

Unit- II

Chapter 5 – Coordination: Concept, Methods and Hindrances

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Objectives: Objectives of this chapter are to make the students aware of:

1. The concept of Coordination;
2. Characteristics of Coordination;
3. Comparison between Coordination and Cooperation;
4. Need and Importance of Coordination;
5. Techniques of Coordination;
6. Hindrances to Effective Coordination; and
7. Measure to Remove Hindrances.

Introduction

Coordination is an important activity that ensures the smooth functioning of an organisation. It includes the amalgamation, integration and synchronisation of the efforts of the members of the organisation to provide unity of action in the pursuit of common goals. It helps in binding all the departments as well as hierarchical levels to attain the objectives of the organisation.

Definitions

Coordination is the process of arranging or organising functionaries of an organisation or teams in such a manner that they work together in a well-planned and harmonious manner. Following are some definitions of Coordination:

1. **Henri Fayol:** “Coordination is essential to harmonise all the activities of an organisation to facilitate its working and success”.
2. **Charles Worth:** “Coordination is the integration of several parts into an orderly whole to achieve the purpose of understanding”.
3. **J.D. Mooney:** “Coordination is an orderly arrangement of a group effort, to provide unity of efforts in pursuit of a common purpose”.
4. **McFarland:** “Coordination is the process in which an executive develops an orderly pattern of group efforts among his subordinates and secures the unity of action in the pursuit of a common purpose”.

Coordination, as per different scholars, is a managerial function that arranges and integrates different interdependent units or groups of an organisation to ensure smooth and harmonious functioning. According to Mooney, coordination brings in unity of action to achieve common goals.

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Characteristics of Coordination

Coordination is a managerial function that helps in integrating organisational activities so that they work harmoniously. Following are the characteristics of Coordination:

1. **Continuous Process:** Coordination is a continuous process that is dynamic in form and content. It is never-ending and never-complete and involves periodic monitoring of activities of different departments to ensure and identify the requirement for course correction.
2. **Managerial Activity:** Coordination is a managerial activity undertaken by not only the functionaries at the senior levels but at all levels.
3. **Integrative Activity:** Coordination helps in integrating and unifying the efforts of different individuals, a group or groups to attain common objectives and work harmoniously.
4. **Inter-dependence of Parts:** It recognises that diversity and interdependence between departments/groups in the organisations need to be harmonised.
5. **Conflict Resolution:** Coordination helps in managing inter-departmental and inter-personal conflicts to ensure smooth functioning of the organisation.
6. **Deliberate Managerial Activity:** It is not an automatic but a deliberate managerial function to ensure the smooth functioning of the organisations.
7. **Universal Process:** It is a universal function of the management of all types of organisations.

Coordination and Cooperation

Coordination and Cooperation both are essential components for the smooth functioning of an organisation. Coordination is a deliberate effort, while cooperation is a mutual and voluntary effort, they cannot be used interchangeably. Lack of cooperation in efforts to bring coordination and vice versa is detrimental to the organisation's interests. Following is a comparison between coordination and cooperation.

| Basis | Coordination | Cooperation |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Meaning | It is the process of organising or arranging functionaries or groups to ensure that they perform their work harmoniously. | It is the functionaries coming together voluntarily and helping each other to achieve a common goal. |
| Organisational/ Individual | It is an organisational effort. | It is due to individual efforts. |
| Deliberate/ Voluntary | It is a deliberate effort initiated by the management to bring functionaries together to achieve common objectives | It is a voluntary and collective effort of the functionaries to achieve common objectives. |
| Relationship | It is based on official or formal relationships | It is basically a result of informal relations between the functionaries working in formal organisations. |
| Scope | It is broader in scope and includes cooperation | It is a part of the coordination process |

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Need and Importance of Coordination

Modern organisations are large-scale organisations that may be spread over a large geographical area, due to which they may lack coordination and may not function smoothly. Coordination becomes extremely important due to the following reasons:

