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EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

IN

PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

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Introduction

Employee opinion survey conducted by NIBM (1981-1982)[1] threw up a variety of issues in the area of personnel management in banks. Among other things opinion data pertaining to performance assessment, reward administration and promotion drew our attention from the point of view of employee motivation. In that nationwide survey which covered around seven thousand bank employees, about eighty six per cent of the respondants stated that they were not aware or did not know, specifically on what basis they were being judged in their confidential reports. Moreover about sixty eight per cent (68%) of them also felt that the confidential reports do not reflect their performance on the job. The implications of this state of affairs are quite obvious. If an employee do not know how he is being assessed on his job and if he also has doubts regarding whatever being assessed do not focus on his performance on the job, it is very likely that his motivation to perform would get affected. When attempts were made to feedback this information to the bankers through various programmes like Regional Managers Programme, Advanced Management Programme, the reaction of the management personnel were quick and invariably alike. That is most of them used to argue that "the data base of the opinion survey may lack validity" on

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1 Kulkarni S S, Prakasam R, and Rupam Nagia, Personnel Policies in Banks An Employee Opinion Survey. NIBM, September 1983.

the ground that "when employees do not have access to see what is written on confidential report they can't say what is written about them". There is enough logic in this argument, but there is also a possibility that employees though do not have direct access to get to know about what is written in their confidential reports or appraisal formats, they can as well guess what could have probably gone in their reports on the basis of decisions that follows, especially at time of promotions. If employees perceive some inconsistency between their performance levels and the outcomes, they naturally would tend to suspect the appraisal reports. At the time of promotions, for instance when two out of ten gets promoted, the rest eight are going to feel disappointed and unhappy, however appropriate and objective the decisions may be the disappointed, will generally cast aspirsions on their performance reports, when they are kept confidential. Moreover what matters or governs ones behaviour is his opinion and not what is in store in reality. From this direction it was thought to verify as to why such kinds of opinion form among employees. In view of this a pilot study was undertaken to examine the related personnel policies and practices concerning appraisal and promotion of selected banks. The result of this pilot study[2] indicated that the opinion of employees as revealed in the opinion survey is not ill founded. There is a possibility that the then existing system of employees appraisal in

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[2] Prakasam R. Some Critical Evaluations of Performance Appraisal in Public Sector Banks. A pilot study. NIBM Working Paper, December 1982.

those banks could easily generate such kind of opinion among employees which in the long run will have adverse effects on overall performance. This pilot study results indicated the possibility of initiating certain action in this area among banks. However it was thought essential to get to know more details about the existing systems in all the banks before other developmental works could begin. It is in this context a survey was undertaken to study the existing system of employee performance appraisal in the public sector banks.

The Present Study

The major objectives of this study may be stated as follows.

(a) To survey the existing performance appraisal systems in the public sector banks

(b) To critically evaluate and highlight the major issues involved in employee appraisal

(c) To suggest an integrated model for installing a system of performance appraisal in Banks.

Coverage and Methodology Adopted

Though the study attempted to cover all the nationalized banks only seventeen banks could be studies. Personal visits were made to all the bank head quarters inorder to obtain information about their policies and practices relating to employee appraisal. As promotation is one among the few important personnel functions closely linked with that of appraisal more information about banks' promotion policies and practices automatically gained importance in this study. Apart from collecting documentary evidences relating to above mentioned issues, detailed discussions were held with executives concerned with and incharge of personnel functions of the bank. Individuals thus interviewed generally covered Deputy and Chief officer/Managers of personnel department, Assistant and Deputy General Managers and General Managers all in charge of personnel department. Brief discussions with Chief Executive of the banks also helped a long way in understanding their philosophy towards employee appraisal. A guided questionnaire schedule specially developed for this project came in handy for documenting the responses.

The report summarizing the major observations of this study is presented in three parts. While in Part I the existing state of the art of employee appraisal in most of the banks is presented Part II of the report presents the critical evaluation of the present system and highlights the major issues involved. An integrated model for installing along with the immediate task ahead are discussed in the concluding part (Part III) of the report.

Part I: APPRAISAL SYSTEMS AS ON TODAY - A STATUS REPORT

Performance Appraisal as a Regular Personnel Function

All the seventeen banks surveyed (including Reserve Bank and State Bank of India) do have one kind or the other formal system of employee performance appraisal. For the award staff and in some cases for subordinate staff also, the systems of confidential reporting still continues. But, for officers the nomenclature of confidential reporting is far disappearing. Baring only one bank, in all other banks it is being called as performance appraisal system, though most of them maintain the confidentiality. In most of the banks it is a regular function mostly once in a year with almost fixed time period regarding supply of forms and fixed time limits for return, almost specified departments/cells which looks after this function etc. The various purposes for which the appraisal system is being used normally includes promotion, identification of training and development needs and to certain extent for manpower plann ing. However almost all the banks excepting two, are utilizing perfor- mance appraisal mainely as a tool for the promotion exercises. On the contrary two banks as at the time of survey were using appraisal purely for developmental purpose and not for promotion exercises.

Appraisal and Promotion

To analyse the linkage between appraisal and promotion, the promotion policy of the banks needs to be understood. The element of performance on the job and recognition of the same by relating it with promotional opportunities has been laid down as one among the various

Pillai Committee recommendations. Within the given framework, however, the extent of weightage given to performance on the job at the time of promotion varies from scale to scale within the banks and between banks as well. For instance in a particular bank weightage given for performance for promotions from Scale I to II is 50, for Scale II to III it increases to 70 and for Scale III to IV it still rises upto 100. Likewise within a bank the weightage given to performance does vary from scale to scale. This normally increases as the grades or scales increases. Similarly while in this example the weightage given is 50 for Scale I to II, for other banks the weightage assigned varies considerably.

While job performance is given certain percentage of weightage as discussed earlier, assessment of such stated performance is not done always with appraisal formats. In otherwords, it appears that usually for 'Performance' a written test to test job knowledge, an interview to assess potential and also appraisal information for exhibited performance are the things normally constitute for the aggregate measure of 'Performance'. Naturally, then, the ultimate weightage given to Appraisal Forms or Reports gets further reduced. An illustration for selected banks is given in table 1. The table indicates (a) weightage given to overall performance and (b) weightage assigned to Appraisal Reports/Forms for scale I to II and II to III etc for selected banks.

It may be observed from the table that weightage assigned to overall performance at the time of promotions from scale I to II ranges from 30 to 70 across banks. However the weightage given to appraisal reports or forms ranges from 10 to 70. One could observe that there is considerable decline in the quantum of weightage given to performance appraisal. However the significance of appraisal formats in terms of relative weightage given increases as the scales go up, it is invariably near 100% at the senior and top management levels in two of the eleven banks for which data was available. Most of the banks however give a weightage of around 50 to 60%.

As mentioned earlier the relative weightage given to performance as measured through appraisal format is relatively much lower (only 10 in the case of three banks, 15 in one bank, 20 in case of two other banks etc at the time of promoting officers from scale I to scale II of the eleven banks for which promotion policy was available). The question now arises that, especially at the lower levels like scale I to scale II, how much importance the employee will attribute to performance appraisal, when the weightage given to it is just minimum. If regular appraisal can be seen as a motivational tool to keep up performance standards, then it may be necessary that importance attached to the same is concreately seen as significant one.

