

The Prospects of Corporate Education in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Corporate education is a systematic way of providing professional knowledge to executives for enhancing competitive advantage of organization and getting long run sustainability. Corporate management development is a way by which organization can develop its employees' skills, knowledge and management capacity. The aim of this study is to explore the importance of corporate education and give a description regarding the corporate education in Bangladesh. This study is mainly based on secondary data for identifying the significance and prospects of corporate education. The study describes corporate education for executives in three major organizational levels; these are public, private and autonomous organizations. Practicing corporate education ensures creating efficiency in individual level, organizational level, national level and global level.

Keywords: Corporate Education, Professional Knowledge, Sustainability, Competitive Advantage, Organizational Level.

• Introduction

Corporate education is a relatively new concept in Bangladesh but it is a popular issue in the field of human resource (HR) management. Surprisingly, only a few scholars have discussed regarding this concept during the last couple of decades. Corporate education means providing higher educational facilities to the employees for future management development by the corporation which is the key success factor for getting competitive advantage in any organization. Dessler (2008) said that the management development is "Any attempt to improve current or future management performance by imparting knowledge, changing attitudes, or increasing skills". For developing employees, modern organizations have taken different strategies such as in house programs and out of home programs. The in-house programs are job rotation, action learning, case study method, management game, role playing; outsource learning, behavior modeling, and executive coaching etc. Training and development is a win-in-win situation for employees and employers of any organization (Alamgir, 2017). Training and development is the voluntary corporate social responsibility (CSR) arranged by corporations.

The world is advancing due to information technology and the development of technological knowledge. For this reason organization needs to develop their employees' skills in information and communication technology and management capacity (Ismail, 2000). Some developed countries like, France and Germany might have legislative support and partnership between higher education providers and employers but it is not obligatory in the United Kingdom for excessive pressure from management for

increasing profitability. The employers of UK are not used to investing for long-term development of their employees. However, many corporations have realized that employee education is mandatory for long-term survival in the highly competitive business world. The positions which are currently occupied by a top executive, must be vacant in near future. Human resource managers are highly concerned about these issues and to solve the problem of vacancy. HR managers try to develop their current employees for fulfilling probable top position vacancies in near future. The main focus of corporate education is to develop managers or executives of the organization (Ismail, 2000). Bakan (2011) also stated that there are 750 crore people around the globe but highly skilled are very few. Highly trained, skilled and technologically developed people are very essential for high profit growth, survival and sustainability of any organization. The nature of job has been changed day by day with the new demands of customers and innovation of technology. The employees must be accustomed to the new jobs that's why there is no way to survive without corporate education for employees. An educated and skilled workforce is essential for the effective functioning of an economy, competitiveness, wealth of nation, as well as for the overall well-being of society (Brardwell & Holden, 1997). Corporate education might play a significant role in equipping the employees with required skills so that they can perform well and keep pace with the changing corporate environment. Therefore, the present study tries to explore the significance of corporate education and its present scenario in Bangladesh.

• Literature Review

World is like a global village. Due to globalization the business is becoming more competitive and for facing intense competitive challenge, educating employees is a must. The higher education providing institutions (universities) have played a vital role for their corporate identity (Melewar & Sibel, 2005). They also discussed that the corporations and universities would go for a contract with each other for developing employees by facilitating higher education for their sustainability and corporate identity. Because of intense competition in the modern business organization for their branding and customizing, the importance of higher education of employee is increasing gradually. Many organizations believe that the employees' higher education programs are enhancing the brand image and publicity of the corporation (Tamilla et al., 2009). They also stated that when employees are sent for higher education abroad, the organization achieves admired position in the industry. Branding is considered as one of the most important intangible assets of any corporation. Corporate branding depends on the organizations' employee management quality, functional effectiveness and efficiency which ultimately improve the quality of products (goods and services). The management incapability ruins the corporate values and competitive advantages. For getting market leadership, corporate efficiency and management capacity is inevitable. So corporate education positively helps the organization to get the leading position in their respective industry. Corporate identity refers to the unique position in terms of employee skills, product quality and organization values and it has a strategic importance to the corporation.

