

Institution Building and Faculty Development at Paining Institutions in Bangladesh : BPATC as a Case in Point

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The Nature of the Problem

Institution building and faculty development may be viewed as two sides of the same coin - increasing effectiveness of trainers - who in teaching/training institutions are called faculty following the universities and educational institutions' style of referring to them. It is interesting to observe that the term 'faculty' relates to a branch of learning or teaching and means ability or power. So, etymologically, faculty means ability-competence in doing ; skill or acquired proficiency. So, faculty development relates seminally to institution building, however defined.

The other term institution building (IB) is a type of social engineering - planning and guiding objectives and their realization through formal organizations¹. The terms 'organization' 'establishment' 'institution' 'system' - are comparable as attempts at coordinating diverse efforts to achieve predetermined objectives.

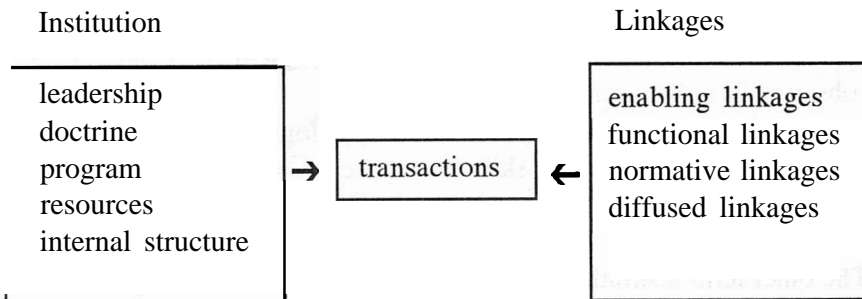
When an organization is socially valued as rendering a special kind of service, it makes its transition to institution (Selznick, 1957).

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Institution building (IB) concepts focus on institution 'variables' and "linkages² (Esman, 1967) apparently drawing on systems analysis variables - like 'inputs' and 'outputs' mediated by 'feedbacks'. The institution variables includes leadership, doctrine, program, resources and internal structure which are related to enabling, functional, normative and diffused linkages. While the linkages suggest an on-going relationships of the institution with the environment, these do not show how these linkages are transformed into institutional defectiveness via the development of individual and group capacity of faculty. These are more assumed than demonstrated.

Inspite of this limitation, the IB concepts assist in understanding the role of institution :

The IB Universe³



The following key elements⁴ are viewed as critical in the process of an organization moving toward an institution (Jorns, 1971, 169-170).

1. Technical competence of leadership ;
2. A leadership committed to the doctrine of the organization ;
3. The visibility and stability of program output accorded value by external environment.

4. The development and training of staff competent in implementing the innovative aspects of the programme.
5. An internal structure administering properly.

When these elements are operative, an organization may be moving toward an institution. To measure progress in capacity building the IB concepts stress 4 variables⁵ (Roskelley and Rigney 1968 : 43).

1. Training
 - Trainers' attitude toward main function
 - Trainers' relations with trainees
 - Trainers' execution of function
 - Trainers' method employed to achieve objectives
 - Subject matter, content's relevance to the country's need
2. Research
 - Volume and productivity of research
 - Proportion of projects directed to high priority problems
 - Capacity of staff for documenting the relevance to country's needs
3. Extension
 - Definition of extension functions
 - Identification of priority activities with country's needs
 - Coordination with other agencies
 - Improvement of system (organization's self improvement)
 - Use of Group dynamics, local leadership and community mobilization

4. Administrative Incentives
- Stimulation of professional improvement
 - Recognition and reward for excellence
 - Delegation of authority
 - Sharing in making professional decision
 - Effective use of controls
 - Development of public support

With the orientations to the IB concepts as transactions between institution and its linkages, buttressed by the key elements of leadership and measured by functional variables, it is possible to consider IB in terms of faculty development. Put another way, faculty development is a major function of an institution building (IB). The concept further it may be held that to the extent the faculty development function is performed adequately, IB may be said to be moving ahead. Such an orientation to IB calls for special efforts on the part of the leadership of the organization to identify the potential faculty, develop their mental faculties and use of outcome of investment in them in making their contribution useful to the society (external environment). If the society values the output of the organization (e.g. training as changed attitude, knowledge and skill), then objectives of the Institution are achieved largely.

Applying the concept to BPATC

Now a general test of whether IB is taking place can be applied to any training organization using the four criteria - (1) training, (2) research, (3) extension and (4) administrative incentives. Let's take the case of BPATC - one of the major training centres in Bangladesh.

