



Light of Management

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12

Authority, Politics, Power and Status in Organizations

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Introduction

AN organization is a web of interrelationships, every individual is linked with other individuals and groups in some ways, and they are many at time, the prescribed ones that the organization charts provide for. However, quite often, they tend to develop when people interact on continuous basis. These interactions among people are, at times, free from reservations and at other times they are constrained or restrained.

Ogundele (2012) states that as a result of division of labour, all units and sub units specialize in different activities. And in these units, every individual specializes in particular task, there is also mutual interdependence. Division of labour creates dependence on others. The organization sees to it that no individual or unit functions in an isolated manner. The linkages are established. An organization lays down linkages of authority and status, whereas power and politics as forms of relationships develop in the process of the functioning of an organization. These four concepts are taken together in this chapter because of their very close relationships and interconnectedness or linkages. The other objective is to provide clearer grasp of and understanding of the concepts which joint treatment will, hopefully provide.

Authority

In common usage, authority and power are synonymous and the two terms are used indistinguishably and interchangeably. However, modern management and organization literatures draw a distinction. It is often witnessed that a person low in the organization hierarchy gains access to the ear of the chief executive and is able to influence decision making. *Therefore, the* concept of authority has to be understood clearly and distinctly from power.

Authority Defined

Authority may be defined as the decision making right. When the right to take decision is given, to a particular position holder, that position holder is said to possess the said authority. For example, a Divisional Police Officer (*D.P.O*) has the right to deploy his men to maintain law and order in troubled area in his

locality. This authority rests in a particular position is enjoyed by a position holder as long as he occupies that position. Individuals come and go but authority remains attached to a position (Sharman, 1989).

Features of Authority

- (1) *Institutionalization*: Authority is given by the institution and is, therefore, legal or legitimate. The institution specifies what authority a position will have. The organization lays down requirements that a position holder should satisfy to occupy that position. Authority assigned to a position cannot be endless or unlimited. The extent of authority is prescribed or defined by the institution.
- (2) *Usually Written*: Authority is usually granted in writing to each position so as to enable position holder to discharge the responsibilities assigned to him. In small organizations, where face to face contacts between people are possible, the grant of authority may take place verbally. When organization structure is designed, it is also simultaneously determined, what and how much authority is to be allocated to each position regardless of individuals who will fill these positions. An unwarranted alteration of allocated authority may have a serious and demoralizing effect on individual position holder. Such change becomes difficult in large organizations. Small organizations are characterized with much flexibility in which authority may be increased or decrease at ease judging by the competence of position holder and the demand of the situation.
- (3) *Authority Involves Responsibility*: Each position is entrusted with certain responsibility; authority given to it should be adequate to handle that responsibility. Authority and responsibility are abstract expressions, it is not possible to obtain equality of the two, but authority must be commensurate with responsibility. No person can function effectively if he lacks requisite authority.
- (4) *Legitimacy*: A legitimate act or authorized act may meet with the obedience or the disobedience of command. A subordinate as a rational human being anticipates gains or losses which are likely to ensue if there is obedience or disobedience, conformance or non conformance. This constitutes one of the features of authority.
- (5) *Centralization of Decentralization*: Authority may be centralized or decentralized, centralized authority refers to a systematic and consistent reservation of authority at control positions. Decentralization of authority implies delegation of authority organization wide. However, decentralized an organization may be, certain matters are always reserved for the higher levels only. Whether organization has centralized or decentralized structure, the delegation of authority implies flow of authority downwards

from one level to another. Informal authority which a group grants to a member may flow horizontally or even upwards as the group may consist not only of equals but also of superiors.

- (6) *Criteria of Authority:* In the exercise of authority, the behavior pattern of a superior involves issues of command and an expectation of acceptance of command by a subordinate. The behaviour patterns of subordinates are governed by the formal criteria of the receipt of command by the superior as basis of his authority for the choice of a particular behaviour by the subordinates. The source of authority may be a person or an impersonal institution. Blau and Scott, (1962) lay down the following as the criteria for authority:
- (i) Voluntary compliance with legitimate command.
 - (ii) Suspension of judgment or holding judgment in abeyance in advance of command, and
 - (iii) Value orientation that defines the exercise of control as legitimate. The orientation arises only in a group context. That is when a subordinate finds other subordinates following the directives of the superior he also does the same.

Authority of the superior has to be accepted by subordinate, conviction or no conviction, whether he likes it or not, and whether he has a choice of his own or not. In authority there is total obedience and so an abdication or giving up of choice.

Types of Authority

Authority is said to be exercised when a position holder is able to obtain compliance of his legitimate command from subordinate. Sharman (1989), notes that the source of this authority lies in tradition, charisma, or law. That is, authority is of three types; tradition, charisma and legal.

Traditional Authority: In this case authority is derived from tradition. The tradition may be that the eldest son of a king will succeed to the throne. For his merits of his own, he rules a community or country by virtue of his birth in a particular family.

