

AGENCIES OF ORGANIZATION

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INTRODUCTION:

- The administrative organization of government consists of three types of agencies namely, Line, Staff & Auxiliary.
- The distinction between these three organizational units lies in the nature of work done by them.
- The '**Line**' agencies are concerned with the primary or main functions of the organization.
- The '**staff**' agencies are there to help, advice & assist the line agencies in their activities.
- The agencies that provide common house keeping services are called '**auxiliary**' agencies.

MEANING:

- According to L D White, “the business of the government is transacted by means of an elaborate organization, held together in a universal superior-subordinate relationship and based on the principle of specialization. **The central hierarchy comprises the line; assisting the line are various units, some concerned with advisory and preparatory operations, known as staff, some concerned with house keeping operations described as the auxiliary agencies.** The line comprises the central element of any administrative system, staff and auxiliary agencies are necessary in a large and complex organization, but they are secondary. They serve the line.”

1. LINE AGENCIES:

- ◉ The term line is drawn from the military organization, wherein line refers to command.
- ◉ The hierarchy that commands military forces in the battle-field is known as line and those who help the fighting personnel are called as staff units.
- ◉ In public administration the term line refers to those governmental agencies which are concerned with the achievement of primary functions for which the organization came into existence.
- ◉ For example, health department, education department of the government are line agencies.

FEATURES OF LINE AGENCIES:

- ◉ Line agencies have the following features -
 1. The line agencies are set up to carry out the **primary functions** of the organization/government.
 2. They have the power and **authority to make decisions**. The line agencies can issue orders and commands down the line.
 3. The line agencies have the responsibility of **execution of government policies** and programmes.
 4. The line agencies **come into direct contact with the people** in order to provide services to them.
 5. The line agencies come under the direct control of the chief executive because they are tied down in a **single chain of command**.

FUNCTIONS:

- ◉ Line agencies are concerned with the substantive functions of the government.
- ◉ These line agencies deal directly with the people and provide services to them.
- ◉ They regulate conduct, collect taxes and carry forward the programmes decided by the legislature.
- ◉ They execute and carry out the main functions of the government.
- ◉ They have the general responsibility of executing the laws.

FUNCTIONS.....

- ◎ The line agencies have a number of other functions to perform like -
 1. To take decisions,
 2. To interpret and defend the policy of the government,
 3. To take responsibility of execution of the policies of the government,
 4. To plan,
 5. To maintain production, achieve economy and efficiency, etc.

KINDS OF LINE AGENCIES:

- There are three types of line agencies namely,
 1. Department,
 2. Public corporations &
 3. Independent Regulatory Commissions.
- Department is the largest and the most popular form of administrative organization and is directly under the control of the chief executive. E.g. education, Health, etc.
- **The public corporations** are set up to carry out the business or industrial activities of the government. E.g. LIC of India, etc.
- **IRC** has features of departmental system as well as corporation system. E.g. Election Commission of India, etc.

II. STAFF AGENCIES:

- The term Staff means a stick carried which is carried for support.
- In public administration, those activities in an organization that help and advice the chief executive in the performance of his duties are termed as staff.
- The staff agencies provide assistance or advice to the line agencies.
- According to Charlesworth, “A staff officer is one who specializes in research, observation and study.”
- Cabinet secretariat, the PMO, the Cabinet committees, Planning Commission are some examples for staff agencies in India.

FEATURES OF STAFF AGENCIES:

- The staff agencies have the following features -
 1. They perform **secondary functions** such as help and **advise the line** in the accomplishment of organizational purpose.
 2. They do not have any authority to take decisions or **issue commands**.
 3. They are not directly responsible for the **executive work**.
 4. They **act behind the curtain** as they do not have people's contact.
 5. Staff agencies are placed **outside the line of command**.
 6. Their function is exclusively of a research, **consultative and advisory character**.

FUNCTIONS:

- ◉ Following are the major functions of the staff agencies -
 1. **Assistance function:** the most important functions of the staff agencies is to assist, help and support the chief executive and other line agencies.
 2. **Information function:** it means to collect all the relevant information for the chief executive on which his decision should be based.
 3. **Advisory function:** the advisory function means that the staff in addition to supply the relevant data for decision also advices the chief as to what in its opinion, the decision should be. For example secretary of a department gives his advice to his minister.

FUNCTIONS

4. **Supervisory function:** it is to see that the decision taken by the chief is duly communicated to, and implemented by, the line agencies concerned. For example, the Cabinet secretariat performs the supervisory function in India.
5. **Delegated function:** some times the chief executive delegates some authority to a staff agency. In that case the staff agency performs delegated functions on behalf of the chief executive within clear and defined limits. Or example, a press secretary of the PM issues press notes on behalf of the PM.

TYPES OF STAFF AGENCY:

- Generally there are three types of staff agencies. They are -
 1. General Staff,
 2. Technical Staff &
 3. Auxiliary Staff.

1. GENERAL STAFF:

- ◉ General staff provides advice and assistance of a general nature to the chief or other high placed executives.
- ◉ The members of the general staff must have sound administrative training and experience, as the success of government depends on their advice.
- ◉ The general staff spends most of its time on planning and deliberation of high policy matters.
- ◉ Prime Ministers secretariat is the best example for general staff.

2. TECHNICAL STAFF:

- Technical staff consisting of experts and specialists like doctors engineers, financial experts, planners, architects etc. are required to advice the chief executive in technical matters of their field of specialization .
- For e.g. decisions regarding financial and economical policy requires the opinion of economists.
- Similarly government needs advice of foreign policy experts in framing its foreign policy or that of the experts in defense and strategic studies to frame its defense policy.

