# BLOCK 2 OFFICE ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

# BLOCK 2 OFFICE ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

This is the second block of the course "Office Management and Secretarial Practices". This block will accustome the learners with various aspects related to office organization and office management, various skills and qualities required to be a good office manager as well as various roles, functions and duties performed by an office manager. This block is structured to cover the fundamentals and preliminary aspects of organization and management of offices. The block on the theme "Office Organization and Management" comprises of three units, the detail of which is as mentioned below:

**Unit 4:** Discusses about the various facets of organization such as its concept, meaning and importance in an enterprise and its various types etc. The later part of the unit talks about the concept of centralization, decentralization along with their respective advantages and disadvantages, differentiation between centralization, decentralization and delegation as well as their usefulness and suitability in an office organization.

Unit 5: Makes the learners aware about various important aspects related to office management in terms of its objectives, importance and various functions such as planning, organizing, controlling and coordination. The unit also emphasizes how office management is important in achieving organization's goals through optimum utilization of office resources and cost reduction.

Unit 6: Discusses the various roles, qualities and duties of an office manager in an office organization. Office managers are in charge of the office and are required to perform various functions efficiently to help organizations achieve their goals. The later part of the unit discusses the various managerial skills required and functions of an office manager.

#### **UNIT 4 ORGANISING AN OFFICE**

#### Structure

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  - 4.4.8 Difference Between Centralization and Decentralization
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#### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the term office organization;
- understand the meaning and importance of office organization in an enterprise;
- explain various forms and types of organizations;

- differentiate between centralization and decentralization; and
- differentiate between decentralization and delegation.

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Organization is essential for any group activity. We spend majority part of our lives in organizations. Organizing is one of the important functions of office management. Once the managers decide the office objectives, next logical step is to give a practical shape to the activities needed to accomplish these objectives. In organizing, various activities required to be performed are determined, similar activities are grouped together and then these manageable group activities are allocated to individuals. Authority commensurate to responsibilities is also accorded to individuals. Though, individuals perform diverse functions, yet effective organization provides for integration of these diverse efforts. Organization is akin to human body. As different systems (such as respiratory system, nervous circulatory system, digestive system, etc.) have been assigned diverse functions in human body but all these systems function in a coordinated manner, in a similar fashion, an office may have different departments or divisions or functions but all should work in an integrated manner to run the organization smoothly.

In this unit-4, we will learn about the various facets of office organization. First, we will discuss about what does office organization mean and what is the importance of office organization in an enterprise. You will further learn about various forms and types of organizations. In concluding section, concept related to centralization and decentralization has been explained. You will also learn about difference between centralization and decentralization and decentralization in this section.

#### 4.2 OFFICE ORGANIZATION

Different authors have defined term organization differently. Also, term organization is used in two ways. First, it has been defined as the organizing function of office management process and second, it has been defined as a network of interrelationships of individuals and jobs called organization structure. Organization structure is the result of organizing activity or process. Organization is the tool with which office managers put plans in to action.

"Organization is the process of combining the work which individuals or groups have to perform with the facilities necessary for its execution, that the duties so performed provide the best channels for the effective systematic, positive and coordinated application of the available effort' – Oliver Sheldon

According to Davis, "Organization is a group of people, who are cooperating under the direction of leadership for the accomplishment of common end".

As per Terry, "Organization is the establishing of effective behavioral relationships among persons so that they may work together efficiently and gain personnel satisfaction in doing selected tasks under given environmental conditions for the purpose of achieving some goal or objective."

Koontz and O'Donnell defined organization as "the structural relationship by which an enterprise is bound together and the framework in which individual effort is coordinated."

Thus, organizing is the process of arranging and structuring of organizational work specialy a work related to office to accomplish organization's goals and organizational structure exhibits formal arrangement of jobs within an organization. Therefore, formal organization is a deliberate coordination of people in the organization to combine their efforts for common causes. Organizing process involves determining the nature of tasks, grouping these tasks as per similarity in nature, assigning authority to do these tasks and integrating the diverse tasks. Organization is the structural framework, which provides for integration and interrelations of tasks.

As there are diverse activities being performed by large number of individuals in an office of any organization, it is essential to harmonize the work of these individuals in order to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in office operations. Higher the number of people working in office, more is the need for office organization for a smooth functioning of office.

As per Leffing well, "a well-organized office makes it possible for the management to plan its operations intelligently, to put its plan into effect surely, to follow their progress currently, to determine their effectiveness promptly, to appraise the results without delay and to coordinate all the activities of the business."

Thus, office organization is the process of collecting and safeguarding useful information from internal and external sources, effectively coordinating various office resources to achieve office goals by maintaining harmonious relations between work and employees with a view to regularly monitoring progress for earning higher profits. Office organization process involves decisions about following key aspects:

- 1) Work specialization: It is the process of dividing work activities into separate job tasks.
- 2) Chain of command: It is the continuous line of authority extending from top to bottom of the organization. It clarifies the reporting relationships.
- **3) Departmentalization:** It refers to the basis used for jobs grouping to make departments.
- **4) Span of control:** It is the number of employees who can be effectively and efficiently supervised by a manager.



- 5) Centralization and decentralization: It refer to degree of dispersal of decision-making authority across different levels of organization.
- **6) Formalization:** It is the extent to which jobs are standardized and the rules and procedures are enforced in the organization.

#### **4.2.1** Importance of Office Organization

- 1) Achievement of Office Objectives: A good office organization helps in proper coordination of all activities of the organization, which ultimately helps in achievement of objectives.
- 2) Reduces Conflicts: A good office organization establishes clear authority and responsibility relationships in the office. Each employee knows what is expected from him/her and interdependence of jobs is minimum. All this helps in reducing conflicts in office.
- 3) Minimum Duplication of Efforts: In a good organization, utmost care is taken to ensure that no essential activity is left out and no activity is duplicated. Overlapping and duplication of work is reduced due to clear identification and assignment of activities.
- 4) Optimum utilization of Office Resources: Good Organization structure helps in optimum utilization of resources by allocating them to the points where they are most needed. A good organization makes employees know their authority and responsibilities in unambiguous manner leading to optimum utilization of human resources. It helps in putting right person at right place. It ensures smooth flow in office operations by avoiding bottlenecks, reducing idle time and reallocating idle machines. It helps in effective administration.
- 5) Facilitates Growth: Sound organization facilitates efficient management, which results in growth and expansion of office.
- 6) Effective Communication: Good structure establishes clear lines of communication in office. It ensures effective communication inside office as well with the other constituents of the organization. Clear lines of communication along the flow of authority make internal communication unambiguous. Organization structure also provides pathways for external communication.
- 7) Facilitates Delegation and Decentralization: Good office organization reduces the workload of senior managers by facilitating delegation and decentralization of authority. This leaves more time to managers for effective planning and good policymaking.

#### 4.3 FORMS AND TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

In offices, task allocation, work division, delegation of authority, span of control and distribution of authority can be done in several ways. Thus, several different organization structures have evolved as the result of such decisions. Each one of these has distinct characteristics, advantages, and



disadvantages. No one is better than the others rather suitability of a structure is dependent on the need of the office. Four main types of office organizations are:

- 1. Line organization
- 2. Functional organization
- 3. Line and Staff organization
- 4. Committee organization

#### 4.3.1 Line organization

Line organization is the oldest and simplest type of organization. In this organization, line of authority or line of command flows from top to bottom. This line of authority is unbroken and vertical. As per J. M. Lundy, "Line organization is characterized by direct lines of authority flowing from the top to the bottom of the organizational hierarchy and lines of responsibility flowing in an opposite but equally direct manner." This organization is also called as scalar organization due to this scalar chain of command. In this organization, communication flow is along the lines of command. Every person is superior to all the persons below him and is responsible for their conduct. He himself is accountable to his superior. This is a vertical structure where every superior delegates authority to his subordinates. Authority flows downward and is delegated to all the persons responsible for the execution of work. On the other hand, responsibility flows upwards. Line organization is either Pure Line Organization or Departmental Line Organization. The various features of line organization are following:

- 1. It is one of the simplest forms of organization.
- 2. Line of authority flows vertically from top to bottom.
- 3. Specialized and supportive services are absent in this type of organization.
- 4. Line officers can maintain unity of command and unified control.
- 5. Line officers take independent decisions in their respective areas.
- 6. Authority and responsibility for each position are clear.
- 7. Efficient communication flow.
- 8. Brings stability to office.

#### 4.3.1.1 Advantages of Line Organization

Various advantages of line organization are following:

- 1) Simplicity: Line organization is the simplest organization to establish and understand. Everyone knows whom to report and who will be reporting to him. Each employee has only one boss.
- 2) Clearly identified authority and responsibility: In line organization, authority and responsibilities associated with a particular job position are clearly defined. Authority should be commensurate to the work assigned.

- 3) Better co-ordination, control and supervision: Line authority inherent in line managers makes them overall in-charge of the department. This hierarchical arrangement helps in achieving effective co-ordination as the manager being in charge can direct, supervise and control all the activities of his subordinates. In addition, number of subordinates under one supervisor are lesser in line organization.
- **4) Effective communication:** As communication flow is along the chain of command, there is always a direct link between the superior and subordinates leading to effective communication.
- **5) Economical:** As there are no specialists hired in line organization to advise line managers, cost of operating such organization is substantially less.
- 6) Quick decisions: Line manager is the only in-charge of the department. He has to make all decisions by himself, as he has no staff specialists to advise him. Non-availability of specialists for consultation fastens the decision-making process.
- 7) Unity of command: Line organization operates in accordance to principle of scalar chain, where each employee is in command of only one superior. Unity of command ensures clear instructions to the employees.
- 8) Executive development: Line managers are responsible for making and executing all types of decisions related to their division. This helps them in learning variety of tasks and develops their capabilities.
- 9) Flexibility: Line organization are flexible as line manager is responsible for all important decisions. He can easily accommodate any changes, if situation warrants.

#### 4.3.1.2 Disadvantages of Line Organization

Various advantages of line organization are following:

- 1) Over reliance on line managers: Line organizations are too much dependent on the line managers. Line organizations are only as good as the decisions of the line executives.
- 2) Excess work for managers: As line managers are expected to discharge all the duties of their departments single handedly, they are always overburdened. This workload increases with expansion of the offices leaving little time to them for important work.
- 3) Lack of expertise: A line organization does not have staff to advise them on important matters. Line managers take decisions with regard to every aspect of their division but as they cannot be experts in each aspect of the office, quality of decisions may suffer.

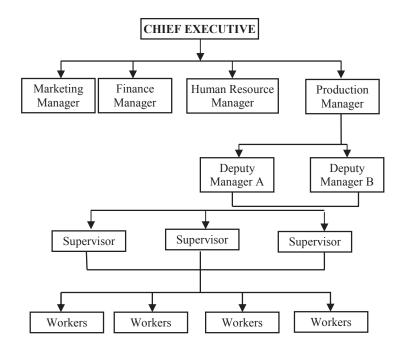


Figure 4.1: Line organization structure

- 4) Scope of nepotism: In line organization, there is ample scope for nepotism or favoritism as managers allocate work according to their whims, preferences, relationship or friendship and not merit exclusively. It is quite possible that performance of subordinates may not be evaluated objectively and favors may be given to undeserving persons.
- 5) Authoritative leadership: Line organization may lead to autocratic leadership and monopoly tendencies in managers. Managers may take decisions in an arbitrary manner and may misuse their authority. This can be damaging to the organization.
- 6) Lack of initiative: In line organization, subordinates may lack initiative in giving any creative and innovative solutions to problems as they lack any authority in decision-making.
- 7) Instability: In line organization, performance of office is dependent on few key individuals. If these individuals leave office on any account, it may lead to instability in office. Also, as lower level employees are not so involved in decision making, there is a problem of succession.
- **8) Inflexibility:** Line organization may turn rigid and inflexible if rules and regulations are enforced too rigorously that they can rarely change.
- **9) Problems of co-ordination:** As different departmental heads have authority to run their departments, there may arise problem of co-ordination among various departments.

