

**WORKPLACE FACTORS PREDISPOSING
EMPLOYEES TO CONNIVE WITH CUSTOMERS IN
ELECTRICITY THEFT IN INDIAN POWER
DISTRIBUTION SECTOR**

By

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**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE
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To

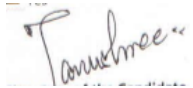
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I hereby declare that this thesis entitled ‘Workplace Factors Predisposing Employees to Connive with Customers in Electricity Theft in Indian Power Distribution Sector’ is original work, and has not been submitted in part or full to any other institution for the award of diploma or degree.

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis does not contain any previously published material, except where due reference is made.



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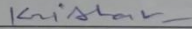
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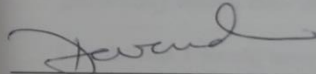
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Tanushree Sharma

Abstract

Workplace Factors Predisposing Employees to Connive with Customers in Electricity Theft in Indian Power Distribution Sector

The biggest challenge facing Indian power distribution sector today is high Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses. While some of the losses are technical, most are commercial- resulting from electricity theft and corruption. A major chunk of the commercial losses in India is attributed to electricity theft. The Indian Government and power utilities have taken a lot of measures to curb electricity theft, but many of its technology driven measures have fallen short of the promised potential. Despite that, majority of the theft-combat interventions are still designed around technology, grossly ignoring the workplace factors.

Given the fact that electricity theft in India happens in connivance with employees of power utilities, exploration of the workplace factors becomes all the more important. Since, electricity theft by consumers with the assistance of utility employees, constitute a dominant form of commercial losses, it is called employee theft. The literature is replete with multiple and distinct perspectives on employee theft. These perspectives have origin in sociology, psychology, criminology, organizational science etc. Though, each perspective contributes to the understating of employee theft, none paints a complete picture. Accepting the idea that each perspective may carry truth, it becomes important to consider all, hence a need was felt to integrate the existing perspectives for developing an effective intervention to check employee theft. Before doing so, there was a need to check whether the theft inducing workplace factors, as specified in the above perspectives hold true for power utilities or not. That's what this study attempted.

In addition, it explored how the workplace factors predispose employees to connive with customers in electricity theft. In doing so, the study made use of the Grounded Theory Methodology.

The employees of state power utility were interviewed to generate empirical data. The data so generated were analyzed using the coding processes of Grounded Theory- initial, focused, axial and theoretical coding. This analysis resulted in generation of theoretical categories, which represented the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with customers in electricity theft. Qualitative associative network for each emerged category was developed, and a conceptual framework detailing how do the workplace factors predisposing employees to connive with customers, was suggested, which could be tested in the future work.

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List of Abbreviations

ACS	Average Cost of Supply
AE	Assistant Engineer
AMI	Advanced Metering Infrastructure
APDRP	Accelerated Power Development and Reform Programme
APR	Average Revenue Realized
AT&C	Aggregate Technical and Commercial
BEE	Bureau of Energy Efficiency
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CEA	Central Electricity Authority
CERC	Central Electricity Regulatory Commission
CTU	Central Transmission Utility
DAE	Department of Atomic Energy
FIR	First Investigative Report
GDP	Gross Domestic Productivity
GFD	Gross Fiscal Deficit
JE	Junior Engineer
J&K	Jammu & Kashmir
MNRE	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
MoP	Ministry of Power
PMS	Performance Management System
HR	Human Resource
R-APDRP	Restructured Accelerated Power Development and Reform Programme

REC	Rural Electrification Commission
SEBs	State Electricity Boards
SDO	Sub Division Officer
SERC	State Electricity Regulatory Commission
SSO	Sub Station Operator
STU	State Transmission Utility
T&D	Transmission and Distribution
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
WDI	World Development Index

1. Introduction

This chapter describes the background, significance and purpose of this study. It then discusses the business problem and problem statement of the study. In addition, it presents the structure of this thesis.

1.1. Background

Electricity theft is a pervasive scourge. It is estimated that the power utilities worldwide, lose over \$25 billion every year due to electricity theft as stated in ‘overview of power distribution’ (cited by Depuru et al., 2011). In developing countries, up to 50 percent of electricity is acquired by theft (Antmann, 2009). The situation in many South Asian and African countries is particularly worrisome (Depuru et al., 2011) - . A major chunk of the commercial losses in India is attributed to electricity theft (Kalsi, 2012, Atmanand, 2013). In Nigeria, many households were found to be indulged in different forms of electricity theft and tampering of meters (Dike et al., 2015). The problem of electricity theft impacts developed countries as well - in the United States, 80 percent of the commercial losses stem from theft or metering defect (McLean-Conner, 2007). In UK, it is estimated that electricity worth £173 million is obtained dishonestly every year (Siddall, Bentley, & Spring, 2012). Electricity theft not only affects the institutional organizations of the sector, but also the countries. The countries can use the savings from reduction in electricity theft to- a) reduce tariffs paid by customers, b) subsidize electricity consumption of socially sensitive users, c) extend access to electricity to the unserved population (in general, the poor and socially unprotected) (Antmann, 2009). Therefore, elimination of these losses becomes the top priority for any country for improving the quality of life of its citizen. India is no exception to this rule.

Like any other developing country, India too is largely dependent on power sector for sustained growth (PwC, 2012). To sustain a growth trajectory similar to the past 5 years, power sector in India needs to grow at least at 8.1 per annum (Ahn & Graczyk, 2012). The Government of India too has realized that an efficient, resilient

and financially robust power sector is a necessity not only for growth, but also for poverty reduction (Ministry of Power, GoI, 2005).

Indian power sector comes under the aegis of Ministry of Power, Government of India, and is regulated by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) and the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC). Its value chain comprises of three technically separate activities— the generation of power, its transmission through high-voltage lines, and its sale to a large number of retail consumers through a distribution network. Figure 1 gives an account of the constituents of Indian power sector.

Figure 1 Constituents of Indian power sector

	Centre	State	Private			
Policy	<p>MOP</p> <p>CEA BEE</p> <p>PFC: financing UMPPs REC: financing rural projects</p>	<p>State government energy agency</p> <p>E.g. Gujarat Energy Development Agency Maharashtra Energy Development Agency</p>				
Regulation	CERC	SERC				
Generation	<p>MOP</p> <p>NTPC NHPC</p> <p>NEEPCO JVs</p> <p>MNRE DAE</p> <p>Renewables Nuclear Power Co. of India Ltd</p>	<p>All sector unbundled</p> <p>State power generation company</p> <p>E.g. Maharashtra State Power Generation Co. Ltd</p>	<p>Only transmission unbundled</p> <p>State generation & distribution company</p> <p>E.g. Tamilnadu Generation and Distribution Co. Ltd</p>	<p>IPP</p> <p>Tata Power</p> <p>Reliance Power</p> <p>Adani Power</p> <p>CPP</p> <p>Steel industry</p> <p>Fertilizer industry</p> <p>Petrochemical industry</p>		
Transmission	<p>Central transmission utility (CTU)</p> <p>MOP</p> <p>POWERGRID</p>	<p>State transmission utility (STU)</p> <p>E.g. Maharashtra Transmission Co. Ltd</p>	<p>State transmission utility (STU)</p> <p>E.g. Tamilnadu Transmission Corporation Ltd</p>	<p>Independent transmission service providers</p> <p>Tata Power</p> <p>Others</p>		
Distribution		<p>State distribution company</p> <p>E.g. Maharashtra Distribution Co. Ltd</p>	<p>State generation & distribution company</p> <p>E.g. Tamilnadu Generation and Distribution Co. Ltd</p>	<p>Private DISCOMs</p> <p>Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd</p> <p>Others</p>		
Consumption	<p>Industry (46%) Residential (21%) Agriculture/forestry (17%) Commercial (9%) Transport (2%) Others (5%)</p>					

Source: (Ahn & Graczyk, 2012)

1.1.1. **Generation**- Indian power generation sector has the world's fifth largest installed capacity. It is bifurcated into three sectors- Central, State and Private. Majorly, power is generated from coal, flowing water and atomic energy. A small but increasing share is contributed by nonconventional and renewable sources like wind and solar (Gulati & Rao, 2007).

1.1.2. **Transmission**- It constitutes bulk transfer of power over a long distance at high voltage. Electricity in India is transmitted through five electricity grids namely Northern, Eastern, North-Eastern, Western and Southern. All except the Southern grid are interconnected into a national grid. All the grids are managed by the state owned outfit PowerGrid Corporation of India Ltd. The end consumers are catered to by the State Electricity Boards (SEBs).

1.1.3. **Distribution**- "Indian Power Distribution constitutes of (i) primary distribution network operating at 11 Kilo Volts (KV) & 33 (KV) and (ii) secondary distribution network operating at 415/240 V & 440/220 V for end use domestic consumption. Distribution begins from the end of sub-transmission network (33 KV to 220 KV) that delivers energy to distribution sub-stations. The distribution sub-station converts energy from high voltage to lower primary system voltage for local distribution" (Kalsi, The Burden Brunt by State Discoms, 2012). The distribution sector interfaces with the end consumers, and generates revenue for the entire value chain.

The survival of generation and transmission sectors is largely dependent on the commercial and financial viability of the distribution sector in India (PWC, 2012).

The sector is currently grappling with huge financial losses. The financial losses of the power utilities have been reported to go up to Rs.1,16,089 crores by 2014-15 (Ministry of Power, GOI, 2012). The fact that financial losses of the utilities have been financed by loans from commercial banks, raises serious

questions on the sustainability of power sector as a whole (Secretariat for Infrastructure, Planning Commission, GoI, 2012)

Indian power sector has traversed a long way since liberalization of Indian economy (a decade ago) and enactment of progressive Electricity Act, 2003 (two decades ago). The sector has crossed many a milestones-

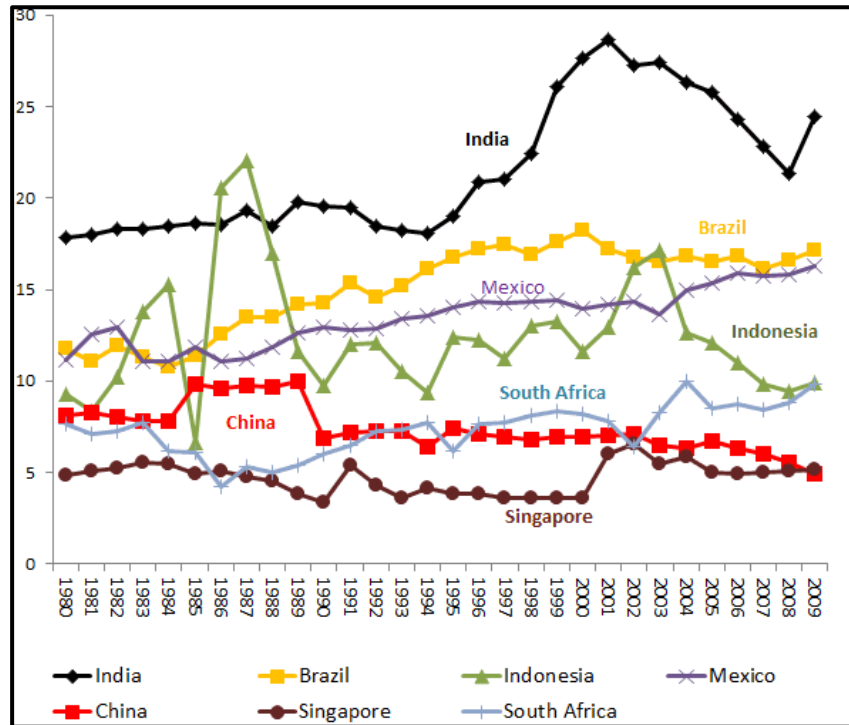
- (i) Tripling of conventional power generation capacity which reached 214 gigawatts (GW) in 2012.
- (ii) Increase in contribution of renewables in the energy mix which rose from 0 to 12 percent.
- (iii) Development of the state of the art integrated transmission grid which linked the entire country.
- (iv) Rise in access to electricity from 59 percent of population in 2004 to 74 percent in 2012 (Pargal & Ghosh Banerjee, 2014).

Despite these achievements, the potential of Indian power sector remains untapped. Though, Indian power sector has come a long way from operating in a controlled environment to a market driven regime, and has seen many ongoing reforms. But, most of the reforms have happened in the generation sector leaving the transmission and the distribution sectors far behind. Despite capacity augmentation, the demand and supply gap still remains a concern. It's a unique dilemma- on one hand India has 25,000MW of stranded unutilized new generation capacity and on the other hand an acute power shortage resulting in public outcry (Mishra & Kumar, 2014). India suffers from an extreme crunch of power, even after being the fourth largest user of power in the world (FICCI, 2012). Three hundred million people are still deprived of electricity (Pargal & Ghosh Banerjee, 2014). Inadequate reliable power supply remains a concern for the industries, and an obstacle to the aspired growth. It has been reported that India witnessed an electricity shortage of 9.8 percent during peak loads in 2010-11 (FICCI, 2012). In 2012-13, electricity shortages in India accounted

for a GDP loss of Rs.4,18,608 crores (Mishra & Kumar, 2014). As per McKinsey, electricity gap could further widen to 25 percent by 2017 (Ghosh, 2012).

One of the reasons for the stated gap is Transmission and Distribution (T&D) loss, which as shown in Figure 2, are far above than many other countries.

Figure 2 Comparison of T&D Losses



Source: (WDI, 2012)

The sector continues to lose a large part of the generated energy in transmission and distribution processes (Prasad, 2012). It is estimated that 1percent reduction in T&D loss would generate savings of over Rs.700 to Rs.800 crores (Madhav & Mehta, 2013). The power sector’s post tax losses continue to pose threat to its own sustenance. The losses amounted to Rs.618 billion in 2011 equivalent to 17 percent of India’s Gross Fiscal Deficit (GFD) and 0.7 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The financial losses of the power utilities had risen to about Rs.60,000 crores in 2010-11 (Secretariat for Infrastructure, Planning Commission, GoI, 2012) and might go up to Rs.1,16,089 crores by 2014-15 (Ministry of Power, GOI, 2012).

As per Kalsi (2012), the soaring financial losses of the power utilities could largely be attributed to:

- Gap between Average Cost of Supply (ACS) and Average Revenue Realized (ARR)- It is the difference between ACS and APR. This gap has been widening which suggests that the cost of supplying one unit of electricity is more than the revenue realized from it. Subsidized electricity and delay in payment are some of the factors responsible for this gap.
- Mounting Debt- In order to sustain themselves; the power utilities are resorting to borrowing loans from the State Governments and financial institutes/ banks. Many utilities are paying the interest on existing loans by fresh borrowing, which is creating a serious liquidity situation.
- Cross Subsidy- The tariff structure in India is skewed with high degree of cross subsidization among various consumer categories i.e., charging Industrial/commercial consumers more and agricultural/ domestic consumers less.
- High Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses –These losses refer to the amount of electricity injected into the transmission and distribution grids, which is not paid for. More than 75- 80 percent of the total technical loss and almost the entire commercial loss occur at the distribution stage. The AT&C losses ranged between 20 and 60 percent in various states in 2009-10 (Kalsi, 2012).

Transmission and distribution losses failed to account for the gap between billing and collection; hence the concept of AT&C losses was introduced in 2001-02 in India (Kalsi, 2012). These losses comprise of technical and commercial losses. The technical losses are the losses attributable to heat and friction that are caused by the physical operation and design of any distribution system. It mainly consists of power

dissipation in electricity system components such as transmission and distribution lines, transformers, and measurement systems. On the other hand, commercial losses are losses that result from improper billing and collection, non-metering of consumers and direct theft. They are caused by pilferage, theft, defective meters, errors in meter reading, estimating un-metered supply of energy etc., (Ghosh, 2012).

AT&C losses which measure distribution sector's operational and financial performance were estimated to be equivalent to 1.5 percent of India's GDP (CEA, 2014). The magnitude of losses was described as unsustainable by Government of India (Bhattacharya & Patel, 2011). On an average, the nationwide AT&C losses were 27 percent in 2011-12 (CEA, Ministry of Power, GOI, 2014) which were much lower than the actual figures (Kalsi, 2012). Table 1 presents the expected state-wise AT&C losses.

Table 1 Expected State-wise AT&C Losses

<20%	B/w 20% - 30%	B/w 30% - 40%	Above 40%
Goa	Tamil Nadu	West Bengal	Madhya Pradesh
Jharkhand	Delhi	Chhattisgarh	Bihar
Kerala	Gujarat	Mizoram	Nagaland
Andhra Pradesh	Maharashtra	Uttar Pradesh	Manipur
Punjab	Karnataka	Orissa	Meghalaya
Himachal Pradesh	Haryana		Sikkim
Puducherry	Assam		Arunachal Pradesh
	Tripura & Rajasthan		Uttarakhand & J&K

Source: (Kalsi, 2012)

The above table indicates that AT&C losses in India are very high compared to efficient countries like South Korea (4 percent) and Japan (5 percent). Even developing countries such as Brazil (17 percent), China (5 percent) and Indonesia (10 percent) fare better than India as per WDI (2012, cited by Ahn & Graczyk, 2012). The data indicates the possibility and the necessity of reducing AT&C losses

in India. Therefore, it is imperative that the reasons for AT&C losses are explored well.

While some of the losses are technical, most analysts agree that the commercial losses resulting from theft, corruption etc., drive the total AT&C losses (Joseph, 2010). It is estimated that about 10-12 percent of AT&C losses are due to technical reasons, while remaining 18-20 percent are due to commercial reasons (GoI, 2006). Of all reasons, electricity theft represents a significant proportion of commercial losses in developed as well as developing countries (Rakhra, 2013). Electricity theft was found to be the biggest menace in the commercial loss segment (Kalsi, 2012; Atmanand, 2013). Estimated at about Rs.20,000 crores annually (Kalsi, 2012), electricity theft constitutes 20-25 percent of the generated power in India (Smith (2004).

Driven by the magnitude of the problem, power utilities look for solutions in the advanced technologies such as smart grid. But, the fact that theft is showing an uptrend in an era of technological means like metering (Smith, 2004) suggests that technology alone is not sufficient to nail the menace. (Gulati & Rao, 2007). Had the technological means alone been sufficient the Restructured Accelerated Power Development and Reform Programme (R-APDRP) would not have failed to realize its potential. The R-APDRP aimed at reducing the losses by adopting IT applications, providing grant to renovate, strengthen and modernize operational, technical, and service delivery mechanism for distribution (Pargal & Ghosh Banerjee, 2014). Further, it has been demonstrated that electricity theft is possible even in Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system (McLaughlin, et al., 2010). Haryana and West Bengal bore testimony to the fact that automatic meters fall into disuse until transformation in the capacity and attitude of ground staff is brought about (Shah et al., 2010). Still, power utilities obscure the problem to push for technical solutions like new technology, additional investments and subsidized financing that are politically convenient (Gulati & Rao, 2007). They fail to

appreciate the fact that it is the interaction of social factors such as employee morale, motivation, capacity, organizational culture and processes, and technical factors namely improved transformers, smart cards, high voltage distribution system etc., that either brings triumph (Shah et al., 2010).

Therefore, to be able to design an effective intervention for combating electricity theft and reducing the losses at a sustained pace, the power utilities need to follow a disciplined approach and bring-in behavioral changes in the employees engaged in management of distribution network and electricity consumers (PwC, 2012).

Exploration of the workplace factors becomes all the more important, given that the power utilities lose big revenue due to connivance of its employees and consumers (Agarwal et al., 2003; Smith, 2004; Gulati & Rao, 2007).

With this background, this research undertakes the study of employee theft in power sector focusing on the workplace factors that predispose the employees of power utility to connive with consumers in electricity theft with the objective of knowing how these factors predispose employees to connive.

1.2. The Significance and Purpose of the study

Electricity theft is a growing problem worldwide. It is estimated that the power utilities worldwide, lose over \$25 billion every year due to electricity theft as stated in 'overview of power distribution' (cited by Depuru et al., 2011). In the developing countries, up to 50 percent of electricity is acquired by theft (Antmann, 2009) –A major chunk of the commercial losses in India is attributed to electricity theft (Kalsi, 2012, Atmanand, 2013).

Electricity theft not only affects the institutional organizations of the power sector, but also the countries. The countries can use the savings from reduction in electricity theft to- a) reduce tariffs paid by customers, b) subsidize electricity consumption of socially sensitive users, c) extend access to electricity to the unserved population (in

general, the poor and socially unprotected) (Antmann, 2009). Therefore, elimination of these losses is the top priority for any country for improving the quality of life of its citizen.

In India, electricity theft by consumers with the assistance of utility employees, constitute a dominant form of commercial losses, hence called employee theft (Agarwal, et al., 2003). The literature is replete with multiple and distinct perspectives on employee theft. These perspectives have origin in sociology, psychology, criminology, organizational science etc. Though, each perspective contributes to the understating of employee theft, none paints a complete picture (Greenberg, 1998).

Accepting the idea that each perspective may carry truth, it became important to consider all the perspectives (Greenberg & Tomlinson, 2004), hence there was a need to integrate the existing perspectives to understand the phenomenon holistically.

So, the purpose of this research was to develop a conceptual framework that explains how the workplace factors predispose the employees of power utilities to connive with consumers in electricity theft in India, by using Grounded Theory methodology.

1.3. Business Problem

Indian Power Distribution Sector is incurring huge commercial losses as a result of electricity theft which happens in connivance with the power utility employees. Electricity theft forms a major chunk of the commercial losses in power distribution segment (Dick, 1995). Theft may constitute 20-25% of the generated power in India Smith (2004). The losses due to theft and pilferage are estimated at about Rs.20,000 crore annually (Madhav & Mehta, 2013). The power utilities are losing substantial revenue due to collusion of consumers and the employees of power utility (Mishra, 2008; Gulati & Rao, 2007; Smith, 2004; Agarwal et al., 2003). The disturbing evidence is that losses (and theft) appear to be increasing in an era of readily

available technological means (metering, for instance) to lower non-technical losses (Smith, 2004).

1.4. Problem Statement

The researcher wants to identify what are the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft in Indian Power Distribution Sector, and also conceptualize how the workplace factors predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis has seven chapters, references and appendix.

Chapter 1 describes the background and the purpose of the study. It then discusses the business problem and problem statement of the study. In addition, it gives an overview of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 describes the use and strategies of literature review in Grounded Theory. It captures literature on Indian power sector, its constituents and challenges. It presents an overview of electricity theft and the role of employees in it, and employee theft. Though, not encouraged traditionally, the study carried out literature review as suggested by the contemporary grounded theorists. The reason of doing so was to become aware of the different perspectives on employee theft to develop a holistic conceptual lens to enter the field with. The chapter concludes with the conceptual lens.

Chapter 3 presents the research objectives, research questions, and the nature of research questions. This chapter details the design and methodology of the study and includes philosophical assumption, underpinnings of qualitative studies, grounded

theory and its application to this study. The chapter discusses the rationale behind the selection of the research method, participants, data generation and data analysis.

Chapter 4 discusses the data analysis using coding. It includes inputs on constant comparative method, initial, focused, axial and theoretical coding for analyzing data, developing categories and identifying relationship among them. This chapter also throws spotlight on writing memos.

Chapter 5 This chapter presents the findings from the analysis of nineteen interviews in the form of categories and sub-categories and compares them with the conceptual lens as suggested in chapter 2. These categories/ sub-categories depict the workplace factors that predispose employees of Indian power utility to connive with consumers in electricity theft, hence answer the first research question of this study.

Chapter 6 presents the modified conceptual lens, the relationship among the emerged categories, and the level-wise description of categories. It discusses how the workplace factors predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft in a power utility. In the end, it presents a proposed conceptual framework

Chapter 7 presents concluding thoughts. It summarizes the study and discusses its contribution to the literature and practice. It explains the criteria for assessing the quality of the empirical research and brings out the limitations of this study. In the end, it presents the future scope of work.

2. Literature Review

As prescribed by the contemporary grounded theorists, though proscribed traditionally, this study carried out literature review. This chapter explains the use of literature in Grounded Theory and describes literature review strategies. It presents the literature on Indian power sector, its constituents and challenges. It then throws light on electricity theft and the role of employees in it. The chapter describes distinct perspectives on employee theft. In the end, it proposes a conceptual lens.

2.1. Use of Literature in Grounded Theory

This study makes use of Grounded Theory Methodology- A qualitative research methodology first proposed by Barney Glaser and Anslem Strauss in 1967. It comprises many unique methodological elements such as- developing substantive theory/ hypothesis rather than testing it, theoretical sampling, collecting and analyzing data simultaneously and most importantly (to this section), deferring literature review until the theory starts taking a shape. While engagement with existing literature prior to primary data collection is characteristic of most strategies of inquiry, Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally argued explicitly against this.

In their original work, Glaser & Strauss (1967), later Glaser and his advocates argued for delaying the literature review in the substantive area of research until analysis is nearly over. They found ignoring literature of theory and facts on the area under study an effective strategy. They contended that delaying literature review helps the researcher generate a theory that is well grounded in the empirical data. They were of the view that postponing literature review helps in avoiding data contamination i.e., forcing data into pre-existing categories. Charmaz (2006) too echoed the same view; she suggested that delaying the literature review help in avoiding import of preconceived ideas and imposing them on one's work. On the other hand, Cutcliffe (2000) suggested that no potential researcher is an empty vessel- a person without

any background. It is not possible for a person to be a clean theoretical slate (Eisenhardt, 2002).

Grounded theory is considered to be an effective strategy for topics about which there is a paucity of knowledge (McCann & Clar, 2003; Payne, 2007). However, (McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007), raised a counterargument saying, ‘but how can the paucity of knowledge be ascertained unless an initial review of literature is undertaken?’ The literature review, therefore helps in highlighting appropriate gaps in the existing knowledge (Creswell, 1998)), providing a rationale for the study (McGhee et al., 2007), orienting the researcher (Urquhart, 2007) and importantly, revealing how the phenomenon has been studied till date (Denzin, 2002).

Not carrying out relevant literature review at an early stage can leave the researchers open to criticism, as it is not very wise to reinvent the wheel, and the researcher who is unaware of the relevant literature, runs a danger of doing the equivalent (Coffey & Aktinson, 1996). The researchers must understand what might appear to be a totally novel idea to them in terms of a discovery in their research might simple be their own ignorance of the literature (Lempert, 2007).

Another conundrum exists related to substantive area of research- given that a researcher may not know what constitutes precisely the substantive area, how can he know what does not constitute area. So, how should the researcher appropriately engage with existing literature? Not reading literature in the substantive area is problematic on one more account- The researcher cannot unlearn what he already knows (Schreiber, 2001) therefore; it becomes impossible for him to carry out studies in his own area of expertise which appears unusual and counter-intuitive.

The literature review can help the researcher in contextualizing the study (McCann & Clark, 2003), developing ‘sensitizing concepts’ (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; McCann & Clark, 2003), gaining theoretical sensitivity (McCann & Clark, 2003; McGhee et al., 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998), avoiding conceptual and methodological pitfalls (McGhee et al., 2007), and knowing how the phenomenon has been investigated to date (Dunne, 2011).

From the above discussion, it can be inferred that there does not exist a blanket ban on reviewing the existing literature in the Grounded Theory Methodology. The core of the problem is not whether or not a literature review should be done- there is more or less a consensus that it should be done. The dilemma rather is - when it should be done and how extensive it should be (McGhee et al., 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Corbin and Strauss (2008) have advised cautious use of literature so that the researchers are able to maintain objectivity when undertaking the study. They further advised that the researchers should avoid developing an in-depth familiarity with the literature, because it might influence them and block their creativity. They said, “To begin with, readers can be assured that there is no need to review all of the literature in the field beforehand, as is usually done by researchers using quantitative research approaches.” They further added that, “Also, the researcher does not want to be so steeped in the literature that he or she is constrained and even stifled by it. It is not unusual for the students to become so enamored with a previous study or theory, either before or during their own investigation, that they become literally paralyzed.”

The contemporary Grounded Theorists appear to take a middle position- They not only acknowledge the original ethos of Grounded Theory, but also recognize the practical need of engaging with the existing literature early in the substantive area of research (McCann & Clark, 2003). Given the opposing perspectives about the role and place of literature review in grounded theory, each researcher must make an informed and logically justifiable decision regarding how and when existing literature should be used in their studies (Dunne, 2011).

2.2. Literature Review Strategy

In this study, prior to data collection, the existing literature on Indian power Sector, its constituents and challenges were reviewed. The review helped in identification of a business problem. To ascertain whether the phenomenon identified in the business problem had already been studied or not, further review of literature was carried out. The initial review suggested that the identified phenomenon had been researched- a)

but in different contexts b) differently by different perspectives, but none painted the picture complete.

To be able to develop a holistic contextualized conceptual framework, development of a conceptual lens integrating all the major perspectives was felt important, hence, the literature review of the major perspectives on the phenomenon was carried out. Since, the purpose was to gain only a broad understanding of each perspective and not an in-depth familiarity, the literature review was intentionally kept limited. The approach of the study mirrored the suggestions outlined in the above paragraph. The coming section presents the literature review on the identified phenomenon.

2.3. Electricity Theft

Electricity theft is a pervasive scourge. It is estimated that the power utilities worldwide, lose over \$25 billion every year due to electricity theft as stated in ‘overview of power distribution’ (cited by Depuru et al., 2011). In developing countries, up to 50 percent of electricity is acquired by theft (Antmann, 2009). The situation in many South Asian and African countries is particularly worrisome (Depuru et al., 2011). In Nigeria, many households were found to be indulged in different forms of electricity theft and tampering of meters (Dike et al., 2015). The problem of electricity theft impacts developed countries as well - in the United States, 80 percent of the commercial losses stem from theft or metering defect (McLean-Conner, 2007). In UK, it is estimated that electricity worth £173 million is obtained dishonestly every year (Siddall, Bentley, & Spring, 2012).

Electricity theft includes illegal tapping of electricity from the feeder, bypassing the energy meter, tampering with the meter and several physical methods to evade payment to the utility company (Dick, 1995). There are various methods of electricity theft including tampering of meters and seals, damaging or removing meters, tapping underground cables or terminals of overhead lines on the low voltage side of the transformer or directly hooking onto bare wires (Pargal & Ghosh Banerjee, 2014).

Smith (2004) identified four types of theft in all power systems namely:

2.3.1. Deliberate deception by consumers- Consumers tamper with the meter so that it shows a lower reading of the power used. As per the article in the New Straits Times (1999, cited by Smith, 2004), in Malaysia, “professionals” approached the residents and managers of businesses offering to “fix” the meter for a moderate fee.

2.3.2. Stealing electricity: Electricity lines are rigged from the power source by passing a meter to where electricity is needed. The employees of the power utilities accept money to allow the practice to continue.

2.3.3. Billing irregularities: The ineffective measurement system does not capture the amount of electricity consumed correctly and inadvertently gives lower figures. Employees may be offered money to record lower meter reading; the consumer pays the lower bill and the meter-reader earns unofficial salary. In another instance, employees may move the decimal point to the left so that a consumer pays far less. Billing irregularities are related to the problem of corruption, which is defined as “the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward that may influence the actions taken by any authority, its members or officers” (Gulati & Rao, 2007).

2.3.4. Unpaid bills: Many consumers do not pay what they owe for electricity consumption. The farmers in India consider electricity as a free service from Government, and politicians curry favor by preventing the power utilities from collecting dues from them. The Government Departments constitute another such group of non-payers.

The above indicates that connivance happens between the employees of the power utilities and consumers. Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand the role the employees in electricity theft.

2.4. Connivance between Employees and Consumers for Electricity Theft

It is assumed in India that electricity theft by consumers in connivance with employees, constitute the dominant form of the commercial losses (Agarwal et al., 2003). Power being a scarce and essential commodity in South Asian Countries, gives employees enough opportunities to exercise considerable discretion. The employees exercise discretion in deciding –

- Who will be given power connection?
- When will the connection be given?
- How much should consumers pay for power?

