

chapters. His topic-wise discussion of different labour laws having relevance for the topics concerned, would be quite useful for the practitioners as well as students. In a way, this appears to be a refreshing departure from the conventional treatment of each labour law separately, as is done in many textbooks on labour legislation in India. The book also would be very helpful for the serious students of labour relations in India, who often finds it difficult to keep his files up to date in view of the numerous changes taking place in the industrial relations scene of the country and also in labour-laws, rules, regulations and official policies at the Centre, or in the States. For all the interesting developments in this field up to the first half of 1977 and several others afterwards (till June 1978), Dr. Agarwal's book may always be safely recommended for ready reference. Particularly the "Epilogue" would be highly useful in this respect.

On the whole, Dr. Agarwal has done a good work, which would help the practitioners in labour laws, personnel managers and academics interested in labour relations in India in several ways.

**Subrathesh Ghosh**

Member of Faculty,

Personnel Management and  
Industrial Relations Area, IIM Calcutta

**Product Planning.** M. Stone. London, Macmillan, 1976. 142 p. £7.95

**Corporate Planning.** O. Kleine and R. Kumar. Delhi, National Productivity Council, 1978. 319 p. Rs. 70.00.

Stone writes his book for the manager or the student of management to put into pers-

pective for them logical problems inherent in the product planning process without getting stuck in techniques and details. He incorporates these 'managerial variables' which, in his view, have been underrated in the writings of economists. He admits that product planning is only one element in corporate planning (p.3). But he feels the need to write this volume to provide the firm with an 'adequate framework' for integrated product planning — the latter being easier said than done (p.3). The main distinguishing feature of product planning from other elements of marketing planning is the relative inflexibility of product planning variables (p.4).

Before developing the product planning logic Stone warns that unless the firm has adopted the 'satisfying' approach to reach an explicit trade-off between its aims of profit and sales, it can make little headway in its product range change decisions (pp. 8-10). In the process of reaching a conscious decision about such trade-off, the author examines both the resource-based constraint and the market — based constraints. Both are rejected by the author because they rule out possibilities which could enhance the aims of the firm (pp. 10-15).

In the long term constraints can be relaxed in an uncostly manner so that the firm ensures its survival by participating "in markets which are not declining in real terms", and by preferring "demand areas that are growing relative to the economy as a whole" (p. 22). This is a useful practical conclusion for managerial decisions. To pursue this guideline Stone defines a multi-dimensional concept of 'advantage' which a firm has, and is capable of developing, relatively to its actual or potential competitors. Such 'advantage' will cover factors under production, purchasing and



selling activities of the firm (pp. 33-34). He then uses this foundation to suggest a framework for judging product choice more in terms of alternative combinations of 'demand area — resource set — product set — customer set' in the light of its existing combination(s) (p. 35). This too appears quite useful for organising available data about alternatives in a simple and realistic manner for managerial purposes.

Stone takes up, rightly, the product life cycle concept for some serious discussion. If the PLC theory is valid then it will not only have real implications for types of managerial resources in various phases of the cycle, but will also mean a lot for the product planning manager. He draws on Fisher, Levitt, Polli and a few others to scan the range of ideas on PLC. One critical operational problem emerging seems to be whether to define the PLC in terms of sales value or profit margins. The author's own conclusion is that the PLC is not of proven validity for firms seeking to predict the patterns of sales of their existing products or of new ones. Its major drawback is that it ignores the cost side of the analysis (p. 62). But then, Stone seems to have made up his mind about the definition of PLC in terms of profit margins. It may not be very useful to burden the demand or salesbased PLC concept with the firm's internal cost structure, albeit the latter has its own very large role in product planning decisions.

So far as practising managers are concerned, the author is right in saying that the use of opportunity cost data imposes a heavy burden on the information system of the firm (p. 70), although theoretically these are the best to use for future decisions. Somehow one ends up with an impression at the end of this chapter on 'Costs, Constraints and

Capacity' that it does not offer the same grip over the subject as the previous chapters have done.

One would tend to agree with Stone when he argues that in the final decision on product planning the aim should be to have a mixed portfolio of projects which have different characteristics. This is the familiar idea of a balanced package, with some positively and some negatively correlated projects or product lines, to even out sales cycles for the total portfolio (p. 86). And it is certainly well worth heeding his observation that along with product planning must proceed proper development of resources within the firm (p. 92). It is also rightfully stressed that far more rapid inter-departmental communication will be required from conception to the marketing of a new product, than for existing products (p. 108).

Obviously, a book such as Stone's, written in an environment not infested with lengthy licensing tangles, core and priority sectors, FERA and MRTP and the like (as in India), ignores several peculiar structural factors in a developing economy. To that extent it has its limitations for Indian readership. But once this jigsaw is sorted out in our own way the analytical insights in this volume should be useful in the Indian context too.