Table 1. Weightage given to overall Performance Vs Appraisal Formats

Banks	Scale I to II		II to III		III to IV		IV to V		V to VI		VI to VII	
	Per*	P.Apl**	Per	P.Apl	Per	P.Apl	Per	P.Apl	Per	P.Apl	Per	P.Apl
A	60	20	70	40	80	50	100	60	100	60	100	60
B	55	15	55	25	70	30	90	40	100	50	100	50
C	70	70	80	80	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
D	65	30	75	40	80	45	100	60	100	60	100	60
E	50	10	60	30	70	40	100	60	100	60	100	60
F	45	45	45	45	45	45						
G	30	30	50	30	80	40	100	60	100	60	100	60
H	50	20	70	35	100	60	100	60	100	60	100	60
I	40	40	50	50	110/150	60	100	100	100	100	100	100
J	55	10	60	30	75	40	100	50	100	60	100	60

* PER - overall performance including written test, interview, appraisal etc

** P.APL - appraisal formats

Appraisal Formats Content and Context

Prior to analysing the content and context of appraisal formats, it may have to be mentioned that most of the banks surveyed are thinking of revising or already in the process of redesigning not necessarily the structure and content of the form but the system itself. Almost all the banks are seriously concerned about it and are at various stages in their developmental, revision exercises. This report however for the purpose of analysis, has taken into consideration the kind of system that is being currently followed. Banks where the past system had been discontinued has not been included in this analysis.

Number of formats being used for the appraisal purposes range from one single format to as many as ten different formats among the eighteen banks for which information is available. Banks having more than one form seem to have decided on the number of formats on the basis of broad classification of officers. Normally these classification fall under broad categorizations like officers in administrative/control offices, officers at the branches, managers in branches, departmental heads in administrative offices, specialist officers etc. These kinds of groups are done primarily to provide appropriate frames of reference and criteria for measurement/assessment.

Self Appraisal

Nine of the eighteen banks have self appraisal. Most of these self appraisals are in the nature of giving an opportunity to the employee to describe about the accomplishments on the job during the period under review. Only one bank tried providing opportunity for the employee to rate himself quantitatively on a linear scale on various dimensions. This self rating again gets moderated by immediate boss, and once more by a reviewing authority whenever the immediate boss tends to disagree with an officer's self rating. This procedure however seem to have created the problems like almost uniform exaggerated self ratings etc and hence has been withdrawn now. Other than this none of the banks surveyed seem to be having provisions where the appraisee himself awards quantitative ratings.

In those eleven banks where officers appraise themselves, the normal pattern seen is that the immediate superior (normally called as reporting officer) appraises an employee by assigning certain scores on various dimensions. The appraisal format then goes to the next higher up official (normally termed as reviewing authority) who moderates the scoring if necessary and counter signs. In the rest of the banks the question of self appraisal does not arise.

In most of the cases the pattern one could observe is a model like a reporting officer who appraises his subordinate officer and passes the appraisal report to his immediate boss (Reviewing Authority). Reviewing authority normally verifies reporting authorities remarks and ratings, approves, modifies or ask for clarifications whenever he may have disagreements with ratings given. When reviewing authority's counte: sign is obtained it is presumed appraisal for that individual for the concerned year is completed.

As regards the role of reporting authority is concerned not much of a variation could be seen across banks. But the role of Reviewing Authority seem to vary considerably between banks and clarity of such roles is not always as one would wish it to be. While in some banks reviewing authority is supposed to function as a counter check for the subjectivity, leniency or otherwise of the reporting officer, in other banks reviewing authority's role becomes a part of the exercise before giving a final rating to an appraisee. In otherwords the reviewing authority along with reporting officer completes the rating for an individual. In few other banks it is only the reviewing authority who gives the final rating and not the reporting officer. In most of the banks where the reviewing authority has some disagreement with the rating given by the reporting officer, he has to back up his argument with providing additional information by way of reasons as why he feels so.

In certain cases, over and above this structure of reporting and reviewing authorities, the assistant general manager (personnel) also counter signs the appraisal reports of each and every employee.

In some banks apart from this a super structure is also provided by way of special committees. In most of the banks which all has these provisions, the committee becomes operative more so at the time of promotional exercises than in normal course of time. In some of the banks these promotion committees primarily do the function of assessing the potential of an officer at the time of promotion by conducting interviews. However they also do the function of verifying the appraisal formats of the concerned employees, more so to moderate the ratings given by the reporting and reviewing officers. They also look into the regiona imbalances if any in terms of ratings given. This is other words form a part of counter check against reporting/reviewing authorities leinancy.

The Content

So far a description about the existing structure and procedure of the appraisal system has been made. An attempt will be made, here after, to have a closer look at how the forms look like, and what kind of information these formats seek and how the scoring is being done.

As mentioned earlier, the number of formats being used vary from bank to bank and so also the major focus or the content of such forms. Not only there are wide variations between banks, within bank itself the focus varies from form to form. If one were to attempt grouping and classifying the various characteristics/traits/dimensions being covered by different banks one may land up with a list of as many as more than thirty categories. However it could be observed that some dimensions seem to be used more often by many banks. These dimensions include job knowledge, resourcefulness, relationship skills, dependability, organizing ability etc. While this is so as regards skills and abilities are concerned, performance on the job also figures not necessarily in all the banks. In the case of branch managers business performance achieved becomes relatively the major factor being considered. As regards number of items one could see in the formats, the range is rather quite large. There are formats which consists of just three to five items other than biodata and there are forms which contains as many as thirty to forty different items.

Ratings

Ratings given to each of these items in the formats normally are on four to five point scales ranging from excellent/outstanding to below average or unsatisfactory. In some banks these individual items are grouped under three different headings like job performance, technical skills and human skills and the total marks/weightage given to appraisal formats gets divided to each of these sections, not necessarily equally. The individual item scores are rarely added up to arrive at the total score for a particular category/grouping.

In most of the cases, no mechanism has been provided to arrive at a subtotal score/rating for a particular dimension being assessed. Once again almost in all the banks there is no built in provision to quantitatively arrive at the final rating with the help of the subdivision ratings or individual item ratings. These final ratings again are normally on a five point or six point scale ranging from outstanding to very unsatisfactory.

Appraisal Feedback

With a solitary exception of one bank in all other banks there is no possibility for an appraisee to get to know what is written about him or what rating he has obtained in his appraisal format. Of course, many banks follow the procedure of bringing to his notice about his shortcomings/weakness or in case if had obtained below standard or unsatisfactory ratings. In another bank however the practice of informing outstanding performances is being followed. However in the same bank the bulk of the individuals who get around normal or average ratings do not have an opportunity to get to know about the assessments. Even the only bank which had provision for self rating has, as mentioned earlier, withdrawn this procedure due to certain difficulties faced by them.

In two to three banks it could also be observed that while a reporting authority gives the rating it is the reviewing authority who gives feedback (in case of unsatisfactory ratings) to the concerned officers.

To this extent the appraisal exercises are kept confidential- In a way it almost looks like an elaborated confidential report with detailed performance, skill and behaviour measurements.

Periodicity and Return Rate

Few banks does appraisal exercise only at the time of promotion. That is appraisal gets done as a part of promotion exercise and not as a regular personnel function. In most of the banks however it is being done as a regular function and at the time of promotion the candidate's formats are being looked into. Many a time in such appraisal, ratings pertaining to a period of past three years are taken into consideration. In two banks appraisal is done twice a year whereas in the rest it is only an annual feature.

Timing of this exercise is linked with the annual increment dates of the individuals. In such cases the date of return gets widely distributed through out the year. In many other banks, the timing for the return of forms is normally fixed, in some cases for all the category of employees and in some banks different fixed months for different category of employees.

As regards the return rate is concerned the banks experiences are not alike. In some cases nearly one hundred percent of return rate has been reported while in many banks the return rate seem to be satisfactory and for few banks figuring around only thirty to forty percent.

Information Storage and Retrieval

Usually the informations obtained are kept at the concerned departmental chief at the head office. However the maintenance of the same is not being done in such a way that retrieval becomes easier. In many banks it is kept along with personal files individually and in some banks appraisal forms are just grouped together for every year separately. In two to three banks appraisal format information are linked with the personnel inventory formats and gets updated every year. In one bank the appraisal ratings gets reguraly recorded at the personal inventory cards.

PART II

A CRITICAL EVALUATION AND ISSUES INVOLVED

A critical look at the status and functioning of the existing system of employee appraisal surfaces variety of issues involved while designing, developing and installing or revising and modifying the same. This part of the paper addresses itself to raise few critical questions and highlight the significant issues for a detailed discussion.