1. **Large and Complex Organisations:** Modern organisations are large and complex units. They may also have several attached offices, located in different places. These organisations have multiple objectives, may produce a large range of products or provide a number of services to the people. Large size and complexity of an organisation necessitate proper coordination to ensure smooth functioning.
2. **Multiple Hierarchical Levels:** Increasing levels of multiple and complex hierarchies require more effort to bring coordination. For instance, Indian Railways is a very large network of offices ranging from national, regional, state to local levels. These offices, arranged in a hierarchical setup, also have office-level hierarchies.
3. **Division of Work:** Detailed division of work in this age of specialisation leads to too many specialised units working in their respective departments and ignoring the work of others. Sometimes such units also start functioning at cross purposes with each other. Coordination helps in unifying their efforts to enable effective functioning.
4. **Organisational Conflicts:** Organisational conflict can occur between colleagues or leaders and lead to a lack of unity and cooperation in the workplace. Conflicts due to personal reasons also harm the interests of the organisation and vitiate the atmosphere. Organisational conflict can lead to decrease in productivity, damage of property, lower morale, increased levels of stress levels and employee turnover. Coordination helps in reducing conflict and thereby facilitating the smooth functioning of the organisation.
5. **Line-Staff Conflict:** The line agencies perform the primary functions of an organisation while staff agencies assist and advise the chief executive. Line agencies work in the field and are accountable for the work they perform while staff agencies are advisory bodies. Conflict/difference of opinion often arises between the line and staff agencies as line agencies feel that the staff agencies encroach upon their authority. Coordination helps in resolving issues of the difference of opinion between the Line and Staff agencies to ensure a well-coordinated organisation.
6. **Good Industrial Relations:** Good industrial relations between the employers and the employees and other functionaries of the organisation facilitate higher and quality output. Good industrial relations also indicate a harmonious working atmosphere in the organisation. Coordination helps in ushering good industrial relations between the employees and the employers. It also helps in reducing conflict between them leading to no/less strikes and dharnas or disruption in the functioning of the organisation.
7. **Unifying Personal Differences:** People from diverse economic, social and cultural environments work in organisations having different views and perceptions. They may also have differences on account of their capacity, capability and approach to work. Coordination helps in unifying these differences to ensure cohesiveness in their efforts to attain common goals.
8. **Inter-dependence:** An organisation is a system having different interrelated and inter-dependent units/departments, i.e. the effective functioning of one department/unit is dependent on other departments/units. Coordination helps different interdependent units in an organisation to integrate their efforts to make sure that the organisation functions smoothly and achieves its goals.
9. **Optimum Utilisation of Resources:** Effective coordination is essential for the optimum utilisation of the human and material resources in an organisation, as it can prosper only if its human and material resources are used judiciously.

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10. **Promoting Team Spirit:** Coordination promotes team spirit in the organisation by integrating its functioning, encouraging communication and cooperation, besides managing conflict between the functionaries working in different departments/units.

Types of Coordination

Coordination is a continuous managerial function that integrates the efforts of a group or groups to attain goals. Following are the different types of coordination:

1. **Vertical Coordination:** Vertical Coordination is the synchronisation of the efforts of functionaries working at different hierarchical levels, i.e. higher-level, middle-level and lower-level. It is also between the superior and subordinates working in the same department of the organisation, i.e. coordination between the manager and his immediate subordinates.
2. **Horizontal Coordination:** Horizontal Coordination is between functionaries across departments and functionaries working at the same level within the organisation. It is through cooperation and consultation within cross-functional teams, interdepartmental meetings and specific committees formed for coordination. For example, coordination between different managers of different departments like production, finance, personnel, etc., i.e. all people at the same hierarchical level.
3. **Diagonal Coordination:** Diagonal Coordination is between functionaries working in different departments and levels to ensure the completion of a task. It helps in aligning strategic, operational and tactical goals, for example, coordination between the line and staff agencies and project management offices.
4. **Internal and External Coordination**
 - a) **Internal Coordination:** Internal Coordination is the harmonising the activities and efforts of functionaries working in the same unit/plant/offices of an organisation.
 - b) **External Coordination:** External Coordination is harmonising the activities and efforts between the organisation and its environment. For example, between the organisation and the market, government, shareholders, and the environment of the organisation.
5. **Informal Coordination:** Informal Coordination is the process through informal interactions, relationships and networks within the organisation. It complements the formal coordination processes and plays a key role in bringing unity amongst various parts of the organisation. It is through social networks, grapevine and enhanced communication during social events, informal meetings, gossip and speculations etc.