These discretionary decisions can be put on sale by the employees. (Smith, 2004).

Gulati & Rao (2007) too confirmed that the employees at the consumer interface exercise huge discretionary powers in providing a connection, revising the bills, or replacing or not replacing the defective meter. The employees engage with consumers extensively—in residences, factories and offices, thus allowing “street level” decision making a chance (Lipsky, 1980).

Electricity theft assumes various forms and flourishes with the support of staff, union leaders and high level officials of the power utilities. There have been instances where replacement of defective meters was intentionally postponed, with officials giving various excuses like lack of finances, need for bulk purchase to get competitive rates and elaborate tendering procedures. There exists evidence that employees and their union leaders steadfastly resist efforts to put meters on feeders (Gulati & Rao, 2007).

The surveys conducted by Transparency International India Chapter (2005) revealed many facts- more than 12 percent of all households in India claimed to have paid bribes to get the services - in past one year; more than 27 percent had used ways like paying bribes, using influence, and contacting middlemen; more than 35 percent of those who claimed to have paid bribes, had paid it to the linemen. It further revealed that nonpayment by consumers in connivance with the employees of the power utilities is just the starting point; it gradually clogs the inflow of money, reduces the

ability of utilities to maintain themselves or expand, leads to inadequate and erratic supply of electricity, and eventually results in consumer dissatisfaction. In India, electricity theft by consumers with the assistance of utility employees, constitute a dominant form of commercial losses, hence called employee theft (Agarwal, et al., 2003). Table 2 presents the modes of thefts and their beneficiaries in power distribution sector.

Table 2 Modes of Theft and their Beneficiaries in Power Distribution Sector

S.No	Mode of Theft	Beneficiaries
1	Tapping of distribution lines	Consumers Distribution utility staff
2.	Unauthorized supply of energy	Consumers Utility managers Distribution utility staff
3.	Organized resistance to paying for electricity theft	Labor union leaders Politicians Group of consumers acting in concert (farmers, industries, residential areas, and the like).
4.	Non-billing and under-billing of energy	Consumers Billing staff
5.	Tampering with or bypassing meters	Consumers Linemen
6.	Billing the consumer at a lower rate	Consumers Billing staff Utility managers

Source: (Gulati & Rao, 2007)

2.5. Employee Theft

Employee theft is “unauthorized taking, control, or transfer of money, goods, or services of an employer committed during the work day” (Merriam, 1977). It is also defined as "the unauthorized taking, control, or transfer of money and/or property of the formal work organization that is perpetrated by an employee during the course of occupational activity" (Hollinger & Clark, 1983) and as “any unauthorized appropriation of company property by employees either for one’s own use or sale to

another” (Greenberg, 1990). Chen & Tang (2006) defined employee theft as “the unauthorized taking, consuming, or transferring of money, goods, data, information, and intellectual property owned by the organization”. Most of the researches have regarded employee theft as a form of occupational theft and staff dishonesty.

All the researches to a great extent have specified that such crimes take place during the course of legitimate occupation, involve a violation of trust, and benefit the individual either financially or in terms of social status (Hollinger & Davis, 2014). In the words of Greenberg (1990), employee theft is

“...any unauthorized appropriation of company property by employees either for one’s use or for sale to another. It includes, but not limited to, the removal of products, supplies, materials, funds, data, information, or intellectual property”.

A lot many expressions are often used as a replacement for employee theft such as ‘inventory shrinkage’; ‘spoilage’, ‘pilferage’, ‘shortage’, ‘unaccounted losses’ and ‘defalcation’. Employee theft has also been considered as Organizational Retaliation Behavior (Skarlicki & Robert, 2004); Fraud (Economic Intelligence Unit, 2013); Organizational Misbehavior- property misbehavior to be specific (Vardi & Weitz, 2004; Taylor & Walton, 1971) Workplace Aggression (Baron, 2004); Counterproductive Work Behavior (Gruys & Sackett, 2003), Deviant Behavior (Appelbaum, Iaconi, & Matousek, 2007), White Collar Crime (Hollinger & Davis, 2014).

2.6. Perspectives on Employee Theft

The literature on employee theft is replete with different perspectives- employee theft has drawn significant attention of both- the researchers, and the practitioners from different disciplines. Greenberg & Tomlinson (2004) have identified five major perspectives on employee theft- clinical psychology, industrial psychology, criminology, workplace security and organizational science. Ash (1991) in his work

included various demographic, sociological and psychological characteristics in the definition of 'theft proneness'. Hollinger & Davis (2014) categorised theories of employee theft into three general categories- rational choice theories, workplace equity theories and organizational theories.

Mentioned below are the various perspectives on employee theft:

2.6.1. Person Based Theories (PBT)

These theories attempt to explain why some people and not others pilfer from organization. Greenberg & Barling (1996) included the following under PBTs:

2.6.1.1. The Need Approach- The approach says that in event of high external financial pressures, people rely on illegitimate methods to achieve socially acceptable goals (Merton, 1988). The social needs like high belongingness needs can lead to employee theft, especially if there is a peer pressure to do so (Caudill, 1988).

2.6.1.2. Deviant Individual Background- The approach says that the propensity for workplace theft is a function of deviant individuals. Such employees are more tempted and vulnerable to peer-pressure to steal, rationalize and attribute theft to others, and punish other thieves less (Terris, 1982). Personality is an important predictor of workplace deviance (Bennett & Robinson, 2003) and certain personality traits appear to be a major fraud-risk factor (Cohen, Ding, Lesage, & Stolowy, 2010). It is said that conscientiousness; emotional stability, agreeableness, cynicism, and external locus of control and age predict deviant behavior (Colbert, Mount, Harter, Witt, & Barric, 2004) and integrity significantly predict counterproductive work behavior (Marcus, Lee, & Ashton, 2007). Niehoff and Paul (2000) reaffirmed that certain personalities of employees and deviant personalities (Lyken, 1995) tend to steal. Theft was found to be high among the never married young male, who were concerned

about their financial, educational, or career situation (Baumer & Rosenbaum, 1984).

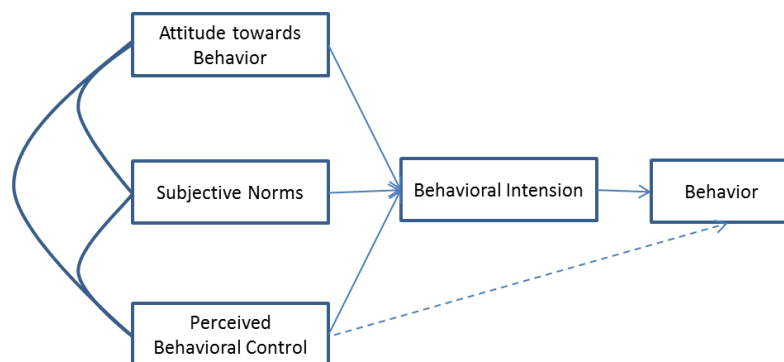
2.6.1.3. Moral Laxity- This theory rests on the notion that today's employees are not as trustworthy as of yesterday. Employee theft has been attributed to the moral laxity among young employees (Merriam, 1977). Greenberg (1990, 2002) too found moral laxity to be responsible for employee theft.

2.6.1.4. Greed or Temptation- Humans are by nature greedy and that everybody would steal if the chance presents (Astor, 1972).

2.6.2. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

In the TPB, Ajzen (1991) emphasized the role of intentions in explaining behaviors (Kim & Hunter, 1993) and suggested that the intentions to perform behavior can be predicted with better accuracy from three factors- attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms and perceived control over behavior as presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Theory of Planned Behavior



Source: (Ajzen, 1991)

Attitude toward behavior is the degree to which a person evaluates the behavior in question either favorably or unfavorably (Ajzen, 1991).

Subjective norm is the person's perception - whether or not the people who are important to him think he should perform the behavior in question (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Johns (1997) supported that the subjective norm act as a predictor of behavior. Perceived control over behavior is the perceived ability of performing the behavior in question on the basis of one's past experience, competence and expected obstacles (Hess, 2007).

Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly (1998) held 'control over behavior' as a predictor of retaliation; their study showed that the employees who perceived a low chance of punishment were more likely to follow coworkers' anti-social behavior.

Further, Shapiro, Trevino and Victor (1995) found theft to be influenced by employees' beliefs about how people who steal would be dealt with. Carpenter and Reimers (2005) reported that the TPB can be used to explain unethical and fraudulent financial reporting.

2.6.3. Theory of Differential Association

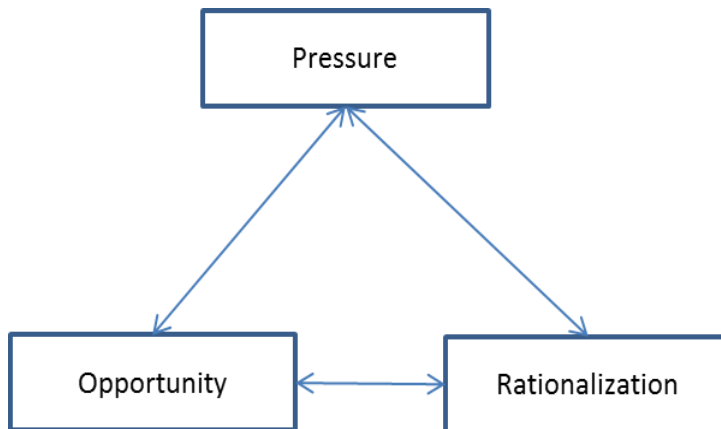
The Theory of Differential Association stresses that crime is rooted in normative conflict. Whether a person will become a criminal is mostly determined by the frequency of his/her contact with the non-law abiding citizens in the group (Sutherland, 1940). This theory says that criminal values, motives, beliefs, behaviors and techniques are learned through interactions within intimate personal groups in a process of communication (Sutherland, 1940).

2.6.4. Fraud Triangle

As per Fraud Triangle, theft occurs when three things are present- motive, desire and opportunity- where motive is a reason to steal, desire is imagined gratification from the potential action, and opportunity is the absence of barriers which prevent theft (Fischer & Janoski, 2000). The work of Fisher and Janoski was inspired by the fraud triangle of Cressey (1973), which

comprised of motivation, opportunity and rationalization. Cressey (1973) claimed that if any of the elements goes missing, the crime does not occur. Lister (2007) defined pressure/ motivation to commit fraud as “the source of heat for the fire”, opportunity as “the fuel that keeps the fire going”. As per him the high turnover of management in key roles, lack of segregation of duties and organization structure create opportunity for fraud. He defined rationalization as “the oxygen that keeps the fire burning”. He said that it may not be possible to assess individuals’ personal values, but corporate culture can be assessed.

Figure 4 Fraud Triangle



Source: (Wells, 2005)

2.6.5. General Theory of Crime

This theory states that low self-control is the primary individual characteristic that causes criminal behavior (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). It is generally acquired early in one’s life, and once acquired, is difficult to change. Self-control includes the ability to resist one’s inner responses, to check adverse behavioral impulses and to refrain from acting upon them (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004). Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) defined self-control as a tendency to avoid actions whose long-term costs exceed temporary advantages. They explained individual differences in crime involvement as variations in the vulnerability to the temptations. The

persons with high self-control consider the long term negative or painful consequences of their behavior and people with low self-control don't. In a nut shell, the theory states that people differ in their propensity to engage in crime based on their level of self-control.

The theory limits the role of environment in causing crime to creating opportunities for the demonstration of propensity (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). Self-control strongly correlates with employee theft (Langton, Piquero, & Hollinger, 2006) and significantly predicts a number of counterproductive behaviors (Marcus & Schuler, 2004; Zettler, 2011).

2.6.6. Organizational Factors

It is important to study the organizational factors in context to employee attitude and behavior at work because they shape the way employees think, feel and behave (Robbins & Judge, 2010). The literature is full of researches carried out to examine the relationship between organizational factors and deviant behaviors. Mentioned below is the account of some of such researches:

2.6.6.1. Perceived Organizational Support- The perceived organizational support plays an important role in influencing deviant behaviors (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Ferris, Brown, & Heller, 2009).

2.6.6.2. Organizational Culture and Climate- Shover (2002) argued that workplace culture is a cause of crime. Fleet & Griffin (2006) stated that organizational culture might contribute or detract from dysfunctional behavior. Theft was found to be higher in the office that had no ethics program (Greenberg, 2002) and lower in the organizations where ethical work climate prevailed (Weber, Burke, & Pentico, 2003). Further, many

work groups were found to have norms either to tolerate or promote petty theft (Sausser, 2007).

2.6.6.3. Leadership

Peterson (2002) called the deviant behavior a function of managerial leadership. Leaders act as a model for employees and create a context supporting parallel deviance (Kemper, 1996). Some previous researches have stated that leaders need not demonstrate corrupt act themselves, their reaction to corruption sends signal to employees (Baucus, 1994). Leaders at the top create ethical culture (Treviño & Nelson, 2004) by setting ethical tone at the top of organizations (Albrecht & Romney, 1986; Murphy & Enderle, 1995; Sweeney, Arnold, & Pierce, 2010).

2.6.6.4. Internal Control- Absence of accountability and internal controls is possibly the single most important factor leading to theft (Gulati & Rao, 2007). Baumer and Rosenbaum (1984) found thefts to be higher in the organizations that did not actively promote anti-theft policies. Mishra & Prasad (2006) observed that a lack of internal controls results in higher theft. According to KPMG Holding (2007), 49 percent of the profiled fraudsters committed fraud by exploiting weak internal controls. Niehoff and Paul (2000) stated that the employees steal when the weak internal controls presented them with the opportunity to do so.

2.6.6.5. Deterrence- Hollinger & Davis (2014) cited deterrence as the single most important factor influencing the employees' decision to steal or not. As per them, deterrence has two dimensions namely perceived certainty of detection and perceived severity of punishment. The perception, not the actual certainty and severity of punishment, is important (Hollinger & Davis, 2014). It was found that theft was considerably higher among employees who believed they would not get caught (Baumer & Rosenbaum, 1984; Hollinger & Clark,

1983). Mishra & Prasad (2006) argued that penalties are not much of deterrence and also that failure to prosecute weakens deterrence.

2.6.6.6. Injustice and Inequity- Theft is a response to injustice (Niehoff & Paul, 2000). Employees who felt inequitably paid (Greenberg, 1990; Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003) and exploited by the company (Hollinger & Clark, 1983) were more involved in theft. The dockworkers reported pilfering as an entitlement for their exploitative work conditions (Ditton, 1977; Altheide, Adler, Adler, & Altheide, 1978; Greenberg, 1997; Mars, 1974). Shapiro, Trevino, & Victor (1995) concluded that perception of procedural justice brought down employee theft. Folger & Baron (1996) theorized that different combination of injustice lead to dysfunctional consequences.

2.6.7. Job Dissatisfaction- Job dissatisfaction was found to be an important cause of employee theft (Merriam, 1977; Hollinger & Clark, 1983; Greenberg, 1990). Baumer and Rosenbaum (1984) found that employee theft was considerably higher among employees who were not satisfied either with their immediate supervisors or the organization with which they worked with respect to opportunities for promotion and day to day workload.

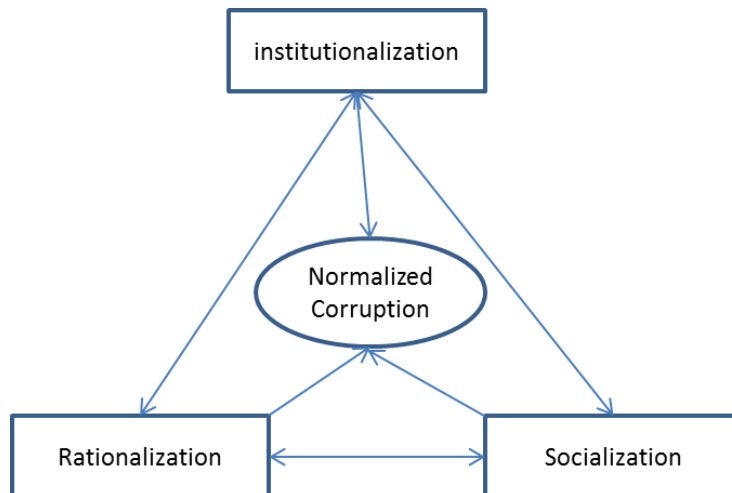
2.6.8. Organizational Structure- Certain organizational structure had a direct impact on workplace deviance (Black, 1993).

2.6.9. Normalization- Ashforth & Anand (2003) proposed that the normalization of corruption rests on the three mutually reinforcing and reciprocally interdependent pillars namely institutionalization, rationalization and socialization.

Institutionalization is the process by which corrupt practices are enacted as routine. Rationalization is the processes by which people who engage in corrupt acts socially constructed accounts to legitimize their acts. It is a

ritualized account used by members of culture to explain variety of untoward acts and reconcile them with societal norms (Coleman, 1987). Corruption gradually becomes embedded in organizational structures and processes, internalized by employees as acceptable and desirable behavior, and passed on to a successive generation (Zucker, 1977). Socialization is the process by which new-joiners are made to accept and perform the corrupt. It plays an instrumental role in the continuity of corruption despite the inevitable turnover of employees practices (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Figure 5 presents the three pillars of Normalization.

Figure 5 Three Pillars of Normalization



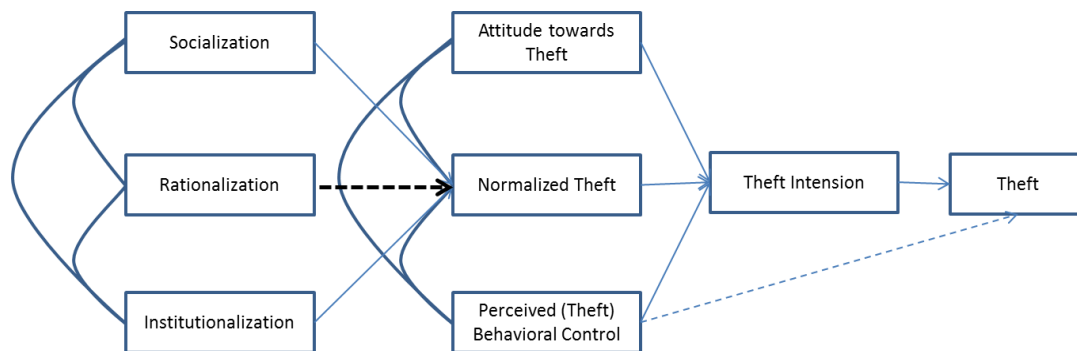
Source: (Ashforth & Anand, 2003)

Ashforth & Anand (2003) recognized three tactics by which new-joiners are inducted to accept corrupt practices, namely cooptation, incrementalism, and compromise. Socialization has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between organizational justice and workplace deviant behaviors (Henle, 2005). This completes the broad overview of the existing literature on various perspectives on employee theft. Next section builds up the conceptual lens integrating the said perspectives.

2.7. Conceptual Lens

The conceptual lens was built by working at the intersections among the perspectives discussed above. Ajein's (1991) TPB, being the widely applied theoretical framework (Armitage & Conner, 2001) has been considered as the base theory to build the framework. First, Ashforth & Anand's (2003) normalization model was introduced to the TPB. As mentioned in the literature above, one of the components of the TPB is subjective norms, and the normalization model describes the process of norm formation (with respect to corruption). Figure 6 presents the integration of the normalization model and the TPB.

Figure 6 Introduction of Normalization to the TPB

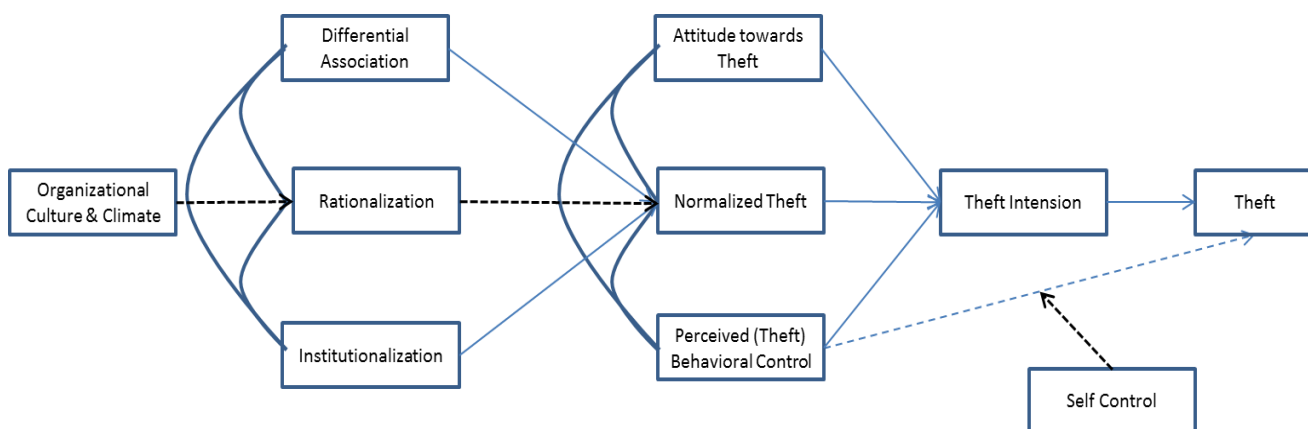


The researches on organizational culture suggest that the culture of the organization defines norms. Many researches have considered norms as a useful construct to understand organizational culture (Chatman & Jehn, 1994; Sheridan, 1992). As per Adler (1986), culture is something that the older members of the group try to pass on to the younger members. It influences individual's behavior by socializing individuals into specific norms (Louis, 1980). Hence, organizational culture has been shown to influence the process of norm-formation in Figure 7.

One of the components of the normalization Model is socialization, a phenomenon well explained by Sutherland in his Differential Association Theory. Therefore,

Differential Association (the process by which criminal behavior is learned) has been incorporated in the Normalization Model in place of socialization as shown in Figure 7. Further, Wolfe & Higgins (2008) found an additive effect between self-control and perceived behavioral control on behavior.

Figure 7 Introduction of Self Control to the TPB and Differential Association to the Normalization Model



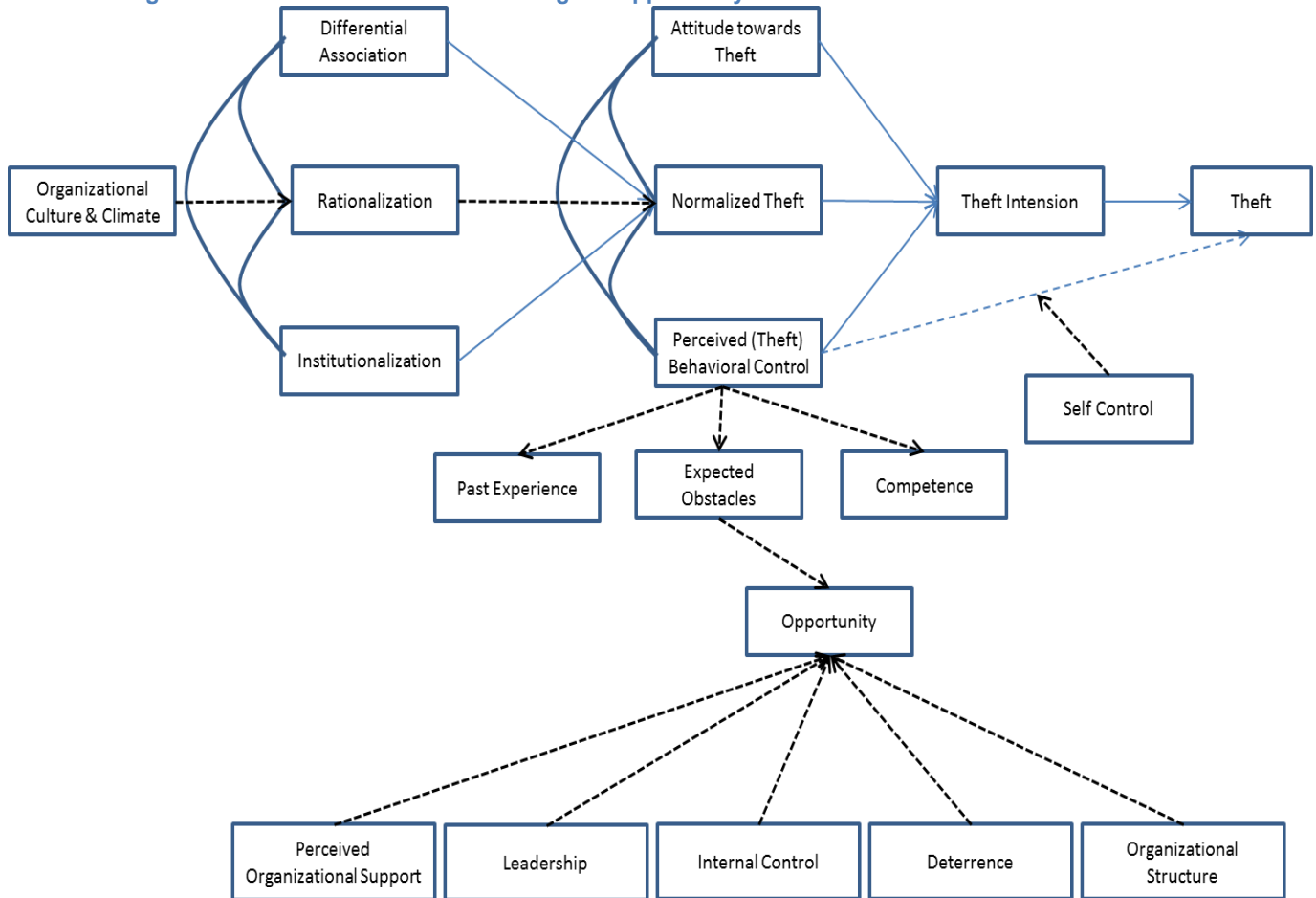
Next introduced was the ‘opportunity’ arm of the Fraud Triangle’s to ‘perceived behavioral control’- the second component of the TPB. The perceived behavioral control is the ability of an individual to perform a behavior based on his past experience, competence and expected obstacles (Hess, 2007). Lister (2007) said that a behavior cannot be executed in the absence of opportunity. It suggests that if the expected obstacles are less, the opportunity is more. So, the ‘opportunity’ arm of the Fraud Triangle is linked to the ‘expected obstacles’ arm of the perceived behavioral control of the TPB, as shown in Figure 8.

Further, Rae & Subramaniam (2008) considered ‘opportunity’ as a weakness in the system, where the employees have power to exploit. The literature on organizational science is full of reserches that hold organizational factors like perceived organizational support, lax leadership, weak internal control and

deterrence, responsible for theft. The same had been detailed in the section on literature review in this thesis.

Careful observation of these organizational factors suggests that they induce theft by weakening the system, hence create opportunities for theft. Therefore, as shown in Figure 8, the above stated organizational factors have been linked to the ‘opportunity’ arm of the Fraud Triangle.

Figure 8 Introduction of the Fraud Triangles’ Opportunity Arm to the TPB



Next, the ‘Pressure/ Motivation’ arm of the Fraud Triangle was detailed and then introduced to the TPB. Lister (2007) defined pressure/ motivation to commit fraud as “the source of heat for the fire”. He divided motivation into three-

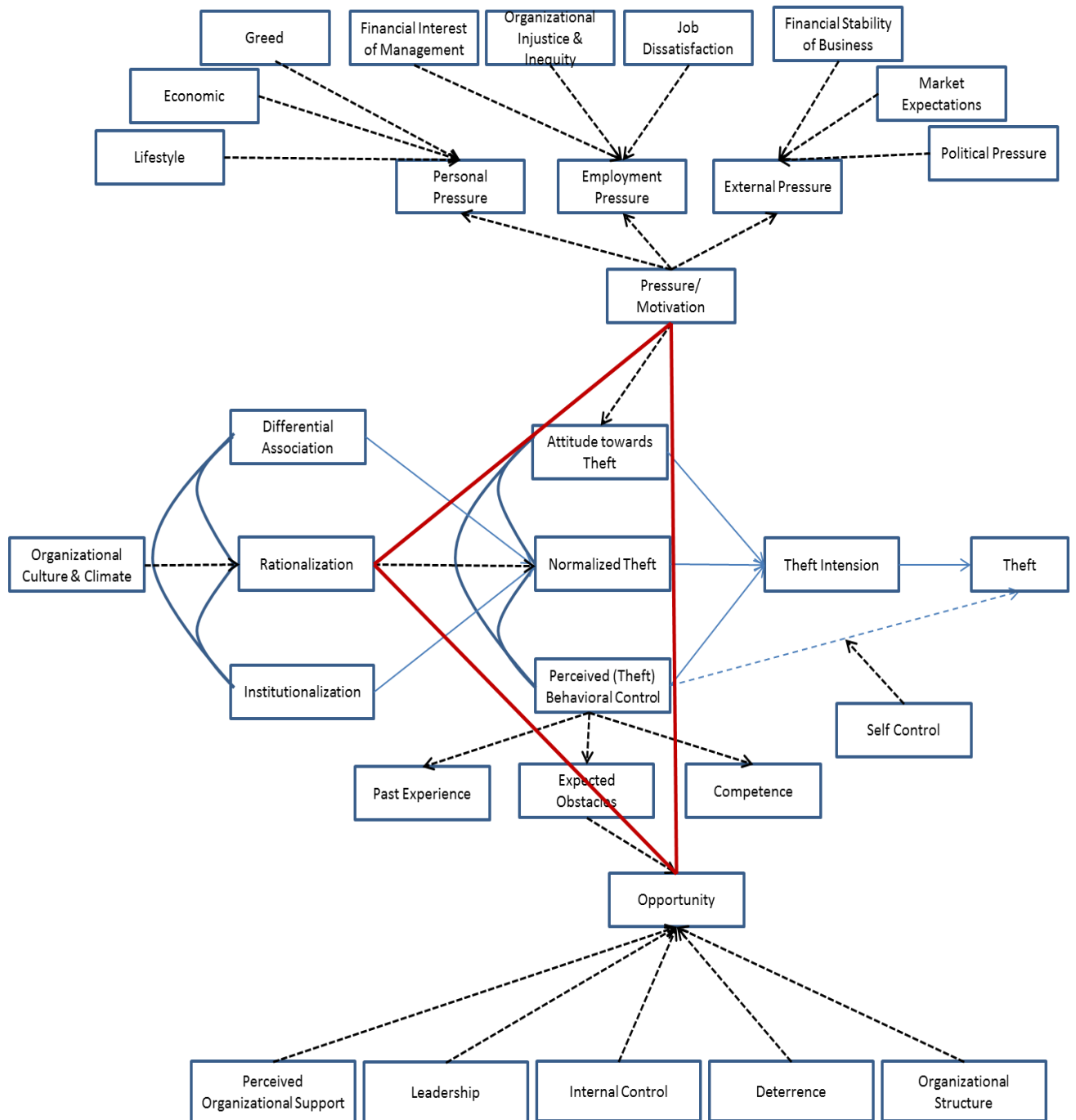
- personal pressure to pay for lifestyle

- the employment pressure from compensation structures/ financial interest of management
- external pressure from market expectations/ financial stability of business.

The motivation/ pressure could be financial, non-financial, political or social pressure (Murdock, 2008), or result of greed or personal financial pressure (Rae & Subramaniam, 2008). Since, the factors that detail the ‘personal pressure arm’ of the fraud triangle are similar to the antecedents of attitude importance, hence are linked to the ‘attitude’ arm of the TPB, as shown in Figure 9.

