
UNIT 1 MODERN OFFICE

Structure

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning and concept of Modern Office;
- understand changing scenerio of Office;
- explain the functions of Modern Office:
 - 1) Fundamental or Principle Functions
 - 2) Administrative/Management Functions
- learn the importance of Office;
- explain the nature of office Services;
- explain the Advantages and Disadvantages of Centralised and Decentralised of Office Services; and
- classify departmentation of office services.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In your daily life, you cannot think of completing your routine without visiting an office – municipal office, transport office, electricity office, post office or any other government office for that matter. You may categorise an office to be efficient if your purpose to visit that office is achieved with minimum possible time whereas your otherwise experience may lead you to form a negative opinion about that office. In this unit, you will learn the Meaning and Concept, Changing Scenerio of Office, Functions of Modern Office, Importance of office, Nature of office services and Departmentation of Office.

1.2 MEANING AND CONCEPT OF OFFICE

In modern society every enterprise is confronted with the rapidly changing conditions. The production technology is undergoing sea changes, markets are widening day-by-day and the new emerging human relationship cannot be ignored. All these issues can only be handled with the help of a very powerful business tool i.e. information. No enterprise can be successful if it does not process the information through recording, retaining, analyzing and supplying to the desired end for the various needs. All these activities clubbed together are classified as important services function and this function is performed in an office.

According to the **Random House Dictionary**, “An office is a place where business is transacted or professional services are available.”

J.C. Denyer defines an office to be a place where clerical operations are carried on. In all modern organizations whether a business concern or a government department, some manpower is required to receive, record and supply necessary information to the managers and executives to run the affairs of the organization successfully. The word ‘Office’, now-a-days, is used in a broader sense to represent the functions performed in it. Thus you can define the office to be a place where all records are prepared, handled and preserved for future reference and are made available at the time of need.

According to **Leffingwell and Robinson** the essential feature (of the office) is the work itself, not who does it or where it is done. If it is office or clerical work in one place, it is office or clerical work everywhere regardless of where the work is done or who does it.

1.3 CHANGING SCENERIO OF OFFICE

While thinking about office, you may think it to be a typical business or government office which is occupying one or two small rooms in a rented building that are very poorly lit, without proper ventilation and are located in an obscure part of a building. Also, since the work performed is not much, only a handful of staff members could be seen sitting on old model furniture and completely engrossed in voluminous registers.

Now compare this scene with that found of a modern office. It would be located in an area which is well known in the city. You will find sufficient number of rooms which are properly lighted, well ventilated, and painted with soothing colours and matching roofs. You may not be surprised to note that the office is spread over several floors of a building. All the officials are provided with modern gadgets

such as computers, printers, intercoms, mobiles and other devices of communication in all parts of the office. You will be able to note the name and designation of the official without much haste as they are addressed in such a smart manner.

The days are gone when fat leather registers occupied the entire table space of the clerk. Their place has been taken by loose leaf registers, computers and card indexes of various types. Also gone are the days when head of the office or superiors had no option but to sit along with their juniors to personally supervise their work. Today the offices are so organized that seniors while sitting in their cushioned seats in individual cabins can supervise the work of their juniors with scientific gadgets such as CCTV etc.

All these immense changes are a result of speedy development and growth of business activities which has led to increase work in the office place. The hiring of qualified personnel and their rising compensation has led to increase in office costs. With the introduction of new gadgets such as computers, printers, Photostat machines, electronic duplications, mobiles etc. followed by revolution in communication technology has almost shook the business and office operations by greatly increasing efficacy and yield of office workers and reducing the cost of office services. With the introduction of new gadgets we can be said to be on the doorstep of the office automation.

Check Your Progress A

1) Which of the following statements are True and which are False?

- i) An office is a place where business is transacted or professional services are available.
- ii) You may categorise an office to be an efficient if your purpose to visit that office is achieved within minimum possible time.
- iii) All office activities are of a routine nature.
- iv) Office work is concerned only with regards of management.
- v) The office to be a place where all records prepared, handled and preserved for future reference.
- vi) Now-a-days, typewriters made it easy for clerks to accomplish the office tasks.
- vii) The days are gone when fat leather registers occupied the entire table space of the clerk.
- viii) The problems of change are to be tackled with the help of information.
- ix) Now-a-days the typewriters made it easy for clerks to accomplish the office tasks.
- x) The art of good handwriting is an essential qualification to find job.

