

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre
Savar, Dhaka
www.bpatc.org.bd

Rapporteur's Report
on
PUBLIC SERVICE DAY 2021

Chairperson: Mr. Md. Monjur Hossain
Rector (Secretary to the Govt.)
BPATC, Savar, Dhaka.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Shah Mohammad Sanaul Hoque
MDS, BPATC

Discussant:
Syed Mizanur Rahman ndc
MDS, BPATC

Mr. Abu Momtaz Saaduddin Ahmed
MDS, BPATC

Rapporteur:
Mehedi Shahnewaz Jalil
Assistant Director, BPATC

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Assistant Director, BPATC

Date: 23 June, 2021

Time: 2:15 pm

Venue: Online Platform (Cisco Webex Meetings)

The Seminar was started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. Mr. Mawlana Md. Ashrafuzzaman, Imam of BPATC Jam E Mosque utters the secret words from the Holy Book where Allah says to judge with justice.

At the very outset of the program, Dr. Md. Ali Mohosin, (Director, PPR) addressed his sincere welcome to all. At the beginning of his address, he paid tribute to the father of the nation and his family who were killed by the miscreants in 1975. He said, this year United Nation is observing the day under the theme of innovating the future public service 'new government models for new era' to reach the SDGs. The aim of the day is to celebrate the value and the virtue of the service to the community. Public servants are recognized and praised for their efforts on Public Service Day. Public Service Days reminds us of the importance of the public service and the people who dedicate themselves everyday to the success of their own nation. He thanked all the public servants of the world who generates and provides public service to the community and in this respect effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are crucial to achieve the sustainable development Goals. Hence talented, knowledgeable, capable, meritocracy in public administration is inevitable. Effective Government is indispensable to reach the SDGs by 2030. The Government of Bangladesh is working relentlessly to turn the country in a development one by 2041. An honest, skilled and meritorious civil servant must play the role to achieve these goals. As a member of the public administration, he wished to devote ourselves utmost sacrifice and sincerity for the welfare for the people of Bangladesh. An innovative, digital, effective, skilled and committed public administration is needed to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people. It is also important to cope with the impact of COVID 19 in future. Prudent, timely and right decision are desired to overcome the health and education service to the nation to face upcoming challenges.

Keynote Speaker:

The Keynote Speaker welcomed the audience connected virtually and started his presentation titled 'Overview and Few Thoughts on UN Public Service Day'. His presentation was started with the famous quote of Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman “সমস্ত সরকারি কর্মচারীকেই আমি অনুরোধ করি, যাদের অর্থে আমাদের সংসার চলে, তাদের সেবা করুন। যাদের জন্য যাদের অর্থে আমরা চলছি, তাদের যাতে কষ্ট না হয়, তার দিকে খেয়াল রাখুন”।

The Keynote Speaker also explained about public administration and public service as well as its necessity to modernize and transform to adapt to today’s needs. Most importantly, the speaker outlined public service in the context of Bangladesh.

He also mentioned the background of UN Public Service Day and the theme of 2021. He discussed about the value of United Nations Public Service Award since 2003 that was reviewed in 2016 to align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The United Nations has postponed the Award giving ceremony this year due to COVID 19 pandemic with a plan to show different initiatives online. The Speaker outlined detailed about the program of UN Public Service Day 2021. It is mentionable that the Ministry of Land of Bangladesh was awarded by the UN the prestigious ‘United Nations Public Service Award’ 2020 in the category of ‘Developing transparent and accountable public institutions’ in recognition of the ‘e-Mutation’ initiative. Finally he pointed out the challenges of public service along with the way forward to meet the challenges as well as to reach its goals (Annexure).

Remarks from the MDS, Abu Momtaz Saaduddin Ahmed:

At the beginning he welcomed all and mentioned some important points the speech of the keynote speaker briefly such as the object of the quality service, UN Public Service Award, Challenges of the Public Service to combat the current situation due to the pandemic and the way forward to resolve the issues.

