PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT CODE : 18BPA13C
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Material prepared according to textbook and reference books given in the syllabus.

SYLLABUS

SYLLABUS FOR B.A. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Objective
The purpose of this paper is to introduce the students the fundamental aspects of Public Administration. This will help the students to obtain a suitable conceptual perspective on Public Administration. They will understand the Principles and structure of organization. Further this paper introduces the students the basics of management.

UNIT – I: Introduction
Meaning, Nature and Scope of Public Administration – Public Administration and Private Administration – Politics and Public administration Dichotomy - Public Administration Arts, Science or both – Public Administration and its Relations with other Social Sciences

UNIT – II: Principle of Organization

UNIT – III: Types of Organization

UNIT – IV: Management

UNIT – V: Control over Public Administration
Control over Public Administration – Legislative – Executive – Judicial.

Textbook

Reference Books
2. Ramesh K. Arora, Rajini goyal India public Administration
Unit 2: Principles of Organization

ORGANISATION

Administration is a cooperative effort of a group of people in pursuit of a common objective. It is necessary that this group should be organised in order to attain the desired goal. In other words, organisation is an essential element of administration. It facilitates the proper utilisation of men, material, and money for the accomplishment of the defined purpose. Hence, there can be no administration without organisation. Dimock and Dimock stated, “Organisation is the basic tool by means of which the administrative process is kept operating.”

Definition

The term ‘organisation’ is derived from the word ‘organicism’ which means an organised body of interdependent parts sharing common activity. The various definitions of organisation are:

Mooney: “Organisation is the form of every human association for the attainment of a common purpose.”

Simon: “By organisation we mean a planned system of cooperative effort in which each participant has a recognised role to play and duties and tasks to perform.”

Characteristics

Nicholas Henry has summarized the characteristics of the organisations in the following manner:

1. They are purposeful, complex human collectivities.
2. They are characterized by secondary (or impersonal) relationships.
3. They have specialized and limited goals.
4. They are characterized by sustained co-operative activity.
5. They are integrated within a larger social system.
6. They provide services and products to their environment.
7. They are dependent upon exchanges with their environment.

According to L.D. White, an organisation has three primary elements viz., persons, combined efforts, and a common purpose. The elements of an organisation, according to C.I. Barnard, are: (a) common purpose, (b) communication, and (c) willingness to serve.

According to Herbert A. Simon, the functions of an organisation includes dividing work among the members, formulating standard practices, providing a communication system, transmitting decisions, and training the members.

HIERARCHY

Hierarchy was emphasised by all the classical thinkers like Weber, Fayol, Gulick, Urwick, Mooney and Reiley as an important principle of administration. Fayol referred to it as the ‘scalar chain’, while Mooney and Reiley called it the ‘scalar process’. Mooney stated that hierarchy is a universal phenomenon.

Meaning

The term ‘Hierarchy’ is derived from the Greek term for a ruling body of priests organized into ranks. The word ‘scalar’ is derived from ‘scale’ which means ‘ladder’ with several steps.

Literally, the term “hierarchy” means the control of the greater over the lesser. In administrative phraseology, it means an organisation structured in a pyramidal fashion with successive steps interlinked with each other, from top to bottom.

Mooney has explained the scalar chain or scalar process in the following way: “The scalar principle is the same form in an organization that is sometimes called hierarchical. A scale means a series of steps, something graded. In an organization it means the grading of duties, not according to the different functions, but according to the degrees of authority and corresponding responsibility. For our convenience we shall call this phenomena of organization the scalar chain”.

While highlighting the universality of the scalar chain in the organisation, he (Mooney) asserted that “wherever we find an organization even of two people, related as superior and sub-ordinate, we have the scalar principle. This chain constitutes the universal process of co-ordination, through which the supreme co-ordinating authority becomes effective throughout the entire structure”. According to him, the scalar process has its own principle, process and effect. These are: (i) Leadership, (ii) Delegation, and (iii) Functional Definition.