Charismatic Authority: This authority is derived from the values that legitimize charismatic authority. An individual may possess some divine or supernatural powers which may impress and attract followers. Such leaders may be found in any field of human endeavour, religion, politics, academic and other spheres. These leaders inspire others. But this characteristic of theirs is specific to them. Therefore, many movements based on such specific individual gifts, with divine attributes, lose their ground when the leader leaves the scene.

Legal Authority: It is derived from principles, rules, regulations, policies, practices, and norms laid down for an organization's systematic functioning, in the rational pursuit of specific goals. It is the authority that an organization

gives and is not dependent upon any tradition or charisma. Any individual that occupies a particular position enjoys the authority attached to it; this has nothing to do with his background or type of his personality.

Extent of Authority or Limits of Authority

It may be customary to obey superior as the practice is a part of culture in which organization operates. Also, an individual finds people around him obeying others. So the value orientation of the acceptance of command has a group context. The change in social situation such as increasing educational levels, legislative measures, strength of bargaining position etc, has gradually narrowed down the zone of acceptance of authority. This is especially true of the professional and skilled workmen who have narrow zone of acceptance of command in the areas of their specialization. In our own society, the present relatively high level of urbanization has weakened the potency of traditional authority.

The zone of acceptance of command also concerns the nature of organization. Two extremes of acceptance levels are represented by a voluntary organization having the narrowest range of acceptance and a military organization having the broadest range of acceptance. In a club, a voluntary member is free to accept or reject a command. Such a choice is hardly present in the case of military.

Factors of Conformance or Observance

A number of factors account for acceptance or rejection of authority. They include the followings:

- (1) **Social Sanctions:** People often act or react not as individuals but as member of a group. People see the younger ones obeying the elders, subordinates obeying the superiors etc. This develops a feeling that disobedience is undesirable and obedience is cherished virtue. To remain an honourable member of the society, an individual like others, accepts the legitimate command from his superior.
- (2) **Personality Differences:** People have different types of personalities. By nature some individual are leading type and are looking for situations in which they can display their leadership. Such people are in the minority. Most people have the ability to follow and need to be led or ordered.
- (3) **Feeling of Sympathy for Purpose:** An individual is willing to accept a command if he is sure of the fact that it will further the object with which he is in sympathy. He may sometimes accept a partly incorrect command which he does not like, if he loves the purpose deeply as often happens in the case of voluntary, charitable and religious organizations.
- (4) **Relationship between the Job and Economic Security and Status:** The importance of economic security and status for an individual determines the extent of acceptance of authority. Those who value these

things highly and consider obedience as necessary to obtain them strictly obey the commands.

- (5) *Unwillingness or Disinclination to accept Responsibility in Matters outside the Areas of their Experience and Competence:* Many people are willing to follow command so long as it is not unduly unpleasant, merely because the problem does not very much interest them, or they do not have the necessary expertise in the matter. It is not always that they are afraid of the consequences which may ensue in case of incorrect decision. This is because the matter does not psychologically interest them. Authority, on a final note, is institutional power or a right attached to a position by the organization and in the proper exercise of authority, the restraint of the superior is as important as obedience of the subordinate.

Politics

Organizational politics is a normal part of organization behaviour. Writers on politics have linked many of its practice with the writings and works of Machiavelli. He is linked with such political behaviour as intrigue, cruelty and opportunism, he was claimed to have remain rooted in his age. Machiavelli observes human nature and organizations and produced the work which appeared to be centuries ahead of his time. His writings have relevance in discussions on politics, power, government and management in short in all kinds of human organization. To him politics is an enactment of power game.

Ogundele (2000) notes that politics affect organizations and organizational behaviour from two dimensions. The first is the internal politics within the organization. The second is the external political environment surrounding the organization. These include political contest between the principal characters within the organization in relation with external parties. Internal organization politics could be at the micro, intermediate and macro levels. These involve individuals, coalition and the context in which the actors operate (Cobb, 1986). The external environmental politics also include the government and its legislations, policies and regulations that affect business operators (Ogundele, 2000).

Politics Defined

Forst and Egri (1990I) define politics as enacted power and goal directed action that is first of all self-interested. They observe that power would be resisted if directed by others with different self-interest. They also define power as potential. It is the capacity to get others to do things they might otherwise not want to do and/or resist others effort to get them to do what others want them to do. Cobb and Margulies (1990) define politics as the use of power to modify or protect an organization's exchange structure. Politics can thus be defined as a game of intrigue or the process of gaining specific advantages (Ogundele, 2000).

Structure of Politics in Organizations Internal Political Environment

Frost and Egri (1990I) note that organizational politics involves:

- (1) Contest among independent actors having different perspectives and motivated by different self-interests.
- (2) Collaboration among actors in the performance of organizational work, when the means/ends for getting it done are unclear and/or subject to dispute.

They stated that politics involve the use of power at both surface and deep structures of organization: (1) *surface politics-power* is overt and direct (2) *deep structure politics-power at the deep structure* of the organization is covert. It is deeply embedded in structure. It informs the interpretative frame and the cognitive map of the organization: Deep structure politics is concerned with power of conception; the systematic distortion of communication to maintain enhance power relations. They favour one social reality over others and also, they favour some interest group at the expense of others.