Distance learning is most flexible way for corporate education. Online learning is the most popular to the employees for corporate education due to cost reduction and minimizing distance barrier (Berge, 2002). Distance learning is the most popular for

corporate higher degree achievers, (Berge, 2002). Though it was very convenient to corporate executives, there are some limitations of achieving higher degree online. The limitations are

administrative structure, organizational Change, technical expertise, social interaction and quality, faculty compensation and time, threatened by technology, legal issues, evaluations / effectiveness, access, student support service (Berge, 2002). Corporate development and strategic alliance in the e-learning sector creates a revolution in knowledge based economy. Globalization creates importance of higher education in different sectors (Lenn, 2000).

Corporate management education is growing day by day because of global competition in the industry and also increasing the sophistication and customer service (Thomson et al., 1997). For getting many prestigious awards, the demand for management education becomes a center for attraction to the employees and organization. Corporate education was less attractive to the employees in the last century but it becomes attractive and useful in the current century. It is known that no investment is more profitable than investment in education. Modern corporations follow the statement for survival and long term profitability (Thompson et al., 1997). The percentage of corporate education for mid-level manager is higher than lower level managers. For developing quality, continuous learning is obligatory for getting competitive advantage and prestigious rewards. Information is not centralized but it is widely scattered. Corporate education is the most popular way to get important information for improving quality of organization (Prince & Stewart, 2000). Women graduates are more sincere and provide more weight on corporate ethical, environmental and societal responsibilities than men counterparts (Lamsa et al., 2008). They also proposed that the students who had finished their corporate degree, are more aware than those without corporate degree. Corporate education is basically learning about ethical and legal concern about business (Matten & Moon, 2004). They also stated that employees who had received corporate business education, he/she would be ethically stronger than those who did not receive the same. Further they indicated that there are a few business organizations which open ethics related course or department. The promotion of organization is involved in employee higher education and its brand image. There is a significant relationship between higher education and management quality (Quazi, 2003). Quazi (2003) also illustrated that for getting sustainable competitive advantage, an organization ought to provide its employees formal higher educational facilities and training. The researchers also noticed that last couple of decades, management education is very important for corporation development (Prince & Stewart, 2000). They also found that the mid-level manager's educational qualification was lower than bottom level managers. Higher degree of employees helps the organization to attain the world most prestigious accreditation which helps to create organization's brand image and corporate performance. Big companies are establishing their own corporate universities and strong training center for their corporate executives (Clarke & Hermens, 2001). They also interpret that quality is the precondition for any organization's sustainability, but achieving sustainable quality is the result of higher education.

Management efficiency depends on the quality of higher education. With the blessings of new technology, managers can easily test the employees' performance, knowledge and skills level (Denton, 2007). He also stated that training and development expenditure of corporation is increasing day by day. The main cost center of world largest corporations is management or executive training and development (DiPietro, 1993). In the film and drama industry, the success of any creation depends on good management training of leadership, communication, creativity, team building and emotion management (Fan, 2013). Sustainable development highly depends on corporate education (Galang, 2010). With the expansion of organizational size and increasing production volume, profitability and resource, the budget of executive education should be enhanced otherwise managing the organization effectively and efficiently is impossible (Goodwin & Fulmer, 1995). Annual expenditure on executive education is billions

of dollars in the value based corporations for reducing the uncertainty and risk. Corporate education plays a vital role in the modern competitive business world for meeting the unclear customer demand and creating more value for them (Liedtka et al., 1999). Trained executives are more efficient in decision making for revenue enhancement program than non-trained executives. Trained senior managers' decision has positive impact on organization (Long, 2004). Learning organizations are getting more success than non-learning organizations. The reason for establishing corporate university is the continuous improvement in learning and value creation activity for employee in the corporation (Nixon & Helms, 2002). Public and private corporations are highly involved in the higher education in Malaysia for increasing productivity for their employees (Zakaria et al., 2006). So the above discussion depicts that corporate education is a must for making efficient human resource management.

