



## *40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of SIAP*



Ninth Management Seminar for the  
Heads of National Statistical Offices in  
Asia and the Pacific  
31<sup>st</sup> August—2 September 2010

Tokyo, Japan

### **Developing Professional Capability for National Statistical System : Bangladesh Experience**

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## PART –A

### **Introduction**

In the context of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) is the mandated organization for collecting, compiling and disseminating statistics of all the sectors of the economy. BBS conduct series of censuses and surveys for generating nationally representative data for the use of planners, policy makers, academicians, development partners, researchers ,NGOs and other users. BBS perform its function through subject matter wings. The data collection in the field level are supervised by the field offices located at the regions (old district) and upazila (sub-district). At present there are 23 regional and 497 upazila/thana offices. BBS has more than 4000 officers and staff of which around 3000 are professional staff involved in data collection, compilation, processing and dissemination. BBS has been implementing various programmes to enhance the capability of the professional staff. In the following sections the present status of BBS in developing the professional capability has been presented.

### **Recruitment**

- (1) The recruited staff generally do not have the professional skill need by the NSO (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics). Additional training is required to develop their skill. The skill in using computer for data entry and processing is the greatest ongoing problem.
- (2) In case of recruiting new staff, we set criteria in such a way that persons having academic background in statistic, mathematics, economic are recruited for the NSO.

In addition we give preference to the candidates having training from Institute of Statistical Research and Training (ISRT), Dhaka University. It was observed from the experience of recruiting members having training from ISRT, DU that their output is better than the others.

Candidates recruited without training in statistical field lacks practical knowledge in statistics though most of them have academic background in statistics.

- (3) We are working closely with the Universities for enhancing the knowledge of the officers and staff through training and academic programmes. Recently we have made an

agreement with a renowned University (BRAC University) for Academic Degree in Public Health which is devoted to demographic statistics and nutritional statistics. We also send officials in different universities to receive training in different disciplines. The arrangements now cover the areas like geographical information system, MDG monitoring etc. We also nominate officials to obtain degree in epidemiology from National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM).

Recently, ISRT of Dhaka University proposed BBS for internship for post graduate students in BBS. The students, during this period will be acquainted with the activities of BBS so that they could develop their skill in official statistics, We are actively considering their proposal.

### **Development**

- (4) We have long-term development plan for development of the skill of the officials of BBS through training. We are in the process of establishing a separate training academy entitled “Statistical Training Academy” for offering regular courses for statistical personnel. This is also one of the objectives of our National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) being prepared now.
- (5) We integrate the need of professional development of individual employee by their aptitude in the relevant field. We develop their skill in the areas like data processing, demographic statistics, economic statistics, census and survey methods, national accounting, agriculture statistics. We arrange short and long-term training for them. Some of the brilliant and potential employees are also send abroad for training in the relevant field.
- (6) We identify the need of capacity building of each employee through their performance, academic background and eagerness in particular field. The recommendation of their supervisors are also given due consideration.
- (7) The followings means are adopted for the skill development of the employees

- (i) On the job training
- (ii) Training on different subject matter areas.
- (iii) Training on different Census and Surveys.
- (iv) Nominated for Training organised by different agencies in Bangladesh.
- (v) Nominated for Training by different International agencies such as SIAP, ISI, US bureau of Census on short and long courses, seminar, workshop, technical meetings etc.
- (vi) Arrange study tours for senior officers for sharing knowledge and experience with other countries and NSOs.

It was observed that workshop and training with hands on training were very effective as the participants can get practical experience while courses with theoretical discussion was not very effective as these are not very practical

- (8) In selecting employees for participation in the capacity building activities of the international organization we consider the following aspects of the employee :
  - (a) Relevancy of the employee's current activity with the programme.
  - (b) Academic background of the employee suitable for receiving the training.
  - (c) Age of the employee. We generally give preference to the young official in long-term programmes whereas for seminar, workshop and study tour we consider senior official who could contribute in the programme.
  - (d) Future career development need of the employee.
- (9) The following measures are used to assess the effectiveness of capacity building efforts:
  - (a) Conducting assessment tests on the course offered.
  - (b) Credit received by the employees in overseas training.
  - (c) Sharing experience with other officials after the training.
  - (d) Performance in office assignment on return from training.

Currently we have no list of capacity building indicators but we are planning to develop such indicators.

**Organizational Strategy:**

(10) Yes, there are special career paths for professional staff. These are as follows :

**Initial appointment/deployment**

**Subsequent Promotion**

Junior Statistical Assistant

Statistical Assistant

Statistical Assistant

Statistical Investigator

Statistical Investigator

Assistant Statistical officer

Assistant statistical officer

Statistical Officer

Statistical Officer

Deputy Director

Deputy Director

Joint Director

Joint Director

Director

Director

Deputy Director General

Deputy Director General

Director General

(11) The need for professional skill of employees are determined by the following way :

- (a) Evaluating the existing knowledge on different statistical matters such as survey, sample, census, statistical measures, techniques of data analysis and estimating different rates & ratios.

