Topics to be covered

Mediation, Conciliation and Negotiation

- a. Concept of Mediation
- b. Evolution and Process of Mediation in India
- c. Conciliation
- d. Good Offices
- e. Negotiation theories, types and strategies

For further query

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Concept of Mediation

Mediation is a form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) where two or more parties involved in a conflict come together with the help of a neutral third party known as the **mediator** to resolve their differences without going to court. The mediator helps the parties communicate effectively and explore potential solutions but does not have the authority to make decisions or impose a judgment.

1. Definition of Mediation

- **Voluntary**: Participation in mediation is entirely voluntary, meaning that the parties involved have the freedom to choose whether or not they want to engage in the process. No party can be forced into mediation against their will. This ensures that the parties are motivated to find a resolution, as they enter the process willingly.
- Confidential: Mediation is a private process, and anything discussed during the sessions remains confidential. This confidentiality ensures that the parties can speak openly and honestly without fear of the information being used against them later in court or other legal proceedings.
- Neutral Third Party (Mediator): The mediator is an independent and neutral individual who does not take sides or make decisions for the parties. Their primary role is to facilitate communication between the disputing parties, assist in identifying underlying issues, and help the parties explore mutually acceptable solutions.

2. Role of the Mediator: Detailed Breakdown

The mediator has a distinct, non-judgmental role in mediation. Their responsibilities include:

- Facilitating Communication: The mediator ensures that all parties have an equal opportunity to express their views and feelings. They manage the flow of communication, ensuring that each party's concerns are heard and respected, which can help reduce tensions and misunderstandings.
- Assisting in Identifying Issues: Often, parties in conflict may not clearly understand the issues causing the dispute. The mediator helps identify and clarify the main points of disagreement, allowing the parties to focus on what needs to be resolved.

- **Generating Possible Solutions**: While the mediator does not impose a solution, they help the parties brainstorm potential solutions or compromises. Mediators often suggest ideas or alternatives that the parties may not have considered, guiding them toward a mutually satisfactory resolution.
- **Not Imposing a Decision**: Unlike a judge or arbitrator, the mediator does not have the authority to make a final decision or impose a solution. The goal is for the parties to work together to reach a resolution themselves, based on mutual agreement.

3. Characteristics of Mediation: In-Depth Explanation

• Voluntary:

- Mediation is based on the principle of voluntary participation. This means that the parties involved in the dispute must agree to take part in the process. No party can be forced into mediation; it is a consensual process that relies on the willingness of all participants.
- The voluntary nature of mediation fosters a collaborative environment where the parties are more likely to be open to compromise and negotiation.

• Non-binding (Unless Agreement is Reached):

- Mediation is typically non-binding unless the parties reach a mutual agreement. The mediator facilitates discussions and guides the parties to an understanding, but the mediator's role is not to make a binding decision.
- o If an agreement is reached, the parties may choose to formalize it in writing, which may then be legally enforceable. However, if the parties fail to reach an agreement, they can walk away from the process and seek other legal remedies (such as litigation or arbitration).

• Confidential:

- Mediation is a confidential process, meaning that all communications, discussions, and negotiations that occur during the mediation cannot be disclosed in future legal proceedings. This confidentiality encourages parties to be open and honest, without fear of their statements being used against them later.
- Mediators are usually bound by confidentiality agreements, and parties are encouraged to keep the terms of the mediation process private. Any information shared in mediation cannot typically be used in court, unless the parties agree otherwise.

• Informal:

Mediation is an informal process compared to the structured, formal procedures of litigation or arbitration. There are no strict rules of procedure or evidence, and the process is flexible. This allows the parties to engage in dialogue in a more relaxed, comfortable environment.

 The informality of mediation helps reduce the stress and tension often associated with legal proceedings. The focus is on open communication, problem-solving, and finding a resolution that works for all involved.

• Flexible:

- o Flexibility is one of the key advantages of mediation. It allows the parties to approach the resolution of their conflict in a way that best suits their needs, interests, and circumstances.
- The mediator can adjust the process depending on the nature of the dispute, the parties' preferences, and the dynamics of the situation. Mediation can occur in person, by phone, or even through online platforms, and can be adapted to suit different cultural or legal contexts.
- Mediation allows for creative solutions that might not be available through traditional legal channels. The parties can agree on terms that meet their specific needs, which can include non-monetary solutions, such as changes in behavior or actions.

