

Resourcing Issues and Practices in the Cadre Service of Bangladesh: A Critical Overview

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Abstract

This paper intends to study critically the present resourcing issues and practices in the cadre service of Bangladesh. It focuses on the existing recruitment and selection procedure of cadre services, its training system, performance appraisal process, transfer rule and promotion policy in Bangladesh. Present selection procedure in the cadre service of Bangladesh is merit and quota based. Only 45 percent posts are kept for meritorious students and 55 percent posts are reserved for various groups under quota system. In addition, nepotism, favoritism, corruption and political interference are hindering the brilliant graduates to join in the cadre service. Moreover, performance appraisal system is not overt and scientific. It is not evaluated on the basis of performance. Furthermore, training system is not modern and most of the training methods are class room based. For recruitment purpose, Bangladesh Public Service Commission does not follow campus recruitment process, consulting the firms of management or associations that have proven expertise in attracting the talented graduates. There are also other pressing issues that are considered to be casting far reaching negative impacts on services like cadre service choice and their selection process, ambiguous promotion policy, absence of proper transfer rule etc. This is basically a review of secondary research contents conducted earlier in this field of study. It finds that resourcing is very important tool for the development of public sector in any country. It is the technique to minimize the cost of employees and maximize their value to the organization. It helps to keep right people in the right place at the right time. The study has also found that resourcing aspects are inter-related to each other. Effective recruitment helps to avoid this kind of chain reaction. It saves time, money and effort. But in Bangladesh recruitment system it is not sound. The study therefore argues for changing traditional systems, developing resourcing issues scientifically which will attract bright graduates in the cadre services.

Keywords: Recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, training, cadre service, transfer, quota system.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of problem

Resourcing system at public sector of Bangladesh is not desirable since in an internal report on people resourcing aspects of Bangladesh Public

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Administration, Asian Development Bank (ADB) 2007 expressed that public administration in Bangladesh is mainly centralized, hierarchy is prevalent and decision is taken by multiple layers. Incentive system is not present in this sector. Performance management system is subjective and out of date. Training is not related to career planning. Career opportunities are confined within a cadre (Ehsan 2008, 59). Faulty recruitment procedure can place a non-qualified person in a formalized organization. Defective recruitment procedure and the politicization of the civil service may be largely responsible for the lack of “good enough governance” in Bangladesh (Jahan 2006, 2).

1.2 Significance of the study

In 1999, in a report on Crisis of Governance in South Asia Human Development Centre (HDC) rated Bangladesh's bureaucratic efficiency at 4.7 on a 0 to 10 scale where 10 was considered best (Ehsan 2008, 59 and Jahan, 2006). This is the efficiency scenario of cadre servants at civil service in Bangladesh. For better performance right people should be kept at right place. Civil servants play a vital role for the development of any country. To achieve Sustainable Development Goals 2030 as well as Vision 2021 (be mid-earning country) resourcing of cadre service is very significant.

1.3 Scope of the study

This paper covers resourcing issues and practices at cadre service in Bangladesh. Firstly, the paper attempts to provide a conceptual framework. Secondly, it presents findings of the study 1) current resourcing issues and 2) present practices regarding cadre service. Thirdly, it makes a critical analysis of present resourcing issues and practices. Fourthly, it presents discussion. Fifthly, it draws conclusion of the study and finally, it suggests some recommendations.

1.4 Objective of the study

Objectives of this report are:

- ❖ To find out present resourcing issues and practices at cadre service in Bangladesh.

- ❖ To analyse these resourcing issues and practices critically and
- ❖ To provide recommendations for progressing resourcing issues and practices at cadre service in Bangladesh.

1.5 Limitation of the study

Every social science study has more or less limitations. Accordingly, the present study also has a number of limitations. Only secondary data were collected from many sources for the study. The study did not cover all the areas of resourcing. There are a number of areas where future studies can be directed. In-depth studies may be conducted to evaluate the impact of resourcing issues on organizational performance. Studies may be carried out on resourcing practices of service sector enterprises.

2. Research methodology

The article is basically a review of secondary research conducted in this area. Data were collected from many published documents such as books, journals, circulars of government, research reports, newspapers etc.