- (b) Knowledge on emerging issues such as, gender statistics, environmental statistics, information economy, global recession, climate change, bubbles, water statistics, ICT, GIS, growth & inequality etc.
- (12) The competency of the professional staff is determined by their office performance and outputs. There exists provision of incentive to attain new competency. The competency is supported by training and promotion to higher post and assigning new responsibility in the broader perspective.
- (13) The staff members are encouraged to be member of professional association. The NSO officials are the members of the following association :
- (i) Bangladesh Statistical Association.
  - (ii) Bangladesh Population Association.
  - (iii) Bangladesh Economic Association.
  - (iv) Bangladesh Computer Association.

NSO actively participate in the activities of those professional associations. The NSO officials also give leadership in the activities of Bangladesh Statistical Association.

- (14) The job structure of the organization has been disaggregated into several subject matter areas with the objective of enhancing the capability of the professional staff.

The broad areas are as follows :

- (a) Demography and Health
  - (b) Industry and Labour
  - (c) Agriculture
  - (d) National Accounts
  - (e) Computer
  - (f) Census
  - (g) Training.
- (15) At present the organization could not attract quality staff due to low salary structure and limited scope of promotion. However, the NSO is going to be re-organised where provision has been kept for higher salary and better promotion scope.

(16) There is no formal regular course, however, in-service training programme are conducted for the staff working in the field level prior to any census, surveys and studies. This facilitates the field staffs to enhance their capability in the areas of concepts, definition and methodology of the census and surveys. Training is also offered in data entry, data editing and data processing to develop the skill of the technical staff in data processing

(17) Yes, professional skills are obtained by contracting in staff for data collection and data entry or contracting out work for sample design, survey methodology, data processing and data analysis of Census and Surveys.

#### **Others**

(18) The development of IT has developed the capability of NSO in the field of quick data entry and data processing and disseminating the findings within a short span of time. On the other hand, the challenges of the use of IT is that the ICT personnel are not very much acquainted with the statistical knowledge. They could give the output in a short span of time but the acceptability and robustness of the output cannot be determined by them which need professional statisticians. This is a great challenge of the use of ICT.

(19) The professional requirement of NSO is acknowledged by the government, however, this is not still well pronounced. It is getting importance to the government day by day. It is expected that in near future professional requirement of NSO will be considered.

#### **Capability of National Statistical Service**

(20) In the context of Bangladesh, the national statistical service is concentrated in Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (NSO) only. So, there is no scope of comparing national statistical service with NSO.

(21) The NSO of Bangladesh (BBS) has recently prepared a reorganization proposal with special emphasis on ICT technology. BBS is working closely with other line ministries and division for establishing a national information centre entitled “Informatics”.

(22) The following professional capabilities are most challenging to develop or maintain because these are changing constantly and lot of works needed to develop it.

- (i) System of National Accounting (SNA).
- (ii) Estimating Poverty, Growth and Inequality.
- (iii) Adopting System of Economic and Environmental Accounting (SEEA).
- (v) Social Protection Expenditure and Social Protection Index etc.
- (vi) Retaining the skilled professionals in the organisation.

## **PART- B**

### **Strategies Adopted for Improving Professional Capability**

#### **(1) User Producer Dialogue**

BBS has been working for improvement of its capability to meet the demand of the users. The need of the users can be ascertained by an effective user and producer dialogue. The gaps and other methodological deficiency identified by the users of statistics help NSO to enhance its capability by improving the data collection methodology and filling up the gaps.

In past no such dialogues was arranged by the NSO. In the recent time a series of such dialogue was conducted by BBS on Census, Labour force, Statistics Pertaining to Livestock and Poultry, Gender, Manufacturing Industries etc. The outcome of these dialogues proved very effective in identifying the problems in these areas and the gaps between the collected data by NSO and the expectation of the users. This dialogue helped BBS to improve the professional capability by addressing the need of users.

#### **(II) Knowledge Sharing on Return from Training, Seminar and Workshops**

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics nominate officials to receive training abroad on general statistics, national accounts, demography, agriculture statistics, environmental statistics and ICT. In addition, officials are nominated to participate in seminar organized by the UN agencies.

An arrangement has been made in BBS that the officials who will participate in such training, workshop and seminar will disseminate their experience to the officials who have not joined the programme. This facilitated the officials of BBS to learn about the experience and knowledge gathered by the participants in foreign training and joining in seminar & workshop. This helped BBS in enhancing the capability of BBS officials in the relevant field.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The demand for statistics in different sectors has increased tremendously with the introduction of market economy in the world. In order to cater the need of the statistics for the users, the professional capacity building of the statistical organization is inevitable. BBS is trying to enhance the professional capability of the manpower through training, interaction with the users, development partners and academicians. This effort will further be geared up in future. The support of SIAP will be of immense help to materialize this effort.