

Semester - V

Paper: C-12 (Basic theories of public administration)

Unit: 2 → Major Concepts of Organization: (a) Hierarchy (b) Unity of Command, (c) Span of Control, (d) Authority (e) Centralization, Decentralization and delegation (f) Line and Staff -

Notes given from the book "Public Administration" → by K.K. Ghai

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MAIN PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION : PRINCIPLE OF HIERARCHY

Organisation is the basis of all administration. An administration is always an organised administration. It is through the organisation that the duties and the responsibilities of the personnel are arranged and performed in such a way as to accomplish the assigned purposes, objectives and goals. Administration involves cooperative efforts made by a number of personnel to achieve some purpose. For this end, the personnel and their efforts have to be systematically organised and coordinated. Organisation is the basic system through which the personnel, their efforts and works are coordinated and operationalised for securing some defined purpose. The creation of each organisation is done on the basis of several well recognised principles which stand duly recognised by scholars and the theory and practice of administration.

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION

There are several well settled and well recognised principles of organisation. By a principle is meant "a standard accepted as a guide to action". The acceptance is based on experience and expertise.

L.D.White writes " These (Principles of Organisation) suggest only working rules of conduct which wide experience seems to have validated".

In the words of **Henry Fayol**, "These principles are acknowledged truths regarded as proven on which one can rely".

There are several recognised and accepted principles of organisation. However, it must also be stated that the principles of organisation are not axioms or laws like the laws of natural sciences which are universal and remain uniform for all times and at all places. Principles of organisation are generally valid in all societies. But their practice can differ, and

mostly differs, from place to place and even from time to time. However, such a difference is often of a degree and not of kind.

Principles of organisation are not as exact as the principles of natural sciences. Their exact formulation, as *Simon* remarks, is both difficult and controversial. Yet, as

Dimock and several other writers observe, "It is possible to list several principles of organisation that are not too rigid and that apply to all kinds of organisations".

The credit for suggesting the principles of Public Administration for the first time belongs to *W.F. Willoughby*. After him, several scholars have tried to give a list of the principles of organisation.

Harvey Walker identifies three Basic Principles of Organisation :

- (I) Administration may be most efficiently organised by functions.
- (II) Every officer should be responsible to public control.
- (III) Staff and Line activities should be separated.

R. Warner lists eight principles of Organisation :

- (1) Political Direction,
- (2) Political Responsibility,
- (3) Social Necessity,
- (4) Efficiency
- (5) Organisation,
- (6) Public Relations,
- (7) Evolution or Progress, and
- (8) Research.

J.M. Pfiffner gives a list of eight principles of Organisation : (1) Hierarchy, (2) Answerability, (3) Functional Departmentalism, (4) Span of Control, (5) Self-contained departments and Coordination, (6) Staff service both general and auxiliary, (7) Distinction between Line and Staff, (8) Personnel and Finance directly under the chief administrative officer.

L.D. White accepts the following seven key Principles of Organisation :

- (1) Authority to Determine Organisation,
- (2) Doctrine of Unity of Command
- (3) The Formation of Departments,
- (4) Line, Auxiliary and Staff Agencies,
- (5) Hierarchy
- (6) Location and Delegation of Authority, and
- (7) Co-ordination, Position and Search for Principles.

No single author has exactly formulated these principles. These have been discovered and formulated by the practice and experience of generations of human beings in several centuries and in many countries. Their acceptance as useful and essential principles of organisation has made them valid. These represent the wisdom and experience of the great theorists of Public Administration and several great administrators.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION

Taking into account all the views, expressed by eminent workers and administrators, the following major principles of organisation can be briefly identified :

I. Principle of Hierarchy or Scalar Process. The Principle of Hierarchy is a universally recognised principle of organisation. It stands for an ordered structure of inferior and superior positions and beings in an ascending scale. The good chief dwells at the apex from which, with his expert and penetrating eye, he can reach out the hearts of his lowest subordinates and mould their deeds to his command. It establishes a defined superior-subordinate relationship in the structure of the organisation.

II. Span of Control. The principle of the Span of Control refers to the issue of the number of subordinates that a superior officer can effectively command and control.

III. Coordination. Coordination stands for the principle of securing orderly and harmonious relations among all the parts of the organisation.

IV. Supervision. Supervision means that the work of each personnel is subject to the supervision and control of a higher officer.

V. Authority and Responsibility. The principle of authority means that each official stands assigned a set of defined powers which he can legally exercise. Legitimate power vested with a personnel is his authority which he can exercise over others. Authority is inseparably related with the principle of responsibility and the latter means that each personnel exercising authority is also responsible for his acts of commission and omission.

VI. Centralisation - Decentralisation. The principle of centralisation stands for keeping the authority structure limited to only a few top level offices while the principle of decentralisation stands for the distribution of authority to several, may be all, parts of the organisation.

VII. Delegation. Delegation is the principle which guides the process of the delegation of authority and powers by an authority holder to his subordinates.

VIII. Unity of Command. Unity of Command means that each subordinate should be under the command of a single officer or office.

In this chapter we will discuss in detail the Principle of Hierarchy and in the next few chapters, other principles of organisation.

I. PRINCIPLE OF HIERARCHY OR THE SCALAR PROCESS

The Principle of Hierarchy, which is also known as the Scalar Process, stands recognised as a fundamental principle of organisation. *Mooney* and *Relley* describe it as "the eternal and universal principle of organisation". Hierarchy division or classification of the personnel in several levels with a system of defined authority and responsibility of each level with every other level of the organization. Hierarchy means the rule or control of the higher over the lower. It can also be described as 'pyramidal' or hierarchical set of parts in which the higher parts control the lower parts.

A hierarchical organisation begins from one person at the top, breaks into several sections and finally descends to the workers who are at its base. It is a concept of arrangement of various units of organisation which have to be grouped at several levels in the form of a pyramid - broad at the base, tapering upward and resulting into a single vertex.

