

STUDY MATERIAL

ORGANIZATION

PART-A

TOPIC COVERED

CONCEPTS OF PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

- ◆ THE HIERARCHY OR THE SCALAR PROCESS
- ◆ UNITY OF COMMAND
- ◆ AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY
- ◆ COORDINATION
- ◆ SPAN OF CONTROL
- ◆ SUPERVISION
- ◆ CENTRALISATION AND DECENTRALISATION
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PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION

INTRODUCTION

Every organisation has certain objectives and goals to achieve and is structured on the basis of certain principles with a view to achieving these objectives. These principles are, therefore, known as principles of organisation, which are generally followed by every organisation for the achievement of its ends. According to Avery Raube, certain principles of a good organisation are as follows:

- (a) There must be clear lines of authority running from the top to the bottom of the organisation. This is known as the '*hierarchy*' or the '*scalar principle*'.
- (b) No one in the organisation should report to more than one line supervisor. Everyone in the organisation should know to whom they report, and who report to them. This is the principle of 'Unity of Command'.
- (c) The authority and responsibility of each supervisor should be clearly defined in writing. This enables the supervisor to know what is expected of them and the limits of their authority.
- (d) Responsibility should always be coupled with corresponding responsibility.
- (e) Accountability of higher authority for the acts of its subordinates is absolute. It means that executives cannot disassociate themselves from the acts of their subordinates. They are as responsible as their subordinates, for what they do, and/or what they neglect to do.
- (f) Authority should be delegated as far down the line as possible. The current trend toward decentralisation explains this principle. This enables members of top corporate management to devote more time to overall thinking and planning.
- (g) The number of levels of authority should be kept at a minimum. The greater the number of levels, the longer is the chain of command, and the more time it takes for instructions to travel down and for information to travel up and down within the organisation.
- (h) The work of every person in the organisation should be confined as far as possible to the performance of a single leading function. This is the principle of specialisation and is concerned with delegation of authority horizontally.
- (i) Whenever possible, line functions should be separated from staff functions, and adequate emphasis should be placed on important staff activities.
- (j) There is a limit to the number of positions that can be coordinated by a single executive. This is the principle of span of control.
- (k) The organisation should be flexible, so that it can be adjusted to changing conditions.

The organisation should be kept as simple as possible. Some of these principles discussed here, such as hierarchy/scalar process, span of control and unity of command may be discussed in details as follows:

THE HIERARCHY OR THE SCALAR PROCESS

The literal meaning of hierarchy is the rule or control of the higher over the lower. In every large scale organisation there are a few who command and there are others who are commanded. This results in the creation of superior—subordinate relationships through a number of levels of responsibility reaching from the top down to the bottom of an organisation. A pyramidal type of structure is thus built up which **Mooney and Reilet call the 'scalar process'**.

In an organisation, scalar means the grading of duties according to degrees of authority and corresponding responsibility. According to Mooney this scale or the scalar chain, as he calls it, is a universal phenomena; wherever we find an organisation even of two people related as superior and subordinate we have the scalar principle.

The basic features of a **hierarchical structure** are as following:

(a) A person will have only one immediate superior from whom he or she will receive orders; (b) A person will not receive orders from a person of lower status; (c) No intermediate level shall be skipped over in the dealings of the top with those at the lower level or vice-versa; (d) A person who is given responsibility for a task will have authority commensurate with his or her responsibility.

From the aforementioned features, it follows that in the scalar system, authority, command and control descend from the top down to the bottom step by step. For example, the secretary of department will deal with the joint secretary who, in turn, shall deal with the deputy secretary, who further shall deal with the under-secretary. The under-secretary shall further deal with the section officer who, in turn, shall deal with assistants, clerks, etc. Similarly, the line of upward communication shall be exactly the same when section officer deals with his higher officers.

Merits of the Scalar Principle

The scalar system is indispensable for every large-scale organisation. Some of its merits are as following: (a) It binds together the various units and divisions of an organisation into an integrated whole, (b) It enables us to fix up responsibility at each level and at each post in an organisation, (c) It serves as a channel of communication, both upwards and downwards. It makes clear to every official with whom they are to deal with, (d) It simplifies the procedure of file movement, (e) It helps decentralise decision-making and prevents congestion of business at the top. **In the words of L. D. White:**

It is the channel of command, of communication, downward and upward, along which flow information, advice, specific instructions, warning and commendations. It is the channel for the delegation of authority. It establishes a sequence of related centres for decision-making and thus prevents congestion in the despatch of business by closing out much of it in lower levels.

In the bureaucratic model of Max Weber also, the organisation of offices follows the principle of hierarchy; that is, 'each lower office is under the control and supervision of a higher one' and 'the whole administrative staff under the supreme authority' are organised in a clearly defined hierarchy of offices.

Demerits of Scalar System

The main demerit of the scalar system is that it makes administrative decision-making a dilatory process. A file must pass through proper channels howsoever urgent the matter may be and howsoever ignorant intermediate officials may be about that matter. In order to do away with this defect, the Government of India started '**file-jumping experiment**' to skip over the intermediate levels in the hierarchy and to make files reach directly to the decision-making authority. Another major demerit is that the scalar system does not contribute to the repositioning of mutual trust, either in inter-organisational relations, or in inter-personal relations in the administration. This might even promote a caste system in the bureaucratic set-up. In those agencies where a large number of specialists is appointed, the principle of hierarchy will mar the initiative of the specialists and the generalists—specialists relationship will tend to become conflictual. Warren Bennis argues

that in the future, organisations will be '**task forces**' constituted around problems to be solved. In such organisations, 'People will be differentiated not vertically, according to rank and role, but flexibly and functionally according to skill and professional training'.

