UNIT 2 ORGANISATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

The study of Organisation and Leadership is a subject of considerable interest that has been gaining prominence in the contemporary world, where the emergence of organisation and the role played by leaders in it, has contributed to landmark developments. There has been remarkable realization amidst the leaders and policy makers on the importance of organisation (both public and private organisations), and the way it functions, as it offers significant benefits not only to the business oriented organisations but also to the public organisations, that are involved in service delivery to the people. However, gender paradigm to the study of organisations, its policies and practices were less explored till recent times. Now, substantial concern has been laid on the study of gender and organisations, covering aspects such as, organisational theories, policies and practices. In this unit, the concept of organisation, its characteristics and the policies and practices of organisation has been discussed.
2.2 OBJECTIVES
After Studying this Unit, you would be able to

- explain the concept of organization, organization characteristics;
- explain the principles of organization; and
- examine the gender dimensions in organization, theory and policies.

2.3 ORGANISATION AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS
Organisations, in today’s world are regarded as institutions whose existence is quite critical and they play a significant role in bringing about transformation, not only in the private business concerns, but also in the public sector. However, not all organisations are successful enough in bringing about such transformation. The ability and performance of such organisations are determined by the policies and practices adopted by the organisation. In this unit, an attempt has been made to explain the nature of organisational policies and practices from a gender perspective. However, before getting into the terminologies of organisational policies and practices, it is critical to have an understanding of the term organisation, its characteristics and the basic principles of organisation, as all these concepts help us in understanding the policies and practices of organisation in a better way.

Organisations are described as a form of association, wherein men, material and other resources are engaged for the purpose of accomplishing a desired objective. The term organisation is derived from the word ‘organicism’, which means an organised body of interdependent parts sharing common activity. Organisation has been defined in various ways by different scholars of management. The most commonly cited definition is that of Chester Bernard, who states that “organisation is a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons”. Some of the views that are expressed by other scholars are as follows (Fadia & Fadia, 2006):

According to Herbert A. Simon, Organisation is, “a planned system of cooperative effort in which each participant has a recognised role to play and duties and tasks to perform”.
Gulick is of the view that, “Organisation is a formal structure of authority, through which work sub-divisions are arranged, defined and coordinated for the defined objective”. It can be observed that in these definitions of organisations, an organisation is looked at as a ‘structure’ or a ‘system’. There are other set of views that has the notion that organisation is about a ‘set of human relationships’. Scholars like Pfiffner, Gladden etc. subscribe to such views. According to Mooney, “Organisation is a form of every human association for the attainment of common purpose”. Gladden is of the view that, “Organisation is concerned with the pattern of relationships between persons in an enterprise, so constructed as to fulfill the enterpriser’s function”. As per the views expressed by Pfiffner, “Organization consists of the relationship of individual to individuals and of group to groups, which are so related to bring about an orderly division of labour”.

From the above mentioned definitions, it can be noted that organisations are perceived in four different ways, viz. as a process, as a structure of relationship, as a group of persons and as a system, which are described as follows:

- **Organisation as a Process**: In this first sense, organisation is treated as a dynamic process and a managerial activity which is essential for planning the utilisation of organisational resources, finance and resources to accomplish the various objectives.

- **Organisation as a Framework of Relationship**: In the second sense, organisation refers to the structure of relationships, in which job positions are created to realise certain objectives. The definitions of Henry, Urwick, Farland, Northcourt, Lansburgh and Spriegel Breach, Davis, Mooney and Reily etc., come under this group.

- **Organisation as a Group of persons**: In the third sense, organisation is very often viewed as a group of persons contributing their efforts towards certain goals. Organisation begins when personnel or the resources combine their efforts for some common purpose.

- **Organisation as a System**: In the fourth sense, the organisation is viewed as a system. As per this view, organisations are made up of components, each of which has unique properties, capabilities and mutual relationship. The constituent
elements of a system are linked together in complex ways that actions taken by one producer have far reaching effect on others.

