

# **Power and Politics in Organizations**

**Discipline Courses-I**

**Semester-I**

**Paper : Organization Behaviour**

**Unit-IV**

**Lesson: Power and Politics in Organizations**

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## **Table of Contents:**

### **Lesson: Power and Politics in Organizations**

- 1: Learning Objectives
  - 2: Introduction
  - 3: Concept of power
    - 3.1: Distinction between power, authority and influence
    - 3.2: Leadership & Power
  - 4: Sources of power
    - 4.1: Formal power
    - 4.2: Personal power
  5. Politics in organization
    - 5.1: Factors contributing to political behavior
    - 5.2: Power Tactics
    - 5.3: Dysfunctions of politics
    - 5.4: Managing political behavior
  - 6: Ethics in Power and Politics
- Summary  
Exercises  
Glossary  
References

## **1. Learning Objectives:**

After studying this lesson, you should be able to:

- describe the concept of power,
- distinguish power from authority, influence and leadership,
- identify the different sources of power,
- comprehend the concept of organizational politics,
- understand the factors that contribute to political behavior in organizations,
- identify the power tactics in organizational situations,
- differentiate between legitimate & illegitimate political behavior,
- understand the consequences of political behavior,
- describe the techniques for managing political behavior in organizations,
- understand the ethics involved in power and politics.

## 2. Introduction:

"Power is not revealed by striking hard or often, but by striking true."—Balzac, Honore De

Power and politics are recognized as a very important and dynamic aspect of any organization. Power and politics are natural and interdependent processes in any group or organizations. It is very much required to understand the concept of power, and how power can be acquired & exercised in the organization. Understanding the concept of power and politics in the organization helps in building the framework of organization behavior.

Everyone in the organization aspires to acquire some power in the organization so as to gain ability to exert influence on others. Power enables a person to alter the behavior and attitudes of other people in the organization. This lesson describes the meaning of power and politics, and the different basis of power. It explains how a person, say a manager or a leader, can acquire and exercise the powers in order to influence the behaviour of the subordinates for the accomplishment of the organizational goals.

## 3. Concept of Power

"Nearly all men can stand adversity. If you want to test a man's character, give him power."  
-Abraham Lincoln

"Power is the potential ability to influence behavior, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance and to get people to do things that they would not otherwise do."  
-Pfeffner

"Power is the ability to influence people or things, usually obtained through the control of important resources."  
-White and Blender

"The probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will, despite resistance."  
-Max Weber

The term 'Power' has been derived from a French word 'Pouvoir', which means power or to be able. Power basically refers to the capacity that one individual 'X' has to influence the behavior of other individual 'Y', so that 'Y' acts in the same manner as 'X' wishes. So in other words, power may be defined as the ability to get someone to do something that you want to be done and make things happen in the way you want.

The essence of power lies in the fact that one can regulate the behavior of other person according to his/her wish. Power is needed to get the work done in the organizations. Power exists naturally in any group or organization and is an indispensable base for management and leadership. It makes others dependent for execution of work. The figure below depicts how one individual is perceived to be stronger, greater and bigger than the others with the acquisition of power.

Figure 1: Power in Organizations



### 3.1 Power, Authority And Influence

“Authority is the right to give orders, and power to exact obedience.” -Henri Fayol

In day-to-day usage, the term power is often used synonymously with authority. But, they differ in literal sense. While, authority means the right of a manager to decide and command, the means to exercise authority is power. For example, in order to accomplish the organizational goals, a manager has a right to assign certain tasks to his subordinates and expect satisfactory performance from them. But, at the same time, it is also possible that the manager does not have any sort of means available to enforce his/her right. In this case, while he/she has authority (the right), he/she lacks power (the means). It is also possible that a manager has power to do something but he/she may lack authority. Authority is different from power because of its legitimacy and acceptance. Authority always flows downwards. A manager's level of authority corresponds to the position he/she holds in the hierarchy of the organization. A person gets authority from the higher authorities. Lower or middle level managers get the authority from top-level managers. The top-level managers get their authority from the owners, who may be shareholders of the company.

‘Authority is a legitimate power which is vested in leaders within formal organizations’  
-Bolman and Deal 1991

Power is the potential or capacity of a person or group of persons to influence the actions of the other people or groups.

Influence basically depicts an ability that helps to affect results and it completely depends on the personal characteristics and the level of expertise of the individual. Influence is usually conceived of having a broader scope than power. It denotes the ability to change other people in general ways, such as by altering their satisfaction and performance. While authority might or might not leave an impact, influence positively leaves an impact on others.

Some of the Bollywood celebrities are most influential people. For example, Amitabh Bachchan, who is the brand ambassador of various products, has the power to influence the purchase decision of the consumers. Similarly, on the social issues, Amir Khan did an excellent job in creating awareness among the general public through the television program ‘Satyamev Jayate’, and he has been successfully able to influence the thought process of many of the people with respect to the social concerns of the society.

