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## A STUDY ON MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICTS AMONG THE EMPLOYEES IN BUSINESS UNITS OF ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS - AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*Economic development of any country depends greatly on the growth and development of its business units which play an important role in the development of backward areas and in removing disparity. Employees of such sectors are very important and play a vital role in the development of business. However, the employees do have difference of opinion among them and create major issues for the management. In many situations, one person's view does not match with that of others but at the same time the conflict is an inevitable aspect of life and so, is the case of the business units also. The end result of the hard work and contributions is called performance and such performance has direct relationship with the conflict among employees in organizations. Difference of opinion among individuals, among groups of employees, and employees and management etc. The causes are many like political influence, sharing of tangible and intangible resources, issues of ego etc. All these conflicts affect production in business units and the productivity of sincere employees which leads to the closure of business units. This is a very serious issue for the economy of sensitive places like Andaman & Nicobar (A & N) islands. They are to be managed effectively along with their differences of opinions. An attempt has been made by analyzing related data to find out the growth of the business units, causes of conflicts, consequences of conflicts, and the present practice of managing the conflicts. Suitable suggestions are offered to manage the conflict among the employees and to increase the production and productivity in the business units of the A & N islands.*

### KEYWORDS

HRM, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, management of conflicts.

### JEL CODES

J52, J53, J59.

### INTRODUCTION

**E**conomic development of any country depends greatly on the growth and development of its business units which play an important role in the development of backward areas and in removing disparity. Business in modern society is a complicated one presenting many facets<sup>1</sup>. Human resource for such sector is very important and plays a vital role in the development of the business sector. However, sometimes the human resources create one or other some other problems for each other and finally, they become inefficient which affects the business strongly. They are to be managed effectively along with their difference of opinions. Such difference of opinions is called as conflict. It is a situation that one person's view will not match with that of others but at the same time the conflict is an inevitable aspect of life and so, is the case with the business units also. The end result of the hard work and contributions is called performance and such performance has direct relationship with conflict among the employees of organizations.

### STUDY AREA

For the present piece of research work, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A & N Islands) as one of the union territories was taken as the study area since it is a miniature India. It is situated in the Bay of Bengal and is located between 6° and 14° of North Latitude, and 92° and 94° of East Longitudes surrounded by Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia constitute the most isolated part of the Indian Union, separated from the Mainland of India by vast stretches of sea. These islands comprise two separate groups, namely, the Andaman groups of islands and the Nicobar groups of islands. The seat of administration of this territory is Port Blair, the capital of A & N Islands, which is connected with Kolkata by a sea distance of 1,225 kms, with Chennai by 1,191 Kms, and with Vishakhapatnam by 1,200 Kms. Once it was coined as KALAPANI<sup>2</sup> (the black water). But now these islands are developing in all the sectors and become green paradise<sup>3</sup>. These islands are full of resources for business activities and invite entrepreneurs to start the business ventures.

### STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Generally, business units play a vital role in the growth and development of any particular place like Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This is because the business units supply all essential goods to the people of these islands. Today people at the work in the organisation are treated as resources comprising of components like knowledge, skill, ability, attitude, aptitude, values, beliefs etc.<sup>4</sup>. The efficiency of the human resources is the basis for the growth and development of the business units namely, trade, commerce, and industry. The success or failure of the business units particularly in these islands fully depends on the efficiency of the employees in general and management in particular, that is, the managerial quality possessed by the manager of the unit. "No human resource means no sales", and "No sales means no business and no business means no life" in these islands. Therefore, employees are very important for the business units. Though there are plenty of opportunities to produce, market, and do business due to the negative conflicts, the business sector could not grow in these islands. Due to the differences of opinions, some sort of negativity in the name of conflict, badly affects business organizations, and thereby, the business units find it very difficult to satisfy the customers. A sales representative, who will be calling on customers, has to have patience, endurance and tolerance<sup>5</sup>. The technique of Customer Relationship Management and Supplier Relationship Management are becoming meaningless. Due to conflict and misunderstanding, a number of problems are arising in business units, and ultimately this affects production and productivity. It is also to be verified through the particular statistical tools. Here, in these islands the business units face problems due to conflicts among the employees. So, in the present study, an attempt has been made to study the causes for the conflicts among employees by tracing the growth of business units in these islands, consequences of such conflicts, and to offer suitable suggestions to solve problems as well as minimize to conflicts.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study was undertaken with the objectives of tracing growth of business units, to study, and analyze the present conflicts in the business units by testing the hypothesis framed for this purpose, to identify the consequences facing the business units due to the conflicts, and to offer suitable measures to manage and minimize the conflicts in business units with a view to improve their performance.