#### 4.3.2 Functional organization

F W Taylor advocated that functional authority not the departmental authority should direct departmental work. He also felt that it is unwise to overload line manager with all the responsibilities of the department. Functional organization is based on the concept of functional Authority of

managers. In functional organization, each employee instead of receiving orders form one supervisor/line manager receives order from a group of specialist supervisors, each of whom is an expert in a particular domain/area/function.

The following diagram shows the functional organisation at the top levels.

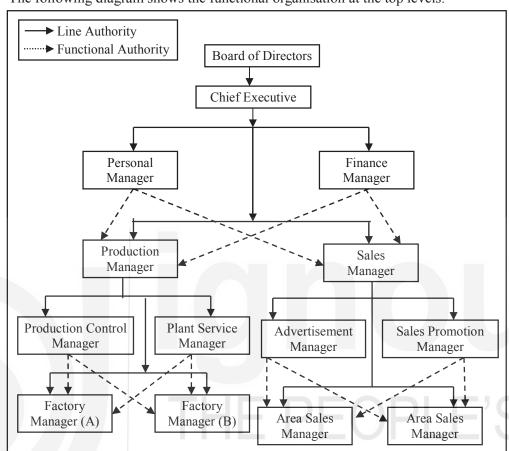


Figure 4.2: Functional organization structure

In functional organization, entire work in the organization is divided in various departments. Similar type of work is put under the control of a departmental manager, also called functional manager *viz.* records manger, service manager, statistics manager etc. These functional managers are then responsible for carrying out various activities of their respective functional area/departments wherever these are performed in the organization. For example, maintenance manager will be responsible for all the maintenance related work in entire organization and human resources manager will be responsible for all personnel related matters throughout the organization. Thus, a subordinate anywhere in the organization will receive commands directly from various functional managers. The various features of functional organization are following:

- Total work of organization is divided into specialized functions.
- Each function is to be performed by a functional expert.
- Functional manger/ functional in charge has the authority over all the employees throughout the organization for his functional area.
- Functional specialists have considerable independence in their functional domain.

#### 4.3.2.1 Advantages of Functional Organization

- 1) **Benefits of specialization:** Functional organization can benefit immensely from the specialized advice of functional experts as they provide the guidance to the employees throughout organization.
- **2) Enhanced efficiency:** This type of organization ensures enhanced efficiency as the workers operate under the expert and competent personnel and perform limited operations.
- 3) Limited duties: Managers are not overburdened in functional organization as they cater to only their area of expertise and are not discharging all the duties as in line organization.
- 4) Scope for growth: Scope for growth and expansion is more in functional organization as functional managers employed at various levels of organization help the organization to grow as per the need.
- 5) Flexibility: Functional organization is flexible as it allows changes in the organization without affecting the performance of the organization in a big way. A function from lower levels in a department can be removed easily without much impact on the performance of same function in other departments.
- 6) Relief to top executives: Unlike line organization, managers are not burdened in functional organization, as experts are there to help in taking decision in specific functional areas.
- 7) **Economy of operations:** Employment of specialists help in controlling wasteful activities and ensures optimum utilization of human and other resources like office accommodation, equipments and machines, etc.
- **8) Better supervision:** Functional managers, being expert, have better planning and execution skills in their area of expertise. They are also able to provide improved level of supervision.

#### 4.3.2.2 Disadvantages of Functional Organization

- 1) No Unity of Command: Functional organization violates the principle of 'unity of command'. In this organization, a subordinate receives instructions from multiple bosses. These bosses may put pressure on the worker to give priority to work pertaining to their functional domain. This leads to conflict and confusion in the mind of the subordinate as to whom to obey and whom to ignore.
- **2) Expensive:** Hiring of multiple functional experts for managing various functions is a must in functional organization. This increases the overhead expenditure of the organization due to higher remuneration of the experts. Small organizations may find it financially unviable to have so many experts.
- 3) Difficulty in Fixing Responsibility: Absence of unity of command makes it difficult to fix responsibility for any slackness in work.



- Subordinates may engage in blame game and a tendency to shirk responsibility may arise in the organization.
- 4) Lack of Co-Ordination: There may arise the problem of coordination among different functional experts especially whenever a decision is to be made after consulting several specialists. Specialists may try to give more importance to their work and this results in conflicts among specialists.
- 5) Slacked Discipline: Absence of unity of command and direction in functional organization leads to problem of discipline among workers and lower-level supervisors.

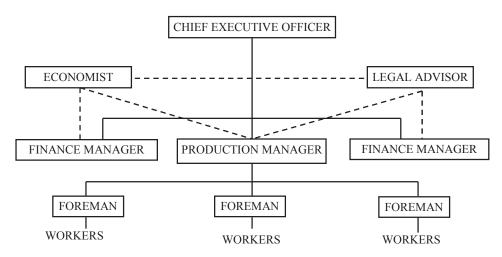
#### 4.3.3 Line and Staff Organization

Line organization is characterized by concentration of authority and control in line managers and functional organization is characterized by splitting authority into various functional managers and having lose control over subordinates. In order to overcome the shortcomings of line organization and functional organization, line and staff organization has been proposed. In line and staff organization, line managers have line authority over the subordinates and they get the advice of the staff specialists whenever needed. Staff is in an advisory role in organization and line managers take final decisions. Staff officers help line managers in solving problems effectively. Personal secretary to chief executive officer is a staff official. Staff is of three types:

- **a) Personal Staff:** includes personal assistants and secretaries to CEO, MD, GM, managers etc. Personal staff gives advice and assistance to line managers and is attached to line managers.
- **b)** Specialized Staff: such as lawyers, chartered accountants possess specialized knowledge and give specialized services to organization.
- **c) General Staff:** comprises of various experts rendering valuable advice to the top management on different matters.

The various features of line and staff organizations are following:

- 1. Line and staff organization is a combination of line organization and staff organization so as to reap benefits of both.
- 2. Line and staff organization is more complex than pure line organization.
- 3. Availability of expert advice on important matters makes line and staff organization more efficient.
- 4. Staff specialists are attached to different functional areas.
- 5. Two lines of authority, line authority and staff authority, flow in organization at any given point.
- 6. Division of work and specialization. Takes place in line and staff organisation.
- 7. Staff is only in advisory capacity and line manages retain the command authority over subordinates.



Note: Straight lines represent line and broken lines represent staff.

Figure 4.3: Line and Staff organization structure

#### 4.3.3.1 Advantages of Line and Staff Organization

- 1) **Better Decisions:** Presence of specialists facilitates line managers with expert knowledge which help in taking better decisions for the benefit of organization.
- 2) Relief to Line Managers: Presence of staff managers provides much relief to line managers. Line managers can concentrate on routine and administrative matters and execution of plans, whereas staff tackles with technical and specialized work.
- 3) Better Management: Division of line authority and functional authority ensures that line and functional managers concentrate and focus on the work in their own area.
- 4) Flexibility: This organization is relatively more flexible than other organizations. More staff can be added as per the need of the organization without disturbing line authority. Also, stability of organization is not dependent on few top line managers.
- 5) Advancement of research: Experts in the organization can undertake research and development work for betterment of organization such as through product improvements, by introducing improved methods of doing work or by introducing economical means of production.
- 6) Training of Managers: Availability of expert advice of staff proves to be an excellent training ground for Line managers. Young staff managers also learn and acquire more expertise in their respective areas.

#### 4.3.3.2 Disadvantages of Line and Staff Organization

1) Conflict between line and staff: Conflict between Line and staff officials is the main problem of this organization. Staff managers always complain that their advices are not properly implemented. On the other hand, line managers complain that staff does not give sound advice, as the ultimate responsibility of doing work is for line. Line also accuses

- staff of taking credit for success and blaming line for any failures. Conflicts are also due to the age differences. Staff is generally young experts and line managers are elder to them. Line managers may have ego problems in taking advice from someone much younger to them.
- **2) Expensive:** This organization may prove to be costly for smaller firms as it is expensive to hire specialists due to their high remuneration.
- 3) Confusion over line and staff authority: In this organization, line and staff authorities are flowing simultaneously, which may confuse the workers as to whom they should obey. Also, line managers may consider themselves superior to staff to which they may object. This may pose hurdle in effective functioning of the organization.
- 4) Lack of sound advice from staff: Staff specialists may not give sound advice, as they are not accountable for the outcome. At times, over reliance on staff may also prove fatal as staff managers may give wrong advice. They may be ineffective due to lack of command authority.
- 5) Dissatisfaction among line managers: In line and staff organization, Staff may steal the show for higher returns. This may leave line managers dissatisfied.

#### 4.3.4 Committee organization

In committee form of organization, a group of managers come together to discuss a problem, decide a course of action and then recommend solutions to line managers. Problems discussed in committee are possibly those which cannot be solved by an individual. Hence, committees are constituted to get better insights and better solutions to the problem. Committees work on the principles of collective thinking, participative management, integration of ideas, democratic management, corporate judgment and common decision. A committee is not a separate type of organization but a way of assigning a group of competent persons to line departments for advice and guidance within some type of organization structure as discussed above.



Figure 4.4: Committee organization structure

Committees are generally used in large complex organizations to solve complex multifaceted problems effectively. In a committee, competent, experienced experts exchange ideas. In addition, opinions of the committee members are pooled together through discussions to take common decisions.

For example, purchase committee will finalize the purchase requirements of each department. Committees provide a platform for exchanging ideas, for generating solutions, and for developing organizational policies. Committees can be standing or permanent, ad hoc or temporary, executive or advisory, and formal or informal.

#### 4.3.4.1 Advantages of Committee

The various advantages of Committee are following:

- 1) Pooling of diverse opinions: As the committee members are from diverse areas of expertise, problem can be discussed in a multifaceted manner. Mangers with varied abilities have different viewpoints and values and are able to highlight multiple aspects of the problem. Pooling of diverse opinions may help in making a realistic estimate of the problem.
- 2) Better co-ordination: Deliberations and discussions among different department heads lead to better co-ordination among different departments as such discussions lead to better understanding of the difficulties faced by other departments.
- **3) Balanced views:** Committee deliberations lead to balanced view of the problem at hand. Committee decisions are based on common agreement among members for the solution. Such common view curbs the tendency of any department head to over emphasize his agenda by ignoring the genuine demands of other departments.
- 4) Motivation: Committees are composed of senior as well as junior managers. Junior managers may get motivated due to the recognition and opportunity to be a part of decision-making. It may lead to high morale and improved performance of the subordinates.
- 5) Dispersion of power: Committees make use of splintered authority. A single manager cannot take decisions that are taken by committees as no manager is authorized to make strategically important decisions single handedly. Such dispersal of authority saves organizations from misuse of authority.
- 6) Better acceptance of decisions: Generally, senior managers such as department heads are the members of the committees and committees' decisions are taken in wider perspective of organization. Hence, the probability of acceptance of committee decisions is higher than the decisions taken by any individual manager.
- 7) Better communication: Committee members can share the background of committee decisions as well as the correct information about the decisions with other members of the organization leading to better communication and acceptance of the decisions.

**8) Executive training:** Committees prove to be a good platform for executive training. Executives participate in committee deliberations and through that learn interpersonal behavior, communication, teamwork, cooperation, negotiations and group dynamics. In addition, they learn to understand and solve office problems in a multifaceted manner and learn the process of decision-making.

#### 4.3.4.2 Disadvantages of Committee

Various disadvantages of committee are following:

- 1) Delay in decision-making: This perhaps is the main drawback of committee form of organization. In committees, members take decisions after much deliberation. Meeting has to be fixed as per the suitability and availability of all the members. Agenda of the meeting is issued to all members well in time. After that, members come and discuss the matter. This entire process takes lot of time and decisions are delayed and may lead to loss of opportunities.
- 2) Expensive: Holding committee meetings is expensive as arrangements have to be done for holding meetings. A large sum of money is needed to pay for refreshments, conveyance, daily allowances etc.
- 3) Compromised decisions: Generally, committee decisions are taken through consensus. In order to reach consensus, committee may resort to policy of compromise to reach unanimity. In such a scenario, committee decision may be less than optimal and only an acceptable decision.
- 4) No accountability of decisions: Committee decisions being group decisions, accountability for wrong or sub optimum decisions cannot be fixed. Thus, committees may lead to inefficiency in organizations.
- 5) Domination by minority: When the committee decisions are to be taken unanimously, some dissenting individuals try to push their agenda and force committee to take compromised decisions. In addition, at times, vocal members try to dominate committee deliberations and ignore the viewpoint of other members. Such acts may leave other members frustrated and discontented. Such decision will not be in the best interest of the organization.
- 6) Limited effectiveness: Committees are not effective always and thus their role is limited in organizations. Whenever, there is a need to make quick decisions, committees prove ineffective. In addition, for routine decisions, committees are ineffective. Committees are most effective in dealing with strategically important matters, inter personal departmental situations and grievance redressal.
- 7) **Misuse of Committees:** At times, committees are formed just to avoid action or delay an action.
  - Not every organization is suitable to all the offices. The choice of the organization is dependent on nature and size of office, period of

establishment, continuity of workflow, geographical dispersion and staff strength and degree of mechanization.

