

RELOCATION OF ARICHA GHAT

Apparently a High Cost, Low Benefit Proposition

by Raffat Binte Rashid back from Aricha

THE people of Aricha were to observe a half day hartal on October 12. Unlike the ongoing ones it was for a totally different purpose, dealing with a more pressing problem.

The hartal was called in protest of the proposal to partially relocate Aricha ghat further 9km down at Baruria, a place locally known as Paturia.

Almost all in the income generating occupations — youths, men, traders are going to lose their main means of living or become totally jobless because of the plan to relocate this age old river station.

Aricha ghat, declared as a port town in 1983, dates back to the time when steamers of the British Raj sailed through its waters, though it was then a mere contact point linking Calcutta and Madras directly.

During the mid-fifties the work for building the quay began and it started operation full-fledged in 1963. Surrounding this important and busy port junction thousands of businesses have sprung up making a stake that amounts to lakhs in taka and providing livelihood to thousands of families.

There are 3000 registered shops, more than 500 hotels and restaurants. More than a thousand labourers, vendors, hawkers, villagers are engaged in regular business on the ferries and in the area.

Throughout the decades, people who are workers in engineering and maintenance docks and workshops, fish mongers, bakers, and many others have established a living based solely on the quay and its surroundings.

Such economic ventures spun around the fact that Aricha connects the country's southern, western and north western region; i.e. almost all of Pabna, Rajshahi, Faridpur, Kushtia, Jessore and Khulna districts giving access to and bringing together thousands of people at a time.

The number of people engaged in these professions are so high that these petty traders maintain a roster dividing and planning their work in shares. There are instances where villagers walk 20 to 30 miles to the ghat to sell eggs of their household poultry or gourds from their kitchen garden.

Of course there are many unaccounted for who are engaged in illegal trades such as extortion, flesh trade etc. Crimes that take place centering, Aricha can even be compared to mafia scales. It is said by the locals that the entire crime operation starts from Gabtali bus terminal in Dhaka. Criminals act like vendors selling paan or jhal-muri or anything to innocent passengers. Only that their foods are mixed with ingredients that make the passengers unconscious or take them into a trance. In this process the vendors help their accomplices prying somewhere in the 90km Dhaka-Aricha highway to mug the helpless passengers.

There are incidents where massage boys pickpocket clients the moment they dose off to sleep or relax. It is a vicious circle of crimes as the locals describe. This however gives us an account of the lives that depend on Aricha.

Aricha ghat besides supporting lakhs of families has many nostalgic and historical values. The mouth watering Hilsa fry, pangash and chicken curry would bring