3.0 Conceptual framework

3.1 Definition of resourcing

The term people resourcing are also known as ‘employee resourcing’ or resourcing. It refers to employment activities and ensures the right number of people that the organization needs. Staff turnover and absenteeism issues are also part of it. Workforce planning, recruitment and selection, management of staff turnover, absence management, attraction and retention of employees and talent management are the elements of employment activities. Training and development programs are also linked to it. It makes people adept for the institution (Armstrong 2012, 239).

Resourcing is not a single activity. It is the amalgamation of many activities that are undertaken by HR to conform that the institution has required employees. Main elements of employee resourcing are recruitment, HR administration, performance management and change management (Tayler 2008, 3).

3.2 Cadre service

In government bureaucracy cadre service is different functional sub division. Cadre service refers the service that is formed under laws with number of positions or structure, recruitment and promotion rules. In 1981 cadre service was first recognized officially at the time of the introduction of Bangladesh Civil Service Recruitment Rules in Bangladesh. There are 28 cadres in Bangladesh Civil Service now. Among these cadres some are general cadre at which public

servants do administrative and other functions and some are professional or technical cadre at which they do profession related works (**Morshed 1997, 77-78**).

3.3 Recruitment and selection

Recruitment is a set of activities that are done by an organization to attract job applicants who have capabilities and attitudes that are needed to help the institution accomplish its targets (**Glueck 1978**). Selection means choosing of an applicant from a pool of applicants for a post by the institution (**Searle 2003**).

3.4 Training and development

Training means system that is used to supply adeptness to the newly recruited employees so that they can perform their duties smoothly. The term development means to expand horizon of staffs (**Dessler 2006**).

4. Findings of the study

4.1. Present resourcing issues at cadre service in Bangladesh

4.1.1 Recruitment and selection issues at cadre service in Bangladesh

As a source of recruitment, public sector does not use campus recruiting, consulting firms of management, associations that are professional to attract talented graduates (**Abser 2012**). Nepotism and favoritism in selection process hinders applicants to come at public sector's job (**Mahmood and Abser 2011, 122**). Moreover, recruitment policy makes graduates disappointed since only 45 percent posts are kept for merited candidates and 55 percent posts are filled by various quotas. If there is no candidate for these reserve posts, it will remain vacant. At this case no chance for the meritorious graduates to come at these posts. Furthermore, politicization in recruitment is another problem for meritorious candidates. Similarly, corruption regarding recruitment and selection process of Public Service Commission discourages talented and poor graduates to come at cadre service (**Ehsan 2008, 64**).

4.1.2 Performance appraisal

Performance assessment of civil servants is done by supervisors. This is called Annual Confidential Report (ACR). It is the only system by which ability and productivity of civil servants are measured. But this system is very subjective and not scientific. It is evaluated not on the basis of competence. The funny matter is that the person for whom this evaluation is done, remains in the dark. He/ she has no opportunity to see the condition of his/her performance. As a

result, he/she has no opportunity to improve his/her performance (**Ehsan 2008, 66**).

4.1.3 Training

Different ministries have more than 150 attached training institutions. Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre and Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy are two major and important training institutes. The first one is used for all cadres' training institute and the second one is used for Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Cadre. There are some problems regarding training and training institutions. Firstly, there is a lack of professionalism, competent as well as well-trained employees. Secondly, training method, techniques and syllabus of these institutions are not up to date. That's why; this fails to enhance the knowledge and capacity of learners. Thirdly, civil servants do not take training seriously since there is no link among training, performance appraisal and promotion (**Ehsan 2008, 64**). Contents of training, trainers' quality and training methods are not up to date. Furthermore, most of the training programs are classroom based academic style teaching. There are 25 institutions that provide training for cadre officers of civil service. Each of these institutions provides individual cadre training. (**World Bank 1998**).

4.1.4 Other issues that hinder to choose the job of cadre service

There are other issues that are considered negatively to take decision in case of choosing public sector's job: such as promotion, compensation, transfer and posting. Promotion of civil servants has been politicized. It is not given on the basis of merit, seniority and rules of conduct. Undue promotion is often given to politicized civil servants instead of competent and senior candidates. Furthermore, there are no specific rules and regulations for transfer of cadre servants. Frequent transfer hinders to career management of civil servants. Even transfer and posting of civil servants are also politicized (**Ehsan 2008, 66-67**).

All these resourcing issues have not only made inconsistencies, conflicts, confusions and imperfections in the cadre services but also have aided in undermining the graduate's belief about cadre service job.