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study will be helpful in understanding the problems of Human Resource Management in the business units in Andaman Islands. The understanding of the Human Resource Management system, the business structure, their growth and problems will help the Government of India, interested investors and development agencies like the Island Development Authority, the Integrated Development Corporation, etc., in understanding the present status of the industrial,

business, trade and tourism entrepreneurs, and the institutions dealing with them. An understanding of the solutions and suggestions given and the future prospects identified in the present study will help in augmenting the knowledge of academicians and others interested in these aspects in A & N islands.

**PERIOD OF THE STUDY**

The study covers a period of 7 years from the year 2010 to the year 2017. The research work started in the month of January 2018 and was completed by July 31, 2018. Due to the changing climatic condition, the field work was delayed. The data collected were classified, tabulated, analyzed, interpreted, proved, and presented in the form of the present article.

**LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study suffers from various limitations. The study cannot cover the entire units due to the constraints of resources both technical, personnel, and time at disposal. This is because the islands are located in very distant places and interior places where reaching is really very difficult. Moreover, the climatic conditions are also often changing and hence contacting the respondents becomes very difficult. Hence, attempt has been made to throw light on the character of the employees of the business units through the limited sample coverage. Some business units cannot be included in the sample because of their inaccessibility as they were located in very remote areas of the inter-islands. Thus, analysis in this project work is as good as the data provided by the respondents.

**HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis framed for the present research work is that *the conflicts among the employees in business units do not affect productivity and production.*

**METHODOLOGY**

In this study to collect the primary data, and to identify the problems, the statistical tools of questionnaire and informal interview were used. The data were collected from the employees through questionnaire and from the employers through informal personal interviews. For this purpose, a sample of 200 employees was selected and questionnaires were distributed. However, only 173 questionnaires were received which were considered for the study purpose. The secondary data was collected from the records of the basic statistics, books, and other published documents, and from elderly persons of different localities. By using the statistical methods, the analysis was done, interpretations were drawn, and the final results are given in this report form.

**ANALYSIS**

**BUSINESS UNITS**

In A & N Islands all business units are small in size and scale. Generally, the small businesses have certain unique features, such as flexibility, labour intensive, local area of operation, personal character, and short gestation period. The A & N islands cannot just be compared with the mainland for many reasons like limited transport facilities, remote location etc. The meaning and definition for the business unit for the present research work in the A & N Islands is a service or business enterprise/unit with investment upto Rs. 20 lakhs in fixed assets in the business, excluding land and building,

**GROWTH**

To trace the growth of business units, data from 2010-11 till 2016-17 was collected. The base year was 2010-11, and the current year has been taken as 2016-17. The growth was calculated over the previous year (PY) and over the base year (BY) This is given in the following table:

**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF BUSINESS UNITS IN A & N ISLANDS**

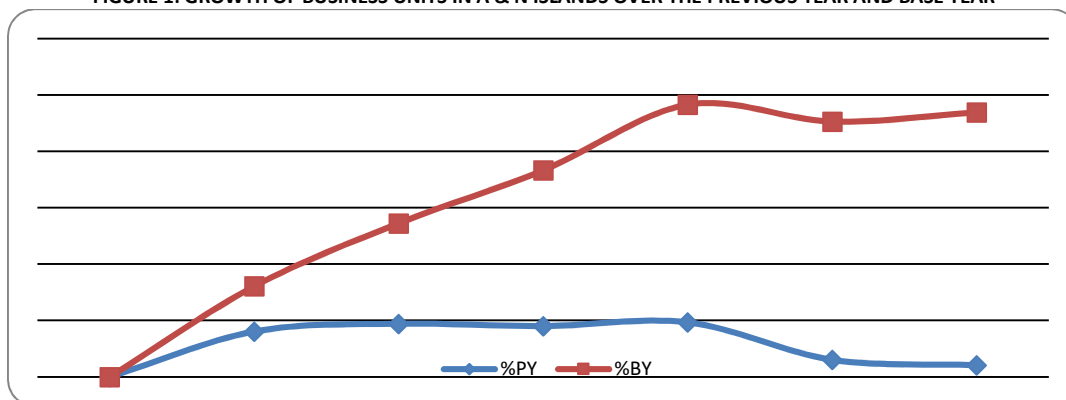
Year	Number of Business Units		% IPY	% IBY
	In this Year	Total		
2010-11	78	2039	0.0	0.0
2011-12	82	2121	04.02	04.02
2012-13	100	2221	04.71	08.92
2013-14	100	2321	04.50	13.83
2014-15	112	2433	04.83	19.32
2015-16	37	2470	01.52	21.13
2016-17	26	2496*	01.05	22.41

Source: Basic Statistics, A & N Administration. \* Provisional

Note: %IPY: Percentage Increase over Previous Year; %IBY: Percentage Increase over Base Year

Table 1 shows the growth of business units in A & N islands since 2010-11. It is very clear from the table that the number of business units are increasing but the growth rate is very low. However, the table recorded a gradual growth rate of 04.02% in 2011-12 to 04.83 in 2014-15. However later, the growth rate reduced to 01.52% in 2015-16 and 01.05% in the year 2016-17 over the respective previous years. The growth rate of the business units over the PY is very low. Comparing with the BY, the growth rate of the business units in the A & N islands is excellent since the growth rate is gradually increasing by recording the smooth growth of business units. The growth rate of 04.02% in 2011-12 has been gradually growing to 08.92% in 2012-13, to 19.32 in 2014-15, 21.13% in 2015-16, and 22.41% in 2016-17.

**FIGURE 1: GROWTH OF BUSINESS UNITS IN A & N ISLANDS OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR AND BASE YEAR**



**CONFLICT**

The meaning of the conflict means difference of opinion between persons. It is a situation that one person's view does not match with that of others, but at the same conflict is an inevitable aspect of life, and so is the case of the business units also. Conflict arises from disagreements over goals to attain or the methods used to accomplish these goals. In business organizations conflict among employees and in their interests is inevitable. Conflict is an integral part of life and may occur within the individual, between individuals, between the individuals and a group or between groups. The conflicts may also be developed due to the perceptual

differences of the individuals. Conflicts may also be encouraged by actions, constraints, and demands of the organization and responsibilities to be performed by the worker. There are five<sup>6</sup> types of conflict namely, conflict within the individual; conflict between individuals; conflict between Groups; and between Organizations. The data were collected on educational levels and experiences and the present system of solving conflicts among employees since these data are very important for the present work.

**TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS – CHI- SQUARE TEST**

The hypothesis framed for the present study is that conflicts among employees in business units do not affect productivity and production. To test this hypothesis, data was collected from employees regarding whether the production and productivity are highly affected by the conflict among employees or the conflict among employees has no effect on the production and productivity. It was decided to discontinue the analysis of the data if the hypothesis is proved. Also, it was decided to continue the research analysis if the hypothesis is not proved.

**TABLE 2: CONFLICT AND PRODUCTIVITY**

Conflict & Production	Actual (O)			Expected (E)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Production is Highly Affected	98	18	116	78	38	116
No Effect on Production	18	39	57	38	19	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>173</b>	116	57	173

**Applying x<sup>2</sup> Test**

O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
98	78	400	5.1
18	38	400	10.5
18	38	400	10.5
39	19	400	21.5
<b>Total</b>			<b>47.2</b>

Degree of Freedom is 1. The Table Value for v=1 (Chi- Square)  $x^2 0.05 = 3.84$

The calculated value of Chi-Square is higher than the above table value. So, the hypothesis is rejected. So, the conflict among the employees in the business units affects productivity. Hence, the analysis was continued.