Appraisal objectives

Before moving into specific issues it may be proper and essential to ask a fundamental question as 'why appraisal'. In other words, the broad objectives or the purposes of the appraisal system has to be clear. The observation of the survey, however, is that in most of the banks the objectives of appraisal system does not seem to be very clear or at least not clearly spelt out. An element of confusion seem to be prevailing about the purposes and utilization of the same. Though most of the banks do utilize the same for promotional exercises, the claims being made to utilize the same for training and developmental purposes are not very clearly spelt out.

In case a bank wants to have an appraisal system for the purposes of reward administration and promotion, it becomes necessary to make all the linkages proper and also make it known to the employees. Similarly if a bank wants to utilize performance appraisal for the purposes of employee development, let them do so provided they have made sure that through appraisal the developments actually starts happening, or at least ensure enough ground that developmental efforts can at least begin. In many cases it appears that the various purposes for which the banks claim to utilize appraisal information, are purely due to availability of information and not because informations were sought for such specific purposes.

It was also observed that bankers do feel that appraisal system does serve as a controll mechanism to influence subordinates behaviour. Many bankers honestly expressed their fealing that appraisal system gives at least some hold over employees, though it was no where near to objectives of the system in their banks. This indicates how diversified the objectives of the appraisal becomes, though as per the stated policy it is not so. Not only it becomes essential to make ourselves very clear as to why we want an appraisal system, for what purposes we are going to utilize the information, it becomes all the more important to communicate the same to employees. From this frame work may be it is time for us to ask ourselves as are we clear as what we want from the system, what kind of utilization we are going to make use of and have we taken enough step to communicate the same to employees (other than sending circulars).

<u>What are we trying to assess through appraisal?</u>

As we had seen in Part I of this paper, wide variations between banks could be observed as regards the content of appraisal formats. One important observation is that many banks have gone away from trait appraisal, though not completely. While some banks seem to focus more on skills and ability of individuals others seem to emphasize on performance dimensions on the job. While in some cases emphasis is relatively more on the quality and effort put in, few banks seem to rate employees on the basis of results achieved.

We may have to apply ourselves more to this task of logically and convincingly arriving at what exactly we are attempting to measure and why a particular dimension and not the other.

Job knowledge and various skills like relational skills, organizing ability, etc. are being included in the appraisal formats probably under the assumption that these skills and job knowledge are essential for effective performance. But do we assume that mere presence of these skills and job knowledge will improve the job performance? Not necessarily so. In which case why are we focusing on job knowledge and various skills, in case we are interested in measuring performance?

From this plane we may move over to the next in terms of actual performance on the job. If we were to focus on the job performance, then do we agree that it will reflect in the output or result achieved? In which case why not to focus on results achieved than on performance? Many a times it also happens that ones' performance depends on variety of factors including certain things that are beyond his control. In such conditions, then, it may be that we will have to focus more on whether the individual had put in enough 'effort' or attempted to do, than to focus on real performance. If we were to focus on 'effort' then are we not tending to focus on his will to perform or motivation to perform? In which case won't it be possible to measure employee motivation on a different plane using different techniques other than through appraisal?

In short we have to be clear as what exactly we want to measure - ones' capabilities and skills or attempt and effort or performance or results achieved. This will become clear only when we are sure why we are assessing - for maintenance and control or for administration of reward and promotion or for developmental purposes.

Who should decide what one should do?

Another fundamental question that rises is that who should decide as what one individual employee say a branch manager should do? Are there any policy statements, or is it that the concerned regional manager should be the person who will decide or is it that the branch manager himself is the best person to decide what he is supposed to do. Once certain concensus can be arrived at in this issue, other problems discussed earlier will get atleast partly solved.

In a present day environment, it appears that officers at many levels either at the branches or at the administrative offices, though are busy with variety of different kinds of work, clarity about what is expected of each one or at least by each role or position seem to be very much lacking. This lack of role clarity seem to perculate right upto the gross root level. This naturally surfaces another important question that do executives know specifically what is expected of their subordinate officers? For instance consider any dyad like Regional managers and Branch Manager, or Branch managers and an officer or a chief officer or departmental head and an officer in administrative department - though, in all these cases some sort of unwritten understanding about what kind of activities the subordinate officer is expected to do, do exist, specific identification of roles and responsibilities are very much lacking. Whatever unwritten agreement exists between a superior and subordinate seem to have come into existance mostly by mere habit than by any logical sequence. In other words, if one is not clear as what he expects from his subordinate, it will be extremely difficult for him to assess and hence he should in no way, logically speaking try to assess his subordinate.

Can expectations be communicated?

Extending the same logic it also becomes equally important that a subordinate also should know what is expected of him in his current role. It becomes much more important that he should know what his immediate superior, who invariably his appraiser, expects of him. Very often, it appears, that a superior and a subordinate seem to have different frames of reference and hence do considerably vary in their opinion as what is expected of the subordinate and this invariably leads to disagreement on 'the goodness' of subordinates' performance. This creates series of problems at the time of performance assessment or appraisal. If it is so, will it be worthwhile to examine the possibility of communicating to the employee right from the begining what is expected of him? More probing is necessary before any suggestion could be made.

Structure of Appraisal Administration

As it was discussed in part I, the normally seen practice is that a reporting officer who appraises a subordinate, and a reviewing authority who reviews the reporting officers ratings. This rises few issues. What is the role of reviewing authority? Is it to verify reporting officers' capacity to rate or leinancy? In which case it is the reporting officer who should get the rating and not the appraisee.

In many occasions the reviewing authority sits and functions from some where either in the regional or head office, and has no access even to know what the concerned appraisee does or how he does, but still fills up the appraisee's formats. How reliable or authentic this rating can be, can easily be imagined. Very often the provision for reviewing authority is there in the system because that is how the banks have seen appraisal being done in other organizations, and not because they felt a specific need for the same.

In other words, the role of reviewing authority is, incase felt as a need, to protect the reliability or validity part of appraisal done by reporting authority, one may have to answer the question of are there any other ways through which this can be taken care of instead of bringing in another official to sit on judgement? This needs further clarification and discussion like should we have a three tier, four tier system at all?

In some banks a high level committee sits on judgement about the reporting/reviewing authority's judgements. What kind of data base do the committee have to modify previous ratings is not known. Should there be a need for such a super committee, its role and responsibilities should clearly be spelt out keeping inview the roles and responsibilities of the reporting and reviewing authorities.

In most of the cases, the reviewing authority has to back up with evidences and explanations in case he disagrees with reviewing officers reports. This itself, invariably creates an atmosphere where almost in all the cases the reviewing authority simply goes along with the reporting officer, thus evading the importance or significance of his role.

Usage of rating scales and rating mechanisms

It has become a common practice to use four or five point rating scales, usually ranging from excellent or outstanding to very poor or unsatisfactory alternatives. Unfortunately what is excellent for one rater may not mean the same for another. One way of overcoming this, as could be seen in few cases, is by introducing behaviourally ancored scales. But then the questions of how to, and who has to decide what is good behaviour etc. arise. Should it be done by the designer of the format or could there be some other ways?

As mentioned in Part I, many a times no provision is made to automatically arrive at the final rating through sub scale ratings. Is not it logical to expect that the overall rating will reflect what is being rated via subscales. If so why not make provisions for computing the aggregate scores through subscores?

The question of experimentation

When convincing answers are ready for the variety of questions one can think of, then implementing any system becomes easier. But in the case of policies, procedures and practices relating to managing men, all the questions cannot be answered that convincingly. That is why attempts to verify the working of certain innovations or new ways of doing things via experimentation becomes important, especially in systems like performance appraisal. However in many banks, baring a few, the need for experimentation seem to have not been felt. There are banks which seem to have just jumped at a new model and started installing all at once. There are banks which wanted new systems to be developed and installed within couple of weaks time.

In case a bank is convinced that they like changes and improvements in the existing way of appraising people, then, after having attempted a model, the question of experimenting with the same and verifying the outcomes as expected, has to be appreciated.