1. Training

Trainers' attitude toward the main function of training is the *conditio sine-qua-non* (the indispensable requirement). Training is a

special skill and it will not suit all. So, special attention needs to be directed toward identifying the potential trainers and thus securing their services. The major courses at BPATC - Foundation, ACAD and the Senior Staff Course - are probably the right places to identify the potential faculty - from both trainers and trainees. Having so chosen them, they may be given a thorough orientation to the objectives of BPATC and how can these be achieved. It strikes me as seminal if these faculty are sent to other organizations institutions for a period for systematic observation, reflection, analysis, comparison, exchange of ideas and sharing of experience. These organizations should be both government and NGO for a depth of penetration into the problem faced. With funds permitting, then the faculty may be sent abroad for a degree/diploma/short course to broadbase experience.

The faculty directly recruited, in my experience, represented considerable knowledge and skill, but they lacked field experience. On the other hand, some faculty members coming with field experience have not considered training as a career - in the sense that many of them regarded BPATC assignment as a stop gap, they would soon go away to either secretariat job or a higher posting in a field station. Both categories of officers are capable, full of potential qualities of a faculty. All they need is a keen interest in their career development by the BPATC leadership (Rector, MDS, Director). I think a faculty development plan may be drawn up for each member of the faculty in consultation with the concerned member, approved by the BOG and pursued meticulously on terms of every success achieved and every problem faced. The GOB in making nomination to the BPATC should therefore take special care just as BPATC leadership should give top priority to direct faculty recruitment. The two groups of the faculty must be of comparable academic background who take a little more than usual interest in training.

From an in house paper it appears that the BPATC faculty development efforts leave much to be desired. It refers to the 'Development Management Training' component of USAID for faculty

development. It holds that BPATC "suffers froms inherent structural and institutional problems"⁶ [Rahman 1997; 12] It does not show case by case problems and their effect on the total faculty development plan. Nonetheless, it serves to highlight that these problems, if existing, be addressed.

The same source brings up another related issue of promotion for trained faculty. It gives a table of 10 officers of BPATC - with various length of service - 13 years for one, 12 years for two, 11 years for three, 10 years for two, 7 years for one, 6 years for one - on average 6 years who are due for promotion, but have not been promoted. The tables show that 8 of them received foreign training adding a comment that "this creates frustration among the officials whose promotion prospect is blurred" (p.16). The matter deserves a careful examination by BPATC authorities for it is linked to the total training thrust.

2 Research

Let's pass on to research. Judging by volume and productivity of research, one must give credit to BPATC. Seven research works have been completed⁸ during FY 1995-96 [BPATC : Annual Report, 1995-96 p. 45]. The first of these seven works relates to the survey of 41 government training institutions. If the findings of this survey are presented to the government, it might be useful in modifying policies regarding the management and effectiveness of training institutes. Much depends on what is done to a report after its completion. Using research to improve performance is yet to be developed into a cultural trait in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, the possibilities are there to be exploited. Unfortunately, the survey is yet to be completed.

To improve research quality, BPATC also undertakes training

programs focusing on increasing the research skills of trainers. 16 officers including 3 from BPATC participated in this research courses.

Of relevance is BPATC's faculty seminars in which its own officers participate. Officers returning from training abroad present papers or papers may be presented on any topic of interest. There is an impressive list of such faculty development seminar numbering 21 in which 56 faculty members participated [BPATC Annual Report 1995-96. pp.52-55]

The village studies undertaken by Foundation course trainees deserve special mention. The village studies are attempts at surveying villages by collecting information on the life and living by villagers. This is a first hand research as the officers are required to be in villages to observe and write reports under technical supervision of BPATC authorities. For example, 165 trainees from 16th Foundation Course in 33 groups spread over 23 districts 31 thanas, 33 villages and 185 trainees from the 17 foundation Course in 37 groups spread over 21 districts, 29 thanas and 37 villages have completed their studies⁹. Judging again by the fact that later on these officers, would be addressing themselves to rural problems as thana level officers and district level officers, the village study is a considerable input into the future development of officers.

BPATC also publishes two Bangla Journals - *Lok Proshashan Barta* (Monthly) and *Lok Proshashan Shamoiki* (quarterly) carrying articles of general relevance to public administration in Bangladesh. However, it may be argued that since BPATC is a training institution, its research should preferably highlight research works bringing their relevance to bear on lectures. It strikes me that it would be worth while to develop a research project in which all training course topics be researched thoroughly and all such research works be published thereby providing a dependable supply of source materials.