To conclude, it may be observed that in practice an organisation does not work on the formal principle of hierarchy. **In the words of Nigro:**

An organisation is more than its structure and its official relationships as spelled out in its organisation charts and manuals...Organisation is also a social system in which its members develop patterns of behaviour which actually may deviate from official directives. This is called the informal organisation, and an appreciation of its role is indispensable to the understanding of the functioning of any agency.

UNITY OF COMMAND

Unity of command means that every employee shall have only one person as their 'boss' and shall receive orders only from the boss. If they get orders from more than one officer, it may become difficult, nay impossible, for them to discharge their duties. They will be put in an awkward position if they receive conflicting orders from different superiors. The superiors too can be put to hardship because the subordinates can easily play one superior against the other. All this may result in confusion and chaos in administration. Responsibility can be fixed only if we know where the authority rests, and this is not possible if authority stands divided. On theoretical grounds, the principle of unity of command seems unassailable but, in practice, we find significant exceptions to this principle. It is usually seen in individual employee, particularly in the professional or technical side. For example, administratively, doctors employed in a local body are under the administrative control of the chairman of the local body, but professionally, they are under the state director of public health. Similar is the case in regard to all organisations employing technical personnel. In our country where all the top posts are held by non-technical administrators belonging to administrative services, 'howsoever technical nature of the departments under them, the duality of command or control is clearly visible. F. W. Taylor, father of the scientific management movement, rejected the principle of unity of command and substituted it by functional direction and supervision. He believed that each individual worker would benefit and their efficiency shall increase if they get specialised and expert supervision in respect of each function that they perform. According to his scheme of things, he recommended eight foremen or supervisors for each individual worker, whom he called (a) the gang boss, (b) the speed boss (c) the inspector, (d) the repair boss, (e) the order of work and route clerk, (f) the instruction card clerk, (g) the time and cost clerk, and (h) the shop disciplinarian. The first four supervisors would personally help the man in their work, each supervisor helping in his own particular line or function, and the other four supervisors would operate from the administrative block issuing orders and instructions in writing. Taylor advocated this setup for industrial units but it has made its way in public administration also. This is on account of the fact that governments of today are taking on more and more economic and technical functions. Technical supervision by different technical experts is growing side by side with the general administrative supervision. It should not, however, be construed that the principle of unity of command is not operative in public administration. The principle of unity of command is not violated if an employee receives orders from two supervisors in respect of different matters or aspects of matters under their charge. It is broken only if they get orders from two different sources regarding one and the same matter. Even in the technical departments, the last word lies with the administrative chief who has the power and authority to overrule technical experts.

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AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Authority is **defined by Fayol as 'the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience'**. In the view of Allen authority is 'the sum of the powers and rights entrusted to make possible the performance of the work delegated. But authority cannot be understood simply in terms of powers and rights. The concept of acceptance and obedience related to authority is as important as power and right. Authority unless accepted and obeyed by others becomes meaningless. The primary element of authority is that it should be acceptable to those on which it is exercised. The obedience of authority is thus a must for the smooth functioning of an organisation. But the problem arises in a situation where commands conflict with the conscience of an individual. The conservative philosophers argue that even when the act prescribed by an authority is an evil one, it is better to carry out the act than to wrench at the structure of authority. On the other hand, the humanists believe that moral judgements of the individual must override authority when the two are in conflict. In practice, there are many factors which influence an individual's response to authority, and thus, the response may vary from one situation to another. Much depends upon the style and vigour of the persons who exercise authority in which they can generate the willingness of the other to obey and accept their commands for the fulfilment of the organisational objectives.

Sources of Authority

- (a) The primary source of authority is the constitution or the law of the country, which confers on some people supreme authority to take decisions and exercise command and powers over their subordinates. Therefore, all the persons who are subject to authority are bound by law to obey the commands of his superior, and non-obedience of authority may even be penalised.
- (b) Another source of authority is the status of the person. In an organisational structure based on hierarchy, the persons at the top get authority due to their higher status or position in the whole setup. Their position compels others to obey their commands and orders.
- (c) Third, the most important source of authority is the informal authority which is conferred on a person by the human beings working in the organisation. Here it is not the law or the status but human relations that matter.

Kinds of Authority

The following types of authority exist within an organisation:

- (a) **Line authority** is the basic and fundamental authority in an organisation, the ultimate authority to command, act or decide in matters affecting others.
- (b) **Staff authority** is the authority exercised by advisory and consultative agencies, called the staff agencies. This authority is limited in scope because it does not include the right to command. Staff authority is subordinate to line authority, and its purpose is to facilitate the activities being directed and controlled by the line organisations.
- (c) **Functional authority** refers to the authority exercised by specialists in an organisation. They exercise limited rights to command in matters pertaining to their function or the specialised area under them.
- (d) **Committees and authority:** The committees appointed for certain special purposes such as investigating plan, or carrying out research, are delegated some limited form of authority. They have no power of decision and generally do not require command authority.

The type of authority to be selected by the organising executive depends upon different situations and problems of particular organisations. Generally, a combination of different types is the best choice for the management.