Further, as per (Boninger, Krosnick, & Berent, 1995) one perceives one’s self-interest to be relevant to the attitude when it is related to the attainment of desired material goods or behavioral opportunities i.e., when one perceives an attitude to be instrumental to one’s tangible rights, privileges or life style. So, it can be inferred that the personal pressures arising out of economic needs, greed, and lifestyle, act as antecedents to attitude-importance in context to theft. Employee attitude such as justice-perception has been found to be one of the antecedents of deviant behavior (Sackett & DeVore, 2001). Further, Hollinger and Clark (1983) found that the workers who feel exploited by the company are more involved in the deviant acts; they consider such acts as a mechanism to correct perception of inequity. Pay cut too was found to have a big impact on employee attitude (Greenberg, 1990). In addition, perception of unfair work environment reportedly leads to negative attitude which in turn leads to the deviant behavior (Greenberg & Alge, 1998). This suggests that the employment pressure resulting from organizational injustice, inequity and job dissatisfaction etc., impact attitude towards theft. The above discussion is pictorially depicted in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Introduction of Fraud Triangles' Pressure Arm to the TPB



The above figure integrates the diverse perspectives on employee theft to suggest an integrated conceptual framework of the psycho-social workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in theft. The triangle in the middle

of the figure, that connects- Opportunity, Pressure and Rationalization, is the Cressey's Fraud Triangle. Each of its arms is shown to be influenced by the organizational factors which in turn influence the elements of the TPB.

This completes the conceptual lens for this study. This lens has been used as a sensitizing concept- as a starting point for this study (Patton, 2002). Gilgun (2002) stated that research usually begins with such concepts, whether researchers state this or not and whether or not they are aware of them. Blaikie (2000) argues that the research that aims at theory generation requires sensitizing concept not hypotheses. As per Charmaz (2003), such concepts are embedded in our disciplinary emphasis and perspectival proclivities. Though these concepts may deepen perception; they offer beginning points for building analysis, not ending point for escaping from it.

Sensitizing concepts can be tested, improved, and refined (Blaikie, 2000), however, researchers following grounded theory methodology not necessarily seek to test, improve or refine such a concept. They might use these concepts to lay the foundation for data analysis or/ and examine substantive codes with a view to develop thematic categories from the data. Whether or not the sensitizing concept survives, depends on the data generated in the study- emergent concepts may supplement or displace them altogether (Padgett, 2004). This study has used conceptual lens to gain theoretical sensitivity, raising questions for initial interviews, confirming findings and informing existing literature.

This concludes the discussion on conceptual lens. The next chapter describes the research questions and objectives in detail.

3. Research Methodology

The background and literature review have been discussed in the last two chapters. This chapter presents the research objectives, research questions, and the nature of research questions. This chapter also details the design and methodology of conducting this study and includes philosophical assumption, the underpinnings of qualitative studies, grounded theory and its application to this study. The chapter discusses the rationale behind the selection of the research method, participants, data generation and data analysis. In the end, it explains the criteria for assessing the quality of the empirical research.

3.1. Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are

1. To identify the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft.
2. To conceptualize how the workplaces factors predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft to suggest an integrated conceptual framework.

3.2. Research Questions

The research objectives were then translated into two research questions as stated below:

1. What are the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft in Indian Power Distribution Sector?

The question is exploratory and seeks to find out the workplace factors that let employees connive with consumers in electricity theft in Indian power utilities.

2. How do the workplace factors predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft in Indian Power Distribution Sector?

The question is explanatory and seeks to develop an understanding of how do these workplace factors make employees connive with consumers.

3.3. Nature of Research

As there is no earlier study done on workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft in Indian power distribution sector, the first research question is exploratory in nature. It seeks to understand and define the nature of the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive.

The second research question is explanatory in nature and seeks to understand how workplace factors predispose employees of power utility to collude with the consumers i.e., what happens at workplace because of which employees are predisposed to connive.

The study is aimed at the workplace situation in Indian power utilities existing during the research process. The temporal focus of the study is current situation. It is highlighted in gray in Table 3 on the next page.

Table 3 Research Questions: Type and temporal orientations

Type of research question	Temporal orientation of research question		
	Backward Looking	Current	Forward Looking
Exploratory Less factual, more oriented towards understanding a trend/pattern	Exploratory backward looking What could have been done? What would have reduced connivance between employees and consumers? Yin (2003) Exploratory what questions	Exploratory current What are the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers? Yin (2003) Exploratory what questions	Exploratory forward looking What will happen if the connivance between employees and consumers continues? Yin (2003) Exploratory what questions
Descriptive and Predictive Factual representation or estimation of study object	Descriptive backward looking What were the outcomes of connivance between employees and consumers? Yin (2003) Inventory what questions, Who what where questions	Descriptive current Yin (2003) Inventory what questions, Who what where questions	Descriptive forward looking What will be the outcome of designing theft combating interventions around workplace factors? Yin (2003) Inventory what questions, Who what where questions
Explanatory Factual, focused on understanding a limited number of events	Explanatory backward looking What happened? Why did it happen? What is the current status? Yin (2003) How, why questions	Explanatory current How do workplace factors predispose employees to connive? Yin (2003) How, why questions	N.A.

Based in part on (Fenema, 2002; Yin, 2003)

3.4. Philosophical Assumptions

All researches are based on some fundamental assumptions about what is reality, what constitutes valid research and which research methods are the most appropriate (Myers, 1977). These philosophical assumptions consist of a position towards the nature of reality – ontology, how the researcher knows what he or she knows- epistemology and the methods used in the process- methodology (Creswell, 2003). Guba & Lincoln (1994) suggested considering three important questions to formulate the research questions, and carry out research-

1. Ontological Question- what is the form and nature of reality and how it can be known.
2. Epistemological Question- what is the relationship between the knowledge holder or inquirer and what can be known.
3. Methodological Question- how can the inquirer find out what is believed, can be known?

Table 4 presents the comparison of alternative inquiry paradigms

Table 4 Basic Belief of Alternative Inquiry Paradigms

Item	Positivism	Post positivism	Critical theory et al.	Constructivism
Ontology	Native realism – ‘real’ reality but apprehendable	Critical realism – ‘real’ reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable	Historical realism - virtual reality shaped by social , political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values: crystallized over time	Relativism – local and specific constructed realities
Epistemology	Dualist/ objectivist: findings true	Modified dualist/ objectivist: critical tradition/ community: findings probably true	Transactional/ subjectivist: value mediated findings	Transactional/ subjectivist/ created findings
Methodology	Experimental/ manipulative: verification of hypotheses: chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/ manipulative: critical multiplism: falsification of hypotheses: may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/ dialectical	Hermeneutical/ dialectic

Source: Lincoln and Guba’s (2000)

The above assumptions reflect the researcher's worldview/ paradigm that help her chose the appropriate approach to address the research questions of the study.

Positivism and post positivism were not found to be suitable as possible inquiry for this study because of their ontological/ epistemological/ methodological assumptions that there exists an objective reality to be discovered by the researcher using hypotheses testing. Critical Theory approach too was found at odds with the exploratory nature of this research.

Constructivism approach resonated best with the study. The ontological and epistemological underpinnings of this approach matched with the researcher's beliefs that - reality is construed in the mind of people experiencing it, therefore is subjective and multiple as seen by the participants of the study

- truth is not apprehendable, the findings of inquiry are created in the process of investigation that involves interaction between the researcher and research contributor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Hence, the process is subjective and transactional.

The methodological element of constructivism that uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, and uses an emerging design, was found appropriate for the study. The study is inductive, seeking to understand and interpret people's (subjective) 'common sense' hoping to generate theory/ conceptual framework (Bryman, 2001; Cohen, Raudenbush, & Ball , 2003)

3.5. The Underpinnings of Qualitative Research

Research methods can be classified in many ways; the most common way is to make a distinction between quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitative research has been used in pure sciences to study natural phenomenon. It includes method like experiments and surveys. On the other hand, qualitative research has been developed in social sciences to understand social and cultural phenomena.

“Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a 'complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action.” (Creswell, 2003 p.37).

Qualitative research studies phenomena in their natural settings; endeavors to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. It is the research that results into findings

‘...not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification’
(Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11).

Qualitative research is designed to understand people, social and cultural context within which they live (Myers, 1997), and its data generally is in the form of words with rich description and detail that give a feel of the social world in which the research is being carried out (Neuman, 2003). The qualitative research methods are applied to problem-solving and subject-matter research to develop timely action for decision support (Bitsch, 2000). As per Bitsch (2005), qualitative approaches are applied in the following cases:

- Description and interpretation of new or not well-researched issues
- Theory generation, development, qualification and theory correction
- Evaluation, policy advice, and action research
- Research directed at future issues.

Whether to adopt a quantitative approach or a qualitative approach is based on the research question of the study and the preference of the researcher (Strauss &

Corbin, 1998). Rossman and Rallis (1998) suggest features of qualitative research and researcher as presented in table 5.

Table 5 Characteristics of Qualitative Research and Researcher

Qualitative Research	Naturalistic – takes place in the natural world
	Uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic
	Is emergent rather than tightly prefigured
	Is fundamentally interpretive
Qualitative Researcher	Views social worlds as holistic or seamless
	Engage in systematic reflection on his own role in the research
	Is sensitive to his personal biography and how it shapes the study
	Uses complex reasoning that is multifaceted and iterative

Source: (Creswell, 2007)

The distinction of qualitative research lies in its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers (Maxwell, 1996).

Table 6 summarizes the distinction between the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Table 6 : Comparison of Qualitative and Quantitative Elements in Design

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Purpose	Precise measurement and comparison of variables Establishing relationships between variables Inference from sample to population	Meaning, Context & Process Discovering unanticipated events, influences, and conditions Understanding single cases Inductive development of theory
Conceptual Framework	Variance theories	Process theories
Research questions	Variance questions Truth of proposition Presence or absence Degree or amount Correlation Hypothesis testing Causality (factual)	Process questions How and why Meaning Context (holistic) Hypotheses as part of conceptual framework Causality (physical)
Relationship	Objectivity / reduction of influence (researcher as extraneous variable)	Use of influence as tool for understanding (researcher as part of process)
Sampling	Probability sampling Establishing valid comparisons	Purposeful sampling
Data collection	Prior development of instruments Standardization Measurement / testing – quantitative / categorical	Inductive development of strategies Adapting to particular situation Collection of textual or visual material
Data analysis	Numerical descriptive analysis (statistics, correlation) Estimation of population variables Statistical hypothesis testing Conversion of textual data into number of categories	Textual analysis (memos, coding, connecting) Grounded theory Narrative approaches
Internal validity	Statistical conclusion validity Construct validity Causal validity (control of extraneous variables)	Descriptive validity Interpretive validity Construct validity Causal validity (identification and assessment of alternative explanations)
Generalizability	External validity (comparability)	Transferability Generalizing to theory

Source: (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003)

On the basis of the above discussion, qualitative research method was found more appropriate for this study because of a couple of facts- i) this study attempts to understand a social phenomenon- a specific behavior of employees- workplace factors predisposing employees to connive with consumers, ii) the behavior needs to be studied in natural settings, rather than in the controlled experimental settings iii) nature of research questions of this study is more amenable to qualitative research (Maxwell, 1996; Yin, 2003)- the research questions are ‘what’ and ‘how’ types, rather than ‘how much’ and ‘why’ types, iv) the purpose of the study is to develop an integrated conceptual framework.

Qualitative research includes ethnography, phenomenology, biography, case study and grounded theory (Creswell, 1998). Ethnography is a study of an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period. Phenomenology identifies the essence of human experience concerning a phenomenon as described by participants. Biography studies the lives of individual and asks the individuals to provide stories about his/her life. Case-study explores in depth a program, an event and/ or activity, a process, or one or more individual. Analysis primarily focuses on exploring the unique quality. Grounded theory drives a general, abstract theory of a process, action or interaction, grounded in the views of participants. Table 7 presents contrasting characteristics of five qualitative approaches.

Table 7 Contrasting Characteristics of Five Qualitative Approaches

Characteristics	Biography	Phenomenology	Ethnography	Case Study	Grounded Theory
Focus	Exploring the life of an individual	Understanding the essence of the experience	Describing and interpreting a culture-sharing group	Developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases	Developing a theory grounded in data from the field
Type of Problem Best Suited for Design	Needing to tell stories of individual experiences	Needing to describe the essence of a lived phenomenon	Describing and interpreting the shared patterns of culture of a group	Providing an in-depth understanding of a case or cases	Grounding a theory in the views of participants
Discipline Background	Drawing from the humanities including anthropology, literature, history, psychology, and sociology	Drawing from philosophy, psychology, and education	Drawing from anthropology and sociology	Drawing from psychology, law, political science, medicine	Drawing from sociology
Unit of Analysis	Studying one or more individuals	Studying several individuals that have shared the experience	Studying a group that shares the same culture	Studying an event, a program, an activity, more than one individual	Studying a process, action, or interaction involving many individuals

Source: Creswell, 2007

Table 8 was made use of to decide the appropriate approach for the study.

Table 8 Five Questions to Select Research Method

Question to Act to Discover Preferred Approach	Associated Tradition
1. If I could discover the meaning of one person’s lived experience, I would ask _____ (individual) about _____.	Biography
2. If I could discover the shared lived experiences of one quality or phenomenon in others, I would want to know about _____.	Phenomenology
3. If I could experience a different culture by living/ observing it, I would choose to experience _____.	Ethnography
4. If I could discover what actually occurred and was experienced in a single lived event, that event would be _____.	Case Study
5. If I could discover a theory for a single phenomenon of living as shared by others, I would choose to discover the theory of _____	Grounded Theory

Source: (McCaslin & Scott, 2003)

The grounded theory was found the most appropriate for the study because:

- It serves the purpose of this study, which is to generate a conceptual framework that can explain a process (Patton, 2002).
- It aids the detection and explanation of phenomenon by answering socially purposeful questions of what is happening here and why (Douglas, 2004).
- It is used to generate theory in areas where little is already known, or to provide a fresh perspective on existing knowledge about a particular social phenomenon (Goulding, 1999).

Grounded Theory is well applicable in this study, as hardly any research is conducted to identify the workplace factors that predispose employees of Indian

Power Distribution Sector to connive with consumers in electricity theft and also understand how they do so. And very importantly grounded theory enables researchers to generate theories that:

- Enable an explanation of behavior (in the study- What are the factors that predispose employees to connive with customers in electricity theft?)
- Are useful in advancing a theory (in the study- integration of various perspectives on employee theft w.r.t. Indian power distribution sector)
- Are applicable in practice (in the study- ways to address workplace factors that influence employee connivance with customers in electricity theft)
- Provide a perspective on behavior (employee connivance with consumers in electricity theft). (Goulding, 2002),

3.6. Grounded Theory Methodology

Grounded theory was initially developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967, who felt that theories used in research were more often than not, inappropriate for participants under study. They held that theories should be “grounded” in data from the field, primarily in the actions, interactions, and social processes of people. Having collaborating initially, the two authors ultimately disagreed about the meaning and procedures of grounded theory, and eventually split. The methodology was later built upon by Strauss and Corbin (1998), and Charmaz (2006). As per Strauss and Corbin (1998), the researcher, endeavors to develop a theory that explains process, action, or interaction on a topic by following a systematic analytic procedures. In their later work, Corbin and Strauss to an extent and Charmaz sought to reclaim Grounded Theory from its ‘positivist underpinnings’ to interpretive. As per Charmaz (2009), “Differences about where various authors stand vis-à-vis positivist and interpretive traditions surface in objectivist and constructivist grounded theory.”

The same have been juxtaposed in bringing out the differences between the two approaches in Figure10.

Figure 10 Objectivist and Constructivist Grounded Theory: Comparisons and Contrasts

<i>Objectivist Grounded Theory</i>	<i>Constructivist Grounded Theory</i>
Comparisons and Contrasts	
<p style="text-align: center;">Foundational Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes an external reality • Assumes discovery of data • Assumes conceptualizations emerge from data analysis • Views representation of data as unproblematic • Assumes the neutrality, passivity, and authority of the observer. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Foundational Assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes multiple realities • Assumes mutual construction of data through <i>interaction</i> • Assumes researcher constructs categories • Views representation of data as problematic, relativistic, situational, and partial • Assumes the observer's values, priorities, positions, and actions affect views.
<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims to achieve context-free generalizations • Aims for parsimonious, abstract conceptualizations that transcend historical and situational locations • Aims to create theory that fits, works, has relevance, and is modifiable. (Glaser) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views generalizations as partial, conditional, and situated in time, space, positions, action, and interactions • Aims for interpretive understanding of historically situated data • Specifies range of variation • Aims to create theory that has credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness.
<p style="text-align: center;">Implications for Data Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views data analysis as an objective process • Sees emergent categories as forming the analysis • Sees reflexivity as one possible data source • Gives priority to researcher's analytic categories and voice. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Implications for Data Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges subjectivities throughout data analysis • Views co-constructed data as beginning the analytic direction • Engages in reflexivity throughout the research process • Seeks and (re)represents participants' views and voices as integral to the analysis.

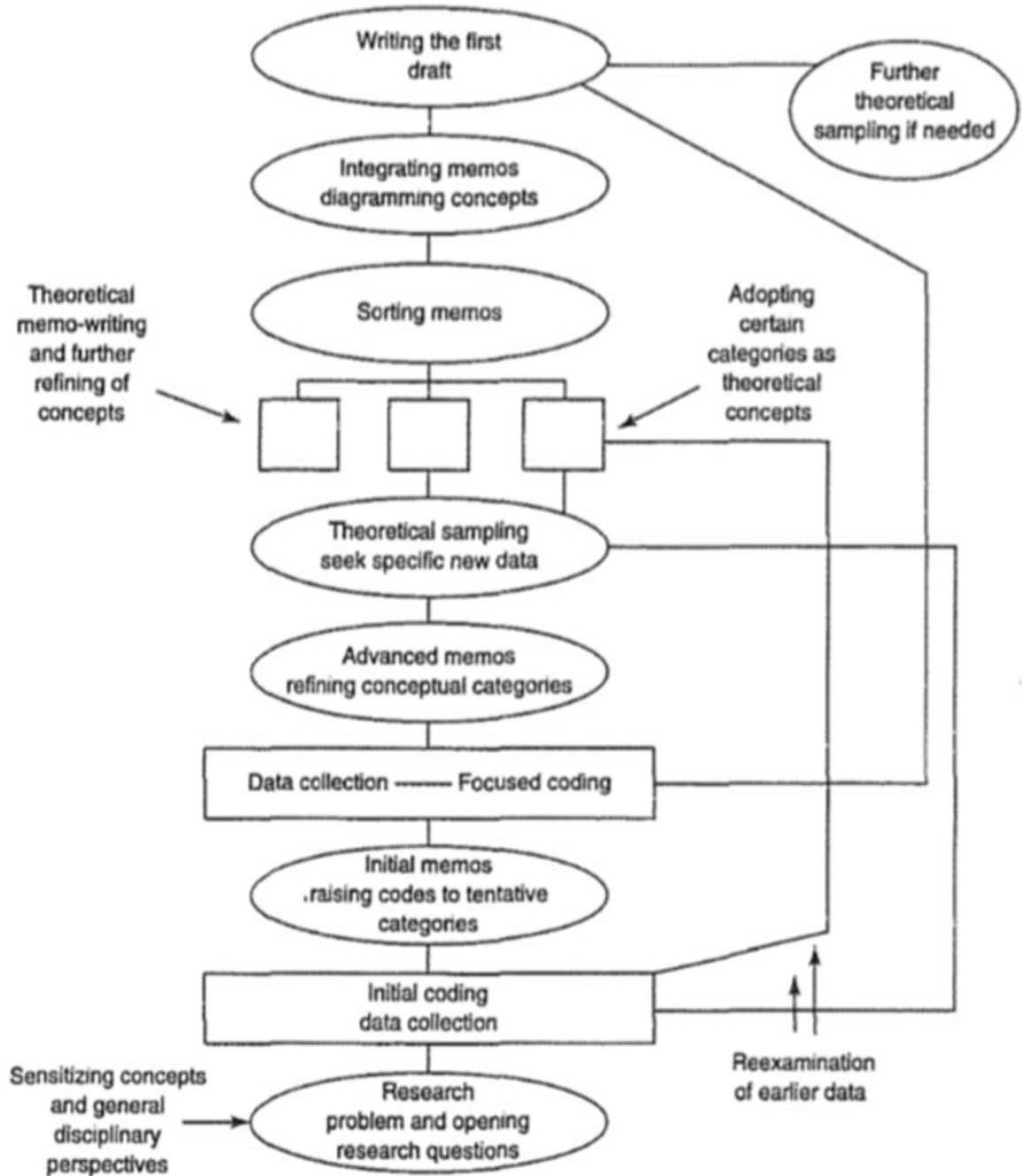
Source: Adapted and expanded from (Charmaz, 2007)

As per Strauss and Corbin (1998), Grounded Theory is a lot more than a method of analyzing data- it is a way of thinking about data and how it and its analysis are influenced by the environment in which it is generated. Grounded Theory centers on an area of study, collects and analyzes data using systematic processes like theoretical sampling and coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Data gathered through interviews are analyzed and organized into distinct categories. Data gathering is continued until saturation occurs i.e., no new information about the topic is found. Data are examined using a constant comparison method that involves initial coding. Figure 11 provides a schematic representation of the process of Grounded Theory. In the words of Charmaz (2006)- “The defining components of grounded theory practice include:

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis
- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses
- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis?
- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis
- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps
- Sampling aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness
- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis”.

Next to follow is Figure 11 pictorially depicting the process of Grounded Theory.

Figure 11 The Grounded Theory Process



Source: Charmaz, 2006

3.7. Application of Grounded Theory to this Study

The purpose of this approach is to generate a substantive theory (Creswell, 1998, Charmaz, 2006) or an abstract analytical schema of a process (or action or interaction, Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Grounded Theory is a qualitative research approach in which the researcher generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, action or interaction shaped by the views of participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The participants in the study would have experienced the process, and the development of the theory might help offer a conceptual framework for further research or explain practice. The salient feature is that this theory –generation does not come “off the shelf” but is “grounded in data” received from the participants who have experienced the process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

On the basis of the above discussion, the ontological and epistemological assumptions, and research objectives of the study, Grounded Theory approach was found best suited. Enumerated below are the relevant factors for adopting the said approach:

Firstly, an essential review of literature suggested that there was dearth of information on the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft in Indian power distribution sector. Secondly, the main purpose of the thesis was to conceptualize how the workplace factors predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft, which could not have been achieved through traditional quantitative methods of surveys and or numerical analyses. Grounded Theory approach enables the collection of a wide-ranging variety of expressive data and associated parameters (Corbin & Strauss , 2008). Thirdly, this study attempted integrating various perspectives that explain employee theft partially, and Grounded Theory is well placed to capture the

‘...complexities of the context aiding researchers to better understand all that may be involved in a particular substantive area’ (Locke; 2001, p. 95).

Grounded Theory was the preferred method for this study as it is capable to generate detailed information about a particular phenomenon. It enables the study of a micro issue of a larger reality within a particular setting (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this

study, the researcher and participants collaborate to generate the data which in turn generates the substantive theory through the inductive process of Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The study and its analysis follow the tenets proposed by Charmaz (2006) Corbin and mainly and to a little extent Strauss (2008). Corbin and Strauss (2008) laid out systematic procedures for coding and creating categories. They advocate axial coding which puts data back together after initial coding by

“specifying a category (phenomenon) in terms of the conditions that give rise to it; the context (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed and carried out; and the consequences of those categories”. (Corbin & Strauss 2008, p. 97)

3.7.1. Setting of the Study

The qualitative research methods lay a lot of importance on the context or the setting of the study. They maintain that the meaning of a social action largely depend on the context in which it appears. When an event is removed from the social context in which it appears, its social meaning and significance may distort (Neuman, 2003). Therefore, great care must be exercised while choosing the setting. It is also said that the initial decisions regarding the number of sites and observations and/ or interviews depend on access, available resources, research goals, plus the researchers' time schedule and energy (Corbin & Strauss , 2008).

The above and the sensitive nature of the topic were instrumental in finalizing the criteria for selecting the setting of this study, which were- AT&C loss percentage of the area, and pragmatism. The research for this study began at one of the Indian state power utilities, which was expected to have AT&C loss falling in the highest range. Later the study got extended to another state power utility. In all, the study drew sample from six cities belonging to the two different Indian states. The names of the cities cannot be mentioned for confidentiality reasons. Lofland et al. (2006) state,

“One of the central obligations that field researchers have with respect to those they study is the guarantee of anonymity via the ‘assurance of confidentiality’ – the promise that the real names of persons, places, and so forth will not be used in the research report.”

In this study, electricity theft included all thefts viz. stealing of electricity, fraud, billing irregularities, unpaid bills etc., and consumers too included all- domestic, commercial, residential, and agricultural.

3.7.2. Sample and Sampling

The participants were chosen by way of initial sampling followed by theoretical sampling. Initial sampling in Grounded Theory is where one starts, whereas theoretical sampling directs one where to go. For initial sampling, one lays sampling criteria for people, cases, situations and/ or settings before one enters the field (Charmaz, 2006), on the other hand theoretical sampling is-

“A method of data collection based on concepts/ themes derived from data. The purpose of theoretical sampling is to collect data from places, people, and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts.” (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p. 143).

In her book, constructing grounded theory, Charmaz (2006, p.189) defined theoretical sampling as-

“a type of grounded theory sampling in which the researcher aims to develop the properties of his or her developing categories or theory, not to sample randomly selected populations or to sample representative distributions of a particular population. When engaging in theoretical sampling, the researcher seeks people, events or information to illuminate and define the boundaries and relevance of the categories. Because the purpose of theoretical sampling is to sample to develop the theoretical categories, conducting it can take the researcher across substantive areas.”

Sampling to develop emerging theoretical categories separates theoretical sampling from other types of sampling. Theoretical sampling is not about representing a population or achieving the statistical generalizability of one's result. As per Strauss & Corbin (1998), the participants in the study should have experienced the process. Therefore, the sample of this study constituted the individuals working in different capacities at Indian state power utilities. The chosen individuals had knowledge of the phenomenon by way of circumstantial evidence. The initial participants were selected basis their vast work experience in the power utility and their known expertise in the area of study. As the study progressed, participants were theoretically sampled as per the questions that arose from the data.

Participants associated with power utility and representing different roles, functions and levels were interviewed. The participants included DGM (retd.), Chief Engineer, HR Manager, Executive Engineer, Assistant Engineer, Junior Engineers, Sub Division Officers, Sub Station Officer, Linemen, Union Leader, Union Workers, Accountants, Contract Workers involved in metering and billing, Help Self Employee etc.,. Their experience with the utility ranged from four to thirty three years.

The area of this study being sensitive, posed problem in getting willing participants. The pool of participants was developed using snowball sampling. The participants were then theoretically sampled as and when the study demanded. The researcher ensured that the data had broad variation; therefore, participants were theoretically sampled to ascertain variations in role, level, place and nature of employment. The researcher selected participants based on data, which suggested a need to interview contract workers, help-self worker, the lineman who suffered injury while working, former worker turned independent technician and workers in another state.

Sampling procedures of qualitative research differ from those of quantitative research- they are based on the concepts of theoretical sampling rather than statistical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Although, there are no fixed rules to decide sample size in qualitative research, it is often recommended that the largest possible

sample be considered (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003). Expressing their views on sample size, Corbin and Strauss (2008) said,

“In qualitative investigations, researchers are not so much interested in how representative their participants are of the larger population. The concern is more about concepts and looking for incidents that shed light on them. And in regard to concepts, researchers are looking for variation, not sameness. Variation is essentially important in theory building because it increases the broadness of concepts and scope of the theory.”

Therefore, in Grounded Theory too, size of sample is determined by theoretical sampling achieved through constant comparison of emerging categories. Grounded Theory approach suggests saturation as the criterion to apply to the emerging categories, Galser (1992, 1998) argued that one must keep sampling until the categories are saturated and that this logic supersedes sample size, which may be small. As per Charmaz (2006):

“... categories are 'saturated' when gathering fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your data no longer sparks core theoretical categories.”

Theoretical sampling should be carried out sensibly to stay focused on the area of study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) keeping in mind the scope of the study and the available resources and time (Richards, 2005).

In this study, nothing essentially new emerged in the nineteenth interview (with the Assistant Engineer at the power utility of the other state), from the content perspective, indicating at theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, theoretical saturation is a notion that fits with a positivist ontology based on one reality. From the perspective of constructivism ontology, the possibility of another researcher arriving at a different conclusion cannot be ruled out.

3.7.3. Data Collection Method

A special feature of Grounded Theory is the simultaneous collection and analysis of data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This indicates an iterative process with constant

comparisons between data and emerging categories leading to further data collection based on theoretical sampling, rather than a linear process where data analysis begins only when data collection is complete. However, for the purpose of proving clarity to the readers, this thesis follows the positivist paradigm and presents literature upfront, followed by methods and then findings.

Grounded Theory like any other qualitative approach collects data by means of observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, biographical methods and documents related to the phenomenon being researched. Charmaz (2006) emphasized interview as a preferred way of data collection for Grounded Theory saying,

“...the combination of flexibility and control inherent in in-depth interviewing techniques fit grounded theory strategies for increasing the analytic incisiveness of the resultant analysis. Grounded theory interviewing differs from much in-depth interviewing because we narrow the range of interview topics to gather specific data for developing our theoretical frameworks as we proceed with conducting the interviews.”

For this study, participants were interviewed in-depth to collect data for the reasons stated in the table below: Table 9 presents the situations where interviews are applicable.

Table 9 Application of In-depth Interviews

Nature of Data	To understand personal accounts
	For exploring issues in depth and detail
	For generating in-depth personal accounts
Subject Matter	To understand complex processes and issues e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - motivations, decisions - Impacts and outcomes
	To explore private subjects or those involving social norms
	For sensitive issues

Source: Based in part on (Lewis, 2003)

Corbin and Strauss (2008) opine that the most data dense interviews are those that are unstructured; therefore, unstructured interviews were used to collect data from the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). If a researcher enters the field with a structured questionnaire, participants will answer only that which is asked, and often without elaboration. The participants might have other information to offer, which they don't share fearing that they might disturb the research process (Corbin & Morse, 2003).

The interview protocol (Appendix 1) was used to guide the process of interview; it included the interview style, procedure and general rules to be followed. Interview styles are not dictated by the grounded theory method. As per Patton (1990), the interview styles for such studies are based on a qualitative interviewing technique that employs a flexible outline of topics and question. Though a few initial questions are asked, the wording of the questions is not predetermined, & the focus of the inquiry gets evolved with the interviews (Patton, 1990).

This concludes the discussion on research methodology; next chapter throws light on data analysis.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis helps researchers get a handle to massive data, reduce its volume, capture emerging patterns, and generate a framework for communicating what the data tells. The process of analysis in Grounded Theory may begin while the data are being gathered, and immediately after the interviews are being transcribed. This chapter on data analysis process includes inputs on constant comparative method, initial, focused, axial and theoretical coding for analyzing data for developing categories and identifying the relationship among them. The chapter also put spotlight on writing memos.

4.1. Constant Comparative Method

Constant comparative method which involves making comparisons at each stage of the analysis is one of the components of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is central to the formation of categories in Charmaz's Constructive Grounded Theory.

“Constant comparative method- a method of analysis that generates successively more abstract concepts and theories through inductive processes of comparing data with data, data with category, category with category, and category with concept. Comparisons then constitute each stage of analytic development.” (Charmaz, 2006, p.187).

Constant comparison helps in achieving higher level of abstraction and advance with the conceptualization (Gregory, 2010)

This study used constant comparative method at each stage of the analysis, at first compared data with data to identify similarities- it compared statements and incidents within the same interview, and then compared them in different interviews. The statements and incidents that seemed conceptually similar were given the same

code (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The constant comparative method was used to compare data with codes and categories to develop and refine the focused codes.

The analysis of data was carried out using qualitative data analysis software Atli.ti. This software helped in coding, linking codes and text segments, creating memos, searching, revising and reorganizing. It also helped in visual display of data and findings (Creswell, 2007).

4.2. Coding

Coding, an essential element to the formation of a Grounded Theory, is extracting concepts from raw data and developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It is categorizing segments of data with a short label that simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded Theory coding occurs in stages- Initial, focused, axial and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006). In initial coding, as many ideas are generated inductively from the transcript as possible. In focused coding, the initial codes which are important and contribute most to the analysis are selected and elevated to the level of categories. In axial coding, relationship among categories and subcategories is specified. In theoretical coding, possible relationship among the final concepts is specified.