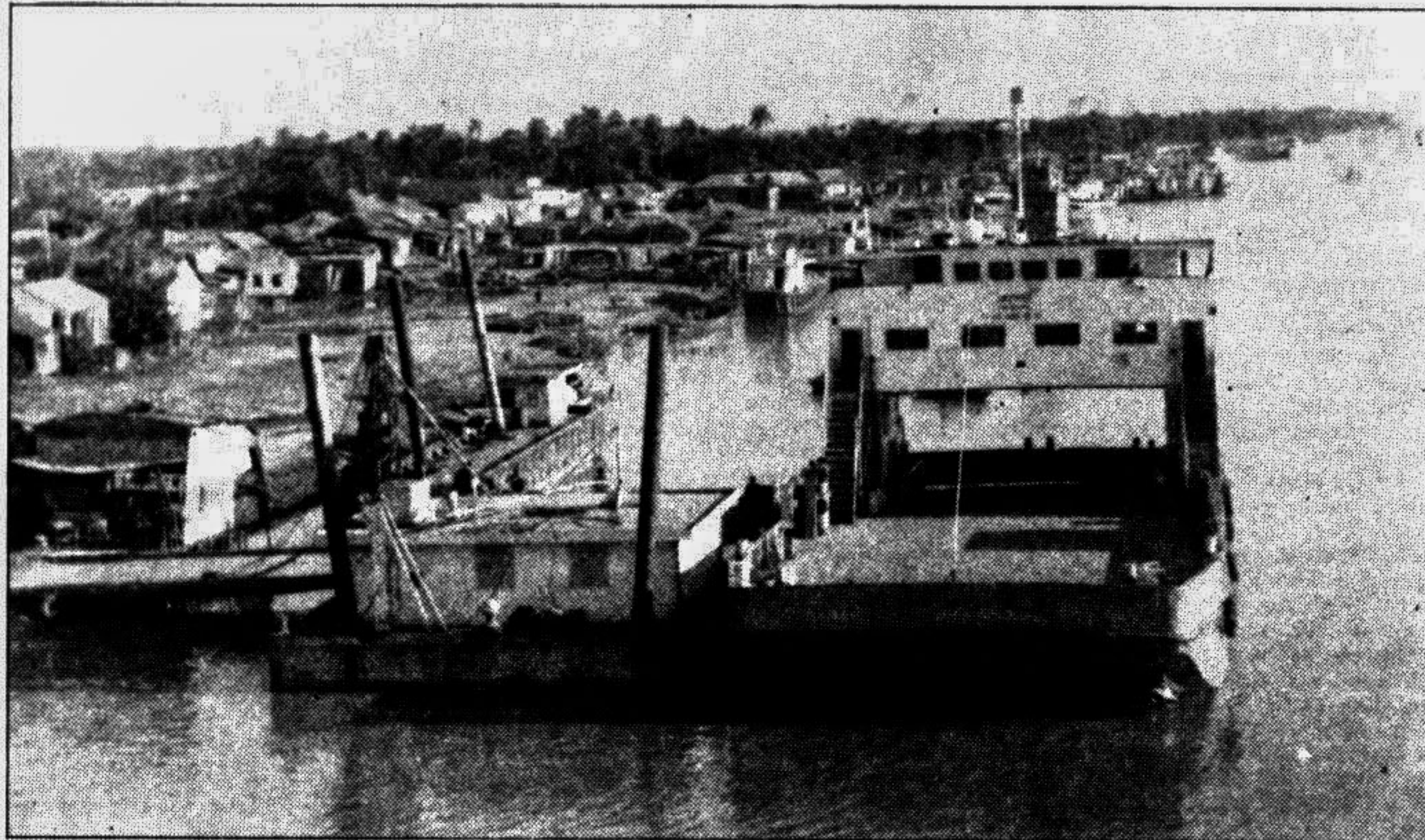
back memories to anyone who has once crossed the rivers and feasted in the ghat's wayside restaurants.

Besides all these reasons an ever growing traffic problem, of course, leaves Aricha as a bewildering maze with no visible solutions or outlets.

Thus the reasons in favour, of shifting of ferry ghats on both sides of the Padma, is time and fuel conserving, better navigability, shortening of distance, controlling haphazard traffic as well as illegal trade growth. However, the Aricha ghat Relocation Resistance Committee, which was formed to resist any move by the government to shift the ferry ghat, has reasons to believe that there could be other solutions to these problems instead of such a major and drastic change.

Uthuli, which is one peak of the triangle Aricha-Paturia-Uthuli, is at a distance of 9 km from Paturia, the proposed ghat site, and takes approximately 30 minutes to reach the river bank, whereas to cover the distance from Uthuli to Aricha it takes less than five minutes, according to this committee's observation.

Going a little deep into the facts it is revealed that Aricha and Daulatdia are diagonally situated on the parallel banks, whereas Paturia and Daulatdia are in straight lines. A steamer, launch or ferry can never run straight in rivers against current. They should first take a 90° turn upstream and then slowly come downstream. "As



project is almost 80-85 per cent completed, according to Titas Gas official M Ali Khan Majlis. "Initially two ferries were to be converted into gas-run vessel on a test basis and we were sure the project would be a success, but for some mysterious reasons the entire agreement is now being stranded for the last four months," he said, confirming further that provided this project ran into full operation the country could save diesel

gust unprecedented traffic jam is believably the cut down on fuel for ferries by a newly appointed chairman, without any specific reasons. This was recovered by the ferry drivers accordingly by reducing speed and going slow; in total taking up an extra hour to cross up and down.

