



Coordination As An Essential Part of Public Administration

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ABSTRACT: According to J. D. Mooney, one of the leading organizational scientists, coordination as an essential part of public administration is the first basic concept and 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. And W. H. Newman says that coordination is not a separate activity but a condition that should permeate all phases of public administration.

Keywords: coordination, organisation, principle, basic concept, means and end, and public administration

I. COORDINATION AS ESSENTIAL PART OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Coordination is an essential part of administration. According to J. D. Mooney, coordination is the first principles 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.

1.1 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

1.2 Definitions

Prominent scholars and writers and their definitions

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.
G. R. Terry:	coordination is the adjustment of the parts to each other and of the movement and operation of parts in time so that each can make its maximum contribution to the product of the whole
L. D. White :	coordination is a process causing disjunct elements to a conception on a complex of forces and influence which cause the mutually independent elements to act together
J. C. Charlesworth:	coordination is the integration of several parts into an orderly whole to achieve the purpose of the undertaking
J. D. Mooney:	coordination is the orderly arrangement of group effort, to provide unity of action in the pursuit of a common purpose
Seckler-Hudson:	coordination is the all important duty of inter – relating the various parts of the work

The above definitions make it clear that coordination is much more than cooperation. According to Terry coordination is synchronization of efforts. While cooperation is the collective action of one person with another or others towards a common goal

1.3 Typologies

Coordination in organized institutions is classified as

1.3.1 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 organizational units, it is also known as structural coordination

1.3.2 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 department

1.3.3 Procedural and Substantive

This typology is given by Professor H. 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

1.4 Importance

Coordination is essential for smooth and successful function of organisation due to the following reasons.

- a. To avoid conflicts and duplication of work in the functioning of organisation. This ensures economy of expenditure
- b. To curtail the tendency among employees to attach too much significance to their own work and de-emphasise others work
- c. To prevent the tendency of empire-building, that is, expansion of one's own activities to gain more power.
- d. To check the narrow perspective of specialists who engage in different and specific aspects of work.
- e. To meet the requirements of growing number of organisations units.

1.5 Techniques

Following are the techniques or means of coordination

- Planning (the most important means of coordination)
- Institutional devices or organisational devices like inter-departmental meetings, conferences, committees, staff units, coordinating officers, and so on.
- Standardization of procedures and methods like forms, manuals, regulations
- Centralization house-keeping agencies like Director-General of Supplies, Central Public Works Department, and so on
- Verbal and written communications\inculcation of institutional spirit among the employees
- Consultations, references and clearance, like with Finance Ministry
- Organisational hierarchy or scalar chain which, according to Mooney, constitutes the universal process of coordination
- In addition to the above formal means, there are various informal means of coordination like personal contacts, dinners, cocktail parties, party system, and others.

1.6 Theoretical Contribution

Various scholars, writers and contributions:

Luther Gulick: he felt that coordination becomes mandatory when sub – division of work is inescapable. According to him, coordination means interrelating the various parts of the work. He opined that size and time are the great limiting factors in the development of coordination. Hence, he stated that coordination is not something that develops by accident. It must be won by intelligent, vigorous, persistent and organized effort. The following are Gulick's two primary ways of achieving coordination:

- i. Organisation, that is, interrelating to parts of work through organizational hierarchy
- ii. Dominance of an idea that is development of a common objective in the minds of the people working together in the organisation.

M. P. Follet: viewed coordination as the core of management. According to her, coordination means harmonious ordering of parts. She emphasized the following four facets of coordination

- i. coordination as the reciprocal relating of all factors in a situation and taking into account also the inter-relationships themselves
- ii. coordination by direct contact irrespective of one's position in organizational hierarchy
- iii. coordination in the early stages, that is, involving the concerned people in the policy – making stage itself
- iv. coordination as a continuing process, that is, from planning to activity, and from activity to further planning.

J. D. Thompson: he identified the following three kinds of interdependencies in organisation;

- i. pooled interdependence, that is, an organisation, according to Thompson, may have various fairly autonomous units but the entire organizational functioning depends on the overall performance of such units.
- ii. Sequential interdependence, that is, the units of an organisation are organised in such a way that the output of one unit become the input for the second unit.
- iii. Reciprocal interdependence, that is, the units of an organisation are so organised that the outputs of each unit become inputs for the other units.

Thompson also suggested the following three kinds of coordinating techniques to match the above three types of interdependencies.

- i. Standardization
- ii. Coordination by plan
- iii. Coordination by mutual adjustments

Harlan Cleveland: his tension theory suggests that in an organisation there must be deliberate planning to create conflicts in jurisdiction and programme of various units. Such conflicts in the administration focus the issues related to public interest which, otherwise, would be overridden. Thus, he opposed the structuring of an organisation to attain complete coordination to ensure smoothness in function

MacFarland: he suggested four ways of achieving coordination:

- i. Clarifying authority and responsibility
- ii. Checking and observation
- iii. Facilitating effective communication, and
- iv. Coordination through leadership

1.7 Limits or Hindrances

According to Luther Gulick, the following factors limit the achievement of coordination

- Uncertainty of the future behaviour of individuals and of group
- Lack of knowledge, experience, wisdom and character among leaders and their confused and conflicting ideas and objectives
- Lack of administrative skills and techniques
- The vast number of variables involved, and the incompleteness of human knowledge, particularly related to men and life\lack of proper methods for developing, considering, perfecting, and adopting new ideas and programmes

Seckler – Hudson included the following hindrances

- i. Enormous growth in size and complexity of public administration
- ii. Personalities and political factors
- iii. Lack of leaders with wisdom and knowledge pertaining to public administration, and
- iv. the accelerated expansion of public administration to international dimension

II. CONCLUSION

From the close study of this basic concept and principle, the various above definitions make its clear that coordination is much more than cooperation. And according to G. R. Terry, Coordination is synchronization of efforts while cooperation is the collective action of one person with another or other person towards a common goal or object.

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Profiles of contributors and photographs



Samson Brown Muchineripi Marume: a former senior civil servant for over 37 years serving in various capacities of seniority and 10 years as deputy permanent secretary; thirteen years as a large commercial farmer; well travelled **domestically** within Zimbabwe; **regionally** [SADC countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and DRC]; and **Africa** [Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Libya, and Uganda]; and **internationally** [Washington, New York and California in USA; Dublin and Cork in Irish Republic; England in United Kingdom; Netherlands, Frankfurt in Germany; Lisbon in Portugal; Spain (Nice), Paris in France, Geneva in Switzerland, Belgrade in former Yugoslavia-; Rome and Turin in Italy; Nicosia – Cyprus; Athens – Greece; Beijing and Great Walls of China; Singapore; Hong Kong; Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama, and Osaka, in Japan]; **fifteen** years as management consultant and **part – time lecturer** for BA/BSc and MA/MBA degree levels with Christ College- affiliate of Great Zimbabwe University and National University of Science and Technology; six years as PhD/DPhil research thesis supervisor, internal and external examiner with Christ University, Bangalore, India [2011 – 2016]; and Zimbabwe

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