In a hierarchical organisation, authority exclusively belongs to the chief executive at the top. He delegates it to the different parts immediately below him, who in turn delegate it to their immediate subordinates. This process of delegation goes on till the bottom line is reached. Each official to whom authority is delegated becomes responsible for doing his work. Thus, authority flows from top to bottom and responsibility extends from the bottom upwards.

Hierarchy : Definition

1. "Hierarchy means the grouping of units into a large unit for the direction and control of activities. It is the method whereby the efforts of many different individuals are geared scale-wise".

— F. M. Marx

2. "Hierarchy is an "ordered structure of inferior and superior beings in an ascending scale. The good chief dwells at the apex from which, with his terrible eye, can search out the hearts of his lowest subordinates and mould their deeds to his command."

— Earl Latham

3. Hierarchy is a method whereby the efforts of different individuals are geared together".

— J.D. Millet

4. "Hierarchy consists in the universal application of the superior-subordinate relationship through a number of levels of responsibility reaching from the top to the bottom of the structure".

— L.D. White

In simple it can be stated that a hierarchical organisation means a graded organisation of several successive steps in which each of the lower levels is immediately subordinate to the next higher one and through it to the other higher step till we reach the apex. The immediate lower is responsible to the next higher one and through it to the other higher step right up to the top. When authority descends from the top to downwards step by step, it is an hierarchical organisation.

Hierarchy as Scalar Process

James Mooney and his colleagues conceptualise Hierarchy as the Scalar Process and give to it a systematic meaning.

Mooney and Reiley observe, "A scale means a series of steps, something graded. In an organisation, it means the grading of duties, not according to different functions but according to the degree of authority and corresponding responsibility. For convenience, we shall call this phenomenon of organisation the scalar chain..... Whenever we find an organisation, even of two people, related as superior and subordinate, we have the scalar principle. This chain constitutes the universal process of coordination through which the supreme coordinating authority becomes effective throughout the entire structure".

Thus, Hierarchy means the grouping of units into a large unit for the direction and control of activities. It is the method whereby the efforts of various individuals are geared together to achieve a goal through a system of interlocking superior-subordinate from the top to the bottom. Each higher level of organisation has some authority and control over its lower level. Each level is also responsible for the authority it exercises over the next lower level or levels.

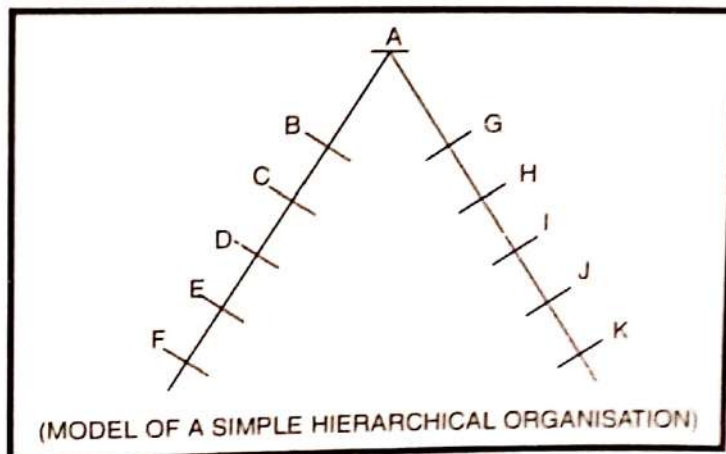
FEATURES OF HIERARCHY

Following are some of the salient features of Hierarchy :

1. All administrative functions are vested into units and sub-units.
2. All the units are organised in the form of a pyramid one below the other.
3. Authority is distributed or delegated among various levels of the organisation.
4. Each hierarchical organisation observes the principles of 'through proper channel'.
5. All commands and communications come through proper channel. No intermediate level can be ignored.
6. A person receives orders from only one superior and not from anybody else. This means the principle of unity of command is observed.
7. Authority and responsibility are adequately combined. Authority without responsibility is dangerous, while responsibility without authority is meaningless.

The principle of hierarchy can be illustrated with the help of the following scale or diagram :

In this diagram, A is at the apex of the organisational pyramid. He is the head of the organisation, the Chief Executive. B is A's subordinate, C is the



immediate subordinate of B and also a subordinate of A through B. Thus if we go down the line, F is the immediate subordinate of E and also a subordinate of A. Thus, orders flow from top to bottom, namely from A to B, B to C, C to D, D to E, and E to F, and communications flow from bottom to top i.e. from F to E, E to D and so on.

The same is true of the other side of the Scale A to K. If A wants to issue an order to F, it has to travel through B, C, D, E and if F has to communicate something to K, it has to travel through E, D, C and B to A and descend from A to K step by step; F, A, K in this diagram represent the line of authorities linking the entire organisation. The travelling of orders from A to F step by step in a descending order and the flow of communication from F to A in an ascending order is called communication 'through proper channel'

If the Section Officer wants to issue an order to the clerk, it has to go through the Superintendent and the Head Clerk. Similarly, a proposal from the Clerk to the Section Officer travels through the Head Clerk and the Superintendent to reach the Section Officer.

MERITS AND DEMERITS OF HIERARCHY

A. Merits

1. **Clarity of Leadership.** In a hierarchical organisation there is clarity of leadership. Authority exclusively belongs to the chief executive at the top who has the eye to search out the hearts of his lowest subordinates and to mould their deeds to his command.

2. **It enables the Fixation of Responsibility at each Level.** In a hierarchical organisation, authority belongs to the chief at the top. He delegates his authority to the official just below him, who in turn delegates it to his next immediate subordinate. Each official to whom authority is delegated becomes responsible for doing the work entrusted to him. Thus, in hierarchical organisation, responsibility exists at each level.

3. **Effective Channel of Communication.** Hierarchical organisation is based on the universal processes of co-ordination, communication and control. Division of work, delegation of authority, enforcement of responsibility, proper communication and control over all levels, are the useful and productive features of a hierarchical organisation. These enable the organisation to work systematically and efficiently.

4. **Decentralisation is an important feature of Hierarchical Organisation.** Authority of command and control descends from the top downward step by step till it reaches the lowest step of the ladder. Hierarchy has the merits of both decentralisation and centralisation.