Is it necessary each and every bank should experiment? Can we learn from other similar experiments? Is it that the very experiment can have a 'Hawthorne effect' for the full project to become more acceptable and successful?

<u>Will it influence Employee Performance and Behaviour?</u>

Either we install a system for the purposes of reward/promotion administration or for the development of employees or for both, it may be worthwhile to ponder as what kind of influence such an appraisal will have on the overall job behaviour of employees. In case an employee knows what is expected of him and is also sure of how is going to be assessed, and if he is also aware as what will follow by such performance, is there a possibility that he will look upon his performance on the job with more seriousness? Will it increase the tendency in him to take up more responsibility and show initiative? And in case he is sure that his desires to learn new jobs and shortcomings will be ducly taken note of to help him overcome the same by suitable developmental programmes by the banks, would he come out of his shell and try to be more open and free?

Will a proper appraisal by itself be an attempt of HRD?

Assuming that a variety of issues are settled with fairly convincing answers and provisions, and an appraisal system has been developed for installation, may be it becomes a HRD effort by itself. For instance, through job descriptions and role analysis, fairly clear understanding is achieved about the duties and responsibilities of various categories of jobs, naturally half the battle is won by way of bringing in clarity in objectives. Then superior-subordinate expectations finds a ground and the possibilities for conflict becomes minimized. Simalarly once awareness is created in both the parties about not only what is expected but also how it will be assessed is clear, then measurement becomes easier. This concensus makes both the parties together responsible for subordinates behaviour and inturn the overall outcome. This develops more mutual trust and confidence and an exhibition of conscious effort on the part of everyone for the growth and development of individuals and organization as such. If these sort of chain reactions are possible then may be a open comprehensive appraisal itself may provide enough impetus for the whole HRD efforts. Are we prepared for this total approach? In case we are, then what are the other organisational requirements we need, structurally, functionally and even at policy levels?

Linkages with other systems

In case a bank wants to use appraisal system more for training and development of individuals, as many banks do claim, do we have enough organizational linkages for the same? When employees weaknessess and shortcomings are identified, do they get regularly documented and individuals sent for such kind of training programmes? Do our courses in the training colleges get designed taking these things into consideration?

Credibility of a system

Having developed a comprehensive system how do we develop conscious efforts to gain the confidence of employees. May be it depends on to what extent the appraisal is seen objective enough. Probably the biggest problem that arises in the whole process is the involvement of the ultimate 'human' rating at one stage or the other. It is at this stage the faith in the system either gets strengthened or weakened. In this context one more related issue comes into focus in terms of evaluater biases. It is natural some will be linient, some will be strict and hence the variations in ratings. What is more harming is the influence of personal likings and dislikings on the ultimate ratings. What can be done to take care of this human error or 'evaluator bias'?

Not necessarily the immediate rates can bias the ratings, attimes the management itself or significant people in the higher ups themself may show this bias and affect the ratings. Mention of one case may be in line here. Recently in a particular bank the feedback sent to an officer consisted negative statements in almost all the items in the format. When further probed, as how come he is so bad in too many things, the executive incharge gave an explanation that "it is only due to some powerful influences he entered the bank, and he naturally deserves much lesser level of posting than what he really is". In this case the bank have found the appraisal format a convenient tool to take care of what was otherwise not possible by them. This may be taken as a concrete case on how the credibility of the system can get tinkered with.

Summary of Issues raised

The various issues raised in this part of the paper may be summarised as follows. Before attempting to develop a new system or revise the existing one, may be we are to clarify various issues like

I What are the specific objectives of the system?

II Can appraisal be looked upon as a process of HRD?

III Is the organization prepared for it, are other personnel functions geared to it?

IV If a superior is not clear about what he expects from his subordinate, can he assess him?

V Is it necessary to keep an individual informed of what has been appraised of him

VI How do we take care of rater biases?

VII Are there ways in which an employee can be informed about him without making him defensive?

VIII Do we need to experiment before installing?

IX Who should develop the formats?

PART III

AN INTEGRATED MODEL FOR EMPLOYEE APPRAISAL

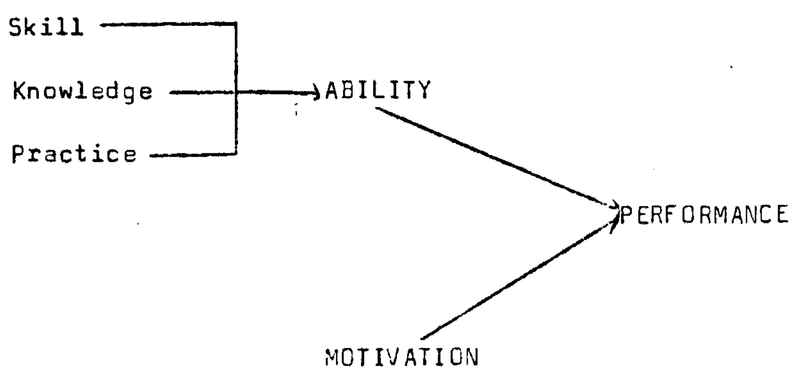
So far we had seen the way employee appraisal programmes are being conducted in various banks. We had also verified the various issues arising out of such programmes as they exist today. Unless these issues are tackled properly the appraisal programmes may not deliver the goods. In other words, there is a need to revise, modify the existing systems or in some places develop totally a new programme which would have answers to many questions raised at the part II of this report.

While the issues identified so far are arising out of the system as they exist today, it may be in line here now to go into the basic issues of performance appraisal as such. In view of this, this part of the report, first and foremost discusses employee performance appraisal as a process, the basic requirements for the same, and then moves on to the attempts of answering tackling the issues rised earlier and at the concluding part the immediate action required by the banks are also highlighted.

Determinants of Performance

Before going further, we may dwell on certain basic theoretical models. In other words let us have a look at what is performance and what factors do determine employee performance. If we are to appraise or measure an employee's performance, it is inevitable that we should take into consideration the various forces or factors that influence or determine one's performance. The often mentioned and well accepted model, as stated in figure one indicates that an individuals' performance depends upon his ability and motivation or will to perform. If it is so then, we should be clear as what exactly we are measuring, is it that we are concerned about his motivation level, ability level or both. As any appraisal programme will have as its ultimate objective improvement of employee performance which leads to overall organizational performance, it is logical that the appraisal programmes should include all the factors that go into the domain of performance determinants.