2) Define 'Office'.

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1.4 FUNCTIONS OF MODERN OFFICE

The work load of an office has increased manifold now-a-days as it has to perform various functions for successful achievement of its targets. Hence you can divide the functions of modern office in the following categories:

1.4.1 Fundamental or Principle Functions (Basic Functions)

You can expect management of any organization to be effective if it is able to make effective decisions with regard to planning and control of organization which is an outcome of continued right decision making. The basis of right decision making is the completeness of the information on which decisions are made. In the absence of lack of information or incorrectness of information management is bound to falter in its decision making.

According to **J.C. Denyer**, the basic functions of an office can be said to be receiving, recording, processing and supplying information. In the work of any office, be it sales, purchasing, personnel or even the drawing office, it will be seen that this is what is done most of the time. ... In fact a leading spokesman of the Institute of Office Management has referred to the office manager as the information officer.

The nature of fundamental functions is discussed below:-

- i) **To receive and collect information:** In every organization information is received from two sources i.e. internal and external. Internal sources include various departments and executives. They transmit information through messages, notes, letters, circulars, reports etc. And the external sources may be customer's suppliers, other organizations, government departments etc. Information through external sources may come by letter orders, inquiries, reports, telephonic instructions etc.
- ii) **Recording information:** After receipt and collection of information the next major job of the office is to record the information in a suitable form. It is imperative to record in a befitting manner so that as and when need arises one is able to locate the records. In addition the office has to maintain certain records under statutory provisions such as Companies Act/ Factories Act and so on. As records serve as a reference library for an office, they should be maintained in a full proof manner.
- iii) **To process the information:** The information received and collected by the organization may not be user-friendly i.e. not in the form in which it is required to be used by the management and others. The next important duty of the office is to process the collected information in such a manner that it is fruitfully used by the management. It may involve the preparation of the statements, summarizing, tabulation or graphic presentation of data. Today the availability of computer software has made the task much easier than earlier when the entire process was carried out manually.
- iv) **Supplying information:** Information collected processed and recorded needs to be supplied to the users as and when required. Correct decision making by the management largely depends on the timely supply of accurate information. Management may need routine information periodically be it

statement of accounts, attendance records, stock records, etc. The office may also be expected to supply information of a special nature e.g. job estimates, credit information about customers etc. The value of information depends largely on its prompt and accurate supply.

1.4.2 Administrative/Management Functions

The office in addition to primary functions, has to perform certain functions which are incidental to primary functions. They are equally important as they help in the performance of fundamental functions. A modern office is expected to perform the following administrative functions:

- i) **Communication:** Making arrangement for communication between different individuals within the organization through intercom facility, meetings, etc. and between outsiders and the organization through personal contact, telephones, letters, etc., is an important function performed by the office.

Through communication people are linked with the organization to achieve specific objective. The office provides channels of communication which enables continuous flow of information with speed and accuracy. Office has to give due importance not only to the mode of communication (verbal or written) but also to the means (telephone, telex, ordinary mail, courier etc.).

- ii) **Coordination:** Coordination implies an orderly arrangement of group efforts to ensure unity of action in the realization of common objectives. Office has to synchronize the efforts of individual and departmental staff to ensure proper timing and sequence of activities so that the organization objectives are fully realized. Office as a store house of information, has to coordinate the activities of different departments so as to get the best results at a minimum costs.

- iii) **Planning:** Planning involves consideration of the factors influencing a situation and laying down a course of action leading to a particular goal. Effective performance of all office functions requires advance planning. It has to be decided before hand, what is to be done, who is to do, how it will be done and when. Planning is necessary to avoid wastage and delay, and to reduce cost of operations.

- iv) **Organisation of Office:** The next important administrative function of a manager is to organize the office in an efficient manner. This may involve the application of main ingredients of management process- planning, organizing, directing and controlling. The effective performance requires the correct mixture of these factors.

- v) **Development of Office Procedures and Routines:** All the tasks in an office are interrelated and supplementary to each other. Therefore, it is utmost important to develop the office systems and routine in such a manner that providing better services to other department they come as a handy tool rather than an obstruction in the way.