Characteristics of Organization
Nicholas Henry (2006) has summarized the characteristics of organisation in the following manner:

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

These characteristic features of organisation gives an indication of the basic nature of organisations.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i. Use this space given below to answer the question.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the characteristics of Organization?

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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2.4 PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATIONS

There is no unanimity as to number of principles of organisation amongst the leading authors on the subject. L.K. Urwick, in his paper “Scientific Principles of Organisation” (1938) and “Notes on the Theory of Organisation” (1952) prescribed ten principles of
organisation. Thereafter, many other writers on the subject have added a few more principles of organisation. The main principles of organisation are as follows:

- **Principle of Objective**: Every organisation, big or small, prescribes certain basic objectives. Organisation serves as a tool in attaining these prescribed objectives. Every part of the organisation and the organisation as a whole should be geared to the basic objective determined by the enterprise.

- **Principle of Specialisation**: Proper division of work facilitates specialisation. According to this principle, division of work between the employees must be based on their ability, capability, tasks, knowledge and interest. This will ensure specialisation and specialisation will lead to efficiency, quality and elimination of wastage etc.

- **Scalar Principle**: The principle is also known as 'chain of command', which means that there must be clear lines of authority running from the top to the bottom of the organisation.

- **Principle of Authority**: Authority is the element of organisational structure. It is the tool by which a manager is able to create an environment for individual performance.

- **Principle of Unity of Command**: This principle demonstrates that in organisation, one subordinate should be kept under the supervision of one boss only. This principle avoids the possibility of conflicts in instructions and develops the feeling of personal responsibility for the work.

- **Span of Control**: It is also known as 'span of management', 'span of supervision' or 'levels of organisation', etc. which states about the number of subordinates that a supervisor can manage or control.

- **Principle of Definition**: In the organisation, the contents of every position should be clearly defined. The duties, responsibilities, authorities and organisational relationship of an individual working on a particular position should be well defined.

- **Principle of the Unity of Direction**: The basic rationale for the very existence of organisation is the attainment of certain specified objectives. Major objective
should be split into functional activities and there should be one objective and one plan for each group of people, which is the essence of this principle.

- **Supremacy of Organisational Objectives:** The organisational goals and objectives should be given wide publicity within the organisation. The people contributing to it should be made to understand that organisational objectives are more valuable and significant and an individual should place one's personal motives under it.

- **Principle of Balance:** In every organisational structure there is need for balance. For effective grouping and assigning activities, this principle calls for putting balance on all types of factors, viz. human, technical as well as financial.

- **Principle of Human Element/ Human Resources:** This principle indicates that the success or failure of an organisation largely depends on the handling of human beings/ resources or human element. If the organisation has sound labour policies along with a number of welfare activities it is bound to succeed.

- **Principle of Discipline:** According to this principle, it is the responsibility of the management to maintain proper discipline in the enterprise. Fayol considered discipline as ‘respect for agreements which are directed at achieving obedience, application, energy and outward mark of respect’.

The principles prescribed above acts as a benchmark to evaluate the soundness of organisational activities and such principles are also incorporated in the practices of organisation too.

### 2.5 GENDER AND ORGANISATION

In conceptualizing organisations, though there are various approaches to it, from the feministic perspective, organisations are exemplified in different ways. Scholars like Rosabeth Kanter, Kathy Ferguson and Rosemary Pringle has looked at organisations, from different standpoints. Till 1980s there was little dialogue between organisational studies and feminist research. For a long time, only technical efficiencies of organisations were points of discussion, rather than other aspects such as power and authority, inequality between men and women in work place. For instance, it can be observed that,
men in organisations, are better paid, have far more formal power in organisations and hold the prestigious jobs in comparison to women (Alvesson & Billing, 2009). It was only after 1990s, gender blindness in organisations was explored and strategies were suggested to bring gender inequality into focus. Due to such measures, representation of women in organisations has been on the rise, though at a slow pace.

