

DEPARTMENTS

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INTRODUCTION:

- ◉ Departments form the largest, oldest and most traditional **units of administration**.
- ◉ Literally the term department means ‘a part or portion of large whole’.
- ◉ However, it has a special meaning in administration.
- ◉ It means the biggest block or compartment, **placed immediately below the chief executive**, through which the entire work of the government is divided and carried out.
- ◉ They are just below the chief executive and are **directly responsible to the chief executive**.
- ◉ Health , Education, Defense, Finance departments are examples of department.

MEANING OF DEPARTMENT:

- ◉ A department is a fundamental organizational unit of administration on which rests the obligation of carrying on governmental operations.
- ◉ Departmental organization is based on the principle of division of labor in administration.
- ◉ They are placed directly below the chief executive and responsible to him.
- ◉ Department is the traditional and most important form of deciding and conducting governmental operations.

MEANING....

- ◉ According to L.D. White, the term department in general sense means a major unit of organization dealing with a substantive field of administration.
- ◉ Government departments enjoy the highest formal status within the administrative structure of a nation.
- ◉ Generally they perform three important functions. They are -
 1. Implementing the policies formulated by the chief executive.
 2. Assist the ministers in making policies, plans and programmes,
 3. Securing overall coordination at the top.
- ◉ In India and in UK the power to organize departments is vested in the executive, whereas in US such power is vested in the Congress.

TYPES OF DEPARTMENTS:

- ◎ Based on their size, structure, nature of work etc. departments can be divided into different types. They are -
 1. Large and small departments,
 2. Old and new departments,
 3. Single or multi-function departments,
 4. Operating or coordinating departments.

BASES OF DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION:

- ◉ According to Gullick there are four principles or bases of formation of departments.
- ◉ They are purpose, process, persons and place.
- ◉ Luther Gullick calls it as 4 'P' formula.
- ◉ The bases on which a department is organized can be discussed in detail as follows -
 1. Functional or Purpose principle,
 2. Process or professional principle,
 3. Clientele or Commodity principle &
 4. Geographical principle.

1. FUNCTIONAL/PURPOSE

PRINCIPLE:

- The most widely utilized basis of departmental organization is that of purpose or functional principle.
- Under functional principle of departmental organization each major or basic function is organized as a separate department.
- In other words, the function to be performed or the purpose to be served is the basis of departmental organization.
- The functional/ purpose principle is almost universally applied in governmental organization.
- Department such as Health dept., Defense dept., Education dept. are organized on this basis.

MERITS OF FUNCTIONAL PRINCIPLE:

- ◎ The main merits of the functional principle of departmental organization are as follows -
 1. It is the **most logical, time proven** and natural form of departmentation.
 2. It **enables better performance of the given task** because all the administrative units concerned with the job are within the same department and under the same direction.
 3. It helps to eliminate waste of time and energy and thus **achieves economy** in organization.
 4. It **reduces overlapping** and duplication of work to the minimum.
 5. **Responsibility for failure can be fixed** easily when organized on functional principle.
 6. It has another advantage to citizens as they can easily **know to which department to go** if they have a complaint or a representation to make.

DEMERITS:

- ◉ Functional principle suffers from several difficulties and limitations such as -
 1. **Function is an elastic term.** It can be interpreted too narrowly or too broadly if the term is used very broadly, the whole work of the government would appear to be a single function. if it is used in the narrow sense, then every unit or division might be given a departmental status.
 2. There is every possibility of **ignoring or neglecting subordinate type of work** when organized on functional principle.
 3. There is also the possibility of overlapping and **duplication of work** when organized on functional basis.
 4. The department **may exaggerate the importance of their own work** and may fail to see their department as a part of the larger whole and thus come in the way of proper coordination of governmental work.

2. PROCESS/ PROFESSIONAL PRINCIPLE:

- Process means a technique or primary skill more or less specialized in nature, e.g. engineering, accounting, medical care, legal advice, etc.
- Organization according to process would produce departments like those of engineering, law, accounting, medical etc.
- In such departments importance is given to technical or professional skills involved in the performance of the work.