Evolution and Process of Mediation in India

Historical Context of Mediation in India

Mediation has deep roots in India's social and cultural history, stemming from **panchayats** and traditional community-based dispute resolution practices. These informal methods of conflict resolution have been an integral part of Indian society for centuries. In ancient and medieval times, village elders or local community leaders would play the role of mediators in resolving disputes, ensuring peace and harmony within their communities.

- **Panchayats**: Local self-governance bodies like panchayats would resolve conflicts by bringing parties together in a conciliatory manner. These forums were based on mutual respect, trust, and the aim of achieving a peaceful settlement rather than imposing a decision.
- Cultural Context: In rural India, people would often turn to community leaders or respected individuals for resolving disputes, reflecting a deep cultural commitment to consensus and compromise.

However, as India modernized and the formal judicial system evolved, there was a growing recognition of the need for an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism to reduce the burden on courts and provide a more accessible, efficient, and flexible means of resolving disputes. This led to the formal adoption of mediation as a part of India's legal system in the 1990s.

Formal Adoption and Shift towards ADR in the 1990s

In the 1990s, the Indian judiciary began promoting ADR methods, including mediation, as a means to address the growing backlog of cases in courts. The increasing pressure on the judicial system, coupled with a need to find quicker, cost-effective, and less adversarial solutions to disputes, led to the formal inclusion of mediation as a viable alternative.

The **Arbitration and Conciliation Act**, 1996 provided a legislative foundation for ADR processes in India, paving the way for the establishment of formal mediation practices. This was further supported by judicial interventions and the recognition of the importance of mediation in resolving civil disputes.

Legislative Framework for Mediation

India's legal framework for mediation is based on both statutory provisions and judicial support. Two significant legislative acts govern mediation:

1. The Mediation and Conciliation Rules, 2004 under the Civil Procedure Code (CPC)

- o These rules, framed by the **Supreme Court of India**, provide a procedural framework for the conduct of mediation in civil cases. They govern the appointment of mediators, the process of mediation, and the role of courts in facilitating mediation.
- The Mediation Rules aim to ensure that mediation is conducted in a fair, transparent, and structured manner, and they provide guidelines for the mediator's role, the process of settlement, and the finalization of agreements.

2. The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987

- This Act encourages the use of ADR, including mediation, for resolving disputes, particularly in the context of access to justice. Under this Act, legal services authorities are tasked with promoting and facilitating mediation as an alternative to litigation for the economically disadvantaged and marginalized groups.
- The Act also empowers the **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)** to set up panels of mediators and promote awareness about ADR in different parts of the country.

Judicial Support for Mediation in India

The judiciary has played a crucial role in the development of mediation in India by endorsing its use in various cases and encouraging its incorporation into the legal process. Some key judicial initiatives include:

- Supreme Court Guidelines: The Supreme Court of India has issued various guidelines for the promotion of mediation in the judicial process. In the landmark Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. v. Cherian Varkey Construction Co. Pvt. Ltd. (2010) case, the Court emphasized the need for mandatory mediation in specific types of cases before they are allowed to proceed to trial.
- Integration with Judicial Systems: Mediation has been integrated into court systems through several pilot projects, such as the Supreme Court's Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (SCMCP), which works towards promoting and training mediators for resolving civil cases.
- Mediation Centres: The Supreme Court has set up Mediation Centres in different high courts and district courts, where cases are referred for mediation before they proceed to trial.

Process of Mediation in India: Step-by-Step Breakdown

The process of mediation in India typically involves the following stages:

1. Pre-Mediation Stage

- Selection of Mediator: The parties involved in the dispute, often with the help of the court or through mutual agreement, select a mediator. Mediators can be chosen from a panel of certified professionals or experts in the field related to the dispute.
- Agreement to Mediate: Both parties must voluntarily agree to enter into the mediation process. This agreement ensures that all parties are committed to resolving the issue through dialogue rather than litigation.