**Conflict – Sources & Types**

There are many sources for conflict like misunderstanding, eagerness to attain or obtain limited resources, ego, over valuation of one’s or self’s status or power etc. Misunderstanding is the first phase of the conflict. This is followed by an eagerness to have all the available materials without giving to anyone. The normal, traditional, and the most common source of conflict is competition for limited resources. Conflict may also be due to competition for intangibles assets such as power, prestige or status. Sometimes, differences in attitude, values, and perception lead to conflicting situations. Diversity of goals may sometimes bring conflict between affected parties. Conflict may be broadly categorized as (a) Intra-personal; (b) Inter-personal; and (c) Group conflicts.

**a) Intra-Personal Conflict:** These conflicts can occur within an employee, between individuals and groups, and across the organization due to competing roles. Actually, this self generates conflicts that lead to a variety of complications.

**b) Inter-Personal Conflict:** This is a very serious problem for many people because they deeply affect a person’s emotions. There is a need to protect one’s self-image and self- esteem from damage by others.

**c) Group Conflicts:** This conflict occurs between different groups, sections of employees, and different departments. The conflict occurs when one party perceives that the other party is frustrated, or is about to get frustrated when accomplishing a goal.

**EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE**

Education particularly higher education<sup>7</sup> has been given a supreme place of special importance because it can provide ideas to the men. Education and experience levels occupy the first position. Education and experience are the major factors that play a vital role in the life of employees and is very much essential for the learning of any job or work. Experience and education are the important work-qualifying factors for everyone, especially employees that determine their skill of labour, ability to tackle problems, and interest in job. Tolerance, understating, adjustability, accountability, responsibilities etc. are more important for the highly experienced persons when compared with freshers. Table 3 gives the education levels and experience levels of employees.

**TABLE 3: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL**

Educational level	No.	%
Below Metric	81	46.9
Metric	54	31.2
Graduation	16	9.2
Post-Graduation	02	1.1
Diploma	02	1.1
Technical	18	10.5
Others	00	00
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data 2018

**TABLE 4: EXPERIENCE LEVEL**

Experience Level	No.	%
Less than 1 year	09	05.2
1-4 years	14	08.1
4-7 years	29	16.8
7-10 years	31	17.9
10-15 years	42	24.3
15-20 years	46	26.5
20 years and Above	02	01.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data 2018

As per the analysis of education level in Table No.3, majority, that is, 46.9% of the employees were below metric, 31.2% were metric, 10.5% were technical, 9.2% were graduates, and 1.1% each were post graduates, and diploma holders. According to the analysis of experience level, majority, that is, 26.5% of the employees had experience of 15-20 years. Many employees, 24.3% had worked for 10-15 years, 17.9% had an experience of 7-10 years, 16.8% had an experience of 4-7 years, 8.1% had an experience of 1-4 years, 5.2% had an experience of about less than 1 year, and remaining 1.2% of the employees had an experience of 20 years and above. Table No. 4 gives the experience levels of the respondents. 26.5% of the respondents are having the work experience of 15-20 years; 24.3% are having 10-15 Years; 17.9% are having 7-9 Years; 16.8% are having only 4-7 years and only 01.2% of the respondents are having more than 20 years experience.

**POLITICAL INFLUENCE**

This is another dangerous factor contributing to the conflicts among employees of the business units. Local politics, party politics, and office politics also affect employees seriously. Table 5 shows political influence.