MERITS:

- The process base of department formation has the following advantages -
 1. It facilitates the **maximum amount of specialization** and also helps in the maximum utilization of up-to-date technical skill.
 2. It **secures economy** by avoiding unnecessary duplication of personnel and equipment.
 3. This system promotes the **spirit of coordination at every level of organization** including resources and finances.
 4. It facilitates the cost analysis and calculation of unit costs easier and it also **furnishes necessary data for purposes of budgeting, accounting, etc.**
 5. This system is also useful **to the development of career services** as these departments are organized on the basis of professions.

DEMERITS:

- This system suffers from following demerits -
 1. It would make coordination very difficult to achieve. Here **importance is given to means and not to ends.**
 2. Good administration is **not merely a matter of skill in various technical processes.** On the other hand, government has to be concerned with the general welfare of the community.
 3. This system is likely to be **very costly.**
 4. There would be lot of **professional arrogance** and superiority complex and narrow mindedness among the members of the process based departments.
 5. This principle ignores the services of generalist administrators. Technical experts may **not have leadership capacity** badly needed to a good administration.

3. CLIENTELE/ COMMODITY

PRINCIPLE:

- ◉ Another method of departmental formation is upon the basis of clientele or persons.
- ◉ When a department is established to meet the special problems of a section of a community the basis of such department is said to be clientele or persons served.
- ◉ Some state governments in India have Department of Tribal welfare.
- ◉ The Ministry of Rehabilitation and Minority Affairs is the best example for these in the government of India.
- ◉ The dept of Agriculture & Labor have been organized on clientele basis to a certain extent.

MERITS:

- ◉ The main advantages of clientele wise organization are -
 1. The staff of such departments develop capacity to understand the problems better. They can solve **whole problem** instead of dealing them in a fragmentary way.
 2. It is possible to have better coordination of several services provided for the beneficiary groups. This is because **all such services come under the same department**.
 3. It is **easy and simple for concerned group** or persons to approach such departments for necessary help.
 4. It would develop behind the departments the support of pressure groups because all the beneficiaries of the dept. would belong to same group.

DEMERITS:

- ◉ Clientele principle suffers from the following disadvantage -
 1. When departments are organized on the basis of clientele principle, **it would lead to thousands of departments.**
 2. It would be **difficult to demarcate the jurisdiction of one department from another** because interest of one group may overlap with those of others.
 3. It may **go against the principle of specialization** because each department deal with heterogeneous problems of a group.
 4. It would develop behind the departments a selfish interest group which will make the government **difficult to pursue a uniform and stable policy.**

4. GEOGRAPHICAL/AREA

PRINCIPLE:

- ◉ If territory or geographical area serves as the basis of the departmental organization, it is called geographical principle.
- ◉ This kind of department is formed to serve a particular area.
- ◉ In India's external affairs Ministry, for example, there is a division of African Affairs, East European Affairs, Western European Affairs, Western European Affairs, Gulf Affairs, South East Asia Affairs and so on.
- ◉ Another example, the Railway department has several regional divisions like Western Railways, Central Railways, Southern Railways, etc.

MERITS:

- ① The territorial base of department formation has following merits -
 1. It has been found **most suitable for large countries where long distance** and the consequent difficulties of communications are involved.
 2. The system is also conducive to a **better expression of needs and aspirations of the people of the various areas.**
 3. The principle is preferred when the government **undertakes the intensive development of a particular region or area.**
 4. It helps in the **greater adaptation of policies to the needs of the area concerned** and hence it is an effective way of developing a particular region or area.
 5. It is **easy to satisfy the cultural aspirations of the people of a particular region** by establishing a separate department to look after their needs.

DEMERITS:

1. It encourages localism at the cost of national outlook and solidarity.
2. It comes in the way of uniformity of administration of national policies as different policies may have to be adopted to solve the problems of different regions.
3. This system bound to result in political instability because different regions are likely to pull in different directions and thus disintegrate the whole system.
4. Since every region will be multifunctional, it may go against the principle of specialization.

CONCLUSION:

- From the above analysis of the merits and defects of the various bases of organization, it is clear that none of them can be regarded as the best principle of organization.
- However, in a government all these four principles may be necessary to be applied.
- Considering administrative convenience, socio-economic and political conditions as well as the objectives to be achieved, the departments are established by making use of one of the four principles of departmental organization.
- Thus, all the four bases of departmental organization are complimentary to each other and have to be used in the formation of the departments.