2. Mediation Session

- Facilitation by Mediator: Once the parties agree to mediate, the mediator helps them engage in discussions.

 The mediator may begin by explaining the mediation process and setting the ground rules for the sessions.
- **Identifying Key Issues**: The mediator helps each party identify the main issues that are causing the dispute. This may involve active listening, asking clarifying questions, and helping each party understand the other's perspective.
- Exploring Solutions: The mediator assists the parties in brainstorming possible solutions and encourages them to consider creative options that satisfy both parties' interests. The mediator does not impose solutions but facilitates dialogue to encourage agreement.
- **Private Sessions**: Sometimes, mediators hold private sessions (caucuses) with each party separately to discuss sensitive issues and help them formulate proposals for settlement.

3. Post-Mediation Stage

- **Agreement Drafting**: If the mediation is successful, the parties reach a mutual agreement. The mediator assists in drafting a formal written settlement agreement that outlines the terms and conditions agreed upon by both parties.
- Legal Binding Nature: In certain cases, the mediated agreement is made legally binding, either by court order or by the parties' agreement to make the settlement enforceable under the law.
- Court Approval (if required): If the case was referred by the court, the mediated agreement is often submitted to the court for approval and ratification, making it enforceable under law.

Conciliation

Definition of Conciliation

Conciliation is a form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) similar to mediation but with a key difference in the role played by the third party involved. In conciliation, the third party is called a **conciliator**. Unlike mediators who primarily facilitate discussions between the parties and help them reach their own agreements, conciliators take a more **active role** by **suggesting** or **proposing solutions** to resolve the dispute. While the process remains informal, conciliators may directly intervene to propose settlements, making it more directive compared to mediation.

Conciliation is often used in disputes where the parties have difficulty reaching an agreement on their own or need expert advice, such as **labor disputes**, **commercial contracts**, or **family matters**.

Difference Between Conciliation and Mediation

While both **mediation** and **conciliation** are non-adversarial methods of dispute resolution, the key differences lie in the roles of the third party and the approach to resolving the dispute:

- **Mediator**: A mediator's role is primarily to **facilitate** communication, help the parties understand each other's positions, and guide them toward finding their own solutions. The mediator does not propose solutions or impose any outcomes on the parties.
- Conciliator: A conciliator has a more active role in suggesting or even proposing specific solutions or terms for resolving the dispute. In some cases, conciliators may even provide opinions on what would be a fair resolution, though the parties are still free to reject these proposals. Conciliation is often used in matters requiring technical expertise or where a neutral third party can offer practical solutions.

When is Conciliation Used?

Conciliation is typically used in the following areas:

- Labor Disputes: The conciliator plays an important role in resolving conflicts between employers and employees, especially concerning issues like wages, working conditions, and collective bargaining disputes.
- Commercial and Contractual Disputes: Conciliation helps resolve disputes arising out of contracts, especially where both parties are seeking a practical and speedy resolution.
- **Family Disputes**: In cases like divorce, child custody, and property disputes, conciliation is often used to reach a settlement in a less adversarial manner than litigation.
- **Industrial Relations**: This method is used to resolve disputes between workers and management over employment terms, leading to better industrial harmony.

Legal Framework for Conciliation in India

In India, conciliation is governed by two major legislative frameworks:

1. The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947:

- o This Act provides a **statutory framework** for the resolution of industrial disputes through conciliation. It empowers the **government** to appoint conciliation officers to intervene and attempt to resolve disputes between employers and employees, often before the matter proceeds to a tribunal.
- Under this Act, the conciliation process is mandatory for certain types of industrial disputes, including disputes related to wages, employment terms, or strikes.
- o If conciliation fails, the dispute may be referred to a labor court or industrial tribunal.

2. The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996:

- o This Act provides the framework for conciliation in matters beyond labor disputes, including **commercial**, **contractual**, and **civil disputes**. It aims to facilitate the settlement of disputes in an amicable and cost-effective manner, reducing the burden on courts.
- Ounder this Act, a conciliation procedure can be initiated either by agreement of the parties or by the court's referral. The conciliator may also propose terms for resolving the dispute, similar to the mediation process, but with greater direct involvement.
- o The Act also lays down rules for **confidentiality** and **enforceability** of settlements.