- vi) **Form and stationary Designing and Control:** The office has to systematize the looking by introducing different types of forms. Also it has to provide various items of stationary as per the requirement of the office staff. It is important for office to introduce simple yet useful forms and provide such

stationary items which will not only increase the utility and output but is also cheaper and does not cost much to the office.

- vii) **Selection and acquisition of office equipments and Appliances:** The office has to make prudent selection of machines, equipments and other appliances for the staff to perform their job smoothly and successfully. The office manager has to make right type of selection of all these items as they not only involve huge cost but are also directly responsible for speedy and qualitative output of the staff.
- viii) **Personnel Functions:** It is of great importance to provide adequate and trained employees for efficient performance of basic office functions. For this purpose, office has to perform certain personnel functions which include selection, recruitment, training and development of the staff. Also office has to place them according to the competence of staff and need of the office. All these functions are very important for successful achievement of the targets.
- ix) **Safety of Assets:** The job of an office is not only making available the assets but also to safeguard the same. The assets may include lighting, ventilation equipments, AC's, heaters, coolers, telephones, furniture, machines, etc. The assets are to be safeguarded against loss, theft, fire or other means to save the office from suffering losses, which may adversely affect the productivity of employees.
- x) **Public Relations:** In its dealings with members of the public, the office projects, the image of the organisation. Steps are required to be taken to build a good image of the organization in the minds of the general public. Office should not only respond to all public enquiries promptly but also keep the management informed if there is a change in public opinion about the enterprise. On the other hand, the public must also be kept informed about the policies, programmes of the organization with respect to matter of public interest.

1.5 IMPORTANCE OF OFFICE

Office is an important part of all organizations whether they are economic organizations or social organizations. The very existence of an organisation or institution is based on the office. Whether it is government department or business enterprise or an educational institution, office is vital for its functioning. In the case of a business organization, operations must be planned which is to be followed by execution. This has to be followed by other management functions. The executive processes and administrative routines of a business rely on office. The importance of the office arises due to following factors:

1. **Office as information centre:** It can be described as a data bank of an organization. All kinds of information and figures are available in the office. Thus the information given by the office forms a base for forecasting, planning and control.
2. **Channel of communications:** Office is the channel through which communications move. The communications move from the top to bottom and vice versa. Also they move sideways.

3. **Aids in coordination:** Coordination is impossible without the office because the office provides the required information and knowledge for coordination.
4. **Aids in managerial controls:** Control is the measurement and corrections of the performance of every person in order to make sure that enterprise objectives and the plans made to achieve them are accomplished. Necessary data, information and plans regarding controlling are furnished by the office.
5. **Importance regarding workers:** The effective human relations need effective office. Preparations of wage and salary sheets, the payments of wages and salaries, the running of the benefit schemes and other data concerning the worker are the responsibility of the office.
6. **Importance regarding shareholders and creditors:** Office is the link between the shareholders and the creditors of a company on the one hand and the company on the other. For example, issue of shares and debentures and information about shareholders and creditors are available only through the office.
7. **Importance relating to customers:** No business can exist without customers. Office acts as the channel that links the business organization with its customers. The enquiries, the orders and complaints are to be put through the office alone. Also the office uses the newspaper media to inform the customers about products at their use.
8. **Importance relating to government and general public:** Today the business organization is considered as a social institution. It is required to satisfy the government rules and regulations. The office is the link between various government department and the organization. Also office is a link between the public and the business.

Check Your Progress B

- 1) **Which of the following statements are True and which are False?**
 - i) The basis of right decision making is the completeness of the information on which decisions are made.
 - ii) The job of an office is only making available the assets.
 - iii) Office means not to perform certain personnel functions which include selection, recruitment, training and development of the staff.
 - iv) Through communication people are linked with the organization to achieve specific objective.
 - v) All the tasks in an office are inter-related and supplementary to each other.
 - vi) Office is a link between the public and the business.
 - vii) All kinds of information and figures are available in the office.
 - viii) Coordination is impossible without the office.
- 2) **Fill in the blanks:**
 - i) In every organization information is received from two sources
(a)(b)

- ii) All kinds of information and figures are available in the
- iii) Information collected, processed and recorded need to be supplied to the users as and when
- iv) The office has to systematize the working by introducing different types of
- v) No business can exist without
- vi) Office uses the newspapers, media to inform the customers about at their use.
- vii) The communications move from the top to bottom and..... to.....