**TABLE 5: EXTENT OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE ON CONFLICTS**

S. No.	Particulars	Yes	No	Total	Yes %	No %	Total %
1	Conflicts are due to local politics	26	147	173	15.0	85.0	100.0
2	Conflicts are due to party politics	18	155	173	10.4	89.6	100.0
3	Conflicts are due to office politics	38	135	173	22.0	78.0	100.0
4	Conflicts are not due politics	91	82	173	52.6	47.4	100.0
5	Conflicts are due to individuals	92	81	173	53.2	46.8	100.0
6	Conflicts are due to groups	81	92	173	46.8	53.2	100.0
7	Conflicts are politically motivated	99	74	173	57.2	42.8	100.0
8	Conflicts are not politically motivated	74	99	173	42.8	57.2	100.0
9	Are you member in any association	71	102	173	41.0	59.0	100.0
10	Production highly affected due to conflict	116	57	173	67.1	32.9	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2018

Table No.5 clearly says that majority of the employees (52.6%) had told that no politics or no political influence was involved in the conflicts, 22.0% of the employees told that they were influenced by office politics, 15.0% were influenced by local politics, and the remaining 10.4% of the employees were influenced by party politics. 53.2% of the employees said that the conflict was among the individuals and 46.8% said that the conflict was among groups. 57.2% of the employees said that there were some conflicts in the business organization and environment was politically motivated. The remaining 42.8% said that these conflicts were not at all politically motivated. 41.0% of the employees said that they are the members of different associations and the remaining 59% of the employees told that they do not have any association. 67.0% said that due to the political influenced conflicts in business units, production is highly affected whereas, the remaining 33.0% said that these conflicts do not have any link with the production of the products, thus, saying that they have no effect on production.

**TYPES OF CONFLICTS**

Table 6 shows the types of conflicts among human resources of business units in A & N islands.

**TABLE 6: TYPES OF CONFLICTS**

S. No.	Particulars	No.	%
1	Conflict within you	19	11.0
2	Conflict with other individuals	59	34.1
3	Individuals & group	28	16.2
4	Between the groups	62	35.8
5	Between the organization	5	2.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data 2018

As far as the types of conflict prevailing in the Andaman islands, 35.8% of the total employees expressed that conflicts were between groups; 34.1% with other individuals; 16.2% individuals, and groups and 11.0% and conflicts within employees, and 2.9% of the total employees expressed that another type was between organizations.

**CAUSES & CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT**

The following were the main causes of conflict among the human resources in the business units in the A & N Islands.

**TABLE 7: CAUSES FOR CONFLICT**

Causes of Conflict	YES	%	NO	%	Total	%
Unequal relationships	98	56.6	75	43.4	173	100.0
Disproportionate status	102	59.0	71	41.0	173	100.0
Partiality in treatment	156	90.2	17	9.8	173	100.0
Dependence of common resources	92	53.2	81	46.8	173	100.0
Informational causes	87	50.3	86	49.7	173	100.0
Personal skill & traits causes	103	59.5	70	40.5	173	100.0
Awarding wrong persons	159	91.9	14	8.1	173	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2018

Table No. 7 presents the causes of the conflicts among the employees in the business units. These causes of Unequal relationships (56.6%), Disproportionate status (59.0%), Partiality in treatment (90.2%), Dependence of common resources (53.2%), Informational causes (50.3%), Personal skill & traits causes (59.5%), and Awarding wrong persons (91.9%) are prevailing in A & N islands. Such causes creates a lot of consequences. Table 8 is the shows the consequence of conflict among employees in the business units of A & N islands.

**TABLE 8: CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT**

Consequences of Conflict	YES	%	NO	%	Total	%
Unproductive wages	124	71.7	49	28.3	173	100.0
Increase the differences	133	76.9	40	23.1	173	100.0
Unable to attain business goal	155	89.6	18	10.4	173	100.0
Democratic to autocratic	161	93.1	12	6.9	173	100.0
Hostility increases	101	58.4	72	41.6	173	100.0
Wastage of time	99	57.2	74	42.8	173	100.0
Cut-throat decision making	153	88.4	20	11.6	173	100.0
Less interactions & communication	132	76.3	41	23.7	173	100.0
Loss of profit	169	97.7	4	2.3	173	100.0
Loss of Justice	157	90.8	16	9.2	173	100.0
Leads to the closure of the business	128	74.0	45	26.0	173	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2018

Table No.8 gives the consequences due to the conflicts. The respondents have expressed the consequences of Unproductive wages (71.7%), Increase the differences (76.9%), Unable to attain business goal (89.6%), Democratic to autocratic (93.1%), Hostility increases (58.4%), Wastage of time (57.2%), Cut-throat decision making (88.4%), Less interactions & communication (76.3%), Loss of profit (97.7%), Loss of Justice (90.8%), and Leads to the closure of the business (74.0%) in these islands.