- **Corporate Education in Bangladesh**

Corporate education in Bangladesh is becoming popular now compared with past. British managers are not accustomed to employee training and development in their organization due to excessive pressure of profitability. As Bangladesh had been ruled by British managers about 200 years, managers of Bangladesh learnt from British management system completely. So corporate education has been a neglected issue here. But it is one of the remarkable issues in the modern competitive business world. Now-a-days, management of various corporations in Bangladesh feels that without corporate training and development, it is very difficult to survive. Renowned organizations of the country are trying to provide training to their employees for continuous improvement. Though private sectors are the pioneer in corporate education, public organizations also believe without training and development employees work efficiency is totally impossible. The corporate education in Bangladesh is divided into three levels such as; Public organizations, private organizations and autonomous organizations. A scenario of corporate education is depicted in the figure below.

Figure 1: Corporate education scenario in Bangladesh.

- **Public organization**

Public sector is less attractive in terms of competition for profitability and productivity. Though corporate education is negligible in this sector, government has taken some initiatives for enhancing the performance of government employees recently with the slogan of Digital Bangladesh especially in information technology sector. Government employees are trying to achieve higher degree for increasing their name and fame in the society. Secretary of different ministry of Bangladesh distributes education scholarship which is offered by different foreign corporate training institutions especially universities. The following government organizations are providing higher education in corporate levels.

- **Ministry of Education**

Ministry of Education is the apex body in the education sector in Bangladesh. Different renowned private and public universities/institutions of the world offer various scholarships for the students of Bangladesh. Once upon a time study in the foreign country was not popular to

the students of Bangladesh but now it is a center of attraction to the students and executives. The number of scholarships shows the interest of students for higher education. Every academic year, some developed countries offer various scholarships for private and government employees of Bangladesh for the purpose of corporate education. In the academic year 2017-2018, China, Japan, Thailand, USA, UK, and some other European countries offered scholarships for the employees of Bangladesh for higher education. The following table -1 and figure -1, show the number of various scholarships offered for students and corporate executives of Bangladesh in the academic year of 2017.

Table-1 and figure-1: Scholarships offered for students and corporate executives of Bangladesh in the academic year of 2017.

| Scholarship offering Country | University/ Institution | Number of Scholarship |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Vietnam | FPT university | 100 |
| Thailand | Kasetsart University | 4 |
| Japan | Japan Government MEXT | 100 |
| New Zealand | Commonwealth Scholarship | 2 |

The pie chart illustrates the distribution of scholarships offered in 2017. Vietnam accounts for 48% (100 scholarships), Japan for 49% (100 scholarships), Thailand for 2% (4 scholarships), and New Zealand for 1% (2 scholarships).

Source: <http://moedu.gov.bd> (Ministry of Education Website), 2018.

• **Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC):**

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre was established for developing the government first class gazetted officers. It is the most important training and development center for Bangladesh government top level executives. This organization facilitates training and development for Bangladesh Civil Service Cadres and non-cadre first class officers. Sometimes the employees are sent to foreign countries with financial grants. BPATC also provides Policy, Planning and Management Course (PPMC) training each year. The duration of the training course is 12 days and 15-20 officers participated in the academic year 2017-2018. Senior Staff Course (SSC) training is for 55 days and total participants were 25-30 officers in the same academic year. Advanced Course on Administration and Development training was designed for 70 days including 10 days foreign study tour and total participants were 25-30. Foundation Training Course duration was for 180 days and total participants were 320.

Table -2 and figure -2: Training Courses of BPATC.

| Training Course Name | Training Duration | Number of Participant |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Policy, Planning and Management Course | 12 Days | 15-20 |
| Senior Staff Course | 55 Days | 25-30 |
| Advanced Course on Administration | 70 Days | 25-30 |

| | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|------------|-------|--|
| | nd Development | | | <p style="text-align: center;">Number of Participant</p> <p>■ Policy, Planning and Management Course ■ Senior Staff Course ■ Advanced Course on Administration and Development ■ Foundation Training Course ■ Special Foundation Training Course</p> |
| | Foundation Training Course | 180 Days | 320 | |
| | Special Foundation Training Course | 40-60 Days | 25-30 | |

Source: www.bpatc.bd, 2018.