Organisations in modern times show considerable interest in increasing the pool of female talents in managerial tasks. Role of women in organisations are explored from various perspectives viz. Gender-in-Organisation and Gendered Organisation. The gender-in-organisations perspective focuses on women and men as fairly robust categories and investigates how these are treated, behave and/or experience work and life. The interest is often in measurement and comparison of groups of men and women. On the other hand, the idea of gendered organisations indicates that workplaces are more than sites where gender is played out. Organisations are seen as inscribed by gendered meanings – structures and practices are characterized by assumptions about masculine and feminine nature. Here the emphasis is on construction processes, how organisations like other social institutions are ‘artificially’ shaped in specific ways and in their turn contribute to the construction of men and women (Alvesson & Billing, 2009). Having a gender perspective in organisation is quite helpful in promoting high degree of sensitivity among people in the organisation.

In the forthcoming section of this unit, emphasis is laid on organisational policies and practices. It should be noted that, in order to have a holistic development of organisation, organisational policies and practices should be gender sensitive. Thus an organisational policy should take into consideration, not only the way, men and women are constructed as individuals, but also should cover aspects like their experience in work life, the way they act and contribute, so that equal opportunity is provided to both men and women in the work place.

### 2.6 ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES
The effectiveness of any organisation depends upon the framing of the apt policies and practices that help in meeting the goals of organisation in the changing environment. A sound policy of an organisation, reflect on the goals, objectives, vision and values of the organisation keeping into consideration the available resources and man power. Further, a sound policy reflects crucial issues of an organisation, such as organisational values, expectations of the people, gender-sensitive institutional norms to be followed in the organisation, etc.

Organisational policies are statements of principles and practices dealing with the ongoing management and administration of the organisation. To put it in simple term, policies are a statement of purpose, which highlights broad guidelines, on action to be taken to achieve organisational purposes. Policies act as a guiding frame of reference, in dealing with various issues, viz. about how the organisation deals with everything, right from its day-to-day operational problems or how to respond to requirements to comply with legislation, regulation and codes of practice. It is important that policies are simple and reasonable, and that employees are aware and clearly understand what the policy is trying to achieve.

As discussed earlier, an organisation, in order to promote gender equality in organisations, need to be gender sensitive and such sensitivity should be reflected both in the policy documents and practices. Thus, when the organisational policy and practices are gender sensitised, it will ensure that, women’s needs and priorities are effectively taken into consideration in the organisation. Further, it will contribute to gender balance and fair representation of both men and women in the organisation.

Need for Organisational Policies

Policies and practices are vital for an organisation, which acts as a frame of reference for the organisation, its leaders and its followers, so that they are able to focus on what has to be done, without getting diverted. Since a policy act as a reference point for diverse issues, people in the organisation, do not have to discuss and re-discuss the same set of issues, every time they occur.
Further, in order to promote gender equality in the organisation, if the concerns of women are incorporated in the organisational policy and practices, the issue gets sanctity in the organisation. Thus, with the focus on gender perspective, both men and women will continue to have equal visibility, equal access and power concerning resources and decision making in the organisation.

**General Aspects Covered in Organisational Policy**

The key areas that need attention of the organisation, either in the current scenario or in the future are covered in the organisational policy. It just gives broad guidelines on the key subject or situation and shows the roadmap on what is to be done and how is to be done. Some of the key areas, covered in a policy are as follows:

(i) *Overview of Organisation*: The key aspects covered in this section, include, History of the organisation, Vision, Mission, goals and Objectives of organisation, Organisational Philosophy, etc

(ii) *Organisational Structures*: Components covered include, information on organisational chart/diagram, accountability chart, organisation meetings and processes.

(iii) *Organisational Standards, Rights and Responsibilities*: This is again an important component of an organisation, which covers aspects like Organisational code of conduct, Rights and Responsibilities of organisation and Employees, Policy on Conflict of interest, Complaints and disputes procedures, Safety procedures etc.