Political Processing in Organization

Pfeffer(1990), Frost and Egri (1990I), emphasized the influence of political process on the functioning of organization. The process of inter-organization politics starts with stated or implicit organizational goal(s) which exist side by side the individual member's goal(s). This leads to the development of heterogeneous and sometimes competing goals. Differentiation within the organization, as a result of division of labour and specialization, is another source of disagreement on goals and belief about technology. Interdependent among subunits, and differences in goals perception of technology, coupled with resources scarcity produce conflict. The result is the use of power and politics in the internal system of the organization (Pfeffer, 1990).

Surface Politics is carried out by organization leaders, top executive group and other management and official members of the organizations. Surface politics therefore involves the overt and direct exercise of power and influence over others. This is in order to achieve the political actor's goal.

Deep structure games emerge as a result of the facts noted above- these are based on systematic distortion of perceived reality. These include:

- (1) *Naturalization*: That treats existing forms and privilege as inviolate and therefore not subject to discussion or change.
- (2) *Neutralization*: This is where a singular position is universalized as a position shared by everyone, thus becoming one of fact rather than choice.
- (3) *Legitimization*: This is the process through which higher order explanatory devices are invoked to justify actions and decisions of interested power elite.

- (4) *Socialization*: This is designed to direct and shape the behaviour, attitudes, values and interpretative schemes of members of the organization (Frost and Egri, 1990II).

Cobb (1986) notes that politics in the internal system of the organization will lead to the formation of coalitions, task network and social network. Internal politics will determine the perception of opportunities and behaviour of organization members. It is these same political activities internal to the organization that Bowen and Stegaert (1990) describe as dialogue process in their conceptualization of the emergence of entrepreneurial organization. The intermediate level involves contests among coalitions or groups. At the macro level the general context within which those actors operate is the subject of analysis.

Reardon (2002) presents the internal structures of political environment with their players in an organization. His analysis is a departure from Mintzberg (1990) characterization of power game and the player. Reardon (2002) presents three types of political cultures and four types of player employing politics of varying colouration to achieve their objectives. They include:- (1) minimally politicized (2) moderately politicized (3) highly politicized and (4) pathologically politicized organizations.

(1) *Minimally politicized*; the atmosphere is amiable conflict rarely occur and don't usually last long.

(2) *Moderately politicized* organizations operate on commonly understood and formally sanctioned rules. They often include smaller, fast moving firms and large ones focused on organizational agility where customer focus, results, teamwork and interpersonal trust are priorities; politics are rarely destructive and often focus on surfacing worthwhile ideas. When conflict gets out of hand managers will invoke sanctions, rules or share mores for resolution.

(3) *In highly politicized* culture conflict is pervasive. Instead of applying formal rules consistently, combatants only evoke them when convenient. In groups and out groups are clearly defined. When there is conflict, people rely on aggressive political methods and involve others in the dispute. Highly political organizations are usually incapable of resolving conflict constructively. They place blame and terminate loser. Such flexes rarely alter the dysfunctional pattern.

(4) *Pathologically politicized* organizations are often on the range of self-destruction. People distrust each other, interactions are often fractions, and conflict is long lasting and pervasive. People must circumvent formal procedures and structures to achieve objectives. They spend much time covering their back. Management uses a carrot-and-stick approach to control people. Subordinate are seen as stubborn, willful even stupid.

Identifying Political Pathology: First, to manage politics, management must

recognize the encroachment of political pathology and avoid it. Five indicators are provided which will show that it is time to alter the political environment.

- (1) *Frequent flattery* of persons in power coupled with abuse of people in Weaker position.
- (2) *Information messaging* where no one says anything that will rock the boat and hints and innuendo become common means of communication
- (3) *Malicious gossip* and backstabbing are common even where little overt conflict appears.
- (4) *Cold indifference* where no one is valued and everyone is dispensable indicates the area has been systematically polluted by people in charge. Survival is based on obsequiousness and getting others before they get you.
- (5) *'Take Left, Go Right'* people, even a whole department, purposely mislead others in order to look good when they fail. Teamwork is absent. Managers' sacrifice subordinates careers to avoid looking bad.

Matching Political Style to Political Culture

The second critical step, suggested by (Reardon, 2002) in learning to manage politics is identifying individual political styles. The styles, their fits with the environment exert dominant influence on goal achievement. The following four types are listed:

The Purists: This is the least political. The purists are those who believe in getting ahead through hard work. They shun politics and rely on following sanctioned rules to get thing done. The purists trust other people and prefer to work with those who do the same. Behind the scene grappling for power and prestige is not of interest, hence purists are best suited to minimally political climates.

The Team Player: Team players believe you get ahead by working with others and using politics that advance the goals of the group. They rarely put career needs ahead of group needs. They prefer to operate by sanctioned rules, but will trade favours or engage in other relatively benign politics to achieve team goals. Team players are best suited to moderately political environment.