5. **Rule of 'Through Proper Channel.'** In a hierarchical organisation each and every order or communication moves through proper channel i.e., through the immediate superior to the top. In the process, it secures the involvement of all the personnel working at various levels/units of the organisation.

6. **Unity of Command.** Hierarchical organisation makes possible the operation of the principle of unity of command. It provides that one person should be subordinate to only one superior and should receive orders only from the immediate superior. In the absence of such a lay out, authority may be undermined or may be in jeopardy.

B. Demerits

1. **Delay in the Disposal of Work.** According to the critics, a major flaw of the principle of hierarchy is that it acts as a source of delay in the disposal of work. Every paper has to move step by step covering every step. In the process, inevitable and harmful delays occur in the organisation.

2. **Red Tapism.** Because of a large gap between the planning of work at the top and its execution at the lower levels, there emerges the problem of red tapism, delay and corrupt practices in the working of the organisation. Delay and red tapism always breed corruption. These also bring rigidity into every administrative organisation.

3. **Top Heavy System.** The success or failure of the scalar system depends, to a very large extent, on the personal qualities and likings of the head of the organisation, the top executive head. If he is a man of high quality and dedication, he can bring life and a personal touch to the organisation which can be a source of success. If he is not up to the mark, he can be a source of further delay and inefficiency in the organisation.

4. **Source of Rigidity in the Organisation.** The principle of hierarchy about rigidity in the administrative organisation and is not really good for the development of dynamic human relationship among its members. They remain bound up with a network of rules and orders. The rules '*Through proper channel*' and '*According to rules*' act as a source of rigidity and delay in the working of the organisation.

After discussing the merits and demerits of the Principle of Hierarchy or the Scalar Process, we can say that its merits are far more and qualitatively superior to its demerits. In fact, Hierarchy stands accepted as a universally recognised principle of organisation. It rightly places emphasis upon the need for a defined organic relationship between superiors and subordinates as well as between different units of an organisation. The rule "through proper channel" is the essence of hierarchy.

An hierarchical organisation is a pyramidal type of organisation with an apex at the top and a broad base at the bottom. There are several successive levels which are both vertical and horizontal. In other words, it is a ladder of authority with various steps. As a principle of organisation, it serves as a channel of communication both upwards and downwards, ensures attention to problems, decentralises decision-making, and lessens the burden of the chief executive. Hierarchy is a built-in device both for achieving consensus and involvement of all as well as for realising the goals for which an organisation is established.

QUESTIONS FOR REVISION

1. What is an Organisation? Briefly discuss the Principles of Organisation.
2. Critically examine the nature of the Principle of Hierarchy.
3. What is the Principle of Hierarchy? Discuss its features, merits and demerits.
4. Explain the meaning and nature of the Scalar Process of Organisation.





PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION: (A) SPAN OF CONTROL (B) UNITY OF COMMAND

Next to the principle of hierarchy, we shall now discuss the principles of Span of Control and Unity of Command. The first one is used for determining the number of units and divisions of an organisation and the second one is concerned with the issue of relation between the higher and subordinate level officials.

(A) SPAN OF CONTROL

Span of Control is an important principle of organisation. The credit for explaining this principle belongs to Graicunas. The principle of Span of Control is taken to mean that a superior exercises and can exercise control over the work of only a limited number of subordinates. This limitation is imposed by the human span of attention which in itself means that each one can attend to a limited number of activities.

Defining the meaning of the Span of Control, Dimock writes: "It consists of the number and range of direct habitual communication contacts between the chief executive of an enterprise and his principal fellow officers."

In other words, the Span of Control refers to the issue and problem of the number of subordinates that each officer can or should effectively supervise.

Span of Control is related to the psychological issue of Span of Attention, which refers to the number of things or persons whom one can attend at a time. In fact, Span of Control is nothing but the principle of Span of Attention applied to the work of supervision and control of subordinates.

The issue of the Span of Control is a natural outflow of the scalar principle. A scalar

system involves a number of tiers or steps, one above the other, in an organisation and each step is headed by a single person. Each higher level controls its lower level. The question that arises is how many persons (subordinates) should work under the control and supervision of one superior. In answering this question different scholars have given different views. Each one thinks that a particular number is ideal or practicable.

Problem of Span of Control

There is a lack of agreement among scholars regarding the exact limit of the Span of Control. The problem of fixing the number of subordinates, which an officer can supervise and control is the problem of the Span of Control.

V. A. Graicunas was of the opinion that a superior can supervise 3 to 5 subordinates. However, Sir Ian Hamilton fixed the limit at 3 to 4, and Urwick at 5 to 6 at the higher levels of work and 8 to 12 at the lower levels of work.

In order to suggest a formula for determining the Span of Control, Graicunas felt that while the number of subordinates increases by arithmetical progression, the resultant network of relationship increase by geometrical progression.

Lord Haldane and Graham Wallas have been of the view that the chief executive can supervise 10 to 12 persons without facing any extra burden.

Similar divergent views are still being expressed by various scholars. As such, neither there exists nor can exist any unanimity regarding the exact number of persons an executive can be in a position to supervise effectively. There is, however, unanimity of opinion on the point that the shorter the span, the greater is the contact resulting into a more effective control over the subordinates.

DETERMINANTS OF SPAN OF CONTROL

The search for an ideal number which a superior can control has been and is destined to remain a useless search. As such, in determining the Span of Control, the best thing is to keep in view certain general factors which always influence the task of determining the number of persons which a person can supervise and control. These are often described as the determinants of the Span of Control.

In the words of Luther Gulick, *"There are three factors which greatly influence the Span of Control i.e., function, time and space"*.

We plan to discuss these three and one more factor personality or capacity factor which together determine the Span of Control.

1. Nature of Function. It refers to the type of work to be supervised. When the nature of work is routine, repetitive and homogenous, the Span of Control is more than when the work is of heterogeneous and complex character. Further, too frequent change-overs from one mental framework to another always reduce the Span of Control.