### Value Addition 1: Example

#### Influence of Power

Mr. Sunil works as an administrative officer in XYZ company. He is assigned with the additional responsibility of keeping track of all the vehicles of the company apart from the other things, which includes the guesthouse of the company. He has been working in the company for 8 years in the same grade without any promotions. He is religiously involved in all his assigned tasks and honestly fulfills his duties & responsibilities. Once the general manager of the company, Mr. Vasu, requested for the company car for his personal work during the office hours. Mr. Sunil refused it, saying that the office car cannot be given for personal work during office hours, as the scheduled office work would suffer. Because of his refusal, Mr. Vasu became quite upset and asked his boss, Mr. Sharma, Sr. Manager-Administration, to let him use the office car. Mr. Sharma wanted a personal favour from Mr. Vasu, and therefore allowed him the access to the office car. On receiving the permission to take the car, Mr. Vasu threatened Mr. Sunil to transfer him to stores for his disobedience and warned him not to show disrespect again in future to his senior officers. Sunil was an active member of staff union. He immediately approached the union president regarding the issue and informed it about the misuse of the company vehicle for a higher official's personal use at the cost of the office work. It was decided that Sunil would send a note in writing to Mr. Sharma asking him to sign the note authorizing Mr. Vasu to use the car, thus absolving Sunil's responsibility. Mr. Sharma anticipated the repercussions and refused to sign the approval note. He rather let his own car for Mr. Vasu's use.

Would you describe the following as authority, power or influence:

1. Sunil's right to allow or deny the access to office car?
2. Mr. Vasu's demand for office car?
3. Mr. Sharma's order to release office car?
4. Mr. Vasu's appeal to the staff union?
5. The staff union's decision regarding authority letter by Mr. Sharma?

### 3.2 Leadership and Power

The concepts of leadership and power are closely related to each other. Leaders use power as a means to attain the goals of the group. In the process of achieving the goals of the groups, power serves as a means of facilitating their achievement. The difference between the two terms lies in their implications. Power can be obtained without having leadership, but on the other side, one cannot lead the group of people without having power.

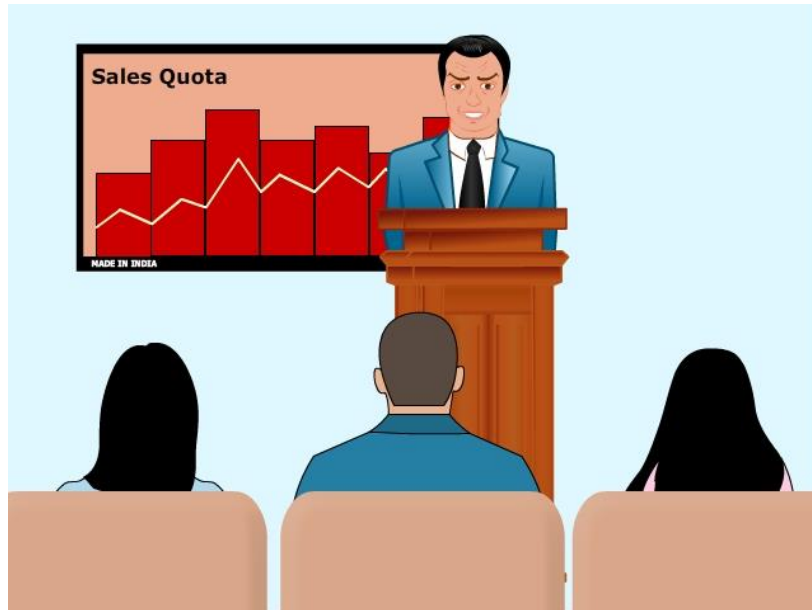
- Authority can be described as when other individuals are bound to listen to you.
- Leadership can be described as when other individuals wish to listen to you.

There are two major bases on which we can differentiate these two broad terms:

1. Goal congruency: Power does not require goal congruency, it basically requires dependence. On the other hand, leadership requires some sort of similarity between the goals of a leader and group that is being led.
2. Direction of influence: Leadership focuses on the downward influence on one's followers. It diminishes the pattern of sidewise as well as upward influence. But power does not.

Figure 2: Power by way of Leadership

## Power and Politics in Organizations



It is quite evident from the definition that the dependency factor is the key to have power. The general logic of power states that, 'The greater B's dependency on A, the greater the power A has over B.' Simply, if a person possesses something that is scarce and others do not have it, rather they depend on him/her for it, the person becomes powerful. If there is something in plenty, then possession of that will not require any sort of power. This something may be a skill, know-how, expertise, access to information or resources or a unique trait that makes the person sought after. This is the only reason why organizations go for multiple suppliers for them instead of focusing on a single one.

### Factors that create dependency

Following factors create dependency of people on someone:

1. **Importance:** To generate dependency, it is very much required that the things one controls must be perceived important by other people around you. This is the first aspect that generates dependency. For instance, in Proctor & Gamble, marketing is the reason of its success, and this makes the group of marketers the most powerful occupational group. Also companies like HCL, MICROSOFT, INFOSYS, which are technologically oriented in nature, are highly dependent on their engineers to maintain their level of existence and to remain competitive.
2. **Scarcity:** A resource needs to be perceived as scarce to create dependency. Possession of such things that are not in abundance helps in developing power. For instance, in organization, for some level of management, if the supply of personnel in relation to the actual demand is low, then the individuals can easily negotiate the compensation and benefit packages as compared to the other positions in the organization having abundance of candidature to choose from.
3. **Non substitutability/Non replaceable :** Creating dependency deals with the non-substitutability factor. Resources which are rare in nature have much more importance than those which are available in abundance. Further, if a resource does not have a viable substitute available, it gives more power to the concerned who has a direct control over it.