BPATC's English language journal *Bangladesh Journal of Public*

Administration was well received in the academic and professional circles. Unfortunately, the journal has not been regular in its publication. The last issue was dated July 1990. An English language journal can keep BPATC in touch with the world of Public Administration.

Indeed, it should be the journal that serves as the mouthpiece of an institution - its research, publication and in particular, its training innovations like the village studies and the faculty development seminars, book reviews and professional news. Two leading Bangladesh institutions - ICDDRB and BIDS have been widely known to the world through their respective English Journals - considered of high research quality and widely quoted abroad. *Bangladesh Journal of Public Administration* (BJPA) as the mouth piece of BPATC - can follow the lead of ICDDRB and BIDS and the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA). IIPA has been best known for its journal *The Indian Journal of Public Administration* since 1954. So, the irregularity of BJPA is regrettable - to say the least.

Research must only be done, but it must also be made available to researchers and other institutions. It seems to me that BPATC does not take any special measure to make its research available to the market. Display and sales centres may be opened in Dhaka city or arrangement with leading book sellers like Book Syndicate of the New Market and exchange programmes with the Universities and other research institutions may be considered.

Now computers are widely available and used. BPATC can consider opening "files" on each and every topic of training course as well as on all aspects of public administration on Bangladesh, South Asia, and the World may be prepared and made available to trainees and faculty members using internet where necessary. Like e-mails, e-books are a reality now. All these have opened a new vista of opportunities in the field of research. Research should be given as much priority as training for an institution like BPATC. For a centre of excellence nothing touches it so vitally as the combined effect of training and

research - the twin arms of information technology. Knowledge is power for such an institution. It is for BPATC to have access to these multi-media global networks and be part of the 21 century global village of training. We must remember that "Countries which harness the power of multi-media communication for education and training purposes will be the economic power of the next century". (Gandhi, 1996 as quoted by Tofazzal Islam in endnote 9, at p.4).

3. Extension

Extension is not usually considered as an activity of training institution. Extension is usually talked of in agricultural development. "The aim of all extension work is to teach people, living in the rural areas how to raise their standard of living by their own resources of manpower and materials with the minimum assistance from government. By encouraging local leadership and a spirit of self-help extension develops civic pride and the progressive growth of the community"¹⁰ [Savile, 1965 : 3] Extension also helps people to improve their farming practices for increasing income through educational process. "Extension is a service or a system which assists farm people, increasing production efficiency and income, bettering their levels of living and lifting the social and educational standards of rural life"¹¹. [Maudar, 1972 : 3] In Bangladesh, extension has been used in the two-tier cooperatives of the comilla model - especially its TCCA and TTDC components of the model.

It seems to me that a joint planning exercise may be undertaken by BPATC with BARD, Comilla and RDA, Bogra to workout an extension plan identifying the priority activities in rural administration and development. The village study is already there as a prologue. It may as much help from local government units like Union Parishad, Thana Parishad and Zilla Parishad with whom the major training institution may have networking relations on a continuing basis. Modern public

administration values networking as a means to effective coordination of efforts with several agencies¹². And administrative extension work (inter-organizational or interinstitutional) is one such **networking** horizon. Networking with NGOs might be the other horizon. Improvements in the public service can be at once many sided and imaginative as the recent efforts by Malaysia¹³ at organizing the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) of the Prime Minister's Department and the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the Ministry of Defence. In Bangladesh, BARD and RDA set up an example of Annual Planning Conference (APC) in which administrators rural development specialists and extension workers from other organization are invited to jointly workout the annual plan for action.

4. Administrative Incentives

Professional work - such as faculty development - needs stimulation for its improvement. Talents and skills must not only be cultivated but also recognized and rewarded for excellence. As at present, there is hardly any such scope. We have "best teacher" award at school and college levels. We have "National Professor" at the University and national levels. We do not have the "best trainers" award yet. By the same token, we do not have "best researcher of the year or the "best extension award" for any training institution in the country. We cannot fault the trainers, researchers and extension workers if they lose interest in their work or if they feel frustrated or at least not motivated enough.

We must consider that the work of training institution or for that matter - that of trainers, researchers and other - is such a special **kind** of work that demands the best in them just as if calls for the most congenial environment. The trainers must be given the best in the country - best compensation, best fringe benefits, and the best

atmosphere if we demand the best work from them. At any rate, the best recognition and the best reward must go to the best trainers. The reward for excellence must come from the high public office - President, Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers - to demonstrate the public support for excellence in government work of a special kind.