2. **Time.** The time factor means the age of the concerned organisation. The Span of Control is greater and supervision can be more rapid in an established organisation. In a new organisation, precedents are yet to be set and new problems keep on arising. Hence, supervision is not easy and the Span of Control is limited.

3. **Space.** Space refers to the physical distance or nearness between the official and his subordinates. The Span of Control increases if the people to be supervised are working under the same roof in which the superior is located. If they are scattered at different places, the Span of Control becomes limited.

4. **Capacity or Personality of the Supervisor.** If the supervisor is competent and able and has a strong personality, he can supervise more persons. If he is a weak person, he may not be in a position to supervise effectively even a few persons. Thus, an incompetent supervisor's Span of Control is always limited. The quality and scope of the Span of Attention of the supervisor is an important determinant of the Span of Control.

Along with the above main factors, we would also like to refer to the role of such elements like Education, training, skill of the officer, and the feeling of self-confidence in the higher officer, as the influencing elements of the Span of Control. An educated trained and experienced officer has a wider Span of Control whereas less educated, less trained and less experienced one has a limited and less effective Span of Control. Also, a self-confident and courageous officer has a wider Span of Control than a weak and less self-confident officer.

Moreover, with the development of new means of communication, administrative and managerial techniques, the nature and scope of Span of Control has undergone a change. Now cameras, E-Governance and computer conferences have been acting as additional factors of span of control. The increasing use of automation in administration, the information revolution and the growing number of specialist are some of the new factors responsible for such a change. Automation and use of computers, e-mails and video-conferences are currently being utilised for simplifying communications. Computerisation has come to be extensively applied to activities like accounting, tabulating, purchasing, sorting, inventory management, record keeping and computation work. Internal video monitors and internal communication systems have improved the chances of an increased Span of Control of the supervisor over his subordinates. Thus the length of the Span of Control has, in the recent times, increased and now a supervisor can control more subordinates. However, differences in the personalities and skills of the superiors continue to constitute an important determinant of the Span of Control.

(B) UNITY OF COMMAND

Unity of Command is that principle of organisation which holds that an employee should receive orders from one superior only or that each employee should be under a single command. **Henry Fayol** has been the prime advocator of this principle. According to him, "Unity of Command means that in an organisation, one person should be subordinate to only one superior and that he should receive orders only from that superior. Only in such a case, there can be no confusion in orders."

Duality of command or multiple command system always results in confusion and inefficiency. It makes the determination of responsibility of the superiors and the subordinates very difficult, almost impossible.

Explaining the main thrust of the principle of Unity of Command, **Pfiffner** has observed, "The concept of unity of command requires that every member of an organisation should report to one and only one leader. In case of non-adherence to this important principle of organisation, there emerges the possibility that authority may be undermined and discipline may be in jeopardy. Administration can suffer from inefficiency or even a virtual breakdown. Even the law, peace and order may get disturbed, and the stability of state may be endangered".

In an organisation, the line of authority should be clearly known. Everyone in an organisation should know his superior from whom he has to receive commands and each superior should know to whom he can issue orders. It means that each man should be a subordinate to one and should receive commands from only one person. In other words, unity of command stands for a system in which one person is subordinate and responsible to one superior and receives direction from one superior only.

Analysing the concept of Unity of Command, **John D. Millet** mentions two other meanings of this principle:

First, it is an arrangement whereby all administrative authority flows from one responsible head i.e., the President or the Governor.

Secondly, Unity of Command may refer to the question of relative merit of a single headed agency as compared to an organisation headed by a board or a commission.

The principle of Unity of Command is opposed to the plural command system which is a source of confusion, inefficiency and irresponsibility of the organisation, particularly of its personnel. Unity of Command on the other hand is a clear and simple principle of placing a definite number of sub-ordinates under a single supervisor or superior.

Merits of Unity of Command.

1. **Absence of Conflict in Orders.** Unity of Command ensures that there is one superior who commands. If the superiors are more than one, there is bound to be confusion in the organisation. It can create a problem when the subordinates may receive different orders from several superiors. It will also lead to failure in fixing the responsibility of the superiors and their common subordinates. When there is only one superior, there can be little confusion in orders, and fixing of responsibility in case of any lapse is easier, rather self-evident.

2. **It enables the superior to exercise effective supervision over his subordinates.** Under the principle of Unity of Command, all administrative authority flows from one responsible head. One superior is able to supervise his staff more effectively. He can understand, supervise and control his staff better. Two or more supervisors can cut out each other and make the subordinates responsible towards none in the name of responsibility towards two supervisors.

3. **Easier fixation of Responsibility.** In an organisation based on the principle of Unity of Command, every personnel of the organisation knows his responsibilities. He is also aware as to whom he is answerable and from whom he is to get work and orders as well as to whom he is to report back.

Thus, there are several apparent merits of the principle of Unity of Command.

Critical Evaluation of the Principle of Unity of Command

However, despite the above mentioned merits, the critics of the principle of Unity of Command raise several objections against this concept.

Seckler Hudson is of the opinion that the old concept of one single boss for each person is seldom found in fact in a complex governmental situation. Some inter-relationships exist outside the straight line of command which require working with and reporting to many persons for the purpose of orderly and effective performance of the functions.....the administrator in government has many bosses and he can neglect none of them. From one, he may receive policy orders, from another personnel, from a third a budget, and from a fourth supplies and equipment.

DELEGATION

DELEGATION : AS A PRINCIPLE OF ORGANISATION

Delegation of authority and responsibility is a universal principle of organisation. No organisation can work without devolution of authority as it is a means of bringing efficiency and economy in administration. No higher officer can do the entire work himself and as such it becomes essential for him to delegate authority to his subordinates. Devolution of authority and responsibility is needed for the smooth working of the administration.

In the contemporary era of the existence of large sized organisations, delegation has become a vital necessity. Without delegation, no large scale or big organisation can really and effectively work. Discussing the importance of Delegation

L.D. White has observed, "Circumstances of magnitude and volume, however, require some delegation of authority and the settlement of much business at the point where it arises".