Street Fighter: The street fighters believe the best way to get ahead is via rough tactics. They rely on subliminal politics than the purist and team players. They are likely to invoke sanctioned rules when they serve personal goals. Street fighters watch their backs, push hard to achieve personal goals and are slow to trust others. They thrive on the "cut and thrust" of business, enjoy intrigue and derive gratification from working the system. They are comfortable in highly political environment and can survive in pathological ones as well.

The Manoeuvrerer: The manoeuvrerer is an individualist, who believes in getting ahead by playing political games in a skillful, unobtrusive manner. He is subtler than the street fighter, not inhibited about using politics to advance personal goals and favoured team objectives. He prefers to do so in deniable.

ways. The manoeuvrers look for ulterior motives in others, have little regard for sanctioned rules and rely largely on subliminal politics. The pure manoeuvrers are less committed to hard work than the purists. They also operate as team player, only, when it suits their agenda. People get in the way of a manoeuvrer at their own peril. The manoeuvrer is best suited to highly political and pathological arenas.

The managers' task regarding politics is to accurately assess the type prevalent in their organization or a division of it. There is nothing inherently bad in the street fighter or the manoeuvrer; they may be assets if they bring something valuable to the group. A predominance of the two could be problematic for an organization. Managers must, therefore, take steps to stem the tide of political self-destruction.

The ways out are (1) assess the degree to which the organization is politicized, (2) recognize the signs of impending political pathology and (3) take steps to detoxify the work place, by communicating more openly, and directly, invoke sanctions, rules or shared more to resolve conflict and emphasize solving problems over placing blame.

External Politics

There is also the external political environment which affects the behaviour of organization. These include relationship with other firms in the environment. They all compete for resource and for the patronage of actual and potential customers. Therefore, between firms political games are involved in their competitive strategies.

The other external political factor revolves around government legislatures, policies, guidelines, and statements relating to and regulating business activities and their practical implementation. Several writers have emphasized the importance of the government as a political dimension affecting organization. Cole (1959) notes the importance of the political dimensions, when he stated that entrepreneurial activity is affected by the operating political circumstances. Child (1977), Rothwell and Zegveld (1981) and Lyanda (1988) emphasize the multi-dimensional roles of government in the operations of business organizations. They all emphasized the facilitating and sometimes inhibiting roles of government. This is brought about in the setting up of laws, and regulations which govern the establishment and operation of business enterprises. Therefore, politics, perception and reaction to political environment are affected by both the internal and external environments of the organization. Politics affect the organizations in all aspects of their operations. These extensive influences of politics and political factor make it an important variable in organization and organization behaviour analysis. Politics are a reality in the workplace and most social environment; one must consequently manage the conflict that arises. Politics itself is not bad, according to Reardon (2002), if it works to serve company goals by making sure that the work place is productive and that morale

remains high. It must, however, not be allowed to degenerate to a self-destructive process.

Power

Meaning and Characteristics

To understand behaviour in organization, it is necessary to understand which influences are present, what needs each seek, to fulfill in the organization and how each is able to exercise power to fulfill them (Mintzberg, 1990). This is because power determines what an organization does. Follett (2002) links power with leadership, she refers to leadership as the ability to develop and integrate group idea using "power with" rather than "power over" people. Equally, Machiavelli (2002) examines several aspects of power relationship, collection of his works is described as grammar of power; they touched on wide-ranging dimensions of power relationships in business organization. Empire, in all social institutions, from Machiavelli's point of view, is no more than power trust.

In similar vein, and taking off from Machiavelli's point of view, Greene (2000) discusses 48 laws of power which are supposed to accommodate the contradictions involved in the types of power being exercised in organizations. He notes that in the world today, it is dangerous to seem too power hungry, to be overt with your power moves. Power holders have to seem fair and decent. They need to be subtle congenial yet cunning, democratic yet devious. They observe that the power game in organization resembles the power dynamic that existed in the scheming world of the old isocratic court. The court has always formed itself around the person of power, king, queen, emperor, and leader. The court is also supposed to represent the height of civilization and refinement.

Today we face a peculiarly similar paradox to the courtier. Everything must appear civilized decent, democratic and fair. But if we play to the rule too strictly, if we take them too literally, we are crushed by those around us who are not so foolish. Machiavelli writes, "Any man who tries to be good all the time is bound to come to ruin among the great number who are not good" power as a social game is a kind the art of direction. All of the laws have some application in the use of power to manage organization. Greenè (2002) discusses the followings as examples of laws of power:

- ◆ Never put too much trust in friends learn to use enemies.
- ◆ Always say less than necessary.
- ◆ Get others to do the work for you but always take credit.
- ◆ Learn to keep people depend on you.
- ◆ Concentrate your forces.
- ◆ Re-create yourself.
- ◆ Keep your hands clean.
- ◆ Make your accomplishment seem effortless.
- ◆ Master the art of timing.

- ◆ Create compelling spectacles.
- ◆ Work on the heart and mind of others.
- ◆ Preach the need for change but never reform too much at once.
- ◆ Do not go pass the mark you aim for, in victory, learn when to stop.
- ◆ Assume formlessness.

These laws in varying situations could be considered as laws for successful management in skillful hands.