1.6 NATURE OF OFFICE SERVICES

A big organization can have many departments like sales, purchase, accounts, personnel, marketing, etc. There is a need to provide office services to these departments. Some of the clerical services can no doubt be provided in each department but there are many services which can be conveniently provided at a centralized place called 'general office'. The common office services are:

- a) Handling of incoming and outgoing mail
- b) Typing and duplicating
- c) Communication
- d) Filing and Indexing
- e) Provision of stationery and supplies
- f) Control and use of forms
- g) Reception of visitors
- h) Employment of visitors
- i) Employment and training of clerical staff.

These office services are needed by all the departments. Efficient provision of these services can lead to economy and make a considerable contribution towards the efficiency of the organization. If there is any mismanagement of these services, perhaps, the best efforts of all the departments may prove ineffective.

Looking at the importance of office services, the management has to decide whether these common services should be performed in each department for itself or should be centralized at one place known as the central office.

Centralisation of office services. It means physical concentration of common office services at one place which is called 'general office'. The general office is put under the control and supervision of office manager. Under this arrangement all the office work of different departments like that of typing, receipt and dispatch of letters, filing, indexing is done in the general office. For example, it will be centralization of office services if the typing work of the whole organization is done in a 'central typing pool'.

Decentralisation of office services. It implies that each department of the organisation will make its own arrangements for common office services. For example, if every department handles its own filing and indexing, keeps its own computers and office equipment, it will be known as decentralization of office services.

1.7 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CENTRALISED AND DECENTRALISED OF OFFICE SERVICES

Advantages of Centralisation of Office Services

1. **Equitable distribution of work load** – If office services are provided in each department, there may be more work in some departments and a little in others. Staff in some departments may sit idle while there may be delays due to overwork in other departments. In the case of centralization, the work can be equitably distributed among the staff so that nobody sits idle and nobody is overworked. There can be optimum use of the office machinery and equipment also. Modern office machines and appliances are expensive, these cannot be provided in each department separately. There is also the problem of operating these machines, services of operators of office machines can be fully utilized if there is centralization of office service.
2. **Decrease in cost of performing office work** – Due to centralization, supervisory costs are lowered. Centralisation leads to reduction in investment on office machines, the cost on their maintenance is also lowered. Due to lesser need for machines and equipment and men, the amount of floor area required is frequently reduced. If one computer and one operator is needed in each of the eight departments, in case of decentralization, perhaps the same work could be done by eight computers and eight operators in the case of central office.
3. **Training of office employees is expedited** – New employees can be easily trained by putting them in centralized groups without affecting the operations of the group seriously. The old employees who by experience become specialists in their respective fields can impart training to the newcomers.
4. **Specialisation is possible** – Because the same employees have to do the same work again and again they become experts in that work, this leads to more efficiency and reduction in costs.
5. **Better supervision is possible** – As the employees are put under the supervision of a person who is a specialist in that field, better supervision is possible. For example, a production engineer cannot supervise the work of a computer operator as efficiently as an incharge of computer section can do.
6. **Duplication of work is avoided** – If office functions are performed in each department there will be the need for separate equipment and staff for each department. This can lead to duplications of work and equipment and may require extra investment.

7. **Leads to standardization of work and equipment** – As all the employees doing the same type of task, work under the supervision of same executive, at the same place by same methods and by same type of equipment, there can be better conformity to the standards. This can lead to better maintenance of machines and equipment also.
8. **Even flow of work** – If the office work of different departments is done within respective departments there are chances that in some departments there may be more work in one season and little in another with the result that the staff in different departments may be overworked at one time and remain idle at other time. In the case of centralized services the quantum of work at any time remains even because extra work relating to one department may be offset by lesser work of some other department.