Authority and Responsibility

The concept of authority and responsibility are closely related to each other. For the efficient working of an organisation, authority must be commensurate with responsibility. Persons in position of authority must have *sufficient* authority to fulfil their responsibilities. Equal authority and responsibility is a time honoured principle. It means that if managers are charged with the responsibility of accomplishing a given task, they must be given the commensurate authority to carry it out. According to Urwick, [T]o hold a group or individual accountable for activities of any kind without assigning to him the necessary authority to discharge the responsibility is manifestly both unsatisfactory and inequitable. It is, therefore, of great importance to smooth working that at all levels authority and responsibility should be coterminus and co-equal.

COORDINATION

It is rightly said that a battle may be lost, how much strong the forces may be, if there is no coordination among the various wings, divisions and units of the army. As in battle, so in administration. No organisation, howsoever competent its staff may be, can achieve the desired objective without coordination. It is the first principle of management to ensure that the organisation works well, that no part of it repeats what the other part does, that no employee works at cross-purposes and that there is no conflict among various units *inter-se*. This is technically called 'coordination'.

Definition of Coordination

Coordination has both negative and positive connotations. Negatively, coordination means the removal of conflicts and overlapping in administration, positively, it means to secure cooperation and teamwork among the numerous employees of an organisation.

Newman defines coordination as 'the orderly synchronisation of efforts to provide the proper amount, timing and directing of execution resulting in harmonious and unified actions to a stated objective'. **According to Terry, 'Coordination is the adjustment of the parts to each other and of the movement and operation of parts in time so that each can make its maximum contribution to the product of the whole'**. In the words of **L. D. White, 'Coordination is a process causing disjunct elements to a concentration on a complex of forces and influence which cause the mutually independent elements to act together.'** Seckler Hudson views coordination as 'the all important duty of inter-relating the parts of the work'. According to **Mooney, 'Coordination is the first principle of organisation and includes within itself all other principles which are subordinate to it and through which it operates.'**

In sum, coordination means making all parts of an organisation work harmoniously, without conflicts and without cross-purposes, to achieve the defined goal. It may however, be noted that coordination is a means and not an end in itself. **In the words of Newman: 'It is not a separate activity but a condition that should permeate all phases of administration.'**

Need for Coordination

Coordination is needed not only to secure the work and cooperation but also to prevent conflicts that may arise in the working of an organisation due to: (a) ignorance of the employees or units of

each other's activities, (b) a tendency among persons in charge of particular activities to regard their own deal as all- important, unmindful of the needs of others and make encroachments on the latter's sphere of activities, and (c) a growing tendency towards empire-building or greed for power among different units of an organisation.

Types of Coordination

Coordination *can be of two types*: (a) Internal or functional, which is concerned with the coordination of the activities of individuals working in an organisation and (b) external or structural, which is concerned with coordinating the activities of different organisational units. Both types of coordination are effected horizontally and perpendicularly. Horizontally, coordination establishes inter-relation between one section and another, between one branch and another, between one division and another, and between one department and another. Perpendicularly, coordination is established between employees and their officers, between officers and their next superior and so on, and between one section and a branch, between a branch and a division and so on.

Methods of Coordination

- (a) Coordination at the organisational levels can be achieved through several devices such as: (i) the establishment of a special unit for coordination work commonly known as 'coordination' or 'establishment' section or unit, (ii) through standardisation of procedures and methods, (iii) through departmental meetings and conferences, and (iv) through organisation and methods staff.
- (b) Coordination at the inter-organisational levels can be achieved through such devices as the interdepartmental committees; meetings and conferences among the officials of different departments and by the appointment of centralised staff; auxiliary and financial agencies like the joint committees of the inter-related departments appointed from time to time; the public works department; the estate office, the directorate general of supplies and disposal, the Union Public Service Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, the ministry of finance and its various departments, etc.
- (c) Coordination at the national level or at inter-state level in India is achieved through the Planning Commission, the National Development Council, conferences and meetings, zonal councils, inter-state councils, etc. The cabinet secretariat, the cabinet headed by the prime minister and various cabinet committees, effect major coordination between the centre and the states. The conferences of governors, chief ministers and ministers of different departments are common bodies that help coordination.
- (d) Besides the above bodies, certain other institutions and boards like the University Grants Commission, the inter-university boards, Association of Indian Universities, the Indian Historical Records Commission, etc., are also doing coordination work.

How to Achieve Effective Coordination

Dalton McFarland suggests four ways of achieving effective coordination:

- (a) **Clarifying authority and responsibility**: this will reduce overlapping and duplication of work.
- (b) **Checking and observation**: Records and reports help the executive to detect the spots where interrelations of the units are lacking.
- (c) **Facilitating effective communication**: Effective communication processes committees and group decision-making techniques help in clarifying authority and observing the existing coordination.

(iv) Coordination through leadership: Top administration must assert its leadership role without which coordination may not occur.

The degree of effectiveness of coordination can be judged by the following criteria:

- (a) It is not forced by autocratic direction, but is fostered by leaders who understand the value of participative management.
- (b) It is timely and extends in a balanced fashion to all parts of the organisation, and operates horizontally as well as vertically. Mary Parker Follett suggests: (i) It must be a continuous process; (ii) it must be direct between the persons immediately concerned; (iii) it must start at the outset of the activity.