This year, the United Nations has celebrated the day virtually taking Covid 19 situation under consideration. This event will bring together the key stakeholders, public servants and UN Officials to honor the work of the public servants. He mentioned that the event focuses and discusses on the increasingly centric role that the innovation and

the technology play in the delivery of public services. In doing so examine how to better prepare the future public service for new era to reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It will examine the various approaches of the countries that undertake to equip public servant where the skill is necessary to be effective, responsive and relevant in the digital age. It will also highlight lessons learned from the past years as the many countries have trust on the digital era adopting, using and innovating the mechanisms to continue their work till the pandemic. He also mentioned about some achievements those are already performed. Every year the United Nation organizes ceremony to commemorate the United Nations Public Service Day during which the most innovative initiatives of the public service sectors around the world are recognized. He congratulated and showed his heartfelt regards to the Honorable Prime Minister under whose dynamic leadership the Ministry of Land of Bangladesh has been awarded by the United Nations the prestigious Public Service Award for 2020 in the category of developing transparent and accountable public service institution in recognition to the e-Mutation initiatives. He remember the statement of Ban Ki-moon on the celebration of the day in 2015 that in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government will need to adopt the innovative and integrated approaches everywhere to promote policy change, institutional coordination, participatory decision making and effective, responsive, inclusive and accountable service delivery. Today every country in the world needs to rethink and restructure and operating the model of civil service as the mentor of the third decade of the twenty first century. The next era will see the fundamental changes as to how public servants are hired, trained and retained. We will see more technology being leverage to make better decisions, monitor performance and deliver service and there will be a need in the private sector and wider society to play a bigger role in all aspects of creative public value. The future public services need to be more agile, data thriven and human centric; these are core elements to build future readiness to ensure inclusive policies and responsive services to reduce inequality and to raise trusts for the government. A new public service perspective rooted in democratic theory emphasizes and the accountability to officials to citizens whereby officials serve and respond to citizens rather than steering society. More than ever ongoing COVID 19 pandemic has

highlighted the necessity of robust, responsive and effective public service delivery. General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande in 2020 expressed his opinion on Public Service Day “In discharging its responsibilities and fulfilling its mandates, the public sector must constantly be guided by the finest principles of public administration, notably, altruism, loyalty, dedication, excellence, integrity, responsiveness, and accountability”. The last decade brought about a digital revolution that changed the way we live, work and govern. Technology and data-driven innovation has increased the pace of our daily lives, opened up with information and elevated civil society voices and changed how we solve problems in design policies and deliver services in parallel Governments find themselves under resource constraints pressures and increasing public demands and having to do much more with less resource. In 2020, COVID-19 pandemic was a forced multiplier to distance introducing Government digital service delivery, virtual service terms and even new portfolios. So the recommendations made by the keynote speaker are justified and relevant. He also wished that the day to be observed physically in the next year.

Remarks from the MDS, Syed Mizanur Rahman ndc:

He started his speech by quoting the words of Former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that, "There is no greater challenge than to be a public servant, and there is no greater owner than a public servant." He said the public servants are the eyes, ears, mouth, and sometimes the heads of the Government. He said from the history of public service from ancient to the modern era, this truth is always prevalent. Then, he welcomed all. He expressed his delight as being a public servant and attending the public service day. He also thanked Rector. He said the keynote speaker has traversed the public service domain and piled huge information in front of the audience. He mentioned the speaker's starting and ending with Father of the Nation Bangabandhu's quotations and briefed public service history, day, and theme of public service day 2021. He mentioned that the Keynote speaker also said about the Inevitable existence of innovation in the public service domain and coronavirus pandemic that unsettled the existing balance of the world. He said that the keynote speaker ambitiously put forward the strategies of future public service; as Bangladesh becomes