Fig. 1. Basic Model of Performance Determinants

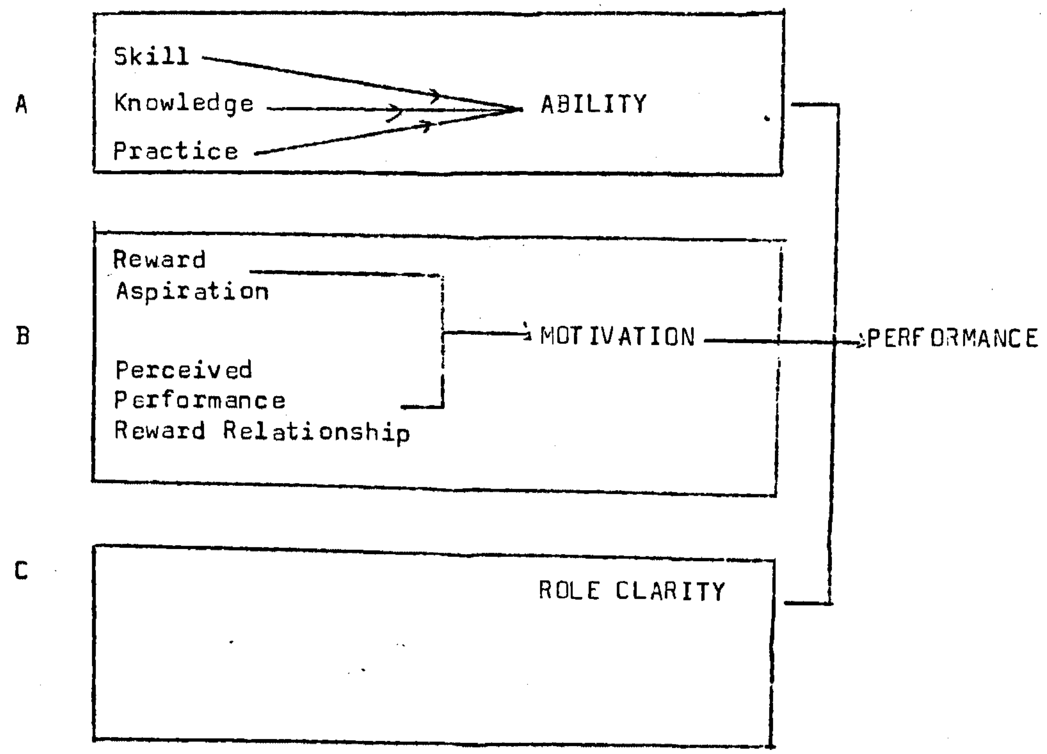


In short, appraisal should include ability and motivation. As level of motivation becomes difficult to measure, we may compromise with measuring performance outcomes as proxy to motivational levels, ofcourse with an assumption that ability level is taken for granted to be alright or at an acceptable level.

As regards ability, we may consider skill, knowledge and practice as subcomponents and hence, assessment would normally include these factors as well.

From this basic understanding we may move over into the next stage as mentioned in figure two.

Fig. 2 Determinants of Performance



Apart from ability and motivation another important factor that may affect one's performance on the job is his own clarity as what is expected of him on the job. In other words clear perception of one's roles and responsibility or role clarity also go a long way in determining one's performance.

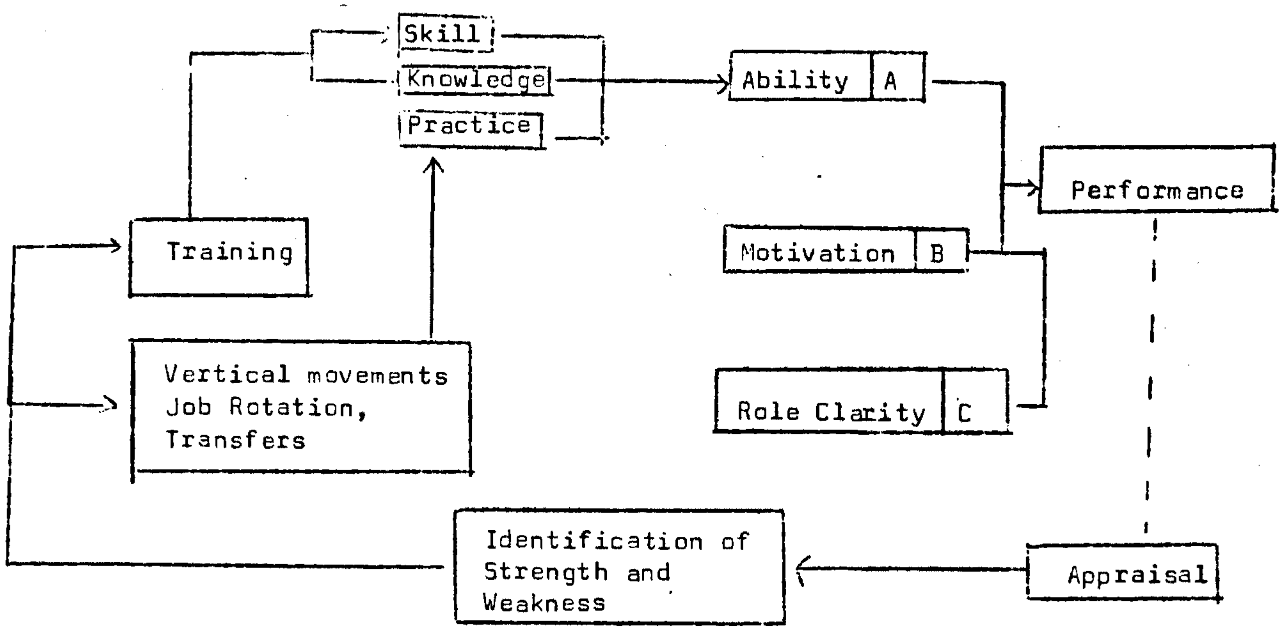
In figure it is also shown as what factors would normally affect one's motivation level. In short it may be stated that one's motivation to do a particular task gets determined by what kind of reward aspirations he has as a result of performance outcomes, and to what extent he is sure that the rewards will actually follow the performance outcomes.

For the sake of convenience, the major three factors namely ability, motivation and role clarity which affect performance, has been labelled in separate boxes namely 'A', 'B' and 'C' and in the discussions to follow we will pick up each box for further indepth discussion and relate it with process of appraisals.

<u>Ability, Performance and Appraisal</u>

We may begin with box 'A' of figure 2 that is the ability part of performance. When appraisal includes reviewing the ability of an individual, then, we get certain data regarding the individuals capabilities, strengths, weaknesses and shortcomings, presence or absence of certain skills and practices required for doing the particular job. This information base from appraisal formats would then, enable us to make the necessary corrective or developmental efforts. (The flow chart of this part of the discussion is presented in figure 3).

Fig. 3 (A) Ability, Performance and Appraisal



The nature of such corrective actions could be in terms of either providing training opportunities to strengthen an individuals' skill or knowledge part of it, or to route him through proper job rotation practices to enhance his practical on the job experiences, or even through transfer to better utilize his strengths and capabilities.

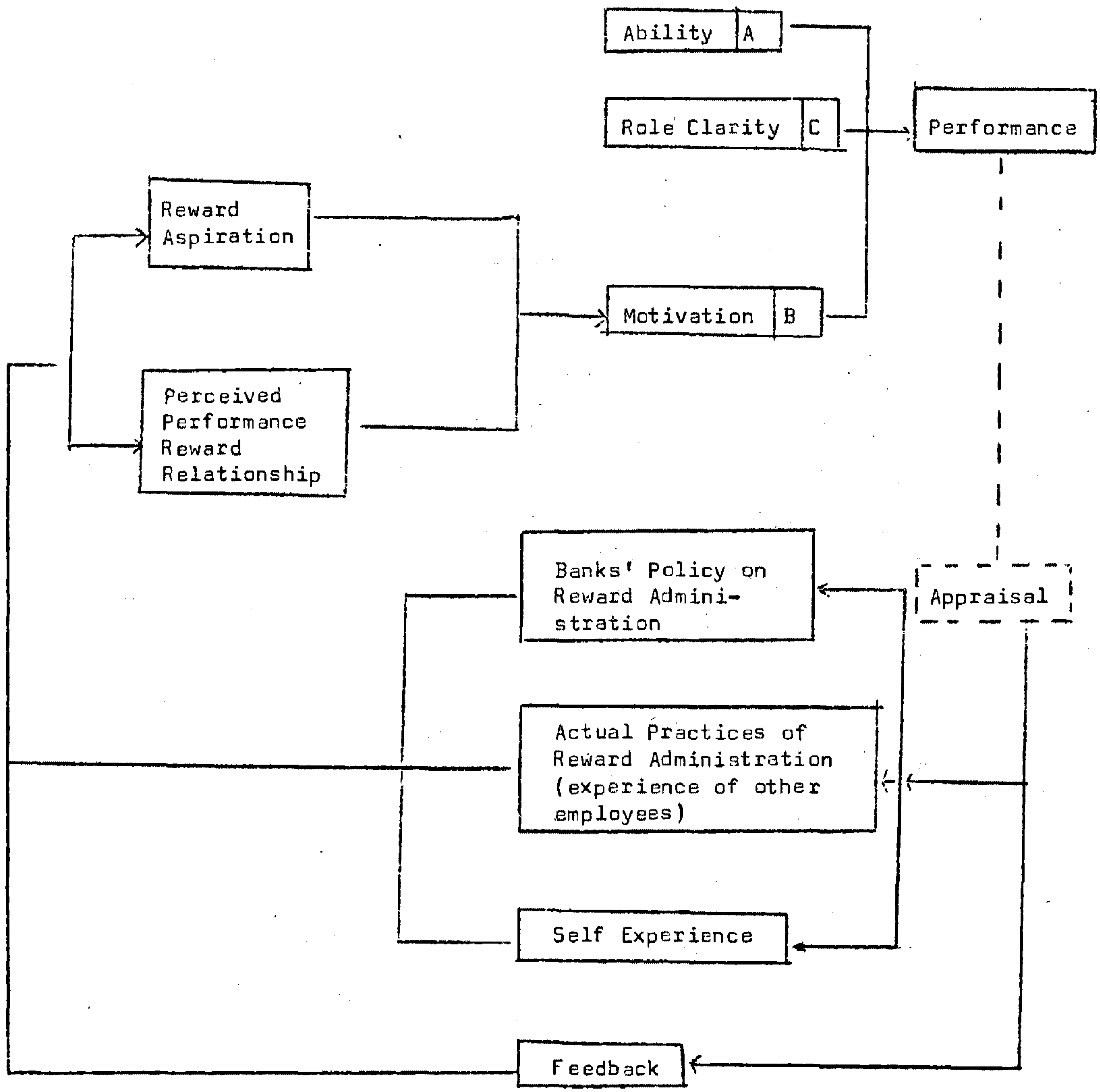
If this is to happen, then the following has to be ensured. That is the appraisal system and the formats should be in a position to clearly and objectively identify the strength, weakness and training needs of the employees. Then, this information should be stored in an ongoing basis in certain places, should be retrieved periodically by the bank, and this information should serve as the basis on which the banks training programmes should be developed.