Disadvantages of Centralisation of Office Services

1. **Secrecy cannot be maintained** – Much office work is confidential and should not go out of the concerned department. There is greater possibility of leakage of business secrets if the work is entrusted to central office.
2. **It may cause delays** – Performance of office functions at one place can lead to delays. The central office cannot appreciate the urgency of work relating to other departments.
3. **Departmental specialization is not possible** – Under centralization, the work is performed by those not familiar with the detailed requirements of a particular department with the result that work of specialized nature cannot be performed efficiently at the central office. Even minor changes and corrections cannot be made on the spot. For example, a computer operator of the accounts department will be much more familiar with technicalities of the accounts department rather than a computer operator of the general office.
4. **Lack of departmental loyalties** – When the work is done at departmental level the employees develop a sense of belonging and try to do the work of their department in a better way. There is a kind of inter-departmental competition to perform better but this spirit is missing if the work is performed at central level.
5. **Encouragement to redtapism** – Under centralization of office services the rules, procedures and systems get standardized and are strictly followed, the result of which is that clerks lay more emphasis on following the rules rather than doing the work. This encourages redtapism resulting in low productivity. Under centralized system of office services the employees get so much entangled in redtapism that they forget to care about special needs or technical requirements of different departments.

Advantages of Decentralisation of Office Services

1. **Recruitment** can be according to the needs of the particular department. The staff can be recruited according to the needs of the individual department, recruitment tests can be shaped accordingly.
2. **Saving in time and efficiency** – Persons working in different departments get well acquainted with the work of their departments and hence can do the work promptly and efficiently. For example, reminders for recovery of debts

can be sent more quickly by accounts department without much red tape than by central office. Depending on central office for all office services causes delays due to transitions and formalities. Decentralisation avoids these delays.

3. **Maintenance of secrets** – It is easier to preserve business secret if there is decentralization because employees working in the department are comparatively more trustworthy and have departmental loyalty. In central office everything comes to the notice of a number of persons and hence nothing can remain secret.
4. **Promotion of departmental loyalties** – Persons working in one department develop loyalty to that department and try to prove their own department better than others. This promotes healthy spirit of competition resulting in increased efficiency.
5. **Better morale** – Decentralisation creates better morale of the departmental employees. A small number of workers employed in a department can know each other better, they develop team spirit, sense of participation and achievement. The supervisor can know his subordinates more intimately and appreciate their problems better. All this leads to better human relations and motivate employees.

Disadvantages of Decentralization of Office Services

1. **Uneven distribution of work-load** – In decentralization work load cannot be distributed equitably. Some departments may have little work while in others there may be a heavy rush of work which may cause delays.
2. **Under utilization of machines and equipment** – If office services are performed in each department every department will need a separate set of machines and equipment which may not be used to full capacity. If eight calculators are required under decentralization the same work may be done by two calculators in the case of centralization.
3. **Increase in office costs due to duplication** – Duplication of work, machines and equipment results in increased office costs.
4. **Lack of specialization** – Under decentralization employees working in different departments have to do all kind of work relating to their departments, this does not permit division of labour and specialization. Under centralization, a set of employees do the same type of work relating to all departments again and again and become experts in that. It leads to efficiency and adherence to standards.
5. **Lack of coordination and integration** – As different departments work independently of each other they do not know what is happening in other departments so they can not develop a team spirit. For example, if reminders for recovery of debt are issued by the central office, it may not know the importance of particular valued customer and may annoy him by issuing harsh reminders for early payment much to the displeasure of sales department. All this results in poor coordination and affects overall efficiency of the organization.

6. Difficulty in supervision – Under decentralisation of office services departmental heads have to exercise control on employees doing office work in their departments and since they are not experts in office work they are unable to exercise effective control over the work of such employees.
7. **No solution for over or under work due to seasonal changes** – The office work in different departments is not equal throughout the year, sometimes it is less at others it is more. With fixed number of office employees in each department it is not possible to maintain smooth flow of work, in some periods there may be a backlog of work while in other the employees might have to remain idle.

It is a matter of discussion as to which office services should be centralized and which should be decentralized. At the sometime, it is difficult to provide a definite answer to this question. It will depend on the nature and size of the organization and the cost involved in decentralization.

1.8 DEPARTMENTATION OF OFFICE

In today's time, office work consists of diverse activities required to be carried out on a large scale. For efficient running of any organization these activities are divided into various categories of functions; each classified function being performed by a group of employees as a 'department'. Different departments perform different functions and work in coordination with each other. Each department performs a specific function and the staff attached to it becomes specialized in that particular function by virtue of continuous handling of the same job.