(iv) *Personnel practices*: This component include details on staff recruitment, details on pay scales, training, leave arrangements, promotions, supervision, etc.

(v) *Organisational Evaluation*: Information covered in the policy as per this component includes evaluation strategies, ongoing monitoring, methods of performance assessment, etc.

(vi) *Staff Management and Development*: Policy should have details of staff reporting procedures and formats, staff supervision and performance development, performance appraisals, dispute and grievance procedure, etc.
(vii) Organisational Health, Safety and Welfare: The policy should cover information on Health and Safety policy, smoking control policy, employee safety awareness formats, fire control, etc.

(viii) Other components: Communications, delegations, critical incidents procedure in the organisation, if any, referral, coordination/networking with external partner organisation, etc.

Apart from the above mentioned aspects that are common to an organisation, gender sensitive components should also be covered in the organisational policy. Through the process of gender roles identification, gender needs assessment, utilisation of gender disaggregated data, the needs and concerns of women should be addressed in the policy.

Benefits of a Well-Formulated Organisational Policy

A well-formulated organisational policy offers wide benefits both to the organisation and the people involved in it. Thus, good policy:

- Is consistent with the values of the organisation and employment legislation
- demonstrate that the organisation is being operated in an efficient and businesslike manner
- ensure uniformity and consistency in decision-making and operational procedures
- save time when a new problem can be handled quickly and effectively through an existing policy
- provides stability and continuity
- maintain the direction of the organisation even during periods of change
- provide the framework for business planning
- assist in assessing performance and establishing accountability
- clarify functions and responsibilities.

On Developing Organisational Policies

The following steps help to ensure that the organisational policies are successfully introduced and implemented in the organisation:
(i) **Planning and Consultation:** The first step in the development of organisational policy is to involve the people in the planning and consultation process of developing and implementing organisational policies. Such consultation with the staff helps in improving the awareness and understanding of the employees and gives them a sense of ownership and compliance. Staff involvement also helps to determine how and when the policies might apply and include possible scenarios.

(ii) **Research and Define Policy:** Secondly, the area of policy development should be identified. Further, in arriving at a good policy, serious research has to be made on what a good policy looks like and insights should be obtained from what other organisations are doing and a variety of sources should be used in acknowledging contemporary organisational or workplace issues. The key terms used in the policy must be defined, so that employees are able to understand what it means. The policy should explain both the acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of the organisation. Further, the organisation should be clear about who the policy applies to.

(iii) **Draft Policy:** The next step in developing a policy is to draft the policy in a simple language, so that it is easily understood by all employees. Further, the organisation needs to ensure that all the employees understand what the policies mean and further, the ways to comply with the policies and the implications of not complying should be made clear to them. The draft policy should be reviewed, revised and re-circulated on a regular basis. Thus, feedback on policies should be obtained in review meetings and policy should be finalised.

(iv) **Implementation:** To be effective, policies need to be publicized and provided to all existing and new employees. The policies may be explained to employees through information and training sessions, at employees meetings and during induction. Policies should also be reiterated and discussed regularly to ensure they remain relevant. Copies of policies should be easily accessible.
(v) **Compliance:** It is important that policies apply consistently throughout the organisation. A breach of a policy should be dealt with promptly and according to the procedures set out in the policy. The consequence of the breach should also suit the severity of the breach – whether it be a warning, disciplinary action or summary dismissal. A termination/disciplinary policy should set out what the organisation considers to be serious, willful or gross misconduct, for example a breach of a confidentiality policy. Policies should be reviewed regularly, may be once in 12 months to ensure that they are relevant and are in line with changes within the organisation. Where policies are significantly changed they should be re-issued to staff, so that they understand the organisation’s new directions.