Delegation is needed to a lesser extent in a small scale organisation. However, in a large scale organisation, it is practically impossible for one person do all the work and to carry out the burden or the responsibility without delegating it or dividing or sharing it with others.

Delegation is a good tool for distributing authority and responsibility. In contemporary times each organisation stands organised on the basis of the principle of hierarchy which binds its different levels and units with a continuous chain of authority. Each higher level delegates a part of its authority and responsibility to its lower levels/levels. In every organisation, delegation of authority is inevitable. It is a good device of work-sharing. It is also a device for minimising the chances of delay in the execution of work. It ensures division of work without diluting responsibility. It acts as a source of efficiency in the organisation.

DELEGATION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Generally speaking, Delegation means the transfer or grant of authority by a superior to a subordinate for the accomplishment of some work. The authority belongs to the superior. However, for the sake of convenience or efficiency or for meeting the rush of work, he delegates its exercise to his subordinate or subordinates.

Some Popular Definitions of Delegation

(1) "Delegation is conferring of specified authority by a higher to a lower authority. It is devolution of authority by a person to his agent or subordinate, subject to his right of supervision and control".
—Mooney

(2) "The act or process of delegation is the assigning to subordinates of specified tasks of the organisation and granting to one or more persons the authority necessary for directing satisfactorily the activities and duties so assigned".
—Albert K. Wickersberg

(3) "Delegation is conferring of authority from one executive or organisational unit to another. It implies that delegation is not only devolution from higher to lower but it can be from lower to highest or between equals".
—George. R. Terry

(4) "Delegation is more than simply assigning duties to others in more or less detail".
—John D. Millet

In simple words Delegation is the system by which a higher official or unit assigns some duties to a lower official or unit. Through delegation authority-holder delegates some authority for accomplishing a specific task of the organisation. The authority delegated is specific and defined. The delegating official/unit retains the right to control, limit or withdraw the delegated authority. *"It may be downward where it moves from the higher to the lower level. It may be upward when it moves from the lower to the higher level. It may be sideward i.e., when delegation takes place at an equal level"*. Delegation is always done by the authority-holders to their subordinates.

In simple words, Delegation involves the conferring of a part of work, and authority to another and creation of a system of accountability in respect of performance and work.

KINDS OF DELEGATION

In terms of the amount or degree of delegation of authority, we can refer to several types of Delegation:

1. **Full Delegation.** Delegation may be full delegation where full powers are granted to the lower functionary. Such delegation is also called total delegation.
2. **Partial Delegation.** When the subordinate or the receiver of delegated authority is required to get advice and guidance from the delegating authority, it is called Partial Delegation.

3. **Conditional Delegation.** When the action of the subordinate is subject to confirmation and revision by the superior, it is called Conditional Delegations.
4. **Unconditional Delegation.** It takes place when the subordinate is free to act without any reservation.
5. **Formal Delegation.** When delegation is granted according to written rules or laws or orders, it is called Formal Delegation.
6. **Informal Delegation.** It takes place when delegation is based on customs, conventions and understanding.
7. **Direct Delegation.** When delegation is directly conferred by the delegating authority to the subordinates without any middle man or party, it is called Direct Delegation.
8. **Intermediate or Indirect Delegation.** It takes place when delegation is conferred through a third person or unit.
9. **Normal Delegation.** When defined and limited authority is delegated to the subordinate or to a lower level, it is called Normal Delegation.
10. **Abnormal Delegation.** It takes place when unduly large and wide ranging powers are delegated by a higher authority to a lower authority.

All these types of delegation of power, authority and responsibility are used by the superiors for getting the work done from their subordinates. They have to resort to it due to some practical needs of the organisation. Increase in the volume of the work of an organisation always necessitates more delegation.

CENTRALISATION AND DECENTRALISATION

Centralisation and Decentralisation are two important principles of organisation. These refer to the manner in which the decision-making authority can be distributed among various levels of organisation. Each organisation faces the question as to whether it should be centralised or decentralised.

An organisation is said to be centralised if most of the power of decision-making is vested with the top level and the lower levels have to refer most of their needs and problems to the top level of the organisation. On the other hand, a decentralised organisation is one in which the lower levels are allowed the power to decide most of the issues and matters which come before them. Only top level decisions are taken by the top level administrator or the chief executive.

Centralisation and Decentralisation determine the nature of the organisation in respect of its decision-making function. These are, as such, two important principles of organisation.

WHAT IS CENTRALISATION ?

Centralisation means the concentration of formal authority at the top levels or level of an organisation. It is the opposite of dispersal, delegation and decentralisation of authority. In a centralized organization, the lower levels of the organisational hierarchy always look upwards for decisions, directions, advice, clarifications and interpretations.

“Centralisation has been used to describe tendencies other than dispersal of authority.....It often refers to departmental activities, service divisions, centralised similar or specialised activities in a single department. But when centralisation is discussed as an aspect of management, it refers to delegating or withholding of authority and the authority dispersal or concentration in decision-making’.

—Harold Koontz

"Everything that goes to increase the importance of subordinate's role is decentralisation, everything which goes to decrease is centralization."
—Henry Fayol

In simple words, it can be said that centralisation means the concentration of power, or authority, particularly decision-making power in fewer hands at the top level. The lower or subordinate level personnel are kept busy with routine and day to day work of the administration.

WHAT IS DECENTRALISATION ?

Decentralisation is the reverse of Centralisation. It means devolution of powers among all levels of organisation.

Decentralisation can be defined as follows:

"Decentralisation is one of the most confusing administrative techniques that characterises the art and science of professional management". "Decentralisation is not only a device for the delegation of administrative authority but it is also a democratic method of devolution of political authority."
—Louis A. Allen

"Decentralisation is properly used to refer to a form of organisation in which there has been considerable delegation, resulting in wide span of control".
—Hodge and Johnson.