Techniques of Coordination

Coordination is a mechanism that unifies different parts of an organisation into a whole, but it is a complex process that requires identified techniques. Following are some techniques that lead to a well-coordinated organisation:

1. **Clear and well-defined Goals:** Clear and well-defined departmental and organisational goals must be determined by the organisation to guide the functioning of different departments and the organisation. It is one of the first and foremost techniques to effect coordination. After identifying the goals, the management must convey them to all functionaries at all levels.

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2. **Plans and Policies:** Effective and well-thought-out plans and policies of the organisation help in coordinating and unifying various parts of the organisation. Plans and policies bring clarity and uniformity in the functioning and decision-making process, thereby bringing coordination.
3. **Standardised Procedures:** Standardisation of organisational procedures, policies, and methodology helps in bringing uniformity in the functioning of the organisation. It also helps in unifying the organisation by providing well-thought-out and standard measures, besides enabling the superior to measure the performance of his subordinates.
4. **Organisational Hierarchy:** A well-functioning organisational hierarchy can bring in maximum coordination. The superiors coordinate the functioning of their subordinates from the top to the bottom of the organisation. Adherence to the hierarchical structure helps in coordinating the functioning of different levels and departments.
5. **Authority and Responsibility:** Identifiable authority and subsequent responsibility attached at all levels facilitate the use of authority to get the work done. Responsibility attached to the authority of a position holds a functionary accountable for their actions. Well-defined and demarcated lines of authority and subsequent responsibility are an effective technique to achieve coordination.
6. **Effective Leadership:** Coordination is a continuous and dynamic process from the planning to the execution stage of a project. A good leader can take all the functionaries of the organisation along in the achievement of organisational goals by guiding, motivating and persuading them towards achieving the objectives. Due to his leadership qualities, the leader/superior can be a good coordinator.
7. **Effective Supervision:** Effective supervision by superiors at all levels helps in bringing coordination by enabling effective control on the functioning of the organisation as well as inspiring the functionaries.
8. **Effective Communication:** Clear lines of communication help in the free exchange of ideas amongst the functionaries of the organisation. Effective vertical, horizontal, diagonal, as well as informal communication is facilitated by building trust among the members of the organisation and also fostering good interpersonal skills, which help create proper understanding among persons. Effective communication helps in bringing coordination within the organisation.
9. **Conferences and Committees:** Coordination is not always voluntary but is achieved with the help of conferences and committees. These devices provide platforms to initiate constructive discussions and find solutions to the problems confronting the organisation.
10. **Participative Decision-Making:** Participative decision-making is an effective tool of coordination as it induces a sense of belongingness, thereby organisational decision becomes their decisions. It also helps by bringing creativity and innovation in the decision-making process, which leads to their voluntary cooperation in achieving the objectives of the organisation.
11. **Information and Communication Technologies:** ICTs help in enhancing communication and collaboration between different parts of the organisation and beyond the organisation. It also promotes the sharing of data and scientific analysis of data.
12. **Informal Methods:** Sometimes, if formal methods are unable to resolve issues, then the management/functionaries can also make use of informal measures to bring coordination in the organisation. Informal measures are dependent on the informal relations amongst the people working in the organisations.
13. **Capacity Enhancement:** Capacity building programmes conducted by the management for the employees from different departments and levels of an organisation help in enhancing their capabilities and collaborative abilities to bring a cohesive environment within the organisation.

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14. **Grievance Redressal:** An unbiased and timely grievance redressal mechanism for resolving the grievances of the functionaries will help in fostering cooperation and coordination amongst different parts of the organisation.

