Managing Performance Challenges of the Public Sector HRD

Md. Shirajul Islam *

Background

Performance management forms an integral part of a management system. The goal of every management system is to get certain things done by its employees and naturally, the question arises how efficiently and effectively the work has been done. Some form of performance management system dates back to an "Imperial Rater" in the Wei Dynasty in the third century A. D. Industrial performance management approaches obviously came much later; they probably began in Robert Owner's cotton mills in the early 1800s (Rausch 1985 : viii). F. W. Taylor's scientific management techniques during early 20th century like setting job standards, time and motion study, job redesign, measuring individual performance, wages incentive plan are classical Models of performance management. The concept was gradually popularized and fairly adopted after World War-1 for blue colloured employees and after Word War-II for managers and professionals. Now at the backdrop of the poor performance of the public sector of the developing countries, the concept has got reinforcement in a new fashion.

* Director. BPATC.

The commonwealth portfolio defines... performance management as...the means by which public service goals are linked to individual target-setting, appraisal, and development. It provides a strategy for delivering a higher quality service, and for increasing efficiency by enhancing accountability and individual motivation and improving communication to assist-organizational change... Performance management builds on two major themes... Identifying the mission of an organization within the public service defines its broad objectives and intentions, and encourages a climate in which achievements are measured. (Commonwealth Secretarial 1996).Erwin views performance management as...a multistep process for encouraging, or stimulating performance which exists in every organization either formally or informally (1985 : 5).

Objectives

The major objectives of the paper are :

    a. to evaluate performance standard of the Bangladesh public services; succinctly

    b. to identify major challenges facing the public sector HRD; and

    c. to suggest measuers for improvement of public sector HRD institutions.

Performance Standards of Public Service

Bangladesh before its independence in 1971 had been under British colonial rule for about 200 years and thereafter an wing of Pakistan for about 24 years (1947-71). Organisational structure, rules, decision-making process and other instruments of administration inherited mostly from British-India through Pakistan, were adopted. Changes, introduced are mostly incremental and founded on British models or tradi-

tions. A study by Huda and Rahman (1990 quoted in Rahman, p.2) reveals that...nobody in the Bangladesh Secretariat could dispose of cases on time as prescribed by Rules of Business (GOB, 1994 quoted in Rahman, p-2). Project peparation, processing and implementation status over all the plan periods are unsatisfactory. Task Force Report pointed out that.....implementation delays increase project costs by 35-40% on average and prolong implementation period by 60% as compared to the time-frame anticipated at project approval (Task Force Report 1991 :219). The extent of project cost overrun may ranges from 100-over 700 percent (Table-1). The information basically derived from 1987-88 annual review by IMED.

Table-1 : Ranges of Project Cost Overrun

Cost Overrun	No. Of Projects
100-200%	57
200-300%	7
300-400%	6
400-500%	1
500-600%	2
600-700%	3
Over 700%	6
TOTAL :	82

Source : Skylark. Chadha, Managing Projects in Bangladesh : A Scenario for Development Projects.

An estimate reveal average cost of delay amounting to US$ 177 million per project (Chada : 1989 : 298). According to survey of 200 businessmen and 70 exporters, government

officials are unresponsive and oblivious to cost of delay ....two third of exporters have lost export orders due to delays in dealing with public agencies and, on average, exporters spend 7% of sales to expedite government decision making...Annual losses of public enterprises are staggering, about 2% of GDP, while their outstanding debt, a large part of which is non-performing and would have to be absorbed by the budget (i. e., future generations), accounts for 90% of GDP (World Bank, 1996 : XV)

The government officials in Bangladesh are reported to work 6 hours instead of 6 days a week (Rahman, 1994 :2). This signifies gross underutilization of human resources leading to unsatisfactory performance. The report of the administrative reforms committee termed that "it is a non-performing government" (UNDP, 1993 quoted in Rahman p. 2). Critics of the civil service today argue that most civil servants are impervious to public sensitivities, highly bureaucratic and self-serving; and increasingly incapable of managing a modern government within a pluralist democracy (World Bank, 1996.iii).