Hindrances to Effective Coordination

The vast and expanding activities of the government and the lack of delegation on the part of high officials in administration make effective coordination difficult. According to Gulick, some of the difficulties arise from: (a) The uncertainty of the future as to the behaviour of individuals and of people, (b) the lack of knowledge, experience, wisdom and character among leaders and their confused and conflicting ideas and objectives, (c) the lack of administrative skill and techniques, (d) the vast number of variables involved and the incompleteness of human knowledge, particularly with regard to man and life, and (e) the lack of orderly methods of developing, considering, perfecting and adopting new ideas and programmes. To these are added four more by Seckler Hudson: (a) The 'size and complexity, (b) personalities and political factors, (c) the lack of leaders with wisdom and knowledge pertaining to public administration, and (d) the accelerated expansion of public administration to international dimensions. According to McFarland, problems of coordination in a business organisation stem from two main sources. First is the number and complexity of functions and activities delegated to different participating individuals. The second problem is the increasing use of specialisation of effort in building an organisations structure. Problems of coordination of different character also arise out of the perverseness of human beings in organisational settings. In fact, it is the human aspect of coordination which poses the most serious difficulties, for, when the elements to be coordinated are human, many variables in performance emerge. Whatever hindrances may occur, suitable measures for their removal have to be sought in the overall interest of the effective working of an organisation.

SPAN OF CONTROL

By span of control, we mean the number of subordinates which an officer can effectively supervise. The problem of span of control is a natural outflow of the principle of scalar system. Scalar organisation involves a number of tiers or steps one above the other each step being headed by a single person. Now the question that arises is how many persons should work under one person's control and supervision at any particular level. This problem of fixing the number of subordinates is a problem of span of control and is related to the psychological problem of span of attention. It is well known that no one can attend to more than a certain number of things or a certain number of persons. In other words, we can say that our span of attention is limited, partly because of the limits of knowledge and partly due to the limits of time and energy. There are divergent opinions of the writers on administration about the exact limit of the span of control. Ian Hamilton fixed the limit at 3 to 6; Urwick at 5 to 6 at higher levels and 8 to 12 at lower levels.

Graicunus felt that while the number of individual subordinates increases by arithmetical progression, the resultant increase in network of relationships is by geometrical progression and

this increase complicates the problem of span of control. According to Sexton, the decisions regarding an effective ratio of subordinates to supervisor depends upon such factors as bottlenecking, the psychological impact of close supervision, communication patterns, automation and extent of interdependence. However, the following factors are determinants of the degree of span of control:

- (a) **Nature of work:** Where the nature of work is of a routine, repetitive, measurable and homogenous character, the span of control is more than when the work is of heterogeneous character. For example, it is easier to supervise a large number of typists because of the measurable nature in comparison to when the nature of work more intellectual..
- (b) **Leadership:** The span of control increases or decreases depending upon the qualities of the supervisors. If they are intelligent, shrewd and tactful, they can supervise a larger group of persons but if they are weak and foppish, they may not be in a position to supervise even a few persons effectively. It may also be pointed out that if subordinates are untrained and incompetent, they are liable to make mistakes and hence need closer supervision.
- (c) **Age of agency:** Supervision is easier and the span of control increases if the organisation has been long in existence. In old established organisations precedents take firm roots and the work goes on smoothly. But in newer organisation, new problems constantly arrive which very often demand reference to the superiors.
- (d) **Location of the organisational units:** Supervision becomes easier when the subordinates work under the same roof where the supervisor is based. If they work in different rooms or at a distance from the supervisor, supervision becomes difficult. Thus, it is clear that the span of control is determined by various factors.

SUPERVISION

Meaning and Definitions

The term 'supervision' means 'to oversee' or 'superintend'. It has been defined as the authoritative direction and superintending of the work of others. However, some writers feel that this is too authoritarian a definition of supervision. Supervision is something more than the use of authority; it has educative aspect too. Williamson defines supervision

as a process by which workers are helped by a designated staff member to learn according to their needs, to make the best use of their knowledge and skill and to improve their abilities so that they do their jobs more effectively and with increasing satisfaction to themselves and the agency. She has more a humanistic rather than technical approach to the meaning of supervision.

Supervision is one of the most important tasks of management. It is inherent in the hierarchical structure of an organisation. The scalar system provides that each level in the hierarchical organisation is subject to the supervision of the one immediately above it and that employees are subject to control by their immediate superior. It is this top-to-bottom chain of supervision which gives coherence to an organisation.

Supervision is to be distinguished from inspection and investigation though the latter are the tools of the former. Inspection is to check compliance with instructions and investigation is to deter or detect wrong doing. Hence, both are negative in character. But supervision is more positive in character; it is consultative and advisory in nature. In the words of Halsey, it is selecting the right person for each job, arousing in each person an interest in his work and teaching him how to do it;

measuring and rating performance to be sure that teaching has been fully effective, administering correction where this is found necessary and transferring to more suitable work or dismissing those for whom this proves ineffective; commanding whenever praise is merited and rewarding for good work; and, finally, fitting each person harmoniously into the working group—all done fairly, patiently and tactfully so that each person is caused to do his work skilfully, accurately, intelligently, enthusiastically, and completely.