In this study, the first three stages helped in identifying the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft by developing codes, categories and concepts. The last stage helped in specifying the relationship among those workplace factors, and understanding how do they induce connivance.

Next to follow is the detailed account of the stages mentioned above.

4.2.1. Initial Coding

Initial coding also known as open coding had been described by Corbin and Strauss (2006) as:

“Breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data. At the same time, one is qualifying those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions.” (p. 195).

Charmaz (2006) suggests a set of guiding questions for line by line coding that forces researchers raise questions about their data. These questions help researchers see actions and identify significant processes:

- “What process(es) is at issue here? How can I define it?
- How does this process develop?
- How does the research participant(s) act while involved in this process?
- What does the research participant(s) profess to think and feel while involved in this process? What might his or her observed behavior indicate?
- When, why, and how does the process change?
- What are the consequences of the process?” (p. 51)

These questions proved very useful in determining the codes from the data about the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers. This study resulted into 1002 initial codes, adopting the guidelines of Charmaz (2006) as mentioned below:

- Line by line initial coding was done.
- The attempt was made to stick close to the data.
- The words and actions of the participants were used in the codes to preserve the fluidity of their experience.
- Actions were seen in each segment of data rather than applying preexisting categories to the data.
- Endeavor was made to code words that reflect action, hence coding was done with gerunds.

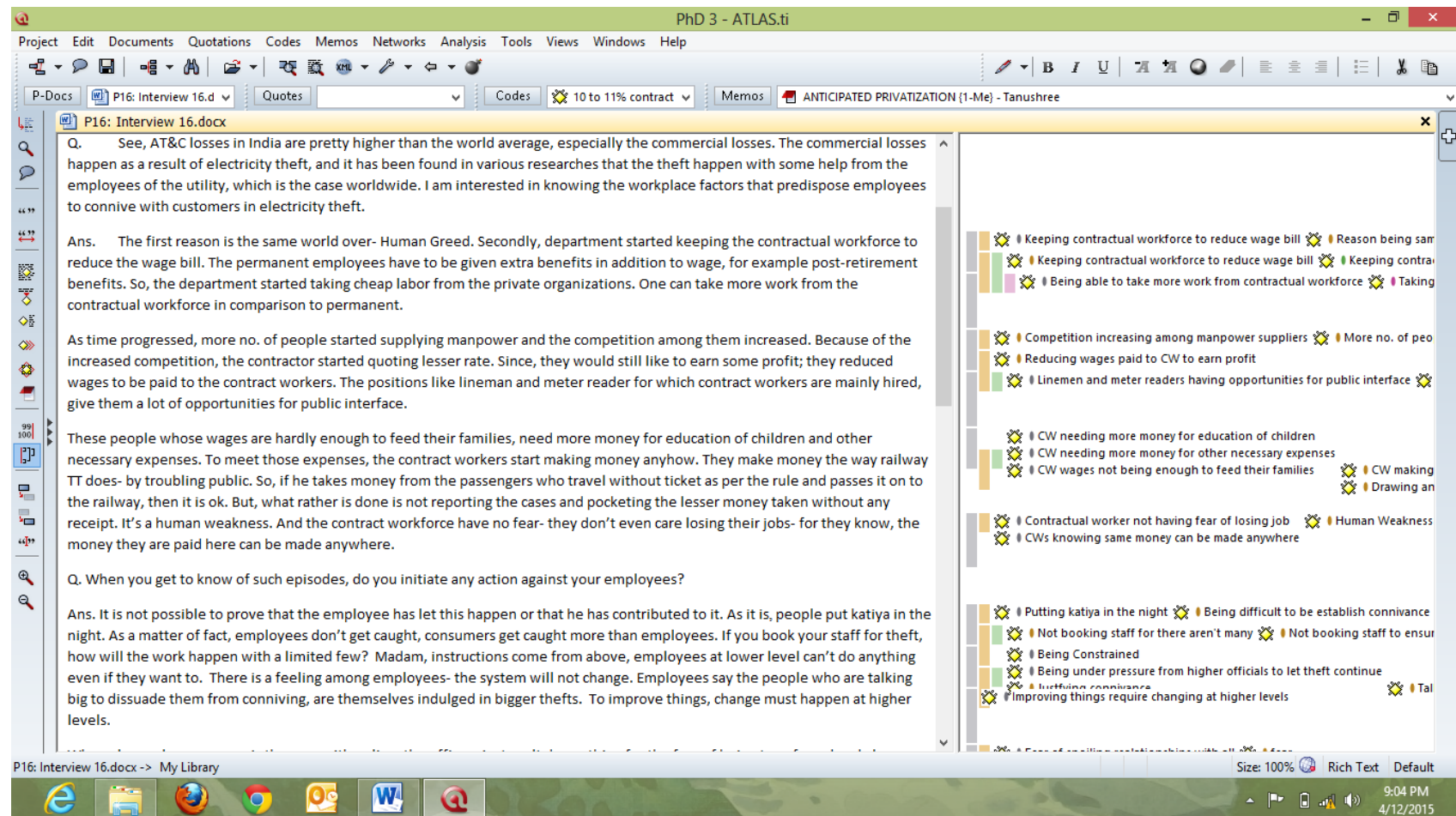
Charmaz (2009) emphasized using gerunds for coding saying

“Throughout this book, I have stressed using gerunds in coding and memo-writing to the extent that they fit your data. Adopting gerunds fosters

theoretical sensitivity because these words nudge us out of static topics and into enacted processes. Gerunds prompt thinking about actions – large and small. If you can focus your coding on analyzing actions, you have ready grist for seeing sequences and making connections. If your gerunds quickly give way to coding for topics, you may synthesize and summarize data but the connections between them will remain more implicit. Thus, I strongly suggest renewed emphasis on actions and processes, rather than on viewing individuals as discrete units of analysis, as a key strategy in constructing theory and moving beyond categorizing types of individuals.” p. 245.

Figure 12 depicts application of all the above in forming initial codes.

Figure 12 Atlas.ti Screenshot of Initial Coding



4.2.2. Focused Coding

Focused coding is the second major stage in coding which generates codes that are more directed, selective, and conceptual than initial codes (Glaser, 1978). It requires identification of the initial codes that make most analytic sense to categorize one's data incisively and completely (Charmaz, 2006).

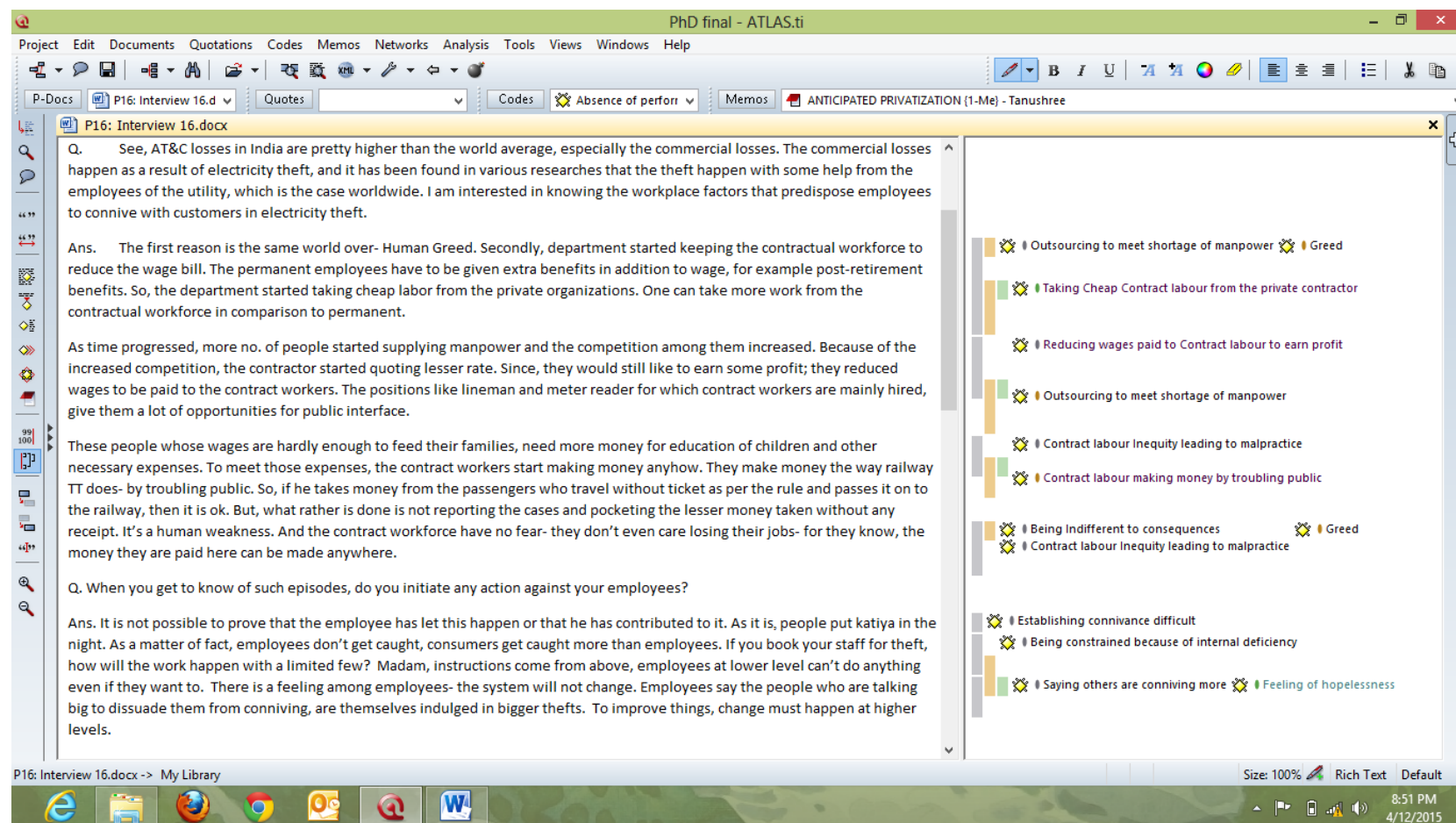
The study merged together the codes with common features to create conceptual categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This consolidation made it possible to reduce the 1002 initial codes to 327 focused codes. To achieve that the researcher sift through the data, moved across the interviews of power utility employees to compare their experiences, perceptions and interpretations.

So in relation to codes- contract worker making money anyhow; contract workers' wages being inadequate to feed family; 'contract workers troubling public to make money etc., the researcher looked at all the scripts to see what the other participants had to say about it. The researcher was led to explore the causes and consequences of hiring contract workers. The output was emergence of a new category- contract workers' inequity leading to malpractice. The new category too was subsumed later resulting into a higher abstraction- diminished organizational control.

The early categories were kept provisional in line with Grounded Theory to remain open to ensuing analytic possibilities. The constant comparison method resulted into many initial categories revised and re-revised.

Figure 13 presents a screenshot of focused coding, done using Atlis.ti software.

Figure 13 Atlas.ti Screenshot of Focused Coding



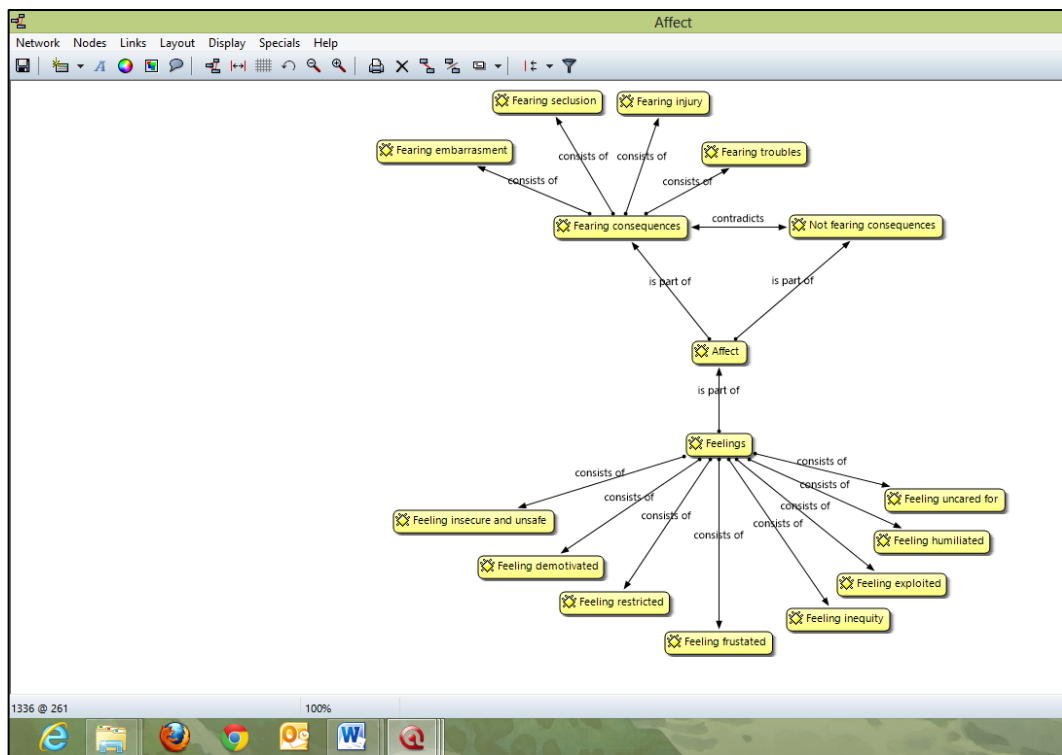
4.2.3. Axial Coding

The third type of coding presented by Strauss and Corbin (1998), axial coding is cross cutting or relating concepts to each other. Whereas, initial coding fractures data into pieces and different codes, axial coding brings data back together as a coherent unit. It relates subcategories to categories. The purposes of the axial coding are to sort, synthesize and organize large amount of data and reassemble them in new ways after open coding (Creswell, 1998).

This study used Charmaz’s way of developing subcategories of a category to show a link between them, and not the paradigm model constituting of conditions, action/ interaction and consequences as advocated by Strauss and Corbin.

The study used axial coding to elaborate a concept using diagrams to integrate relevant categories. The Figure 14 is one such example, wherein the concept, ‘Affect’ is elaborated and integrated with the relevant categories, ‘Fear’ and ‘Feelings’.

Figure 14 Atlas.ti Screenshot of Axial Coding



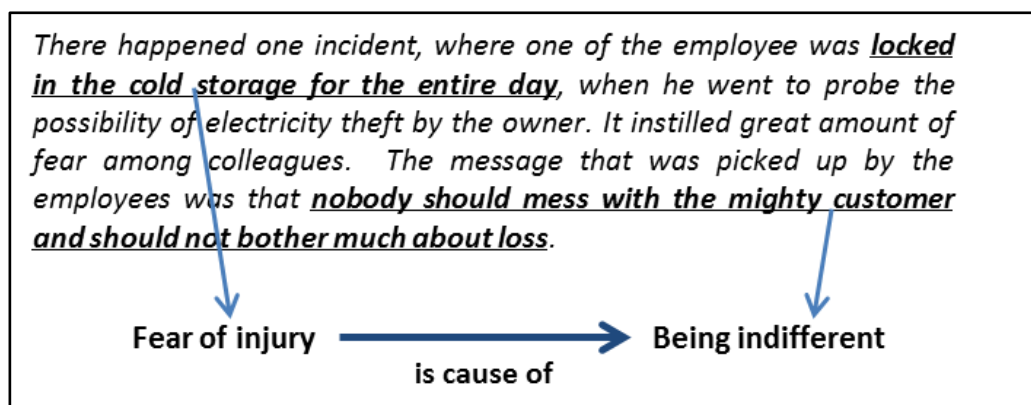
4.2.4. Theoretical Coding

Theoretical coding is the final and the most sophisticated stage of coding. It involves analyzing the focused codes and specifying the relationship between them. Theoretical code act like an umbrella that covers and accounts for codes and categories developed before the stage of theoretical coding (Saldana, 2010).

“Theoretical codes are integrative; they lend form to the focused codes you have collected. These codes may help you tell an analytic story that has coherence. Hence, these codes not only conceptualize how your substantive codes are related, but also move your analytic story in a theoretical direction.” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 63).

In this study, the focused codes were integrated and organized into a logical emerging framework of the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers for electricity theft. The first step in doing so was to identify the underlying relationships between codes, categories and concepts. The relationships identified were causal in nature. Figure 15 demonstrates how the causal relationships were identified from the participant’s response. As shown in figure 15, “...locked in the cold storage for the entire day” coded as ‘fear of injury’ leads to “...nobody should mess with the mighty customer and should not bother much about loss” coded as being indifferent’.

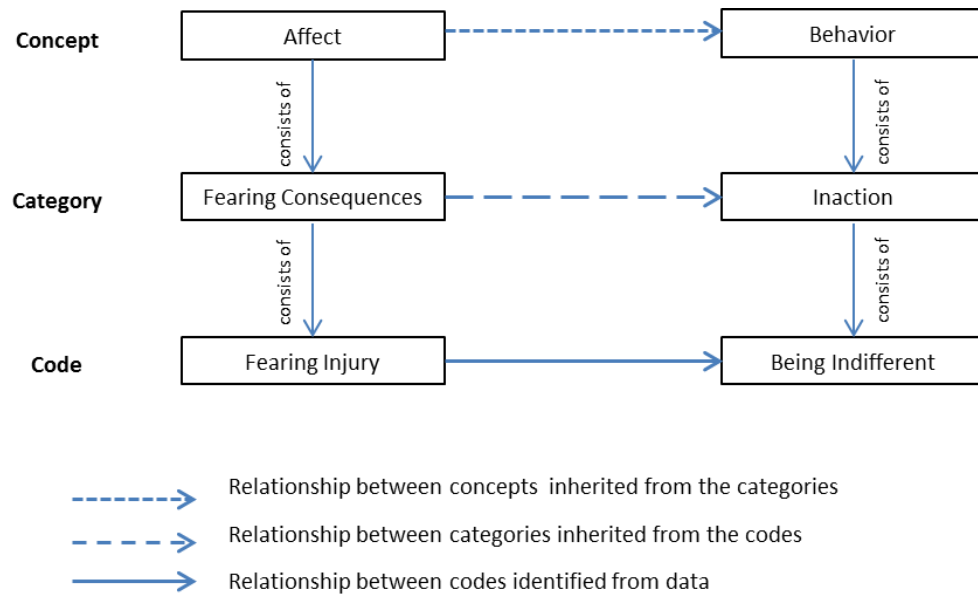
Figure 15 Causal Relationships Identified from the Participant’s Response



Abstraction of these codes into categories, and categories into concepts, lead to inheritance of relationship between codes too. Continuing with the stated example, the code ‘fear of injury’ is associated with the category ‘fearing consequences’ which in turn is associated with the concept ‘affect’. Similarly, the code ‘being indifferent’ is associated with the category ‘inaction’ which in turn is associated with the concept ‘behavior’.

The causal relationship between the codes gets inherited by respective categories which in turn get inherited by respective concepts as shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16 Relationship between concepts/ categories inherited from codes



Figures 17 to 19 show the upward inheritance of relationship from codes to concepts, with the help of the quotations of the participants.

Figure 17 Atlis.ti Screenshot of Relationship between Codes Identified from Data

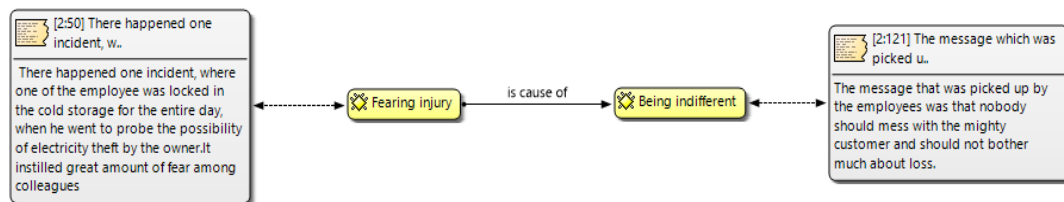


Figure 18 AtliS.ti Screenshot of Relationship between Categories Inherited from Codes

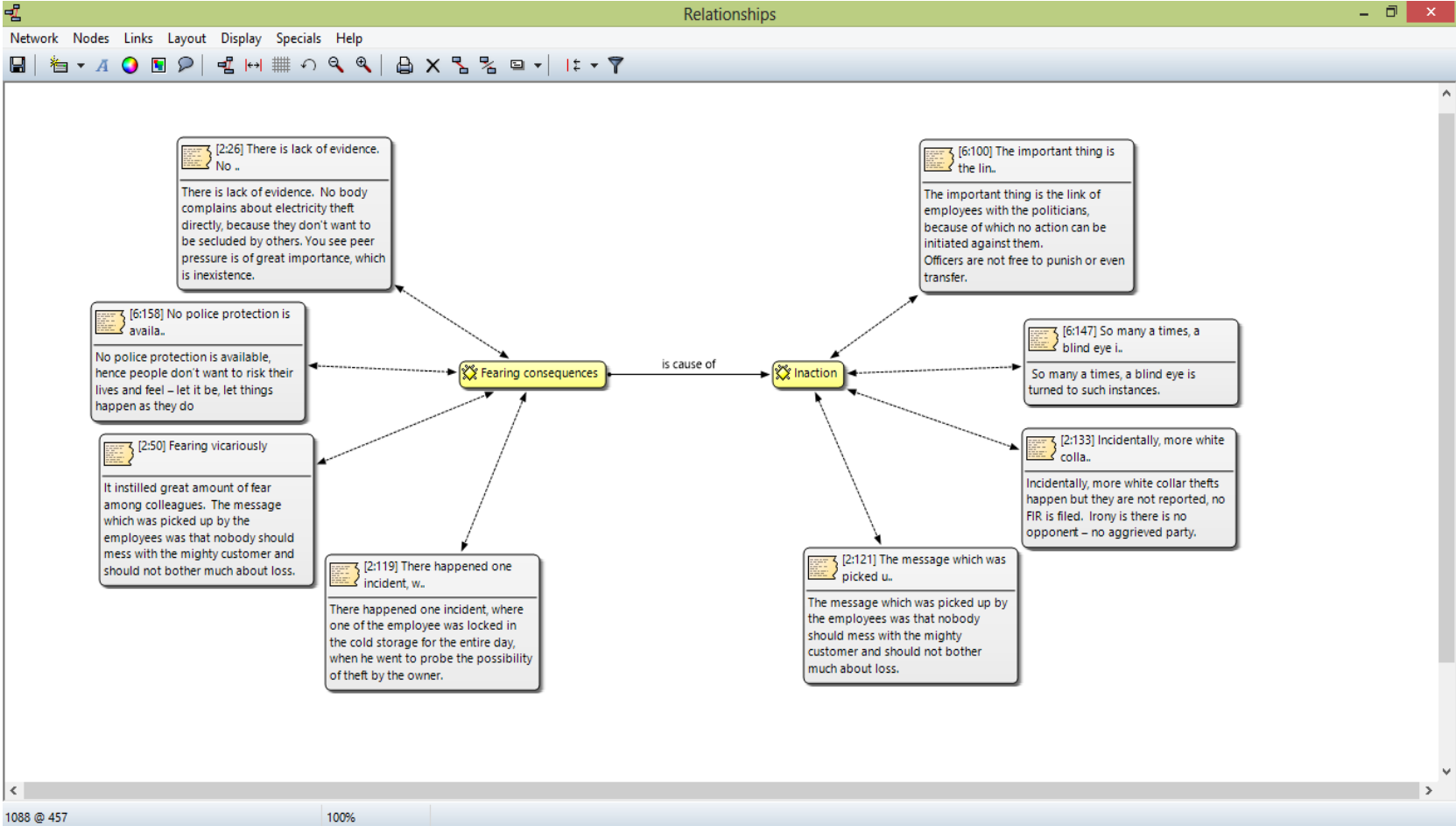
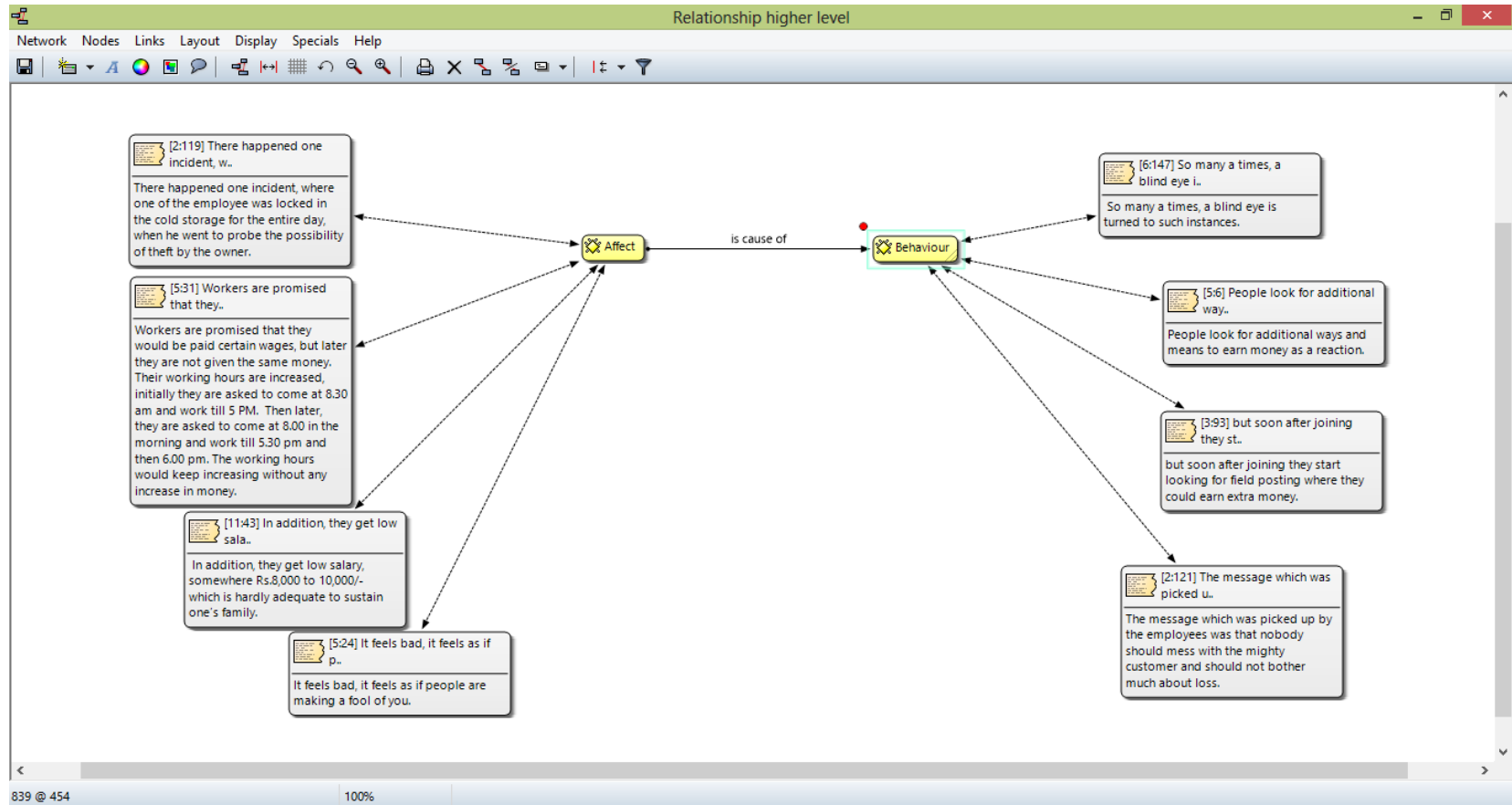


Figure 19 Atlis.ti Screenshot of Relationship between Concepts Inherited from Categories



4.3. Memo-writing

Memos record the abstract thinking about the data. They include questions that data throw and the future course of action for data collection. They are therefore an evidence of the data analysis. Strass and Corbin (1998) put a lot of importance on the use of memos. They opined that memos provide a record of the research process and progress.

“Memos catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue. I through conversing with yourself while memo-writing, new ideas and insights arise during the act of writing. Putting things down on paper makes the work concrete and manageable-and exciting. Once you have written a memo, you can use it now or store it for later retrieval. In short, memo-writing provides a space to become actively engaged in your materials, to develop your ideas, and to fine-tune your subsequent data-gathering.” (Charmaz, 2006, p.72).

Next to follow are the examples of memos. See Figure 20 and 21.

Figure 20 Atlis.ti Screenshot of an Initial Memo

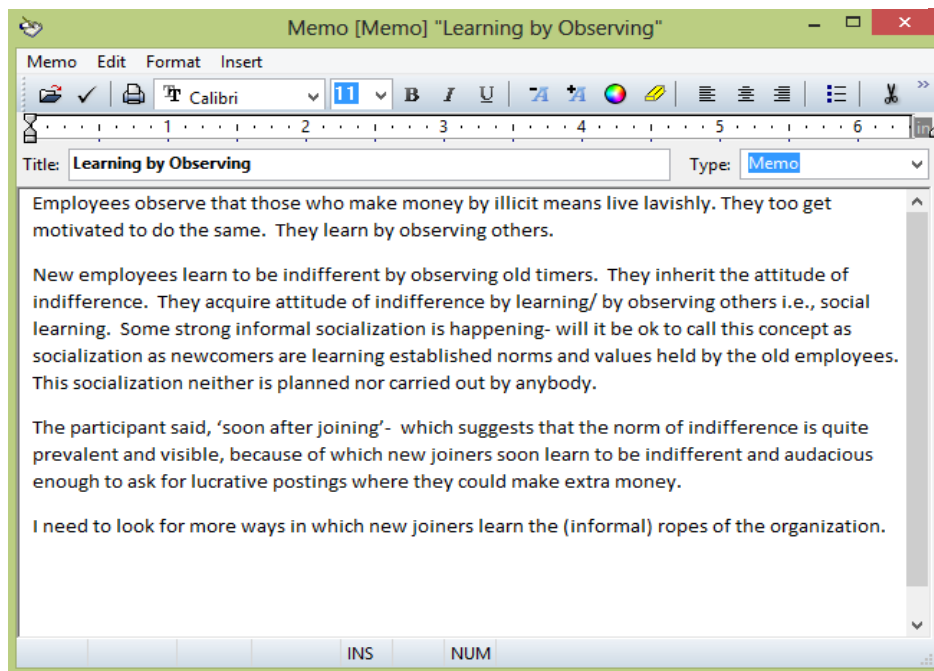
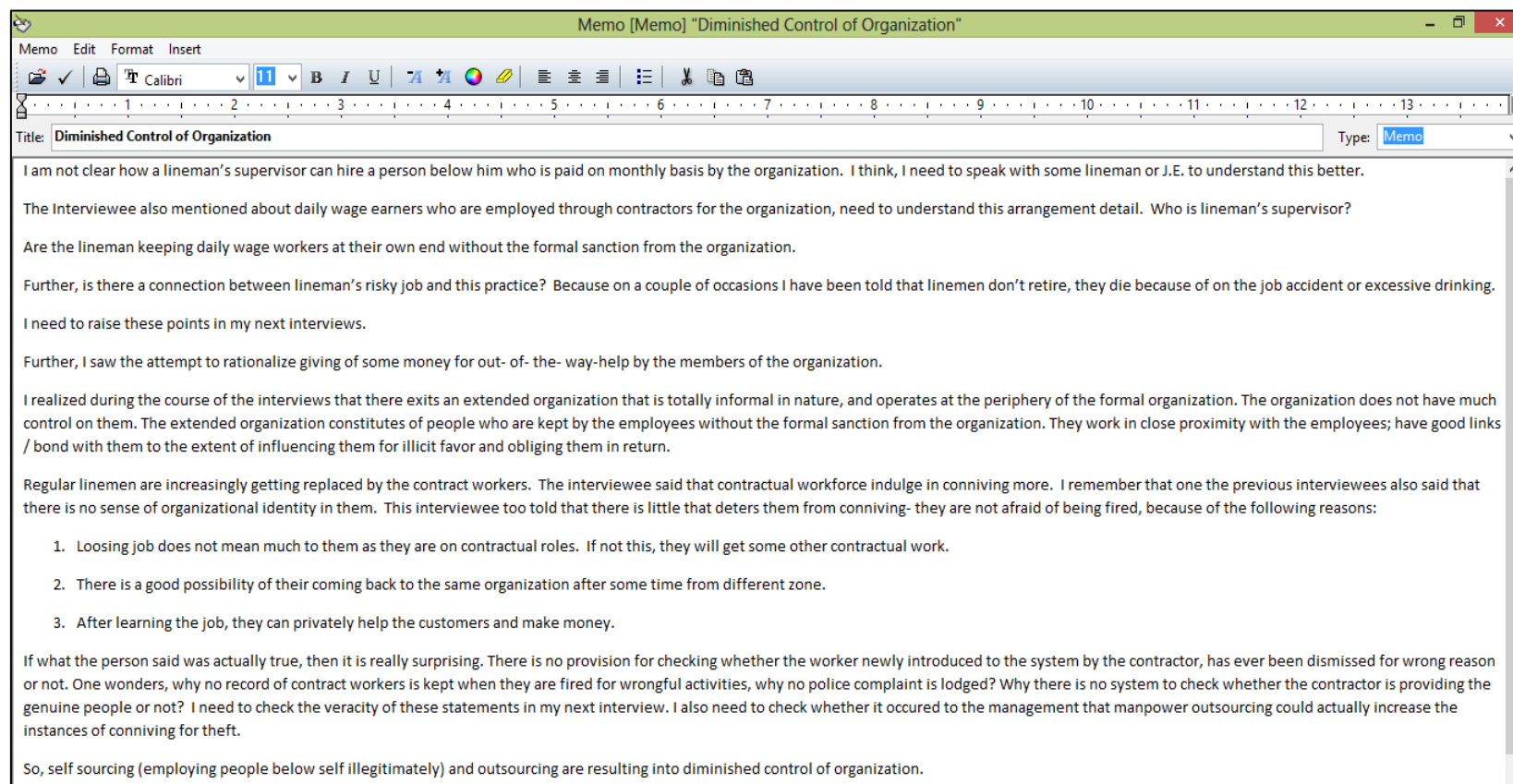


Figure 21 Atlis.ti Screenshot of an Advanced Memo



This concludes the discussion on data analysis; the next chapter presents and explains the findings in form of concepts and categories.