Process of Conciliation

The conciliation process in India typically follows the steps outlined below:

1. Appointment of Conciliator:

o A **neutral third party** (conciliator) is appointed, either by mutual consent of the parties or by the court. The conciliator is usually an expert in the subject matter of the dispute or a person with experience in dispute resolution.

2. Pre-Conciliation Stage:

- Before beginning the conciliation sessions, the conciliator may meet individually with each party to understand the issues at hand, clarify their concerns, and assess the overall situation. This is often referred to as a private session or caucus.
- o The conciliator will explain the process and set expectations for confidentiality and voluntary participation.

3. Conciliation Sessions:

- Joint Meetings: The conciliator arranges meetings between the parties to facilitate open and direct dialogue. These sessions allow both sides to express their positions, identify common ground, and work toward a mutual understanding.
- o **Individual Sessions**: In some cases, the conciliator may also hold private discussions with each party to explore their interests more deeply and craft possible solutions without influencing the negotiations between the parties.
- Proposing Solutions: At any point, the conciliator may propose solutions or settlement options that they believe are fair and practical based on the discussions. These may include financial settlements, changes in the terms of a contract, or changes in behavior or actions.

4. Settlement:

- o If the parties reach an agreement, the conciliator drafts the settlement terms, and both parties sign the settlement agreement.
- The settlement can either be binding or non-binding, depending on the agreement between the parties.
 In some cases, the conciliator may suggest converting the agreement into a formal, legally enforceable contract, depending on the nature of the dispute.

5. Post-Conciliation Stage:

- o If conciliation is successful, the conciliator may file a report with the appropriate authority (e.g., a labor court or the court system), which may make the settlement agreement enforceable.
- o If the conciliation fails, the dispute can be escalated to arbitration, or the parties may proceed with litigation in a court of law.

Key Features of Conciliation

- **Voluntary**: Participation in conciliation is voluntary, and the parties are free to withdraw from the process at any time.
- Confidential: Like mediation, conciliation is a confidential process, ensuring that anything discussed during the process cannot be used against the parties in subsequent proceedings.
- **Non-binding**: The recommendations or solutions proposed by the conciliator are not legally binding unless the parties agree to them. However, once an agreement is reached, it can become legally enforceable.
- Informal and Flexible: The process is designed to be informal, allowing the parties to have greater flexibility in resolving their issues without the formalities of court procedures.

Good Offices

Definition of Good Offices

Good offices refer to a process in which a **neutral third party** assists two or more disputing parties by facilitating communication, negotiation, and dialogue. Unlike mediation or conciliation, the third party in good offices **does not intervene directly in the decision-making process** or suggest any solutions. Their role is purely to **assist in the process of communication** and create an environment where the parties can negotiate and attempt to reach a resolution themselves.

The third party's involvement is generally limited to **organizing meetings**, **arranging discussions**, or providing logistical support. The aim is to help the parties find common ground and resolve their issues independently.

Role of the Third Party in Good Offices

The third party, often referred to as the facilitator, plays a **passive** role in good offices. Their functions include:

- **Setting Up Meetings**: The third party helps by arranging the time and place for discussions between the parties, ensuring that the environment is conducive to open dialogue.
- Facilitating Communication: The third party may assist in overcoming communication barriers between the parties, ensuring that each side is able to express their position clearly and is willing to listen.
- **Providing Logistical Support**: In cases where the parties may be unable to meet in person or need additional resources, the third party may help facilitate the process through technology, scheduling, or other necessary arrangements.

However, unlike mediation or conciliation, the neutral third party in good offices does not intervene by suggesting solutions or actively guiding the parties toward specific outcomes.

Distinction from Mediation and Conciliation

Good offices are often compared to **mediation** and **conciliation**, but there are significant differences in the role and involvement of the third party:

1. Mediation:

- o In mediation, the third party (mediator) is **actively involved** in the process, helping the parties identify issues, suggest potential solutions, and facilitate discussions.
- The mediator can propose solutions and work directly with both parties to bridge the gap in their positions.