Public Sector Human Resource Development Policy

Since independence of Bangladesh 1971, government ascribed top priority to the HRD. The first five year plan (1973-78) of the independent nation emphasized the need for training of the officers and staff at all levels. In addition to the training institute inherited from Pakistan, a new training institute called BASC (Bangladesh Administrative Staff College) was set up for the joint secretary and equivalent officers. This was the first time that a high level training institute was established. Subsequently GOTA (Gazetted Officers Training Academy) was reorganized and renamed as COTA (Civil Officers Training Academy). Finally, an integrated training

management system was founded in 1984 with the merger of the following four institutions (Table-2). The newly emerged institution was renamed as BPATC (Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center).

Table-2 : Institutes Amalgamated as BPATC

Institute	Year Founded	Level of Participants
a. Bangladesh Adminitrative Staff College (BASC)	1977	Joint Secretary and Equivalent
b. National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA)	1961	Mid-level Officers (Deputy Secretary & Equivalent)
c. Civil Officers Training Acadimy (COTA)	1961	Newly Recruits of Civil Service
d. Staff Training Instutute (STI)	1963	Clerical Staff

Source : Ali Ahmed, Bangladesh Public Administration Training and Sevior Civil serveant (Dhaka, BASC, 1984) P. 191-224

In Bangladesh there are more than 300 training institutes in the public sector. Most of these instituties provide skill based training to their own departmental officers and staff. Some training institutes like BPATC provides training to all cadres and services at all levels to meet common professional needs of the government.

In 1981 a National Training Council was set up to formulate a public sector training policy. In 1983 a draft policy was formulated for government officials only covering only incountry training. Thereafter, in 1986 a comprehensive draft national training policy was designed. Unfortunately, the draft policy is still being followed in the public sector with certain modifications issued from time to time. Recently,

government has drafted a new training policy where partici-
pation of both public and private sector representatives were
incorporated. The draft policy is awaiting approval of the
government.

Challenges of the Performance-oriented HRD in Public Sector

Bangladesh, after its independence, inherited significant
number of abandoned industries. Production, market and
other installation capacities estimated based on internal
demands of both the wings (East and West) had sharply
declined after the independence. Owners, managerial and
technical experts who were Pakistani had left Bangladesh.
Consequently, a vacuum in managing and organizing the
industrial sector, developed. Government had to take the
responsibility of running the abandoned industries by form-
ing public sector corporations. The management of these
public sector corporations vested sometimes, on inexperi-
enced, politically appointed managers. At the same time,
government had to absorb, in the public sector, huge number
of repatriates and political motivators, freedom fighters and
employees of the exile governments. They were indiscretly
placed the public service. HRD programmes to meet the
public service management challenges, could not be intro-
duced because of the prevailing socio-economic and political
situation of a newly born war ravaged country.

After independence, Bangladesh visualized unstable govern-
ment. Military rule and military rulers under the banner of
democracy ruled the country for a fairly long time. Demo-
cratic institutions, a cluture of fair and neutral elections did
not grow. National plans setting development goals were not
consistently adopted and implemented. National consensus
between political parties on common issues has not yet been

founded. Thus, setting of public sector performance stand-ards and measurement of the output is still in a state of fluidity.

New global economic reorientation process evolved over a decade have enhanced interdependency and competition between nations and organizations. To meet the emerging challenges, every organization, whether government or non government, must operate efficiently and respond quickly to customer needs. This reinforces the need for demand driver HRD programmes for all managers and staff employees.

1. Traditional Organizational Design

Training Institution's structure and decision making process are as traditional as the administrative ministries. The tall hierarchy created role overlaps and turned the training institutions into inefficient organizations. Superfluous policy-making bodies like Board of Directors or Governors delays decisions resulting in poor performance. The legal frame-work (the presidential ordinance) on which the institutions were usually founded lacked visions. The role of the Board of Directors or Governors and the head of the training institutes are ambiguous and overlapping. The goals and functions of the training institutes are also lacks specificity. An external mid-term evaluation on public sector training commented that : BPATC and other Public Sector training institutions suffer from inherent structural and institutional problems... (Ahmed, 1994 : vi).

