

SUMMARY

NATIONAL POWER: A STUDY ON MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

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The meaning of manpower

Manpower (or labour force) generally signifies that part of the population aged 14 upwards who are either engaged in an occupation (whether as owner-operator, employer or employee) or unemployed, with the exception of those who are students, convicts, housewives or disabled. In Thailand, out of the total population of over 25 million (according to the census taken in 1960), approximately 13 million were labour force. (According to this census, those aged 11 and upwards were considered the labour force.)

The meaning of national power

Harold and Margaret Sprout¹ defines national power as "the total capabilities of a state to gain desired ends vis-à-vis other states".

Hans J. Morgenthau² considers the following as composites of national power, namely geographical base, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, national morale and character, quality of government and diplomacy and population".

National power can really exist only when it is employed which can be in 4 ways:³ persuasion; barter or bargaining; compulsion; coercion.

Manpower as foundation of military power

In olden times, the strength of the fighting force depended first and foremost on its number. Although quality is also of high consequence in modern warfare, accentuated by the advancement of weaponry and other military requisites, the quantitative aspect of a modern

¹ Harold and Margaret Sprout, *Foundation of National Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

² Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), pp. 3-15.

³ A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959), pp. 105-11.

fighting body tends to be overlooked. Modern military strength is in fact based no less on the number than on the quality of its personnel, as proved by the local or limited warfare conducted or instigated by the Communists. Even in a nuclear war, numerical strength will have a more decisive rôle to play than would appear on the surface.

Manpower as foundation of economic power

Economically, manpower not only increases the productive power of a country but also its purchasing power. It also gives rise to big business and big industry. In modern times the real foundation of a country's power is its economy, which in turn depends primarily on manpower. It is vital therefore that manpower, at all stages of economic development, be itself highly developed. All this of necessity involves long-range planning at the national level. It also involves development in administrative system and practice. In Thailand both manpower development and administrative development have been the stated policy of the government. The newly-conceived plan of changing the present Institute of Public Administration, Thammasat University, to an autonomous National Institute of Development Administration is a part implementation of this policy.

When on 20 October 1960 the government announced a six-year national economic plan which was to take effect from 1 January 1961, the need for trained personnel to carry out the plan had been sorely felt. The remedy lucidly lies in personnel development on an extensive scale. Again manpower, being both a means and an end to economic progress, must be so planned as to yield maximum benefits. To plan effectively, a thorough study of the economic structure of the country must be made. Various facts and figures about the population must be acquired. Manpower survey and manpower assessment must be undertaken.

In 1960, a population census was taken, followed by various other censuses and surveys. The government, fully noting the importance of statistics in economic and social planning, recently established a National Statistical Office, under the Office of the Prime Minister.

Then on 10 June 1961, to protect labour and promote industrial growth to the country, "The National Labour Council" and "The Executive Committee for Labour" were set up by the government. Moreover, the National Economic Development Board and the Department of Public Welfare had been assigned, since August 1963, the following tasks, namely: collection of

facts and figures in connection with labour; planning of labour or manpower resources; training of men for various professions and labour administration. These tasks which were carried out with the assistance of the United States government had resulted in many useful recommendations to the government.

The author proposes that for over-all manpower development the following approaches should be instituted: development from the quantitative aspect; development from the educational aspect; development from the health aspect; morale building and development of leadership.

The quantitative aspect of development

It is worthy of note that the census of 1960 revealed the annual increase rate of the population of Thailand as about 3 per cent. From this census also derived the figure of labour force of approximately 13 million (out of the population of over 25 million) as mentioned earlier. Again of the labour force 81.91 per cent were engaged in agriculture. In this connection one highly regrettable fact emerged and that is, with a one-crop system of rice farming generally prevailing in the country, the Thai farmer works only 191 days a year. Moreover, agriculture in Thailand is characterised by woeful under-employment.

It is not aware by many that unpaid labour is among the reasons accounting for low per capita income in Thailand. Quoting again from the census of 1960, unpaid labour which numbered 7,982,836 comprised 57.96 per cent of the entire labour force. Also of the unpaid labour force, 68.46 per cent were women. This is the problem that warrants urgent attention since, among others, it has substantially cut down the country's purchasing power.

The author then goes on to suggest the following as means for manpower development namely: community development, co-operatives, industrial and business promotion, extensions of markets, increase of agricultural products, vocational guidance and counselling, employment service, migration and the creation of new jobs.