4.2. Present practices at cadre service

4.2.1 Present cadre service recruitment methods

On the basis of current recruitment policy, cadre servants are recruited by three methods.

- ✚ Open competitive direct exam
- ✚ Internal promotion and
- ✚ Transfer or deputation (**Ali 2007, 10**).

Among the three recruitment methods this report will cover open competitive direct exam method since entry level recruitment is performed by it.

4.2.2 Present cadre service selection policy and practices

According to **recruitment rules 1981** (known as **Bangladesh Recruitment Rules, 1981**) and elaborate **recruitment rules 19 82**, officers of various cadres are appointed. It is open for the candidates who have completed master degree from any university of Bangladesh or foreign countries' universities. Applicant must be at least 21 years old and maximum 30 years old for applying. For freedom fighters and disabled maximum age is 32 years. But there is a restriction to apply for the job in case of non-citizen and who marries foreigner. Applicants will choose his/ her cadre at the time of filling the application form. Recruitment policy preserves both 'merit' and 'quota' system in the principle to provide equal opportunity for all citizens to civil service. 55 percent seats are reserved for various quotas and 45 percent seats are reserved for merit. Bangladesh Public Service Commission performs all the activities of recruitment and selection (**Azizuddin 2008**).

4.2.3 Examination system

Public Service Commission operates examination according to 'The Bangladesh Civil Service (Age, Qualification and Examination for Direct Recruitment) Rules, 1982'. Some amendments have been brought both in examination system and syllabi of this rule. Now total marks of examination are 1100. Within 1100 marks 200 marks are for viva voce. Pass mark is 50 percent. (**37th Bangladesh Civil Service Circular of Bangladesh Public Service Commission**).

Both ministry of Public Administration and Public Service Commission of Bangladesh play vital role to recruit and select cadre servants. On the basis of the demand of Ministry of Public Administration, Public Service Commission advertises on national newspaper and it uses its web site for recruitment.

Steps that are taken by Public Service Commission to select cadre servants are mentioned below.

- ✚ Select application form.
- ✚ Preliminary examination.
- ✚ Written examination.
- ✚ Viva voce.
- ✚ Merit list
- ✚ Result publication.
- ✚ Sending list of selected candidates to Ministry of Public Administration recommending for appointment.

Steps that are taken by Ministry of Public Administration

- ✚ Medical test.
- ✚ Police verification.
- ✚ Through gazette notification final appointment is done by Ministry of Public Administration (**Jahan 2012, 31**).

4.2.4 Present training system in cadre service

After selection as public servant, they have to undertake various trainings. There are different kinds of trainings to which civil servants have to take part. Principal trainings are:

- Six-month foundation training.
- One year on-the-job training at probationary period.
- One and a half month settlement training for cadre servants.
- Advanced training for the officers under Joint Secretaries.
- Advanced training for the officers whose rank is equal and above Joint Secretaries, and
- Foreign training.

First two years are rendered as probationary period. At this period they have to undergo foundation training at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC). This is known as post-entry training. It is compulsory for a civil servant to do the training within these two years. Job confirmation depends on the successful ending of training during this probationary period. All civil servants of different cadres have to do the six-month training (**Ali 2004**).

4.2.5 Present performance appraisal system of cadre service

Present performance appraisal system of Bangladesh Civil Service is known as Annual Confidential Report (ACR). It is done through a prescribed form. There are eight different sections in it. Among 8 sections number 3 and 4 are performance appraisal sections since these two sections have Graphic Rating Scales of 4 to 1 for 25 items. Section 3 has 13 items and section 4 has 12 items that constitute a score of 100. Out of 100 total score is given by the appraiser according to his judgment. Score 95 to 100 is for outstanding performance. Score 85 to 94 is for very good performance. Score 61 to 84 is for good performance and score 41 to 60 is for average performance (**Alam, 2009**).

4.2.6 Trainer

Generally, transfer is to take place every after three years of tenure in 'public interest'. But to transfer civil servants Government does not follow any systematic transfer policy. Thereby, civil servants are transferred frequently.

There are two elements that influence to make transfer decision such as arbitrariness and personal-pull or tadbir (**Momen and Islam 1997, 49**).