## 4. Sources of Power

### Value Addition 2: Video

#### Sources of Power

Click on the link below to watch a small snippet on the sources of power. Make a list of the three sources of power described in the video and observe them critically in the context of an organizational or institutional functioning. Discuss their validity with your peers.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYwgzWgkb6A>

Power can be categorized into two types: Formal & Informal

**Formal Power:** Organizations have formal hierarchy that depicts certain level of relationships of employees with each other at different levels in the hierarchy. Formal power depends on the position one individual holds in that organizational chart. The organizational chart basically shows the line of authority and responsibilities. Formal power is derived from either one's ability to coerce or reward others. Formal power may be categorized into three types, which are as follows:

1. **Coercive power:** The source of this power is fear. It is derived from the ability to influence others through threats or punishments. This form of power has majorly contributed towards the negative connotation of power. In an organizational framework, managers use coercive power in a way to directly or indirectly threaten the people who work for them, in case they are not working in accordance with the norms. Mindtools.com states that coercive power can cause unhealthy behaviour and dissatisfaction in the workplace. It is basically related with punishing subordinates for not meeting performance expectations by withholding pay increase, or demoting, or firing the subordinates
2. **Reward Power:** This type of power is opposite to coercive power. It is the extent to which a manager can use organizational resources to reward the employees who are contributing efficiently for the accomplishment of the organizational goals. The greater the perceived value of such rewards, greater will be the power of the manager. These rewards can be extrinsic in nature with tangible values, or can be intrinsic in nature like praise and recognition. Rewards might come in the form of job assignments, schedules, pay increases or benefits, recognition, praise, promotions, etc. Both coercive power and reward power are actually counterparts of each other.
3. **Legitimate power:** The third base of position power is legitimate power or formal authority. This sort of power stems from manager's position in the organization and the authority that lies in that respective position. It basically depicts the formal authority to control and use organizational resources. This kind of power corresponds to the term 'authority'. Subordinates acknowledge the legitimate power that comes from being in a leadership position in an organization. It is related to person's title and job responsibilities. It is lost when a person loses the job title.

Figure 3: Bases of Power

## Power and Politics in Organizations



**Personal Power:** This type of power resides in the individual and it is completely unassociated with the individual's position. In this perspective, power comes from the individual's unique characteristics and charisma. Personal power can be further divided into two subparts:

1. **Expert power:** When other people believe that an individual has some sort of relevant expertise or specialized knowledge, which others do not possess, the individual acquires power. This makes a subordinate follow his/her superior because of the expertise of the superior. Now a days, when jobs are becoming more specialized, one has to depend upon the experts to accomplish the ultimate goals of the organization. The influence therefore is completely based on special skills or knowledge.
2. **Referent power:** Referent power comes from being trusted and respected by others. This is the ability to control another's behaviour because others wish to be identified with the person. This sort of power basically develops out of admiration of others. It cannot be acquired but gets developed because of the personal charisma. In the organizational context, a subordinate might obey his/her superior he/she likes the superior and wants to emulate him/her.

### 5. Politics in Organization

Modern organizations are the fertile land for the politics to thrive, this term is very often heard from those who are working in organizations, be it large or small, public or private. When people in the organizations transform their power into action, then they are said to be engaged in politics. At times, it becomes one of the most disturbing elements for employees, and they might even decide to quit the organization if the political waters get above their heads. An employee who has a great deal of knowledge, skill & expertise, but does not have the ability to counter the political environment, will get easily disappointed and this will in turn affect his/her level of output.

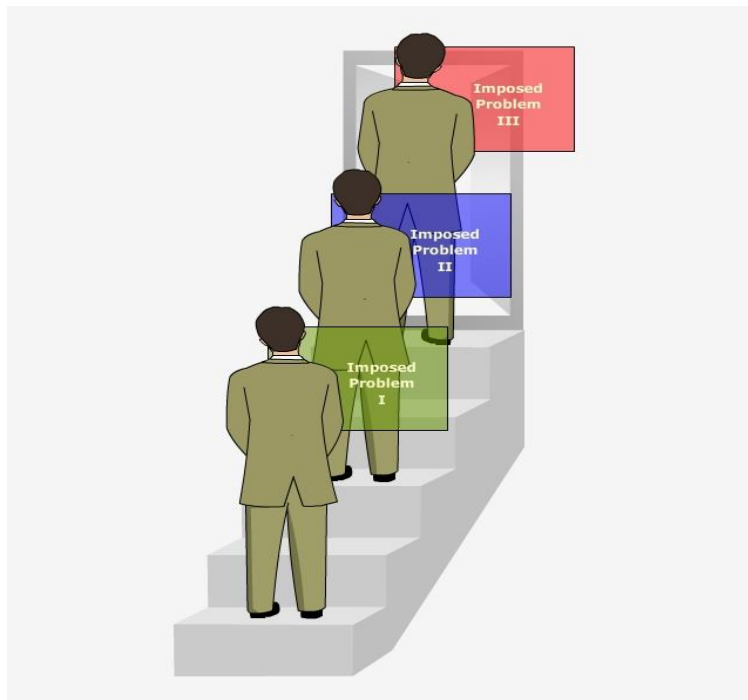
Organization politics can be defined as the accomplishment of the individual motives and upholding of individual interest over the organizational interest, without regard to the impact on the organization. Although politics is generally regarded as negative and undesirable, but politics may be both sometimes good for the organization. Politics is inevitable in any organization.

The power play and the use of politics in the organization is demonstrated in the figure below, where people unduly create problems in the growth of an employee. As he/she rise up the success ladder in the career path, imposed problems comes in his or her way. Such problems are not genuine ones but are deliberately created to pull one down and hinder one's growth.



# Power and Politics in Organizations

Figure 4: Organizational Politics



Having gone through the concept, let us now consider a few definitions on politics in organizations.

