**Control** is a function of **management** which helps to check errors in order to take corrective actions. ... **Control in management** includes setting standards, measuring actual performance and taking corrective action in decision making.

**What is control in an organization?**

**Control** in a business setting, or **organizational control**, involves the processes and procedures that regulate, guide, and protect an **organization**. It is one of the four primary managerial functions, along with planning, organizing, and leading.

What is meant by controlling?

**Controlling** can be defined as that function of management which helps to seek planned results from the subordinates, managers and at all levels of an organization. The **controlling** function helps in measuring the progress towards the organizational goals & brings any deviations, & indicates corrective action.

What are the features of control?

**Characteristics of Control:**

* Managerial Function:
* Forward Looking:
* Continuous Activity:
* **Control** is Related to Planning:
* Essence of **Control** is Action:
* Basis for Future Action:
* Facilitates Decision-making:
* Facilitates Decentralization:

**Control: Definition, Characteristics, Importance and Limitations!**

**Definition:**

**George R. Terry:**

“Controlling is determining what is being accomplished that is evaluating the performance and, if necessary, applying corrected measures so that the performance takes place according to plans.” In Terry’s view, controlling helps in proper implementing of plans. If the plans are not progressing at a proper pace than necessary measures are taken to set the things right. Controlling is a channel through which plans may be properly implemented.

**Robert N. Anthony:**

“Management Control is the process by which managers assure that resources are obtained and used effectively and efficiently in the accomplishment of an organization’s objectives.” Control is a tool in the hands of management for ensuring better utilization of resources. Anthony even goes to the extent of saying that control even ensures the arrangement of required resources.

**Earnest Dale:**

“The modern concept of control envisages a system that not only provides a historical record of what has happened to the business as a whole but pin-points the reason why it has happened and provides data that enables the chief executive or the departmental head to take corrective steps if he finds he is on the wrong track.” Dale has enlarged the scope of control by saying that it helps in finding out the reasons for low performance and then suggesting the ways of improving it. It also gives information to the top executives to assess their performance and then take corrective measures if necessary

**:Koontz and O’Donnell:**

“The measurement and correction of the performance of activities of subordinates in order to make sure that enterprise objectives and plans devised to attain them are being accomplished.” The accomplishment of organizational goals is the main aim of every management. The performance of subordinates should be constantly watched to ensure proper implementation of plans. Co-ordination is the channel through which goals can be achieved and necessary corrective actions may be taken if things are not going as per the objectives.

**Henry Fayol:**

“In an undertaking control consists in verifying whether everything occurs in conformity with the plan adopted, the instructions issued and principles established.” It has to point out weaknesses and errors in order to rectify them and prevent recurrence. It operates on everything things, people, actions, etc.

**Characteristics of Control:**

From the discussion of above given definitions, following inferences may be drawn:

**1. Managerial Function:**

Control is one of the managerial functions. It is not only the function of chief executive but is the duty of every manager. A manager is responsible for whatever work is assigned to him. He will control the performance of his subordinates for ensuring the accomplishment of goals. Control is mainly the function of line organization but manager may ask for data from staff personnel.

**2. Forward Looking:**

Control is forward looking. Past is already gone thus, cannot be controlled. Measures can be devised to control future activities only. Past provides a base for determining controls for future. The manager will study the past performance in order to find out the reasons for low results. A corrective action will be taken to ensure that work in future is not adversely affected. Take for example, production for a particular month is low than the standard. Manager will not be able to do anything about the past performance. However, he may study the reasons for low production. He should take appropriate steps so that the same mistakes are not repeated and production will not suffer in future.

**3. Continuous Activity:**

Control is regularly exercised. It is not an activity in isolation. The manager will have to see that his subordinates perform according to plans at all the time. Once the control is withdrawn it will adversely affect the work. So control will have to be exercised continuously.

**4. Control is Related to Planning:**

Planning is the first function of management while control is the last. Control cannot be exercised without planning. First the objectives are set and then efforts are made to see whether these are accomplished or not. Whenever there is a laxity in performance or things are not happening as per the plans then corrective measures are taken immediately. So planning provides a base for controlling.

**5. Essence of Control is Action:**

Whenever performance is not as per the standards the immediate action is needed to correct the things. The purpose of control will be defeated if corrective action is not taken immediately. If the sales are less than the standard set for marketing department then steps will be taken to ensure that performance is not low in future. If no such steps are taken then there will be a lack of control. In practice, immediate action is the essence of control.

**Importance of Control:**

The control function helps management in various ways. It guides the ‘management in achieving pre-determined goals. The efficiency of various functions is also ensured by the control process. The shortcomings in various fields are also reported for taking corrective measures.

The following are some of the advantages of control system:

**1. Basis for Future Action:**

Control provides basis for future action. The continuous flow of information about projects keeps the long range planning on the right track. It helps in taking corrective action in future if the performance is not up to the mark. It also enables management to avoid repetition of past mistakes.

**2. Facilitates Decision-making:**

Whenever there is deviation between standard and actual performance the controls will help in deciding the future course of action. A decision about follow up action is also facilitated.

**3. Facilitates Decentralization:**

Decentralization of authority is necessary in big enterprise. The management cannot delegate authority without ensuring proper controls. The targets or goals of various departments are used as a control technique. If the work is going on satisfactorily then top management should not worry. The ‘management by exception’ enables top management to concentrate on policy formulation. Various control techniques like budgeting, cost control, pre action approvals allow decentralization without losing control over activities.

**4. Facilitates Co-ordination:**

Control helps in co­ordination of activities through unity of action. Every manager will try to co-ordinate the activities of his subordinates in order to achieve departmental goals. Similarly, chief executive will co-ordinate the functioning of various departments. The controls will act as checks on the performance and proper results will be achieved only when activities are coordinated.

**5. Helps in Improving Efficiency:**

The control system helps in improving organizational efficiency. Various control devices act as motivators to managers. The performance of every person is regularly monitored and any deficiency is corrected at the earliest.

**6. Psychological Pressure:**

Controls put psychological pressure on persons in the organization. Everybody knows that his performance is regularly evaluated and he will try to improve upon his previous work. The rewards and punishments are also linked with performance. The employees will always be under pressure to improve upon their work. Since performance measurement is one of the important tools of control it ensures that every person tries to maximize his contribution.

**Limitations of Control:**

Though control is essential for better performance and maintenance of good standards, there are certain limitations also.

Some of the limitations are discussed as such:

**1. Influence of External Factors:**

There may be an effective control system but external factors which are not in the ambit of management may have adverse effect on the working. These factors may be government policy, technological changes, change in fashion, etc. The influence of these factors cannot be checked by the control system in the organization.

**2. Expensive:**

The control system involves huge expenditure on its exercise. The performance of each and every person in the organization will have to be measured and reported to higher authorities. This requires a number of persons to be employed for this purpose. If the performance cannot be quantitatively measured then it will be observed by the superiors. The exercise of control requires both time and effort.

**3. Lack of Satisfactory Standards:**

The performance of certain activities involving human behaviour cannot be fixed in terms of quantities. It is difficult to fix standards for activities like public relations, management development, human relations, research, etc. The evaluation of work of persons engaged in these activities will be difficult.

**4. Opposition from Subordinates:**

The effectiveness of control process will depend upon its acceptability by subordinates. Since control interferes with the individual actions and thinking of subordinates they will oppose it. It may also increase the pressure of work on subordinates because their performance is regularly monitored and