

REVIEWS

Management Thought and Thinkers.
R. N. Singh, Revised Edition 1984, New
Delhi, Sultan Chand & Sons.

In a well-printed, well-bound book, reasonably free of misprints, a teacher of management studies has offered a condensation of the knowledge his students must be acquiring in great detail through two years of assiduous study. The date of reception of the first edition is unknown to the present reviewer, but the preface to the first edition, reprinted in this second enlarged edition, mentions that the author "undertook this academic exercise for the benefit of those who are fascinated by the growing discipline of management". Such an evolutionary concept naturally took him well beyond the finite limit of Frederick Winslow Taylor as the starting point—but the jettisoning of this safe mooring opened up bewildering choices taking him back to the ancient Chinese and Indians, the origin of the Roman Catholic Church, Kautilya, Macchiavelli, Ghazali and countless men and ages. It is almost at the head of a relieving flotilla that Robert Owen arrives in page 107, to bring the author and the reader on to chartered waters. Thereafter, the sailing is predictable and smooth; the selection of thinkers and thoughts is comprehensive and logical, the substances appropriate and the language clear.

One cannot avoid a lurking suspicion that the seasoned teacher was motivated to put in this great effort after sensing the need to assist the evergrowing multitudes of full or part-time management students throughout the country to have a ready reference book to organise the information and knowledge with which they are bombarded through academic sessions. Depending on the type of course, the utility to a student can go farther and assist the student to concentrate singly on this book for the very limited but highly apposite purpose in the examination-ridden Indian academic world of scoring respectable pass marks.

That may well be so, but that in no way diminishes the usefulness of this book as a ready reference manual even in the highly

sophisticated library of management literature. It's only serious and almost unpardonable drawback for that purpose is a surprising exclusion of a subjects index at the end. The publishers owe it to the author to have one compiled urgently and make it available to all holders of this revised second edition.

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Management Planning and Control Systems in Commercial Banks.
Mohinder N. Kaura, Vani Educational Books, 1984, pp. 160, price: Rs. 35.

The banking sector had undergone a sea change after nationalisation both in its outlook and functioning. There has been a tremendous increase in the number of new branches opened, deposits mobilised and advances made. The bankers have been called upon to reorient their outlook from that of 'security-cum-profitability' to acting as catalysts for hastening the process of socio-economic upliftment of the weaker sections of the society. The growth trend in the proportion of loans and advances provided to what has come to be recognized as Priority Sector in the total investment portfolio of the banks bears adequate testimony to the new role assumed by the banks. Even in the case of Non-Priority Sector lending, thanks to the recommendations made by the Tandon Committee and later by the Chore Committee, the security-oriented approach is fast giving place to the end-use-based approach.

While it is true that the Public Sector Banks are called upon to play a vital role in improving the lot of the weaker sections, indiscriminate lending, even when made with all the good intentions, will only result in recovery problems at a later stage. As custodians of a scarce national resource—capital, bankers have to ensure proper utilisation of credit in the interest of the national economy. The need for effective planning and control becomes all the more important in view of the multiplicity of functions bankers are called upon to discharge after nationalisation.

Prof. Kaura's well-researched book throws adequate light on the current practices followed by Public Sector Banks in respect of long-range, strategic and operational plans and the control systems adopted for effective implementation of the Plans. Further, it highlights the lacunae in the present practices such as inadequate involvement of grass-root level employees in the planning process, dysfunctional reward and discouragement practices, inability of the Head Offices in providing necessary infrastructural facilities to the branches for meeting the budget targets etc. Prof. Kaura has also made valuable suggestions which the bank executives would do well to ponder over.

The book has been divided into nine chapters. The first chapter provides information on the objectives of the study, sampling scheme followed and research methodology adopted. The second chapter provides the historical backdrop for the present work. The basic principles of effective management control systems are explained in the third chapter. The need for and importance of strategic planning at the apex level of the Bank's organisation structure have been thoroughly discussed in chapter four. Chapters five and six are devoted to the 'Performance Budgeting System: Budget Formulation and Settlement' as it constitutes the pivotal point for the subsequent steps. The case for the involvement of grass-root level personnel has been very forcefully developed in these

chapters. The limitations of the practices followed for performance evaluation are pointed out and an approach based on multiple scores for performance evaluation suggested in chapter seven. Operational planning and control systems are discussed in chapter eight. Finally, chapter nine provides a brief summary of observations and suggestions for improvement made in the earlier chapters and also indicates areas having scope for further research. Besides the tables containing data presented in different chapters, the book contains ten appendixes which include, inter alia, the sample questionnaires administered to branch level and apex level personnel.

The study reveals the increasing awareness of banks for the adoption of performance budgeting. At the same time it also indicates that there is a long way to go before an effective system of performance budgeting, well supported by timely flow of information, is fully implemented. The book is concise and provides directional guidelines to the banks. The banks have to go into further details as the book is not intended to provide any ready-made manual to be followed. Both the practitioners and academicians will certainly find the book useful.

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