

Shri Indranil Hazra, Asstt.Manager, (P&IR), Haldia Dock Complex is the winner of distinguished prize of “Akiyama Award Essay Contest organized by International Association of Ports and Harbours” held on May 28, 2009 at Genoa, Italy. The name of the topic was “Synthesis of Safety with Productivity - Looking Beyond Excellence” which is reproduced herewith

SYNTHESIS OF SAFETY WITH PRODUCTIVITY –

LOOKING BEYOND EXCELLENCE

Haldia Dock Complex, Kolkata Port Trust, the gateway to Eastern India faces challenges in ensuring safety because of its complex & varied cargo handling activities involving both modern and conventional methods. The challenges have aggravated with the globalization of trade, multi-modalism & demand for more efficiency especially in the backdrop of rural orthodox background of the dockworkers. The studies on accidents during the last five years' have well established that around **90%** of the accidents took place because of human reasons. It has also been accepted that the journey towards excellence in safety could be made, in a nutshell, through

- (a) Well laid policy, systems & procedures.
- (b) Infrastructural support.
- (c) Human Competency and
- (d) Human attitude.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Unfortunately, whereas we claim to “believe in **SAFETY FIRST** giving it priority even over **PRODUCTIVITY**”, the never ending **vicious cycle** of decision making, implementation and recurrence of accidents of similar nature continues. Whereas , the number of minor accidents decreased by **9.62%** per year since **2003-04**, there were, in average, **two fatal accidents**.

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

A deep insight into the failure to achieve excellence in safety from an otherwise efficient organization revealed that the major factors responsible for the lack of success in safety are: -

- (1) Lack of **visible and felt leadership** across all levels.
- (2) Belief that safety is the function only of a particular division.
- (3) **Tolerance** of non-conforming habits.
- (4) **Concern for corrective actions** rather than for preventive actions.
- (5) Expenditure on safety viewed as mere **outflow of funds**.
- (6) Feeling that importance on **safety affects productivity**.

The root cause behind this **lack of genuine interest** and commitment for safety emanates from the **perception of dichotomy between productivity and safety** – a feeling that safety is extraneous to the core operation not having positive impact on productivity, Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss A/C.

Therefore, there is a need to explore

- (i) whether **synthesis** between Safety & Productivity is possible and
- (ii) whether that is really **rewarding** for the organization.

DICHOTOMY – HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Previously, since the days of industrial revolution, the main objectives of the organizations were productivity & profit making. The working conditions used to be horrible with no concern for safety & health of the workers. However, with the pressure from the middle class intelligentsia and enactment of laws, the concept of safety was **incorporated**.

As the concept of safety did not grow naturally from **within** and was mostly thrust upon from outside; it was perceived as an **extraneous obligation** eating away productivity & profitability. This belief compelled the organizations to frame policies, procedures and systems **separately** for **safety** and for **productivity** using **different sets of resources**.

DISSOLVING THE DICHOTOMY

The dichotomy can be dissolved by proper “**synthesis**” of the **factors** influencing both productivity & safety and through “**harmony**” in their **manifestation**.

(A) POLICY, SYSTEMS & PROCEDURES

“Well Laid Policy” for **better safety** has always many common elements meant for **higher productivity**. “Well framed systems & procedures” for **safety** also give impetus to **productivity**. For example, Safety requires compliance regarding quality maintenance, testing and certification of cargo handling gears to avoid breakdown or unwarranted performances. This also **helps in higher productivity** and longer life span, thereby leading to more earning & more saving.

Excellent **infrastructural support** statutorily required for safe operation directly **improves productivity** through uninterrupted and quicker operations. Giving human protection through right personal protective equipments **for safety** also gives confidence and courage to work efficiently on sustainable basis, thereby having direct **positive impact on profit**. The **variables influencing policy, systems & procedures** for **safety** being also contributory to **productivity**; the above can be well **synthesized** with Cargo Handling Systems to reap the benefits of cost reduction, efficiency & synergy.

(B) HUMAN ASPECTS

(i) Human Competence

Competence, an essential precondition for productivity, is based on education, experience and training. Analysis of the above components would reveal that **competence for productivity is a pre-requisite for gaining competence in safety**. Whereas, **separate programmes** are generally framed for improving competence in productivity and safety, it is feasible, effective and economical to **synthesize** the productivity and safety related competence developmental programmes.

(ii) Attitude

The intangible yet most dominant factor for both productivity & safety is the ATTITUDE. Attitude development has an all-encompassing effect on organization, nation and the human civilization as a whole.

Going by Cattell's classification, a deep insight into the industrial psychology would reveal that addressing the **“source traits”** like Intelligence, Integrity, confidence, conscientious, responsibility, etc. for their manifestation through **“surface traits”** like maturity, clarity, creativity, commitment, independence, determination etc. is essential for **improvement of productivity**.

An introspection into the above behavioural pattern would reveal that **they are also essential for excellence in safety**. Therefore, behavioral development through **ethico-moral transformation** and **creation of the organizational culture** for its sustainability need **not** be addressed **separately** for improving productivity and safety. The **core values influencing both productivity and safety being similar**, the organization would reap multiple benefits through value orientation if the apparent **dichotomy** between safety & productivity is ignored and be rightly integrated and **synthesized**.

SOLUTION

Although all the aspects for ensuring safety are not identical to those for ensuring productivity, they are so **much similar** that it is not pragmatic and economical to treat them in disintegrated fashion.

The different components of productivity viz. production process, maintenance, quality control etc. having **partially different domains**; which were earlier treated as **separate disciplines**, have long been adopted as an **integrated one**. The economy and the synergy thus has been so successfully reaped, that now it is unbelievable that once some of them were disintegrated.

Similarly, **“Safety”** having so many **common** variables with **“Productivity”** in the systems, procedures, infrastructure and human components should be **synthesized** with “productivity” in a **holistic manner**. Such integration would ensure

- (i) higher productivity through safety,
- (ii) eliminate separate monitoring process,
- (iii) reduce overheads,
- (iv) reduce expenditure and most importantly,
- (v) the managers would be **genuinely interested in safety while focusing on productivity**.

This will bring radical positive transformation from the **“compulsive extraneous thrust”** on safety to the **“inspiring empowerment coming from within”** in the journey **beyond** excellence in safety.
