

**MBA- III semester, Specialisation- Marketing Management,
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PROCESS-AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF SERVICE.**

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In a service organisation, the system by which you receive delivery of *the* service constitutes the process, in fast food outlets the process comprises buying the coupons at one counter and picking up the food against that at another counter.

The process of a delivery function which can be compared with that of operations management implies the conversion of input into the finished product. But in a service organisation there is no clear-cut input or output. Rather it is the process of adding 'value' or 'utility' to system inputs to create outputs which are useful for the customers.

Services can be described on the basis of the types of processes used in the delivery of the services. The three kinds of delivery processes that are applicable in case of service products are line operation, job shop operations and intermittent operations. Self-service restaurants and shops are examples of line operations. The consumer moves through logically arranged operations which are arranged in a sequence. In a self-service departmental store, the consumer starts picking up the items he needs and pays for them near the exit. This kind of delivery process is relevant when the service you are providing is fairly standard and the consumers' requirement is of a routine nature.

When the consumers require a combination of services using different sequences, the job shop type of operation is more useful. Hospitals, restaurants and educational institutions usually have this type of delivery process. In a hospital, some patients need only consultation in the Out-Patient Department, some others may need consultation as well as medication or X-ray, some patients require hospitalisation or surgery, medication or investigations. All these categories of consumers require a different combination of services. A college may offer courses for full-time students as well as for working people through correspondence.

Intermittent operations are useful when the type of service is rarely repeated. Firms offering consultancy for projects use this kind of delivery system. Advertising agencies also use the intermittent delivery system since each advertising campaign requires a unique set of input factors.

As a manager you are interested in optimising the efficiency of your organisation without sacrificing the qualitative aspect. Some of the critical questions you need to focus upon are:

- a) What are the steps involved in delivering the service to the consumer?
- b) **Are** they arranged in the most logical sequence?
- c) If not, can some steps be eliminated, combined or rearranged to form a smoother sequence?
- d) What are the steps in which the consumer is involved?
- e) Can the consumers' contact be reduced or totally eliminated?
- f) Can we introduce automation to speed up the delivery process?

You will appreciate that the importance of process management is that it assures service availability and consistent quality. Without sound process management, balancing service demand with service supply is extremely difficult. Service cannot be inventoried; therefore, it becomes essential to find

out ways and means to handle peak load to optimize different customer needs with varied expertise levels within the service organization.

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