- **Bangladesh Bank**

Bangladesh Bank monitors all commercial public and private banks and non-banking financial institutions. Bangladesh Bank also sends their employees abroad with scholarship for PhD, MBA, Diploma and other training and development programs. They help to promote and establish leadership training institutes and organize seminars and conferences.

- **Bangladesh Armed Force**

Armed force of Bangladesh has taken part in various peace missions in the United Nations. Bangladesh Armed forces learned a lot of management systems since 1988 from United Nations' peace mission. Bangladesh Armed Forces gained popularity all over the world by contributing in the United Nation's peace mission especially during Iraq and Kuwait war.

- **Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority**

Industrialization is the pre-condition for development of any country. For industrialization, the government of Bangladesh established some special industrial areas which are known as export processing zones. The regulatory authority of export processing zone is BEPZA. The vision of BEPZA was "To become a significant contributor for economic development of Bangladesh". We have eight EPZs. BEPZA is providing training for their employees at home and abroad. Garments and apparel sector is the highest priority in the Bangladesh that's why skill is obligatory for keeping the image of this industry to capture foreign markets. For keeping the brand image, different garments companies are also providing executive training to their executives.

- **Private Sectors**

Private sectors are most attractive sectors in Bangladesh. Most of the employment is created by private owners in Bangladesh. Private organizations are facing high competition compared to public organizations. Their employees must be skilled otherwise employees may lose their job. For enhancing the employees' skills, private organizations arrange scholarship and fund for their employee training and development and send them abroad. The following organizations are mostly contributing in the corporate education sector;

- **Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)**

BRAC is the largest NGO around the globe. For educating their employees, BRAC has also taken some initiatives at home and abroad. In Bangladesh, it established BRAC Centre for development management (CDM) at Savar for providing training to their employees. BRAC is

also sending their employees outside the country for training and fulfilling the crisis of future management position. Employees of various government and private organizations come BRAC Centre for development management (CDM) for pursuing their corporate training.

- **Private Commercial Banks**

Some private commercial Banks also facilitate higher education to their employees abroad for placing them in the top management position of bank. Own training institutions of the same banks are also playing a vital role for developing their employees to become a corporate manager. Private commercial banks provide foundation training to employees in their own training institutions.

- **Garments Industry**

The garments and apparel industry is also sending their employees abroad for higher training programs for getting extra priorities in their own industry. Not only garments and apparel industry in Bangladesh is providing corporate training to their employees but also some other companies are providing corporate education to their executives for ensuring their superior quality and innovation.

- **Autonomous Organizations**

Autonomous organization is a type of organization where all decisions of the organization are taken on the basis of organization's policy and needs. Autonomous organizations are enjoying all financial facilities from the state. Bangladesh has some autonomous organizations. For their betterment, the organizations and institutions arrange some training and development programs for developing their corporate executives. Sometimes they also send their employees to educationally and economically developed countries for pursuing higher education with various scholarships. The remarkable autonomous organizations are; Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA), Agriculture Research Institute (ARI), Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR), Public Universities etc. These organizations also provide training and development facility for their employees.

- **Conclusion**

Corporate Education increases employees' skills and productivity indirectly. Most of the employees want to take higher degree from home and abroad for their personal branding. Maximum organizations in Bangladesh don't properly present their personnel information in their website and periodicals. Level best effort has been provided to present the corporate education scenario in Bangladesh. Due to inadequate information about corporate education of different public, private and autonomous organizations of our country, it is quite difficult to present this concept numerically. Researchers can collect adequate information from different sources and analyze about corporate education statistically. Statistical and mathematical analysis will help articulate about corporate education precisely. For getting higher productivity and profitability, corporate education is essential, otherwise organizations may not survive in the long run which will affect our economic development.

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