

# How to develop and better utilise hu

"In a capital-short country, productivity gains is the main source of capital formation or profitability. No industry or establishment can serve the economy usefully unless the management is in a position to generate funds for reasonable wage increase, tax and reinvestment after making profits higher than the bank interest rate. The way out is improving, in the first instance, the performance capability of workers through pre-and post-employment training."— So writes A. M. A. H. Siddiqui, a former Director General of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, and now, Chief Technical Adviser of Bangkok-based ARPLA ILO. Siddiqui critically looks at the human resources situation obtaining in the country. The first part of the article was printed yesterday

Another lacuna is the wages and incentive structure for the production process workers. The public sector salary scales put the production process workers at near bottom of the scales with no attraction for the workers to attain higher skill. The first entry point, both in private and public sector, is usually that of a helper, who in most cases are illiterate, unskilled and without any sense of motivation, belonging and aptitude for the work. Promotions are not based on any objective assessment. There is thus no reason, except non-availability of alternative opportunity, for a literate able-bodied young man to aspire for a career in manufacturing trade. Hence the low quality and frequent unreasonable demand. The overseas employment has shown that the same worker transplanted from local to overseas labour market show better performance, earn promotions, learn the language of the country and upgrade skills through evening courses and other means. In the local labour market, the mobility is extremely limited and there is very little scope for a skilled worker to become a professional worker.

The professional worker enjoys a salary at least five times higher than that of a skilled worker. In the public sector, this may be even 10 times higher. Relative contribution to the production process is not taken into account while determining salary differentials. Consequently, well literate, articulate, degree or diploma holders, with no skill to repair, overhaul or even operate a machine, get premium mainly because of the certificate obtained or because of his command over language to deal with buyers, bureaucrats and owners of establishments.

The recruitment process, therefore, needs much closer scrutinising, both in the public and private sector and much more in the private sector. The utilisation of the manpower should be much more for productive purposes rather than servicing the production or recording the sales or extracting work from those who know the job. The productivity of labour is basically a management function and skill development, wages and incentive structure, and recognition of importance of production process workers are basic management responsibilities, neglect of which has resulted in inferior investment climate in Bangladesh.

## MANPOWER PLANNING AT PLANT LEVEL

Manpower planning at plant or enterprise level is particularly unknown to the management in the public or private sector. In more than 300 project

proformas approved by the Planning Commission, the section on manpower requirement and ways of meeting them is either left blank or statements like "locally available" are written in these spaces. In the public sector, at any point of time, more than 70,000 posts remain unfilled due to procedural bottlenecks. On many occasions, project staff face retrenchment on completion of

project period (not necessarily project activities) or they continue as "work-charged" establishments for years together. It is, therefore, very common to see that buildings for health centres having been completed but staff recruitment not yet begun. In the health sector, for example, the country produces more doctors than nurses or medical technicians, whereas the situation should be the opposite. The Planning Commission, for long, planned institutional facilities on the basis of 1:5:25 ratio for engineers, technicians and skilled workers respectively, whereas in practice, the public sector agencies employ more engineers than skilled workers, particularly in infrastructure building institutions like Water Development Board. The work-distribution is highly lop-sided in most pub-

lic some private sector establishments, resulting in over work of a few and leisurely work for the many. So callous is the attention to institution-building that some establishments are set up with given responsibilities and are wound up within a few years because of failure of management to deliver the services and re-established again after a lapse of time to perform the same functions. Sometimes, offices and institutions are transferred from one Ministry to another with no visible improvement.

The present system of public administration absorbs a large number of unproductive workers. An elaborate ministerial set-up, several huge directorates and corporations and a network of field offices is the common stricture except in case of the Ministry of

## Bringing quali

ways and Foreign Affairs. In late sixties, Cornelius Commission report advocated reforms in this structure. In other former British colonies, with unitary form of government, like Sri Lanka and Singapore, such wasteful set-up is not seen. Non-profitability of public sector corporations have been largely blamed to this type of set-up.

Public sector planning has avoided these issues so far. In the five-year plans, the planning process has ventured estimate of unemployment, employment creation, shortages and surpluses with no reliable basis. Huge training complexes have been set up with World Bank money for management training, while the system has remained almost entirely clerical. An officer of the Government, however, well-meaning he may be, is helpless, if the clerical support in providing the relevant file in time or to type out the relevant letter promptly, is not available. The human resource planning and utilisation has remained counter productive, with volumes of manuals, thousands of circulars and hundreds of annual foreign training facilities, mainly because of the multi-stage decision-making process, poor documentation and record keeping and negative attitude among officials who are more interested in playing safe to re-

grounds that quality of SSC has gone down. If this argument is accepted, very soon, an MA degree will be needed for the job of typist. While Secretaries can be a university graduate, an Assistant Director in some departments must possess a post-graduate degree with honours at BA level. University education is expensive. There is no reason to work out measures to upgrade the quality of educational streams at SSC or BA/B.Sc/B.Com levels. The post-graduate education should be a requirement only for research, technology development and teaching at higher institutions.

## POST-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING

Post-employment training is virtually non-existent except for BCS Cadres, where also the training is not related to the jobs to be performed. What is more harmful, no training of any significance is available for clerical workers, who are still the main core of functionaries in the delivery of services. Very few ministries produce annual report of activities, properly analysed in the context of services to be delivered. The 'paid unemployed' in the research and planning units are a frustrated lot of human resources, as their services are not utilised and policies are determined without any analysis of current and foreseeable situations.

