B.A. Part 3 (SEM V)

Foundations of Organizational Behavior: Scientific Management Theory

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Scientific Management Theory

- Scientific Management Theory propounded by Frederick Winslow Taylor in 1911, is the first coherent theory of administration.
- Scientific Management Theory is also known as "Taylorism".
- Taylor's contribution to the growth of Scientific Management is contained in his book;

1. A Piece Rate System 1895
2. Shop Management 1903
3. Art of Cutting Metals 1906
4. Principles of Scientific Management 1911

- Scientific Management movement had a significant impact on administrative thought and practice in both industrial as well as governmental organizations.

Basic Theme of Scientific Management Theory

- According to Taylor, management is a true science as it rests on clearly fixed laws, rules and principles which have universal applicability in all types of organizations.
- Scientific Management was concerned with application of scientific methods to managerial practices and production processes in industrial organizations.
- It focused on the lowest level (shop floor) of the organization.
- It aimed at studying the relationship between the physical nature of the work and the physiological nature of the workmen.
- It stressed upon specialization, predictability, technical competence and rationality for improving the organizational efficiency and economy.

Assumptions of Scientific Management Theory

Taylor based his theory of scientific management on three assumptions:

1. The organizational functioning can be improved with the application of scientific methods.
2. A good worker is one who does not initiate action, but accepts the orders of the management.
3. Every worker is an 'economic man', that is, he is motivated by monetary factors.

Principles of Scientific Management Theory

Taylor gave 4 principles of scientific management:

1. Develop a science for each element of a man's work, which replaces the old 'rule-of-thumb' method. By this the 'one best way' of doing a task can be decided and standard output can be determined.
2. Scientifically select and then train, teach and develop workmen.
3. Management should fully cooperate with workers, so as to ensure that the work is done in accordance with the scientific principles developed for this purpose.
4. There must be equal division of work and responsibility between management and workmen.

Techniques

1. **Functional Foremanship:** Taylor advocated the concept of functional foremanship under which a worker is supervised and guided by 8 functional foremen. They are: a) Order-of-work-and-route clerk; b) Instruction card clerk; c) Time and cost clerk; d) Shop disciplinarian; e) Gang Boss; f) Speed boss; g) Inspector; h) Repair boss.
2. **Motion Study:** It is a technique of standardization of work methods, that is, finding oit the 'one best way' to do a work.
3. **Time Study:** It is used to determine the standard time for completion of work.
4. **Differential Piece Rate Plan:** Taylor suggested pay by piece rates on the basis of standards set by motion and time studies.

Criticism

- Concentration on the activities of shop floor level only.
- Mechanistic theory of organization as it neglected human side of the organization.
- Underestimated and oversimplified human motivation.
- Described as the physiological organization theory by March and Simon.
- It received the greatest opposition from the labour leaders.

Thanks