#### **Check Your Progress A**

1.	Define office organization. Describe the two ways of defining organization.
2.	Enumerate the key elements of office organization.
3.	Describe the features of Line and Staff organization.
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1	Committees and its analysis of the contraction in t
4.	Committees provide a platform for exchanging ideas". Comment.

# 4.4 CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION

Concept of centralization and decentralization is related to diffusion of decision-making authority in the offices. These terms are opposite to each other. Centralization of authority implies concentration of decision-making at top levels of office. It refers to the concentration of powers at higher levels of management. On the other hand, decentralization is the diffusion of decision-making powers to middle and lower levels of management or the degree to which middle and lower-level employees have their say in

decision- making or actually make decisions. Giving more authority to employees to make decisions empowers them.

Allen defines "Centralization as systematic and consistent reservation of authority at central points within an organization. Decentralization applies to the systematic delegation of authority in an organization wide context."

#### 4.4.1 Measuring the Degree of Decentralization in an office

Different offices may have varying degrees of decentralization. As per Ernest Dale, following criteria can be used to measure degree of decentralization in an office:

- 1. More number of decisions made at lower levels, higher the degree of decentralization
- 2. More important decisions made at lower levels, higher the degree of decentralization
- 3. More the effect of decisions made at lower levels on other functions in office, higher the degree of decentralization
- 4. Lesser the checking of decisions made at lower levels, higher the degree of decentralization

#### 4.4.2 Advantages of Centralization

The various advantages of centralization are following:

- 1. Centralization leads to better utilization of talents of top leaders.
- 2. Centralization acts as a unifying force in the office. It ensures all departments move together and all operations are integrated.
- 3. Centralization ensures strong coordinated team at top level.
- 4. Centralization ensures that uniform plans and policies are implemented in office.
- 5. Centralization is best suitable in emergencies as it helps in faster decision-making.
- 6. Duplication of functions and facilities is least in centralization.

#### 4.4.3 Disadvantages of Centralization

The various disadvantages of centralization are following:

- 1. Decision-making and communication flow is slow in centralized offices.
- 2. There are always chances of abuse of power and authority in centralized offices by corrupt officers.
- 3. Centralization restricts development of subordinates and does not prepare them for higher positions in offices.
- 4. It leads to low motivation and morale of employees as they do not enjoy autonomy under centralization.

5. Future of office depends upon decision-making capabilities of top executives.

#### 4.4.4 Advantages of Decentralization

The various advantages of decentralization are as follows:

- 1. Decentralization relieves top executives of their workload by shifting routine decision making to lower executives.
- 2. Decentralization enhances job satisfaction and motivation of subordinates by giving them autonomy and chances for participation in decision-making.
- 3. Decentralization facilitates faster and accurate decisions nearest to the point of action.
- 4. Decentralization helps growth and diversification of office by giving autonomy for innovation and creativity.
- 5. Decentralization gives subordinates opportunities to exercise their judgment, which leads to executive development.
- 6. Decentralization means wider span of control and lesser layers of management through which communication has to travel. Thus, there are lesser chances of distortion of communication.

#### 4.4.5 Disadvantages of Decentralization

The various disadvantages of decentralization are as follows:

- Decentralization increases administrative expenses due to duplication of functions and underutilization of physical facilities.
- 2. Decentralization gives autonomy to different divisions or departments. This may lead to difficulty in cooperation among various units.
- 3. Due to decentralization, different departments may implement policies and programs inconsistent to each other.
- 4. Decentralization is not possible if office lacks competent personnel.
- 5. External constraints such as market uncertainties, resource constraints, and government policies may create barriers to decentralization.

#### 4.4.6 Factors Affecting Decentralization

The various factors affecting decentralization are as follows:

- 1) Size and complexity of the office: In bigger and complex offices, there is a greater need for decentralization.
- 2) Physical dispersal of operations: More geographically dispersed the physical facilities/ operations of office, greater is the need for decentralization.

- **Degree of diversification in office activities:** More diversified the work in the office, more is the need for decentralization.
- 4) **History of the office:** Offices, which have grown through diversification and amalgamations, are more likely to be decentralized.
- 5) Availability of competent staff: If lower-level staff in office is competent, then it is advisable to have decentralization in office.
- **6) Philosophy of top management:** If top management believes in individual's freedom and capability, offices need to be decentralized.
- 7) Effective planning, control and communication system: Existence of sound planning, communication and control system in the organizations support decentralization.
- **8)** External environment: When external conditions are uncertain and unfavorable, then high degree of freedom can be fatal to the office as resources need to be optimally utilized.

#### 4.4.7 Difference between Delegation and Decentralization

**Table 4.1: Difference between Delegation and Decentralization** 

Delegation	Decentralization
Delegation is a process.	Decentralization is outcome of delegation.
It is necessary for management.	It is discretionary and depends upon the top management.
It is a technique of management.	It is both- a philosophy as well as a technique of management.
Delegation is the relationship between superior and subordinate.	Decentralization is relationship between top management and various departments.
Delegation is possible without decentralization.	Decentralization is not possible without Delegation.
Delegator can exercise control over subordinates.	Control is delegated to departmental heads.
Delegation supports decision- making in a superior –subordinate relationship in the office.	Decentralization results in diffusion of decision-making authority throughout office.

# 4.4.8 Difference between Centralization and Decentralization

**Table 4.2: Difference between Centralization and Decentralization** 

Basis	Centralization	Decentralization
Definition	Centralization is retention of authority for planning and decision –making with the top management.	Decentralization is dispersal of authority to various levels of management.
Involves	Methodical reservation of authority.	Methodical dispersal of authority.
Flow of Communication	Vertical (Mostly downward)	Free Flow
Pace of Decision- Making	Slow	Relatively fast
Benefits	Proper coordination and Leadership	Sharing of burden and responsibility
Decision – making authority	Top management	Multiple positions in all three levels of management
Implemented when	Inadequate control over the organization	Considerable control over the organization
Suitability	Small organizations	Big organizations

Centralization and decentralization are used relative to each other. Absolute centralization or decentralization is neither practical nor feasible in any office. Thus, managers always seek a judicious blend of both as per the need of the office. This blending of centralization and decentralization has an impact on organization structure of office and makes these different from office to office.

#### **Check Your Progress B**

1.	Differentiate between Centralization and Decentralization.
2.	Distinguish between Delegation and Decentralization.

Offi	ce Organizatio	n
and	Management	

3.	List the factors that favor decentralization of authority in an office.
4.	What criteria is used to measure degree of decentralization in an office?

#### 4.5 LET US SUM UP

Organization is essential for any group activity. We spend majority part of our lives in organizations. Organizing is one of the important functions of office management. Once the managers decide the office objectives, next logical step is to give a practical shape to the activities needed to accomplish these objectives. In organizing, various activities required to be performed are determined, similar activities are grouped together and then these manageable group activities are allocated to individuals.

Different authors have defined term organization differently. Also, term organization is used in two ways. First, it has been defined as the organizing function of office management process and second, it has been defined as a network of interrelationships of individuals and jobs called organization structure. Organization structure is the result of organizing activity or process. Organization is the tool with which office managers put plans in to action. Office Organization process involves decisions about work specialization, chain of command, departmentalization, span of control, centralization and decentralization, and formalization etc.

In offices, task allocation, work division, delegation of authority, span of control and distribution of authority can be done in several ways. Thus, several different organization structures have evolved as the result of such decisions. Each one of these has distinct characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages. No one is better than the others rather suitability of a structure is dependent on the need of the office. Four main types of office organizations are line organization, functional organization, line and staff organization, and committee organization.

Concept of centralization and decentralization is related to diffusion of decision-making authority in the offices. These terms are opposite to each other. Centralization of authority implies concentration of decision-making at top levels of office. It refers to the concentration of powers at higher levels

of management. On the other hand, decentralization is the diffusion of decision-making powers to middle and lower levels of management or the degree to which middle and lower-level employees have their say in decision- making or actually make decisions. Giving more authority to employees to make decisions empowers them.

#### 4.6 KEYWORDS

**Authority:** Authority are rights inherent in a managerial position.

**Centralization:** It refers to the systematic and consistent reservation of authority at central points within an organization.

**Chain of Command:** It is a continuous line of authority extending from top to bottom of the organization.

**Decentralization:** It is a systematic delegation of authority at various levels of organization.

**Departmentalization:** It refers to basis used for jobs grouping to make departments.

**Organizational Structure:** It is a formal arrangement of jobs within an organization.

**Organizing:** It is the process of arranging and structuring of organizational work to accomplish organization's goals.

**Span of Control:** Span of control pertains to the number of employees who can be effectively and efficiently supervised by a manager.

#### 4.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Describe importance of good office organization.
- 2. What is line organization? Discuss its advantages and disadvantages.
- 3. Enumerate limitations of committee. How can committee be made effective?
- 4. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of line and staff organization.
- 5. Enumerate the features of Staff organizations. Why this organization is not suitable for small organizations?
- 6. What do you understand by "Centralization"? Describe the advantages and disadvantages of centralization in an office.
- 7. "Centralization and decentralization are two sides of same coin." Comment.
- 8. How is delegation different from decentralization? Discuss the factors that necessitate decentralization in an office.
- 9. What do you understand by "decentralization"? How would you assess whether an office is centralized or decentralized?

**Note:** These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

### **UNIT 5 OFFICE MANAGEMENT**

#### Structure

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- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives of Office Management
- 5.3 Importance of Office Management
- 5.4 Functions of Office Management
  - 5.4.1 Planning
    - 5.4.1.1 Nature of Planning
    - 5.4.1.2 Importance of Planning
    - 5.4.1.3 Problems in Planning
    - 5.4.1.4 Planning Process
  - 5.4.2 Organizing
    - 5.4.2.1 Steps in Organizing
  - 5.4.3 Coordinating
    - 5.4.3.1 Importance of Coordinating
    - 5.4.3.2 Nature of Coordination
    - 5.4.3.3 Techniques of Coordination
  - 5.4.4 Controlling
    - 5.4.4.1 Nature of Control
    - 5.4.4.2 Importance of Controlling
    - 5.4.4.3 Steps in Control Process
    - 5.4.4.4 Essentials of an Effective Control System
    - 5.4.4.5 Control Measures for an Office Manager (W.H. Leffingwell)
- 5.5 Activities of Office
- 5.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.7 Keywords
- 5.8 Terminal Questions

#### 5.0 **OBJECTIVES**

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the objectives of office management;
- discuss the importance of office management;
- explain the various functions of office management viz. planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling; and
- describe the various activities of office.

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Office is an important component of business/organization so much so that it is termed as the centre of an organization. Office is a place where all types of paper work is done to plan, organize, coordinate and control various activities of the organization in a smooth and efficient manner. In order to carry out the work of an office effectively and efficiently, you need to understand and learn about various important aspects related to office management. In this unit, you will be introduced to some of these aspects.

First of all, you will learn about the objectives and importance of office management. You will further learn about the important functions of office management such as Planning, Organizing, Coordinating and Controlling, which are required for smooth conduct of offices. Next, you will learn about various activities of office.