2. Lack of Integration between Recruitment and HRD Programmes

There is wide gap between public sector recruitment and HRD programmes. The recruitment and selection processes are not founded on scientific human resource demand

forecasting models. Consequently, unplanned growth of the public sector created heavy pressure on the HRD Institutions. The table-3 depicts 100% increase (from 78,685 in 1971 to 9,46,749 in 1992) of public sector human resources in 21 years time span. The number of BCS officers have also increased by 607% (from 11,130 in 1971 to 78,685 in 1992) within the same period.

Table-3 : Employment Growth of Civil Service.

Class	1971	1982	1986	1992
BCS	11,130	56,100	60,106	78,685
1	12,320	187,700	32,042	36,858
11	245,500	308,700	594,.300	579,842
111	185,500	226,500	386,406	251,364
Total	454,450	770,000	1,072.854	946,749

Source : Government That Works : Reforming the public Sector, World Bank, Dhaka 1996.

Table-3 reveal year-wise statistics of BCS recruitment form 1973 to 1996. The table depicts average 1207 annual recruitment.Unfortunately, the BPATC, on whom the responsibility of foundation training of newly recruited civil servants were legally ascribed, can provide 4 months foundation training to maximum 600 officers annually. The backlog (600 persons) is thus shifted to other public sector training Institutes whose legal role and functions were different. This policy temporarily helped to control the backlog ,and negatively affected their own performance. Inter-cadre interactions for dispersed foundation training have also significantly diminished.

Table-4 : Year-wise Statistics of Recruitument in Bangladesh Civil Service

Year of Examination	Number of Appointment
1973	353
1977	1344
1979	130
1981	130
1982	977
1983	2004
1984	765
1985	2499
1986	2078
1988	1081
1989	932
1990	705
1991	1127
1992	1849
1993	2516
1994	1127
1995	827
1996	1270
Total	21714
Average	1207

Source : Ministry of Establishment

Role of all the public sector should be reviewed and analyzed keeping in view the global challenges, market competitions, societal needs, citizen expectations and other environmental conditions. Human resource demands of the public sector

should be scientifically forecasted and recruitment, selection, socialization and HRD programmes be redesigned and readjusted accordingly.

3. Inadequate Faculty Development Opportunities

Prior to professional contributions, each faculty should get a fair chance to develop himself. Unfortunately, no budgetary provision subsists for faculty development Residual fellowships as trickle down from ministry to training institutes are misallocated and less potential trainers are sent abroad for study. The HRD fellowships are not directed toward institution building. Usually supervisors tend to recommend subordinate officers for overseas training on the basis of their personal preferences rather than merit (Ahmed 1994; 14). After training the trained officers fails to meet the professional challenge.

4. Ambiguous Job Description

Job descriptions are standards of job that a jobholder must meet. Job rotation, performance measurement and appraisals are organized according to specifically defined job descriptions. Unfortunately, in many training institutions either these documents are lacking or have been designed traditionally. These traditionally designed job descirptions... lacked clarity, precision, completeness, rationality and above all realism (Shiraj, 1996 : 32).

Unless a job holder clearly knows what is expected from him, it is unlikely that the can effectively perform his role. Moreover, he will not know why and how he should perform and to whom he should report, cordinate, communicate and above all to whom he is accountable.

Al these are preconditions for effective job performance. Job study and analysis of each position need be scheduled to

make the public service HRD performance oriented. Main job output and performance standard can thus be objectively determined.

5. Uncertain Career Path

Service conditions and career opportunity of HRD professionals mostly are inferior to other services. There are innumerable precedence that HRD professionals remain in a same position for more than 15-16 years. It sometimes happened that a HRD professional who was supervisor to a cadre officer has subsequently became subordinate to the same officer. Moreover, their career progression is fixed upto certain limit. These conditions result in increased employee turnover, low motivation, low commitment and low morals, high frustration and other negative psychic symptoms. Specialization and professionalism, innovation and creativity, development of need-based curricula and training methods and above all the institution building process is seriously hindered. Thus progressive service conditions, promotion policy, service terms and staffing plan based on interest, aptitude and specialization should be introduced for HRD professionals. Every HRD professional should have fair chance to reach the highest level within his institution based on his professional contributions like research, publication and service seniority.