Politics in organization is a process whereby power is acquired, transferred and exercised upon others to influence their behaviour. Authority could, be regarded as institutionalized power.

The concept of power is different from authority. Power is one's ability to influence others' behaviour. Through the use of power, people influence decision-making. It is to enable a person to assess or to deprive him of something that the individual considers valuable. The individual who influences others behaviour may be at very low level in the organizational hierarchy. Thus, power is not institutional and hence, legitimate, rather it is acquired by people in various ways and then exercised upon others. Power may reside in unsuspected places.

Power therefore, is the potential ability of one person to induce forces on another person towards movement or change in a given direction, within a given behaviour region, at a given time (Wolte, 1959).

Sharman (1989), notes that politics or politicking is endemic to every organization. When people play politics, they get divided into blocs, or camps, cliques or groups. People who play politics are engaged in a contest for power where the ethics and goals of the organization are of little concern to them. They play an opportunistic role and expediency is their norm, they engage in behaviour which sustains power.

Areas for Use of Power Games or Exercise of Power-Internal Forces Affecting the Use of Power

Ogundele (2012)) states that areas where problems are continually recurring and people play active politics and the use of power include the following:

- (1) pressure of economy (2) cooperation of officially powerless experts with their administrative superior line and staff, relationship (3) conflict between labour and management for interpreting agreements (4) uncertainty about standard and strategies for promotion (5) difficulty in linking reward with productivity, (6) practicality of policies. Various types of alliances tend to develop among individuals. These alliances or cliques, may be vertical (superior and subordinates in a department) horizontal (members more or less of same ranks and more or less the same area) or random or mixed (based on social attractiveness than hierarchy across department) are means of acquiring and expanding influence (Sharman, 1989 and Sekaran, 1989).

The exercise of power occurs when an individual induces forces on another to mould his/her behaviour according to his choice. That is, power is an ongoing process. It implies that there is no evidence of power unless it is exercised, evidence in the sense that it is not formalized. Often *people* voluntarily behave in accordance with the well known choice of a powerful person for the fact of his being powerful. This power may not actually have to be used. Hence power operates consciously and unconsciously, directly and indirectly.

External Forces Affecting Use of Power

Power play in organization is influenced by external environment and organization responds and adjusts to it. Power is thus affected not only by internal organizational elements, but is also affected by external forces as organizations are open systems. External interest units include banks, insurance companies, governmental agencies etc, they all have some power to influence decision making. There are four ways, each representing a stage of entry, in which external forces influence decision-making in organizations.

- (1) Competition between two organizations and the third party cast its vote in favour of a particular organization.
- (2) Bargaining, when two parties are negotiating for sharing of resources invading the decision process directly.
- (3) Co-optation, when outside elements are absorbed in the policy determining structure itself.
- (4) Coalition, when from beginning no proposal can be implemented without the assistance of the other party.

Allocation of Power

Sharman (1989) notes that if a particular work is more important for organizational survival and growth than some other works, this fact itself brings power to those job-holders regardless of the individual actors and their leadership qualities. Division of work *creates* dependence which, in turn, brings power. People performing more important tasks and possessing other attributes which bring power, such as expertise emerge as powerful. Based on the degree of power possessed, it is possible to classify people into power hierarchy. Thus, there is a hierarchy of power centres as a result of varying degrees of success by those who aspire to power.

Organization allocates power in two ways: -

- (1) By creating hierarchical levels i.e. structural power.
- (2) By dividing work resulting in specialization i.e. functional power.

Base of Power

Blunt (1983), Schein (1983), Sharman 1989 and Sekaran (1989) note that for a person exercising influence, power base could be:

- (1) *Legitimate*: That the targets of influence understand that power, the power-holder enjoys is legitimate and they should comply with his command in order to meet their own goals. Mintzberg (1990) refers to this as legal prerogatives or exclusive rights or privileges.
- (2) *Reward*: That the targets of influence knows that the power-holder has the power to grant promotion, monetary inducements or other rewards if his orders are complied with. This is what Mintzberg (1990) calls a resource base of authority.
- (3) *Coercive*: The targets of influence know that if the power-holder's orders are not complied with, he has the power to hire, fire, and discharge them.
- (4) *Expert*: That the targets of influence know that the power-holder possesses specialized knowledge in the field e.g. a technical skill.
- (5) *Referent*: That the targets of influence feel attracted towards the power-holder because of his amiable manners, pleasing personality, and his connections with the high-ups in the organization. This is similar in a way to what Mintzberg (1990) calls access to those who can rely on the other four sources thus it is based on relationships.
- (6) *Mentorship*: This is looked at as a basis for power, in which one decides what he / she wants out of a mentorship relationship. Beaulieu (2002) notes that when working with mentors (1) trust is reposed in the mentor to keep discussion not for general consumption as confidential (2) the mentor is looked upon as someone in the company whose guidance is especially valued (3) the beneficiary may pay for the service in some form (4) there is the consideration of being mentor to others. In being mentor to others one has to look for the candidates and interview them and establish grand rules to guide the relationship.