#### 5.2 OBJECTIVES OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT

An office is focal point of an organization. Like a human brain, it controls the activities of the organization. In an office, clerical functions like information collection and dissemination, record keeping, and managerial functions such as planning, formulation of policies, organization, controlling etc. are performed. In order to carry out such diverse activities, offices need to be managed. Different authors have defined the term office management differently. Some of the definitions of the office management are given below:

"Office management is that branch of management which is concerned with the services of obtaining, recording and analyzing information of planning and communicating, by means of which the management of a business safeguards its assets, promotes its affairs and achieves its objectives."-Institute of Administrative Management, England.

"Office management may be defined as the manipulation and control of men, methods, machines and materials to achieve the best possible result of the highest possible quality with the best possible effort and expense, in the shortest practicable time and in a manner acceptable to the top management."-Wylie and Brecht

"Office management as a function is that branch of the art and science of management which is concerned with the efficient performances of office work, whenever and wherever that work is done."- Leffing well and Robinson

Above definitions clearly indicate that aim of the office management is the organization of an office and this office organization helps in achieving specific office objectives. For achieving these objectives, office management aims to put human and non-human resources to optimum use.

Some of the main objectives of the office management are as given folow:

- doals: All organizations have certain goals and objectives which they strive to achieve over a period. Organizations have long term as well as short-term goals. All the functional areas/ departments of the organizations derive their departmental objectives from long-term organizational objectives and decide their mid to short term goals in terms of activities to be carried out. Office management helps in deciding goals and objectives of the office in order to help organization to achieve its long-term goals. Office manager can make plans, collect information, hire and train staff and organize resources to contribute to organizational goals.
- 2) Optimum utilization of office resources: One of the major objectives of office management is the optimum utilization of office resources-both human and material. Optimum utilization means achieving both efficiency (maximum outputs with minimum inputs) and effectiveness (timely completion of tasks). It involves doing things right as well as doing right things. Optimum utilization can be ensured by proper planning, organizing, directing and controlling of office work.
- 3) Ensuring operational workflow: Another objective of office management is to ensure smooth flow of work in office. This involves supervising the administrative staff to ensure that they are performing the allotted duties in a proper manner. For example, receptionist greets visitors, phone calls are answered in time, phone etiquettes are followed, customer service representatives are courteous, and timely and accurate handling of mail. It may also involve overseeing cleaning, maintenance, repair and other functions essential for office operations. Standard office procedures, written policies, procedures, and rules can be of great help in achieving functionality. Office staff may be sent for training to improve operational workflow.
- 4) Effective communication flow: Effective communication flow is another important objective of office management. It includes all types of information flows in office *viz*. horizontal, vertical, diagonal, written, verbal, upward, downward, formal, and informal. Communication channels should ensure fast and timely flow of accurate and relevant information. Office interactions should be meaningful. Interpersonal communications should be frank, open, supporting, and inculcating cooperative relations in the office. Employees should be comfortable in approaching office manager. They should feel valued. Visitors should feel welcome in the office environment. Effective communication will help in inculcation of supportive office culture.

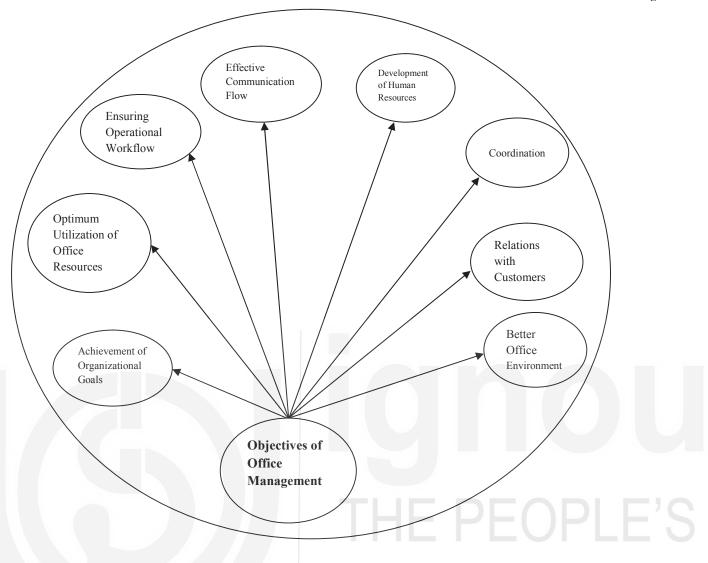


Figure 5.1: Objectives of Office Management

- 5) Development of human resources: Development of human resources in the office is a crucial objective of office management. It is extremely important to develop human resources, as they are the only thinking resource and greatly influence the proper utilization of other resources. For this, objectives of office management are to ensure proper supply of work force, training of employees, their remuneration, evaluation, motivation, supervision etc.
- 6) Coordination: Diverse activities are performed in the office. These include handling of mail, record management, inventory management, organizing of events and meetings, taking notes, report writing, reporting, information collection and dissemination, handling phones, managing visitors etc. to name a few. Coordinating these diverse administrative operations is must for smooth operational office flow in office. Office management ensures that there are no inter and intra team conflicts. Office management also ensures that rest of the organizational activities and tasks take place unhindered.
- 7) Relations with customers and suppliers: It is the objective of office management to ensure good working relations with customers and

- suppliers. Customers bring business to the organization and should be treated with dignity by customer service representatives. Their concerns and grievances must be addressed. Good relations with suppliers help in getting better prices and preferential treatment. This ensures adequate level of supplies at best prices.
- 8) Better office environment: Office management plays a significant role in making office a better place to work. It is the job of the office manager to stock adequate supplies (for example stationery items) in the office. Regular supplies of copier paper, notebooks, file folders, staples, tape, pencils and pens, batteries, toiletry items etc. should be maintained as employees depend on the administrative staff for such items. S/he should maintain tools, equipment and machinery (working telephone and internet connections, photocopying machines etc.) needed to run office. Office management helps in ensuring safety measures such as fire extinguishers at work place. It helps in ascertaining that company vehicles are properly maintained, are in working conditions and having proper legal documents etc. (license, registration, pollution control certification and insurance).

#### 5.3 IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Proper planning, organizing, coordination and control of office activities, reduction of office costs etc. help in smooth functioning of office work. It is very important to manage an office efficiently and effectively as success of a business is dependent on efficient and effective performance of the office work to a great extent. Below given points emphasize the importance of office management:

- 1) Helps in achieving goals: Office management helps in achievement of office goals in a smooth, efficient and cost-effective way. This becomes possible due to proper planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling of various office activities and by managing change, challenges and innovations in office.
- 2) Optimum utilization of office resources: Office management can ensure optimum utilization of scarce office resources such as human, material, machines and equipment. Managers can guide the human resources as to how to use resources efficiently. Managers can remove unnecessary activities and avoid duplication of efforts using principles of organization. Coordination, integration and control of various resources will also lead to better utilization of resources.
- 3) Cost reduction: Optimum utilization of resources (money, man, material and machines) leads to reduction of wastage and helps in doing the office activities in a cheapest manner. Work simplification, mechanization and digitalization of office work can also lead to cost reduction. Similarly sound planning, suitable organization structure,

- coordination among activities, and effective control will help in reducing costs of operating an office and make an organization more competitive.
- 4) Maintains and enhances office efficiency: Office management helps in enhancing as well as maintaining efficiency in office work and activities with the help of optimum utilization of resources and cost cutting techniques employed in office.
- 5) Smooth flow of work: Office management helps in uninterrupted workflow in office. Smooth flow of work is made possible through proper planning and exercising effective control.
- 6) Helps in managing public relations: Office management is helpful in maintaining good public relations in the office. Good office management helps in effective redressal of grievances of consumers and other publics and makes it look more trust worthy to various stakeholders. All this enhances goodwill of the enterprise.
- 7) Managing change: Change is inevitable in the life of an organization and most often employees in the organization are averse to change and resist the change. Proper planning, implementation and control of change can help managers to overcome this resistance. Office management helps in coping with changes in efficiency and economy, which are affected due to technology and work practices changes. Office management thus acts as a change-agent in such situations.
- 8) Helps in attracting and retaining talent: Good and comfortable working environment, smooth flow of work, efficient work practices etc. may help in attracting and retaining capable employees. Employees do not want to leave good offices and become loyal to the organization.
- 9) Managing challenges for survival and growth: In order to grow and survive, an organization has to meet and overcome many challenges. Challenges such as changes in competition, changes in technology and changes in work practices must be anticipated. Also, organizations need to adapt to these changes for survival and growth. Office management helps managers to achieve goals in time by overcoming these challenges.
- **10) Supports innovation:** Good office management helps and supports new, better and different ways of accomplishing work in office. Good record keeping, indexing and filing (online or offline) can help in finding and incorporating suggestions of employees, customers and other stakeholders to improve existing system.
- 11) Facilitates coordination of office functions: Office management coordinates and integrates various office functions in order to achieve office goals in an efficient and effective manner. It helps to ensure that no important activity is left and no activity is duplicated. In addition, work is broken down into smaller units to facilitate work specialization. Planning helps in setting goals, organizing function helps in

departmentalization, centralization/ decentralization and delegation of work activities. Coordination helps in integration of various activities and control ensures conformity to plans.

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1.	How does office management help in cost reduction?
2.	Discuss the importance of office management in an organization.
3.	How does office management help in ensuring operational workflow in offices?
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4.	"One of the major objectives of office management is the optimum utilization of office resources- both human and material". Comment.

#### 5.4 FUNCTIONS OF OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Offices are those tools of management, which help in managing a business effectively and efficiently. Thus, office management is an essential element of total management of an enterprise. Office management is concerned with the efficient and effective performance of office functions, using principles of general management by optimally utilizing the resources of office.

Through office management individuals are provided centralized guidance to direct the individual efforts towards the common goals of office. Every office thus needs to decide office objectives, choose course of action to achieve these objectives, co-ordinate office activities, direct and evaluate human resources to check whether their performance is directed toward the objectives. As per George R. Terry "Office management may be defined as the art of guiding the personnel of the office in the use of materials, methods, machines and equipment appropriate to their environment in order to achieve its specified purposes." Office activities are performed by office staff working with appropriate machines and equipments in office environment for providing efficient and economical clerical service to entire organization. It is the function of office management to plan, organize, guide and control all the activities of the office staff to achieve common objectives. For this, office managers perform the planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling functions of general management.

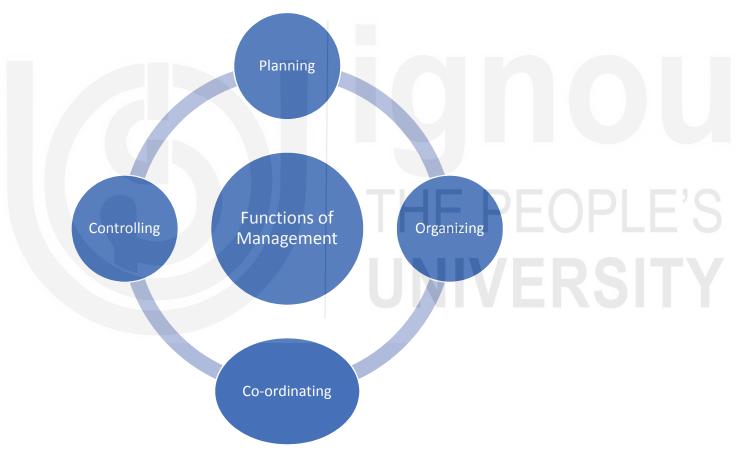


Figure 5.2: Functions of Office Management

#### 5.4.1 Planning

Planning is the primary function of office management. It precedes all other office management functions. It establishes the purpose and direction for all other functions of office management. It is deciding in advance, what needs to be done, when it will be done, how it will be done, where it will be done and who will do it. Planning is future oriented and forward looking. It can be called a blue print for future course of action. Planning is all about

anticipation of future and making a conscious choice for an action. Plans, which are the result of planning process, outline the steps to be taken to achieve the office goals.

"Planning is the function that determines in advance what should be done. It consists of selecting the office objectives, policies, programs, procedures, and other means of achieving these objectives."-Haimann.

"Planning involves selecting office objectives, departmental goals, and programs and determining the ways of accomplishing them. Planning thus provides a tactical approach."- Koontz and O'Donnell.