“Politics refers to the structure and process of the use of authority and power, to affect definition of goals, direction and other major parameters of the organization. Decisions are not made in a rational way, but rather through compromise, accommodation and bargaining.”  
-Tushman

“Politics is defined as those activities that are not required as a part of one’s formal role in the organization, but that influence, or attempt to influence the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within the organization.”  
- Farrell and Peterson

From the above definitions, following points emerge:

1. Political behaviour rests outside the range of the requirements of the job.
2. It includes all possible attempts to control goals, criteria, or processes required for the process of decision making.
3. It includes variety of political behaviour such as confining crucial information from decision makers, whistle blowing, spreading rumours, leaking confidential information, etc.
4. It involves the use of some kind of authority, power or pressure over other person or groups.
5. Political behaviour is self-serving in nature.

## Dimensions of Politics in Organizations

There are primarily two distinct dimensions of politics. These are:

1. Legitimate Political Behaviour: It refers to the normal everyday politics, for example, complaining to your supervisor, bypassing the chain of command, forming coalition, obstructing organizational policies or decision through inaction or excessive adherence to rules and developing contacts outside the organization through one’s professional activities.

## Power and Politics in Organizations

2. **Illegitimate Political Behaviour:** It can be defined as the behaviour that violates the stated rules of game. This kind of behaviour shows the extreme political behaviour that violates the stated rules and regulations of the organization that are pre-decided by the people at the strategic positions. Activities like sabotage, whistle blowing, symbolic protests, etc. are the examples of illegitimate political behaviour.

The majority of all organizational political behaviors are legitimate in nature. Illegitimate behavior poses a real level of risk of loss to the organizational setting.

### **Value Addition 3: Surf and Learn**

#### **Politics is in the Eyes of the Beholder**

Click on the link below to view a presentation. On slide 12, read about the political labels generally given in work situations and their corresponding labels for effective management. The slide demonstrates that a manager may convert a political situation into an effective management situation by adopting a corrective measure. For example, in case of a political label 'Blaming others'; the manager may fix responsibility for effective management. The manager is described as the beholder who may choose to see a label as political or convert it into sound management.

Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/DelwinArikatt/session-9-power-and-politics>

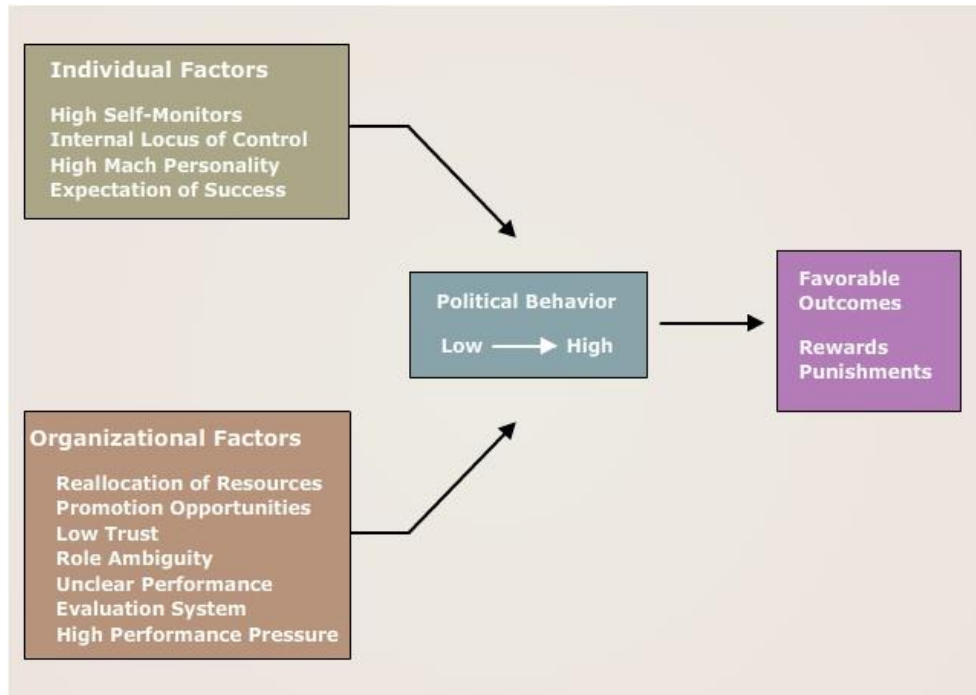
### **5.1 Factors Contributing To Political Behaviour**

Certain factors contribute to political behavior in the organizations. Some of them can be described as follows:

1. **Lust for power** - People want to acquire and enhance power so that they can influence other people around them.
2. **Discretionary power** - Certain positions in the organization have discretionary powers that can be used in case of emergency. Such power rests in the hands of the position holder. That is why people indulge themselves in politics to grab such kinds of position.
3. **Scarce resources** - Some resources in the organizations are scarce. Any person who has the control over the allocation of such limited resources enjoys more power.
4. **Organizational changes** - Changes in organization keep taking place. Whenever there is a rearrangement of organizational policies, people in powerful position try to take advantage and avail the opportunity to play political games to suit their interest.
5. **Moving up in organization hierarchy** - To rise in one's career, one has to acquire the level of competence and learning from experience. But people generally prefer to have a short cut and make rapid progress in moving to higher positions in the organization. At times, they lack specific skills or abilities and try to rise through political influence. This gives rise to political behaviour in the organization.
6. **Organization culture** - If the organization culture is characterised by low trust, role ambiguity, poor or biased performance evaluation system; high pressure for performance will create a fertile ground for politicking.
7. **Safeguarding oneself during downsizing** - When organization downsizes to improve its efficiency, people may engage in some sort of political actions to safeguard their existing status quo.

