

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Delegation of authority is one of the important factors in the process essential to the existence of a formal organisation. The organisational units created through the process of departmentation require the authority to the managers charged with their respective management. Assignment of activities to various managers creates responsibilities and in order to carry out these responsibilities, managers need appropriate authority. In fact, the authority should match responsibility.

To delegate means to grant or confer. Here, delegation means conferring authority from one manager or organisational unit to another in order to accomplish particular assignments. A manager simply does not delegate authority, he delegates authority to get certain work accomplished. By means of delegation, the manager extends his area of operations. Without delegation, his actions are confined to what he himself can perform.

Delegation of authority has following features:

1. Delegation is authorisation to a manager to act in a certain manner. The degree of delegation prescribes the limits within which a manager has to decide the things. Since formal authority originates at the top level. It is distributed throughout the Organisation through delegation and redelegation.
2. Delegation has dual characteristics, As a result of delegation, the subordinate receives authority from his superior, but at the same time, his superior still retains all his original authority. Terry comments on this phenomenon like this :- "It is something like imparting knowledge, you share with others who then possess the knowledge, but you still retain the knowledge too."
3. Authority once delegated can be enhanced, reduced, or withdrawn depending on the situation and requirements. For example, change in organisation structure, policy, procedure,

method etc. may require change in the degree of delegation of authority.

4. Delegation of authority is always to be the position created through the process of organising. The individual occupying a position may exercise the authority so long as he holds the position. Therefore, the authority is recovered fully from the individual when he moves from the particular position.

5. A manager delegates authority out of the authority vesting in him. He cannot delegate which he himself does not possess. Moreover, he does not delegate his full authority because if he delegates all his authority, he cannot work.

6. Delegation of authority may be specific or general. Delegation of authority is specific when courses of action for particular objectives are specified. It is general when these are not specified, though objectives may be specified.