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## BOOK REVIEW

Joseph Prokopenko, *Productivity Management*, First Indian edition, New Delhi, Oxford and IBH Publicity Co (P) Ltd Reproduced with the permission of I. L. O., 1990.Rs. 150.

Productivity is a term, which is often used for different purposes in the industrial or economic context, but which is often misunderstood as a concept. The literature on management of productivity—mainly for improving it,—although not rare, is also not sufficiently reliable for practical use. Some times such publications cover only a few limited aspects of the matter. The handy volume by J. Prokopenko, a senior Consultant in the Management Development Branch of the International Labour Organization, is therefore, a very welcome addition to the literature on the subject for its conceptual clarity, practical guidance as well as wide coverage of case-studies from different countries. It exposes the reader to the practicability of different approaches to productivity management, providing useful illustrations of what had been attempted and what could be achieved in reality in different cases.

The book opens with a chapter defining productivity and emphasising its importance and role. This is followed by a chapter identifying internal and external factors affecting productivity at the level of an enterprise and another chapter on approaches to appraisal of productivity and different approaches and problems of productivity analysis, again at the enterprise level. In this connection, the author rightly emphasises the value-added measure of productivity, as against the more conventional measures and gives valuable clues regarding measurement of productivity of indirect workers and also that in the service sector.

In response to natural expectations of practise-oriented readers, particularly those from industry and Government, the book deals exhaustively with management of organizational effectiveness. It discusses in that context the broad strategy for productivity improvement and identifies the managerial responsibilities for that. It rightly focusses the spotlight on the role of management of change in the organization in relation to productivity improvement. It also invites attention to the role of motivational activities and approaches in achieving higher productivity. It discusses some cases on various approaches and variations of productivity improvement programmes drawing upon I.L.O.'s access to information and data in respect of such programme in different countries. The readers get good insights into the strategies of different programmes, the premises behind them, the steps followed, organization-frames of the programmes and their implementation. However, the reviewer feels somewhat disappointed in regard to the inadequate level of critical review of these programmes. The shortcomings and deficiencies of particular programmes have been hardly examined. This deprives the would-be practitioners the chance of being careful about these shortcomings and to critically plan ahead in meeting them.

The chapter on Productivity Improvement Techniques presents competent gists of various industrial engineering techniques and behavioural tools which are used for improving productivity. The topics covered here include main components of work-study, work-simplification, Pareto analysis, Just-in-Time Method (mainly related to inventory management and production management), application of value analysis in management, cost-

benefit analysis, cost-productivity allocation and zero-based budgeting. The behavioural techniques discussed include organization development, brain storming, forced field analysis and nominal group techniques. However, it is somewhat surprising that some economic methods, particularly those for linking economic rewards with productivity improvements have not received adequate coverage in this connection. While some of the methods linking earnings with performance have been briefly mentioned in a few cases-studies (e.g. in the Blue Circle Industries Case) and in a few paragraphs on national level productivity-gain sharing, a comprehensive discussion on the very interesting innovations in the case of wage-productivity linkage at the enterprise level tried out in different countries, their conceptual bases and rationale, their problems, achievements etc, is needed under any treatment on productivity management. This omission is indeed a major deficiency, which should be rectified in the next edition of the book by a more complete treatment in a full chapter, or a section of the book. Another significant omission in terms of a comprehensive treatment has been in the area of Productivity Agreements/Technology Agreements/ Technology Agreements etc., which certainly deserve a much greater attention than what the author offered.

The book has admirably treated the approaches towards improving use of capital resources. The discussions on waste reduction, energy conservation, maintenance improvement, and better productivity through better quality management are very competently done. These would be useful to the managers and employers in improving the productivity of capital as an indispensable component of the improvement of total productivity. The author, in this connection, has also correctly re-emphasised some essen-

tials of effective human resource management in relation to the management of productivity.

Productivity promotion at the national level is another topic well discussed in this book, covering a full chapter for it. The readers would be enlightened by the competent analysis and information provided by the author on the education and training policy in relation to productivity improvement, national mechanism for promoting institutional productivity, labor-management relations in the context of productivity management and the role of government in the productivity development. The author has also well discussed the role of the government particularly in relation to correcting of underutilisation of production-capacities and inadequacies of infrastructure. It has been rightly pointed out that in many developing economies the existing capacities remain unused not only because of the lack of infrastructure, but also because of the inadequate involvement of all parties concerned in the planning and implementation process, particularly at the macro level.

As already mentioned, along with many other merits, a strong point of this book is the practical guidance it provides for productivity management on the basis of some useful case-studies selected from different countries. However, it is to be mentioned that although not completely neglected, the case-studies from the less developed countries (with a few exceptions of cases from the Philippines and 1 each from Nigeria, Singapore and India), are relatively fewer in comparison with the requirement of the subject. After all, the less developed countries lag much more than the developed countries in respect of productivity management and, therefore, need greater assistance and guidance than the developed economies. The case-studies from these countries, therefore, required more space

and fuller treatment in this book, as they might provide more relevant lessons for productivity management to these countries. For example, there are several case-studies—both success stories as well as failures—in regard to application of productivity management techniques in India in the fields of work-redesign, wage-productivity linkage, quality circles etc. and some of these were reported in I.L.O. journals and publications as well as in other professional publications. The author could have well utilised them in connection with the points and approaches discussed by him in this book. Possibly, similar cases may be available also from South Korea, Pakistan, Malaysia, middle-east countries and Latin America.

On the whole, this I.L.O. publication is a very useful handbook for practitioners, academics and students,—in other words, any one interested in management of productivity. Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. (Pvt.) Ltd. deserves thanks for making this useful book available to the Indian readers at a reasonable price.

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*Industrial Restructuring and Union Power,*  
**Ajeet N Matur, ILO-ARTEP New Delhi, 1991.**

The response of many industrial enterprises to the official liberalisation measures adopted in India in the eighties with the consequent increase in domestic and international competition took the form of industrial restructuring. It involved changes in capital structure, technology, product mix, plant location as well as employment. The trade unions viewed these changes,—more importantly those connected with changes in technology, employment and, to some extent, plant loca-

tion,—with alarm, which in turn often caused negative responses in the form of strikes, demonstrations and political action. The impact of industrial restructuring on industrial relations in India deserves serious and systematic attention, not only as a matter of contemporary interest, but more due to its significance for the state policy of future in the area of industries and labour in the context of the growing tempo of such restructuring with India's arrival into the threshold of techno-electronic revolution in industrial production, information technology and management. Professor Mathur's monograph on "Industrial Restructuring and Union Power" is a welcome study in this respect on the micro-economic dimensions of economic restructuring and its interface with industrial relations in India. In view of I.L.O.'s concern with structural adjustments and its effects on employment, it has been quite appropriate for I.L.O.'s Asian Regional Team for Employment Promotion to sponsor a study on the subject, the findings of which have been published in the form of this monograph.

The book opens with a few introductory chapters clarifying the concepts used, outlining the objectives of the study and presenting the methodology as well as research design, coverage and hypotheses of the study. It uses mainly the qualitative approach to research, heavily leaning on the case-study method, instead of the statistical methods,—more popular with the social science researchers in India. While the present reviewer strongly believes in the appropriateness of the use of a systematic and conscious mix of the qualitative and quantitative tools in social science research,—which the author has used to some extent, in view of the lack of familiarity with the methodological basis of the qualitative research tools on the part of many researchers in India, an elaborate exposition of the case-study as a tool of