B. Motivation - Performance and Appraisal

We now shall turn to the motivation component of the model. For this purpose we have to go into the various factors that influence an employees motivation level, and also discuss in brief how these various factors can be controlled, and what role appraisals can play in influencing these factors. This part is described in figure 4.

As stated earlier, one's level of motivation gets determined by among others, two important factors namely, (a) the kind of reward associated with performance outcomes, and the individuals' level of aspirations for such rewards, and (b) the performance-reward relationships and the possibility of such accurances in reality as perceived by the individuals.

Fig. 4. Motivation, Performance and Appraisal



As shown in figure 4, these two factors can, to a greater extent be influenced by the organization, mostly so by appraisal programmes. If the existing promotion policy has provisions to recognize performance on the job as one among the most important criteria for promotion, and not only that, if organizations can take steps to communicate the same to employees, it is very likely reward aspirations of the individual can greatly be influenced. In other words if the appraisal programme emphasizes on performance standards to be considered as essential parametre for promotion, and if employees car made to honestly feel that there is some concrete reward they may achieve by doing excellent work, it is very likely their willingness to work will get influenced.

Secondly, though there may exist such policy provisions of linking performance with promotion, if employees, some how or the other, do not see consistancy between policy and practices, then again employee will do good work will get affected. Hence any organizations' responsibility does not simply end in formulating and installing a policy, but lies mostly in bringing about consistant objective practice of the same. This becomes more crucial in the case of activities like performance appraisal. Apart from basic faith in the system and preparedness to excercise practices purely on objective basis, by keeping appraisal process open and by providing constant feedback, employees can be impressed upon about the consistancy between policy claims and real life practices.

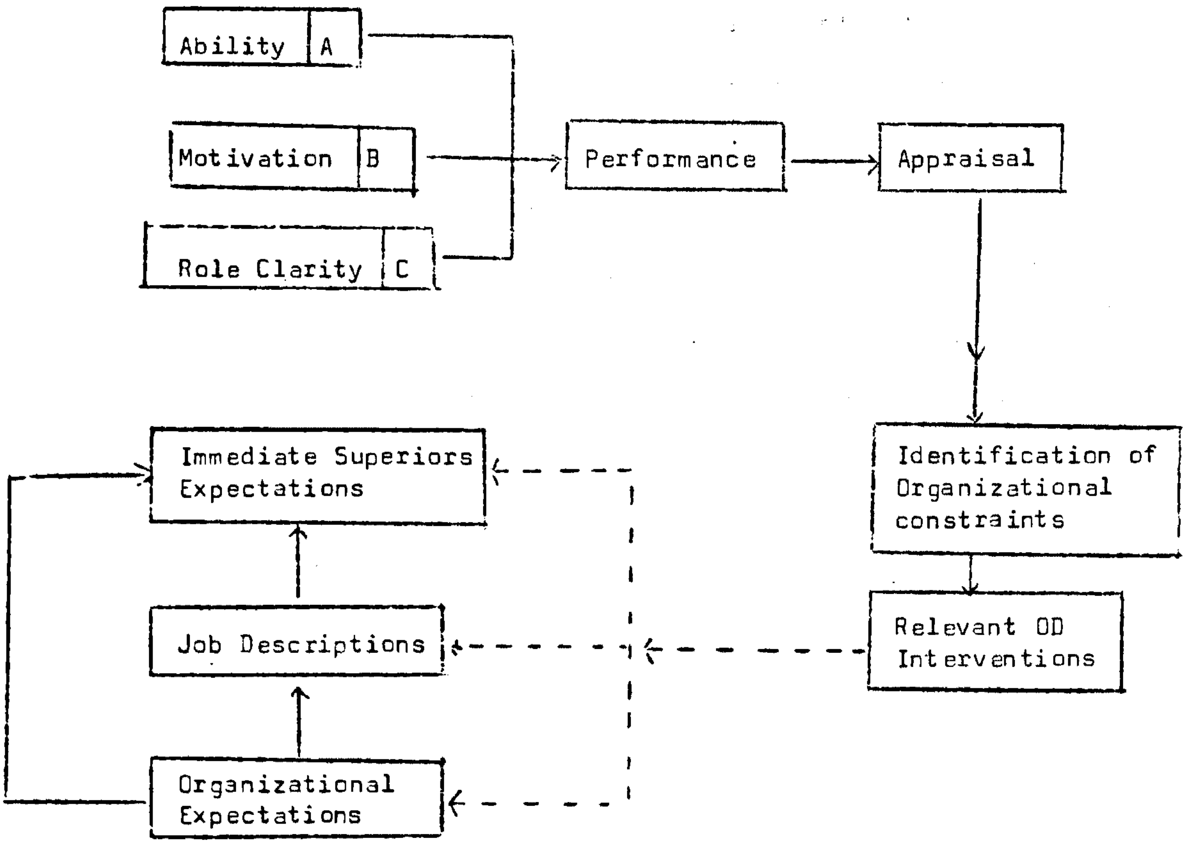
In the absence of 'openness', or in the presence of confidentiality, employees simply tend to form opinion about appraisal systems and that becomes their self (biased) experience. This can be overcome partly by keeping the system as open as possible, that is employees getting first hand information about what is being rated about them and why they get or did not get promotion etc.

While this is so regarding self experiences, individuals also do form opinion on the basis of what they see happening to others in the organization. In case in a branch or a department, employees generally agree about the hardworking efficient nature of a particular officer, and at the time of promotion exercise, somehow if this particular officer was left out of promotion, immediately most of the employees will start suspecting the objectivity or trust worthyness of the appraisal programme. Apart from keeping it open which can partly solve the problem, it becomes very essential in this context to develop measures, which will not only reflect the actual performance on the job, but will have provisions to increase objectivity at the time of assessment. This is easily said than done. This obviously requires a lot of homework as the part of the management while deciding on the parametres for evaluation and while designing the formats and structure of appraisal administration.

C. Role Clarity, Performance and Appraisal

Now let's turn over to part 'C' of our model. As mentioned earlier, apart from ability and motivation, role clarity about what is expected of an individual on the job also greatly affects ones' performance on the job. How this kind of role clarity can be brought about, and the significance of the same in appraisal programmes are presented in figure 5.