The second book under review, as the title indicates, is a comprehensive volume on corporate planning as a whole. Kleine and Kumar have sought to make the book 'practice-oriented', and to produce a 'comprehensive textbook' on corporate planning (pp. xi-xiii). The chief merit of the book for a practising manager is its step-by-step sequencing of the entire planning process. It is almost as if one could sit down with the book and with a scribbling pad, and patiently follow through the



gradually expanding planning tree. Summaries at the end of each chapter are pithy and precise. Since it covers the whole range of planning processes, we do not propose to go through it here chapter by chapter. Instead, let us highlight certain interesting and useful features.

The technique of 'progressive abstraction' for reaching the definition of business is well illustrated through several examples (pp. 19-24). The process of analysis in product definition is also well brought out through the wrist watch example (pp. 25-34). The use of purchasing power and motivation-to-buy matrices to estimate demand is also sensible (pp. 41-42). Although the phrase 'corporate mission' is not used in the book, it appears this idea is covered when the highest aggregated objective at the corporate level is referred to in the light of management value systems (pp. 61-63). Or may be on p. 65 the word objective has been used in the sense of mission. But, by now the former has acquired a specific meaning through Management by Objectives. A 'mission' transcends the interpretation given to 'objective' in M.B.O.

The statement "Anyone who is entrusted the responsibility of introducing corporate planning has to read the mind of management..." is fraught with some danger (p. 66). Not being able to read the authors' mind with respect to this sentence, we may say that it may not be the right thing for the corporate planner to define the business or corporate objective on behalf of management (top?). Rather, he should arrange and organise systems and contexts in which top management members can do their *own* mind reading. The corporate planner ought to be no more than a catalyst. Similarly, although apparently

logical, the suggestion to substitute 'additional expenses' for 'social obligations' appears to be overstretching the analytical technique (p. 69).

The quantification of corporate objectives through the break-even technique is interesting, although the computation of  $V_2$  on p.153 (the figure of  $S_2$  in particular) is not readily understandable. The breakup expected beneficiaries, and their respective financial claims, is apt (p. 148). Some useful insight can be obtained by the break-even chart on p. 153 for manpower planning, although it should have been made clear how to measure 'output per man'.

There appears to be a substantial degree of terminological confusion (and who can avoid this in the present stage of evolution in corporate planning literature ? ) on p. 170. The definition of strategy is couched wholly in terms of policy, although the second term has not been used formally anywhere. And then this mix-up is carried forward to p. 171 where strategies are said to be for achieving objectives. Then what are 'action plans'? In the light of our reading it appears that book should have done well to start with a detailed glossary of corporate planning terminology and to use them consistently, throughout the volume. The 'organising' and 'manning' of the corporate planning function has been 'sensibly' dealt with. But it is not clear what is meant by 'management system', and by stating that its outputs are the inputs of information system (p. 186). The explanation in para 3.2.7 on p. 190 does not help much to clarify the distinction.

The corporate planning case (pp.219-293) provides the reader with a complete demonstration of all the steps and concepts dealt with in the earlier chapters of the book. A



bibliography of books, and of Indian and foreign articles (yearwise from 1970) enhances the value of the book.

But even this book is by and large an introspective analysis of the corporate planning process. Although written in India, for Indian managers, the macro-economic, legislative and industrial policy provisions impinging directly on corporate planning have been wholly omitted. Four pages devoted to environmental analysis (pp.44-48) is only a general analytical framework, without substantive content. But then the authors may have taken a conscious decision to omit this.

**S. K. Chakraborty,**

Member of Faculty,

Finance and Control Area, IIM, Calcutta.

**Communications for Social Marketing—A Study in Family Planning.** Labdhi Bhandari, Delhi, Macmillan, 1978. 193 p. Rs. 35.00.

Government of India was the first amongst the few governments in the world who decided to adopt, in 1952, family planning as a national policy and as an integral part of its socio economic development plans. As a part of the national policy the Government has sponsored several research projects in different parts of the country to ascertain the knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning (commonly abbreviated as KAP study) from time to time. This book is based on one such study (although it was not spon-

sored by Govt. of India) in Jodhpur city of Rajasthan and in a number of neighbouring villages. The primary point of view which the author has adopted in this book is to consider the propagation of family planning as a problem of social marketing. Through the research reported in the book the author has tried to identify the different types of target groups and the process of communication methodology most suitable for successful implementation of family planning programme.

In Chapter 1 there is a brief introduction about social marketing. The author has also tried to indicate the objective of the research. In the problem of social marketing the marketing man must realise the basic value and belief of the target population in order to influence their behaviour. In this process the various causes of offering resistance to the adoption of family planning methods should be identified to develop appropriate communication strategies.

The author has discussed a number of models of communication in Chapter 2. The broad structure of these models indicate that the entire target population should be segmented in an appropriate manner so as to use different methods of communication to the different segments. In particular the author has suggested the following segmentation of the target population for the propagation of family planning programme :