Hindrances to Effective Coordination

Despite efforts by organisations to bring coordination with committees, conferences, hierarchy, policies and procedures, there are various hindrances to effective coordination. Following are some hindrances to effective coordination:

1. **Lack of Clearly Defined Objectives:** Vague and ambiguous goals of the organisation that are not understood by the functionaries lead to lack of coordination.
2. **Lack of leadership and administrative skills:** Lack of leadership and administrative skills in the senior functionaries of the organisation is one of the biggest impediments to coordination.
3. **Lack of Knowledge:** Lack of knowledge of the organisation's institutional aspects, objectives and procedures by either the superiors or the subordinates hinders effective coordination.
4. **Complex Human Nature:** Complexities of human nature leading to organisational and inter-personal conflict prevent effective coordination between different units/departments and levels of hierarchy. Diverse cultural and behavioural differences amongst the employees can also create complexities.
5. **Indiscipline:** Indiscipline amongst the employees leads to their being less cooperative and hence hinders coordination.
6. **Size and Physical Dispersion of the Organisation:** Large size and the location of the organisation at different places hamper proper coordination.
7. **Uncertain Future:** Uncertainty in the political, administrative and social scenario within which the organisation functions hinders effective coordination.
8. **Lack of Standardised Techniques:** Lack of standardised techniques of carrying out the work of the organisation, and also bringing coordination, is a big barrier to effective coordination.
9. **Personal Bias:** Personal bias of the superior leading to a lack of fair dealing with subordinates hampers coordination.
10. **Lack of Effective Communication:** Ineffective communication of goals, objectives, and important decisions to the concerned people hinders coordination.
11. **Resistance to Change:** Generally, the functionaries resist adopting new technologies and processes, leading to delays and conflicts within organisations.
12. **Scarcity of Resources:** Scarcity of human, material and financial resources within the organisation affects its functioning and ability to implement mechanisms/tools and techniques to bring effective coordination.

Measures to Remove Hindrances

Effective coordination is essential for the proper functioning of an organisation. Following are some of the measures that can help in removing hindrances to effective coordination in organisations:

1. Clear and well-defined goals of the organisation and the departments/units will remove barriers to effective coordination;
2. Unambiguous and well-demarcated lines of authority and responsibility;
3. Competent, committed and motivating leadership;

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4. Motivating employees to give their best to achieve organisational goals;
5. Nurturing willing cooperation amongst employees of different units and levels;
6. Standardisation of systems and procedures;
7. Good communication system to ensure free flow of information from top to bottom, bottom to top, horizontal and diagonal directions;
8. Capacity building programmes for employees wherein employees of different levels and departments take part;
9. Integration of the latest technology in the functioning of the organisation;
10. Fair dealing by the seniors towards their subordinates; and
11. Participation of the functionaries in the decision-making process.

Conclusion

Coordination is a deliberate effort on the part of the organisations to bring cooperation amongst the employees functioning in different parts as well as levels of the organisation to ensure smooth functioning of the organisation. It helps in integrating and unifying different parts of the work.

Important Terms/Terms/Information

1. **Coordination:** According to Charles Worth, Coordination is the integration of several parts into an orderly whole to achieve the purpose of understanding.
2. **Coordination:** It is the process of organising or arranging functionaries or groups to ensure that they perform their work harmoniously.
3. **Cooperation:** It is the functionaries coming together voluntarily and helping each other to achieve a common goal.
4. **Vertical Coordination:** Vertical Coordination is the synchronisation of the efforts of functionaries working at different hierarchical levels, i.e. higher-level, middle-level and lower-level. It is also between the superior and subordinates working in the same department of the organisation, i.e. coordination between the manager and his immediate subordinates.
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Short and Long Questions

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Define Coordination.
2. Give three characteristics of Coordination.
3. Distinguish between Cooperation and Coordination.
4. Write a note on the importance of Coordination.
5. Give any two techniques of Coordination.
6. Discuss any three hindrances to effective Coordination.
7. Discuss three measures to improve coordination.
8. Write a note on the types of Coordination.

Long Question

1. Define Coordination. Give its characteristics and techniques. Discuss hindrances to effective Coordination.

Suggested Readings

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