2. Conciliation:

- o In conciliation, the conciliator plays a more **directive role**, offering specific proposals or recommendations for resolving the dispute. The conciliator may intervene more actively than a mediator in suggesting practical solutions.
- The conciliator's role is more proactive than that of the mediator and focuses on finding a compromise that both parties are willing to accept.

3. Good Offices:

- o In good offices, the third party acts **only as a facilitator**. They do not suggest or propose solutions and have no active role in negotiating the terms of the settlement.
- o The third party's involvement is primarily **organizational** and **communication-based**, making it less interventionist than mediation and conciliation.

Thus, good offices are a **more passive** form of dispute resolution compared to mediation and conciliation. The third party's role is to **support** the communication process rather than guide or influence the dispute's outcome.

When Are Good Offices Used?

Good offices are typically used in situations where:

- The parties are already in some form of dialogue but need **assistance** in overcoming barriers to communication.
- The parties are not seeking a **third party's** involvement in decision-making but require a neutral facilitator to help them find their own solutions.

• The parties prefer to remain in control of the negotiation process and do not want an intermediary to suggest solutions or interfere in their decisions.

Examples where good offices are commonly used include:

- **International diplomacy**: Governments or organizations may use a neutral third party to help resolve conflicts or facilitate negotiations without taking sides.
- **Commercial disputes**: Businesses may use good offices to help resolve contractual disputes where both parties are willing to negotiate but need assistance in arranging meetings and discussions.
- Family or community disputes: In cases where the parties need help in coming together to talk, such as divorce settlements or community conflicts, a third party may assist in arranging and facilitating discussions.

Key Features of Good Offices

- Neutral Third Party: The facilitator must be neutral, impartial, and have no vested interest in the dispute's outcome.
- **Facilitative Role**: The facilitator's role is to encourage communication and cooperation between the parties, ensuring that discussions occur in a neutral, constructive manner.
- **Non-interventionist**: The third party does not propose solutions or influence the final decision. They are only involved in the facilitation of the process.
- Confidentiality: Similar to mediation and conciliation, the process of good offices is often confidential, ensuring that anything discussed cannot be used against the parties in future legal proceedings.

Negotiation Theories, Types, and Strategies

Theories of Negotiation

1. Distributive Negotiation:

- o **Definition**: Distributive negotiation, also known as **win-lose** or **competitive bargaining**, involves two or more parties competing for a **fixed**, **limited resource**. In this type of negotiation, one party's gain is the other party's loss, creating a **zero-sum** situation.
- Key Features:
 - **Fixed resources**: The pie is limited, and one side's gain means the other side's loss.
 - Competitive approach: Each party tries to claim as much of the resource as possible.

- **Short-term focus**: Often used in one-time deals or situations with little need for future relationships.
- Example: A car buyer negotiating the price with a seller, where any reduction in price for the buyer means a loss for the seller.

2. Integrative Negotiation:

- o **Definition**: Integrative negotiation is a **win-win** approach where both parties collaborate to **create value** and find mutually beneficial solutions. The focus is on **expanding the pie**, not dividing it.
- o Key Features:
 - Mutual gain: Both parties try to create value by identifying each other's needs and interests.
 - Collaboration: Parties look for solutions that benefit both sides, increasing the total value.
 - Long-term focus: Often used when ongoing relationships are important.
- Example: A company negotiating a partnership where both sides collaborate to increase profits, benefiting both over time.

3. Principled Negotiation:

- Definition: Developed by the Harvard Negotiation Project, principled negotiation is based on four key principles:
 - Separate people from the problem: Focus on issues, not personal attacks.
 - Focus on interests, not positions: Understand the underlying interests of both parties.
 - Generate options for mutual gain: Brainstorm multiple options to satisfy both parties' needs.
 - Use objective criteria: Base decisions on fair standards and procedures.

o Key Features:

- Cooperative problem-solving: The focus is on collaboration to solve the problem.
- Mutual respect: Avoids conflict and ensures both parties feel heard and respected.
- **Objective standards**: Solutions are based on fairness and impartiality.
- **Example**: Mediating a workplace dispute by understanding the personal and professional needs of each party and finding a mutually beneficial solution.