a role model in the international arena. The Keynote speaker also mentioned the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in this regard. The Keynote speaker also mentioned SDG – Goal 16 specifically and provided some statistics that are very relevant to providing impetus in future policy making of the country and the challenges and way forward. The Discussant expressed thanks and gratitude to the keynote speaker. Then Discussant quoted again from former US President John F Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what can you do for your country." This is one of the mottos for public servants. He then distinguished between Public Service and Civil Service by saying, Civil Servants are all the cadre members of Bangladesh Civil Service, and Public Servants may or may not be cadre officials. For instance, in education, the BCS cadre officials can be civil servants and public servants. Other than that, many local electives and recruitment as other government officials – they can be public servants. The Government has candidly put in front of us some manifesto documents; public servants usually thought to implement manifesto, but one UK Cabinet Secretary said that formulating policy is another important duty of public servants as they advise to political masters. Basic public service earlier was defined with three 'E's –Efficiency, Equity, and Economy. But now, another three 'E's has been added: Equity, Ethics, and Empathy; also, about responsiveness. But finally, what comes to an end is the trust of the people/customers/citizens. It is important to know whether people have trust in public servants. Can people have 100% trust in public servants? – this should be the question asked by every public servant to self. Discussant then said about the UN Code of Conduct which was formulated in 1996. The most important aspect of the code was: Trust of the people, then the efficiency and responsiveness of the Government. Effectiveness is also important. That is why international civil service effectiveness is introduced. The parameters are Capabilities, crisis & risk management, digital service introduction, fiscal & financial management, human resource management, inclusiveness, integrity, openness, policy-making ability, procurement, regulation, and tax administration. He asked about measuring the position of public servants regarding the parameters. He warned us not to suffer complacency, as some points are fingered on us, e.g., the Tax-to-GDP ratio is low compared to neighboring countries. Another challenge is the ease of doing business, inviting, and

fostering FDI. Governance is another issue. But under the leadership of PM Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has achieved a lot. Introduction of many new things, like Public Administration Award. He mentioned "carrot-and-stick" rhetoric (Awards and Punishment) that most institutions didn't have necessary elements of carrot (benefits and opportunities) earlier but have them now. But at the same time, he urged that less-service providers should be punished equally. He mentioned about introduction of APA as well for enabling dynamism and accountability of the Government. He also mentioned NIS, Citizen Charter, GRS, RTI. He particularly mentioned a2i in shaping the civil service of Bangladesh in terms of systems and process simplification, system process engineering/reengineering. For achieving Digital Bangladesh and innovation, a2i's role is fantastic. Then he said, Bangladesh has already become a role model to many countries. Public Servants face a lot of problems during disaster management, emergency, and Covid pandemic also. Field administration is regularly facing these challenges. They're coming up with lockdowns, vaccinations, food & money assistance, a supply of washing and cleaning equipment, and even during the death, they are beside the victim. Although Bangladesh has achieved MDG, attaining SDG is a daunting task. The planning commission of Bangladesh has also working aligning these goals with national policies. Vision 2021, 2041, and Delta Plan are ahead now. 2021 was particularly important due to the Father of the Nation's Centennial birth anniversary celebration, achieving lower-middle developing country status. However, the plan is to achieve Upper developing country status. He hopes for a good future due to having documents of set goals and objectives. Bangabandhu's dream of 'Sonar Bangla' is embedded in these objectives. As a public servant, it is important to implement these. He mentioned good things were written in newspapers nowadays about public service, which is a good thing as previously public servants were rebuked. But at the end of the day, public servants are the End-solutions makers. He expressed his belief that public servants will always be with the people. He hoped for success for Bangladesh and concluded his speech by uttering the words of John F Kennedy again.

Q/A Session

Q-1: Md. Mamun, SRO: During Pandemic, the public sector contributes while the private sector does not; to encourage public servants, wouldn't it be better to award public service officials only?

A-1: Dr. Shah Mohammad Sanaul Haque: Didn't mention anything about giving awards; they suspended face-to-face programs but circulated that UNDISA will award Public Service award in 4 categories.

A-1: Syed Mizanur Rahman ndc: Businessmen, media, NGOs, development partners are all contributing towards pandemic management. It's a team approach, and everybody is doing their part. So, the private sector is not contributing – that statement is not valid.

Q-2: FTC Participant A-106 Mohammad Mozaherul Haque: Due to the suffocating days of Covid-19, the poverty rate in every country, especially in LDCs and developing countries, alarmingly increased. Especially in Bangladesh, privately, it is prescribed that the poverty rate increased by 30% from 20.5% in 2019. My question is that what sort of leadership in the public sector do you revisit and rethink in terms of new perspectives in the Post Covid-19 pandemic to achieve SDG Goal-16?