According to BIWTC officials and reports, the number of vehicles that move daily on this road is 2500 to 3000 on the average. However the transportation of vehicles remained static during the July-August congestion. Another BIWTC official data on the Aricha ferry fuel conservation is that, yearly the diesel conservation of the ghat's 22 ferries (of which four are always out of order) runs up to millions of litres worth crores of taka. A simple example would help to give the actual total (which could not be found in the BIWTC Aricha office because of incomplete work): Shahjalal (one of the 22 ferries), the biggest roll on-roll off ferry, consumed 75, 119.92 litres of diesel only in the month of

August.

Therefore the amount of fuel and extortion involved could somehow be visualized," locals complain to which many non-locals agreed as well. "This is a total mismanagement on part of the official decision makers. Another important fact that we realized while talking to the officials was that the concerned Minister was completely in the dark about this gas line while his secretary knew what was going on," says Hamid-ur-Rahman Hena, Convener of the Resistance Committee and BNP thana chairman.

Aricha ghat is also a centre for many notorious crimes where not only local vested groups are involved but groups from various levels are attached too. Crimes ranging from child prostitution including male children, extortion, human trafficking to gang fights and gambling to misappropriating fuel to embezzling funds are said to be going on here on a regular basis.

This place is a gateway to heaven for all involved in

such activities while at the same time, it is a life saver for many who are actually working for their day to day survival.

It was alleged that these activities took place and have been in reign for years without hindrance from the law enforcing agency. Many felt that the government's decision to move the ghat might be a measure to resist the growing crime rate. It might be pointed out here that another reason for the July-August traffic congestion was because some vested groups, rather crime gangs, sold serial numbers to trucks which were last in the queue, agitating and also stranding trucks that were in the front of the line. "This happened because the rule was to clear off trucks carrying raw materials first than trucks loaded with finished products. However few people with ill intentions sold the serial to others at a higher price, which also became one of the reasons for the jam," says Moklesur Rahman Selim, joint convener of the committee and chairman of the port's busi-

ness community.

However another aspect of the pros and cons of this debate is the river's character streaks.

This is a major and natural cause. There was a time last when a portion of area adjoining the quay turned into a football field and then it had to be shifted further down. Rivers take their own course eroding one bank while shoals appear on the other.

During the rainy season, current became a major problem in this river. Specially Paturia the proposed site is in a vulnerable position. The Padma and the Jamuna meet around here and Paturia is exposed to their strong currents. Paturia, according to locals, is still under erosion. Moreover, silt deposition is another acute problem here. It has been reported by BIWTA officials that within two to three days seven ft of silt could be deposited. Luckily this year's flood has washed away the silt, yet the river is unpredictable, the officials feels.

To control such jams and unprecedented natural calamities the number 5 terminal or pontoon was built recently. "Now the jam has been relaxed with drastic efforts and we believe the number 6 would help further," Hena reports.

However it should be added here that during currents or flood two of the existing four ghats are always out of order. If they were shifted in time the problems could have been helped. "The new number five is out of order at present because it was not shifted in time due to negligence," says Badal. "Negligence and mismanagement like these are constant and usual phenomenon here," he adds, talking further on the dredging done every year.

Reports on where the dredging will be needed is basically prepared around this time of the year that is, in Aswin-Kartik months of the Bangla calendar. But the authorities here, do it in the rainy season, and submit a probable advanced report de-

ciding months ahead on the unpredictable river characters and shoals". Badal reports the extend of mismanagement.

With the construction of the Jamuna Bridge by December 1997, the locals fear that the Aricha ghat is destined to be doomed as the bridge would divert the remaining Nagarbari bound traffic. In such circumstances and without straightening the already existing mismanagement in Aricha this relocating venture is useless, according to locals.