While defining Decentralisation L. D. White explains its meaning as well as difference between it and devolution. He writes:

"Decentralisation is a twin process of decentralisation and devolution. In decentralisation, a superior officer, in order to make his department function effectively and efficiently, delegates to his subordinate field officials, the power to act in his name without transferring to them the authority he enjoys. Devolution, which also implies dispersal of authority, is a process wherein power is transferred from one organ of government to another by means of legislation or constitution. It means a system in which there are many centres of government—central, state and local—each with a recognised right of independent existence and function. To be more specific, certain spheres of jurisdiction, either functional or territorial are set apart for a legally constituted body which, while administering its authority, enjoys some power of self-determination".
—L.D.White

In simple words, it can be said that decentralisation is an arrangement in which the ultimate authority to command and the ultimate responsibility for results is localised in the units located in different parts of the country. Assigning of functions and responsibilities to the subordinates or sub-divisions for their efficient and effective performance, is the essence of Decentralisation.

TYPES OF DECENTRALISATION

Four Basic Types of Decentralisation:

1. **Administrative Decentralisation.** It refers to the decentralisation of authority to the lower officials in the administrative hierarchy of the organisation. Each level is involved in the process of administrative decision-making.

2. Functional Decentralisation. It implies that the functions are decentralised to the specialised units or departments. Each department is given a specific work and within itself, each department has several sub-departments or wings. Each sub-department is entrusted with a particular responsibility which falls within the ambit of the major responsibility of the department as a whole.

3. Political Decentralisation. It refers to the system in which political power and functions concentrated in the hands of the higher level political organs are decentralised to the lower level political organs. The Panchayati Raj agencies are units of decentralisation and the political power of decision-making stands decentralised from the Government to the Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads.

4. Geographical Decentralisation. In it, the powers and functions of the headquarters are decentralised and assigned to the field offices for their effective performance. This facilitates quick decision-making at the local level, keeping in view the local requirements.

LINE AND STAFF DEPARTMENTS

The traditional and most popular pattern of organising the administrative system of the government has been the establishment of departments. Departments came into existence naturally for serving the needs of the administration and for carrying out its work. Each department is a self-contained unit and it carries out all such activities as are essential for its maintenance and functioning. With the change of time, the functions of almost all the departments have been registering a big increase in functions. Even their number has registered a big increase.

It is the prime responsibility of the Chief Executive to perform all functions which are assigned to him by the constitution and law of the state, and even more than the assigned functions. Naturally, the Chief Executive cannot individually perform all the functions assigned to him. He has neither the time nor the energy to perform all the functions himself. He needs help, in fact organised and definite help, This help is provided by the agencies attached to his office.

Mooney writes, "There are too many things to think about, too many factors to consider, too diversified a knowledge required for solution for the unaided capacity of one leader to encompass".

Thus, it is neither possible nor desirable for the Chief Executive to perform his functions without any assistance. That is why departments or agencies are created for helping the Chief Executive in performance of all his functions and specified tasks.

All departments which work for the Chief Executive can be classified into three broad categories :

- (1) Line Agencies or Line Departments
- (2) Staff Agencies or Staff Departments
- (3) Auxiliary Agencies or Auxiliary Departments

These administrative agencies or departments help the Chief Executive in all his work.

1. Line Agencies or Line Departments.

These are administrative agencies or units which directly carry out the functions of achieving the very purpose of the government organisation. For this purpose, these make decisions based on governmental policies, give directions and perform supervision and command functions. All such departments which perform such functions are called the Line Agencies or Line Departments, Departments of Health, Defence, Education are examples of Line agencies in India.

2. Staff Agencies or Staff Departments.

These are such agencies as mainly help, advise and assist the Line agencies in carrying out their work. The Planning Commission and the UPSC are examples of Staff agencies in India.

3. Auxiliary Staff Agencies or Auxiliary Staff, Departments.

Finally, those agencies which provide common house-keeping services to all other agencies are called Auxiliary agencies. For example Printing and Stationery Department is an Auxiliary Agency or a House-keeping Department.

(A) LINE AGENCIES

Line Agencies or Line Departments are those which are directly involved in carrying out the responsibilities and functions of public administration.

LINE AGENCIES : MEANING

Almost every citizen daily comes into contact with departments or agencies which are to provide a particular service or goods to him. All such agencies as are concerned with the execution or fulfillment of the primary objectives and functions of the government and deal directly with the people, are called Line Agencies. These agencies provide service to the people, regulate their conduct and implement programmes as sanctioned or approved by the legislature.

Defining a Line Agency, **L.D. White** observes, "The Line Agencies are concerned with the provision of services for the people or regulating their conduct in a particular field".

In the words of **Dimock and Dinlock**, "A Line Agency is the organisation for execution".

In other words, a Line Agency is organised on the basis of a major function or purpose, and is concerned with the rendering of service to the people or for regulating their conduct in a particular field of activity/function. In the governmental network of line departments, there is single line of authority from the top to the bottom, extending from top and going downwards.

Line Agencies are of three types:

- (a) The Departments

- (b) Government Corporations or Public Corporations
 (c) Independent Regulatory Commissions or Special Agencies

LINE AGENCIES : NATURE/ KEY CHARACTERISTICS

1. Each Line Agency carries out a major or primary objective of the Organisation. The Line Agencies are those administrative organisations which are established to carry out the major and primary functions of the administration. For example, a university is established to impart education. Teaching departments working as parts of the University are the Line Agencies for imparting education to the students. Departments of Education, Health and Defence are Line departments

2. Line Agencies have the Authority to issue orders. A second fundamental feature of Line Agencies is that these have the power to issue orders and to make decisions. These direct as well as command. Each line agency has one chain of command e.g., the police department right from the DGP at the top to a constable at the bottom are directly involved in the maintenance of law and order.

3. Responsibility to implement Policies and to secure the Defined Goals. Line Agencies are always responsible for the execution of public policies and other programmes approved and sanctioned by the legislature. These are enforced and implemented by the executive authority. The whole policy execution is the responsibility of Line Agencies.

4. Direct Contact with the People. Line Agencies directly deal with the people and provide them specific services e.g., the agriculture department renders services to the farmers. Police department protects the citizens. The Health Department directly provides health-care services to the people.