Functions of a Supervisor

According to **H. Nissen**, a supervisor is to perform the following duties:

- (a) To understand the duties and responsibilities of his own position; (b) to plan the execution of work; (c) to divide work among the subordinates and to direct and assist them in doing it; (d) to improve work methods and procedures; (e) to improve his or her own knowledge as a technical expert and leader; (f) to train the subordinates; (g) to evaluate the performance of the employees; (h) to correct mistakes, solve problems of employees, and develop discipline among them; (i) to keep subordinates informed about policies and procedures of the organisation and about the changes made therein; (j) to cooperate with colleagues and seek their advice and assistance whenever needed; and (k) to deal with employees, suggestions and complaints.

Methods or Techniques of Supervision

Millett suggests the following six methods or techniques-of supervision:

- (a) **Prior approval:** Prior approval or advance review is a very common method of control by the headquarters over field establishments. It means that before taking any initiative outside the framework of policy, the field establishments must get prior approval of the headquarters. In India, prior approval of the Ministry of Finance, besides the approval of the departmental heads, is needed if a project has financial implications. This arrangement of prior approval benefits both the subordinate agencies in so far as they are in a position to get guidance from the headquarters and the headquarters in so far as it is able to exercise detailed control over the progress of projects. This also affords scope for removing misunderstandings and rectifying errors well in time.

This approval process has, however, some disadvantages: It is time consuming, results in a mass of paperwork in the central office, interposes delays, creates diffidence on the part of operating heads and may sometimes lead to personality clashes between the operating heads and top management.

- (b) **Service standards:** The top management can lay down certain standards and fix norms for performance and targets for the operating agencies to achieve. This will not only provide guide-points to the operating agencies but shall also become a means for determining how effectively they have been doing the jobs assigned to them. Service standards are necessary in government in order to ensure that work is done promptly and properly. But standards fixed must be fair, exact and concrete and must be judged objectively. In certain intellectual type of activities, however, these standards are somewhat difficult to determine because of the immeasurable nature of work.
- (c) **Work budget:** Budget allotments are a very powerful means of exercising supervision. Budget allotments fix the magnitude of the work to be done in a given time and the operating agencies have to work within these allotments. The top management's control becomes effective as these operating agencies are not given a free hand to spend money as and when they like.

- (d) **Approval of personnel:** No government agency is given complete freedom in the matter of recruitment of personnel except for recruitment of insignificant subordinate staff. The central personnel agency can exercise control over subordinate operating units by providing for prior approval of certain appointments made by them.
- (e) **Reports:** A standard practice in supervision is to require operating units to submit periodic or ad hoc reports about their activities to the central office. Such reports provide information on the basis of which the central office can evaluate the performance of the operating units. In the words of Millett, 'These reports may be narrative or statistical; they may embrace the broad scope of all major activities, or they may be confined to a few essentials; they may emphasise achievement or deficiencies in performance.' It may, however, be mentioned that a report defeats its purpose if it gets unduly lengthy. Hence, voluminous reports should be avoided.
- (f) **Inspection:** Inspection is one of the accepted techniques of supervision. Its purpose is to see whether the field agencies are doing work according to the established rules and procedures and whether their performance is up to the expectation of the central office. It is not a fault-finding process rather it helps acquaint top management with the operating problems facing subordinate levels of management. Inspections are generally conducted by (i) the superiors of the work of subordinates; (ii) by the headquarters inspection staff specially deputed for the purpose of inspection, and (iii) by a separate outside inspection agency or department.

Qualities of Good Supervisors

According to **J. M. Pfiffner**, a good supervisor should possess the following qualities: (a) command of job content—expert knowledge of the work to be supervised; (b) personal qualification—cooperative spirit, evenness of temper, honesty, ability to attract, to motivate, to enthuse and unite others; (c) communicating ability—ability to communicate with the workers and to make them understand management's point of view; (d) general outlook—love for the job and source of inspiration to others; (e) courage and fortitude—ability to undertake responsibility and act decisively; (f) ethical and moral considerations—freedom from vices having social disapproval; (g) administrative capability—capacity to organise, coordinate and direct; (h) curiosity and intellectual ability—mental alertness and flexibility, responsiveness to new ideas and practices.

In the words of Halsey, qualities of a good supervisor shall be: (a) thoroughness: they should collect all the detailed information relevant to the issue; (b) fairness: they must be fair, considerate and truthful towards workers; (c) initiative: he must combine in himself courage, self-confidence and decisiveness; (d) tact: the ability to win the loyalty and support of others; (e) enthusiasm: an intense and eager interest in and devotion to a cause, a pursuit, or an ideal; (f) emotional control: canalisation of emotions in the right direction.

Importance of Human Characteristics of Supervision

The quality and performance of supervision in an administrative agency depend to a large extent upon the personal relations of supervisors to employees. The days of authoritarian leadership are gone and the term 'command' has to be replaced by the term 'persuasion'. Only if employees are generally satisfied with the type of supervision which they get in an organisation will they put forth their best efforts. Pfiffner has rightly summarised the importance of human characteristics of supervision in these words,

The pattern of leadership desirable in supervisory position is based upon behaviour that emphasises cooperation, participation, consultation, and satisfaction for the egos of the rank and file, even though the strong leader may have to subdue his natural desire for self-assertion and self-display.

He further writes,

The supervisor on the lower levels secures cooperation and production by deemphasizing his own ego, stimulating group participation, and encouraging the maximum satisfaction of individual egos that is consistent with coordination.