**PRESENT SYSTEM OF MANAGING CONFLICTS**

As per the information collected, management principles of avoidance, cooperation, compromise, negotiation, and settlement through political parties are being adopted in the business units of the A & N islands. This is given in Table 9.

**TABLE 9: PRESENT TOOLS OF MANAGING CONFLICTS**

Present Management	No.	%
Avoidance	11	6.4
Cooperation	14	8.1
Compromise	41	23.7
Negotiation	38	22.0
Settlement through political parties	69	39.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data - 2018

Table 9 clearly shows the details and the information about the present system of management of the conflicts in the business units. Cooperation respectively. Finally, the minority of the respondents i.e. 6.4% of the employees say that by Avoidance, the conflicts are tolerated whereas 23.7% expressed as the conflicts are settled through the compromise, 22.0% through the negotiation, and 39.8% told that the conflicts are settled through the political parties. This is shown in Figure 2.

**FIGURE 2: TOOLS OF MANAGING CONFLICTS****SUGGESTIONS**

Due to conflicts among employees in the business units in these islands, the consequences are the loss of profit, shifting of democratic style of management to autocratic style of management, loss of justice, inability to attain the goal, cut-throat decision making among different levels of management, increasing differences of opinions among employees, decreasing interactions, and communication among employees, leading to closure of business, payment of unproductive wages, and wastage of time. Moreover, the test of hypothesis is very clear that the conflicts among employees adversely affect productivity of business units. So, the following measures are suggested to avoid the conflicts and to manage conflicts among employees in the business units of these islands.

- A concrete awareness program should be arranged and held by the business units in the premises of the units. This should be carried out periodically.
- A review meeting is should be conducted at least once in a week and the common problems related to business units should be thoroughly discussed and suitable suggestions are should be found after having clear cut consultation with the employees.
- Compromise system should be adopted by the management. This means that compromise in all directions, that is, compromise between employees, management and employees, groups and individuals, groups and management and the likes.
- Bargaining is another way settling conflicts. It involves having the groups agree about what each will get and give to the other. Since A & N Islands are having heterogeneous population, people of different regions have different opinions. So, bargaining is also one of the suitable methods to manage the conflict.
- Since the employees themselves have agreed that productivity is affected due to the conflict between groups, and groups and individuals, it is easy for them to bring them to meet the management to discuss their differences, and to work out a solution without management's involvement by creating quality circles.
- Management should also adopt the 14 principles of Henry Fayol and the Principles of scientific management. Equity and Esprit de Corps are to be brought by the management.
- The management, that is, the Board of Directors, Managing Director and managers have to go for intensive training program so that they will understand the meaning of conflict, causes of conflicts, consequences of conflicts, and the strategies to be adopted to manage conflicts.

**CONCLUSION**

Human resource in business sector is very important and plays a vital role in the development of the business sector. They are to be managed effectively along with their difference of opinions called as conflict. This research analytical study with reference to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands brings the effective results of the causes of the conflicts. Suggestions are offered suitable to these islands to settle the conflicts, to increase the productivity, production, optimum utilization of the factors of production etc. Once the impediments are removed and proper strategy and rules are framed in the light of the above findings, the same are very carefully implemented through dedicated managers, with the training, amicable settlements, by adopting the principles of management etc., it is certainly believed that the business units will not have any adverse conflicts and the organizations will be free from the problems of conflicts. The production and the productivity of business units in A & N Islands will increase and they will also contribute their share to the income of the country.

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