3. AUXILIARY STAFF:

- It performs functions which are of secondary nature.
- They perform certain house keeping functions which are common to various departments.
- Purchasing, printing of papers, maintenance of building, purchase of furniture, recruitment, training, preparation of budgets , audit and accounts etc. are common auxiliary functions performed by auxiliary staff.
- These services are incidental in character and they are not part of primary activities of the organization. But without these services it will not be possible for any organization to carry out its primary functions.

AUXILIARY STAFF.....

- ◉ The important auxiliary agencies of the Government of India are-
 1. union public Service Commission,
 2. Information & Broadcasting Ministry,
 3. Parliamentary Affairs ministry,
 4. Director General of Supply & Disposal. Etc.

FEATURES:

- ◉ Main features of auxiliary agencies may be listed as follows -
 1. These agencies are set up to provide **common house keeping services** to the line agencies.
 2. These services are incidental in character and they are not part of primary activities of the organization.
 3. They can exercise **limited authority** and make decisions in their own sphere of activity.
 4. They perform certain **routine functions** of government like purchasing, supplies, accounting, etc. with operational responsibility.
 5. Generally the centralized auxiliary agencies are **placed under the chief executive**.

FUNCTIONS:

- ◉ Auxiliary agencies perform the common housekeeping functions which can be summed up as follows -
 1. **Supply different types of equipment, furniture, etc. to the line agencies and arrange services for them.**
 2. **They help in keeping records and thereby perform useful services to the departments.**
 3. **They collect revenues for the departments. They also maintain accounts and exercise financial control.**

FUNCTIONS...

4. Recruitment of personnel for various services is also done by auxiliary agencies.
5. Purchasing, storing and supply s another function of auxiliary agencies.
6. They also take up responsibility of construction and maintenance of buildings and so on.

ADVANTAGES:

- Advantages of auxiliary agencies are -
 1. The line officers will **be relieved of their secondary activities**. This enables the line agencies to pay full attention to their main duties and responsibilities.
 2. This system **ensures specialization** of functions as they are placed in the hands of persons who are experts in those fields.
 3. It **secures economy** in administration as it avoids duplicity of work in various departments.
 4. **Improved methods** may also be introduced as each agency is concerned with only one type of activity.

DISADVANTAGES:

- Auxiliary agencies are criticized on the following grounds -
 1. The establishment of auxiliary **agencies tear the departments away**. This results in weakening the responsibilities of the line agencies.
 2. They may encroach upon the responsibilities of line agencies. They may **cause unwanted conflict between line and auxiliary agencies**
 3. Auxiliary agencies may consider their functions superior to the objects sought by line agencies and thus **complicate the matter**.
 4. Auxiliary services may **result in undue delay in administrative work**.

CONCLUSION:

- ◉ The auxiliary agencies prove to be useful only in large scale organization.
- ◉ Only large organizations are capable of bearing the expenses of these large agencies.
- ◉ So setting up of a auxiliary agency should be judged on the basis of requirement of the situation.
- ◉ To get the best out of these auxiliary agencies, they should not be allowed to encroach upon the powers of line agencies.

DISTINCTION B/W LINE & STAFF:

LINE AGENCIES	STAFF AGENCIES
1. PRIMARY FUNCTIONS	1. SECONDARY FUNCTIONS
2. AN END IN ITSELF	2. A MEANS TO AN END.
3. ISSUES ORDER DOWN THE LINE	3. CANNOT ISSUE ORDERS
4. EXECUTION OF GOVT. POLICY	4. ADVISORY AGENCIES.
5. COMES INTO DIRECT CONTACT WITH PEOPLE	5. THEY ACT BEHIND THE CURTAIN
6. TIED DOWN IN A SINGLE CHAIN OF COMMAND	6. PLACED OUTSIDE THE MAIN LINE OF COMMAND.
7. Line services are substantive	7. Staff services are supportive.
8. Exercises control	8. Investigates and reports.
9. Bears final responsibility for results	9. Does not bear final responsibility.

DISTINCTION B/W LINE & AUXILIARY AGENCIES:

LINE AGENCIES	AUXILIARY AGENCIES
1. AN END IN ITSELF	1. A MEANS TO AN END
2. PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT	2. Incidental services
3. Line agencies directly deal with the people.	3. They serve the line agencies & not the people direct.
4. Line agencies deal with primary functions & hence the question of economy does not arise.	4. Auxiliary activities are performed purely with an idea of achieving economy.
5. The procedure of work differs from department to department.	5. But the procedure of work is similar to all agencies.

DISTINCTION B/W STAFF AGENCY AUXILIARY AGENCIES:

Auxiliary agencies	Staff agencies
1. Auxiliary agencies provide common house keeping services to the line agencies.	1. They aid, assist & advise the line agencies. So advice is a major function of staff agencies.
2. Auxiliary agencies exercise 'limited authority'. They have some powers to make decisions relating to their own sphere of activity	2. Staff agencies on the other hand, do not have authority to make decisions and they merely help the line agencies in making decisions.
3. They have operating responsibilities	3. Bt the staff agencies have no operative responsibilities.
4. The auxiliary agencies are generally placed under chief executive.	4. Whereas the staff agencies are attached to the line agencies at different levels in the administrative hierarchy
5. These are mainly concerned with the maintenance of	5. These are concerned with reforms in the organization and

CONCLUSION:

- ◉ Despite the above differences, there are **certain similarities** between the two.
- ◉ Both staff and auxiliary agencies **help and assist the line agencies** in carrying out their primary functions.
- ◉ Functions of these agencies are basically **secondary in nature**. Yet they are necessary for running of administration.
- ◉ Both these agencies **do not serve the people** but the line agencies.