Figure 5: Factors Influencing Political Behaviour

## Power and Politics in Organizations



The above figure depicts that there are two factors that influence the political behavior in the organization, individual factors and the organizational factors. Individual factors include certain traits of the individual that are likely to be related to the political behaviours. Employees, who possess high self-monitors, regularly keep check on their performance, and are more sensitive to the social cues. Those who have internal locus of control believe they can control the environment and can easily manipulate things and have a very high need of power. The Machiavellian personality is characterized by the desire to manipulate others and acquire power in the organization. These kinds of employees are more prone to engage in some sort of political behaviors in the organization. Also individual's high expectation of success fosters political behavior.

Organizational Factors also give rise to the political behavior in the organization. If the organization is characterized by low level of trust, unclear performance evaluation system, scarcity of resources, etc. political behavior in the organization rises from low to high levels. The outcome of the political behavior may be positive or negative depending upon the level of politics in the organization, low or high respectively, and might induce the use of rewards or punishments consequently.

### 5.4 Tactics Of Organization Politics (Power Tactics)

Both individuals and groups play politics in the organization for different reasons, like to safeguard their level of interest, to have a greater say in the process of decision-making, or to have a greater autonomy over the allocation of limited resources. The most commonly used power tactics that helps to translate some power bases into a specific action are:

1. Negotiation or bargaining: This tactic involves negotiation for sharing of benefits between the groups. Negotiating helps in avoiding the conflicts. The individual or group with higher bargaining power is able to get more benefits than the sacrifices made.
2. Competition for acquisition of power: Groups working in organizations compete regularly with each other to have a greater share of scarce resources. In order to achieve this, they often try to influence the criteria used for resource distribution.

## Power and Politics in Organizations

3. Cooptation: Under this strategy, the power holder tries to associate the representatives of other groups in decision making so as to avoid the grounds of criticism about the misuse of power.
4. Alliance with other groups: Using this tactic, two or more groups in the organization may form a coalition or temporary alliance on the basis of the minimum common program. It serves as an interesting mix of competition and cooperation. Members of such groups cooperate in order to compete with other non-group members.
5. Rational persuasion: Persuasion can be used as a political strategy to exercise greater influence in the organization. In a persuasive attempt, people present logical arguments and factual evidence to others to demonstrate that their request is reasonable in nature. For example, a person who is likely to be considered for promotion to the post of Vice President (VP) of a company, may try to prove consistently that he/she is a deserving candidate, possesses the right skills, knowledge and expertise for the post, is able to handle matters dealt at the VP level with efficiency, in order to demonstrate rationally by providing evidence his/her suitability for the post.
6. Coercion or pressure: People using coercion or pressure use warnings, repeated demands or threats. Generally, when persuasion fails, coercive or pressure tactics are employed. For example, on the denial of the management to accept the demands of the trade union, the trade union might threaten to strike or slow down.
7. Control over the agenda of the meetings: A politically inclined person(s) may have the control over deciding the agenda of the meeting. Such person(s) can easily manipulate the things to suit their personal interest.
8. Ingratiation: It is one of the most common power tactics. People use flattery, praise or friendly behaviour prior to making any request. It is a tactic to make someone feel important or good before making a request to them. One can increase the chances of success by using such tactic.
9. Personal appeals: This tactic involves asking for compliance based on friendship and loyalty.

### **Value Addition 4: Activity**

#### **Ways of Upward, Downward or Lateral Influence in Power Tactics**

Click on the link below to view a presentation. On slide 23, read about the use of power tactics for influencing people at upward, downward, and horizontal level.

Explore more about these tactics and try to find out which of these are applied more often in organizations to have greatest impact. Discuss your findings with your peers.

Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/robinsmithnsb/power-politics>

### **Value Addition 5: Did You Know?**

#### **Use of Power Tactics in America and China**

People in different countries tend to use different power tactics.

American managers of multinational companies rate Rational persuasion as one the most effective power tactics.

Coalition tactics, upward appeals, & gifts are rated as more effective tactics by the managers of large multinational companies in China.

Click on the link below to open a document that contains details about it.

Source: <http://crossculturalcentre.homestead.com/files/influencetacticschinaus.pdf>

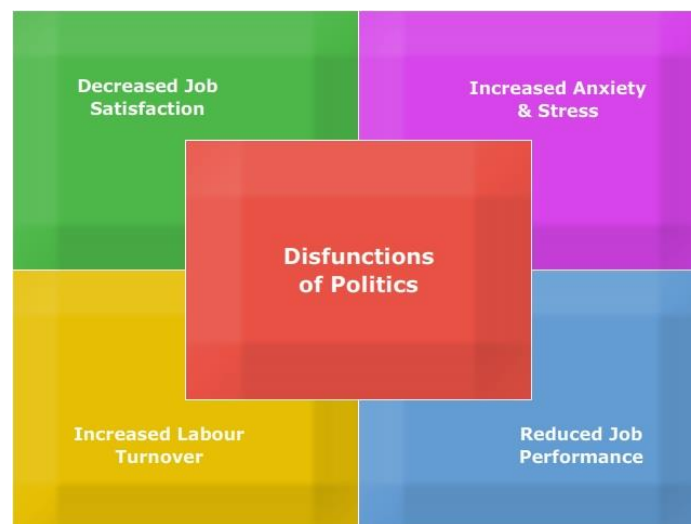
### 5.5 Dysfunctions Of Politics:

Organizations may be viewed as a political system wherein individuals acquire and exercise power over each other to satisfy their self-interests. Politics is a fact of life in the organization. Although politics may not always be bad or negative, the struggle for self-interest may produce some undesirable consequences or dysfunctions in the organization. Political behavior becomes dysfunctional when it hinders the smooth functionality of the organization and hinders the accomplishment of its goals.