The Hawthorne experiments (Elton Mayo group) and Michigan Studies have proved that employees can be most effectively motivated by people-centred and democratic leadership aided by favourable institutional environment.

But researches made at Ohio State University have contradicted the Michigan Studies generalisations. They have proved that extreme 'soft' type of supervision does not pay; rather it adversely affects the morale of employees. Of course, they do not suggest a return to pre-Hawthorne production-oriented supervision but nor do they outrightly advocate 'employee-oriented' leadership. In fact, they advocate that a supervisor should be both production-oriented as well as employee-oriented. In the words of Seashore, 'If a leader abdicates his interest in and responsibility for production it has an adverse effect on both productivity and morale. A moderate amount of emphasis on production is required to avoid both low production and low morale.'

Training of Supervisors

Supervision is no doubt a technical skill which can be acquired and developed by proper training. In the words of Halsey,

It has been demonstrated time and again that almost any person of normal intelligence and sincere desire to be of service to people, can acquire considerable skill in the art of supervising people, if he will study its principles and methods and apply them thoughtfully conscientiously, and persistently.

The personality of the successful supervisor of people is made up of a number of qualities and these qualities are made effective through the use of certain definite techniques. During World War II, large scale training of supervisors was undertaken in the USA in the three essentials of supervisor's work through the so-called 'J' programme consisting of job instruction training, job methods training and job relations training. Among the few training programmes, 'work simplification' is getting very popular both in private and business organisations.

Training departments which are a part of the personnel department of various organisations provide for programmes of supervisory training, and so do some colleges, universities and training institutions.

CENTRALISATION AND DECENTRALISATION

The other problem that confronts an organisation is whether it should be centralised or decentralised. According to Charlesworth, 'one of the important problems of organisation is to reconcile the administrator's natural desire for complete control, uniformity and certainty with the people's demand that governmental administration, accommodates itself to local public sentiments. To centralise or to decentralise seems to be dilemma facing the governments today. Centralisation and decentralisation are the interrelated aspects of organisation.

Meaning

Centralisation refers to concentration of authority at or near the top. Decentralisation carries quite opposite meaning. It denotes dispersal of authority among a number of individuals or units of an organisation. In the words of L. D. White, 'the process of transfer of administrative authority from a lower to a higher level of government is called "centralisation"; the converse, "decentralisation".' The essential element in decentralisation is the delegation of decision-making functions.

Centralisation and decentralisation are relative terms. One can hardly think of a system which is either fully centralised or fully decentralised. It may be either more centralised or more decentralised. Thus centralisation or decentralisation may be termed as the tendency of either concentration or dispersal of authority.

White writes that administrative authority, like political authority, may be concentrated or dispersed. Constitution and legislative bodies may distribute power on the basis of two major rules. Much administrative authority may be vested by law or by constitution in the local governing bodies of a governmental system. In this case the administrative system is decentralised. Conversely, relatively, greater administrative power may be vested in the hands of officials of the central government, with a consequent diminution of the authority and discretion of officials in lower governmental levels; the system is then called 'centralised'.

L. D. White further writes: The term 'centralisation is also used with other meanings. It may refer to the relations between headquarters and field, in any given jurisdiction, as a description of the relative amount of freedom left to field agents or the trends in this relationship.

The difference between the two concepts can be well understood from the following explanation by Fesler;

Whether a given field service leans towards centralisation or towards decentralisation may be discerned from observation of the importance of matters on which field officials have decision making authority, compared to matters wholly retained for headquarters' decisions, the extent of central consultation with field officials on matters that arise and are formally decided at headquarters, and the weight such field opinion carries, the frequency with which field officials must refer matters to headquarters for decision even though they arise at and are partially processed in the field, the number and specificity of central regulations and orders governing decision-making in the field; the provision for citizens' appeals to headquarters for overruling of field decisions; the degree to which all the agency's field activities within each geographic area are directed by a single field official; and the calibre of field officials. Neither the mere existence of a field service, nor its carrying of a heavy workload, or its employment of nine-tenths of the agency's personnel constitutes evidence of decentralisation.

Centralisation and decentralisation have relative significance. Neither of the two is without merits or demerits.

Merits and Demerits of Centralisation and Decentralisation

The merits and demerits of centralisation and decentralisation have been summed up by Willoughby in the following words:

The advantages of the centralised system are that it provides for a maximum of control; ensures that all the work is performed in the same manner and in accordance with same general policies and principles; and makes more difficult administrative abuses in such matters as the

employment and handling of personnel, the purchase and use of supplies etc. The disadvantages may be summed up in the delay in securing action, the increased expense that usually results under this system, the fact that the central office has to act without the knowledge of local conditions possessed by the local units; and lack of flexibility in administration. The advantages and disadvantages of the system of decentralisation are for the most part reverse of those stated for that of centralisation.

Merits and Demerits of Centralisation

Merits

- (a) Ensures effective control over all units of the organisation.
- (b) Ensures uniformity as all the work is done in the same manner and in accordance with the same general policies and principles.
- (c) Prevents abuse of administrative authority.
- (d) Makes coordination easier.
- (e) Gives priority to national interests over local interests.

Demerits

- (a) Lacks flexibility of approach.
- (b) Leads to delay in decision-making.
- (c) Prohibits people's participation in decision-making.
- (d) Diminishes the opportunity of the field units as well as field officials to take initiatives.
- (e) Puts too much burden on headquarters.
- (f) Renders it unlikely that decisions taken will be in tune with local conditions and requirements.