5. Workplace Factors Predisposing Employees to Connive with Consumers in Electricity Theft

This chapter presents findings from the analysis of nineteen interviews in the form of categories and sub-categories and compares them with the conceptual lens as suggested in chapter 2. These categories/ sub-categories depict the workplace factors that predispose employees of Indian power utility to connive with consumers in electricity theft, hence answer the first research question of this study. The categories are illustrated by select quotations of the participants of this study. The quotations are written in quotes in italics. In the end, the chapter summarizes all the categories and compares them with their conceptual lens counterpart.

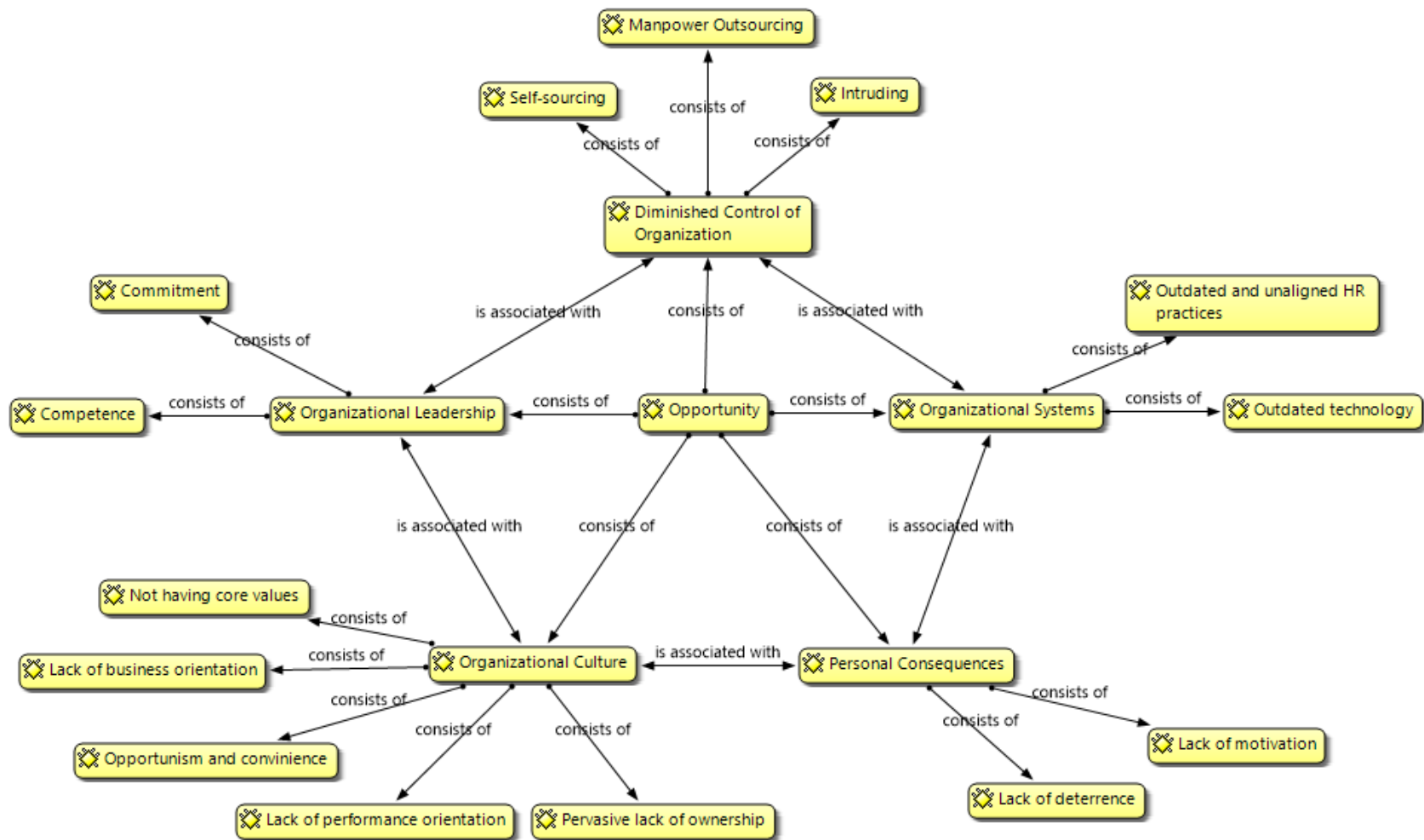
5.1. Opportunity

As is evident from Figure 22, this emerged category is somewhat different from the one stated in the conceptual lens in Chapter 2.

The participants reported five sub-categories of opportunity viz., diminished organizational control, organizational leadership, organizational culture, organizational system and personal consequences, whereas the conceptual lens had suggested perceived organizational support, leadership, internal control, deterrence and organizational structure. So, some of the suggested subcategories emerged as expected, and others did not. The reason for the difference could be the substantive nature of the findings.

Diminished organizational control was the only sub-category which was not included in the conceptual lens; the remaining sub-categories were similar. Though ‘personal consequence’ appeared different by name, but one of its elements ‘lack of deterrence’ was similar to ‘deterrence’ of the conceptual lens. Figure 22 presents the qualitative associative network of opportunity.

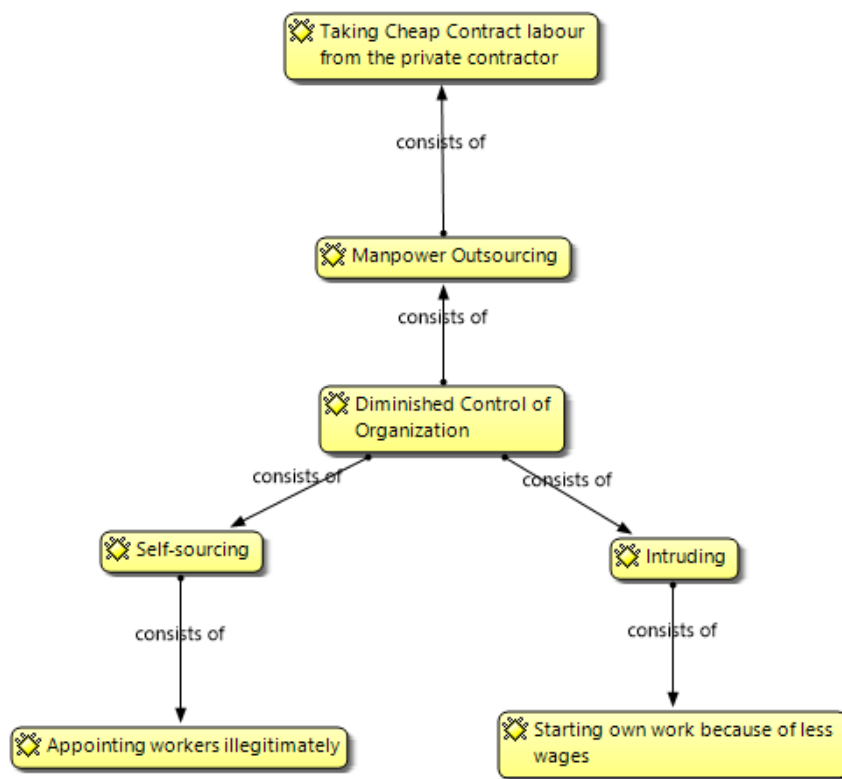
Figure 22 Opportunity



5.1.1. Diminished Organizational Control

Diminished organizational control means that organization is unable to exert influence on behavior of some specific groups of people. It is inept in preventing undesired behavior and promoting desired behavior among people associated with it. The participants cited three reasons for the said inability namely manpower outsourcing, self-sourcing and intruding. Figure 23 presents the constituents of Diminished organizational control.

Figure 23 Diminished Control of Organization



Outsourcing- Loss of control has been identified as one of the major risks of outsourcing (Kremic, Tukel, & Rom, 2006). Organization failed to exert control on its outsourced workers because they neither identified with the organization nor did they value the meagre money paid to them. They found the money inadequate to feed their families, and felt that the same money could be made anywhere else; hence they

were not afraid of losing their jobs. Need, coupled with fearlessness made the contract workers connive with the consumers more. The increased opportunity to interface with consumers aggravated the problem. The absence of checks and balances in the outsourcing agreements, because of which the offending contract workers went scot free, further diluted the influence of organization on them.

“There was only a marginal increase in staff. The operative manpower was minimized. It resulted in shortfall of manpower, which was filled by outsourced manpower on which organization has no control, especially metering.” **Participant 12**

“Further, the contractual staff is prone to mal practice. They are paid less; they have no stake in the organization and have no sense of responsibility. They have no fear of transfer etc.” **Participant 2**

“They have done incorrect outsourcing – the positions which are office based should have been outsourced, rather than field based, because the field work allows for direct interface with the customer. Meter reading and realization of money should have been kept with the regular work force only” **Participant 13**

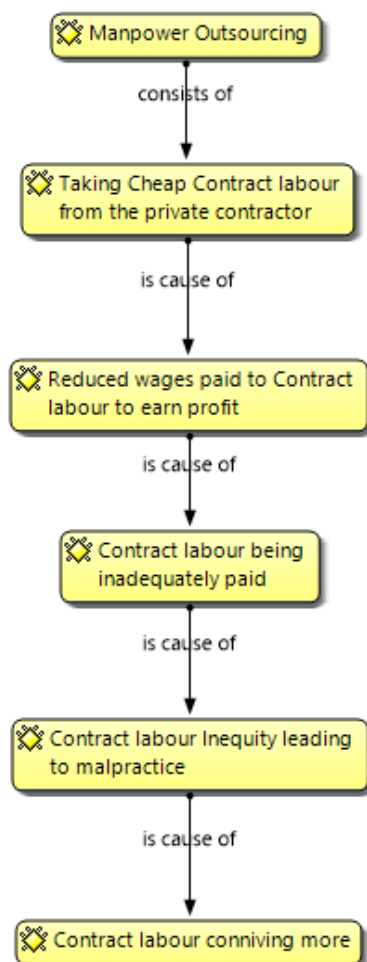
“So, if a worker gets fired from north zone, he gets re-introduced in south or central zone after sometime. No police record is kept. There is no way in my knowledge, in which it can be traced or checked at the time of entry of contract worker whether or not he had been previously changed of any act of connivance. I am also not aware of any system or practice which holds the (manpower) contractor liable for re-introducing a defaulter.” **Participant 6**

“See, contractual workforce is employed mainly. The contractual workforce is not skilled; neither any training is given to them. Further, they are not paid well. In times when even a mason is paid Rs.500/- day, the contractor in our case pay only Rs.5000/- per month. They are not satisfied, as a result, are more prone to such inducement.” **Participant 7**

“There is shortage of manpower because of which the contractual workforce is hired. They don’t work the way regular employees work. Outsiders are outsiders. Secondly, the contract workers are not paid well by the contractor. Therefore, the contract workers connive with customers more.” Participant 17

The above quotations brought out the unintended consequences of manpower outsourcing. They suggested that the contact labor would not work the way regular employees did, because they were paid less, they connived with customers more. They exploit the deficiencies in the systems to get away with the punishments; as a result organization lost its control over them. Figure 24 presents the Qualitative associative network of manpower outsourcing.

Figure 24 Manpower Outsourcing



Organization can control only those people who are employed by it directly or indirectly, and not the pseudo-employees. Power utilities have a lot of pseudo-employees appointed illegitimately by its employees. Since, the employees employ them as a private help for the official work, without the knowledge of organization, the phenomenon has been labeled as self-sourcing.

Following were the reasons stated by the participants because of which such practice happened:

- Risky nature of the job.
- Old age of linemen did not allow them to climb up the poles for correction of faults.
- Excessive workload.
- Good salary of linemen/ billing personnel that gave them a luxury to employ a private-help.
- Availability of unemployed people willing to work for peanuts.

The employees paid the private-help either themselves or made the consumers pay or got them paid through organization by way of petty imprest. Those people soon learned the tricks of the trade and started helping consumers for some monetary gain, to the detriment of the organization. The very fact that the money they made was far from adequate made them start conniving with consumers to earn more. Interface with customers, no fear of consequences and power to take street level decisions presented such people with lots of opportunity to connive. Since, they were not the employees, the organization failed to spot them and exert control over them.

Mentioned below are the excerpts from the participants' interviews:

“So, I keep some help-self staff, which is paid between 5000 to 7000 rupees per month. The money is hardly anything; it is nothing, given the expense they have to make on petrol for commuting from one place to the other. To recover that expense, they give direct connection to the customers, or they

take some money from them for letting their theft of electricity go unnoticed.”

Participant 15

“Linemen, give some money from their pockets and also get some money paid to them (private-help) by the customer like Rs.200 – 500 per complaint. This way, such people make money. Now you tell how such people will run their expenses and feed their families, especially when inflation is sky high. They need money, which then comes from customers through illicit activities.”

Participant 8

“Yes, linemen do keep people below them to get some of their work done. It is their compulsion to keep them. See, the lineman’s work primarily involves getting up on the poles to rectify the problems, which after a certain age is not possible. Linemen retire at the age of 60, do you think it is possible for a lineman of 50 + to climb up the pole.

It is not their fault, but compulsion, because they have to get the work done- there is a lot of pressure from the department, and customers also don’t tolerate delay in redressal of their problems. Above all, a lot many people are available to work for them for peanuts. Linemen don't need to pay them even from their pockets; they make the customers pay these people.”

Participant 19

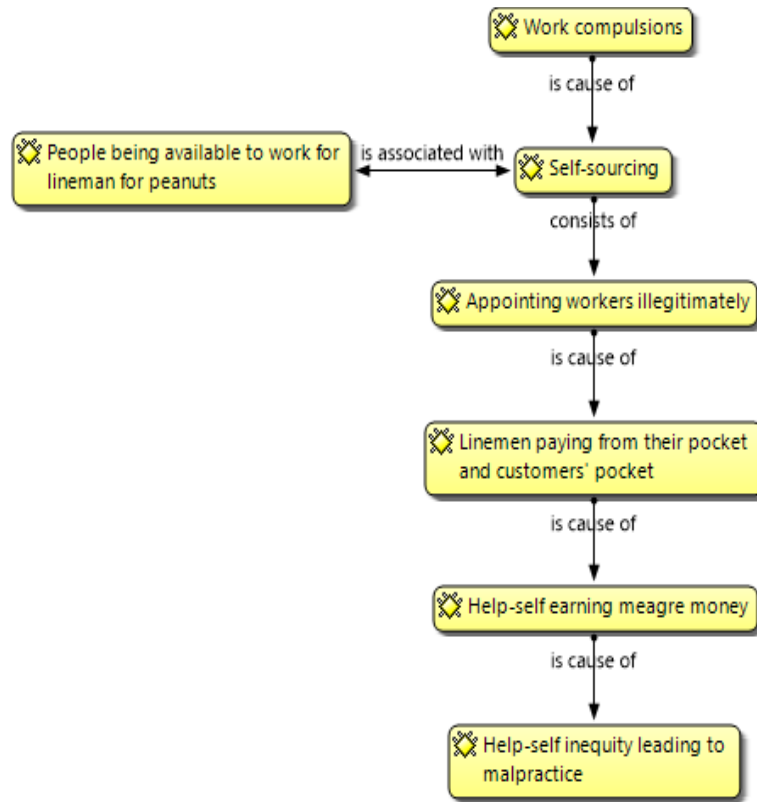
“Yes, when the area under them (linemen) is too big. It is not possible for him (lineman) to manage on his own, for timely redressal of complaints; he is forced to do such things.” **Participant 7**

“Because of the shortage of manpower, the JEs keep below them some operators unofficially on daily wages.” **Participant 11**

“Linemen employ – 4 to 5 people below them who are not trained. The organization does not allow any such appointment.” **Participant 4**

Figure 25 presents the qualitative associative network of self-sourcing on the next page.

Figure 25 Self-sourcing



The third reason because of which power utility lost control was intruding. Utilities seemed to have a porous boundary- their work was not confined to their premises. It work rather seeped through the boundary and ran into the society to each and every household. Many people in the society encroached on the work of power utility that was spread all over- private electricians, customers, contract workers and private-help turned electricians. They stole electricity either themselves or helped others steal, hence the label- intruding. It is important to note here that many contract workers and private-help start their own work- they utilize their experience with the utility and the connections with the insiders to connive with consumers

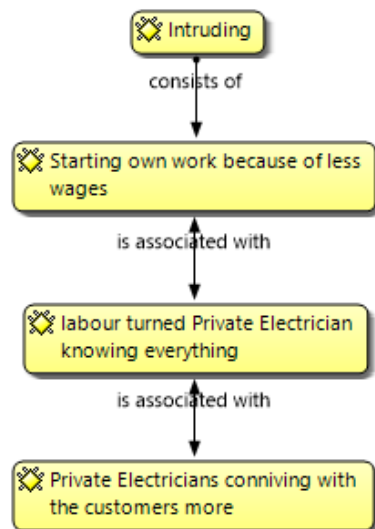
illegitimately. Power utilities influence on them is very limited. Absence of any barrier presented lots of opportunities for conniving.

The text to follow carries quotations of the participants related to intruding and Figure 26 details intruding:

“People learn from each other, and in any case every village has one or two electricians. It is very easy for any electrician with the kind of knowledge he has to put the hook on the cable to access electricity.” **Participant 6**

“The factories steal electricity with the help of private technicians. You know who these private electricians are? They are the contractual workers who leave the job because of very less wages. They know the work in and out. So, what you expect them to do.” **Participant 16**

Figure 26 Intruding



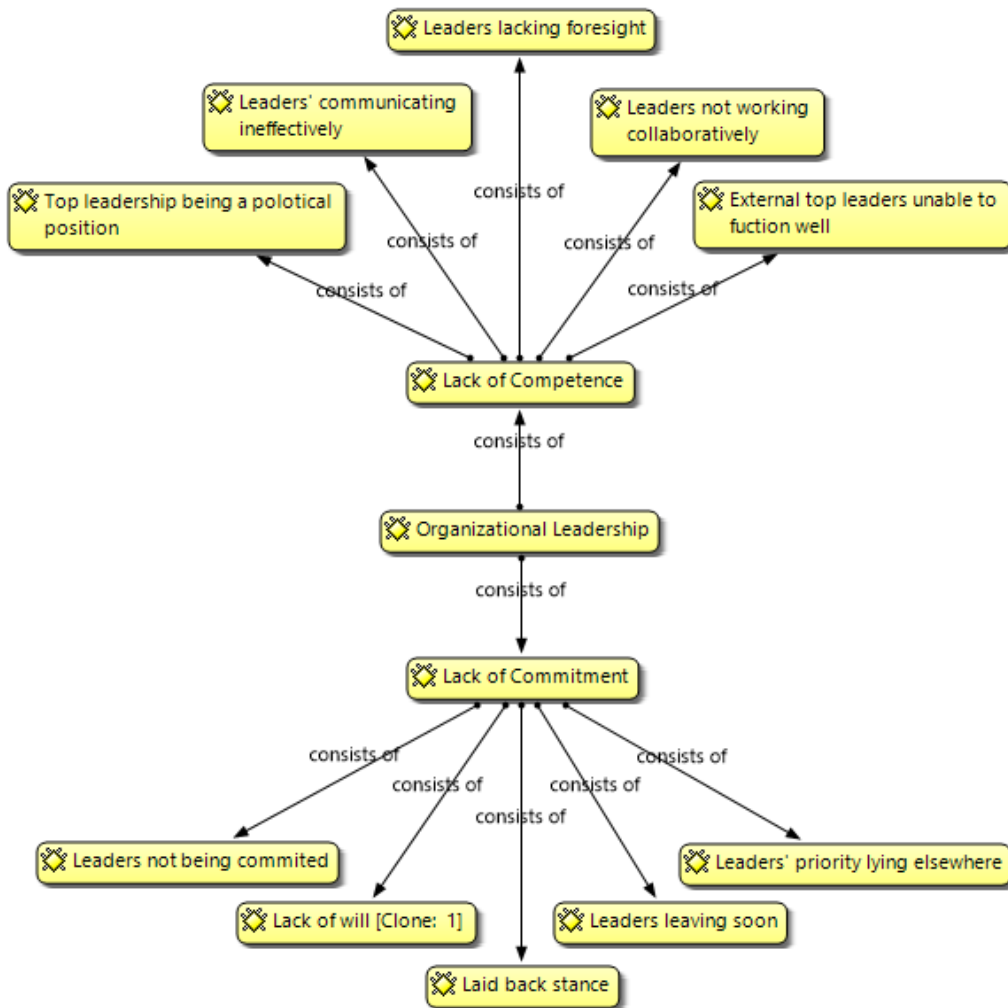
Thus, all the three -manpower outsourcing, self-sourcing and intruding, together largely dilute the control of power utility on people who directly or indirectly work for it, and present to them many opportunities to connive.

5.1.2. Organizational Leadership

A second group of categories were grouped under the heading ‘Organizational Leadership’. As suggested in the literature review, leaders create ethical culture in the organization by setting ethical tone at the top (Sweeney, Arnold, & Pierce , 2010) It is this tone which decides whether any dysfunctional behaviors will be acceptable or not, and either presents or kills the opportunity for dysfunctional behaviors.

Figure 27 presents qualitative associative network of leadership.

Figure 27 Organizational Leadership



The participants of the study said that the leadership of the utility was neither committed nor competent. Many reasons were shared for the lack of commitment on the part of leaders, mentioned below are some important input

top leadership been the political position- the occupants of these positions were driven by the interest of their sponsors which at times resulted in the conflict with the organizational interest, high turnover at leadership positions (Lister, 2007), conflicting priorities, etc.

The above factors diluted the focus on curbing electricity theft at the topmost level resulting in formation of organization culture which was non serious about controlling electricity theft. In the absence of pervasive lack of focus on curbing electricity theft, the dysfunctional behaviors like connivance for electricity theft, increases. Fleet and Griffin (2006) suggested that organizational culture might contribute or detract from dysfunctional behavior in variety of ways. Since leaders shape the formal and informal ethical cultures (Trevino & Nelson, 2004), they therefore play an important role in motivating dysfunctional behavior (Fleet & Griffin, 2006).

Presented below are some of the quotations of the participants of the study:

“The position of MD is a political position. The people who are appointed at the top position help their God Father more than helping the department.”

Participant 14

“But, the problem is that the top management does not have a thought process, a vision to utilize those funds for the betterment of the department. The MD hardly stays in the organization for one year on an average.”

Participant 12

“The orientation needs to be changed – for MD, operations remain utmost important, theft is just one of the hundred other objectives.” ***Participant 2***

“Anything is possible, if one sets one’s mind to it, but there is a deep lack of will on part of the leadership (corporate) and the Government.” **Participant 7**

“I feel that things in company are not improving because the teamwork among top management people is missing- they don’t work collaboratively.” **Participant 13**

In this study, the participants were of the opinion that the leadership was not competent for want of foresight, ability to communicate, collaborate and motivate, and sound understanding of the system. As a result failed to engage employees and created many opportunities for dysfunctional behaviors including connivance.

5.1.3. Organizational Culture

A third group of categories was labeled as Organization culture. It constituted of the values and assumptions shared by the stakeholders of an organization. It defines what is right and wrong, and subsequently directs everyone towards the acceptable way of doing things. The participants of this study reported the organizational culture of the utility was one of the major causes of connivance between employees and consumers for electricity theft. The culture of the utility was described as the distorted culture of opportunism, indifference and convenience, devoid of values, ownership and performance orientation. The culture was such where the focus was just sustaining and where connivance was deeply institutionalized. The entire focus of the utility was on just keeping the services running, and there was no business orientation and understanding of losses- employees don’t relate to the term AT&C losses. Connivance was deeply ingrained in the culture and was not considered wrong; as a matter of fact it was considered a way of life. The culture was marked by mutual accomplicity and audacious impudence (illustrated later in the report).

Next to follow are some of the quotations expressing the views of the participants on culture:

“...now, what we have is a distorted culture of convenience.” **Participant 13**

“There is no orientation of right or wrong... there is no system, no core values,” **Participant 4**

“In Government companies, people would not like to steal in the day time, but would not like to miss opportunity to steal in the night.” **Participant 2**

“They have no qualm to let the organization loose Rs.10,000/- if they are able to make Rs.10/- in the process.” **Participant 8**

“You will find that when the company is privatized there occurs continuous monitoring, but in case of government there is no ownership. This is one of the reasons why the loss in privately owned companies is 3% only.”
Participant 2

“Only 10 % of the workforce is responsible, accountable and involved, rest 90% is non-functional, they are hibernating- they hardly contribute.”
Participant 4

“The state of affairs today is that everybody is waiting for an angel to be born in neighbor’s family to change the situation around.” **Participant 3**

“There is no performance orientation.” **Participant 6**

“An analogy can be drawn between the Indian Railway and Indian power sector – The priority is given to operations, what is considered more important is the supply of electricity.” **Participant 2**

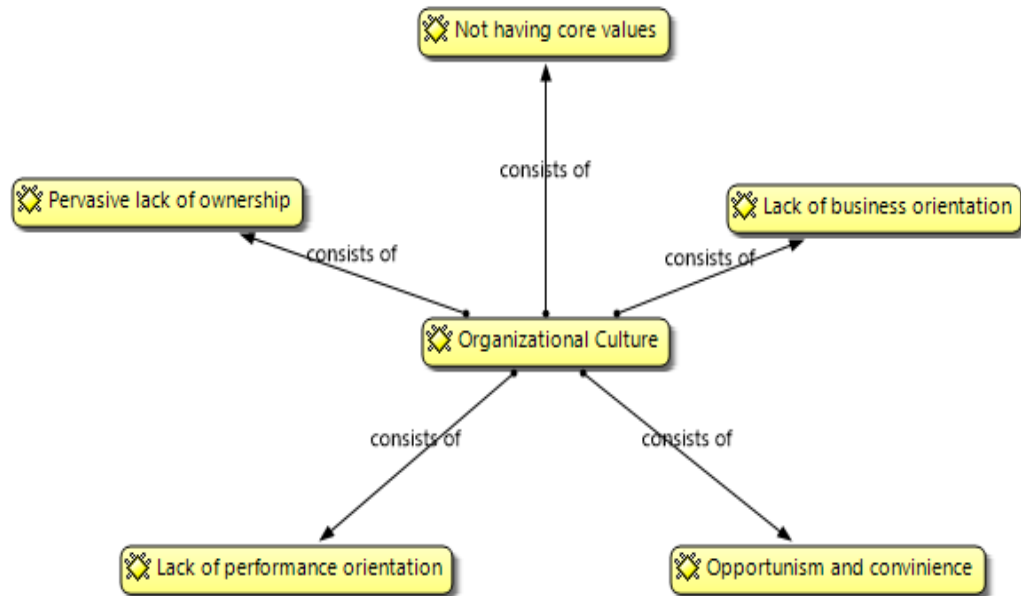
“The prime focus remains continuity of electricity supply than anything else.” **Participant 10**

“People don’t understand this term; they cannot even tell you the full form of AT & C. Up to SDO’s perhaps know about it or J.Es to some extent.”
Participant 7

“It (connivance) is deeply ingrained in the system” Participant 3

Figure 28 presents qualitative associative network on organizational culture on the next page.

Figure 28 Organizational Culture



5.1.4. Organizational Systems

A fourth group of categories was grouped under ‘Organizational Systems’. The inefficient organizational systems generated opportunities for connivance, hence kept under this category. The data advocated division of organizational systems into two-outdated and unaligned HR practices, and outdated technology.

The participants held that un-encouraging HR practices related to HR planning, appointments, performance management system (PMS), capability building, change management and trade unions were responsible for HR losing faith and control, and eventually becoming powerless. Powerless HR could never enforce discipline among

employees, hence presented them with the opportunity to connive with customers more.

As per the participants, improper HR planning led to shortage of manpower, which in turn resulted in reduced supervision and increased connivance. It also led to inefficient outsourcing- an identified reason for increased occurrences of connivance. The quotations to follow express views of the participants:

*“It (HR) has no clue, how to right size the organization, where 10 people are needed, it will have 50 outsourced workers there- those outsourced workers who hardly give any output” **Participant 14***

*“I tell you one thing; our old substation has been divided into two substations now. But, only one additional SSO has been given, line staff has not increased at all. Two substations were made because the consumer base has expanded, logically; the no. of staff too should have gone up, which didn't happen. What's the point of creating additional substation, without increasing the manpower- the same no of people could have operated from the same substation itself, as they have been doing earlier.” **Participant 17***

*“Regular appointments are not happening and only back door entries happening.” **Participant 12***

*“Lately, the manpower has not increased in the same proportion as the workload.” **Participant 15***

The participants reported many flaws in PMS- It was not oriented to mission/ vision of the organization, neither was it oriented to performance; no performance based incentives were paid. The roles and responsibilities of employees were not defined. Employees were promoted basis seniority alone, which the employees found demotivating. The HR practices created inefficiencies in the system and left employees demotivated and disengaged- another factor that fuel opportunity to connive.

*“Roles responsibilities are not defined, you ask any employee- he will not be able to tell what he has done from morning until evening. The story is the same across the board.” **Participant 4***

*“People should be incentivized; their salary rise should be in proportion to their performance. It is a Government department no extra incentive is given howsoever hard you work. Incentives and promotion should be given on the basis of the performance.” **Participant 11***

*“There are almost no internal promotions happening from SSO to J.E. level now which is creating a kind of imbalance.” **Participant 6***

*“Human Development is non-existent. Nothing is happening at the capacity building front” **Participant 4***

The participants spoke depressingly about the status of technology in power utilities. They opined that slow adoption of advanced technology was limiting proper monitoring as a result presenting more opportunities to connive.