The scalar system denotes that every employee is bound in a single chain of command. In the words of Stephen Robbins, “the chain of command is an unbroken line of authority that extends from the top of the organisation to the lowest echelon and clarifies who reports to whom.”
Definition

L.D. White: “Hierarchy consists of the universal application of the superior-subordinate relationship through a number of levels of responsibility reaching from the top to the bottom of the structure.”

Millet: “Hierarchy is a method, whereby, the efforts of many different individuals are geared together.”

Principles

Three principles are followed to organise functional units in a pyramidal form. They are:

(i) Principle of ‘through proper channel’, that is, all commands and communications should pass through a proper channel. No intermediate level can be skipped in transacting business.

(ii) Principle of ‘correspondance’, that is, authority and responsibility should be coequal and coterminous at all levels. It is believed that “authority without responsibility is dangerous and responsibility without authority is meaningless.”

(iii) Principle of ‘unity of command’, that is, a subordinate should receive orders from one superior only.

The following diagram illustrates the principle of hierarchy in administration:

![Diagram of Hierarchy](image)

**FIG.2.1 Principle of Hierarchy**

In the above diagram, A is the head of the organisation. The immediate subordinate of A is B and the immediate subordinate of B is C. But C is also subordinate to A through B. This is true of all the other levels in the line, that is, D, E, F and G. Hence, orders flow from top to bottom, that is, from A to B, B to C, and so on, and communications flow from bottom to top, that is, from G to F, F to E, and so on. The same is true on the other side, that is, A to Q. The communication between G and Q takes place through A, that is, it ascends to A from G and descends from A to Q in a step by step manner. This is called communication ‘through proper channel’. The line of authority (the chain of command or line of command) linking the entire organisation is represented in the above diagram.

Fayol’s Gangplank

To speed up the flow of business and avoid delay in disposal of cases, Henry Fayol suggested an alternative route called ‘gangplank’. He illustrated it in the following way:

![Diagram of Gangplank](image)

**FIG.2.2 Fayol’s Scalar Chain**

Following the line of authority (scalar chain), F to communicate with P, has to go through E-D-C-B-A-L-M-N-O and back again. On the other hand, it is much simpler and quicker to go directly from F to P by making use of FP as a ‘gang-plank’, if the procedure is agreeable to higher officials, that is, E and O. Thus, the concept of gangplank stands for establishing a communication channel with an employee of the same level, that is, a horizontal communication system.
UNITY OF COMMAND

Meaning
Unity of command means that an employee should receive orders from one superior only. In other words, it means that no employee should be subjected to the orders of more than one superior. Thus, it stands for single boss for each person or mono-command.

Definition

Henry Fayol: “For any action whatsoever, an employee should receive orders from one superior only.”

Pfiffner and Prentiss: “The concept of unity of command requires that every member of an organisation should report to one, and only one leader.”

Dimock and Dimock: “A corollary of the chain of command is unity of command, the principle that each employee should have only one boss.”

SPAN OF CONTROL

Meaning
The principle of span of control means the number of subordinates or the units of work that an officer can personally direct, control, and supervise. It is also known as ‘span of supervision’ or ‘span of management’.

According to Dimock and Dimock, “The span of control is the number and range of direct, habitual communication contacts between the chief executive of an enterprise and his principal fellow officers.”

Relationship with Hierarchy
There is a close relationship between hierarchy and span of control. That is, the number of levels in a hierarchical (scalar) organisation depends upon the span of control of a superior officer. Narrow (smaller) span of control increases the number of levels in the organisation and thereby creates tall structure. On the other hand, wide (larger) span of control decreases their number and thereby results in a flat structure.

Views on Limit
The principle of span of control in public administration is related to the concept of ‘span of attention’ described in psychology by V.A. Graicunas, the French management consultant. This concept says that there is a limit to the number of things one can attend to at the same time. In other words, the span of attention of a human being is limited as there are limits to the range of human capacity and attention. Thus, it follows that there is a limit to the span of control which is nothing but the span of attention applied to the job of supervision of subordinates by the superior.

