

## Planning: A function of Management

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### 1. Objectives

At the end of the session learners will be able to

- Explain meaning of planning
- Identify the characteristics of planning
- Apply the characteristics of planning in daily life
- List the steps in planning
- Explain objectives of planning

### 2. Introduction

Planning is a part of each person's life; be it a student, home maker, doctor, engineer. Each of us does planning as soon as we get up. We make daily plans, weekly plans sometimes monthly and yearly plans. We also have planning for our life which is long term. If individual decides to live the life as it comes to him/her then it will lead to chaos in his/her life. It means planning is a day-today activity which helps an individual to use his/her time effectively. This is equally true for effective functioning of organisation. Hence one of the important function of management is planning.

When we are considering planning as a process it means we are deciding our goals and we are also taking decisions about how we are going to achieve these goals. Today we are going to look into planning as function of management.

### **Scenario 1:**

Mr. Patel is working as an assistant teacher in Vidya Mandir Secondary School. On 30<sup>th</sup> April principal of the school called him and gave responsibility of organising a lecture for celebrating Environmental day in the school on 5<sup>th</sup> July. Principal handed over the list of speakers to him. From 1<sup>st</sup> May the summer vacation started. Mr. Patel told to himself that programme is in July hence he has more than two months at his disposal and the task is very simple. He decided that he will start working on this assignment once school reopens.

On 13<sup>th</sup> June School reopened. Mr. Patel started contacting the speakers. All the speakers except one from the list regretted saying that they have given appointment to other organisations long back hence cannot accept the invitation. Luckily one speaker accepted his invitation. Principal issued notice for the staff and students about the lecture. Mr. Patel did not realise that organising lecture is not simple task.

On 5<sup>th</sup> July he came to school along with speaker 15 minutes before the lecture time. Just before starting of lecture when he visited hall and found that no arrangements for the lecture are done. When he enquired with the class IV employee they said that nobody told them to make arrangements. Mr. Patel became much tensed. He requested the staff and got the hall ready. It took some time and hence lecture could not be started in time. He also realised that he has not made any arrangement for felicitation the speaker, hospitality for the speaker. Other teachers who were concerned about image of school helped him and made arrangements. Somehow lecture got over. After the lecture principal issued memo to him.

From this scenario it is very clear that for organising any programme detailed planning is required. The person who is responsible for organising an activity needs to think about the objectives as well as resource allocation, time planning and budget in advance

### **Scenario 2:**

Ms. Amina is an assistant teacher in St. John School. Ms. Amina teaches science at secondary level. On 1st December Principal of the school called Ms. Amina and gave her responsibility to organise science quiz for celebrating science day in month of February. Ms. Amina happily accepted the responsibility. Principal also allowed her to co-opt other teachers for help.

As per instructions of principal Ms. Amina co-opted three teachers. She convened the meeting for planning. The team first wrote the objective of the science quiz. They listed the tasks to be undertaken for the science quiz. They identified the strategy to be used for conducting the task. They also identified other teachers and students who can help them in conducting the quiz. They wrote in detail the role and responsibility of other teachers and students. They identified the classrooms for preliminary rounds and finals of the quiz. They decided the time schedule for different activities related to quiz. They carefully framed the rules related to quiz. They also prepared the work flow diagram of the tasks. From the office they found out how much money is earmarked for this activity in the school budget. On the basis of this information they prepared the budget for the science quiz.

They documented all the details and presented the planning in front of principal. After getting the approval, each person involved in conducting quiz was given a sheet which clearly stated what, when and how to do task.

As lot of time and efforts were spent by the team led by Ms. Amina the science quiz was conducted smoothly without any hassles. All the teachers and principal appreciated the planning done by Ms. Amina's team.

This example clearly shows that for executing any activity be it at small scale or large scale lot of thinking is required in planning so that activity can be carried out smoothly.

If we compare scenario one and two we understand why Ms. Amina was appreciated while Mr. Patel has been given memo. Hence we can say that planning has very important place in the life of individual as well as organisation. As compared to individual it is more important for organisations as they are come into existence for achieving societal goals.

### **3. Meaning**

Planning is very important and the first step of management. As a process it indicates the thoughts of the manager through the act and the activities planned by the manager in advance. Any organisation does not work in isolation; there are various functions any organisation performs. To make this functioning effective as well as efficient, planning is very important. It gives guidelines to people. In other words we can say that planning is very goal oriented activity. It is a process in which manager decides his/her goal for the institution as well as for self. Hence it can be said that planning is a process of deciding the objectives and ways to achieve the set objectives. In a simple way it can be defined as the act to set a

goal and to decide the means for achieving these goals. It means the manager does not only decide the goals but also decide what are the different ways and out of these which way they are going to select to achieve goal.