When the individual and organizational interests are complementary to each other, the political behavior is beneficial or functional in nature. But if the goals of the individuals are not in sync with the goals of the organization, then the political behavior becomes dysfunctional in nature.

Some of the unintended consequences of political behavior are shown in the figure below.

Figure 6: Dysfunctions of Politics



1. Conflicts: In organizations, people play political games to acquire power and have a say in the organizational functionalities. Such kind of petty and dirty plays create unhealthy atmosphere in the organization. Also, the efforts of the members of the organization get directed towards the power struggle, instead of performing their duties. As a consequence, work suffers and conflicts emerge.
2. Biased performance appraisal: This is one of the most important consequences of dysfunctional political behaviour. Organizational politics affects the pay system based on performance evaluation most detrimentally, benefitting the less efficient employees over the meritorious ones.
3. Delay in feedback: Feedback mechanism plays a very crucial role in determining the success rate of the employees in the organization. Due to dysfunctional political activities in the organization, the correct feedback gets delayed. This affects efficiency of the workers, which in turn directly affects the organizational functioning.
4. Promotion of self interest: Political behaviour is generally guided and motivated by self-interest. The dysfunctional political behaviour widens the gulf between the

## Power and Politics in Organizations

individual and organizational interest. This further promotes politics in organizations and people are often engaged in political behaviour.

5. Adverse impact on employees: Power politics weaken the morale of the employees and demotivates them. Such an environment creates negativity in the organization and hampers the smooth functioning of the organization.

### 5.6 Managing Political Behaviour

It is impossible to eliminate political behavior in the organization in totality. But one can adopt certain measures through which the dysfunctional component of political behavior can be minimized. The following measures may be adopted to manage political behavior effectively and in the interest of the organization:

1. Clarity of roles: It is the responsibility of the management to define the roles and authority of organizational members in a clear and unambiguous manner. Such an attempt of defining roles, responsibilities, authority and accountability clearly helps in minimizing favouritism and nepotism in the organization.
2. Ethical role model: Top managers should work positively and ethically, so that they serve as a role model to other employees in the organization. If people at senior positions engage themselves in playing political games, it is bound to convey a wrong message to the subordinates and creates an un healthy culture in the organization where people perceive that such kind of behaviour is acceptable. They further promote such environment and get trapped in an unending vicious circle.
3. Transparent appraisal system: To ensure stable and positive environment, which is free from all sort of dysfunctional politics, organizations must ensure sound and transparent performance appraisal mechanisms. The scope of bias in performance appraisal mechanism should be minimised. They also need to ensure that performance should be the only basis of rewards like increments, promotions etc.
4. Fair distribution of resources: Organization must adopt a systematic approach for the allocation of resources within the organization. They need to give due concern especially when the resources are scarce in nature. This would restrict the dysfunctional aspect of politics in the organization.
5. Effective communication: Restrictions and barriers in communication develop a land for dysfunctional political behaviour in the organization. To ensure smooth functionality, organization must ensure a two-way communication channel. The efforts should also be made to eliminate any sort of barriers to communication. There should be free flow of information in the organization.
6. Aspiration of employees: Organization must be aware of the perception of their employees on different issues. Management should be responsive to the needs and aspirations of their employees so that they can achieve a direct sync between the individual needs and the organizational needs.

<b>Value Addition 6: Case Study</b>
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<b>Power &amp; Politics in a Company</b>
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## Power and Politics in Organizations

A company, located in UP, has its headquarters in Delhi. It manufactures alloy wheels in its plant at Allahabad and has a turnover of Rs. 100 crores. The company made a loss of Rs. 3 crores in its first final year. Suraj, the Managing Director, was under great pressure to turn it around so that he can survive in the company.

The M.D. Mr. Suraj had a second line managed by Mr. Ravi V.P. (Finance), Mr. Prakash V.P. (Production) and Mr. Dev V.P. (Purchase). Mr. Ravi and Mr. Prakash has a secret desire of becoming M.D. after Mr. Suraj leaves.

The average production of alloy wheels at present is 150 units per day in the company and the break point is 200 units. The machinery was imported from Italy and is 20 years old.

One day the production of alloy wheels was only 125 units. M.D. wanted to know the reason for the same. The production head Mr. Prakash knew that the production was lower than the average because of non-availability of a part required for being assembled by the machine. This stopped the production in the middle of the day. He also informed the M.D. that the reason for shortfall in production consequent to inadequate raw materials was due to the fact that the supplier of the raw material was not paid by the finance department.

M.D. called the finance head for an explanation. Mr. Ravi, the finance head, informed him that the payment was held because there were some pending disputes regarding the past supplies.

Questions:

1. Do you see any politics at play in the justification by the production head?
2. Do you see any politics at play in the justification by the finance head?
3. Suppose if you would be the MD of the company, how would you handle the situation?