However, the opinions of various writers differ on the exact limit of span of control.
- Sir Ian Hamilton felt that a supervisor could supervise 3 to 4 subordinates.
- V.A. Graicunas found that a superior can supervise the work of 6 subordinates directly.
- Lyndall Urwick believes that a superior can supervise directly 5 to 6 subordinates at the higher levels, whereas, the span of control varies from 8 to 12 at the lower levels, where the work is more simple and routine.

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Authority
Mooney and Reiley described authority as the ‘supreme coordinating power’ that provides legitimacy to the organisational structure. The defining characteristic of authority is legitimacy, while that of power is coercion. Authority is the legitimate power of the office holder.

There are three sources of authority in public administration, viz.
(i) Law, that is, constitution, legislative enactments, delegated legislations and judicial decisions
(ii) Tradition, that is, organisational norms, codes and work habits
(iii) Delegation, that is, conferment of authority by the higher to the lower levels

According to Millet, administrators need sufficient authority in the following four areas to discharge their duties effectively:
(i) To decide the objective and purpose of the activities, that is, programme authority
(ii) To create and organise the structure needed to execute the programmes efficiently, that is, organisational authority.
(iii) To determine budgetary requirements according to the programme goals and priorities, that is, budgetary authority.
(iv) To appoint, motivate, appraise and discipline personnel in the organisation, that is, personnel authority.

Following are the two types of organisation on the basis of distribution of authority.
(i) Bureau type, where administrative authority is vested in a single individual.
(ii) Board and Commission type, where administrative authority is vested in a group of individuals.
Types

Coordination is classified as:

**Internal and External**  Internal coordination deals with coordinating the individual activities of persons working in an organisation. It is also known as functional coordination. External coordination deals with coordinating the activities of various organisational units. It is also known as structural coordination.

**Horizontal and Perpendicular**  Horizontal coordination deals with the coordination between one section and another, one branch and another, one division and another or one department and another. Perpendicular coordination deals with the coordination between an officer and his employee, a branch and a division, and a division and a department.

**Procedural and Substantive**  This typology is given by Herbert A. Simon. Procedural coordination is exemplified by the structure of the organisation itself that defines the pattern of formal relations among its members. The substantive coordination, on the other hand, is concerned with the content of the activities of the organisation.

**CENTRALISATION AND DECENTRALISATION**

**Meaning**

Centralisation means concentration of authority at the top level of the administrative system. Decentralisation, on the other hand, means dispersal of authority among the lower levels of the administrative system. Thus, the issue of centralisation versus decentralisation revolves around the location of the decision-making power in the administrative system.

In a centralised system of administration, the lower levels (called field offices) cannot act on their own initiative. They have to refer most of their problems to the higher level (called headquarters) for decision-making. They act as only implementing agencies. In a decentralised system of administration, on the other hand, the field offices can act on their own initiative in specified matters. They are given authority to take decisions without reference to the headquarters. Thus, the essence of decentralisation is the vesting of decision-making power in the field offices.

Recentralisation is the opposite of decentralisation. It means centralisation of authority once decentralised. The word decentralisation is derived from Latin.

**COORDINATION**

Coordination is an essential part of administration. According to Mooney, "Coordination is the first principle of organisation and includes within itself all other principles which are subordinate to it and through which it operates."

However, coordination is only a means and not an end in itself. Newman says, "It (coordination) is not a separate activity but a condition that should permeate all phases of administration."

**Meaning**

Coordination has both positive and negative connotations. Positively, it means bringing about cooperation and team work among the persons and units of an organisation. Negatively, it means removing conflicts, inconsistencies, friction, overlapping, and working at cross purposes among persons or units of an organisation.

**Definition**

*W.H. Newman:* "Coordination is the orderly synchronization of efforts to provide the proper amount, timing and directing of execution resulting in harmonious and unified actions to a stated objective."