Forecasting, decision-making, strategy formulation, policy-making, programming, scheduling, budgeting, problem-solving, innovation, and research are some of the sub-functions of planning. Thus, planning is the process of deciding the office goals and then selecting course of actions to achieve these decided goals within the internal and external office environment. Office objectives and the actions are decided with reference to overall organizational objectives. As shown in figure 5.3, planning helps in taking office from current status (at time  $t_1$ ) to a desired status (at time  $t_2$ ) by identifying and then suggesting ways for reducing the gap in both the statuses. Planning quality and implementation leads to positive financial results, higher profits and better returns on investment in office. Planning is necessary for deciding the kind of organization structure, deciding the kind of people required, deciding the ways to effectively lead the people and how to ensure implementation of plans by providing standards of control in office.

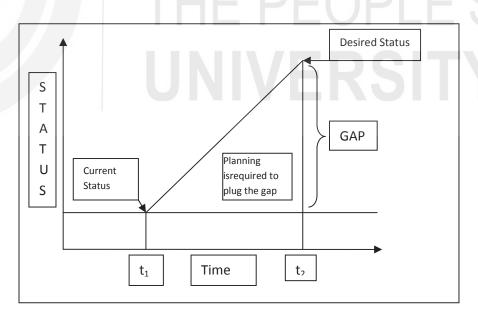


Figure 5.3: Reduction of gap between current and desired status with the help of Planning

#### 5.4.1.1 Nature of Planning

- 1. Planning is a goal-oriented activity and paves way to achieve office objectives by suggesting actions to be taken.
- 2. It is the primary function and lays foundation for all other managerial functions of office. All other functions *viz*. organizing, staffing, directing and controlling are designed to support the achievement of office objectives.
- 3. Planning is a pervasive function as it is preformed in all offices at all levels.
- 4. Planning is a thinking, intellectual, and rational process. It involves use of mental faculties.
- 5. It is a continuous process as old plans need to be revised and new plans needs to be made as per changed circumstances in office.
- 6. It is futuristic in nature as it involves anticipating and affects future of office.
- 7. Planning is based on decision-making, which involves choosing among alternative courses of actions. Planning assumes existence of alternatives, which are evaluated, and then best is chosen for implementation.
- 8. Planning is an integrated process. Planning results in different plans, which are independent, yet need to be interrelated. This process of integration results in end-means chain.

#### **5.4.1.2** Importance of Planning

The importance of planning is as follows:

- 1) Focuses on objectives: Planning helps office mangers to focus attention on office objectives. It ensures that members do not get lost in maze of routine activities and lose sight of the desired ends of office.
- 2) Provides direction: Planning keeps office action oriented and provides a results-driven sense of direction to the activities being carried out in office.
- 3) Reduces uncertainty: Planning helps in anticipating future events and environment. Though planning cannot predict future with certainty but can help in coping with uncertainty.
- 4) Minimizes waste and redundancy: Planning eliminates unproductive office work. Planning ensures that all essential office activities are done in a proper way and non essential, unproductive, out of place activities are not done. Thus, planning ensures that all resources are used to best advantage and cost and redundancy are reduced.
- 5) Sets the standards for controlling: Planning is the foundation of control. No planning is successful without control and no control is

- possible without planning. Plans provide the standards for performance evaluation using which performances in the office are gauged.
- **6) Priority oriented:** Planning ensures that the most important objectives get first attention.
- 7) Change oriented: Planning helps in coping with change by anticipating problems and opportunities in time to deal with these in best possible manner.
- **8)** Acts as basis for delegation: Well made plans serve as guides to subordinates and make the job of delegation easier for managers.

#### 5.4.1.3 Problems in Planning

The various problems and hindrance in planning are listed below:

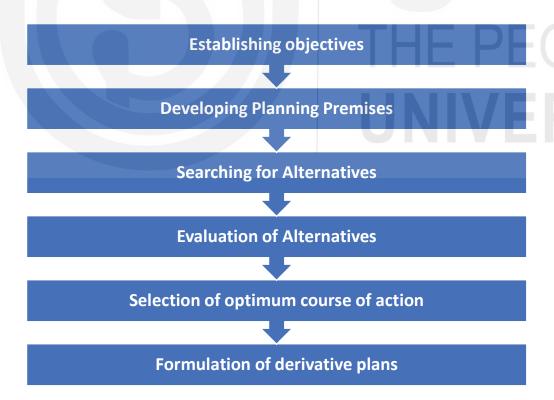
- Lack of accurate information
- Time consuming and expensive process
- Detailed plans and procedures may result in inflexibilities and curb employee initiatives.
- Office managers may lack the ability to plan
- Lack of simplicity in plans
- Lack of specific, clear, measurable, attainable goals
- Uncontrollable external factors

#### **5.4.1.4** Planning Process

As offices differ in size and complexity, no single planning process is followed in the offices. However, given below are some of the main/common steps generally followed in planning process:

- 1) Establishing objectives: First step in planning process is to set clear and measurable office objectives. Objectives should clearly specify what is to be done, where would the action take place, who is to perform the action and when is it to be performed. For example, mistake free letters, achieving typing speed of 60 words per minute, reducing customer complaints by 30%, make any defective machine operational within 24 hours are clearly spelt objectives.
- 2) Developing planning premises: Planning premises are the assumptions about the future environment. Planning is made for future and no one can predict future with certainty. Hence, office managers make certain assumptions about the future and these assumptions become the boundaries within which plans are implemented. Planning premises can be internal (such as resources of the office), external (such as customer demand), controllable (such as hiring policies of the organization) and uncontrollable (minimum wages policy of government).

- 3) Searching for alternatives: There maybe many ways to achieve a target. For example, efficiency in office work can be achieved by training the existing staff, by hiring more skilled staff, by mechanization of office work or by outsourcing of office work. Thus, alternative courses of action should be searched using imagination and foresight. Critical factors must be kept in view while deciding alternatives.
- 4) Evaluation of alternatives: Alternatives developed in previous step should be evaluated. Alternatives may be evaluated based on costs, benefits, risks, organizational capabilities, short term and long term impacts etc. Strong and weak points of the alternatives should be carefully analyzed. Computer based mathematical models and techniques can be used for evaluation.
- 5) Selection of optimum course of action: Most suitable course of action out of the ones evaluated in step 4 is chosen for implementation. At this point, a decision is made about which out of the evaluated alternatives is most suitable to adopt.
- 6) Formulation of derivative plans: This is the final step of the planning process. Necessary sub-plans to support and help the main plans are formulated. These are the tactical plans, budgets and action programs for timely implementation of the main plan.



**Figure 5.4: Planning Process** 

#### 5.4.2 Organizing

i) As a process, organizing is an important function of the office management. Organizing refers to the process of identifying, ordering, classifying and allocating the actions to be performed for the achievement of office objectives. Haimann defines "Organizing as the process of defining and grouping the activities of the enterprise and establishing the authority relationships among them. In performing the organizing function, the manager defines, departmentalizes and assigns activities so that they can be most effectively executed."

Organizing process comprises differentiation and integration of activities of organization. Differentiation demands division of work and integration involves unification of the effort. Thus, organizing involves a harmonious blending of specialized parts of organization. This blending is effected through coordinated system of authority responsibility relationships.

Result of organizing process is organization structure. Organization structure is the network of relationships among various job positions in the organization. Structure is the skeleton of the organization within which efforts of different individuals are coordinated with each other.

#### 5.4.2.1 Steps in Organizing

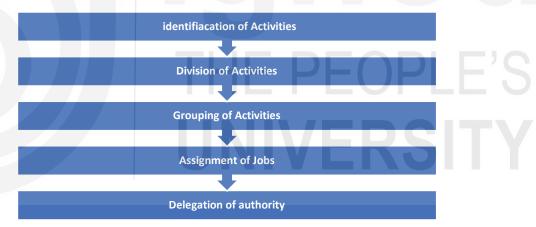


Figure. 5.5: Steps in Organising

- 1) **Identification of activities**: All activities needed to accomplish the office objectives are identified.
- **2) Division of activities:** Total work is divided into manageable activities as no one can accomplish all the work. It should be ensured that no important and necessary activity is left and no duplication of work takes place.
- **3) Grouping of activities:** Similar or closely related activities are combined together to make positions, jobs or sections or departments. This grouping of similar activities is called departmentation.
- **4) Assignment of jobs**: All created jobs are assigned to individuals by matching individual capabilities with the requirement of job.

5) Delegation of authority: Appropriate authority is delegated to each position in the organization. Authority and responsibility are balanced for each position in the organization. Delegation of authority creates hierarchical relations in the organization.

#### 5.4.3 Coordinating

As per Henri Fayol, "To coordinate is to harmonize all the activities of a concern so as to facilitate its working and its success. In a well-coordinated enterprise, each department or division works in harmony with others and is fully informed of its role in the organization. The working schedule of various departments is constantly tuned to circumstances."

Coordinating function of management is all about unifying the efforts and activities of different individuals, groups and departments in an office to achieve office objectives with minimum friction. It is about bringing together the efforts of the subordinates in an orderly and deliberate manner so that unified efforts lead to the stated objectives. It involves blending, integrating and harmonizing the diverse activities performed in an office. Balancing, timing, and integrating are three main elements of coordinating process.

#### 5.4.3.1 Importance of Coordinating

- 1) **Provides unity in diversity:** Coordination provides much needed unity to the diverse activities performed in the office. It is like a silken thread keeping the pearls together in necklace.
- 2) Facilitates team work: Without coordinating, no teamwork is possible.

  Team consists of individuals working on different aspects of a problem.

  Their efforts need to be coordinated to get fruitful results.
- 3) Propels growth: Coordination is a must in big offices as large number of employees are performing variety of jobs. Personal contacts and communication are difficult in big organizations. In such an event, coordinating function facilitates the growth of offices.
- **4) Creates synergy:** Coordination brings synergy to office efforts. Coordination integrates and blends the individual efforts and such coordinated efforts far exceed the sum total of individual efforts.
- 5) Economy and efficiency: Coordinating helps in bringing economy to office operations by reducing duplication of efforts. Proper integration and blending of activities and efforts ensures optimum utilization of resources.
- 6) Good human relations: Coordinating individual employee interest with office interest can improve job satisfaction and morale of employees. Coordination can also be instrumental in reducing conflicts in offices. All these can result in good human relations at work.

#### **5.4.3.2** Nature of Coordination

Following statements describe the nature of Coordination:

- Coordination is. The basic responsibility of office manager.
- Coordination is the result of deliberate efforts.
- Coordination is a continuous process.
- Coordination is mandatory where group efforts are involved.
- Coordinatino is based on systems concept.

#### **5.4.3.3** Techniques of Coordination

The various techniques of coordination are as follows:

- Clearly defined goals of office
- Harmony in various policies and programs
- Cooperation among staff
- Clear chain of command
- Sound organizational structure
- Effective communication flow
- Liaison officers such as project managers
- Effective leadership
- Commonality of interest

#### 5.4.4 Controlling

Controlling is an important function of office manager. Controlling ensures that office objectives are being achieved in a predefined manner and as per pre-decided time schedule. In order to seek pre-decided outcomes from office staff, office manager needs to effectively control the activities of the subordinates. Controlling ensures that office activities are performed as per the plans and office resources are used optimally for the achievement of predefined office goals. Controlling is required in all kinds of offices. Controlling is not the last function of management rather it brings management cycle back to planning stage. The controlling function provides feedback to planning function by pointing out deviations from standards, by analysing the causes of the deviations, and by suggesting corrective actions. This feedback helps in reviewing and revising the existing plans in the light of encountered problems and results in better plans in future.

#### 5.4.4.1 Nature of Control

- Controlling is a universal process as it is exercised for all activities of the office.
- It is a continuous process as employee efforts need to be continuously monitored to keep them on right track.

- Control is forward looking, as past cannot be controlled.
- Control involves measurement, as it requires comparing actual performance with the standards.
- Control curbs the undesirable behavior and makes people conform to rules and regulations.