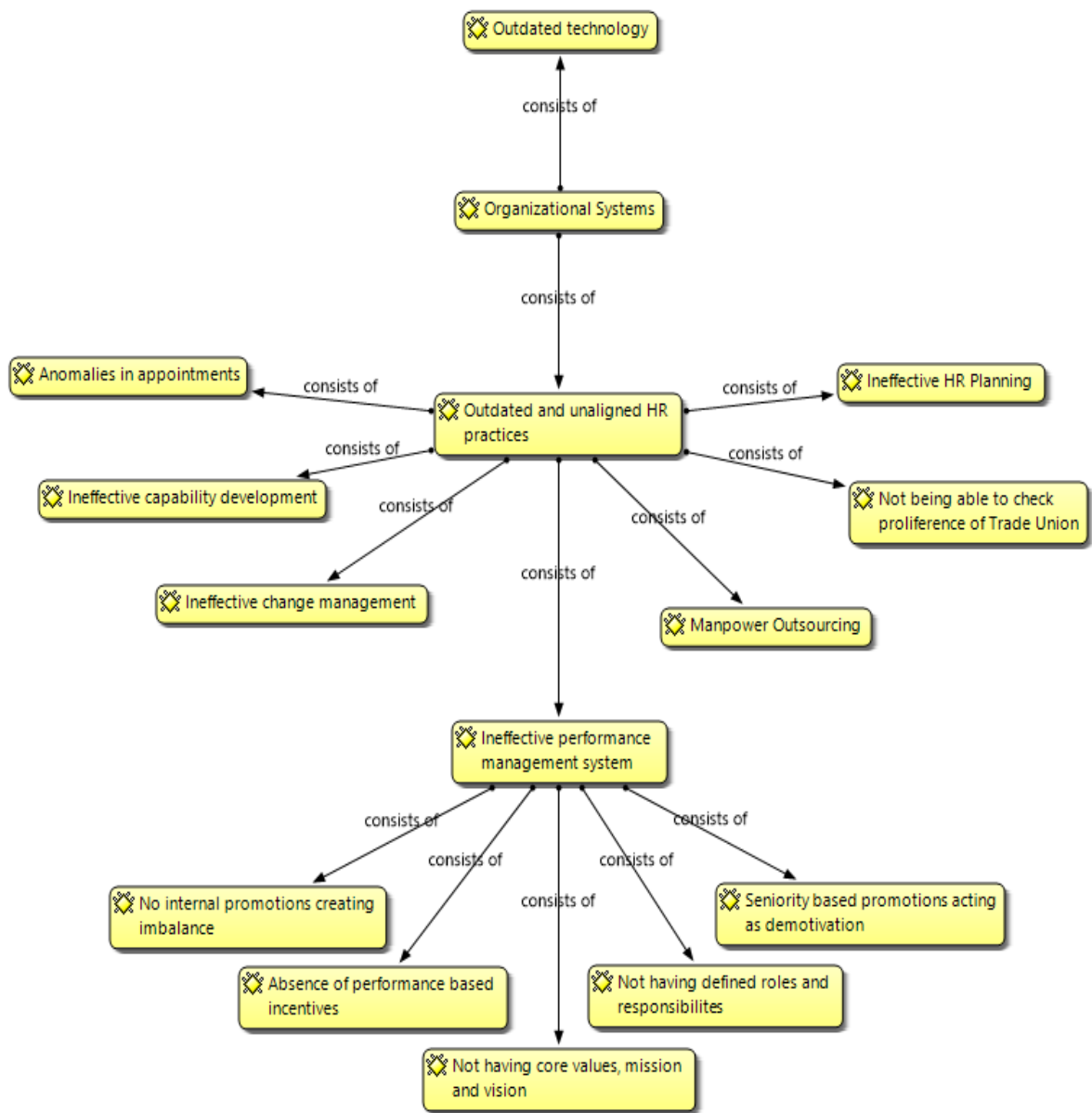
*“Further, we are lagging in terms of technology. We have not been able to install smart meters. The computerization is not complete as a result, metering and monitoring are not happening properly.” **Participant 3***

*“Metering system is not ready for automation.” **Participant 4***

*“As per Regulatory Commission’s guidelines, the distribution companies were supposed to introduce bunch cables. There is a big delay in doing so.” **Participant 12***

Figure 29 presents the qualitative associative network of Organizational Systems on the next page.

Figure 29 Organizational Systems



5.1.5. Personal Consequences

Skinner’s (1948) theory of operant conditioning states that behavior is the function of its consequences. Positive consequence results in an increased frequency of the behavior and negative consequences result in diminished frequency of the behavior.

The participants reported that there was absence of both- positive as well as negative consequences in the organization; hence there was a lack of motivation as well as deterrence at the individual level. There was no incentive for desired behavior (not conniving, or reporting connivance) and no deterrence for undesired behavior (connivance for electricity theft).

It was shared by the participants that the inadequate and inappropriate incentives resulted in demotivation. The participants shared numerous problems the utility faced in identifying whom to incentivize and how much-

- When AT&C losses as a result of reduction in electricity thefts go down, all stakeholders demand their share. It is difficult to attribute the reduction in loss to one employee.
- Incentive is a two way sword- on one hand, a small incentive fails to motivate employees to not connive/ check electricity theft; on the other hand a bigger incentive increases the possibility of employees falsely implicating consumers for claiming the incentive.

Presented below are the quotations of the participants capturing the sentiments expressed above:

*“The incentive scheme brought by organization fails to motivate staff as they are not lucrative enough. The incentives offered are inadequate to motivate people from conniving with customer. The staff makes lot of money by other means instead.” **Participant 1***

*“As is difficult to blame one person, it is difficult to identify one to whom incentive can be given.” **Participant 2***

*“The other problem with incentive scheme for reduction in AT & C losses is identifying whom to give incentive and how much. Everybody from peon to Chief wants incentive in proportion of one’s salary.” **Participant 3***

“There is a problem with big incentive. It puts consumers at risk – there is a possibility of linemen falsely implicating consumers to avail the incentive.”

Participant 3

“See, incentives are given to the informer. The scheme is open for all, but employees. There is no incentive as such” ***Participant 10***

“No, Government does not give any such money, neither does organization. We work from morning until late in the evening, even at night, on the days of rest, anytime for emergency. There is no return.” ***Participant 15***

The reported reasons for lack of deterrence were not very different. The participants blamed absence of stringent rules against connivance, difficulty in establishing connivance, and ineffective penalty for connivance, for lack of deterrence. It was reported that employees connive collectively, that they acted as accomplices to each other. Therefore, the cases of electricity theft were more often than not, not reported, even when they were; convicting one employee was found difficult. The participants further explained the reasons for lack of deterrence, namely:

- No penalty- A blind eye was turned to the act of connivance because the number of employees was limited, had any action been taken against them who would have done the work. There was a lot of political pressure for letting connivance for electricity theft go unnoticed.
- Delayed punishment- Delay in punishment was one of the well accepted norms in the organization. Delayed punishment reportedly lost its deterrence power.
- Inadequate punishment- Quite a few incidents of theft were reported where only one increment was stopped against the need to suspend the person. FIRs were generally not filed, only departmental inquiries were initiated which too after some time are closed.

- **Withdrawing punishment-** Many participants said that whatever little punishment is levied for connivance is soon withdrawn under pressure from politicians.

Some participants also reflected on what make contract laborers (who reportedly connive more to restore equity) become undeterred. They said that the contract laborers don't feel belonged; the meagre money they make with organization can be made anywhere, so they don't fear being fired. Further, the loopholes in outsourcing arrangement allow them re-entry into the organization despite being fired for connivance, hence no deterrence.

Presented below is the account of the participants of this study:

“People don't have fear of suspension, despite being booked for instances of theft. They would make one arrangement or other- One call from politician, and they are set free, else they are set free by giving money.” **Participant 6**

“Further, the contractual staff is prone to mal practice. They are paid less; they have no stake in the organization and have no sense of responsibility. They have no fear of transfer etc.” **Participant 2**

“It is not deterrence, because they again get the job after 2-3 months. The contractor introduces them in another zone after some time. Otherwise also, even if they don't get a job they make money. Since they know the work, they help customers at their own end by charging money.” **Participant 6**

“There have been some cases where employees were suspended for some wrong doing, but then reinstated soon, in the same unit. And delay in disciplinary action is a very normal and accepted practice.” **Participant 3**

“Nothing happens to anybody here, at the most, employees are suspended for some time, but soon they come back.” **Participant 19**

“What is missing here is the lack of deterrence. There has been an instance, where termination of the employees was compulsory, but he was let go with only an increment stoppage.” **Participant 19**

“. Secondly, people are reinstated after being suspended for 3 to 6 months for connivance/ electricity theft. Nobody is terminated” **Participant 16**

“No disciplinary action is taken, those who indulge in wrong things, hardly get suspended.” **Participant 13**

“No disciplinary action is taken against those who indulge in wrong things; they are hardly suspended.” **Participant 12**

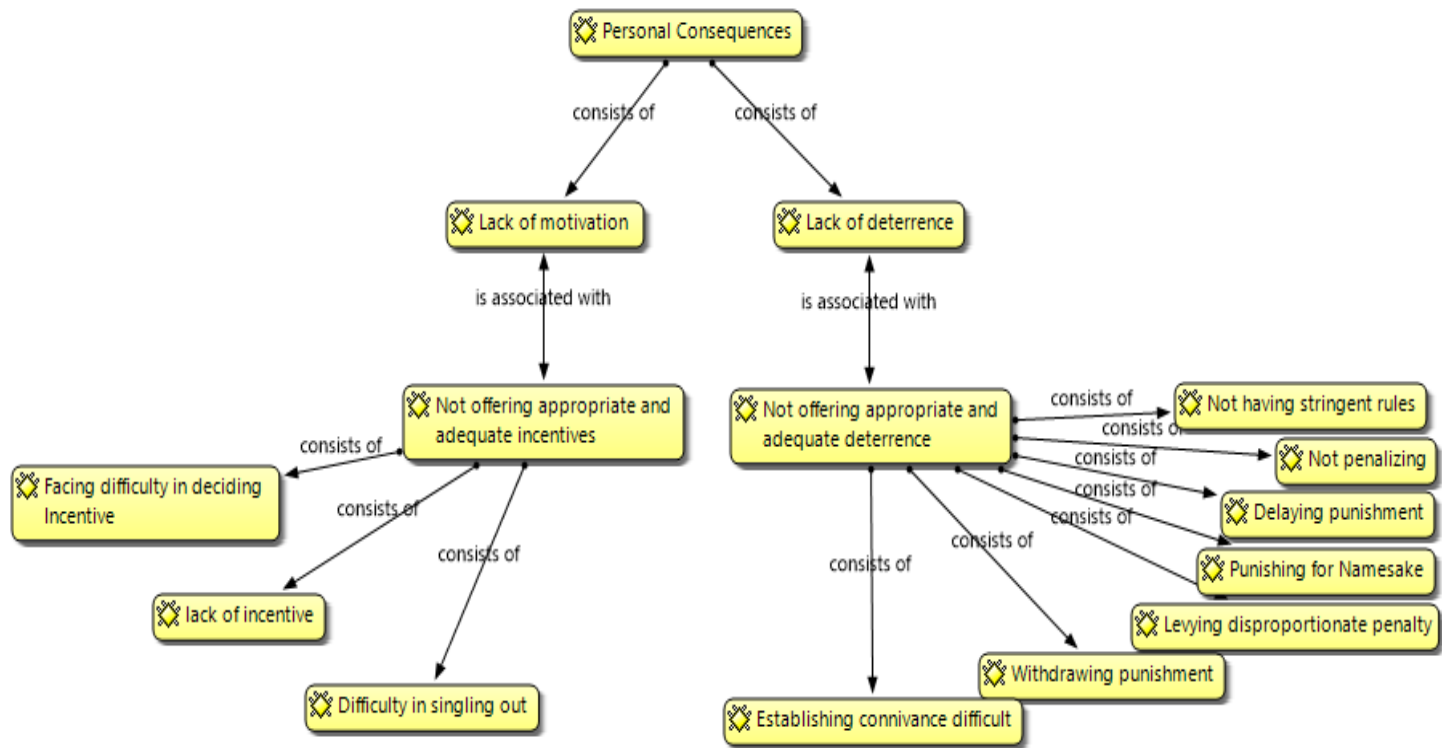
“They would make one arrangement or other- One call from politician, and they are set free, else they are set free by giving money.” **Participant 6**

“See, no point working against linemen. The connivance is difficult to be established.” **Participant 11**

“It is not possible to prove that the employee has let this happen or that he has contributed to it.” **Participant 19**

The qualitative associative network of personal consequences is presented in Figure 30.

Figure 30 Personal Consequences



5.2. Constraint

As is evident from Figure 31, the emerged category had some elements of similarity with the one stated in the conceptual lens in Chapter 2.

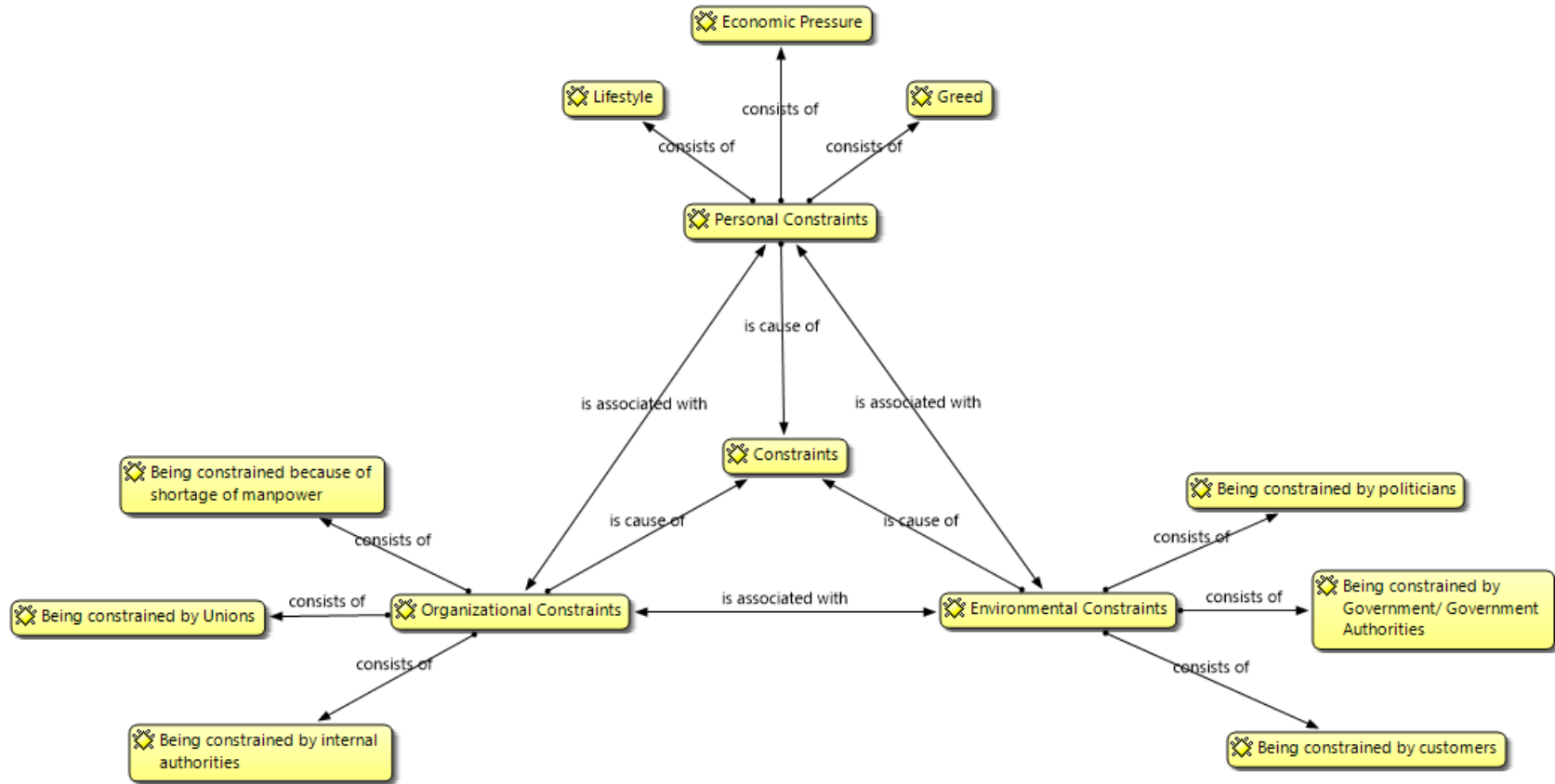
The participants reported three categories of constraint viz., environmental constraint, organizational constraint and personal constraint, just like the conceptual lens. The categories of the conceptual lens were- external pressure, employment pressure and personal pressure. The emerged categories were different from the ones of the conceptual lens in terms of their constituents.

The conceptual lens's category 'external pressure' include financial stability of the organization, market expectations and political pressure, whereas its emerged counterpart 'environmental constraint' comprised of constrained by politicians, constrained by Government authorities and constrained by customers. So, the commonality between the two is limited to 'pressure from politicians'. The participants did not indicate financial stability of the organization and market expectations as the reasons for connivance for electricity theft. Might be because, unlike other dysfunctional behavior (fraud/ corruption), connivance solely benefits individuals and not the organization.

The conceptual lens's subcategory 'employment pressure' include financial interest of management, organizational injustice and inequity, and job dissatisfaction, whereas its emerged counterpart 'organizational constraint' comprises of shortage of manpower, trade unions and internal authorities. The participants laid a lot of emphasis on shortage of manpower as a prime reason behind connivance. Because of the shortage of manpower, they felt constrained in taking appropriate action against the offenders. They feared taking actions against employees because there weren't many; they feared that taking action may jeopardize continuity of work.

The last subcategory of the conceptual lens 'personal pressure' resonated with the emerged subcategory completely. Both included greed, lifestyle and economic pressures. The next section summarizes the emerged category.

Figure 31 Constraints



5.2.1. Environmental Constraints

The first category of 'constraints' is environmental constraints, which emerged as one of the prominent reasons of connivance between employees and consumers. The participants held three major stakeholders viz., politicians, Government authorities and consumers responsible for creating the environmental constraints.

As per the participants, politicians' vote bank politics to a large extent hampered disciplinary actions against the wrong doers whether they were the employees or consumers (Gulati & Rao, 2007). Electricity constituted the essential commodity in India, which is scarce and needed by all. Captured below are some of the quotations of the participants on political pressure.

*“Senior management is not able to function effectively because of too much interference of politicians. If you look at ***** sector - the organization is suffering maximum losses there, but nobody can touch the existing team. The people there are the favorites of ministers. There is a political pressure on management not to transfer them. Politicians want to have their own people posted in their areas for the obvious reasons.”* **Participant 3**

“No, in a lot many cases charge sheets are filed, departmental inquiry is made, increments are stopped, and orders for recovery are made. But thanks to political interference, most of the times orders are rolled back.” **Participant 3**

“The important thing is the links of employees with the politicians because of which no action can be initiated against them. Officers are not free to punish or even transfer them.” **Participant 6**

“Further, one call from the politician, police does not even entertain request for filing an FIR.” **Participant 10**

“The regular JEs go through humiliation while getting work done through the outsourced workers as they are not free to take disciplinary action against them. There is a lot of political pressure on them.” **Participant 14**

“These contractors too are the people of politicians. There is a lot of interference of politician in this industry. They put pressure on officers to let the theft go unnoticed, let culprits go free. Vote Bank Politics, you see. The theft and connivance will reduce to a great extent if political pressure is checked.” **Participant 19**

“There is a pressure on employees to let electricity theft continue- pressure from politicians,” **Participant 15**

The officials of power utility felt constrained by Government or Government Authorities. Many a times, their decisions hung in balance for want of a nod from the Government, which took ages to happen. Insensitivity of Government and bureaucratic procedures results in inordinate delay in decision making, which in turn results in costly inefficiencies.

Mentioned below is what the participants said about the same:

“Revised organization structure is waiting an approval from Government since 2008. Now even the revised structure will not have enough provision or be adequate to meet the current manpower requirement.” **Participant 2**

“Inspection can be done in day time only, that too between 9.00 AM to 5.00 PM. Everybody knows that the maximum theft occurs in the late evening to early morning period. The male members of the family return from their jobs in the evening, it is then they put hook – use the electricity the entire night and remove the hook in the morning. But inspections are not allowed in the night, so such cases don’t get caught.” **Participant 7**

“Yes, police lethargy. Police doesn’t take complaints of electricity theft seriously. In 90 % of the cases no arrest is made. People are discharged after taking some fine from them. This happens under political pressure.” **Participant 7**

*“Even the Government machinery is not sensitive, electricity theft is the last priority for the police department.” **Participant 2***

The officials felt constrained because of the customers too (Gulati & Rao, 2007), who sought help from the utility staff and politicians to access electricity/ expedite services illegitimately. The nexus between mighty customers, politicians and regulatory commission too was reported to be a reason which added on to the constraint experienced by the officials.

In the words of the participants of this study:

*“Because of the workload, the complaints are not handled on time. The irritated customers themselves offer money to the employees to get their work done fast, and some of the employees accept that.” **Participant 9***

*“Shortage of resources – metes, insulators, wires. Because of that we are not able to solve problems of customers on time which put pressure on employees and then they look for ways to oblige them.” **Participant 6***

*“Yes, I tell you one more thing- there is no provision of monitoring BPL families who had once been given free connections under Rajeev Gandhi Vidhutikaran Yojna (Electrification Scheme). After many years, those free connections are still continuing, despite many of those families no longer remaining BPL. There is no revision of list of the BPL families. One can't do anything even if one tries to, as families constitute the vote bank of politicians.” **Participant 6***

5.2.2. Organizational Constraints

In addition to environment, organization too offered a lot of constraints in checking the connivance between employees and consumers for electricity theft. The biggest organizational constraint reported by the participant was shortage of manpower. The

shortage of manpower constrained the supervisor's discretion of taking disciplinary actions against the offenders for conniving in electricity theft. They could not penalize, transfer or fire employees, because there were already less. The dire consequence of punishing an employee did not let them take a free decision on connivance for theft. Secondly, the shortage of manpower does not allow a strong vigil on electricity theft. Finally, the manpower available to utilities was not adequate to run the electricity supply itself, hence the focus on ways to curb connivance for electricity theft got diluted.

The participants spoke prolifically on shortage of manpower as the biggest constraint in the way of checking connivance for electricity theft, as mentioned below:

“Shortage of manpower- Officials cannot fire people because there aren't many. They need them for running the services. In every substation some 10 linemen are needed, whereas in reality you would find only 1 or 2. So many a times, a blind eye is turned to such instances.” **Participant 6**

“If you book your staff for theft, how will the work happen with a limited few?” **Participant 19**

*“Let me tell you, when I was posted at **** subdivision, which is a very vast area, there were 6 electricity offices with only two J.Es – one J.E. had 2 officers under him and the other had 4. Poor J.E most of the time struggled ensuring the electricity supply remains on. Because of the vast spread of area, it is not possible for him to check thefts.”* **Participant 7**

“Lately, the manpower has not increased in the same proportion as the workload has, because of the shortage of manpower, keeping a close supervision on what is going on in the field is not possible for the supervisors. I have to take care of 10,000 to 15,000 customers with a staff of 7 to 8 persons only.” **Participant 15**

“There are already too many important things to take care of than theft. There is too much pressure from the top to show profit, and the easiest way to

do so is to reduce manpower. The departments where 40-50 employees used to work earlier now have 20-25 only.” Participant 16

The participants suggested that they at times felt constrained while taking actions against electricity theft/ connivance because of the instructions from internal authorities. Despite being earnest they could not book the offenders against the wishes of the top bosses.

“There is a pressure on employees to let electricity theft continue- pressure from politicians, pressure from higher authorities of the organization. In such situation, even those employees who want to bring in some improvement, too give in and become indifferent.” Participant 14

“Madam, instructions come from above, employees at lower level can’t do anything even if they want to” Participant 19

Another reported organizational constraint was Union. Presence of multiple and mighty unions impeded the process of checking dysfunctional behaviors of employees including connivance. Supervisors were subjected to pressure to ensure that disciplinary action was not initiated, or withdrawn if already initiated.

“And, how can one forget union activity- we have seventeen unions and associations. You try transferring a worker for any reason; union will not let it happen. Four to six unions normally engage for table talks, rest would talk individually to influence posting.” Participant 3

“Any transfer for disciplinary reasons, especially of a lower staff is strongly resisted by the union.” Participant 2

5.2.3. Personal Constraints

The participants brought to light many personal constraints that compelled employee to connive. The first among them was economic pressure- the wages paid to contract and private-help laborers were far from adequate. They found their wages inadequate to feed their families and provide them with basic necessities of life; hence looked for opportunities to make more money by other means, conniving with consumers in electricity theft was one of such opportunities.

These people whose wages are hardly enough to feed their families, need more money for education of children and other necessary expenses. To meet those expenses, the contract workers start making money anyhow.

Participant 16

Now you tell how such people will run their expenses and feed their families, especially when inflation is sky high. **Participant 8**

A few participants reflected on the change that the society had undergone, and the change in lifestyle it brought about:

“These days people want to live beyond their means. The one who rides bicycle wants to drive a motorcycle.” **Participant 2**

“These people who are obtaining benefit this way and improving their lifestyle.” **Participant 2**

“Earlier, people involved in corruption used to be looked down upon, today those who are not corrupt are considered fools.” **Participant 19**

Some of the participants also held greed responsible for increased instances of connivance between employees and consumers for electricity theft (Rae & Subramaniam, 2008).

“People do it for money” **Participant 10**

“The first reason is the same world over- Human Greed.” **Participant 17**

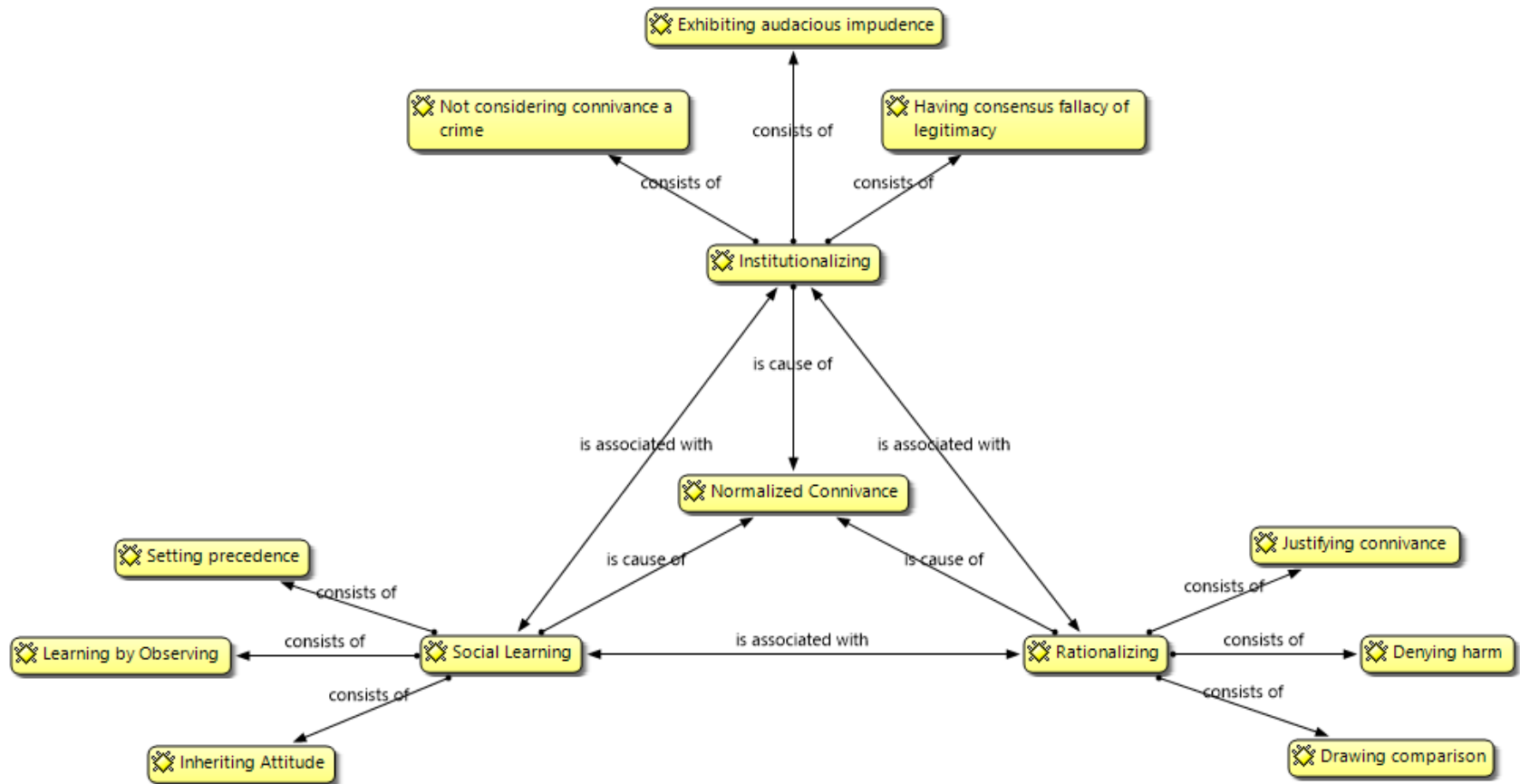
5.3. Normalization

As is evident from Figure 32, the emerged concept is more or less the same as that of the conceptual lens described in Chapter 2. The two categories- ‘institutionalizing’ and ‘rationalizing’ emerged as expected, but the third category ‘social learning’ is different from its conceptual lens’s counterpart ‘differential association’. The study did not find evidences of differential association where a person is presented with criminal patterns, techniques, motivation for crime. On the contrary, it found many instances where the new joiner learned the existing ways himself by observing the old timers. Therefore, the category was labeled as social learning.

Connivance is an established and accepted norm in the organization, the participants reported that give and take is normal, making money by letting electricity theft happen in connivance with consumers was not considered wrong, nobody complained about it, everybody was involved and generally connivance was done collectively. So, it would not be wrong to say that connivance was normalized. The study found all elements of normalization - institutionalizing, rationalizing and social learning. Next to follow are the qualitative associative network and the elaboration of ‘normalized corruption. Affect as a category was manifested at individual level only. It was more an outcome of interplay among opportunity, constraints, and norms.

Figure 32 presents the Qualitative associative network of Normalization.

Figure 32 Normalization



5.3.1. Institutionalization

Ashforth and Anand (2003), defined institutionalization as the process by which corrupt practices are enacted in organization as a matter of routine, often without conscious thought about their propriety. It is the transformation of the actions into routine, mechanical, highly programed decision (Kelman, 1973). The responses of the participants suggested that the utility employees didn't consider connivance a crime; they showed audacious impudence, and held a consensus fallacy of legitimacy about connivance. The elements of institutionalizing of corruption could be seen in the following quotations:

“Every commercial transaction that happens, makes people pay money, higher the price of that service, higher is the money that gets paid by the way of Suvidha Shulk (facilitation charges) which is set around 10% of the transaction.” **Participant 2**

“Nobody needs say anything; the contractors know the percentage of the amount to be given to the JE, cashier and others.” **Participant 16**

Connivance seems to be normative (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). For utility employees too, connivance was a well-accepted norm.

“...it is believed to be a set and accepted norm and people remain ready to seize any such opportunity. It is a pact between customer and the employee, no one else gets to know about it” **Participant 2**

Institutionalization makes people behave mindlessly (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Utility employees too seemed to engage in mindless behavior. Mentioned below is one such example

“When the JEs were told that the new meters were not prone to tempering, they got curious, and showed a great interest in knowing- how to break the lock? They requested that they be given the CD which carries the software to change the programming of the meters. They had no shame in asking for it.” **Participant 3**

The responses indicated that the employees had become accustomed to the aversiveness and riskiness of connivance, which was an important element of institutionalization.