### Value Addition 7: Did You Know?

#### Maccoby's Four Political Types

In his book "The Gamesman", Michael Maccoby describes 4 interesting types of organizational politicians. These are as follows:

1. **The Craftsman:** Craftsmen, driven by achievement, are the least political. They are often technical specialists who like details and precision. The person is usually quiet, sincere, modest and practical.
2. **The Jungle Fighter:** Jungle fighters, although very different in behaviour, are apt to be active politicians. Unafraid to step on others to get ahead, this fighter believes employees should be used to get ahead in the company. They desire success at any cost. There are two types of jungle fighters:
  - a. Foxes: The foxes make their nests in the organization and manoeuvre from this safe base.
  - b. Lions: Conquer others' territories and build empires.
3. **Company Man or Woman:** As politicians go, these are conservative people. They possess a strong desire for affiliation and may not exhibit a lot of political behaviour. In fact, this individual's identity rests with the powerful, protective company. The concern of such people is for humans; however, they are more involved with security than success and may miss opportunities that arise.
4. **The Gamesman:** The gamesmen are apt politicians. They view business as a game and

take calculated risks. The Gamesman tends to be charismatic, thrives on challenge and competition and motivates employees with enthusiasm.

The major contribution of Maccoby's work is that it shows that individuals differ in their behaviour as political actors in an organisation.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Maccoby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Maccoby)

### 7. Ethics in Power and Politics

Ethics can be defined as the moral concerns that an individual basically follows while taking any sort of decisions. This kind of aspects basically helps in governing the behaviour of any of the individual. Ethics basically depicts the moral correctness. And in terms of the organization, ethics can be defined as the systematic thinking of the consequences of any of the decision on the basis of morality.

It can be inferred that if the decision of the organization has the potential to harm any of the stakeholders be it the internal one or external, then we can say that the moral consequences of the decision are not up to the mark.

#### Reasons behind unethical behavior:

1. Pressure to succeed: This is one of the prime reasons for an individual to think & act unethically. An individual always have a pressure to succeed, to meet the targets, deadlines & the expectations. Besides these an individual always have pressure from colleagues, boss, or even customers.
2. Situation of dilemma: Some people have unethical intentions just because they do not know what is right & what is wrong. And obviously the ethical concerns are at times complicated in nature.
3. Self-interest: One of the common reasons, behind the unethical behaviour or intention is the self-interest of an individual. The greed, personal gain, wished to achieve more in a quick & easy way are some of the reasons for which the individuals practice the unethical behaviour.

#### Examples Of Unethical Behaviour At Workplace:

There are many situations and a lot of actions that are usually adopted in an organisation, though they are unhealthy, unethical and uncalled for altogether.

1. Sexual harassment: an employee could have unethical behaviour when he sexually harasses his co-workers. This could include passing lewd comments to the co-workers; touch them in a very inappropriate way which is not acceptable, or making unwanted sexual advances from the co-workers. This also includes bullying that is passing demeaning comments or gossiping about the co-workers, and even conveying physical & verbal threats.
2. Illegal acts: When an employee <sup>uses</sup> uses his/her position in order to achieve their self-interest, and then at times, some unethical acts can also be illegal in nature. For example, an employee who has a hold of all the personal details of the employees could commit identity theft & use employees details to harm them or to bully them.
3. Inappropriate use of office things: Many employees use company computer system for their personal use. Not only this but also the photocopy machines to get their personal documents Xeroxed. For example the employees are not permitted to use the internet for their personal use but if an employee is doing online shopping or downloading movie is committing unethical behaviour at workplace.

#### Measures To Combat Unethical Behaviour at Workplace:

1. Test the level of the ethical behaviour at the time of the hiring process.



## Power and Politics in Organizations

2. Explain the company's code of ethical conduct during the orientation program of the employees.
3. Provide suitable training to the employees in developing ethical behaviour in the organization.
4. Try to include the ethical component in all sort of the operations of the organization like

### Advantages of Ethical Behaviour in Organizations

1. Ethical organization helps in retaining high quality employees.
2. It helps in attracting & retaining good customers to the organization.
3. It helps in developing competitive advantage to the organization.
4. It helps in gaining higher value to the customer
5. It helps in minimising the strict supervision mechanism in the organization
6. It helps in facilitating good & rational decision making for the organization.

### Value Addition 8: Activity

#### It's Not What You Know, It's Who You Know that Matters

Read the situations and initiate a discussion among your peers about the ethicality of using personal contacts in getting a personal favour.

1. A student uses his personal relationship with the sports faculty to get selected for the school cricket team.
2. A teacher uses her personal contact in seeking employment in a more prestigious school.
3. A trade union member uses his personal links to get an employee's incentives released by the management that were held by them in order to influence control over the employee.
4. An employee uses his private link to get affiliation with an institute that will help his organization in the long run.
5. A parent uses a personal link to have the child re-evaluated for a paper that was incorrectly assessed.
6. An employee influences the management to introduce a merit-linked promotion policy by making use of her personal relationship with the CEO of the company.

### Summary:

- The term Power refers to the ability to make things happen in the way individual wants, either by self or by the subordinates.
- Essence of power lies in control over the behaviour of others (French & Raven 1962).
- Sources of power for a manager can be both the organization and the individual itself that is the positional power & personal power.
- In an organization, leadership & power are related to each other. Power is used by leaders as a means to achieve the goals of the group.
- Power can be categorized into two forms: Formal & Informal
- Formal power is derived from the position of an individual holds in an organization. It is derived from either one's ability to punish or reward others or is derived from formal authority rests in the individual due to his/her strategic position in the organization hierarchy.