Fig. 5 Role Clarity, Performance and Appraisal



An individuals' clarity about his role and responsibilities in an organization is greatly governed by immediate superiors expectations. Superiors expectations about a particular subordinate, in turn, is governed by, in case it is available, the job descriptions for the various roles and category of positions. Obviously these job descriptions are made owing to the requirements of organizations keeping in line with the objectives of the organization.

Despite having a clear job description for various positions, which greatly enhances role clarity of the employees and hence his performance, many a times it can also happen that certain employees' performance may get affected due to certain organizational constraints. A proper appraisal system should have provisions to retrieve these information from appraisal formats. Moreover, the information base thus created should constantly be reviewed, and if necessary the relevant organizational developmental efforts should begin. This would naturally in turn help alter, if necessary, the existing job descriptions and superiors' expectations such process ultimately should result in removing the organizational constraints experienced by the employees, and they get facilitated to perform better.

The discussions so far generated via figure 1 through figure 5, and more specially the later ones (figure 3, figure 4 and figure 5) may be summarized as follows.

Component A (Ability)

The appraisal programme, should have as one among its objective to ultimately help enhance employee performance. As skill, knowledge and practices all go into enriching ones' ability, which greatly influences ones' performance on the job, the appraisal programme should obviously have provisions to tap information regarding the same. However, what is more crucial is, this collected information should enable the organization in turn to help develop individual's ability level. The relevant actions to follow can be either in the form of training programmes, or making transfers for proper placement or making necessary job rotations. While training activities are managed by colleges and training ventres, they should have direct links with appraisal data base. This will help them in designing appropriate training programmes. As transfers, and job rotation practices involve personnel department and immediate superiors of the concerned individuals then naturally, the appraisal information should reach these people as well. This will once again help in making appropriate nominations for the need based training programmes.

In short through appraisal it will be possible to identify the specific lack of ability of an individual, and by proper follow up actions like training (on the job or institutional) the individual can be helped to equip himself the required ability and thus resulting in improved performance.

Component B (Motivation)

As ones' motivation to perform cannot be easily measured, often the resultant performance outcomes are taken as synonym to motivation level. Ones' motivation gets influenced by the valve equated with performance outcomes, and more specifically by the resultant personnel decisions of the management particularly in case of promotion exercises. An objective performance evaluation followed by objective personnel decisions can greatly influence employees motivation. More over if the appraisal process can be kept open with provisions of giving immediate feedback one can again enhance the chances of generating trust among employees about the appraisal programme.

Component C (Role Clarity)

A clear job descriptions becomes essential inorder to bring about role clarity among individuals' minds. This will also take care of undue expectations from immediate superiors. If job descriptions are available, this will also help fixing proper performance goals for employees and this in turn greatly helps objective assessment against set objectives possible. In this way appraisal exercise becomes more helpful, and less threatening. This also brings pressure on appraisers to be more serious accurate and objective in their appraisals.

The immediate task ahead

First and foremost the bank should make it very clear to themself what kind of philosophy they hold about employee appraisal. In case they hold such beliefs like 'appraisal is difficult', 'no matter, what ever we do, objective appraisal is impossible', 'employees will never believe in appraisal', then it is better they do not attempt on an appraisal programme. Instead they can continue with a closed, confidential reporting system. On the contrary, if they believe in the possibility and usefulness of objective, open appraisal they may as well begin the following exercises.

The first step in this exercise should begin by clearly spelling out the specific objective of an appraisal programme. What specific purposes they want to utilize the appraisal programme for, should be chalked out. Specific objectives to be served by an appraisal programme may be suggested as follows.

(1) To generate performance level data for personnel decision namely promotion

(2) To identify obstacles of performance to initiate corrective measures like training, job rotation and OD interventions

and (3) To better utilize the existing manpower potential by transfers, placements - manpower planning.

The superordinate goal underlying these specific objectives is to ultimately enhance employee performance and over all organizational effectiveness.

Once the objectives are made clear, what follows next is to look for the relevant data which may serve to meet the above said objectives. Once this is clear, in terms of what kind of data to look for, then structuring the appraisal format will become relatively easier. However, generating data base and hence forming relevant parameters to serve objective no. 1. (performance level) will create the greatest of problems.

<u>Formulating Job description</u>

Before assessing one's performance, it is very essential to be clear of what is expected of him. In order to bring about clarity in it, the expectations from each role and category of job should be for: in black and white and this can best be achieved by framing proper job descriptions. In case a particular bank has already done this exercise it is well and good, otherwise this exercise should be done at the earliest. This requires making detailed job analysis, involving individuals holding different kinds of jobs. Once done, clustering of jobs in identical nature should be done. This will help roughly to estimate how many different forms a bank may require to adopt.

This exercise should be followed by identifying the relevant key performance areas in each cluster of jobs. This will essentially become the broad structure within which performance outcomes can be measured.

Keeping it open

These key performance areas and the yardsticks that will be used to assess the performance levels should be discussed with the concerned employee right at the begining of the year. This process of goal setting makes the individual feel involved and also makes assessment at the year end easier and more objective.

Appraisal results need to be fed back to each and every employee. It is desirable to involve the concerned individual while preparing the final appraisal reports. Apart from this at the time of promotions, the promotional decisions along with the contestants' results can be made publicly available. This along with immediate feed-back will greatly help building trust in the minds of employees about the objectivity of the appraisal programmes.

The Question of Experiment and Training

It will be a good idea if the entire exercise can be experimente on a pilot basis in a particular region or zone, for a particular year.

The result of the experiment will help us understand to what extent the stated objectives of the programme gets achieved and will help us make the necessary corrective actions needed. It will also be a good idea if this exercise can, to start with, cover relatively senior people in the hierarchy and progress downwards year by year to cover all officers. This will greatly enhance the acceptability and reduce resistance among employees.

Before making full fledged installation it becomes very necessary to make each and every employee aware about the proposed programme via services of specific training programmes at various levels in the hierarchy.

Appendix I

APPRAISAL SYSTEM IN VARIOUS BANKS

A SUMMARY

In the following pages the existing system of performance appraisal has been described in a nutshell for ten different banks individually. The details are presented under five sub-headings namely:-

I. Quantum of weightage given to appraisal reports at the time of promotions for various scales

II. Number of formats in existance

III. Major focus of the format in terms of content

IV. The procedure or the process of appraisal and

V. The process of arriving at the final ratings.

<u>Bank A</u>

I. <u>Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotion</u> :

Scale I	to	II	-	20
Scale II	to	III	-	40
Scale III	to	IV	-	50
Scale IV	to	V	-	60

II. <u>Number of Formats</u>: Five (5)

III. <u>Focuses on</u>: Job performance, potential ability and job knowledge varies from format to format as regards number of items and nature of items are concerned.

IV. <u>Consists of</u>: Self appraisal, appraisal by Reporting Officer and appraisal by Review Authority.

V. <u>The Final Rating</u>: Done on the basis of -

A+ outstanding	-	86 - 100 marks
A good	-	70 - 85 marks
B+ above average	-	55 - 69 marks
B average	-	40 - 54 marks
C poor	-	39 and below

Appraisee does not rate himself for scoring. It is the Reporting Officer who gives the score and is moderated by reviewing authority.

According to New Performance Appraisal System - i) No ratings/ marks be awarded by the reporting/reviewing authority. Observations should be laid down with objective reasoning in respect of the evaluation of an officer. ii) A committee consisting of senior executives of appropriate rank constituted by competent authority would give the ratings and award marks based on self appraisal report and observations given by reporting authority and reviewing authority for uniform application of awarding marks or ratings.

Bank B

I. Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotion:

Scale I	to	II	-	15
Scale II	to	III	-	25
Scale III	to	IV	-	30
Scale IV	to	V	-	40

II. Number of Formats: Three. (i) Officers in Administrative offices;
(ii) for Managers in Branch offices
(iii) for Managers in Branches and Administrative offices.