A-2: Keynote Speaker: Theoretically, leadership traits are prevalent. But due to pandemics, traditional leadership styles need to be changed, and leadership skills in innovation and technology should be adopted. He mentioned the example of PM Sheikh Hasina's foresightedness' to adopt technology for the development of Bangladesh. Civil service has to be innovative, so a diverse set of actions, activities, and policies must be taken.

Q-3: FTC Participant RDA – 1201 Abul Kalam Azad: What role can our education sector have in developing public service?

A-3: Syed Mizanur Rahman ndc: Attaining a perfect role in public service requires the education sector to play a vital role. Because public service requires an evidence-

making decision system today. Also, the requirement of a knowledge-based society. They're also making future leadership of this country. Right now, the need is transformational leadership. Where not only transecting own businesses but as a part of the whole society. The education sector has many essential aspects; although in the competitive area, Bangladesh has done well, there remain some questions in terms of quality of education. It has to improve to achieve SDG or Vision 2021 or 2041. Research is also an important domain. Without innovation and reform in the education sector, goals and objectives set by political masters won't be achieved. Even in the corona situation, schools and colleges went online. Authorities related to the education sector should develop initiatives like this and try to implement innovation and achieve objectives.

Md. Monjur Hossain, Rector, BPATC:

He welcomed everyone and started his speech with Max Weber's quote: "Public Administration is the most general term, while bureaucracy refers to a particular organization from inside the public administration". In other words, he tried to mention that, Public Service or Service Delivery is almost the same. He expressed his satisfaction in attending the program that started a few years back. He also expressed his disappointment not to conduct the program physically but didn't miss the event. He thanked Keynote Speaker; then pointed out that the program itself is a service delivery where the speakers and discussants are the service provider, and the audience is the service recipient. He mentioned the words of Abraham Lincoln: "Public Servants are, Of the People, By the people, For the people." He noted from Keynote Speech that Public Administration is like the Government's Organ/Head/Hands/Brain. Then he said, public servants, are the heart and mind of the Government. They can judge the good things to be done, which is also a duty and responsibility. The need to deliver the best for clients/general people is the desire of the Government. There are many challenges, and public service delivery depends on the private sector, media, and especially clients/customers/accountable to people. Public Administration can only provide good service with the support of other actors as well. In the last one and half years, the public

sector has proved its potentiality in Bangladesh and across the globe. During the pandemic crisis, the world experienced the necessity of the public service provider. So, this year, public service day is carrying a symbolic message. He also mentioned the UN theme for the day. Innovating the future public service meant the necessity of public service delivery. New government models and everything is changing for the last two years; in the future, people might face something challenging and different. In the past two years, public service has gone significant changes like this program is being conducted virtually. Just two years back, it wasn't possible. As public servants, it is crucial to remember that they're agents of change. Public servants should be ready for any modification, which is a big challenge for public service. Almost all the challenges the other speakers have mentioned, but there are other challenges such as mind to serve, Conflict management, and Social Media; in terms of social media, it is either overused, Less used, misused, or optimally used. All public servants should know about these sorts of things. At present, it is impossible to be without touch with social media. Media also plays an important role, which is blended with everyday life. He mentioned speakers who talked about the UN's resolution last year about public service providers. The next era of public service will incorporate how public servants are hired, trained, and retained. Rector mentioned the word 'fired' with the abovementioned 3 points. Public servant's activities are under scrutiny due to the RTI Act, Access to information transparency, and visibility.

Rector went back to his trainee days 29 years ago, saying that Accountability and Transparency were trendy words in BPATC. It is no longer essential to teach these things to participants; because every action is now understandable to general people, and they know what is happening here – like sitting in a glass room where everything is visible and audible. Public servants should be accustomed to the small world during the emerging situation and provide speedy service delivery. He wished the commitment of the participants for the motherland. It is the moral responsibility and utmost duty of public servants when there is an opportunity to represent a nation or work in the international arena to perform jobs successfully. He motivated the participants to do their jobs properly, thanked BPATC and faculties, RPATCs, and other institutions. Encouraged to be an 'agent of change' and concluded the session.