## Power and Politics in Organizations

- Formal power can be categorised into different types coercive power, reward power, legitimate power
- Personal power resides in the individual & is independent of that of individual's position in the organization. It is of two types- expert power & referent power.
- Politics is very closely related to power
- Modern organization is a fertile land for politics to thrive.
- Politics is inevitable in the organization
- Various causes of politics counts for lust for power, command over scarce resources, organizational change
- There are different power tactics used by the individuals as well as the groups in the organization.
- Politics can be bad and good also;it has some unintended consequences that need to be taken care of by the management.
- There are certain strategies to manage political behaviour in the organization.

### Exercises:

#### A. Objective Type Questions:

1. Which of the following is an interpersonal source of power that exists because of the personal characteristics of an individual?
  - a) Coercive power
  - b) Referent power
  - c) Expert power
  - d) Legitimate power
2. Which of the following organizational factor that causes the reason to use power tactics?
  - a) Limited resources
  - b) Vague goals
  - c) Organizational change
  - d) All of the above.
3. Which of the following focuses on downward influence on one's follower?
  - a) Communication
  - b) Leadership
  - c) Information
  - d) Power
4. Which of the following is based on individual formal position in an organization?
  - a) Leadership
  - b) Informal power
  - c) Formal power
  - d) Influence.
5. Which of the following is a factor that creates dependency?
  - a) Scarcity
  - b) Importance
  - c) Non substitutability
  - d) All of the above

## Power and Politics in Organizations

### Fill in the blanks:

6. ----- Is the opposite of coercive power.
  - a) Expert power
  - b) Reward power
  - c) Legitimate power
  - d) Formal power.
7. Dependency factor get minimized if an organization has-----.
  - a) Limited sources of resources
  - b) Alternative sources of resources
  - c) Highly substitutable resources
  - d) None of the above.

### State True or False:

8. An employee using the office equipment's like computer for their personal use can be termed as ethical behavior in the organization.
9. Passing lewd comments on the coworkers & gossiping about them & make their situation highly miserable is an example of unethical behavior at workplace.
10. Power gets increased if one possesses something that is available in plenty.

### B. Short Questions:

1. Explain the meaning of power?
2. Explain the concept of authority?
3. How can manager increase his positional power?
4. Differentiate between power & authority?
5. Contrast leadership & power?
6. Explain any two sources of interpersonal power?
7. Define organization politics?

### C. Long Questions:

1. What are the causes & consequences of political behaviour?
2. What is political behaviour & how would you distinguish between legitimate \* illegitimate political behaviour?
3. What is authority? Why do people accept authority? Discuss.
4. 'Politics is inherently bad. It's merely a way to get things accomplished within the organization' discuss
5. Political skills have a positive aspect also. Discuss
6. 'Modern organization is a fertile place for the organizational politics' elucidate
7. It is stated "the political power game is very real in today's organization" explain this statement in terms of the discussions in this chapter & any first-hand experience you have had to verify it
8. Identify the different political strategies?
9. Identify & summarize the different types of power with examples?
10. Explain the different power tactics?
11. Describe a situation where you saw evidence of power or influence being used in any of the circumstances?
12. Describe a time when someone influenced you to act in a particular way or to do a particular thing that you would not do otherwise?

### Answers to Objective Type Questions:

## Power and Politics in Organizations

1. (c) expert power; 2. (d) all of the above; 3. (b) Leadership; 4. (c) Formal Power
5. (d) All of the above; 6. (b) Reward power; 7. (c) Highly substitutable resources;
8. False (Office equipment should not be used for personal purposes.)
9. True (It is a case of bullying.)
10. False (Power increases only when someone has the possession of scarce resources.)

### Glossary:

**Performance Appraisal:** It means evaluating employee's current or past performance relative to his/her performance standards. It is a process through which companies ensure that employees are working towards organizational goals.

**Leadership:** it is defined as a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid & support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.

**Feedback:** it is the process in which the information about the past or present influences the same phenomenon in the present or future.

**Locus of control:** it means whether people believe that they are in control of the events or events control them. Those who have internal locus of control believe that they can control the events according to their wishes but people who have external locus control believe that the events occur by chance they do not have any control over them. These people are very much prone to depression & anxiety.

**Machiavellianism:** this is one of the personality traits of the individual, named after Niccolo Machiavelli. People who have high 'MACH' score are very pragmatic, maintain emotional distance, manipulate the things, and persuade others, they can only flourish if they have face to face interaction.

**Strategy:** it is plan of action or a series of action that need to undertake in order to achieve the organizational objectives. It is all about integrating the organizational activities & utilizing the available resources of the organization within the organizational setting to achieve the organizational goals.

**Labour turnover:** the ratio of the number of employees that leave a company through attrition, dismissal, resignation during a period to the number of employees on payroll during the same period.

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### 2. Web Links:

- Visit the link <http://www.slideshare.net/pridiv/the-aspect-of-power-influence-and-authority> to view a presentation on authority, power and influence.
- Visit the link <http://kalyan-city.blogspot.com/2011/08/difference-between-authority-and-power.html> to read more on the difference between authority and power.
- Visit the link <http://www.slideshare.net/robinsmithnbs/power-politics> to view a presentation on power and politics.
- Visit the link <http://www.citeman.com/3767-power-tactics-2.html> to read more on the power tactics to exert upward influence, downward influence and lateral influence.
- Visit the link <http://www.slideshare.net/DelwinArikatt/session-9-power-and-politics> to view a presentation on sources of power.
- View a presentation on by clicking on the link beside: [Chapter 1: Power and Politics - Wiley](#).