It might be mentioned here that these local people think they were rather cheated by the concerned ministry because of few incidents. "First of all when the plan or decision was taking place none of our people from the local administration or any of us were present", says Hena, quite frustrated at the fact.

"Much of our land and property has been used up in this quay, we never bothered to ask for money or compensation, the recent number five pontoon is on our lands too," adds Badal reminding of their personal property involvement in the Aricha ghat.

However, the final blow came to them when they were summoned by the Minister to discuss facts. "He asked us to submit our proposal in a planned way within a week's time. But before we could work on the submission of our proposal, it was announced in the national media (TV-Radio) that after talks with the resistance committee the arrangement for the relocation of the ghat was 'on'. We were absolutely shocked to hear that," explain Hena and Badal with the support of the other members involved. "It was promised that the Minister would come himself with experts to survey our proposal," adds Selim, totally baffled.

However, this discussion did help fizzle out the October 12 hartal but triggered agitation immediately afterwards.

Local people who are in the committee are from different political parties, irrespective of caste, creed or religion and believe they are neutral on this point and only want a well-planned, properly managed change.

Change in the existing state of affairs may help, not changing the site of the ghat.

for time and fuel conservation our calculation is quite simple, which shows that practically very little is saved the proposed way," says Md Anwar Hossain Badal, the Committee's joint convener, ex chairman of the Union and a local business man. The time that is now needed to ferry to Daulatdia and come back to Aricha is approximately 30 minutes up and 30 minutes down (a total of 60 minutes).

What these Aricha locals suggest is rather to make a slight detour and construct a new road from the hospital, taking one and half km turn and build a new terminal. "This actually relieves the daily congestion and keeps all things running smoothly," he says. The proposed 9km road from Uthuli to Baruria would take up acres of farmlands, private habitats not to speak of destroying thousands of trees.

Moreover, the entire construction to turn this narrow and katcha road into a highway would cost nothing less than 30 crore taka. This estimated approximate amount suggested by the locals, of course, excludes the construction of the new ghat.

Besides all these human and technical reasons, the proposed change would also hamper the Titas gas Cylinder-Natural Gas project called the CNG marine project. This project was installed because it was a higher authority decision that ferries would run on gas and not on diesel any more.

Accordingly an eight to nine crore taka gas pipe line was set up at the ghat. This



A squatter of shops: There are scores of them.

— Star photo



Part of the pontoons: Pulling the nerve out!

— Star photo

Employee Attitude Towards Management in Industry

by Md Nazim Uddin

EMPLOYEE attitude towards management in industry is now an important issue in industrialisation. Modern management system depends on human relation culture. Without a good man-management relation, an industry cannot augment its productivity. Every management wants to produce more and more goods, because it deals with profit-making and aims to maximise it. In a management system, the employee is a vital force to develop all its elements easily more in relation to the labour-value aspect.

What is Attitude?

The concept of 'attitude' is an old one is psychology in every country. Both social workers and psychologists consider it inseparable from value, either individual, group or social. Attitude is primarily an inner state rather than an over-expression, and it is an act of mental state or readiness to act. We often speak of attitude in everyday conversation. It is reflected by the opinion or view that we hold. Attitude is often formed by the judgements we make as a result of information we receive from various ways. For any person or group, attitude is variously related to motive, value, personality and emotion. Individuals have internal need and external pressure in relating these, he manifests want, aspiration and expectation. A renowned psychologist New Comb stated: "An attitude is not characterised by an existing state of

drive, as is a motive, but verily refers to the likelihood that a given kind of motive can be aroused." We all have attitude which govern our tendency to react positively or negatively to people, thing, situation we like or dislike. Our work is different in ways and in different degrees.

Development of Attitude

Attitude is learned or acquired during daily life experience. People are not born with attitudes. From childhood, a person acquires tradition, belief, opinion and knowledge, all of which helps to formulate this attitude. Attitude is acquired in a combination of three ways: firstly attitude is past experience which is used to assist in evaluating either accepting or rejecting the new situation.

Secondly, acceptance of the attitude of the group of which a person is a member. Group codes and unwritten agreements not only guide and shape the group but give support to each member individually.