“See, here the crime happens with knowledge.” Participant 4

Institutionalization of connivance was visible from the following quotations, in which connivance was seen to be the right and the only course to be adopted.

“99% of employees don’t consider salary as income, to them income is additional money they make by conniving.” Participant 3

“...So stealing is not considered wrong. It is more of an accepted phenomena – it works like this only.” Participant 2

“It (conniving for electricity theft) is not considered as a crime the way violating the traffic rules is not considered a crime” Participant 10

Connivance seemed to have embedded in the way utility employees worked, hence institutionalized. The responses also suggested that utility employees had internalized connivance not only as permissible, but desirable behavior (Zucker, 1977).

5.3.2. Social Learning

This category suggests that utility employees learn to connive by observing others getting benefited by conniving, through the mental processing of information, i.e., by way of social learning. Social learning assumes that modeling influences produce learning principally through their informative functions (Bandura, 1971).

Social learning occurs when observer’s behavior gets changed after observing the behavior of a model. The consequence faced by the model influences the behavior of the observer, by way of vicarious reinforcement. All the elements of social learning were present in the responses of the participants- Because of pervasiveness of

connivance in the utility, the new joiners could observe employees (model) conniving and acquiring wealth (called vicarious reinforcement by Bandura (1971)). Mass prevalence of connivance for theft and lack of deterrence resulted in inheritance of connivance behavior. The quotations to follow corroborate that connivance for electricity theft spread in organization by way of social learning.

“When others see that people are making money by wrong methods and no action is taken against them, they get irritated first and then motivated to indulge in such behavior themselves.” **Participant 6**

“People learn by seeing - when they see seniors making money, they say to themselves – why to report cases, higher ups make money, no action is taken against anybody, why do we bother. Whenever cases are reported, deals are made and people get money in proportion to their designation.” **Participant 6**

“...people learn by seeing others, they get influenced by the fact that people are living a comfortable life by making additional money and nothing happens to them.” **Participant 8**

“Employees inherit such attitude from senior employees. At the time of joining, they are innocent, but soon after joining they start looking for field posting where they could earn extra money.” **Participant 3**

“These people who are obtaining benefit this way and improving their life style further motivates others to do the same.” **Participant 2**

“The message which was picked up by the employees was that nobody should mess with the mighty customer and should not bother much about loss.” **Participant 2**

“...in such situation, even those employees who want to bring in some improvement too give-in and become indifferent. They also let things happen as they do... they should not bother much about anything.” **Participant 15**

So, social learning ensures continuity of behavior despite churning of employees in the organization. The responses suggested that the social learning in the utility was unintended, unmediated and informal process that happens on its own. Except for small evidence which suggests use of ‘incitement’ to induce the new joiners to connive, learning was largely the result of one’s observation. Therefore, it couldn’t have been labeled as socialization, which involves exerting strong social pressure on new joiners for change. As per Ashforth and Anand (2003), the process of socialization involves three key processes-

- Co-optation- New joiners are induced by rewards to change their attitude toward the (corrupt) behavior.
- Incrementalism- New joiners are induced to gradually escalate their corruption
- Compromise- New comers are induced to engage in corruption.

5.3.3. Rationalizing

Rationalizing constitutes of the ritualized accounts members of a culture use to explain a variety of acts and outcomes so as to reconcile the acts and outcomes with socially accepted norms (Coleman, 1998). Ashforth and Anand (2003) have classified rationalization into eight types. Refer Appendix 3. This study found the occurrences of only three in the utility viz., justifying connivance, denying harm and drawing comparisons.

The utility employees were found rationalizing connivance in their responses- they appeared legitimizing acts of connivance of self and colleagues. They justified connivance saying

“Some chai –pani (a small money for tea), 50 -100 rupees for small work. It is mainly because they come by their own vehicle which consumes petrol which costs money.” Participant 5

“The money is hardly anything; it is nothing, given the expense they have to incur on petrol for commuting from one place to the other. To recover that expense, they give direct connection to the customers, or they take some money from them for letting their theft of electricity go unnoticed.”

Participant 15

“The contractor pays these workers a wage of 2000 to 3000 rupees per month. What else do you expect these people to do.” ***Participant 16***

The above has been labeled as denial of responsibility by Ashforth and Anand (2003) in which people mentioned that they have no choice due to circumstances beyond their control.

Denying the harm is the second manner in which the connivance was rationalized in the utility. Since, no individual gets aggrieved because of connivance for theft, it was not considered wrong. The notion among employees was that electricity is Government's property i.e., nobody's property, hence if they access it, they are not taking it from any individual. In other words, nobody is getting aggrieved by their act.

Mentioned below are some illustrations for the above from the interviews

“...electricity is Government's property; it is not individual's money, so stealing is not considered wrong.” ***Participant 2***

“Incidentally, a lot of white collar thefts happen but they are not reported, no FIR is filed. Irony is there is no opponent – no aggrieved party.” ***Participant 11***

Ashforth and Anand (2003) called the above 'denial of injury. In this category of rationalization, persons construe that no one is really harmed.

Drawing comparisons is another way in which the utility employees rationalize their own act of connivance

“Employees say the people who are talking big to dissuade them from conniving, are themselves indulged in bigger thefts” Participant 19

The above has been defined as ‘social weighting’ by Ashforth and Anand (2003), which includes condemning the condemer. The other strategy of rationalization viz., denial of victim, appeal to higher loyalties, and metaphor of ledger have not been reported by the participants of this study.

5.4. Affect

This category did not have any mention in the conceptual lens; it emerged fresh from the collected data. It included different feelings and fear of consequence and no fear of consequence.

Participants reported feelings of inequity, insecurity, demotivation, restriction, frustration, humiliation exploitation etc., and fear of seclusion, embarrassment, trouble, injury, commitment and happiness. The negative feelings were reported more than the positive ones.

Fear has been kept as a separate subcategory because it has generally been considered an emotion than feeling which are labeled as moods (Watson & Clark, 1984; George, 1996; Fredrickson, 2003).

The emergence of this category motivated the researcher to explore the concept in extant literature. The researcher found that the role of affect has not been explored in the context of theft, but it has been researched extensively in context of decision making and behavior. However, there is hardly any consensus in the literature on what is meant by affect.

“Affect can be thought of as an umbrella term encompassing a broad range of feelings that individuals experience, including feeling states, which are in-the-moment, short-term affective experiences, and feeling traits, which are

more stable tendencies to feel and act in certain ways”. (Watson & Clark, 1984).”

Affect is a psychological construct that describes one’s global feelings such as moods and emotions (Fredrickson, 2003).

“Affect is a generic term that covers a broad range of feelings that people experience. It’s an umbrella concept that encompasses both emotions and moods.” (George, 1996). The affective phenomenon includes feelings, moods, emotions and attitude.

As per (Frijda & Mesquita, 1994), affect can be divided into two categories- moods and specific emotions. These two categories are differentiated by intensity duration and specificity. Emotions are intense, relatively short-term effective reaction to a specific environmental stimulus in contrast to moods, which are longer lasting.

In this study, feelings represent moods and fear represents emotions.

Researches have proposed a distinction between anticipatory emotions and anticipated emotions:

“Anticipatory emotions are immediate visceral reactions (e.g., fear anxiety, dread) to risks and uncertainties. Anticipated emotions are typically not experienced in the immediate present but are expected to be experienced in the future.” (Loewenstein & Lerner, 2003).

In addition to ‘risk as feelings’ hypotheses, ‘affect as information’ hypothesis too supports the notion of affect influencing behavior.

Next to follow is Figure 33 that presents qualitative associative network of affect.

Figure 33 Affect



5.4.1. Feelings

Feelings were reported as the experienced affect in this study. The participants reported mainly the negative feelings- feelings of inequity, insecurity, demotivation, restriction, demotivation, frustration, humiliation and exploitation. The people from the similar groups reported experiencing the same feelings, and the people from different groups reported different feelings. Though rarely, but positive feelings too were expressed- like feeling of happiness and commitment.

Mentioned below are the quotations of the participants of this study that reflect the experienced feelings:

“...the policies are not transparent and encouraging. There is not fixed schedule for transfers. There is no incentive for right behavior. Everybody talks about punishment- where the motivation for not stealing.” **Participant 7**

“There have been instances when people went for monitoring; they were attacked by the residents by lathis (rods). No police protection is available”
Participant 6

“In one case when the A.E. insisted on installing the electronic meter, a false complaint was lodged against him that he tried to rape the lady in the house. The A.E. is fighting his own case. Why is organization not helping him in fighting the case when it knows the truth? Nobody is concerned; there is no security no safety” **Participant 6**

“The regular JE go through humiliation while getting the work done through the outsourced workers as they are not free to take disciplinary action against them.” **Participant 14**

“One feels completely helpless and frustrated” **Participant 3**

“Seems, the entire system is moving towards collapse.” **Participant 13**

“People feel why to pick up fight unnecessarily, when nothing would happen.” **Participant 15**

“There is a feeling among employees- the system will not change.”
Participant 19

“I tried improving things there myself but, then I started receiving a lot of threats. I got worried.” **Participant 7**

“The real thing is, there is no care for workers.” **Participant 8**

“Nobody looks after the injured worker. The work is risky, many a times, workers suffer serious injuries while correcting fault in lines- who bothers about them? Nobody.” **Participant 8**

“Nobody takes pain in upper level management about the ground staff.”

Participant 15

“I didn’t feel like working there, I was so tired & humiliated.” **Participant 8**

“Workers are promised that they would be paid certain wages, but later they are not given the same money. Their working hours are increased, initially they are asked to come at 8.30 am and work till 5 PM. Then later, they are asked to come at 8.00 in the morning and work till 5.30 pm and then 6.00 pm. The working hours would keep increasing without any increase in money.”

Participant 5

“It feels bad; it feels as if people are making a fool of you. There is a feeling that you are not getting what you should.” **Participant 5**

“We have no problem working, but there should be no exploitation, as is happening currently.” **Participant 15**

“People who are performing technical and risky tasks and the peons are paid the same salary – everybody gets 8000 rupees.” **Participant 8**

“Above all they don’t get regular money, what they make is Rs. 4000 to 5000 in two months or three months. Many a times, linemen don’t give them any money for months together.” **Participant 8**

“Yes, it is important to add that there are committed and hardworking people too in the department, they are happy working for the department”

Participant 16

“Yes certainly. I am committed to my organization.” **Participant 18**

5.4.2. Fear

Fear like anger and envy is an instance of a general category called emotion (Charland, 2002). Two subcategories of fear emerged from the data- fear of

consequence and no fear of consequence. The fears reported by the participants were fear of seclusion, embarrassment, trouble and injury.

Some of the participants were fearful of being ostracized or boycotted by others on initiation of an action against them (offenders). Fear of embarrassment too was reported as a fear that prevents initiation of actions against the offenders.

“...Emotions have their role in choice either because one is attempting to reduce future negative emotion and is treating that goal as an attribute of the options or because one is experiencing unpleasant anticipatory emotions (e.g., fear, dread) and hopes to cope with those emotions by selecting a particular behavioral option”.

Mentioned below is what the participants had to say.

“Nobody complains about electricity theft directly, because they don't want to be secluded by others. You see peer pressure is of great importance, which is inexistence” **Participant 2**

“One has to back-step which is very embarrassing, hence reluctance. Department's support is missing. There is no security provided by department. Who will invite trouble in such circumstances above all, such people are called fools.” **Participant 10**

“There happened one incident, where one of the employees was locked in the cold storage for the entire day, when he went to probe the possibility of theft by the owner. It instilled great amount of fear among colleagues.” **Participant 2**

“No, too many hassles, court case, presence on dates, prolonged decisions ordeal. It becomes more of an ordeal, a personal ordeal. It becomes harassment” **Participant 10**

“I am not comfortable. Once you transfer a person, your life becomes miserable, because of the no. of phone calls that you receive. One goes mad

*receiving calls, and thinks what sin have I made, I should have never initiated such action.” **Participant 7***

*“...generally people fear, why should call for troubles by reporting theft, when the department is supporting it” **Participant 15***

*“...people don’t want to risk their lives and feel – let it be, let things happen as they do. Let me narrate to you once incident. Some officials went to install electronic meters in one of the areas in suburb. Officials were not allowed to install meters; there was stiff resistance from the inhabitants, hence people fear.” **Participant 6***

Absence of fear of consequences was also reported by a group of employees of the utility. The reasons of the absence of control were said to be many-

- Lack of punishment
- Inaction of management
- Opportunity to make the money elsewhere
- Losing job not a deterrence
- Being transferred or suspended too is not a deterrence

Why sacking from job, suspension and transfer fail to deter some employees? The answer lies in the meagre wages paid to the contract workers, which was found not enough to sustain their families. Secondly, once they know the work and the customers, they can easily make equivalent amount without being on the job by conniving, or from any other job for that matter. They don’t value their jobs, and hence have no fear of losing it. Lastly, they are re-introduced in the system again in the different zone despite being fired once. So, loopholes in outsourcing management too indirectly contributed to the audacity among contract workers. Mentioned below are the responses of the participants airing the sentiments captured above:

*“So, there is no fear of punishment, employees accept money openly without any tension.” **Participant 3***

“Management turns a blind eye to the proposed corrective measures – Since there is no action, there is no fear” Participant 4

Otherwise also, even if they don't get a job they make money. Since they know the work, they help customers at their own end by charging money.” Participant 6

And the contract workforce have no fear- they don't even care losing their jobs- for they know, the money they are paid here can be made anywhere.” Participant 19

“People don't have fear of suspension despite being booked for instances of theft.”⁶

They have no fear of transfer etc.” Participant 2

“Yes certainly. I am committed to my organization. I don't fear what happens.” Participant 18

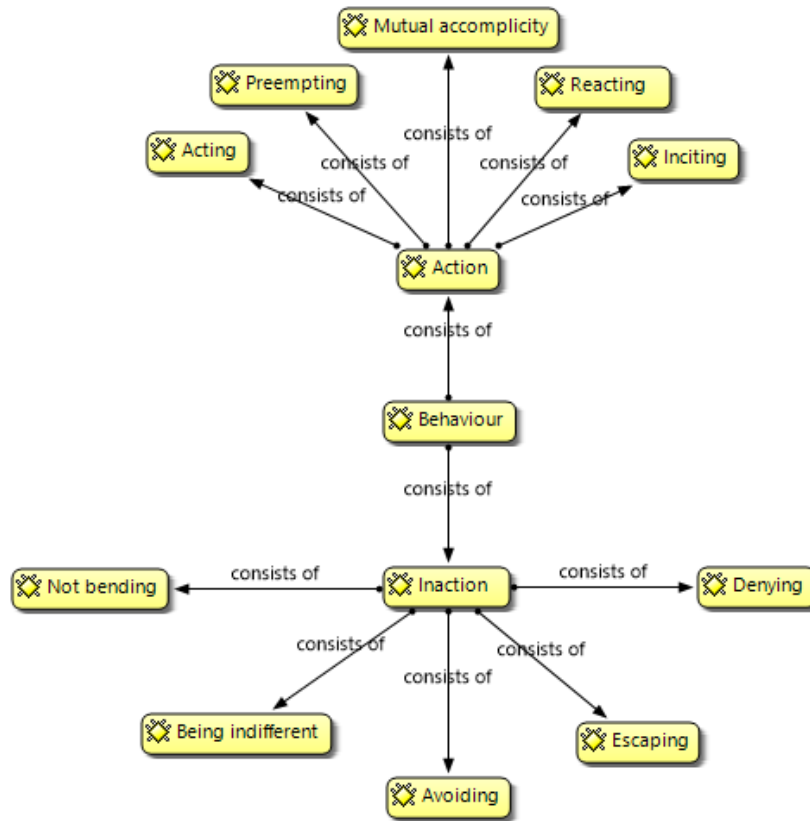
5.5. Behavior

Behavior was the last category that emerged from data analysis. It included the two subcategories viz., action and inaction. This category too was not suggested in the conceptual lens.

Action comprised of engaging in different pro-connivance behaviors like mutual accomplicity to protect each other and connive collectively, preempting ways to connive and protect oneself from the consequences of connivance, conniving with customers for electricity theft in order to restore equity, inciting those who don't connive, and acting like reporting the incidents of electricity theft, suspending, issuing a charge sheet etc., More of pro-connivance behavior were reported in the study in comparison to the anti-connivance behavior. Inaction comprised of avoiding action, denying occurrences of connivance for electricity theft, becoming indifferent to connivance and allied problems, withdrawing oneself, escaping confrontations,

not bending rules for anyone etc., Figure 34 presents different types of reported actions and inactions.

Figure 34 Behavior



5.5.1. Action

Action comprised of utility’s employees engaging in activities leading to connivance with customers for electricity theft and also their taking actions to check it. The actions ranged from conniving collectively to sharing proceeds from connivance among the group, protecting each other’s illegitimate interests, proactively exploring opportunities to connive and make arrangements to evade consequences of connivance, showing audacity, conniving to restore equity, prompting others to start conniving to acting to check theft/ connivance for theft.

The quotations to follow exemplify how connivance is carried out collectively-

“Everybody knows each other’s lose point. SDO can’t initiate any action for theft against JE, because the JE would also have knowledge of some lose point of the SDO. It is true about almost everybody. Everybody is supporting each other.” **Participant 16**

“Generally, such things happen by (involvement of) many, the entire group works together” **Participant 2**

“There is a strong norm among employees too, each individual is protecting others illegal interest. JE, S.D.O, executive engineer, accounts- money is shared between them. Linemen distribute money among office staff.” **Participant 2**

“The lower level contractual staff is said to indulge in connivance more, to an extent employees upto the level of executive engineers are involved and a cut is sent above from below.” **Participant 16**

The employees seek posting in the areas where the opportunities to connive are more, and exert pressure for that. Their preparedness for connivance was visible from their trying to establish a political connect which could come to their rescue in event of their getting caught for connivance. Their pro-activeness was also visible in their attempt to find out ways to be able to connive at any cost.

“See Madam, soon after coming to field, employees start exploring connections with politicians, gram Pradhan (village head), generally people have some links, remote if not close” **Participant 6**

“...but soon after joining they start looking for field posting where they could earn extra money.” **Participant 3**

*“Everyone wants and makes efforts to get a posting in areas like ****, ****, ***** and *****. These are the industrial areas with good potential of additional income.”* **Participant 16**

“When JEs were told that the new meters were not prone to tempering; they got curious, and showed a great interest in knowing- how to break the lock?”

Participant 3

One particular group of employees was reported to act to restore equity (Greenberg, 1990). This group was paid less, they felt that they were not adequately remunerated for their rendered services, and were exploited. That made them connive with customers to earn additional money, which they thought they deserved.

This action resulted from the feeling of inequity, exploitation etc.,

“People look for additional ways and means to earn money as a reaction.”

Participant 5

“Secondly, the contract workers are not paid well by the contractor. Therefore, the contract workers connive with customers more.” ***Participant 17***

“These people whose wages are hardly enough to feed their families, need more money for education of children and other necessary expenses. To meet those expenses, the contract workers start making money anyhow.”

Participant 19

“Further, they are not paid well. In times when even a mason is paid Rs.500/- day, the contractor in our case pay only Rs.5000 /- per month. They are not satisfied, as a result are more prone to such inducement.”

Participant 7

“Like Rs.200 – 500 per complaint. This way, such people make money. Now you tell how such people will run their expenses and feed their families, especially when inflation is sky high.” ***Participant 8***

They need money, which then comes from customers through illicit activities.”

“Today, the culture is to harass the customer by delaying solution / service to the customers. They (people) then seek benefit to address the problem provide the service.” Participant 8

Mentioned below is an account that explains how the utility employees incite others to join them in their act of connivance.

“I want to narrate one small episode- I was travelling by a bus, where one new JE from the organization, hardly one year old in the system, was also there. He saw me and shouted – how long will you remain in HR, come to the field and make some money” Participant 3

Mentioned below is one example of the very few reported where the participant acted to check the connivance, despite having experienced negative consequences.

*“I report. I was transferred from ***** to ***** when I reported incidents of theft the last time” Participant 18*

5.5.2. Inaction

Lack of activity is inaction. In this study, inaction comprised of not complaining about electricity theft, not pressurizing peers, turning blind eyes to the occurrences of connivances, becoming indifferent, avoiding actions, not filing FIRs, not transferring or suspending offenders, escaping, denying existence of connivance, and also not bending rules. When the extant literature was explored to understand why the above happens, the answer was found in decision avoidance which states that among other factors, anticipatory negative emotions, decision strategies, counterfactual thinking and preference uncertainty lead to decision avoidance. (Anderson, 2003).

The above reasons are evidenced in the quotations of the participants mentioned as hereinafter mentioned:

“Fear of seclusion by colleagues makes people avoid complaining.”

“There is lack of evidence. No body complains about electricity theft directly, because they don't want to be secluded by others. You see peer pressure is of great importance, which is inexistence.” Participant 2

For different reasons including compulsion of running services results in people not initiating any action against the offenders and turn a blind eye to occurrences of connivance for theft.

“Management turns a blind eye to the proposed corrective measures – Since there is no action, there is no fear” Participant 4

“Shortage of manpower- Officials cannot fire people because there aren't many. They need them for running the services. In every substation some 10 linemen are needed, whereas in reality you would find only 1 or 2. So many a times, a blind eye is turned to such instances.” Participant 6

“Incidentally, more white collar thefts happen but they are not reported, no FIR is filed.” Participant 2

A large scale indifference results into no action.

“There is no concern for man or material, nobody knows what material is ordered and what is delivered, no material is audited for quality- check on arrival, and there is no accountability.” Participant 6

“In such situation, even those employees who want to bring in some improvement, too give in and become indifferent. They also let things happen as they do.” Participant 15

“People are indifferent.” Participant 4

Fear of hassles and troubles on taking disciplinary action deterred employees from initiating action against connivance

“I am not comfortable (transferring a person for wrong doing)” Participant 7

*“No, I don’t feel comfortable reporting a case of electricity theft against my employee” **Participant 10***

*“Action is taken only when complaint of theft is made, but complaints are not made.” **Participant 16***

*“If 100 cases of theft are found, only 30 % are reported, 70% cases are not even reported.” **Participant 8***

Fear of consequences make people flee, escape the confronting situations

*“I tried improving things there myself but, then I started receiving a lot of threats. I got worried. I left no stone unturned to get my posting changed; luckily, I was transferred within 8 months of posting.” **Participant 7***

Employees used defense mechanism like denial to avoid taking any action. Participants refused occurrences of connivance and used other methods for reporting reduced connivance which alleviates the need for action.

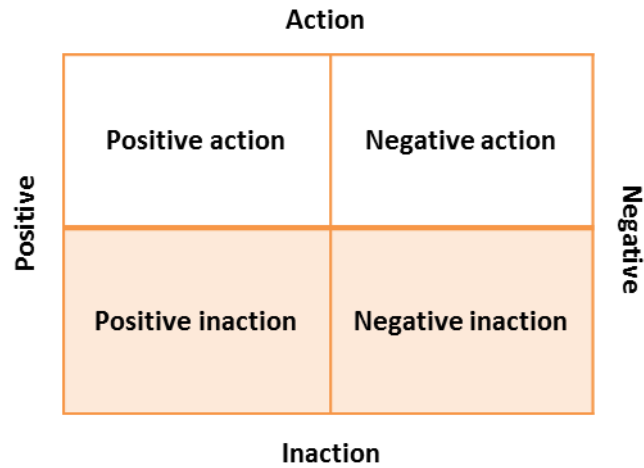
*“Theft is a technical loss; it is shown as a line loss. And organization is not much responsible for it.” **Participant 7***

*“The company increases the line losses to hide the loss because of electricity theft” **Participant 11***

*“I personally know them, who would not bend rules to solve electricity related problems of even their kith and kin, they don't get influenced.” **Participant 16***

So, the above can be interpreted and summarized as below. The participants reported different behaviors that have been classified into actions and inactions. As indicated in Figure 35, the actions and inactions can further be classified into positive and negative. In context of this study, the positive actions and inactions check electricity theft/ connivance, and the negative actions and inactions let electricity theft happens

Figure 35 Action -Inaction



It is important to state here that more negative actions and inactions were reported in the study than positive.

This sums up the discussion on the emerged categories in this study; next to follow is Table 10 that captures the emerged concepts, categories and subcategories, which in fact are the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft.

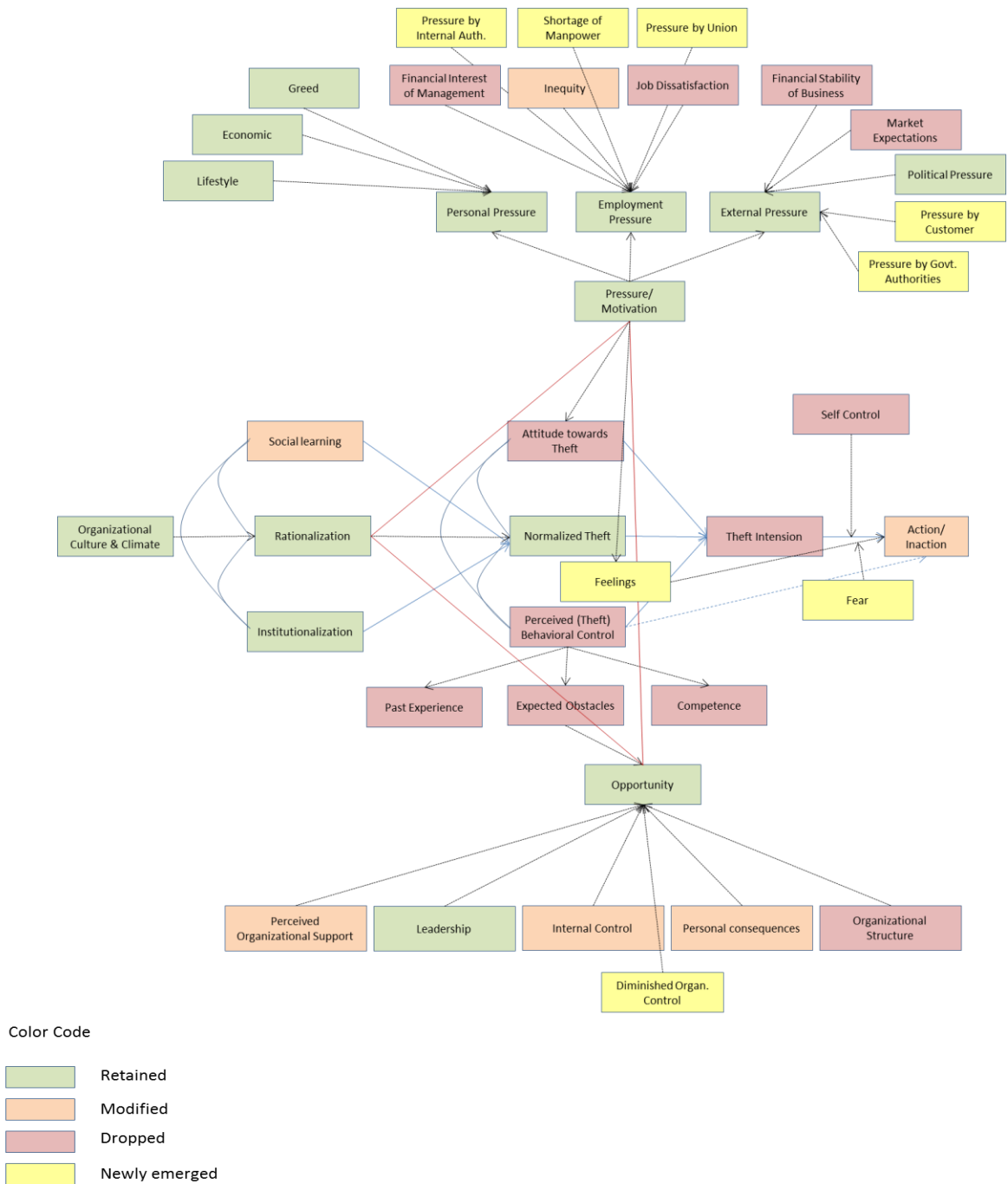
Table 10 Workplace Factors that Predispose Employees to Connive with Consumers in Electricity Theft

S.No	Concepts	Categories	Subcategories
1	Opportunity	Diminished Organizational Control	Outsourcing
			Self-sourcing
			Intruding
		Organizational Leadership	Lack of Commitment
			Lack of Competence
		Organizational Culture	Not having core values
			Lack of business orientation
			Lack of performance orientation
			Lack of ownership
		Organizational Systems	Opportunism and convenience
Outdated HR Practices			
Personal Constraints	Outdated Technology		
	Lack of Motivation		
2.	Constraints	Environmental Constraints	Lack of Deterrence
			Constrained by Politicians
			Constrained by Government/ Authorities
		Organizational Constraints	Constrained by Customers
			Shortage of Manpower
			Constrained by Internal Authorities
		Personal Constraints	Constrained by Unions
			Lifestyle
			Economic Pressure
			Greed
3	Normalized Connivance	Institutionalization	Not considering connivance a crime
			Exhibiting audacious impudence
			Having consensus fallacy of legitimacy
		Rationalization	Justifying connivance
			Denying harm
			Drawing comparison
		Social Learning	Having precedence
			Learning by observing
			Inheriting attitude
4.	Affect	Feelings	Feelings
		Fear	Fearing Consequences
5.	Behavior	Action	Not Fearing Consequences
			Mutual accomplicity
			Preempting
			Reacting
			Inciting
		Inaction	Acting
			Denying
			Escaping
			Avoiding
			Being indifferent
Not bending rules			

5.6. Mapping of Categories on the Conceptual Lens

Many of the emerged categories were not included in the conceptual lens, lots of categories proposed in the conceptual lens got revised, and many got omitted, resulting into a modified lens. Figure 36 maps the categories on the conceptual lens.

Figure 36 Emerged Categories Mapped on the Conceptual Lens



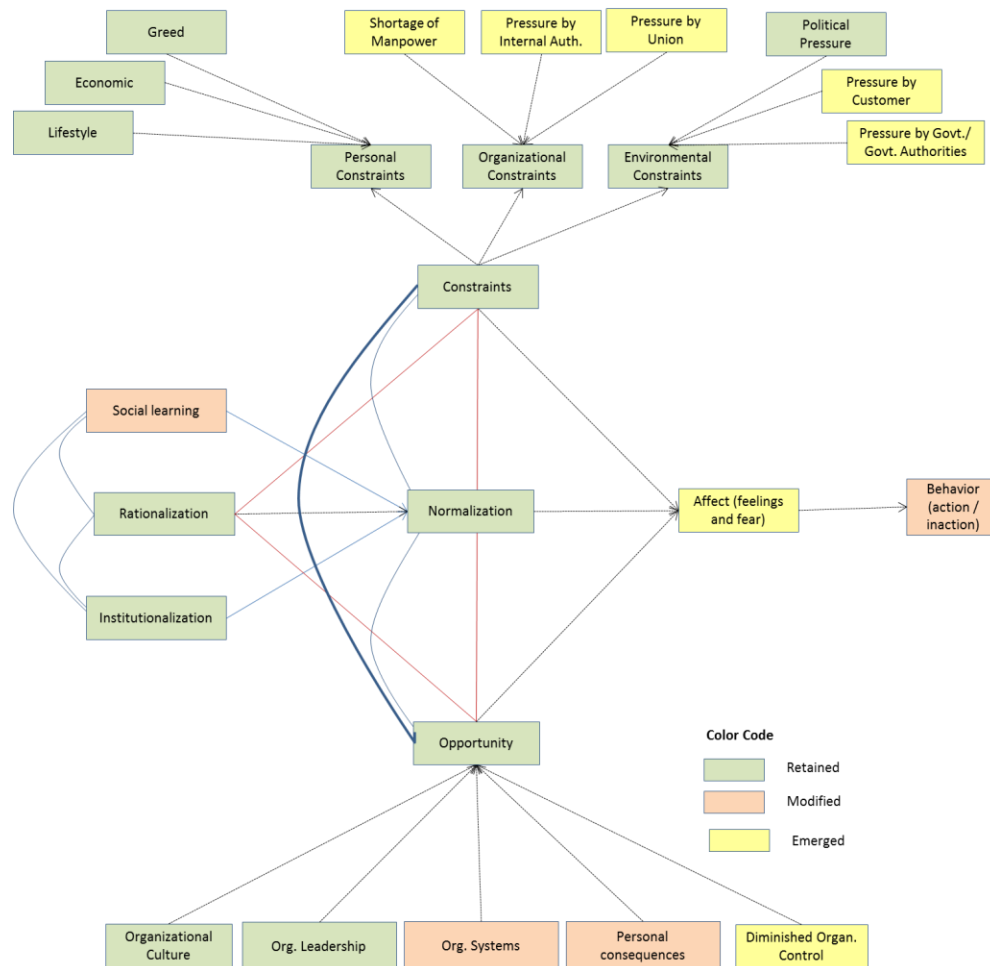
6. Proposed Conceptual Framework

This chapter presents the modified conceptual lens, the relationship among the emerged categories, and the level-wise description of categories. It discusses how the workplace factors predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft in a power utility. In the end, it presents a proposed conceptual framework.