The first three of power bases indicate positional power which one derives from ones position. The remaining three indicate power which is based on the individual's own characteristics. In choosing a particular power instrument, one must keep the following in mind: (1) check the depth of power base (2) seek legitimacy in the exercise of power and (3) avoid the use of power that has its base in coercion.

Types of Power

There are three major forms of power:

- (1) *Force*: Force is said to be at work when the power figure influences the behaviour of others by physical manipulation like assault, confinement etc.
- (2) *Domination*: When a power figure makes it explicit to others what he wants them to do through command, request, etc he is said to be attempting domination.

- (3) **Manipulation:** When a power figure does not make it explicit to others what behaviour he wants them to perform, but still want to influence. He is said to be engaged in manipulation. He may do so through propaganda against the party or by sabotaging its activities and undermining confidence.

Generally the exercise of power is attempted through domination. That does not mean that the power figure shuns force and manipulations. Etzioni (1972) lists three kinds of power to obtain compliance with orders (1) *coercive power* is based on the threat to use physical sanction like use of a gun, a whip or a lock; (2) *utilitarian power* comes from the use of material means (i.e. money) which can help acquire goods and services and (3) *the use of normative symbols*, of prestige and esteem or of social symbols of love and affection or both i.e. give normative, social or normative and social powers. The use of coercive power is more alienating than the use of utilitarian power to those subject to it. The use of utilitarian power is more alienating than the use of normative power. Generally powerful people in organizations use more than one kind of power.

Power Players in Organization

Mintzberg (1990) outlines eleven groups of possible influences in organization power game. Five of them are external and six are internal to the organization.

(a) External Influencers

- (i) *The Owners:* Who hold legal title to the organization?
- (ii) *The Associates:* These include suppliers, clients, as well as trading partners.
- (iii) *Employee Association:* That is, unions and professional associations. Acting collectively through representatives the employees choose to exert their influence on the organization from outside of its regular decision-making and action-taking channels, much as do owners and supplier-so they are considered as external influences.
- (iv) *Various Public:* These include (1) the general group-families, opinion leaders etc. (2) special interest group-local community institutions, conservation movement or consumers group (3) Government in all its forms-local, state and federal
- (v) *Directors of the Organization:* This is made up of representatives of the other four groups listed above.

(b) Internal Coalitions of Organizations

These are made up of six groups of actors.

- (i) *Top or General Management:* These are executive members of the organization who are peak coordinators.
- (ii) *The Operators:* Those workers who actually produce goods and services or who provide direct support for them e.g. machine operators.

- (iii) *The Manager*: S/he who stands in the hierarchical line of authority from the CED down to the first-line supervisors to whom operators report formally.
- (iv) *The Analysts or Technostructure*: Those staff specialists concerned with the design and operation of the system for planning and for formal control e.g. cost accountant, work study analysis etc.
- (v) *Support Staff*: Those who provide indirect support to the operation and the rest of the organization e.g. Mailroom staff, the researcher and canteen staff.
- (vi) *The ideology of the organization*: The set of beliefs shared by its internal influences that distinguishes it from other organizations. Mintzberg (1990) refers to it as the technically inanimate, but in fact shows every indication of having a life of its own. These eleven groups constitute the players in the power game of an organization. They have their hearings on organizational behaviour.

Extent of Power

Sharman (1989) notes that there are degrees of power corresponding to various degrees of impact which individuals or groups make through their channels of influence. Generally a person who influences behaviour in a large number of areas is more powerful than a person who repeats in a particular area. There are, however, some limitations on the use of individual's power. These are:

- (1) The formal managerial structure places limits on the use of power.
- (2) Favouring one person often deprives another, and an individual in power soon faces the dilemma of whom to help. The "art" of politics lies in aiding as many people as possible in ways they feel important without seriously antagonizing anyone. This calls for the application of some of the laws of power listed earlier on.
- (3) Several persons are active in any political game, and in many situations, they tend to check one another (though not necessarily in a way that benefits the enterprise).
- (4) Departmentalization also set bounds to what people can do.

Power Structure

It is to be noted that power is personnel and political and it is person-specific. The kind of people and number of people etc. that converge around the power-holder depends upon his place in the power hierarchy. Thus, a power structure develops, and though one can visualize a number of such structures, ultimately there is one overall power structure dominating all others. Power structure may be unique to the present individuals who currently compose it and may change with the turnover of personnel. As a powerful person changes, adjustments take place and new power structure around new power-holder develops. This gives rise to one of the characteristic problems, namely, the change in power structure accompanying turnover of managerial personnel. It is suggested that shift from

preoccupation with negative power to power as an organized, creative and energizing force deserves urgent attention.

Status

Meaning and Characteristics

Status relations are distinguished from power and authority relation by the fact that they are a product of judgment about where people stand in comparison with each other on some scale of judgment (Sharman, 1989).