De Tocqueville has rightly pointed out:

Indeed I cannot conceive that a nation can live and prosper without a powerful centralisation of government. But I am of opinion that a centralised administration is fit only to enervate the nation in which it exists by incessantly diminishing their local spirit.

Merits and Demerits of Decentralisation

As already mentioned, it is difficult to conceive of an organisation, the administrative system of which is fully centralised. Decentralisation is inevitable. Its degree may vary from one organisation to another. Decentralisation is in consonance with the principle of democracy at grass roots.

Merits

The dispersal of authority, functions and responsibility has many merits.

- (a) It lessens the burden of overburdened headquarters and strengthens field agencies and grassroots units.
- (b) It reduces delays, curbs red-tape and encourages quicker action. Quick decisions become possible.
- (c) Decentralisation leads to morale boosting of employees. It increases efficiency.
- (d) Subordinate officials develop a sense of confidence as they take their own decisions and shoulder their own responsibility.
- (e) Decentralisation facilitates experiments by various units.
- (f) Field units can take local conditions and requirements into consideration while arriving at decisions.

According to Charlesworth, 'Decentralisation has a more important justification than mere administrative efficiency. It bears directly upon the development of sense of personal adequacy in the individual citizens. It has spiritual connections.'

Demerits

- (a) Decentralisation is also not free from dangers. Too much of or excessive decentralisation may lead to anarchy. It makes coordination and integration of administrative operations difficult.
- (b) It is neither possible nor desirable to have complete decentralisation in personnel, budgeting, tax collection, accounting, planning, programming, etc.
- (c) Rapid means of transport and communication do not favour decentralisation.
- (d) Decentralisation may result in lack of proper control over field units or agencies.
- (e) Uniformity in administration is unlikely to be ensured.
- (f) Local interests may take precedence over national interests.

Decentralisation, therefore, can be brought about only within certain limits. There have to be certain safeguards provided for in the administrative system.

Centralisation and decentralisation however, are not principles which can be universally applied at any time and at any place, they have a situational relevance. Decentralisation cannot be effected only for the sake of decentralisation and vice-versa. A single system cannot be adopted in all circumstances. According to Fesler, centralisation or decentralisation of authority within an organisation depends upon various factors. These are the factors of responsibility, administrative factors, functional factors and external factors.

The factor of responsibility

According to the factor of responsibility, every departmental head is responsible for all the administrative activities of his or her department and as long as the central authority is held responsible for all actions, it is hesitant and even reluctant to cede any authority to its subordinates or field officials. The central authority, in such a situation prefers to direct and control all their activities. The end result is greater centralisation and less decentralisation.

Administrative factors

Administrative factors also determine the extent of centralisation or decentralisation of authority. Among the administrative factors, mentioned by Fesler, are 'age of the agency, stability of its policies and methods, competence of its field personnel, pressure for speed and economy and administrative sophistication'.

Older agencies are more prone to decentralisation. Stability and competency of field officials is a point in favour of decentralisation. If the policies and methods are not changed every other day, there is no risk involved in decentralising reasonable authority. The need for economy and the pressure for speedy work may necessitate decentralisation. Administrative sophistication is also an important factor influencing decentralisation.

Functional factors

Decentralisation also depends upon what type of functions the department performs or the variety of functions an agency performs. The technical nature of functions and the need for nationwide uniformity demand centralisation. It is a common experience that certain types of functions such as

defence, planning and communication requiring nationwide uniformity tend in the direction of uniformity. On the other hand, if the functions need diversity such as agriculture, forest, etc., then decentralisation is preferred. Moreover, operating decisions can easily be decentralised at the appropriate lowest level. Long back, J. S. Mill recommended the vesting in the local agencies 'not only the execution, but to a great degree the control of details'.

External factors

Among the external factors may be included the demand for popular participation in programmes. The demand for planning from below is a good example of this factor. Grassroots democracy needs a great degree of decentralisation.

Decentralisation of authority means a greater sense of responsibility and higher morale among field officials. It democratises administration and brings it closer to citizens. But before decentralisation is affected the problem needs to be carefully studied. Certain safeguards are must before decentralisation is opted for. Before divesting itself of authority, functions and responsibility, the central authority must be sure of several things:

- (a) Local officers must report to no more than one central agency.
- (b) Jurisdictional lines must be meticulously drawn.
- (c) Procedures in several field establishments must come up to a common standard, although they need not be uniform.
- (d) The local agency must have a sufficiently flexible physical and psychological structure to permit it to adjust to emergent local conditions.
- (e) The field unit must not make decisions affecting overall policy, although it should be encouraged to make its own decisions to a point approaching that situation.
- (f) A system of ready appeals must be present.
- (g) Suggestions from the field to the centre must be freely channelled.
- (h) Adequate reporting and inspection methods must provide the central authority with full and current knowledge of peripheral operations.

If the central authority feels satisfied that these safeguards have been provided, it is free to decide on the extent of decentralisation it wants to effect.

DELEGATION

Delegation is defined by Mooney as conferring of specified authority by a higher to a lower authority. It means that delegation is the devolution of authority by superior persons to their agent or subordinate subjects to their supervision and control.