In other words it can be said that it is a decision making activity through which a manager ensures that the goals are achieved successfully and effectively. When we are investing time, energy and money into any organisation it definitely requires that we should utilise money and time properly so that whatever the goals we have decided we can achieve them. So any manager in an organisation thinks about the human as well as the non-human resources they have and also how effectively he or she can make use of these resources so as to achieve the goals. There are different alternatives available to manager for achieving the goal. For example: The two schools, they may have a same goal, but their ways to achieve can be different. The way to be used for achieving the goal depends on the resources that is human as well as the non-human at the disposal of manager.

#### **4. Characteristics of Planning**

##### **a. Goals**

Planning is closely associated with goals. Each institution or organisation has their own goals. Goals are based on the philosophy of organisation. The activities of the organisation are based on goals. For example, if the school has a goal of developing students for creative writing then the school will have workshops on the subject as an enrichment activity or if a school wants to address the cultural diversity of India then they will organise activities related to this goal. The activities included in their planning will include starting from their prayer wherein they can include the prayers of different religions, they can use cooperative learning strategy in which groups are deliberately formed which will give an opportunity to students of different caste, different religion, and different languages to mingle. The school will celebrate festivals of different religion.

##### **b. Futuristic**

Planning is always concerned with the future. Eg: If the school wants to have a culturally competent student then they are looking into the future or according to them the cultural competence is a future need of the society. So by considering future needs activities are planned by the school. This shows that planning is futuristic in nature. This need may be of near future or after some years.

### c. Selection of best alternative

To achieve the objectives different alternatives are available to manager. The selection of best alternative depends on availability of resources. Eg: School principal wants to train the students of his school for self-defence. Hence he/she decides to conduct karate classes for the students. He/she finds that there is no teacher who has expertise in this subject. The school also do not have that much funds so that teacher can be hired. So he or she thinks about different alternatives available to him/her. At the end he /she selects the best alternative for implementing the objective.

### d. Comprehensiveness

The planning has to be exhaustive. Suppose the school is interested to develop the cultural competence among students then merely having different types of religious prayers is not sufficient for that. To achieve the objectives they may have to plan different activities which can be curricular as well as co-curricular. This planning of interlinked curricular and co-curricular activities is reflected in the semester plan as well as the year plan of the school.

When the organisation provides a year plan it includes every plan, i.e. a day plan, week plan, month plan. So when we are talking about comprehensiveness of a plan, it gives us a picture about what all activities which are to be done daily, weekly, and monthly for developing cultural competence. Eg: a school is organising some enrichment program for the cultural competency. But they also have to think about schedule of school examination or schedule for science examination. If science exhibition and enrichment programme will overlap then both programmes will not be successful in achieving objectives of respective programme. So in a way planning is an activity or planning is the act of preparation of lot of activities and co-ordinating these activities together.

### e. Interdependent

A school is responsible for developing knowledge, skills and attitude. Also the school aims at developing a sports person, writer, thinkers so on and so forth. For this there are different subjects included in the school curriculum. School plans different activities for achieving the aims of curriculum. These activities are to be completed in academic year hence manager cannot plan each activity separately but he/she has to identify the interdependency of the activities and plan accordingly.

### f. Flexible

It does not mean that manger can change planning every day, but if there is some unavoidable circumstances then instead of doing that particular activity on that day manger reschedule the activity. Eg: Examination time table is planned well in advance and placed on the notice board so that students can plan their

study accordingly. But due to natural calamity such as heavy rains students and teachers could not reach the school then principal can make reschedule the paper.

This shows that planning is a process in which a school personnel or the manager decides the goal, they also think about the alternative, the ways through which they can achieve it, while deciding these alternatives they think about the resources i.e.: human as well as physical resources they have, they co-ordinate all these resources in such a way that they can succeed in achieving goal.

## 5. Objectives of planning

Planning aims at preparing an organisation in achieving its goals. Following are the objectives of planning:

### a. To bring clarity in achieving goals

In the planning process lot of thinking is done for deciding what is to be done and how is to be done for achieving the goal. This brings lot of clarity. Everyone in an organisation knows what they are supposed to do. The clarity in the task helps personnel to give his/her best.