5. Line Agencies are directly under the control of the Chief Executive. Line Agencies work directly under the Chief Executive. In fact, these are directly under the control and supervision of the Chief Executive. For all their activities, they are responsible to the Chief Executive and through it, to the legislature.

Thus, Line Agencies are those agencies of Public Administration which have the responsibility to implement all governmental policies and programmes. These have a direct dealing with the people and are responsible before the Chief Executive for all their activities. These constitute links in the single chain of command which flows from the top to the bottom.

STAFF AGENCIES

The term 'Staff' in Public Administration comes from the word 'staff'-meaning something on which one can lean for support. Staff Agencies exist and work to support the executive power with specialised knowledge and wise counsel. Staff service is primarily service of advice and help. It almost always remains in the background. It makes preparations for the executive's decisions but does not decide.

What are Staff Agencies?

Describing the meaning, nature and role of the Staff Agencies, **Mooney** observes, "Staff is an expansion of the personality of the executive. It means more eyes, more ears and more hands to aid him, informing and carrying out his plans".

According to **Marx**, "The Staff simply prepares matters for his (Chief Executive's) action. It does not issue commands of its own".

In general, Staff activities are mainly concerned with advising planning, budgeting, personnel, public reporting and public relations. Thus, Staff includes all those agencies and persons who are engaged in acquiring knowledge, who act as a think-tanks and undertake planning advising and assisting functions.

Staff Agencies constitute an indispensable supplement to a system of ministries and a descending hierarchy of sub-divisions. These extend the competence of the executive at each level without interfering with the authoritative flow of commands.

In short, it can be said that Staff Agencies are the units which assist and advise the executive.

Types of Staff Agencies

Staff Agencies are of different types from the stand point of their relation with the policies, programmes and decisions of the government.

According to **Pfiffner** there are three kinds of Staff Agencies :

- (i) **General Staff,**
- (ii) **Technical Staff,**
- (iii) **Auxiliary Staff.**

- (i) The General Staff helps the Chief executive in a general manner by giving advice, by collecting information and conducting research. It acts like a filter and a funnel and lets only the most important matters to reach the Chief Executive.
- (ii) The Technical Staff advises the Chief Executive on technical matters and policy decisions.
- (iii) The Auxiliary Staff performs functions and service common to various departments. It performs common house-keeping functions and services for all departments. It prevents duplication of activities.

Thus, the Staff Agencies provide help, assistance, advice and information to the Chief Executive. The latter cannot work effectively and efficiently without the help and advice of the Staff. Staff Agencies have little authority and power but they have influence and advice which is equally important. In India, the Prime Minister is the real Chief Executive and the cabinet secretariat, and the PMO, which gives help, assists and advises him in his work and activities, are Staff Agencies. Even the Finance Department is a Staff Agency as it provides funds for all departments. Planning Commission of India is also a Staff Agency.

STAFF AGENCIES : NATURE

Main Features

(1) **Staff Agencies perform helping and advising functions which secondary functions.** Line Agencies perform the primary functions, and Staff Agencies perform only secondary functions. The role of Staff agencies is supportive and advisory in nature. Staff is like a stick which can help in walking. Line agencies function for securing the objectives of the administration and the Staff Agencies function as units or organizations for helping the achievement of objectives by the Line Agencies/ departments.

(2) **Staff Agencies exercise little Authority and Command.** Staff Agencies do not directly exercise authority and command. These advise and assist the 'Line' in making decisions and performing their functions. The Line executes the decisions and acts. These have the power to command and control the areas that stand delegated to it by the Chief Executive. The Staff agencies have influence and can advise.

(3) **Staff Agencies do not have Executive Responsibility.** In administration, responsibility lies with the Chief Executive. Staff Agencies are only to help and assist the Chief Executive in his work. These are not directly responsible for the executive's work. These remain behind the scene. These cannot be held responsible for the success or failure of administration.

(4) **Staff Agencies do not directly deal with the People.** The Line Agencies directly deal with the people and serve them. The Staff Agencies provide service to the Line Agencies. These help, assist and advise the Line Agencies and remain behind the scene. These do not directly deal with the people.

(5) **Staff Agencies are outside of the Line of Command.** Staff Agencies are located outside the line of command. These do not enjoy the power to command and control. These however, do indirectly influence the exercise of command and control over the Line Agencies by the Chief Executive.

STAFF AGENCIES: FUNCTIONS

The Staff Agencies constitute an essential part of administration. Without these no administration can work successfully and efficiently. A study of the functions performed by the Staff Agencies clearly brings out as to how far the Staff Agencies have come to be an integral part of contemporary administration.

Referring to the functions which the Staff Agencies have been performing in public administration,

Prof. Willoughby observes, "Staff duties are....exclusively of a research, consultative and advisory character. In fact, the Staff is an expansion of the personality of the (chief) executive. It means more eyes, more ears, and more hands to aid him in forming and carrying out his plans".

Line, Staff Agencies : Pfiffner describes the following as the functions being performed by the Staff Agencies :

- (a) Advising the Chief Executive as well as the Line Agencies.
- (b) Coordination function.
- (c) Research and fact-finding function.
- (d) Planning function.
- (e) Maintaining of contacts with other organisations.
- (f) Assisting the Line Agencies.
- (g) Exercising delegated authority.

According to Paul Mooney, "The three main functions of the Staff are : informative, advisory and supervisory".

We can describe the main functions of the Staff Agencies under the following heads:

1. **To Assist.** An important function of a Staff Agency is to assist and support the Chief Executive in carrying out his work. Staff Agencies reduce his work, relieve him of the routine matters, and save his time for important matters.

2. **Information Function.** An important function of a Staff Agency is to collect all relevant data on which the decisions of the Chief Executive are to be based. The Staff has to collect, preserve and provide up-to-date information and data to the Chief Executive.

3. **Advisory Functions.** The 'Staff' has to advise the Chief Executive. The advice may be accepted or rejected by the Chief Executive. But the view of the Staff is to be taken by the Chief Executive before making a final decision. In fact, the Chief Executive always seeks advice from the Staff Agencies and often holds consultations with them before taking decisions. Rendering of Advice and consultancy services are important functions of all Staff Agencies.