**Definition**

The following definitions can be noted in this regard:

**L.D. White:** "The process of transfer of administrative authority from a lower to a higher level of government is called centralisation; the converse, decentralisation."

**Henry Fayol:** "Everything that goes to increase the importance of the subordinate’s role is decentralisation, everything which goes to decrease it is centralisation."
Types

Broadly speaking, decentralisation is of the two types—political and administrative. The administrative decentralisation is further sub-divided into territorial (vertical) decentralisation and functional (horizontal) decentralisation.

1. Political Decentralisation It stands for the establishment of new levels of government like the autonomous states in India or provinces in Canada. In the federal systems, political authority is divided between central government and the regional governments (State governments in India or Provincial governments in Canada).

The creation of autonomous local governments in Federal States like USA or India and in Unitary States like Britain or Japan also imply political decentralisation. Thus the establishment of City Governments in USA, Panchayati Raj and Municipal Corporations in India, County Governments in Britain and Prefectural Governments in Japan are good examples of political decentralisation.

2. Territorial Decentralisation It stands for the establishment of area administrative units (field offices) by the higher authority (headquarters). For example, the creation of divisions, districts, talukas, circles, and so on in India. These are vested with decision-making powers within specified limits and thus function in an independent manner.

3. Functional Decentralisation It implies the vesting of decision-making authority in the specialised units by the central agency. For example, the creation of technical or professional bodies in India like University Grants Commission, Flood Control Board, Central Social Welfare Board, and so forth.

Merits of Centralisation

1. It provides for maximum control over the entire organisation.
2. It ensures that all the work is performed in the same manner and in accordance with the same general policies and principles.
3. It makes administrative abuses more difficult in matters like employment and handling of personnel, purchase and use of supplies and so on.
4. It secures economy in administration by avoiding duplication of work.
5. It facilitates the introduction of dynamism in the organisation through the active role of personal leadership.
6. It is suitable for dealing with emergencies and unanticipated matters.
7. It enables the maximum utilisation of the human and material resources in the organisation and thus develops a corporate personality.

Demerits of Centralisation

1. It leads to delay in securing action as the field officials have to refer the matter to the higher authorities.
2. It makes the head-office overburdened due to “apoplexy at the top and anaemia at the extremities.”
3. It leads to autocratic control over subordinates and thus results in lack of flexibility in administration.
4. It makes administration irresponsible as the head office acts without the knowledge of local conditions and requirements.
5. It does not facilitate people’s participation in administrative process.
6. It does not allow the development of second line of executives.
7. It is not conducive for the expansion and diversification of the organisation.
Demerits of Decentralisation

1. It complicates coordination and integration of the activities of various units due to decrease in the degree of central control over the total organisation.
2. It makes communication among various levels difficult and thereby reduces its effectiveness and authenticity.
3. It makes administration expensive due to duplication of work and lack of centralised housekeeping services.
4. It is not suitable for dealing with emergencies and unanticipated matters.
5. It encourages divisive forces in the organisation and thus threatens the organisational integration.
6. It weakens the national perspective in administration by breeding localism and parochialism.
7. It increases administrative abuses like corruption, maladministration, nepotism, and so on. These things can be seen in the working of Panchayati Raj in our country.

Effective Decentralisation

J.C. Charlesworth suggested the following safeguards to make the decentralization effective:

1. Field offices should report to one central agency only.
2. Jurisdictional lines should be meticulously drawn.
3. Procedures in the several field offices should be of a common standard, although they need not be uniform.
4. Field office should have a sufficient flexible physical and psychological structure to permit it to adjust to the emergent local conditions.
5. Field office should not make decisions affecting overall policy, although it should be encouraged to make its own decisions to a point approaching that situation.
6. A system of ready appeals should be present.
7. Suggestions from the field to the centre should be freely channelled.
8. Adequate reporting and inspection methods should provide the centre-head with full and current knowledge of field operations.