### b. To offsets uncertainty and change

Planning helps us to decrease the uncertainty. When any task is to be performed by the organisation people are confused about what they are supposed to do because the task is very big and everybody has to play some role and their tasks are interdependent. So if one does not play that particular role assigned to him/her then other tasks suffer. Eg: Ms. Amina and her team had to think about the role of teachers who had been given responsibility of setting questions for science quiz. Her team had to decide the content, type of questions, difficulty level of questions, blue print for having the parallel sets of questions for preliminary round. This preparation will help the teachers in doing their task properly. It will give assurance to Ms. Amina that the task is performed properly.

### c. To focus on objectives

Every institution has a particular as well as a general goal. While planning manager needs to take into consideration both the goals. By chance if there is diversion then it is planning which will actually bring the manager on the track. Planning gives clear guidelines or directions.

#### **d. To help in coordination**

Institution has to carry out various activities. We cannot always go in a sequential manner when we are in the organisation or otherwise also for our day to day plans. We have to carry out many activities together. So usually we carry our similar activity simultaneously; it means the activities which requires the same efforts or same human resources or same non-human resources, so we club those kind of activities first and then the other activities which are different from these activities are kept aside. For example: Suppose there is an examination related work which needs to be carried out. It involves paper setting, preparation of time table, time for centralised assessment procedure (CAP), and declaration of results. In conduction of examination, so many tasks are involved. We need not do them sequentially. We can start CAP for core papers simultaneously when the examination for special papers is going on.

#### **e. To gain economy in operation**

Economy in planning means by investing minimum resources achieving the goal. So while planning for any task, manager try to plan it in such a manner that it will use minimum resources in terms of time, money and efforts and still give the desired result.

#### **f. To help in control**

Planning helps in the process of controlling. Controlling does not mean to stop any activity, but it means that the feedback to be given about the working of the strategy. If as per plan we are not getting results then manger needs to think about some different strategy. It means we are not going away from objectives, but we are just changing the strategy. For example: Supposing we keep some competitions before the examination of students, we will not get any response from the students. The reason is because of examination they do not want to participate. That means while planning we did not pay attention to this point. Therefore we need to change our plan. This way planning helps in controlling certain activities in the strategy.

#### **g. To increase organisational effectiveness**

All the organisations work to perform the particular task. They focus to achieve the efficiency and the effectiveness. Efficiency means the amount of work we are doing and effectiveness talks about the impact of work which is done. There is a difference in the efficiency and effectiveness. The efficiency speak about numbers, but the effectiveness talks about the impact. If a particular school wants to develop a culturally competent student, it means the students who will be coming out of these schools will have a very broad outlook towards all cultures. So these will be individuals who will not be having any prejudices on the basis of religion, region, language, so on and so forth. And according to them it's a human being and the human development only that is important.

Hence they will give importance to conduct these activities effectively so that goal can be achieved.

These objectives of planning help us to make the work of an organisation very systematic and methodical.

## 6. Summary

Planning is one of the most important functions of the management. It is a decision making activity through which a manager ensures that the goals are achieved successfully and effectively. Following are the characteristics of the planning process:

- a) It starts with clearly stated goals.
- b) It is futuristic in nature. Planning is always done for the task which is to be conducted in future.
- c) Involves selection of best strategy. There are different strategies which can be employed for achieving the goal. All the options are carefully studied and best strategy is selected.
- d) It is comprehensive in nature. Here the holistic approach is adopted by manager.
- e) It is interdependent. Here manager considers the interdependence of the activities of the organisation.
- f) It is flexible. Planning is based on certain assumptions. If those assumptions prove wrong then manager needs to modify the plan.

Following are the objectives of planning:

- a) To bring clarity in achieving goals: Planning brings clarity in actions to be carried out by the personnel to whom the responsibility is assigned.
- b) To offsets uncertainty and change: All the details related to tasks are clearly defined or specified hence there is no scope for certainty.
- c) To focus on objectives: All the activities included in the planning are related to objectives.
- d) To help in coordination: Organization has to perform different activities or functions planning helps in proper coordination of the activities.
- e) To gain economy in operation: If the planning is good then by utilizing minimum resources the optimum output is possible.
- f) To help in control: The feedback obtained while implementation of the task helps manger to change the strategy.



- g) To increase organisational effectiveness: Due to proper planning organisation can function effectively.