Status is a case of perception that people look at a position in relation to other positions in the same organization, and even how society in general looks at it. There are cases of officials drawing between fat salaries in private sector organizations and joining public sector organization at lower salary for the sake of status. This is because status, in a way, has some direct linkage with authority in the hierarchy of organizational structure. Every culture engages in some type of prestige-grading. A similar prestige grading takes place in organizations as well. The grading in society gets reflected in organizations also. We use the term "status" to describe the comparative esteem which members of various social systems accord to the positions in them. Status, thus, is not an absolute property of the people. It is the interpretation others place on certain properties an individual has. They grade positions in terms of their understanding of social system and acceptance of its norms. Status does not necessarily involve individual behaviour. It is accorded on the basis of potentialities of a position in the organization, not what is actually observable of that work by members. Characteristics of status include system, and symbols of status, which are as follows:

(a) Types of Status

There are two types of status, formal and informal.

- (i) *Formal Status* refers to rank of people as designated by the authority structure of organization.
- (ii) *Informal Status* refers to the social rank which others accord to a person because of their feelings towards him. Incongruence between the two makes his position ambiguous and cause anxiety among people in his group. If informal status is higher than formal status, the individual is likely to turn into an informal leader of the group, sympathizing with them and representing them with the management. If formal status is higher, than informal status, this is likely to undermine his confidence in self and the status accorded to him by the organization is likely to be wasteful.

(b) System of Status

These are functional and scale:-

- (1) *Functional Status* is gained in terms of the importance of the function, in

terms of competence of the position holder by virtue of which he enjoys some more privileges necessary for the discharge of that function for which people hold him in high esteem than his peers.

- (2) *Scale Status* is according to a position by the organization in terms of its designation, privileges, and prerogatives do's and don'ts and anyone who occupies that position enjoys that status. It is determined by the relationship of superiority or subordination in a chain of command or formal authority and by jurisdiction.

(c) Sources of Status

There are two sources of status-birth and ones attainments in life.

- (1) *Birth-one* becomes a king or commoner because of one's parentage and accordingly society accords him a particular status. One has the advantages or disadvantages of being born in particular family, community, state etc, this is called ascribed status.
- (2) *Achieved-status* or status by attainment when one receives a particular status on the basis of achievements to his credit regardless of his origins. It is called achieved status. It is based on merit.

Symbols of Status

Several indicators are used to judge individual's status in an organization. Salary, perquisite, privileges, prerogative, -etc. speak of one's status. One's designation, cars provided by organization, with or without petrol or driver, telephone facility in the office, and home determined ones status. Other determinants or symbols of status are sizes of room, table and carpet, exclusive parking space, right of entry or turn when waiting for the lift etc. organization may prescribe both prerogatives and limitations. The court may ask its judge not to mix with the people so as to avoid their views being influenced by considerations other than legal. The mark of status can be grouped into five broad categories (Ogundele, 2005).

Marks of Status

- (1) *Rites of initiation, passage and intensification*: On joining an organization, an important person is offered a welcome party and makes a round from room to room telling of his arrival. Also, when one leaves the organization, he is bid farewell and farewell speeches given. On important occasions e.g. New Year, people greet each other and go to their superior.
- (2) *Insignia and other public indices of status*: Four or five stars hotel, the pips of an army officer, possession by student of a particular college badge and by sportsman of badge for representing a university or state or nation, etc. indicate the status of the person in us organization concerned.

- (3) *Title and Designations:* Secretary, additional secretary, joint secretary, deputy secretary, and assistant or under secretary speaks of one's status.
- (4) *Emoluments and Perquisites:* These are popular indicators. Every organization has a salary structure and generally organization sees to it that superior receives more than his subordinates. Across organizations people often draw comparisons in terms of emoluments and perquisites to judge ones status.
- (5) *Limitations and Restrictions:* Organizations may earmark certain gates for entry or exit only for certain class of people. It may earmark toilets for the same purpose e.g. 'For officers only'. Organization establishes and maintains a status system in the five ways referred to above. It is also possible to classify people in terms of status on the basis of each of the following factors:

Internal Factors

Organizational rank,
 Job itself,
 Differences in abilities or skills or organization,
 Knowledge,
 Material worked on,
 Working condition,
 Pay,
 Security, etc.

External Factors

Occupational prestige,
 Organizational image,
 Prestige of industry engaged in Education,
 Age,
 Sex,
 Race, etc.

Functions of Status System

What role does status system play in an organization? It has been pointed out that it is confirming administrative relationship. That relationships which organizations has prescribed have to be operationalized and embodied in certain symbols which speak for the status of different persons and which will enable a casual observer to distinguish between two persons. The functions that status system performs are:

- (1) *Facility of Communication:* Communication received from a person who is authorized in regard to that matter is regarded as authentic (no reason for information to be untrue) authoritative (from an authorized source) and intelligible (communication is quite clear no; vagueness exists). This produces cooperative response from all concerned.
- (2) *Motivating Factor:* The offer of many symbols of status is the least expensive form of incentive. It is this which helps two unequal to work together for long. No problem arises as long as there is some distinction in the people's eyes in terms of designation or salary differences of even small magnitude.
- (3) *Creation of Feeling of Responsibility:* Status system inculcates a sense of responsibility. The individual feels he is different from others. He also

needs not to behave the same way as others do. He regards himself as a responsible person. Through the status system is reflected the true picture of an individual and where he fits in.