6. Non-rewarding Work Culture

The work culture of the training institutes are non-professional. Professional achievements are not counted for promotion and fellowship awards. Disposal of a files, writing a note and other administrative communication get precedence over conducting training sessions. Trainers are mostly burdened with administrative jobs. Consequently, the quality of professional standards declines.

Training institutes, sometimes, are used as damping grounds. Civil servants disliked by government in power are damped to training institutes. The performance of such unwilling personnel dampens the professional work culture.

7. Inherent Limitations of Public Sector Performance

In manufacturing sector, quantity and quality of output can be deternmed objectively than public sector services. Public sector performance standards and measurement process has inherent limitations. The tasks performed by public sector is mostly subjective in nature. Rigid rules and regulations, absence of reward system, lack of freedom and autonomy, diminished the chances to introduce performance-oriented public sector HRD. However, job analysis information, job descriptions and other objective job criteria can be designed to improve productivity and performance.

8. Loosing Couping between Public Sector and Performance

Druker has pointed out that the typical public service institution has traditionally had monopoly powers so that the intended beneficiaries have had no choice (quoted from handout of Shafiullah). Recruitment rules for civil servants made the foundation training compulsory. Services of the new recruits of civil service shall not be confirmed unless this mandatory training is undertaken. Consequently, huge number of participants usually from 150-200, are sent to BPATC for such training. The quality and customers' needs and expectation remains subservient to monopolistic power of training institutions.

Recommendations

1. Analysing jobs
In-depth study of jobs should be undertaken for each HRD

institutions to create a HRD data base for planning and decision making. Job description, identification of training needs, designing objective performance appraisal system, designing need based curricula should be synchronized with job study information.

2. Human Resource Planning

Role and functions of all the public sector agencies should be reviewed and analyzed keeping in view the global challenges, market reorientation, citizen expectations, societal needs and other environmental conditions. Human resource demands of the public sector should be scientifically forecasted and recruitment, selection, socialization process and HRD programmes be redesigned and readjusted accordingly.

3. Organisational coufiguration

To improve the performance of the public sector HRD, tall hierarchy that delays decisions and complicates communication and coordination process, should be replaced by flat hierarchy. Superfluous organs like Board of Directors or Governors should be given full autonomy and freedom or otherwise eliminated.

4. Redesign job Description

Present structure of the job description should be made comprehensive. Accountability, coordination, communication and other organizational relations and authority should be clearly spelled out for in each individual job description.

5. Faculty Development Programme

HRD institute should be allowed to invest adequate amount of money in inhouse faculty development. Separate line item in annual budget may be introduced for each HRD institutes. Moreover, the institute head may be given full authority to directly explore donor funds for faculty development.

6. Carcer Planing of HRD Profassinals

In order to reduce frustration and turn over rate, develop motivation, morality and commitment of HRD professionals with concurrent developemnt of specialization, professionalism, innovation and creativity, need based training curricula and training methods, progressive service conditions, promotion policy and staffing policy based on individual interest and specialization should be introduced for HRD professionals. Moreover every HRD professional should get the chance to reach the highest level within his service career based on his professional contribution like research, publications and service seniority.

7. Leadership in HRD Institutes

HRD professional should not be burdened with administrative tasks. Colleagial leadership and work culture be built in HRD institutes. Persons with outstanding academic background having aptitude in HRD should be posted in HRD institutions. Leadership positions of the institutes, however, should be manned by HRD professionals so that institutes culture, policy and professional work get right sense of direction.

8. Freedom and Autonorny of HRD Institutes

All institutions engaged in HRD activities should be made free from the control of the administrative ministry. Each institute should have its own service, financial and other operating rules for decision-making. The board of Directors or Governors should be reconstituted by HRD professionals instead of ministry representatives. NGO, private sector and political representatives should also be included in the Board of Directors or Governors.

Conclusion

Challenges of the public sector HRD in a developing country like Bangladesh are multiple. No one can make an exhaustive inventory of such challenges. In this short paper some fundamental issues were raised and solutions proposed. The author believes, if these recommendations are transformed into appropriate policies, these would significantly contribute to the efficient and effective management of the public sector HRD programmes.

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