Recognition or reward is just one side of the coin. The other side is the sharing in making professional decision - a team work among colleagues so involved. There must be delegation of authority commensurate with ability to use it for innovative work. Whatever controls there are in the institution must be used effectively and imaginatively so that a traditional 'no' may be transformed into a tactical 'yes'. In other words, administrative incentives must be conceived of in advance and put to use so that creative work in the institution does not suffer.

All these demand a pro-active response from the top management. It is heartening to learn that the matter of a national reward for the best trainers of the training institution¹⁴ has recently reached the level of the Executive Committee of National Training Council (ECNTC) on its twelfth meeting held on March 4, 1997 with the Education Minister presiding. It was resolved that a committee be formed with the Secretary-in-charge of the Prime Minister's office as the Chairperson and 5 other members-one each from BPATC, BMDC, Planning & Development Academy, CERDI and Labour & Manpower Ministry. The Committee after **determining** the need for national rewards for trainers in training institution and the method of choosing the candidates - will report within two months [Item No. 3 of the minutes]. If the dateline was really meant to be so, the report should be ready now for consideration. But a caveat may be added at this point. The ECNTC or for that matter National Training Council (NTC) have not been known for their regularity in meetings and despatch in implementing. ECNTC or NTC is yet to demonstrate that as the top training coordinating agency, it can accord a top priority to training decisions.

Conclusion

In brief compass, the phenomenon of institution building and faculty development in training institutions in Bangladesh has been examined using the IB concepts and in particular, the four variables viz, training, research, extension, and administrative incentives. To illustrate the training scenario, these four variables have been applied to the situation obtaining in BPATC as a case in point.

It seems reasonable to me that these four variables in their coordinated form are most likely to create conditions in which training can be imparted the best way - serving at once the cause of the training institutions and their faculty. Institution building can not be considered in isolation. The faculty in letter and spirit are the institution builders. Dr. A.T.M. Shamsul Huda and Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, the two MDSs of the formative years (1986-89) built up BPATC from scratch laying down solid formation on which latter builders could just add their modicum of mortars. Institution building requires pioneering work in the part of the faculty just as it needs a supportive role by the top management and the policy props of the coordinating agencies. The job of the institutional management is to create a congenial climate in which the trainers can give their best. The trainers' job is like the academics' job - reading, reviewing, writing. There the similarly ends. Unlike the academic, the trainer must ensure that his or her method is testable learning at every step from the practitioners where the shoe pinches and revising it with the earliest opportunity and moving to and from theory and practice - It begins as a practicum but proceeds through praxis¹⁵.

There can, therefore, be three levels of IB and faculty development

First level : The right attitude to training on the part of the trainers.

Second level : The management uses this right attitude to advance

the cause of the training institute.

Third level : The top training coordination agency ECNTC or NTC making pre-training decisions and giving it a top-priority. The three levels may be mediated by appropriate policy decisions.

At the dawn of its birth, BPATC was introduced as a "centre of excellence"¹⁶. To live up to its expectations BPATC must keep trying treading upon yet uncharted path of experimentation - trial and error and learning by doing.

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9. M. Tofazzal Islam, "Educational Technology for 21st Century", *The Bangladesh Observer*, May 9, 1992, Observer Magazine Cover Story, pp3-4.
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13. Government of Malaysia, *Improvement and Development in the Public Services* Kuala Lumpur, 1993, includes INTANs major training programme to impart information, knowledge and skills pertaining to the quality and productivity **management**.
14. Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Committee of National Training Council (ECNTC) held on March 4, 1997, Item No-3, pp3-4.
15. As to practical training and effective learning Ingalls quotes Chinese Philosopher Confucius as saying.

"I hear and I forgot

I see and I remember

I do and I understand"

See J.D. Ingalls *A Trainers Guide to Andragogy - Its concepts, Experience and Application*, rev. ed. Washington, D.C. : US Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, 1993), p.242.

16. Project Implementation Office, Ministry of Establishment, *Public Administration Training Centre*, 3rd May, 1984. The messages by the President, Establishment Minister, Secretary and Additional Secretary, Ministry of Establishment, Project Director, Chief IPA/TAU consortium, and Rector refer to the term - "a centre of excellence" - and also pp.4,5,28,et passim.