Thirdly, attitude is a statement of an authoritative source. When a person is confronted with a situation about which he is expected to have an attitude but about which situation he has a limited background or knowledge, he may accept an attitude based upon the word of an authority.

Importance of Attitude in Management

Every employee reflects his attitude in his daily work

in management in industry. It will affect the efforts of his associates with him. If there is any lack of confidence, conceit, fear, narrow-mindedness, fallacious thinking and personal prejudice, work atmosphere is to be hampered. It is important because, it holds the key to job satisfaction. It is also important in cases of pension, group insurance, vocational pay etc., satisfy the employee.

Information about Attitude

Formal communication channel Assessment of employees made by the foreman and supervisor is one of the most important source of information of employee attitude.

Behaviour manifestation: Some of the behaviours such as gripping on the job, show-downs and excessive absenteeism are the revealer of attitude.

Interviewing: This has been one of the main sources of getting information about employee attitude and the face-to-face contact between the interviewer and the employee that provides an excellent opportunity for the interviewer to observe the employee attitude.

The questionnaire: It is most economical and also has certain advantages of objectivity of measurement providing for a quantitative treatment of responses.

Factor Related to Job Attitude

Security: The man with security feels that he is valued by the organisation and that he has the ability and opportunity to keep his job secured is a strong reason for liking a job that is generally mentioned first by the employee as contributing to job satisfaction.

Opportunity for advancement: The results of many attitude surveys show that the lack of opportunity for advancement is frequent by a strong reason for disliking a job, but truly the opportunity for advancement mentioned is seen as contributory to satisfaction.

Wages: Wages is more important to the employee than to other facility. This is more so far factory employee than to office employee.

Supervision: Good supervision increases production and as such a supervisor is the key man in the managerial set-up. A good supervisor is a trained supervisor. Effective supervisor makes an organisation profitable.

Social aspect: The social aspect of the job is more important to every employee. It is relatively independent of age and occupational level in management in industry.

Communication: Management cannot function without a good atmosphere communication. In order to measure employee attitude and organisational activity, there is to be communication among the

employees.

Working condition: Working hours and time are to be determined according to government laws.

Benefit: Employee is entitled to benefits, like pension, insurance, festival allowance travelling allowance etc.

Developing Favorable Attitude

Strong confidence and progress, avoid once of fear and retrospection are key elements in the regard. The people surrounding a person can exercise great influence upon his attitude. If they are experiencing full, helpful lives, they serve as a favourable motivation and lead to encourage a person to greater and better accomplishment.

Every organisation needs qualified, skilful and effective employee. By dint of best selection, it can perform easily. Every employee need proper training to develop his vocational, semi-vocational skill to carry out a good performance. If the employee can play a good role in his task, he will satisfy to his job.

Every man has a minimum liberty in personal, social and state life. In a management system, employee needs free thinking from organisational bondage. It helps him to take proper decision, plan an effective action for production. Democratic value is vital in all productive organisations. In a democratic process all employees at all levels of an organisation can participate easily in policy making and carry out better its implementation.

On the other hand, employees can think that they are also an important part of the organisation. This helps them develop healthy attitude towards the management.

Health and safety is an important factor to job attitude related activities. Every healthy employee can work hard. They need a safety rule and provision so that they can do work easily, without a mental torture. It develops attitude for an employee in a management system towards job. Recreational facility is the right of all employees, as human-beings. In a management, it influences on the job attitude of employee.

Conclusion

In this modern world, every industry wants to profit more and more in business. In a competitive age, all management are concerned to business. On the other hand, every industrial management are also concerned for their employees, so that management can develop a good human relation by developing total employee attitude.

Employee-favourable attitude makes a management safe and healthy in industry. It also develops professional skill, management capacity, human relation, group cooperation etc. In this modern world a highly formal industrial society is committed to the notion that the society will establish various types of labour welfare activities for developing employee attitude towards management in industry.



The gas installations: With the cost go waste? — Star photo