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tain their jobs rather than delivering the required services. The one-step processing centre has become a dead-stop centre, co-ordinating bodies becoming obstructive units and monitoring units becoming fault-finding agencies.

So poor is the manpower planning in the public sector that basic state function of administering justice has become the weakest unit, in terms of delivery of services. Despite legal reforms, getting relief from judicial authorities has remained costly, time consuming and inaccessible to the poorer sections who need the relief most. The number of undertrial prisoners, constitute more than half of the total prisoners and many of them are in jail for periods longer than convictions by court would require them. A low-cost speedy system of

Human resources development is a continuous process and cannot be completed in an educational institution, without supplementary manpower planning programmes including systematic training at various stages of employment. The same is true of private sector as well, where manpower planning should be a basic tool of management. Staffing pattern, pre-employment training, post-employment training, training for adaptation to new technology, preventive maintenance training, training for acquiring higher skills, training for promotions, training in product development, market development, public relations and in assessing workers motivation are some of the ingredients of manpower planning at plant or enterprise level. Cost of training should be an investment

"The social, political and administrative climate in the country is live a reasonably comfortable life pursuing an occupation that challenge the human resource development planning faces today form. To the youth of today, any honest career is a life of frustration, hardship and mental agony. The vast majority of the population to this fate. The small few who are revolting against this are groping

justice would have eliminated corruption, inefficiency and exploitation of the poor to a large extent.

The major aim of the manpower planning in the public sector is to facilitate private sector activities by delivering services, without unduly hampering the entrepreneurial ability of the private sector. Currently, it is the reverse and the entrepreneur spends most of his energy and resources loitering in the corridors of power in the public sector.

Recruitment rules in the public sector are putting undue strain on the education system. Higher and higher levels of educational attainments are being prescribed for posts that were earlier filled by persons with lower level of education. A typist is now required to be an HSC in place of SSC on

cost and its end results should be continually evaluated.

## PROPRIETARY ATTITUDE VS CORPORATE ATTITUDE

Private sector management, in many cases, have a proprietary attitude rather than a corporate attitude. A proprietor has a feeling that he can deal in any manner with his capital, products, pricing, obligations to the state, repayment of bank loans and finally with his employees. On the other hand, a corporate attitude has a long-term view to establish and run the organisation with a predetermined objective and manner, requiring the management process to be a subject of well-defined practices. A corporate attitude encourages the management process to generate reasonable profit, wage increase and reinvestment fund after payment of taxes. A cor-

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assessed with a view to tying up local production of raw material and reduction of unutilised capacity.

- (i) Creation of new institutions should be decided after ensuring fuller utilisation of existing institutions, particularly areas of research, education, administration, financial and commercial institutions.

- (j) Producers in Bangladesh both in agriculture and non-agriculture suffer losses while traders, trading in the same goods and services, make profit. This situation should be looked into.

These recommendations have been quoted from document of well-established institutions at national and international levels. These changes will depend on individual behaviours rather than on policy or legal measures. The way to change individual practices will be more successful through examples set by elite and campaigns initiated by such elite. The purpose in bringing these aspects to the notice of the reader is mainly to raise a discussion on how to bring about qualitative changes, in individual practices. It is, however, certain that without such changes, human resources will remain deficient, resulting in continued deterioration in economic situation. May be, organised group can play an effective role in bringing about changes in some of these areas.

## tative changes

porate attitude is continuously in search of productivity gains through better utilisation of men and machine, which essentially means technological improvement and congenial work-environment. In other countries, small enterprises of individual ownership have grown into world-wide giant corporate entities. Profit motive is important, but more important is the urge to generate reinvestment funds through improved labour productivity.

Bangladesh is not fortunate enough to have entrepreneurs with such corporate attitude. This gross deficiency of human resources in the country will need to be removed and the means of removing this deficiency are not available in text books. It will be forthcoming, only if it is realised that Bangladesh will be better off as an agricultural economy unless industries and other modern sector establishments are run by persons with corporate attitude. Each manufacturing unit, trading house, hotel is consuming agricultural land, which provided subsistence to larger number of persons than the industries or similar establishments occupying the land would eventually employ. There will be a negative effect on total employment, if such units remain under utilised or if they do not expand at a rate coping with

significantly different from the majority and to invest in productive ventures. Development means "sacrificing today for a better tomorrow." The present generation will have to demonstrate this by actual examples so that the future generations can learn to live within their means and repeat the sacrifices for their next generation. If Bangladesh can practice this, for at least ten generations continuously, then only we can expect to attain a living standard of today's Malaysia. Education, religion, practices of the elites and serious efforts to improve individual behaviour can eliminate the massive poverty several generations later.

## QUALITATIVE CHANGES IN HUMAN RESOURCES

It is at this stage that qualitative aspect of human resources development planning assumes crucial importance. Unfortunately, there are no easy way to attain qualitative changes in the human resources, nor can it be attained in a span of 15 to 20 years. The recommendations that are seen in the literature are vague, generally suggesting to look into national culture for remedies. In case of Bangladesh, several recommendations usually mentioned are given below:

- (a) If wastage, corruption, mismanagement can be reduced by about 30 per cent, the GDP will grow at a rate between 10-15 per cent per year without any additional investment.
- (b) If food habits of Bangla-

not be completed  
nning programmes