#### 5.4.4.2 Importance of Controlling

The importance of controlling is discussed bellow:

- 1) Guide to operations: It acts as a guiding light to office operations by keeping the activities aligned to office objectives through continuous monitoring and correcting deviations.
- 2) Policy verification: Control helps managers to verify the relevance of the plans in the changed circumstances. It points out need to review, revise and update the plans before things go out of control.
- 3) Employee morale: Control helps in motivating employees by providing clear, attainable, and measurable performance standards to employees.
- 4) **Psychological pressure:** Sound control system puts pressure on employees to perform well as they know their performance will be measured and evaluated.
- 5) Helps in uncovering deficiencies: There are various controllable and uncontrollable forces which can put the achievement of goals off the track. Controlling helps in uncovering deficiencies in the system caused due to such forces and remove the causes in time.

#### 5.4.4.3 Steps in Control Process

Below mentioned are the various steps in control process:

- 1) Establishment of standards: First step in control process is to establish the control standards. Actual performance will be measured and evaluated against these benchmarks. These standards can be qualitative (such as goodwill, image, human relations in office) or quantitative (such as quantity of output, number of customer inquiries to be handled). These standards should be as far as possible quantitative, objective, accurate, clear, flexible, and reasonable.
- 2) Measurement of actual performance: In this step, actual performance is measured. Measurement should be accurate and reliable. For quantitative standards, performance should be measured in quantitative terms. For qualitative standards, opinion surveys can be done to measure the performance.
- 3) Comparing performance with standards: In this, actual performance is compared with the standards to find out any deviations between actual results and desired results

**4) Analysis of deviations:** Deviations noted in third stage are analysed. There can be three outcomes no deviation, actual performance exceeding standards and actual performance falling short of standards.

Not all deviations need to be reported to higher authorities. Insignificant deviations (both positive and negative) do not demand any attention. Only exceptional deviations demand some actions. Such deviations and their causes are reported to the concerned managers.

**5) Taking corrective action:** This is the final step of the control process. This step ensures that deviations do not occur in future and objectives are achieved. Corrective actions can be taking no action, revising objectives, training of the employees etc.

Two mistakes are to be taken care of at this stage – taking an action when no action is required and taking no action when an action is required. Effective control system would suggest a right action at the right time.

#### **5.4.4.4** Essentials of an Effective Control System

Following are the essentials of an effective control system:

- 1. It should be as per the needs and objectives of the office.
- 2. It should be simple to understand.
- 3. It should focus on future actions.
- 4. Control system should focus on strategic or critical deviations.
- 5. It should be adaptable and flexible to changing conditions.
- 6. It should be economical.
- It should not only point out deviations but also lead to some corrective action.
- 8. It should be objective.

#### 5.4.4.5 Control Measures for an Office Manager (W. H. Leffingwell's)

Below mentioned are the various control measures for an office manager by W. H. Leffingwell:

- 1. Plan and schedule the day's work in writing
- 2. Ensure that day's work is started in time
- 3. Determine the amount of unfinished work
- 4. Determine the amount of current work to be done
- 5. Measure the working force by the work
- 6. Check daily output
- 7. Insist on a full day's work
- 8. Check standard workpractice instructions

- 9. Plan daily supervision work for the week
- 10. Establish daily inspection of maintenance
- 11. Establish overall inspection of filling and record keeping
- 12. Get acquainted with the staff

#### 5.5 ACTIVITIES OF OFFICE

Like human, each office has a different personality, which reflects the objective for the existence of the office. Office in a manufacturing unit will be different from the office in an accounting firm. Sales office will have different orientation than R & D office. Despite such differences in prime responsibilities of offices, many of the activities are common to all offices.

Some of these common activities have been listed below:

- 1. Processing/ handling incoming and outgoing mail
- 2. Taking dictation
- 3. Producing transcription
- 4. Typing of letters, circulars, orders, memorandums etc.
- 5. Various kinds of printing jobs
- 6. Making duplicate copies of documents
- 7. Records maintenance (filing and indexing), records retention for future reference, records retrieval and records disposal(office records includes correspondence, letters, invoices, orders, financial and cost records, minutes etc.)
- 8. Developing office systems, procedures, standards, and methods
- 9. Maintaining communication flow
- 10. Designing and improving of office forms
- 11. Procuring stationery and other office supplies
- 12. Recruitment, selection, placement and training of office staff
- 13. Maintenance of furniture, machines, appliances etc.
- 14. Preparation and maintaining of accounts statements, pay roll, other financial records and reports etc.
- 15. Handling telephone calls
- 16. Prompt and accurate handling of customer and supplier enquiries, orders, and complaints
- 17. Preparing up to date information for the organization
- 18. Recorded, arranging and processing of collected information so as to convert it in a quickly accessible form for use by converting it into notes, reports, diagrams, graphs etc.

- 19. Safeguarding the office assets such as cash, machinery, office equipment, buildings, plants, equipment, lighting and air conditioning, furniture, title deeds, records, documents etc.
- 20. Maintaining efficient workflow in office

#### **Check Your Progress B**

1.	What are the benefits of planning in an office?						
2.	Describe the process of controlling the activities in an office.						
3.	List any four activities of office.						
4.	What are the various control measures for an office manager?						
••							

#### 5.6 LET US SUM UP

Office is an important component of business/organization so much so that it is termed as the center of an organization. Office is a place where all types of paper work are done to plan, organize, coordinate, and control various activities of the organization in a smooth and efficient manner. In order to carry out the work of an office effectively and efficiently, you need to

understand and learn about various important aspects related to office management.

An office is focal point of an organization. Like a human brain, it controls the activities of the organization. In an office, clerical functions like information collection and dissemination, record keeping, and managerial functions such as planning, formulation of policies, organization, controlling etc. are performed. In order to carry out such diverse activities, offices need to be managed. Some of the main objectives of the office management are achievement of organizational goals, optimum utilization of office resources, ensuring operational workflow, effective communication flow, development of human resources, coordination, relations with customers and suppliers and better office environment.

Proper planning, organizing, coordination and control of office activities, reduction of office costs etc. help in smooth functioning of office work. It is very important to manage an office efficiently and effectively as success of a business is dependent on efficient and effective performance of the office work to a great extent. Office management helps in achieving goals, optimum utilization of office resources, cost reduction, maintaining and enhancing office efficiency, smooth flow of work, managing public relations, managing change, attracting and retaining talent, managing challenges for survival and growth and coordination of office function etc.

Offices are those tools of management, which help in managing a business effectively and efficiently. Thus, office management is an essential element of total management of an enterprise. Office management is concerned with the efficient and effective performance of office functions, using principles of general management by optimally utilizing the resources of office. Office activities are performed by office staff working with appropriate machines and equipments in office environment for providing efficient and economical clerical service to entire organization. It is the function of office management to plan, organize, guide and control all the activities of the office staff to achieve common objectives. For this, office managers perform the planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling functions of general management.

Like human, each office has a different personality, which reflects the objective for the existence of the office. Office in a manufacturing unit will be different from the office in an accounting firm. Sales office will have different orientation than R & D office. Despite such differences in prime responsibilities of offices, many of the activities are common to all offices. Some of these common activities are processing/ handling incoming and outgoing mail, taking dictation, producing transcription, typing of letters, circulars, orders, memorandums, making duplicate copies of documents, maintaining efficient workflow in office etc.



#### 5.7 KEYWORDS

Controlling: Controlling can be defined as that function of management which helps to seek planned results from the subordinates, managers and at all levels of an organization. The controlling function helps in measuring the progress towards the organizational goals & brings any deviations, & indicates corrective action.

**Coordinating:** It is about bringing together of efforts of the subordinates in an orderly and deliberate manner so that unified efforts lead to the stated objectives.

**Functions:** Functions are various activities/ tasks that are natural to a person in a particular job

**Office Record:** Office records are some written/permanent office communication for future reference. It includes correspondence, letters, invoices, orders, financial and cost records, minutes etc.

**Objectives:** In context of an organization, objectives are office target or purposes to attain or accomplish and for which employee's efforts or actions are intended

**Office Management:** It refers to that branch of the art and science of management, which is concerned with the efficient performances of office work, whenever and wherever that work is done.

**Organizing:** It is the process of defining and grouping the activities of the enterprise and establishing the authority relationships among them. In performing the organizing function, the manager defines, departmentalizes and assigns activities so that they can be most effectively executed.

**Planning:** Planning is deciding in advance, what needs to be done, when will it be done, how will it be done, where it will be done and who will do it.

#### 5.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Write a short note on office management.
- 2. What is office management? What are the objectives of office management?
- 3. "Office management is the task of planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling the efforts of employees in the office to achieve the objectives of office". Elucidate the statement.
- 4. Describe the functions performed by an office manager for running an office smoothly.
- 5. Enumerate the key activities, which are performed in an office.
- 6. Describe the importance of office management.

**Note:** These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.

## UNIT 6 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICE MANAGER

#### **Structure**

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Roles of Office Manager
- 6.3 Duties of Office Manager
- 6.4 Qualities of a Good Office Manager
- 6.5 Functions of Office Manager
- 6.6 Skills required to be an Office Manager
- 6.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.8 Keywords
- 6.9 Terminal Questions

#### 6.0 **OBJECTIVES**

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- describe various roles of office manager;
- understand the duties of office manager;
- explain the qualities of a good office manager;
- describe various functions of office manager; and
- discuss skills required to be an office manager.

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

By now, you have understood the importance of office in an organization. In addition, you are well acquainted with various important aspects related to office management like objectives, activities and important functions of office management. Different tasks of the office are assigned to executives in order to carry out activities and functions of office. These executives, who are in charge of the office, are called office managers. Office managers have to perform all the functions of the office in an effective and efficient manner to help the organizations to achieve the goals. Office managers are a vital link between upper levels of management and office workers/ employees. They are responsible for proper execution of various policies of the organization. Thus, it is important to understand role, duties, qualities, skills, and functions of the office managers.

In this chapter, you will learn about the duties and responsibilities of office manager. You will get to know about various roles played by an office manager and various duties to be discharged by office manager. Next, you will be acquainted with the qualities needed to be a good office manager. Further, you will learn about various functions of office manager as well as skills required to be an effecient office manager.

#### 6.2 ROLES OF OFFICE MANAGER

Office managers have to play various roles while discharging functions and duties allotted to them. Roles maybe defined as those behaviors that are either specified or expected from a person while performing a particular job or working in a particular position in an organization. Roles are the behavioral outcomes expected from an employee by his/her superiors and subordinates. An office manager is also expected to exhibit certain behaviors in the office. Some of the roles played by office managers have been listed below:

- 1) Leader: Office manager has to lead his office staff for effective discharge of the duties assigned to them. It is his duty to inspire the subordinates not merely by words but actions as well. He should be a role model for them.
- 2) Motivator: Another important role of office manager is to motivate his subordinates. He should understand the needs and aspirations of the subordinates. He can act as a catalyst in integrating personal goals of the employees with the goals and objectives of the office.
- 3) Trainer: Yet another role of the office manager is of trainer. He has to coach and guide the new employees in order to make them understand the office work, methods and machinery. In addition, he has to assess the training needs of the new and old employees and accordingly arrange for the orientation training and refresher training for them.
- **4) Organizer:** Office manager is responsible for the office organization. He is supposed to arrange for various meetings, seminars, events and functions of the office on a routine basis. In addition, he is responsible for the office organisation.
- 5) Supervisor: Office manager has to act as a supervisor as he is responsible for the proper discharge of the duties allocated to the subordinates. Hence, they must constantly direct, guide and supervise the subordinates and oversee their work to ensure that no mistakes are committed.
- 6) Communicator: Effective communication is essential for maintaining good interpersonal relations in an office. Communication is required for guiding, inspiring, motivating and instructing subordinates. It is essential for sending work instructions to the subordinates. Communication is also

Duties and Responsibilities of Office Manager

required for making reports, orders, circulars, and presentations. As office managers are involved in all these tasks, they need to be excellent communicators.