In the words of Millett:

Delegation of authority means more than simply assigning duties to others in more or less detail. The essence of delegation is to confer discretion upon others to use their judgement in meeting specific problems within the framework of their duties. Management leadership must then accept the responsibility for how this discretion is exercised.

Need for Delegation

Delegation helps the chief executive to devote time and energy to more important decisions of the organisation. Effective leadership is made possible only through the process of delegation. In the words of Mooney and Reiley, 'The real leader finds it easy to delegate authority, and is quick to do

so whenever he perceives its necessity'. One of the duties of managers is to help their subordinates grow, to train them in the art of sharing responsibility and making decisions which is possible only through delegation. Delegation of authority has, therefore, much educating value. The subordinates develop greater loyalty and a greater identification with the organisation if they are made partners in the exercise of authority. This builds up their morale and gives them the incentive to work hard. Delegation provides the necessary flexibility to the otherwise rigid procedures. Delegation helps to adjust procedures according to the needs of situations. Proper delegation of authority minimises delay, makes service more effective, economical and efficient.

To sum up in the words of White, 'Circumstances of magnitude and volume, however, require some delegation of authority, and the settlement of much business at the point where it arises.'

Type of Delegation

Delegation in terms of degree of authority delegated may be (a) full or partial, (b) conditional or unconditional, (c) formal or informal.

- (a) Delegation is full when complete powers are conferred on the agent, for example, when a diplomatic representative is sent abroad with 'full powers' to negotiate. It is 'partial' when the diplomat is required to get advice and guidance on crucial points from the delegating authority in his country.
- (b) Delegation is conditional when the action of subordinate is subject to confirmation and revision by the supervisor; it is unconditional when subordinate is free to act without reservations.
- (c) Delegation is formal when embodied in written rules by laws or orders; it is informal when based on customs, conventions and understanding.

Hindrances to Delegation

The hindrances to delegation are of two types: (a) organisational and (b) personal.

Organisational hindrances are:

- (a) Lack of established methods and procedures, delegation is made easier if procedures and rules are well established.
- (b) Lack of means of coordination and communication.
- (c) Unstable and non-repetitive nature of work, stable and repetitive work affords a greater degree of delegation.
- (d) Size and location of an organisation—delegation becomes a necessity if organisation is geographically spread.
- (e) Lack of properly spelled out positions in terms of duties and authority.

Personal factors, which cause failure to delegate may be summed up as: egotism to keep power; to remain in limelight and to take credit for everything; fear for disloyalty on the part of subordinates, lack of confidence in the intelligence and technical competence of the associates; absence of emotional maturity in the chief; fear of accountability to higher officials, to the legislature or the people, etc. Pfiffner gives the following human causes of failure to delegate. Persons who rise to position of hierarchical leadership have more than normal egotism. They are afraid that others will not make the proper decisions or carry them out in the desired manner. They fear that disloyal or subversive power centres will develop among strong subordinates. Strong, vigorous and highly motivated persons grow impatient with the slower pace and indecision of subordinates. In public administration political considerations often make delegation difficult. The cultural heritage of man has been one of authoritarian, patriarchal leadership, thus the practice of delegation is partly

dependent on cultural change. The act of delegation requires an emotional maturity which apparently is rare, even among successful persons. The symbols of leadership (those personal qualities and traits which attract the attention of others) are inconsistent with the philosophy of delegation. Those striving to succeed must make themselves prominent. Persons who desire to delegate do not know how. They do not know how, for at least two reasons: (a) the science of organisation and management is immature, and (b) their work experience has not taught them to delegate because most organisations fail to practise delegation.

Notwithstanding all the above organisational and personal difficulties hindering delegation, the need of delegation cannot be denied. Organisational hindrances can be removed by establishing proper procedures and methods of work. Each operating service should have an organisation manual as also an office procedure manual in which proper procedures and the responsibility and authority attached to each of the positions in the hierarchy should be fully described. Delegation, then, shall be more exact and specific. Proper means of coordination and communication should also be established to facilitate delegation.

As far as the personal factors are concerned, not only training of the subordinates but also of the top executive should be emphasised. The subordinates should be trained in the art of properly using discretion within limits of the rules and the top executive in the habit of delegation. It augurs well for our administration that delegation has become an honoured subject of discussion in our country. On the recommendations of O & M Division, the central government in India has already taken to 'delegation' in administration as a matter of policy. The control of the Ministry of Finance over expenditure has been considerably reduced by the delegation of financial powers to various ministries and departments.

General Principles of Delegation

Delegation should be guided by the following principles:

- (a) Delegation should be written and specific.
- (b) Authority and responsibility for each position in the management group should be spelled out and delegation should be made to a position rather than to an individual.
- (c) Only that much of authority should be delegated as it is within the competence of subordinates to exercise safely.
- (d) Delegation should be properly planned and systematic.
- (e) Policies, regulations and procedures should be well defined as to give no misunderstanding to the employees using discretionary powers.

The degree to which delegation is possible depends upon the nature of the case, the circumstances and the responsibilities involved. Usually, the following powers are not delegated:

The supervision of the work of the first line of immediate subordinates,

- (a) General financial supervision and the power to sanction expenditure above a specified amount.
- (b) Power to sanction new policies and plans and departures from established policy or precedents.
- (c) Rule-making power where it is vested in the delegating officer.
- (d) Making of the specified higher appointments.
- (e) Hearing of appeals from the decision of at least the immediate subordinates.