It must be clearly understood here that the number and importance of different departments in an office are not the same in all cases. It depends on the nature of business and the volume of work.

Let us now discuss various important departments of an office.

Cash Department: This department mainly deals revenue income and expenditure of the entire business. Cash department is headed by a cashier who organizes the work of the department. He is responsible for safe custody of cash, banks transaction, maintenance of cash book and payment against proper vouchers / bills etc.

Legal Department: This department is headed by a legal expert. The department is to render legal advice to all other functional departments. Matters relating to law suits, disputes before tribunal, are looked after by this department.

Filing Department: The main job of the filing department is to maintain records of the organization for future reference. The filing department is responsible for storing, file movement, and also the safe custody of records and documents. If records are maintained properly, the requisite information can be traced and passed on without loss of time to the person who requires such information.

Mailing Department: All written communication which may be dispatched or received pass through the mailing department. It collects all written communications and passes on the same to various functional departments, and takes such steps as are required to dispatch letters from the organization. The person in-charge of this department must be familiar with the latest postal rules and regulations.

Communication Department: This department provides for internal and external communication facilities for which intercom, external telephone, telex, FAX etc. are some of the most effective means used.

Duplicating Department: Multiple copies of letters, circulars, notices, etc are often required to be made out in the office to disseminate information or data among managers of different departments or to communicate with customers, dealers and other parties. Photo-copying machines are now widely used in office to take out multi-copies.

Stationary Supply Department: Office personnel require stationary, like pen, pencil, paper, pin, ink, rubber etc. in their day to day work. This department ensures continuous supply of stationary items, makes purchases, issues items of stationary on requisition by staff and maintains sufficient stock of the same.

Maintenance Department: The maintenance department is to ensure that office machine and equipment are serviced regularly and repaired whenever necessary without disturbing normal office work. A schedule of preventive maintenance is generally drawn up to secure continuity of use.

Security Department: The responsibility of this department is to provide for safety and security of the properties and assets of the organization. It ensures that durable assets and other valuables are insured against loss due to theft, fire etc.

Relations with other departments:

An organization consists of many departments. These departments are created according to the nature of activities of the organization. Generally speaking any organization may have purchase department, production department, marketing department, accounts and personnel department. Apart from these departments all organizations have an office which functions as a central office and caters to the needs of all these departments:

- Purchase Department
- Production Department
- Marketing Department
- Accounts Department
- Personnel Department

Therefore both i.e. office and departments are supplementary to each other. The jobs of departments are defined but their basic needs are taken care by the office. Therefore it is important that office has cordial and close relations with Purchase department.

Purchase Department has to depend on office for making purchases. So it has to maintain close continuous relations with office. The office has to do the spade work before purchases are made. It has to call for tenders, contract, quotations etc. to finalise the purchases at competitive prices. Also it is the office which keeps all the records regarding the purchase of different departments.

Production Department: The backbone of the production department is raw materials, machinery and equipments. For the purchase of this it has to depend on office. It is the office which collects information regarding various items. Unless

there is a co-ordination between the two the production department cannot achieve its goals. Also office provides certain common services like mailing, communication etc.

Marketing Department: The relations with the outside world of any organization are kept and maintained by the office. This outside world mainly consist of customers. All the customers make inquiries and place the orders through office only. The orders are executed by sales department. The office also carries out marketing research from time to time and presents the analysis to sales staff and management. Apart from this office senders basic services like, secretarial, mailing, procurement of stationery etc.

Accounts Department: The accounts department plays an important role in the life of any organization. It maintains financial records of all business transactions. It prepares various financial reports for fulfilling them up before the management to take decisions in the matter. For all this, accounts has to take the help of office as office makes all documents available to accounts, makes correspondence on behalf of accounts department. Also various accounting stationery items like registers, accounting machines etc. are provided by the office.

Personnel Department: The personnel department is responsible for employment, training, transfer, promotion, appraisal of employees. To perform all these functions, it has to take the help of office. From recruitment to placement, it is only office which plays a major role in acquiring staff members. For their continued training and development the office has to constantly remain on its toes. It is also through office that employees can communicate with the management.

Thus you will find there is a close link between the office and all these departments.

Check Your Progress C

1) Which of the following statements are True/False?