4.2.7 Promotion

There is a rule for promotion of civil servants called Bangladesh Civil Service (Examination for Promotion) rules 1986. It considers many factors such as vacancy, service length, merit and record of performance etc. But in reality these are hardly followed. There are many committees for considering and recommending promotions of different levels and categories of civil servants. In Bangladesh promotion system of cadre servants is not smooth both in policy and process (**Azizuddin 2008**). Fairness and system of Promotion of cadre servants are very often criticized (**Momen and Islam 1997, 51**).

5.0 Critical analysis of findings and discussion

5.1 Resourcing issues and practices in cadre service in Bangladesh

As resourcing is an amalgamation of many things, some of the main aspects of it will be critically analyzed below:

5.2 Quota system

55 percent posts are reserved for various groups and only 45 percent posts are for meritorious students. The main problem of this 'quota' system is that graduate gets less opportunity to enter into civil service. In a report published in (**The Daily Star, 13 July 2013, 1**) on Review of Quota System: Govt site on PSC recommendation it was stated that in the five Bangladesh Civil Service exams from 2005 to 2012, Public Service Commission recommended appointment of 3179 successful candidates to the posts of 15 class-1 general cadres. Of them, 1493 were picked on merit and 1686 from different quotas. It shows candidates from quota system get more opportunity to come at cadre service than merit. On the other hand, it is hard to select candidates 100 percent accurately due to complex 'quota' system. Moreover, a large number of posts stay vacant after civil service examination. Candidates are not available for 'quota' posts. It cannot be filled up by merit. At 21st, 22nd and 25th civil service examinations only 10.8 percent, 2.2 percent and 5.2 percent posts of 'quota' were filled and at 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st civil service examinations 813, 792, 784 and 773 posts under different quotas remained vacant. Akbor Ali Khan, former Cabinet Secretary told the Daily Star that only 45 percent candidates on merit in Bangladesh Civil Service examinations are unconstitutional and discriminatory. Quotas should not exceed 50 percent of government jobs and they cannot exist forever (**Habib and Chakraborty 2013, 1-2**). Many meritorious students do not get the job of civil service due to 'quota' system. Creation of equal opportunity

through quota system does not show equal efficiency. Quota system is rendered as one of the main problems for the gradual reduction of efficiency of civil servants. Judgment of merit is not transparent. Principles of recruitment and open competitive system are contradictory (**Mohammed 2008**). Furthermore, there is no transparency in implementing quota. All researchers recommend modification of quota system.

a. Interference of corruption and political force

Complain of corruption about the members and staffs of Public Service Commission is often raised and it loses its credibility (**TIB 2007, 7**). It is often said that governments in the past appointed Chairman and members of PSC to recruit candidates of their choice to the important cadres like Administration and Police (**TIB 2007, 8**). Thereby, it has made talent gap in civil service. The standard and quality of civil servants lessen when they are recruited politically.

5.4 Faulty examination system

Preliminary examination of 200 marks is taken on two-hour duration. But it is not the proper way of selecting talented candidates. Their academic performance is not considered at this stage. Questions are not critical and analytical. Most candidates memorize study guides, write the answer mechanically and pass (**Jahan 2006, 10**). To select candidates several viva voce examination boards are formed. Different questions are asked by the members of different boards. Structured interview is not followed to select candidates. As a result standard and quality of candidates differ very often.

5.5 Training

Training institutions of Bangladesh use traditional methods of training. Training systems are not multidisciplinary international training. Interactive lesson, use of case study, problem solving exercise, e-learning and mix learning are not found in training system. Demand and supply of training are not similar. Identification of training needs is not done properly. Systematic training is not provided to the participants.

5.6 Performance appraisal

Duration of performance appraisal is yearly not quarterly. It is done through a prescribed form. It is not linked to the plan of organization. There is no system of differentiation of performance. Pay is given not on the basis of performance; it is given equally without regarding performance. There is no Performance Review Board. Head of the Office gives counter sign in it. It is not evaluated on the basis of performance and merit. The funny matter is that the person for whom this is done does not know the result of his/her performance. So, there is no opportunity to correct his/her fault. It is not beneficial for both the

individual and the organization. It is subjective and not scientific. It is evaluated not on the basis of competence.

5.7 Promotion

Promotion of civil servants has been politicized. It is given not on the basis of merit, seniority and rules of conduct. Undue promotion is often given to politicized civil servants instead of competent and senior candidates. Thereby, they are not active to their job as well as prompt to service delivery.