Types of Negotiation

1. Competitive Negotiation:

- Definition: In competitive negotiation, the goal is to win and achieve the best possible outcome for oneself, often at the expense of the other party.
- o Key Features:
 - Win-lose mentality: One party's success means the other's failure.

- Tactical approach: The focus is on leveraging power and strategy to achieve a favorable outcome.
- **Short-term relationships**: Often used in transactions where future interactions are not important.
- **Example**: Negotiating the sale of a product where the seller aims to maximize profit and the buyer aims to pay the least amount.

2. Collaborative Negotiation:

O Definition: Collaborative negotiation, or cooperative negotiation, focuses on creating a win-win outcome where both parties work together to meet each other's needs.

o Key Features:

- Cooperation: Both parties seek to understand each other's interests and work toward a solution that benefits both.
- Long-term relationships: The goal is to build trust and maintain a positive relationship for future interactions.
- Value creation: Focus is on expanding the available resources or solutions to satisfy both parties.
- Example: A supplier and a customer negotiating terms that provide benefits for both sides, such as improved delivery schedules and pricing.

3. Avoidance:

O Definition: In avoidance, one or both parties choose to delay or completely avoid the negotiation process, often due to a lack of interest, fear, or unwillingness to engage.

• Key Features:

- Passive approach: Parties avoid addressing the issue or delay discussions.
- **Temporary relief**: While avoidance may offer short-term peace, it often leads to unresolved issues.
- Can lead to escalation: By avoiding issues, problems may worsen over time.
- **Example**: A person avoiding a salary negotiation due to fear of confrontation, or a party failing to respond to an offer.

4. Accommodative Negotiation:

 Definition: In accommodative negotiation, one party concedes to the demands of the other, often to maintain a good relationship or to reach a resolution quickly.

o Key Features:

• Win-lose: One party benefits, and the other party sacrifices.

- Relationship focus: Often used when maintaining the relationship is more important than the immediate outcome.
- **Short-term solution**: It may resolve an issue quickly but can lead to resentment or inequality in the long term.
- Example: An employee agreeing to terms set by an employer, even if it's not favorable, to maintain
 a good working relationship.

Negotiation Strategies

1. BATNA (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement):

 Definition: BATNA refers to the best alternative a party has if the negotiation fails. It represents the fallback plan and helps set the minimum acceptable outcome.

o Strategy:

- Know your BATNA before entering negotiations to avoid accepting unfavorable terms.
- Strengthen your BATNA to enhance your bargaining power.
- Assess the other party's BATNA to understand their limits.
- **Example**: If negotiating the price of a house, your BATNA could be purchasing a similar property at a lower price elsewhere.

2. ZOPA (Zone of Possible Agreement):

Definition: ZOPA is the range within which an agreement is possible, where both parties' interests
 overlap.

Strategy:

- Identify the ZOPA to understand where both parties can reach an agreement.
- Focus negotiations within this zone to avoid unproductive discussions.
- **Example**: In salary negotiations, if the employer is willing to pay between \$50,000 and \$60,000, and the employee is seeking \$55,000, the ZOPA is \$50,000 to \$60,000.

3. Anchoring:

 Definition: Anchoring involves setting an initial reference point in a negotiation (often with the first offer), which then influences the negotiation's outcome.

o Strategy:

- Make the first offer to anchor the negotiation in your favor.
- Be prepared to adjust your anchor if the other party counters.
- Example: In a salary negotiation, offering a higher initial salary figure (e.g., \$70,000) can set the stage for a final offer closer to that figure, rather than a lower starting point.

4. Concessions:

 Definition: Concessions involve gradually giving in to the other party's demands to move toward a resolution.

o Strategy:

- Plan your concessions carefully to avoid giving away too much too quickly.
- Make concessions in exchange for something of value (e.g., a trade-off or compromise).
- Concede in small, strategic amounts to preserve your interests.
- Example: A seller might reduce the price of a product slightly in exchange for a larger order or faster payment terms.



Service	Description
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	aid study and exam
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	detailing daily activities,
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