4.2 Modern Work Organizations: Basic Design Principles

At the heart of any work organization will be the official control apparatus which is designed

and continuously redesigned by those ‘managing’ the enterprise. The official control apparatus

of an organization are the sets of roles, rules, structures and procedures managerially designed

to coordinate and control work activities.

In designing the organization, the management makes the following decisions:

• How the tasks to be done within the chosen technologies are to be split into various jobs.

• How these jobs are to be grouped into sections, divisions and departments.

• How many levels of authority there are to be.

• The nature of communication channels and reward structures.

• The proportions of supervisors to supervised.

• The balance of centralization to decentralization and authority to delegation.

• The degree of formalization and standardization of procedures and instructions.

The most basic set of principles which underlies the formal aspect of organizational design in

the twentieth century are those of bureaucracy. We can consider what this entails first, and

then go on to examine two prescriptive ‘schools’ of organizational thinking, classical

administrative Principles and Taylorism, which have provided managements with design

guidance, respectively, for the— organization as a whole and for the part of the organization

most directly involved with productive tasks.