III. Focuses on: Trait Appraisal - 6 item 5 point rating scales
Skill Appraisal - 6 item 5 point rating scales
Overall Assessment - Just one 5 point rating scale.

IV. Appraisal done by: i) Reporting Officer
ii) Reviewing Authority
For managers business performance also gets rated.

V. Final Rating: Final rating consists only the overall opinion and not the total of Trait and Skill Appraisals. Main decision of promotion depends upon Overall Assessment. Marks are awarded for performance on the basis of the overall rating for the past three years of satisfactory service.

Performance would be done on 5 point scale -

a) Outstanding - 100 marks
b) Very Good - 80 marks
c) Good - 60 marks
d) Satisfactory - 40 marks
e) Inadequate - 5 marks

The marks awarded to each officer gets multiplied by the appropriate weightage for final computation

I. Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotion:

Scale I	to	II	- 70
Scale II	to	III	- 80
Scale III	to	IV	- 100
Scale IV	to	V	- 100

II. Number of Formats: Only one

III. Focuses on: Job performance, job knowledge and skills and personal qualities.

IV. Appraisal done by: Self Appraisal, Reporting Officer, Reviewing Authority and (Moderation Committee).

While the individual does self appraisal he indicates via three items only his overall achievements, problems faced by him and any factor he wants to be considered while appraisal.

While Reporting authority reports on self appraisal he gives marks on the various factors like job knowledge etc, provision has been made to ioderate the score by the reviewing authority.

Apart from the aforesaid review, a High Level Committee shall be constituted by the Chairman and MD/ED for final review of the appraisal of the officers in various scales.

Moderation may be done by the High Level Committee in these cases where it is felt that assessment made by certain Reporting Officers and Review Authorities does not reflect the correct assessment, say where it has been too strict or too liberal.

V. Final Rating:

a.	Job Performance	50
b.	Job Knowledge and Skill	20
c.	Personal Qualities	30
		100

The total marks obtained gets multiplied by 70/100 in case of Scale I officer and by 80/100 in case of Scale II officer and by 100 in the scales above.

I. Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotion:

Scale I	to	II	-	30 marks
Scale II	to	III	-	40 marks
Scale III	to	IV	-	45 marks
Scale IV	to	V	-	60 marks

II. Number of formats: Four (4)

III. Focuses on: General information and additional observations like international postings etc in the case of top management In the case of senior management technical and human skills are covered. For other categories the focus is on a) work performed and b) technical, human and mental skills.

IV. Appraisal done by: Reporting officer reports and the reviewing authority counter signs.

V. Final Rating: Assessment under performance review are on the basis of the Performance Appraisal Reports for the immediate past three years and is done on a five point rating scale on the basis of marks awarded for such rating factors.

Total marks awarded for three years gets averaged for the purpose of rating and then reduced to the assigned weightage factor i.e. 30 marks/40 marks etc. Moreover it is not clear as to how the fiaal rating gets accounted at the time of promotion. Self appraisal is being introduced. Review of the whole system is under active consideration.

Bank E

I. Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotion:

Scale	I	to	II	-	40
Scale	II	to	III	-	30
Scale	III	to	IV	-	440
Scale	IV	to	V	-	60

II. Number of formats: Four (4)

III. Focuses on: In case of middle management grade present responsibilities, suitability for higher positions and comments of Reviewing Authority regarding personality, potentiality etc. In case of Branch Managers, focus is more on business performance, in other cases the coverage includes job performance, administrative skill and potentiality.

IV. Appraisal done by: Self appraisal, reporting officer and reviewing authority. While the appraisee gives a descriptive report about his performance, reporting officer comments on the appraisee's report. The ratings on five point scale on various sub-divisions/ items are done by the reporting officer. The reviewing authority places his counter sign at the final rating.

V. Final Rating: The subcategory scorings are aggregated to arrive at the final overall rating. Marks on the following basis are awarded for overall rating earned by the officer in each of annual performance review - reports of last three years.

A - 100
B - 80
C - 60
D - 40
E - 20

The aggregate marks of last three years are divided by three for annual average marks of employees. Average marks so arrived are multiplied by proper weightage divided by 100

Bank F

I. Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotion:

Scale I	to	II	-	45
Scale II	to	III	-	45
Scale III	to	IV	-	45
Scale IV	to	V	-	

II. Number of formats: Ten (10)

III. Focuses on: Job performance aspects, potential for future growth, punishment and penality awarded during the review period and development aspects. Managerial abilities at certain levels is also covered.

IV. Appraisal done by: Self appraisal in all the cases are done on a elaborate way with specific questions.

This is considered by the assessing authority while rating (on a four point scale). Reviewing Authority gives the final rating. Ratings are done on behaviourally descriptive scales.

V. Final rating: Final rating is done on a single four point scale. There is no built in mechanism of converting sub-scale scores to overall assessment.

Evaluation of performance is done on the basis of Cumulative appraisal ratings for the last three years.

Rating		Marks
Rating -	Very Good	Marks - 15
	Good	11
	Satisfactory	8
	Unsatisfactory/Poor	0

The minimum qualifying marks will be 24. None of the reports should be below "satisfactory".

Bank G

I. Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotion:

Scale	I	to	II	-	30
Scale	II	to	III	-	30
Scale	III	to	IV	-	40
Scale	IV	to	V	-	60

II. Number of formats: Two (2)

III. Focuses on: Business achievements, training needs, problems unable to handle, weakness if any, achievements in key areas

IV. Appraisal done by: Self appraisal, appraisal by reporting officer, scrutiny by reviewing officer and review at head office.

V. Final Rating: The process of final ratings done is not clear. How it is linked with promotuon marks is also not clear. To ensure objectivity and fairness of performance grading, cases of all candidates for promotion are reviewed by special committee at the head office.

Bank H

I. **Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotion:**

Scale I	to	II	-	20
Scale II	to	III	-	35
Scale III	to	IV	-	60
Scale IV	to	V	-	60

II. Appraisal System being developed. Other details are yet to be finalised.

I. Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotions:

Scale I	to	II	-	40/100
Scale II	to	III	-	50/100
Scale III	to	IV	-	60/100
Scale IV	to	V	-	100

Performance for a period of three calendar years immediately preceding the year of consideration shall be taken into account through a self appraisal process. While assessing the performance the leave and health records of the officer will also be assessed.

II. Number of formats: Four (4)

III. Focuses on: General administration, staff management, customer service and related areas. However the specific focus differs from format to format.

IV. Appraisal done by: Concerned officer shall appraise himself about his performance and submit his self appraisal for three calandar years separately for each year. The appraiser discusses with appraisee in case of disagreements. The rating is made by the reporting officer and after review the reviewing authority communicates the score to the appraisee traitwise and year wise. Whereever appraisee and appraiser have differed regarding rating the rating and marks awarded by final reviewing authority shall be final decision.

The marks for service and performance shall be added and officers be ranked as per total marks ewarded.

V. Final Rating: The final rating is obtained by totalling up the subcategory totals and gets multiplied by the respective weightages.

P.S. The open self appraisal rating which was experimented was withdrawn since 1983.

Bank J

I. Weightage given to appraisal formats at the time of promotions:

Scale I	to	II	-	10
Scale II	to	III	-	30
Scale III	to	IV	-	40
Scale IV	to	V	-	50

The marks obtained in the annual Appraisal Reports of the officer are taken for rating only in respect of promotion from scale I to II, scale II to III and scale III to IV. The performance of the officer due for promotion from scale IV to V, scale V to VI and scale VI to VII are suitably evaluated by the committee constituted by the board for the purpose.

II. Number of formats: Seven (7)

III. Focuses on: Technical skills, relational skills and conceptual skills. However specific coverages under each headings differ from format to format.

IV. Appraisal done by: Appraiser reports on an officer and gets reviewed by reviewing authority.

V. Final Rating: Ratings are given to each subscale with differential weightages. The final rating is obtained by summing up the total subcategory scores.

P.S. This system is under modification.