4. **Supervisory Functions.** After a decision has been taken by the Chief Executive, the function of the Staff Agencies is to communicate that decision to other related departments. These have to plan and coordinate their work, maintain contact with all related agencies and help the Chief Executive in his task. It is the function of the Staff Agencies to help the Line Agencies in overcoming their difficulties experienced in the process of implementing the decisions of the Chief Executive.

5. **Delegated Functions.** Sometimes, the Chief Executive delegates some authority to a Staff Agency. Such a Staff Agency has to perform such a function on behalf of the Chief Executive but within clear and defined limits. A Staff Agency can be entrusted with the execution of a desired function on the basis of the specific authority delegated to it by the Chief Executive.

These are the major functions of the Staff Agencies.

Summing up these functions, L.D. White has observed that the Staff Agencies perform the following important functions :

- (a) To keep the Chief Executive correctly informed.
- (b) To assist the executive in foreseeing problems and planning future programmes.
- (c) To protect him against a hasty judgment.
- (d) To protect his time.

DISTINCTION AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LINE AND STAFF AGENCIES

The distinction between the 'Line' and 'Staff' agencies was first developed in the military administration and from there it travelled to the civil administration. In military, the commander-in-chief has under him generals, brigadiers, colonels, majors, captains, lieutenants and other subaltern officers who command the, army corps, divisions and brigades for achieving the purpose of defending the state against war and aggression. These are, therefore, Line officers engaged in command and action. Along with them there are other categories of officers who are engaged in specialised services e.g., supply, transport, ordnance, medical service, veterinary service etc., which are necessary for helping the fighting forces as well as for successfully undertaking war operations. These services do not directly get involved in war. Their involvement is incidental to their function of providing assistance and help to the fighting officers and soldiers. These are, therefore, regarded as Staff Agencies in the wider sense of the term.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN LINE AND STAFF

In civil administration, a distinction is made between Line functions and Staff functions.

The distinction between the two kinds of services, Line and Staff, is a simple one based on the nature of the services performed by the different branches or units of departments or agencies.

Line Agencies are those which perform the primary function for which the organisation is required to perform. Staff Agencies are those which undertake the advising, assisting or house-keeping services. Another difference between them can be identified by observing that while Line Agencies exercise authority, Staff agencies only assist the executive.

Pfiffner and Presthus point out three main distinctions between Line Agencies and Staff Agencies :

- (a) The Staff workers are often better educated than the Line workers.
- (b) The Line workers are often struggling for security and equilibrium whereas the Staff workers are always striving for improvement through change.
- (c) The Staff often consists of younger men than the line workers.

These points reflect the functional and formal distinction that exists between Line and Staff Agencies.

In simple words, we can say that while the Line Agencies are primary agencies acting on

achieve the purpose for which these are established, Staff Agencies are not the main agencies of action. These exist to assist and advise the executive. Exercise of authority is done by the Line Agencies, while the Staff Agencies play an advisory role for the Chief Executive. Basically, to run the administration is the responsibility of Line Agencies, to aid and advise the Line and help the executive is the function of the Staff Agencies.

LINE AND STAFF: RELATIONSHIP

However, these points of distinction between Line and Staff should not be taken to mean that both are totally different and distinctive units which stand vertically divided into two parts.

Willoughby has observed, "It is difficult to draw a clear-cut demarcation between Line and Staff."

A complete separation of their function is impossible. When a unit is called a Line Agency, it simply means that it is predominantly Line. It also performs some Staff functions. Likewise, a Staff unit is basically involved in providing advice and assistance but it is not totally devoid of Line activity. In its internal set up and working, it is a Line unit.

In contemporary times, several Line functions are being undertaken by the Staff Agencies. The Ministry of Finance basically performs the staff-function of allocating funds to various departments. By this standard, it can be termed a Staff Agency. However, it is a well-known fact that in practice it exercises an authority over all departments. Likewise, a Line Agency like the Department of Health also advises the government in respect of the reforms needed for streamlining and improving the health services for the people. Hence no hard and fast distinction can be made or retained between Line and Staff Agencies.

Lepawasky has observed, "Line and staff Agencies move on a horizontal plane of activity. The traditional view that the Line commands and acts, and the Staff helps and advises cannot be maintained in contemporary times." Staff Agencies perform some Line functions and likewise, Line Agencies also undertake some Staff functions.

Earnest Dale lists five factors by virtue of which the Staff commands authority over the Line. These are :

- (i) Superior articulation and skills of the Staff personnel vis- a-vis the Line personnel ;
- (ii) The specialised and technical competence of the Staff personnel is more than the Line personnel and the latter have to depend upon the advice of the former ;
- (iii) Several Staff personnel occupy higher positions in the managerial hierarchy. Their statuses help them to play a command role ;
- (iv) The Staff men have a direct approach to the Line superiors or even to the Chief Executive. They can use this direct channel to prevail upon the Line personnel in every such case in which the latter may try to evade the advice of the Staff ; and

(v) Any omission on the part of the Line personnel is an opportunity for the Staff specialist to influence the top level Line personnel to arrive at decisions for overcoming the omission.

Thus, the Staff personnel also get a chance to exercise command over the Line personnel. Hence, the traditional view that the Staff does not command stands abandoned in favour of the view that the Staff also in a way commands authority at least at times.

The distinction between the Line and the Staff is not always fully tenable. In every organisation both work side by side. Their works are both complementary as well as supplementary to each other. Both have some common elements.

As **Dimock and Dimock** put it, these have:

- (i) *the ability to work together,*
- (ii) *a general point of view, and*
- (iii) *technical competence.*

Thus Line and Staff Agencies exist side by side in an organisation. What is needed is not to demarcate the difference between the two, but to accept and provide for a harmonious relationship between the two. The distinction between them is neither absolute nor total. It is a case of relative and functional differentiation. What is ideal and needed is a successful and balanced meshing of the Line and Staff. In the theory of Public Administration, one has to analyse their distinction but in the practice of Public Administration one has to look for the relationship between the Line and the Staff.