Further, policies and procedures should be regularly reviewed in order to ensure that they reflect current good practices and legal requirements within the organisation. Policies should be reviewed:

- when there is a change within the legal requirements, e.g., any new regulations
- regularly as part of the annual review
- as new information on good practice emerges
- when one in the organisation notice that the policy or procedure contradicts a legal or ethical direction in the organisation.

Thus, developing a policy is not a simple task, as it is not just a written statement. It has to be comprehensive enough, so that it includes all the crucial issues of an organisation and should be simple enough, so that it can be interpreted by the people in the organisation. Further, in developing a sound organisational policy, the process should also include doing a gender diagnosis, setting gender objectives, engaging in gender consultation and participation and thus devise strategies which are gender sensitive.

**Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

**Note:**

i. Use this space given below to answer the question.

ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.
1. What is the need for organizational policy?

2.7 ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES

While organizational policies are roadmaps to action, organisational practices are the actions itself, that are undertaken by an organisation in meeting the goals and objectives of organisation. In other words, organisational practices are a clear step by step method for implementing organisational policies or responsibilities. It describes logical sequence of activities or processes that are to be followed to complete a task or function in a correct and consistent manner.

Organisation is not an end it itself but a means to achieve an end. The effectiveness of an organisation depends upon how efficiently the practices are adopted. An ideal organisation can be created through the active cooperation of people in the organisation and also by practicing the principles of organisation.

An organisation must also adopt effective practices, such as, having proper delegation of work, effective supervision, sound decision making process, effective system of communication, etc. That is, the inter-communication system should be clear and easier and there should be no ambiguity. There must be proper division of work load in the organisation according the capabilities and the expertise of the human resources. The most important element of any organisation is the promotion of satisfaction of employees. The organisation must satisfy the employees need so that they will be motivated and energetic to cope up with the changing atmosphere. Apart from that, organisations should also adopt flexible practices, so that necessary changes and modifications in the nature of the activity could be easily and conveniently effected. Thus, in the era of globalisation, innovative and creative thinking along with disciplined
action to respond to challenge is required to deal with the process of change. Thus, a result-oriented organisation must have the ability to handle the challenges that arises every now and then.

2.8 SUMMKING UP

Thus, the policies of an organisation are a vital component of an organisation. If the policies and practices of the organisation are effective, it is more likely that the organisation would be successful. Similarly, if the policies and practices are backed by gender perspective, it can give the assurance that prospective employees will be treated equally. As stated earlier, the success of an organisation highly depends upon the organisational policies and practices adopted by the organisation. The more organised, systematic and thorough the policies and practices are, the less scope for misunderstandings in an organisation, with maximization of outcome.

2.9 GLOSSARY

Policy: A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions.

2.10 ANSWRERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISE

Check your progress exercise 1

1. Characteristics of Organization

Nicholas Henry (2006) has summarized the characteristics of organization in the following manner:

- They are purposeful, complex human collectivities
- They are characterized by secondary (or impersonal) relationships
- They have specialized and limited goals
- They are characterized by sustained co-operative activity
- They are integrated within a larger social system
- They provide services and products to their environment
- They are dependent upon exchanges within their environment.
These characteristic features of organization gives an indication of the basic nature of organizations.

**Check your progress exercise 2**

1. Need for Organizational Policies are given below.

   Policies and practices are vital for an organization, which acts as a frame of reference for the organization, its leaders and its followers, so that they are able to focus on what has to be done, without getting diverted. Since a policy act as a reference point for diverse issues, people in the organization, do not have to discuss and re-discuss the same set of issues, every time they occur.

   Further, in order to promote gender equality in the organization, if the concerns of women are incorporated in the organizational policy and practices, the issue gets sanctity in the organization. Thus, with the focus on gender perspective, both men and women will continue to have equal visibility, equal access and power concerning resources and decision making in the organization.

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**2.11 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS**


2.12 QUESTIONS FOR RELECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Briefly explain the organizational policies.