- 7) Delegator: Delegation of work and authority is essential for effective functioning of any organization. Delegation helps office managers to assign the routine and simpler tasks to subordinates so as to focus their energies on important and non-routine tasks of the office. Office manager must be able to delegate work as per the capabilities of the subordinates. He must ensure some means to check that the assigned tasks are performed in an appropriate manner.
- 8) Evaluator: Office manager delegates the work to subordinates and thus, is responsible for the work assigned to them. He needs to monitor the subordinates continuously to ensure that they are working in a desired fashion and their efforts are contributing to the achievement of the office goals. Performance evaluation of the subordinates is also essential for improving their shortcomings and for motivating them through promotions and pay raises. Thus, office manager has to act as an evaluator too.
- 9) Information disseminator: Lot of data is generated in offices, which needs to be monitored and analyzed to get information from it. Apart from this, lot of information is continuously available in external environment of the office. Office manager should continuously and regularly keep a tab on both internal and external information, filter and analyze these and then timely disseminate relevant information to different decision centers
- **10) Spokesperson:** Office managers also play the role of a spokesperson. They may be entrusted with the task of communicating the policies of the organization to various stakeholders and publics. In addition, they act as spokesperson of the top management to the subordinates when they communicate long-term plans, policies, any plan and policy changes, and initiation of new programs to their subordinates and try to persuade them to adhere to the norms of the organizations.
- 11) Problem Solver: Office managers have to act as problem solver too. Problem solving and decision-making are continuous and pervasive activities in an organization. Every employee is involved in problem solving related to his/her domain of work. An office manager being incharge of the office has to deal with routine and non-routine problems arising in his/her office. Repetitive problems such as employee reporting late for work can be solved by establishing standard procedures and rules. Non-routine problems, such as relocation of office, demand investment of time, efforts, and innovative solutions.
- **12)** Coordinator: Coordination is the essence of office management. It is essential for any group activity. It is like a silk thread, which keeps all

the pearls of the necklace together. It is important to synchronize, unify, integrate and harmonize the efforts and activities of subordinates for effective achievement of the goals of the organization. As a coordinator, office manager is responsible for integration of efforts of all the employees working his office through planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling.

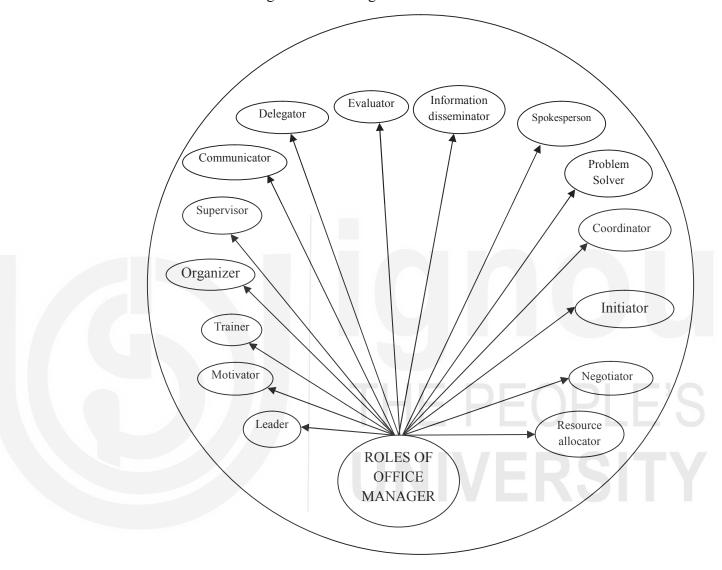


Figure 6.1: Roles of Office Manager

- 13) Initiator: Office managers can act as initiator too by conceiving new ways to do work. Organizations constantly and proactively need to adapt to environmental changes for survival and growth. As initiators, office managers can foresee the need for such changes. They can help bringing in planned changes at work place by managing restraining and driving forces.
- **14) Negotiator:** Negotiations are daily job of office managers. Office managers generally negotiate with their staff, co-workers and customers and most of the times, these negotiations are informal conversations. As negotiator, office managers build and grow mutually beneficial relationships in the office. As negotiations are about dealing with people,

- s/he must understand the interests, needs and motivations of people and try to help them achieve these besides their goals for the organization.
- 15) Resource allocator: Resources are always scare in any organization and should be optimally and judiciously used for achieving efficiency and effectiveness in office operations. As resource allocator, office manager has to see that different machines and other office equipment are available for use to everyone as per the need. Also, office layout should be having comfortable and optimal sitting arrangement for all the employees, that is, all the employees should have a place to sit in and it should be spacious enough to carry out assigned activities without any duplication of work.

#### 6.3 DUTIES OF OFFICE MANAGER

Duties may be defined as the collection of tasks or actions associated with a particular job. Each job in the organization involves performance of certain tasks by the holder of that job position in the organization. Accordingly, duties of an office manager have been summarized below:

- 1) Maintaining office services: Office manager is responsible for smooth functioning of the office and thus, he needs to maintain various services of the office such as:
  - i) proper organization of office operations and procedures;
  - ii) preparation of payroll;
  - iii) controlling of office correspondence (Inbound and outbound);
  - iv) dealing with complaints and queries;
  - v) putting appropriate filing and indexing systems in place;
  - vi) review and approve office supply requisitions such as ordering stationery and furniture;
  - vii) delegation and monitoring of various clerical functions;
  - viii) booking transport and accommodation;
  - ix) organizing company events or conferences; and
  - x) preparing letters, presentations, and reports, etc.
- 2) Providing past references: It is the duty of the office manager to define and establish various procedures for proper maintenance of office records. These procedures include defining procedures regarding how to retain, protect, retrieve, transfer, and dispose of office records. These procedures provide historical references to new employees and help in smooth functioning of the office.
- **Maintaining office efficiency:** It is the duty of the office manager to plan and implement various systems of the office such as office layout, material, supplies and equipment procurement, etc. Effective planning and proper implementation can help in efficiency in office operations.

- 4) Designing and implementation of office policies: Office managers are responsible for making policies. They establish standards and procedures for various office activities. They are also responsible for proper implementation of these policies and procedures. In order to ensure the implementation of the policies, it is the duty of the office managers to measure and compare the results against the standards and make necessary adjustments.
- 5) Employee scheduling and assignment: Office manager's duties include scheduling and assigning of employees to ensure that office operations are accomplished with optimum resource allocation. It is the duty of the manager to delegate tasks to junior employees and to take a follow up of the work results.
- 6) Providing relevant information to management: It is the duty of the office manager to manage various databases of the organization. In addition, h/she should periodically summarize and spot the trends in the information gleaned from these databases for putting up in meetings. S/he is responsible for reviewing and analyzing important/special reports and making summary of these reports available to top management for suitable action.
- 7) Ensuring continuity of office: In order to ensure continuity of any organization, it is mandatory to ensure regular supply of work force through recruitment, selection, orientation and training of human resources. Office managers assist HR department in all these functions. They keep employees' records up to date, arrange interviews, organize induction programs and training programs for new employees and thus help in maintaining the office.
- 8) Motivating office staff: Office manager monitors, supervises, and appraises the work of administrative staff under him/her. Office managers coach, counsel, discipline, and motivate office staff by employing fair evaluation and promotion rules.
- 9) Updating self: In order to remain relevant and up to date in the changing work environment, it is the duty of office manager to update and enhance his/her professional and technical knowledge by attending educational workshops. S/he should be a member of the professional societies, should subscribe professional publications, and establish and grow professional network.
- **10) Managing office budgets:** Office manager facilitates top management in achieving financial objectives. For this, they prepare annual budget, schedule expenditures, analyze variances in standards and actual figures and on the basis of the deviations they take initiate corrective actions.
- **11) Accomplishing team efforts:** It is the duty of office manager to liaison with various stakeholders in organizations such as staff, suppliers, and clients for synergistic results.

# **Duties** and **Check Your Progress A:** Responsibilities of Office Manager Explain the role of office manager as Information disseminator. Describe various duties performed by office manager for maintaining office services. Enlist various duties of office manager in an office. ..... "It is the duty of office manager to update and enhance his/her professional and technical knowledge". Comment.

## 6.4 QUALITIES OF A GOOD OFFICE MANAGER

It is amply evident by now that office work is composed of various service functions. Office manager controls various activities in the office to help in achieving the office goals. S/he needs to liaison with superior and subordinates, to motivate subordinates and to optimally utilize various human and non-human resources. To achieve the organizational goals in most efficient manner, office manager should possess certain qualities. Qualities

are inherent in a person. Quality maybe defined as a specific trait, feature, attribute, or characteristic possessed by someone. The various qualities of a good office manager are listed below:

- 1) Management training: A good office manager should possess some management qualification in addition to some general basic qualification. Management qualification will give an edge while managing the office. However, there is no hard and fast rule as to what should be the minimum qualifications as qualifications are based on the job s/he does.
- 2) Good communicator: Office manager must be a good communicator. S/he should have good verbal and written communication. Good oral communication is essential for coaching, counseling, motivating, directing, and leading the subordinates. Good written communication helps in noting, drafting, making summary reports, circulars, notices, and other office communication.
- **3) Good organizer:** S/he must be possessing good organization qualities as managers need to organize meetings on a routine basis. Apart from this, entire office organization is the responsibility of office manager.
- **4) Good trainer:** As it is the responsibility of the office manager to supervise and control the work of the subordinates, s/he must be a good trainer. This will help her/him in coaching new employees through on the job or off the job training methods. Thus, s/he should be able to teach others.
- 5) Tactful: Office manager may come across difficult situations in the office. Thus, he must be able to deal with such situations tactfully. S/he should be skillful in her/his dealings with various stakeholders.
- 6) Pleasing mannerism: Office manager should have pleasing manners while dealing with critical positions and in suggesting suitable ideas. S/he should have a neat appearance for making good impression in the office.
- 7) Sincerity: Office manager must discharge his duties sincerely. S/he should have a sense of responsibility, should be disciplined and punctual so as to serve as an example to others in the office.
- 8) Leadership: Office manager must lead her/his staff from front. Her/his leadership should be able to inspire followers, instill confidence in them and must be able to inculcate team spirit. S/he should be enthusiastic towards the work and should also have excellent persuasive capabilities.
- **9) Delegation ability:** Office manager must be having sound judgment so that s/he can delegate work to staff according to the abilities of the workers.
- **10) Self-confidence and self-control:** It is important for office manager to remain calm and composed in trying situations. A good manger has confidence in self and exercises self-control and does not get irritated so easily.



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- 11) Adaptability: Good office manager would be constantly in touch with new technologies, equipment, facts and methods to increase the efficiency. S/he will always take initiative in learning new things related to work and will be adapting her/his ways of working as per the demands of the situation.
- **12) Understanding of human nature:** Office manager must be a keen observer of human behavior. S/he must understand the nuances of organizational behavior for effective leadership, motivation, supervision and control.

#### 6.5 FUNCTIONS OF OFFICE MANAGER

Office manager has an important role to play in the office, as office work is service oriented. A manager has to perform various activities in order to achieve the purpose of his job. These activities performed by the manger in order to achieve organizational objectives as related to his job position are called functions of office manager. There is no set criterion to decide the exact functions of office manager and generally, nature, need and size of the organization decide functions of office manager. Hence, functions of office manager vary according to time, need and office and office manager is expected to discharge her/his functions within the limit of authority and responsibility delegated to him. Some of the main functions performed by an office manager are as given below:

- 1) Providing leadership: As office in-charge, office manager has to control all the work done in his office. Accordingly, he needs to lead his team effectively to ensure smooth and efficient handling of office work. He is responsible for maintaining public relations and helping other departments and subordinates to achieve their targets. For all this, he needs to be an example to them and lead them from front.
- 2) Motivation of subordinates: Motivation of employees is essential for better work performance in an organization. Proper motivation leads to more efficiency. Better results motivate employees to improve their performance. Hence, another important function to be performed by office manager is to motivate her/his employees. As the needs of the employees differ, accordingly ways to motivate them also differ. Office manager needs to find out the right type of motivation to ensure effective and economical work performance.
- 3) **Performance evaluation:** Another important function of office manager is performance evaluation of the subordinates. Fair, just and timely evaluation motivates employees, improves their performance and leads to promotion. Hence, measurement of employees' output and offering rewards based on the output is an important function of office manager as it also helps in seeking co-operation of the employees.