6.1. Modification in the Conceptual Lens

On incorporation of the newly emerged and revised categories in the conceptual lens, and deletion of the ones that did not emerge in data analysis, the modified conceptual lens assumed a new appearance as shown in Figure 37

Figure 37 Modified Conceptual Lens



The modified conceptual framework retained the original relationships. The data analysis supported the relationship between the categories as mentioned in the conceptual lens, except for one. In the conceptual lens, organizational culture was shown to impact normalization, but the data analysis suggested a stronger linkage between organizational culture and constraint.

Opportunity (diminished organizational control, organizational leadership, culture and system, and personal consequences), constraint (environmental constraints, organizational constraint and personal constraint) and normalization (institutionalization, social learning and rationalization) lead to affect (feeling of frustration, inequity, humiliation, insecurity, seclusion, trouble, embarrassment, fear and no fear of consequences) which in turn lead to behavior (action or inaction).

6.2. Level-wise Manifestation of Emerged Categories

Further, in-depth analysis of data indicated that some of the categories emerged at multiple levels and the others at one level only.

The categories ‘opportunity’ and ‘constraint’ emerged at three levels- environmental, organizational and individual, whereas ‘normalization’ at two levels- organizational and individual.

The remaining categories ‘affect’ and ‘behavior’ appeared at only one level- individual. The above is detailed in the section to follow.

6.2.1. Manifestation of Opportunity at Different Levels

The category ‘opportunity’ was found to manifest at three levels- environmental, organizational and individual.

As presented in Table 11, at the environment level, diminished organizational control was said to create or increase the opportunity for connivance for electricity theft. All the three subcategories of diminished control namely outsourcing, self-sourcing and intruding were reported to increase the likelihood of electricity theft through

connivance. At the organizational level, ineffective organizational leadership, systems and culture were held responsible for creating breeding ground for connivance.

Table 11 Manifestation of Opportunity at Different Levels

	Level	Categories	Subcategories
Opportunity	Environmental Level	Diminished Organizational Control	Outsourcing
			Self-sourcing
			Intruding
	Organizational Level	Organizational Leadership	Lack of Commitment
			Lack of Competence
		Organizational Culture	Not having core values
			Lack of business orientation
			Lack of performance orientation
			Lack of ownership
			Opportunism and convenience
		Organizational Systems	Outdated HR Practices
			Outdated Technology
	Individual Level	Personal Constraints	Lack of Motivation
			Lack of Deterrence

At the individual level, the appropriate and adequate personal consequences were reported to either create an opportunity or deterrence. Lack of motivation for not conniving, and no deterrence from conniving were found to present the individuals with an opportunity to connive.

6.2.2. Manifestation of Constraint at Different Levels

Data analysis suggested that the category ‘constraints’ too, like ‘opportunity’ exists at all three levels- environmental, organizational and individual. The participants

reported that at the environmental level, constraint was induced by politicians, government/ government authorities, customers. They obstructed initiation of any action against connivance for theft. At the organizational level, shortage of manpower, internal authorities and unions inhibited free actions against connivance. At the individual level, it was reported that employees feel pressurized to connive because of lifestyle requirement, economic pressure and greed. Table 12 presents a snap shot of manifestation of ‘constraint’ at different levels.

Table 12 Manifestation of Constraints at Different Levels

	Levels	Categories	Subcategories
Constraints	Environmental Level	Environmental Constraints	Constrained by Politicians
			Constrained by Government/ Authorities
			Constrained by Customers
	Organizational Level	Organizational Constraints	Shortage of Manpower
			Constrained by Internal Authorities
			Constrained by Unions
	Individual Level	Personal Constraints	Lifestyle
			Economic Pressure
			Greed

6.2.3. Manifestation of Normalization at Different Levels

The category ‘normalization’ was reported at two levels- organizational and individual. At organizational level the norms got institutionalized- the organization developed a common understanding of the phenomenon, the actions got routinized in the organization and were carried out mechanically and mindlessly.

At individual level, employees learnt connivance by the process of social learning i.e., by observing other employees conniving and getting benefited. They then rationalized connivance to hold it right, using different strategies like denying harm,

drawing comparisons and justifying connivance. Mentioned in Table 13 is the level-wise account of normalization:

Table 13 Manifestation of Normalization at Different Levels

			Concepts	Categories	Subcategories
Normalization	Organization Level	Institutionalization	Not considering connivance a crime		
			Exhibiting audacious impudence		
			Having consensus fallacy of legitimacy		
		Rationalization	Justifying connivance		
			Denying harm		
			Drawing comparison		
	Individual Level	Social Learning	Having precedence		
			Learning by observing		
			Inheriting attitude		

The rest of the categories- ‘affect’ and ‘behavior’ manifested at individual level only.

6.3. Environment Level Categories

At environment level, diminished organizational control and environmental constraints create opportunity and constraint respectively, which are responsible for increased connivance for electricity theft.

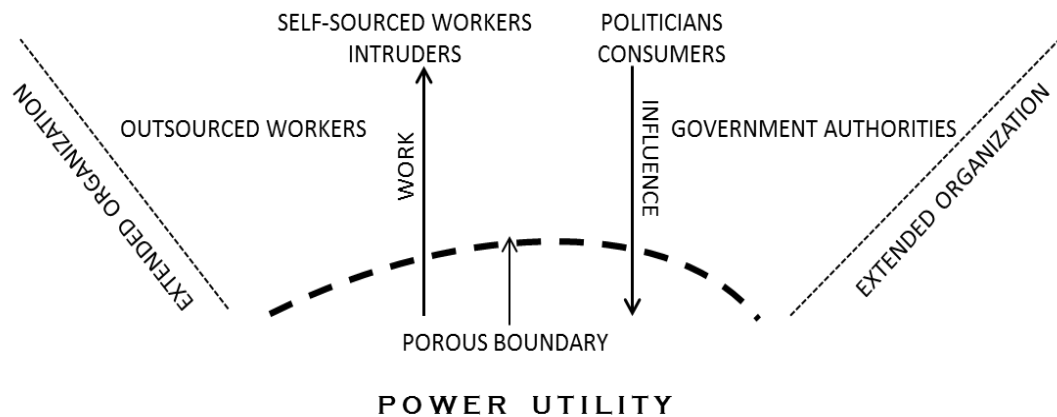
As mentioned earlier, the work of power utility is not confined to its premises. It seeps through its boundary and runs into the society, to each and every household. On the other hand, the employees of utility illegitimately employ people under them as private help. These people, though not employed by the utility do work for it.

The decisions taken outside by politicians percolate and influence actions inside. This suggests that the boundary of power utility is porous- work from inside and influence from outside keep passing through the boundary.

The facts that the work of utility is performed outside its premises by the unauthorized persons (in addition to employees), and that the decisions of the utility are largely influenced by the external stakeholders extraterritorially (in addition to jurisdictionally), suggest formation of an **extended organization** around its periphery.

As presented in Figure 38, the extended organization includes outsourced workers, self-sourced private help, other intruders (electricians/ consumers) and politicians, government authorities, customers.

Figure 38 Extended Organization



Utility can exercise only a limited control on the people in the extended organization. The control diminishes as it moves away from its boundary- it can exert some control on the outsourced worker, very limited control on the self-sourced private help and hardly any on the intruders. As mentioned before, being employed by a contractor at a low salary, the outsourced workers don't relate to the power utility- they neither value their organizational membership nor the wages they draw from it. They are not deterred by any consequence to their misbehavior including connivance for electricity theft, may it be transfer, suspension or dismissal. Hence, utility fails to exert any control on them.

As far as the self-sourced private help are concerned, because of utility's failure to check the practice, their number has increased substantially over a period of time.

Their large number has given them the strength to form a union of their own, which keeps putting pressure on the utility to secure employment for its members, time to time. The utility's influence on them is very limited, because firstly they are not its employees and secondly they are united.

In addition to the consumers who themselves access electricity illegitimately, intruders include private electricians too. Some of these private electricians are the former outsourced workers or self-sourced private help. It is easy for them to connive for electricity theft and go scot free. Their connivance falls in purview of vigilance and external law enforcement bodies more, which take their own time to address the issue. Here too, the utility's influence is next to missing.

On the other hand, the extended organization's stakeholders like politicians, government/ government authorities and consumers have a huge influence on utility. The government authorities include regulatory commission and law enforcement bodies. Politicians have been continuously including the promise of cheap electricity to all in their manifestos. Many elections have been contested and won on this ground. So, they don't let power utility initiate any action that may annoy their vote bank and put their political interest in peril (Gulati & Rao, 2007). They limit power utility's freedom to act with respect to policy, dealing with customers and offenders; as a result put lots of constraints on it.

The stakeholders in the extended organization are linked with each other- politicians and consumers with contractors, self-sourced private help and intruders, so the two categories diminished organization control and external constraints mutually reinforce each other.

6.4. Organization Level Categories

At organizational level, deficiencies in leadership, culture and systems create opportunities for connivance. Leadership has a bearing on organizational culture and systems. Culture decides whether and to what extent systems will be followed.

Together organizational leadership (tone at the top), culture (shared beliefs and understanding), and systems (resource management) influence institutionalization of norms, one of the sub-processes of normalization, which too contributes to increased occurrences of connivance.

Shortage of manpower, directives of internal authorities and pressure from union constraint action against connivance, hence let it happen. So, presence of mutually reinforcing opportunity, constraint and normalization at organization level fuels the occurrences of connivance.

6.5. Individual Level Categories

At the individual level, the lack of deterrence and motivation for conniving and not conniving, create an opportunity to connive. Likewise, economic pressure, lifestyle aspirations and greed put pressure for connivance, hence constraint an individual to act fairly. Further, an individual learn to connive and justify it by the processes of social learning and rationalizing respectively.

Combined effect of opportunity, constraint and normalization from all levels, evoke different affect (feelings and fear) in employees. The workplace endogenous factors like leaders, workgroup characteristics, organizational rewards and punishment etc., produce moods and emotions (George & Jones, 1996; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Leaders have been theorized to affect how their subordinates feel (George, 2000). Common socialization experiences and common social influences generate similar mood (Hackman, 1992).

The affect (feeling and fear) dispose the employees to behave in a particular manner. As per Zhu and Thagard (2002), "...emotions also play a crucial role in the explanation of human action." (p.34).

The affective primacy hypothesis by Zajonc (1980) too assigns precedence to affect over cognition (Ajzen, 2001) in influencing behavior, in other words the affective/intuitive system may overrule the cognitive evaluations when these are in

conflict (Kobbeltvedt & Wolff , 2009). Both consequence-related factors (anticipated outcomes and subjective probabilities) and feelings-based factors (vividness of the consequences and mood) give rise to cognitive evaluations and feelings (Loewenstein, Weber, E. U., Hsee, C. K., & Welch, N., 2001).

Here, the relationship between affect (feeling and fear) and behavior (action and inaction) warrants further discussion. The analysis suggested that when experienced feelings were not accompanied by fear, they resulted into action and when they were accompanied by fear of consequence, the result was inaction. Fear has been theorized to cause decision avoidance (Anderson, 2003).

Watson & Tellegen (1985) suggested that affectivity is divided into two- positive affectivity and negativity. Positive and negative affectivity predict positive and negative affective reaction respectively (Fisher, 2002). The positive affect has been reported to have a facilitative effect on decision quality, interpersonal performance and other general indicators of performance (Staw & Barsade, 1993). As per Zhu & Thagard (2002),

“Different emotions correspond to different patterns of action. For example, anger usually leads to aggression and retaliation; fear is involved in preparing for rapid escape from a dangerous situation.” (p. 27).

Therefore, it will not be wrong to say - whether the action/ inaction will be positive or not, depends on the positivity/ negativity of the feelings and the presence/ absence of fear of consequences. The same can be translated into equations as shown below:

Negative Feelings + Not fearing consequences = Negative Action

Negative Feelings + Fearing consequences = Negative Inaction

Positive Feelings + Not fearing consequences = Positive Action

Positive Feelings + Fearing consequences = Positive Inaction

Figure 39 demonstrates the same pictorially on the next page

Figure 39 Relationship between Affect and Behavior

		Positive Feelings			
No Fear of Consequences		Positive action	Positive inaction		Fear of Consequences
		Negative action	Negative inaction		
		Negative Feelings			

As per the above figure, an individual demonstrates a positive action when s/he experiences positive feelings and is not fearful of the consequences. S/he engages in positive inaction when s/he experiences positive feelings and is fearful of the consequences. The individual demonstrates a negative action when s/he experiences negative feelings and is not fearful of the consequences. S/he engages in negative inaction when s/he experiences negative feelings and is fearful of the consequences.

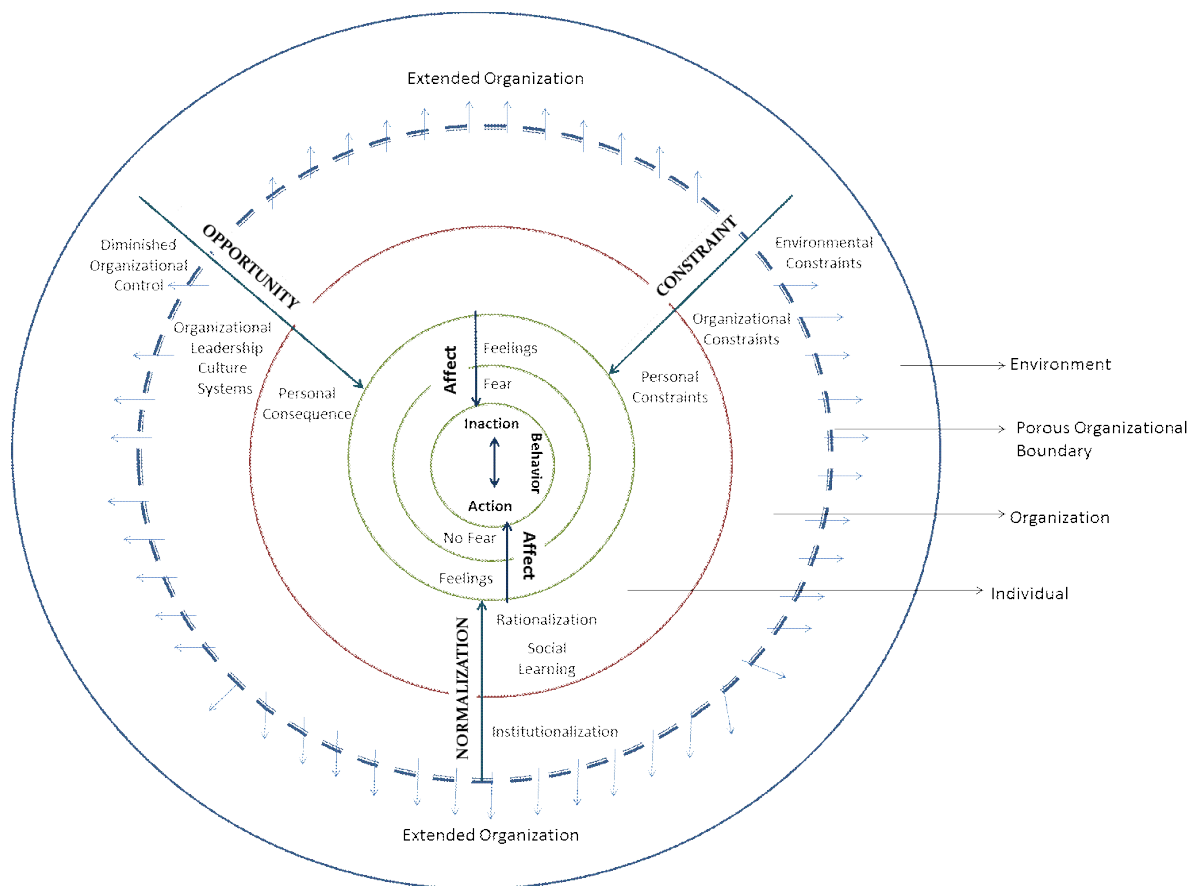
The above finding is in contrast to the argument of Pfister and Bohm (2008), that the positive-negative valence dimension is not the most important aspect of emotions in decision making. On the other hand many studies point to the importance of affective experiences on withdrawal behaviors, though they are unequivocal in their findings regarding positive and negative states (Brief & Howard, 2002).

This concludes the discussion on affect-behavior relationship; next to follow is the conceptual framework of the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft.

6.6. Conceptual Framework

The framework proposes that the porosity of a power utility's boundary creates an extended organization around its periphery. The utility can exert only a diminished control on the extended organization, but gets constraint by it a lot. The opportunities and constraint created by the extended organization coupled with internal opportunities, constraints and normalization lead to production of affect which in turn leads to behavior. Figure 40 is the pictorial depiction of the above and its magnified version is included in Appendix 4.

Figure 40 Proposed Conceptual Framework



This concludes chapter sixth, the next chapter summarizes the study, its contribution, quality and limitations.

7. Concluding Thoughts

This chapter summarizes the study, and discusses the contribution of this study to literature and management practice. The chapter describes the limitations of this study and concludes with the suggestions for future research.

7.1. Summary

This study was led by the fact that the AT&C losses in India are far more than the world average. The literature review revealed that the commercial losses contribute to AT&C losses more than the technical losses. The literature further revealed that the electricity theft in connivance with consumers is one of the main reasons for the commercial losses, which organizations have traditionally been trying to address by technological means to a little avail. This raised the need to look at the workplace factors beyond technology, which could possibly predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft. The literature review also highlighted the need to integrate various perspectives on employee theft (because of the involvement of employees in electricity theft, electricity theft is labeled as employee theft).

On exploration of a couple of state power utilities where the expected AT&C losses fell in the first two highest range, many workplace factors have been found to influence connivance- especially diminished control of organization, shortage of manpower (as a result of ineffective manpower planning), manpower outsourcing and affect (feelings and presence and absence of fear). The study proposes an integrated multilevel conceptual framework that explains how the workplaces factors predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft. The study concluded with explanation of its contribution to literature and practice.

7.2. Contribution of Study

The study made contribution to the extant literature and also to the current practices in power utility that have a bearing on electricity theft thereby AT&C losses.

7.2.1. Contribution to Literature

This study proposed an integrated multilevel conceptual framework that explains how the workplaces factors predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft. The framework drew inputs from in sociology, psychology, organizational science and criminology.

The study added a new category each to opportunity and pressure arms of the Cressey's Fraud Triangle (1973). Shortage of manpower emerged as a new category under pressure/ constraint arm. Diminished organizational control as a result of outsourcing, self-sourcing and intruding, emerged as a new category under opportunity arm of the Fraud Triangle. Emerged category- normalization replaced the original third arm- rationalization of the Fraud Triangle. Apart from these, the categories for opportunity and constraint were identified at environmental, organizational and group levels, and for normalization at organizational and group levels to propose a multilevel framework.

This study added affect as a new category to the Fraud Triangle. Feelings, Fear of consequences and No fear of consequences clubbed under the head of affect, emerged as new categories that lead to behavior (either action or inaction). Many past researches have established the role of affect in decision making, but very few tried exploring the role of affect in producing organizational behavior (Brief & Howard, 2002) or misbehavior. None of the study specified how the workplace factors produce affect and to what consequences. This study further specified that feelings (mood) results in inaction when they are accompanied by fear of consequences (emotion), and action when there is no fear of consequence.

This study contributes to the literature on employee theft in general and employees' connivance with consumers for electricity theft in particular.

7.2.2. Contribution to Practice

The suggested framework may help managers of power utility to have an additional insight into the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft. They may use the insight in designing an effective intervention to combat electricity theft.

The study highlighted **increased electricity theft as the unintended consequences of manpower outsourcing**. Outsourcing the functions that provide opportunities not only for direct interface with consumers, but also street level decision making, in a technology deficient environment, about the commodity which is already scarce, to the people on whom the utility has a limited control, raises many concerns. Given the above facts, metering and billing functions of power utility don't appear to be outsourcing compatible at all. The study therefore raises a question on adopting outsourcing as a preferred way of manpower sourcing for metering and billing functions of power utilities. The study reported the existence of loopholes in the outsourcing contract because of which the utility failed to create effective deterrent to connivance for electricity theft. The above suggests the management and HR of power utilities must ascertain the manpower-outsourcing compatibility prior to adopting it as a preferred manpower sourcing strategy and keep a constant vigil on the administrative aspects of outsourcing, especially outsourcing contract management.

The study raises a concern about self-sourcing- the practice where the linemen illegitimately employ private help for repairing faults in lines. The power utility needs to address the factors that lead to self-sourcing like manpower-workload imbalance (as a result of growing number of customers and shortage of manpower) and age-work mismatch. In addition to reviewing the manpower planning, the power utility may look for ways of redeploying (elsewhere) the linemen who feel constrained in carrying out their duties because of old age.

The inaction of employees against connivance for electricity theft was attributed to the absence of organizational support and subsequent personal hassles. A cell may be created within the vigilance department or separately, and given the responsibility of supporting the employees who initiate actions against the offenders, ensuring that the offenders are brought to books.

The study warrants a serious need to revisit the performance management system; to align it with business imperatives and make it more performance driven.

Institutionalization of connivance calls for cultural change for which the top leadership should be stable. The policies related to appointment criteria and tenure of the top leadership need a relook.

7.3. Quality of Grounded Theory Research

Researchers have traditionally called for objectivity/ reliability and generalizability/ validity to judge the quality of quantitative research, but criteria for Grounded Theory may vary (Charmaz, 2006, p. 101).

In the words of Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 32):

“...objectivity in qualitative research is a myth. Researchers bring to research situation their particular paradigms, including perspectives, training, knowledge, and biases; these aspects of self then become woven into all aspects of the research process”

Corbin further went about saying:

“I (Corbin) don't feel comfortable using the terms “validity” and “reliability” when discussing qualitative research. These terms carry with them too many quantitative implications (a personal bias).” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 32).

Reflecting on the issue of generalizability of Grounded Theory, Charmaz (2006, p. 101) said:

“Colleagues and teachers who invoke the logic of quantitative research often mistakenly advise qualitative researchers to make their samples represent distributions of larger populations. The error of this advice lies in assuming that qualitative research aims for generalizability. Although this strategy may be useful for initial sampling, it does not fit the logic of grounded theory and can result in the researcher collecting unnecessary and conceptually thin data.”

General criteria that can be used to evaluate the quality of research findings using Grounded Theory include Fit, Applicability, Concepts, Contextualization of Concepts, Logic, Depth, Variation, Creativity, Sensitivity and Evidence of Memos (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As per Charmaz (2006) criteria for Grounded Theory are Credibility, Originality, Resonance and Usefulness. See Table 14 for detail. Glaser’s (1978) criteria include Fit, Work, Relevance and Modifiability. Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize on Credibility as a criterion for assessing quality of Grounded Theory.

Table 14 Criteria for Grounded Theory

S. No.	Criteria	Indicators
1.	Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has your research achieved intimate familiarity with the setting or topic? • Are the data sufficient to merit your claims? Consider the range, number, and depth of observations contained in the data. • Have you made systematic comparisons between observations and between categories? • Do the categories cover a wide range of empirical observations? • Are there strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis? • Has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment-and agree with your claims?

2.	Originality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your categories fresh? Do they offer new insights? • Does your analysis provide a new conceptual rendering of the data? • What is the social and theoretical significance of this work? • How does your grounded theory challenge, extend, or refine current ideas, concepts, and practices?
3.	Resonance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the categories portray the fullness of the studied experience? • Have you revealed both liminal and unstable taken-for-granted meanings? • Have you drawn links between larger collectivities or institutions and individual lives, when the data so indicate? • Does your grounded theory make sense to your participants or people who share their circumstances? • Does your analysis offer them deeper insights about their lives and worlds?
4.	Usefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their every- day worlds? • Do your analytic categories suggest any generic processes? If so, have you examined these generic processes for tacit implications? • Can the analysis spark further research in other substantive areas? • How does your work contribute to knowledge? • How does it contribute to making a better world?

Source: Charmaz, 2006

In line with the constructivist ontology of reality, this study does not claim objectivity, instead contends that the suggested conceptual framework is one of many possible “plausible” interpretations possible from data. The framework or explanation reflects the participants and the researcher.

Mentioned below are the criteria on which this study was assessed for quality:

7.3.1. Usefulness

This study focused on richness of depiction of the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft, and provides insights on how the workplace factors predispose employees to connive, rather than generalizing as promoted by other (Yin, 2003). This approach might be criticized for generating a

substantive empirical theory, which has a limited generalizability, but is useful as it contributes to the existing body of literature (Huges & Jones, 2003). Further, it contributes to practice too- The conceptual framework may help the managers of power sector have an additional insight into the workplace factors that induce employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft. They may use the insight in designing an effective intervention to combat electricity theft.

7.3.2. Credibility

The researcher visited and studied the corporate office, many divisions and subdivisions of state power utility to gain familiarity with the setting. To gain better understanding of the topic, relevant literature and videos were explored. Good number of in-depth interviews were conducted which resulted in adequate data. The researcher ensured systematic comparisons between observations and categories.

7.3.3. Originality

Research offered a new integrated conceptual framework and provided new categories viz., affect, shortage of manpower, outsourcing to explain the phenomenon of connivance of employees with consumer for electricity theft. It also suggested that employees demonstrate pro-theft action and anti-theft inaction basis interaction between fear and feeling. It emphasized the need to look into workplace factors as well while designing an intervention to combat electricity theft effectively.

7.3.4. Resonance

The findings were reviewed by an expert as advocated by Yin (2003) who resonated with the findings of this study.

In addition, the following measures were taken to enhance the quality of this study: Triangulation has been attempted by getting the findings of this reported vetted by the expert, corroborating the statements of the participants by website and internet, obtaining data from varied persons to get different perspectives on the phenomenon, using interview protocol to guide the research process (Yin, 2003) to bring in the

elements of reliability, and using Atlis.ti software for systematic and consistent analysis of data (Weitzman, 2000).

7.4. Limitations of the Study

The conclusions offered in this study were based on an in-depth interview of nineteen employees from two state power utilities. The study used qualitative interpretive approach that is often considered subjective and having limited generalizability (Klein & Myers, 1999).

The output being a substantive conceptual framework, its generalizability is limited to the selected domain.

Further, in line with the view of reality as socially constructed, this study does not claim objectivity, but instead argues that the emergent theory is one of several possible explanations of reality constructed with the researchers as active instruments.

The topic under study being sensitive, didn't allow the researcher to tape record the interviews. Though, the researcher made use of paraphrasing, questioning, checking and working on the data immediately post interview to ensure the data is captured correctly and completely.

7.5. Future Scope of Work

The findings of this study provided an insight into the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft that can be further researched in the future.

The following topics can be suggested for the future research.

- To further study the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers in electricity theft, and expand the conceptual framework proposed in this study, exploratory research in power utilities of different states, with different business ownership is required.

- There is a need to explore the relative strength of relationship between affect and behavior (connivance with consumers for electricity theft). There is also a need to study how and to what extent fear (emotions) mediates the relationship between feelings (mood) and behavior
- Future studies can further explore outsourcing compatibility of different functions and unintended consequences of outsourcing.
- A fresh study may be conducted to explore customers' perspective on electricity theft.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Sample Participant Information Sheet

I am Tanushree Sharma, a faculty with University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, Dehradun. I am conducting a study on Indian power distribution sector for my PhD. As you might be aware, India's Aggregate Technical & Commercial (AT&C) losses are far high than the world's average, especially the commercial losses. Researches have indicated that employee theft by consumers that happen in connivance with employees of power utilities contribute majorly to the commercial losses.

My study aims at identifying the workplace factors that predispose employees to connive with consumers for electricity theft. The study needs input from the employees of power utilities working at different departments at different levels.

In connection to the same, I need your structured time at a place of your convenience to take your insight on the topic. The interview will be 30 minute long, but might take longer depending on how the interview unfolds. Your answers will be used for academic purpose only, and complete confidentiality will be maintained. I assure you that your or your organization's name will not be revealed in the report.

I shall be glad to provide further information, should you so require.

Thanks in positive anticipation.

Appendix 2 Interview Protocol

Interview Style- Unstructured Interviews were made use of.

The topics for the interview were drawn from the conceptual lens as detailed below:

- What are the factors that predispose employees to connive with customers in electricity theft?
- Why do employees connive?
- How does connivance happen?
- Which workplace factors help in connivance?
- Which workplace factors hinder connivance?
- Why does connivance continue?
- How does a new joiner start conniving?

Probing questions were asked to have a detailed insight into the phenomenon, mentioned below are the examples of the same:

- Could you describe...?
- What contributed to?
- How...?
- Tell me more...?
- Could you throw more light on...?

Procedure-

- Introduction
- Giving background Information- narrating the study and the purpose of it.
- Promising confidentiality
- Asking for concern and permission
- Putting the first mandatory question.
- Putting probing questions
- Asking further leading and probing questions
- Asking for something they wish to tell or know more.

- Asking for lead, and checking whether the participant is comfortable letting his name used.
- Thanking for the support

Rules-

1. Informing the participant about the sensitivity of the topic and obtaining consent prior to the visit.
2. Ensuring that the place of interview be comfortable enough for the participant to share information about the phenomenon.
3. Making a point to paraphrase the responses of the participants for capturing their thoughts correctly and checking with them the understanding.
4. Transcribing the interviews immediately after the interviews were done to ensure that time delay does not result in data-erosion.

Appendix 3 Rationalizing Corruption

Rationalizing Corruption		
Strategy	Description	Examples
Denial of responsibility	The actors engaged in corrupt behaviors perceive that they have no other choice than to participate in such activities.	<i>"What can I do? My arm is being twisted." "It is none of my business what the corporation does in overseas bribery."</i>
Denial of injury	The actors are convinced that no one is harmed by their actions; hence the actions are not really corrupt.	<i>"No one was really harmed." "It could have been worse."</i>
Denial of victim	The actors counter any blame for their actions by arguing that the violated party deserved whatever happened.	<i>"They deserved it." "They chose to participate."</i>
Social weighting	The actors assume two practices that moderate the salience of corrupt behaviors: 1. Condemn the condemner, 2. Selective social comparison.	<i>"You have no right to criticize us." "Others are worse than we are."</i>
Appeal to higher loyalties	The actors argue that their violation of norms is due to their attempt to realize a higher-order value.	<i>"We answered to a more important cause." "I would not report it because of my loyalty to my boss."</i>
Metaphor of the ledger	The actors rationalize that they are entitled to indulge in deviant behaviors because of their accrued credits (time and effort) in their jobs.	<i>"We've earned the right." "It's all right for me to use the Internet for personal reasons at work. After all I do work overtime."</i>

Source: (Anand, Ashforth, & Joshi, 2004)

Appendix 4 Proposed Conceptual Model