Status System and Stratification

All societies are stratified in some ways or the other. This despite the objectives of equality of rights, sexes etc., people are not equally rich, or poor, not equally hard working, intelligent, not inheritors of equal wealth etc. people having some broad similarities are grouped together and called a class (Blunt, 1983 and Sharman, 1989).

The society is stratified, so also are organizations where a similar hierarchical system exists. The stratification in society makes it difficult for members of one class to move into the next higher class. The same is true of organizations. Among the several stratifying influences operating in organizations are the followings:

- (1) *Ascribed Status*: This is when people are in positions not by merit, but because of their birth in a particular family. For example most sons and daughters of industrialists come to hold directorship position not as a result of their achievement in the competitive market, but for the fact of their birth in a particular family.
- (2) *Education*: Education is an important mobility factor for the under privileged in any society. It is also a serious stratifying factor in any organization. No job can be secured in modern organization without relevant education.
- (3) *Types of Work*: People in any organization are divided on the basis of work they do. Some do manufacturing work, others marketing and still others accounts work.
- (4) *Promotion from Within*: Trade unions always emphasize the seniority principle for purposes of promotion. Promotion, from within, leads to inbreeding of people in substantial agreement with the position-holder. It is also easier and economical to appoint someone close at hand.
- (5) *Others*: There are many other factors like age, seniority, sex etc. which cause stratification in organization. Age divide people and create a distance. So it is with senior people, society being hierarchical, senior do not mix so much with the junior. Because of stratification, various kinds of problems arise from status system in organizations.

Problems of Status System

A few of the important problems are listed below:

- (1) *Status as an End in Itself*: The privileges and perquisites that a position-holder enjoys many times become an end in itself. These facilities are granted to the position-holder for the smooth discharge of his duties.

- (2) *Creation of Social Distance:* As status levels of some people are different, some individuals place too much emphasis on this inequality of status. As such the communication flow between two person enjoying different status levels is not free.
- (3) *Emphasis on Position rather than Man and His Acts:* Status system violates the basic "givens" of one's personality. Thus making people of low status to maintain an upward focus towards a person enjoying a higher status irrespective of what kind of person he is or what his actions are.
- (4) *Problem of Equity:* The position-holder who places too much emphasis on the perseverance and maintenance of his status and makes little use of it for the conduct of his office raises thorny issues for others. He enjoys privileges which he does not make use of for the office purpose, he does not deserve them. An offer of perquisites to him is often regarded as inequitable by others.
- (5) *Heavy Financial Burden:* Whenever the status system introduced in an organization, its maintenance involves a serious financial burden. It is more seriously painful when it is not serving an organizational purpose.
- (6) *Difficulty in Circulation of Elite:* Many people enjoy ascribed status. Once they enter the organization, the question of their leaving it does not arise. They did not occupy positions on the basis of their achievements; there is little mobility in their case. The introduction of fresh blood is infeasible. There are, therefore, barriers for the most able people in organization to move up. It is to be noted that status needs are reflected in the desire for distinction both within and without the enterprise. They could positively be used as motivational instrument. The linkages between the four constructs of authority, politics, power and status have been provided in this chapter. Their relationships have also been adequately explained.

Multiple Choice Questions

- (1) _____ is the right to give order to the subordinate in organization.
(a) Power (b) Influence (c) Authority (d) Government
- (2) Authority is embedded with the following features except _____
(a) institutionalization (b) legalization (c) usually written: (d) legitimacy
- (3) One of the following is not the types of authority. (a) tradition, (b) charisma (c) royalty (d) legal.
- (4) A number of factors account for acceptance or rejection of authority. They include the followings apart from _____ (a) social sanctions (b) personality differences (c) feeling of sympathy for purpose (d) egocentric
- (5) _____ defines politics as enacted power and goal directed action that is first of all self-interested.
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(a) Ogundele (b) Forst and Egri (c) Cobb (d) Margulies.

- (6) _____ refers to leadership as the ability to develop and integrate group idea using "power with" rather than "power over" people.
(a) Greene (b) Mintzberg (c) Follett (d) Machiavelli
- (7) Types of power include the following except _____
(a) general power (b) force (c) domination (d) manipulation.
- (8) _____ outlines eleven groups of possible influences in organization power game. (a) Ogundele (b) Follet (c) Mintzberg (d) Mcgregor.
- (9) _____ is used to describe the comparative esteem which members of various social systems accord to the positions in them.
(a) Influence (b) Status (c) Ego (d) Position.
- (10) One of the listed points is of system status. (a) friendly status (b) scale status (c) birth-one (d) achieved-status.

Theory Questions

- (1) Distinguish between surface power politics and deep structure power politics in an organization.
- (2) How will you classify the types of power structure that exists in organizations?
- (3) What are the usefulness and relevance of status in organizations?
- (4) What is the usefulness of power in the management of an enterprise?
- (5) Provide the linkages among authority, politics, power and status.

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