- **Maintaining discipline:** Office manager is responsible for maintaining discipline in the office. He must see to it that rules and regulations are implemented with the right spirit and without any biases. He should explain rules and regulations to his subordinates and should address the grievances of the staff.
- 5) Staffing: An office manager coordinates with human resources department for recruitment and selection of the staff. It is his function to ensure that right person is selected for the right job. For this purpose, he needs to determine quantity and quality of staff needed, decide and find new sources of recruitment, receive applications, conduct interviews/ tests, and select right employee.
- 6) Imparting training: Yet another important function of office manager is to arrange for the training of the new as well as old employees. He helps new employees in getting to know the organization by arranging orientation training for them. He provides refresher training to old employees to enhance their skills by arranging training to help them to learn latest tools, techniques, equipment, and machinery.
- 7) Facilitate coordination: Coordination is another important function of office manager as s/he is responsible for coordination of various activities of office staff. He has to coordinate between various stakeholders in organization. For example, he has to act as a link between top management and the workers. Then he has to coordinate with human resource department for recruitment, selection, training etc.
- 8) Costing and accounting: An office manager needs to maintain costing and accounting records especially in small organizations. Thus, he should have thorough knowledge of costing and accounting related aspects. Every figure should be on his fingertips.
- 9) Controlling of stationery and office machinery: Stationery control in an organization is also the responsibility of office manager. He must frame clear-cut procedures for purchase, issue and storage of office stationery to ensure that right quantity of the stationery is purchased and issued to concerned officials. He is also responsible for safeguarding furniture, fittings, machines, equipments and various records of the organization. Optimum allocation and utilization of machinery and equipment is also his job.
- **10) Secretarial services:** Office manager also discharges secretarial services, as he is custodian of office records such as statutory and accounts books. He also holds meetings, drafts reports and minutes etc. as any secretary does.
- 11) Organizing and supervising: Office manager arranges and conducts office meetings, events and other office activities. As he is responsible for the entire office, he supervises office correspondence (inbound and



- outbound), messenger services, procedures, filing, indexing, record maintenance and protection, policy implementation etc.
- 12) Managing human relations: It is extremely important to maintain good relations between management and employees in an organization. Maintenance of human relations is valuable for an organization as it affects costs, competitiveness and long-term sustainability of the organization. Human relations deals with understanding and addressing the needs of the employees, fostering a conducive work culture, managing group relationships, resolving conflicts between employees, between groups and between union and management. Good human relations motivate employees to work harmoniously. Thus, an office manager must manage and maintain good human relations in an office.

## 6.7 SKILLS REQUIRED TO BE AN OFFICE MANAGER

Managing office is a challenging task as many times office managers operate at higher levels in the organizations and are working in close coordination with other department heads. Office managers need to ensure the smooth functioning of the office. This is no mean feat, as they have to multitask to take care of numerous responsibilities every day such as ordering office supplies, solving customer complaints, organizing events etc. They are the backbone of the organization, glue that holds all the departments together. In order to discharge such varied and important functions and duties, office managers need to be well versed in office management skills.

Given below is a list of the skills required by the office managers. However, not all office managers need exactly same skills. Desired skill set varies from office to office and depends upon how many subordinates you have to supervise, how big the office is in terms of number of employees and what software are in use in office. Also, the functions and skills of an office manager may seem similar; both are distinct from each other despite having some overlapping aspects. Functions refer to the task-based aspect of the job whereas skills refer to the ability of the manger to perform the task. Below mentioned are the various skills required to be an effective office manager:

- 1) Managerial and administrative skills: As a part of his/her job as an office manager, one is responsible for many managerial and administrative tasks in the organization. Such responsibilities of office manager may include making plans, decision-making, hiring new employees, training employees, evaluating performance, motivation, firing underperforming employees, maintaining personnel records, maintaining paperwork, scheduling and attending meetings, approving formal requisitions, conducting general business operations, delegation, conflict resolution and teamwork.
- 2) Leadership skills: Office managers generally have a team of office assistants to help him/her in discharging office work. In order to get best

- results from the team, office manager need to be an effective leader who can motivate his subordinates to put their best foot forward as they strive to achieve organizational goals. An office manager is required to lead from front to ensure that the tasks are accomplished effectively and efficiently. He is to set work standards, ensure teamwork, take initiative, ensure communication and create a healthy work culture in the office.
- organizational skills: Continuous multitasking requires great organizational skills in office for efficient and effective utilization of office resources. Office managers are responsible for scheduling and organizing meetings, arranging for events, delegation, facilities management and space management. They are also responsible for organizing and allocation of various resources to run office as well as proper record and document preparation and management.
- 4) Professional skills: An office manager must possess professional skills such as transcription, note taking, handling inward and outward mail, file indexing, proofreading, managing appointments, revising drafting, report writing, reporting skills and record keeping. They must know how to handle various machines used in office and should update their knowledge on a continuous and proactive basis. These skills make her/him effective in day to day functioning of the office.
- 5) Information technology skills: It is era of digitalization and almost all the offices are using information technology (IT) in varied forms. Use of IT is no longer a choice but a compulsion for remaining competitive nowadays. Software like Microsoft Office help you in preparing documents, presentations and charts. Internet helps in inter and intra organizational communication instantaneously. Software helps you in database maintenance, inventory management and account keeping to name a few. So, as an office manager, one should possess strong IT and computer skills. Some of IT related skills to be acquired by office manager are knowledge of microsoft office, operating systems, data entry, digital calendars, email management, file sharing etc.
- 6) Finance and accounting skills: An office manager needs to have a basic understanding of finance and accounting. Office managers may be entrusted with the tasks such as preparation of financial statements, invoices, bookkeeping, budget preparation and management, payroll, handling of petty cash etc. Office manager may be asked to prepare and manage quarterly and semiannual reports and documents as well. S/he must have knowledge of popular accounting software too.
- 7) Communication skills: Another important skill needed by office managers is strong written and verbal communication skill. Communication skills help office manager to be effective receptionist as many times they are the first point of contact to the outsiders in the office. Communication skills help in delegation of work and resolution of conflicts. It also helps in acting as a bridge between the employees of



the organization. In order to carry out the work, office managers need to be accurate, efficient, friendly and professional in their communication. Office communication includes written communication, verbal communication, e-etiquettes and phone etiquettes.

- 8) Interpersonal skills: Also known as human relations skills or human skills or social skills are another set of important skills to be possessed by office manager. Manager has to deal with people visiting his office. He also interacts with his colleagues, superiors and subordinates while working in his office on a routine basis. It is important to have a positive approach and attitude while interacting with other humans to strike a rapport and have a congenial work atmosphere. Good interpersonal relations result in great teamwork. Human relations encompass various interactions at work places such as conflicts, group efforts and cooperative efforts. Human relations skills help employees in achieving economic, psychological and social satisfaction at work places.
- 9) Time management skills: Time is of essence and a scarce resource, which cannot be bought with any amount of money. Responsibilities of office manager are multiple and diverse in nature. In addition, most often s/he has to multitask, time management skills are very important for her/him. S/he must learn how to identify time waters, how to delegate, allocate and prioritize work, and adhere to deadlines so that every minute of the duty time can be fully utilized.
- 10) Analytical skills: Office manager should have analytical skills as well to be an effective manager. Analytical skills help you to find inefficiencies in the existing system by continually questioning the existing processes, practices, and procedures. It helps office manager to find innovative, creative and out of box solutions to office problems and contributes to organization's short term and long-term growth. Some of the analytical skills include problem-solving, process improvement, critical thinking, creativity, optimization and use of deductive and inductive reasoning. Some other skills which can help one becoming effective manger include skills related to auditing, benchmarking, inventory management, billing, desktop publishing, handling legal documents, handling stress, troubleshooting, management of social media, use and optimization of search engines, developing and maintaining standard operating procedures, reliability, accuracy, attention to details and adaptability.

#### **Check Your Progress B:**

1)	What do quality of	-	nderstand ice manag	2	rm (	qualities?	Explain	the	adaptabili	ty

Offi	ce Organization
and	Management

2)	Differentiate between functions and skills.
3)	How a manager can motivate employees in the office?
4)	Explain the importance of managing human relations in an office.
	THE PEOPLE'S

#### 6.7 LET US SUM UP

Offices are important as these help in achievement of organizational goals and objectives. Office managers as in charges of these offices perform various functions efficiently and effectively to help organizations achieve their goals. Office managers are a vital link between upper levels of management and office workers/employees.

Office managers have to play various roles while discharging functions and duties allotted to them. Roles maybe defined as those behaviors that are either specified or expected from a person while performing a particular job or working in a particular position in an organization. Roles are the behavioral outcomes expected from an employee by his/her superiors and subordinates. An office manager is also expected to exhibit certain behaviors in the office. Some of the roles played by office managers are leader, motivator, trainer, organizer, supervisor, communicator, delegator, spokesperson, negotiator, initiator, resource allocator, etc.

Duties and Responsibilities of Office Manager

Duties may be defined as the collection of tasks or actions associated with a particular job. Each job in the organization involves performance of certain tasks by the holder of that job position in the organizations. Accordingly, duties of an office manager are maintaining office services, providing past references, maintaining office efficiency, designing and implementation of office policies, employee scheduling and assignment, providing relevant information to management, maintaining/ ensuring continuity of office, maintaining/motivating office staff, updating self and managing office budgets, etc.

It is evident by now that office work is composed of various service functions. Office manager controls various activities in the office to help in achieving the office goals. S/he needs to liaison with superior and subordinates, to motivate subordinates and to optimally utilize various human and non-human resources. To achieve the organizational goals in most efficient manner, office manager should possess certain qualities. A good office manager must be a good communicator, good organizer, tactful, sincere, a good leader, should have self-confidence and self-control, adaptable and should have understanding of human nature.

Office manager has an important role to play in the office, as office work is service oriented. A manager has to perform various activities in order to achieve the purpose of his job. These activities performed by the manager in order to achieve organizational objectives as related to his job position are called functions of office manager. Functions of office manager vary according to time, need and office and office manager is expected to discharge her/his functions within the limit of authority and responsibility delegated to her/him. Some of the main functions performed by an office manager are providing leadership, motivating subordinates, performance evaluation, maintaining discipline, staffing, imparting training, facilitate coordination, managing human relations etc.

Managing office is a challenging task as many times office managers operate at higher levels in the organizations and are working in close coordination with other department heads. Office managers need to ensure the smooth functioning of the office. This is no mean feat, as they have to multitask to take care of numerous responsibilities every day such as ordering office supplies, solving customer complaints, organizing events etc. They are the backbone of the organization, glue that holds all the departments together. In order to discharge such varied and important functions and duties, office managers need to be well versed in office management skills such as managerial and administrative skills, leadership skills, organizational skills, professional skills, information technology related skills, finance and accounting skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, time management skills, and analytical skills.

#### 6.8 KEYWORDS

**Adaptability:** It is the quality of being flexible or capability to adjust to new conditions/ new uses.

**Duties:** Duties are collection of tasks or actions associated with a particular job.

**Leader:** A leader is person who persuades followers for the achievement of a goal.

**Negotiator:** Negotiator is a person who either himself/herself signs an agreement with other stake holders in the organization, or who helps other parties to reach at an agreement.

**Organizer:** An organizer is a person who arranges for events or activities by putting in efforts and thus brings order in an office.

**Quality:** It is a specific trait, feature, attribute, or characteristic possessed by someone.

**Role:** Roles are the behavior patterns either specified or expected from a person performing a particular job or working in a particular position in an organization.

**Spokesperson:** Spokesperson is a person who speaks on behalf of an office.

**Tactful:** These are skills, consideration and sensitivity exhibited in dealing with peers and/or while dealing with difficult issues.

#### 6.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Explain the role of office manager as Information disseminator, Leader, Organizer, Spokesperson and Motivator.
- 2. "Roles are the expected behavior of a job position". In light of this statement, discuss various roles an office manager is expected to play in an office.
- 3. State and explain the functions performed by an office manager.
- 4. What are the duties of an office manager in relation to top management and subordinates? Elucidate.
- 5. Describe the qualities to be possessed by a good office manager.
- 6. What do office managers have to do in order to maintain office services?

**Note:** These questions will help you to understand this unit better. Try to write answers for them. But do not submit your answers to the University for assessment. These are for your practice only.