From the above critical analyses it can be said that there are lots of resourcing issues in Bangladesh. Present activities are not sufficient to deal with the issues. It is without question that a well-organized civil service is necessary for efficient service delivery and it leads to well performed government. But the above mentioned resourcing issues make the quality of bureaucracy low and the efficiency of civil servant less. As a result, civil service is not qualitative and civil servants are not dexterous, motivated and efficient. The prevalence of good governance is absent due to inefficiency in civil servants. Civil servants are not able to discharge their duties properly owing to defective recruitment, politicization regarding promotion and posting and ineffective training. Public sector feels the lack of efficient public servants.

The following things cannot be addressed for these resourcing issues:

- Up to the level of social and economic development of Bangladesh.
- Efficient and effective service delivery from public sector.
- Productive and ethical behavior from public servants.
- Sustainable high performance.
- Commitment of public interest.
- To be mid earning country.
- Digital Bangladesh. (**ibid, 2004**).

Resourcing issues should be given top priority for conforming to good governance, increased social and economic development, efficient and effective service delivery, productive and ethical behavior of public servant as well as to attain the sustainable development goals.

6. Conclusion

The key objective of this study is to analyze present resourcing issues and practices critically in the cadre service of Bangladesh. This article is basically a review of secondary research contents conducted earlier in this field of study. It has found nepotism and favoritism in selection processes that hinder talented graduates to join in the civil service. Moreover, policy of recruitment and selection make graduates disappointed because 55 percent posts are reserved for various groups and only 45 percent posts are earmarked for meritorious graduates. Furthermore, corruption and politicization regarding recruitment and

selection are also vital causes that hinder talented graduates to enter in cadre service. Performance assessment report of civil servants is done by supervisors to be countersigned by the head of the office. This is called Annual Confidential Report (ACR). This is the only system by which ability and productivity of civil servants are measured. But the system is very subjective and unscientific. Promotion of cadre servants has been politicized. Merit, seniority and conduct are not considered for promotion. Moreover, equal pay is given for unequal work. There is no specific rule and regulation for transfer. Transfer is also politicized. It is high time to modify policies and practices of resourcing to make the bureaucracy an efficient, dynamic and strong force for better governance of the country.

7.0 Recommendation

To develop resourcing issues and attract talented graduates, authority can change their traditional systems. The following things can be taken into consideration.

7.1 Recruitment

Bangladesh Public Service Commission can use campus recruitment, consulting firms of management and professional associations to attract talented graduates.

7.2 Selection

Selection process of cadre servants in Bangladesh should be clear cut and there should be a well defined selection policy in place. Selection should be on the basis of merit and performance through open competitive exam. Quota system cannot bring the standard, efficient and talented graduates. It gives opportunity of low quality candidates to join in civil service. For this reason, at first 'quota' system should be minimized gradually and to be abolished finally. To overcome gradual deterioration in the quality of cadre servants, pass marks of written examination should be 70 percent.

7.3 Performance appraisal

Annual Confidential Report (ACR) is highly subjective in Bangladesh. Abolishment of subjective judgment is not possible but it can be minimized by some mechanistic standard design to gain maximum objectivity. It should be linked to organizational goal and individual development that are absent in Bangladesh performance appraisal system. A practice should be introduced to allow supervisors to give feedback to officers concerned from month after month so that he/she can improve his/ her performance.

7.4 Training

To overcome poor quality and increase skill and knowledge a clear, bold and innovative training policy should be introduced so that useful and pertinent training and sufficient hours can be given to the trainees. Training system of Bangladesh should be modernized to face the challenges of civil service. Training Institutions can change the traditional methods of training and can introduce a modern system of training such as interactive lesson, use of case study, problem solving exercise, e-learning and mix-learning, creation of policy papers on training and public sector reform and advanced career long learning.

7.5 Promotion

Promotion should be linked to performance, merit and seniority rather than political influence and favoritism. It should be given as reward of well-done job. Transparency should be ensured to give promotion so that present employees will get inspiration to do work efficiently and side by side talented graduates will be inspired to come to cadre service.

7.6 Transfer

Specific policy can be made for transfer of cadre servants because it will keep their mental stability necessary for organizing their professional and personal plans. Concerned ministries can make specific policies for transfer of cadre servants.

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