- i) The relations with the outside world of any organization are kept and maintained by the office.
- ii) The personnel department is not responsible for employment, training, transfer, promotion, appraisal of employees.
- iii) Office has cordial and close relations with other departments.
- iv) Various accounting stationary items like registers, accounting machines etc. are provided by the office.
- v) Office and departments are supplementary to each other.
- vi) The purchasing procedure is to call tenders and quotations.
- vii) The general office is put under the control and supervision of office Manager.
- viii) The office services are not needed by all the departments.
- ix) The current trend appears towards centralization.

2) State the four departments which are related with an organization:

1.
2.
3.
4.

1.9 LET US SUM UP

Office has been described as the nerve centre of the entire organization. The office may be defined as any place where records are prepared, handled and preserved for future references and making them available as and when required. Office is a place where some clerks and a few officers sit on chairs with bundles of files on their table doing nothing but paper work.

The functions of a modern office may be broadly classified as (i) primary or Basic functions and (ii) Administrative management functions. **The primary functions are:** (a) receiving and collecting information from internal and external sources, (b) organizing information, (c) supplying information. **Administrative management functions** include communication, safety and security, coordination, planning systematisation and cost reduction, office personnel administration and public relations. A well organized office is an indispensable aid to management as the policies and programmes formulated by the management are based on the information supplied by the office. The office organization is governed by unity of function, simplicity, flexibility, efficiency, initiative, continuity and coordination. The design of office organization may be based on either the geographical location of offices, or the services rendered by the office.

Office is the place from where correspondence of the organization is done. All incoming letters are received in the office and replied from there only. All the records of the organization are kept in the office. It is the office which maintains records of the properties and estates of the organization. The office collects, maintains and presents the information required by management to take decisions. It is the office which maintain both internal and external communication system for the organization. On the basis of these facts it will not be wrong to call office as hub of administrative set-up of the organization or the essential organ of management.

The types of common services rendered by the office to other departments are typing and duplicating, stenography, stationery, mailing, filing and supplies, communication, public relations, filing maintenance, library estate, security and hospitality.

Departmentation of office is necessitated by the diverse nature of office activities required to be carried out on a large scale in modern offices. For efficient operation, office activities are divided into two categories of functions, each function being performed by a group of employees as a ‘department’. Separate department of sections usually are related with cash transactions, legal matter, filing, mailing, communication, duplication, stationery, maintenance and security.

The central office provides certain common services to the functional departments. It also coordinates their activities to maintain close links with all departments.

1.10 KEY WORDS

Office: Any place where records are prepared, handled and preserved for future reference.

Functions: A modern office performs a variety of functions which may be classified as:

1. Primary or Basic Functions and
2. Administrative / Management functions

Departmentation: It is a process of dividing and sub-dividing each activity into small jobs and tasks and combining and grouping them into various easily identified groups.

Centralization of office services: All the office work of different departments like that of typing, receipt and dispatch of letters, filing, indexing is done in the general office is called a centralization of office services.

1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress A

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| 1) i) True | ii) True | iii) False | iv) False |
| v) True | vi) False | vii) True | viii) True |
| ix) False | x) False | | |

Check Your Progress B

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1) i) True | ii) False | iii) False | iv) True |
| v) True | vi) True | vii) True | viii) True |
| 2) i) (a) Internal | i(b) External | ii) office | |
| iii) Required | iv) Forms | v) Customers | vi) Product |
| vii) Bottom to Top | | | |

Check Your Progress C

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 1) i) True | ii) False | iii) True | iv) True |
| v) True | vi) True | vii) True | viii) False |
| ix) True | | | |
| 2) i) Personnel Department | ii) Accounts Department | | |
| iii) Marketing Department | iv) Purchase Department | | |

1.12 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What is a Modern Office?
2. Explain the meaning and concept of modern office.
3. Discuss the various functions of an office. What steps you will take while organizing an office?
4. What is an office? Discuss its importance in business house.

5. Bring out clearly the relationship of office with marketing and production departments.
6. What do you mean by centralization and decentralization of office services?
7. Write notes on
 - a. fundamental Functions
 - b. changing scenario of office
 - c. personnel department
 - d. safety of assets
8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of Centralisation of office services.

Note: These questions will help you in understanding this unit better. Try to answer these questions but do not send your answers to the University for assessments. These are for your practice only.