The educational aspect of development

Educational development which involves class-room learning, on-the-job training, extension services and mass communication is by far the most important and the most urgent of all types of development mentioned in this study. Hence the national education plan must go hand in hand with the national economic plan.

The Thai educational system had incessantly come under fire, notably in that it was not framed to meet the future needs of the country and that because of shortcomings in education,

economic and social progress was retarded. Also some of the chronic problems of education had of late loomed large in public eyes, e.g. the illiteracy rate of nearly 30 per cent of the population over 10 years of age, the low standard of education of the masses, the strong trend of secondary school students to proceed to the universities, the difficulty of vocational school graduates to get jobs, the high percentage (approx. 70-80 per cent) of unskilled labour in the labour force and the inefficiency of government officials.

In 1951 a royal decree instituting the National Education Plan came into force, followed by the launching in 1958 of the Regional Education Development Project including Higher Education and the creation in 1959 of the National Council on Education. However, an announcement was made on 20 Oct. 1960 changing the National Education Plan to fit in with the six-year National Economic Plan which was born on the same date. The most important aspect of this new national education plan was the extension of compulsory education period from 4 years to 7 years. Government budget on education also showed a marked increase. Whereas it was 1,341,729,556 Baht in 1960, it is 1,975,765,500 Baht this year, an increase of 47.25 per cent. New technical offices will also be set up to cope with the educational advance.

The health aspect of development

Although health promotion has been one of the main policies of the Thai government, the health situation of the Thai people is still far from satisfactory. However, with big increases in the Ministry of Public Health budgets, more and more hospitals and health centres have come into existence. Schemes for the eradication of such diseases as malaria, cholera, small pox, yaws, tuberculosis, leprosy etc. have also been introduced. There has also come into effect a plan which deserves particular mention here. This is the 15-year Regional Health Promotion Plan. Begun in 1960, with the assistance of the United States government, the plan aims at raising substantially the health standard and suppressing massively such scourges as dysentery, typhoid fever and worm diseases in the rural areas.

The health of the industrial workers is also being cared for under the "labour protection" policy of the government. It is perhaps not without interest to mention that the Act to safeguard the health of the workers was first promulgated in 1934, followed by the Labour Act of 1956. The latter, however, was substituted after the coup d'état of 1958 by a Ministry of In-

terior Announcement which so far was the most comprehensive statute on labour ever devised in this country. Among others, there also were launched the school health and the school children's free lunch schemes.

Morale building

It cannot be gainsaid that the building of national morale is another development aspect of consequence. A prerequisite to the success of any government scheme is the public support. This support, however, will not likely be forthcoming if the morale is low. Although the morale of the Thai nation had been enhanced during the late Field-Marshal Sarit Thanarat's Administration, the author cannot but feel that it could have been further heightened but for the many problems confronting the nation, e.g. the infiltration and subversive activities of the Communists, Cambodia's aggravating attitude, the ethnic and language problems of the population in the southern border provinces, the privileges exercised by certain groups of officials, the practice of numerous officials in earning incomes over their salaries, the birth of a new constitution now in the making and the fear of a counter coup d'état.

Development of leadership

The progress of a country is the result of the industry, conscientiousness, resourcefulness and leadership of its people. The last quality, however, is sorely lacking in this country. Although the late Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat had set a good example in leadership in his time, thereby distinguishing not only himself, but also his country, it was evident that this leadership was found wanting in the official, business and social spheres in general. The government, realising the necessity of training to promote leadership and other qualities conducive to the smooth-running and the ultimate success of its plans, had supported the in-service training in the various ministries, departments and enterprises, including the sending of officials abroad for further studies and training.

The aims underlying this in-service training programme were three-fold: to promote the efficiency of government officials, to imbue them with the sense of responsibility; to make them fully understand the policies and plans of the country in the light of the country's needs.

The in-service training of government officials on an extensive as well as systematic scale actually came with the creation of the Institute of Public Administration in Thammasat University in 1955, with the assistance of the United States. Between August 1957 and July 1963, the Institute had organized or assisted in organizing 161 training courses which involved 9,385 participants including 134 officials of the executive level. It also produced 73 graduates (Master's degree) in the field of Public Administration. The author opines that it is imperative that the citizens in general be trained in leadership and with the same urgency. One method is to develop more middle-class businessmen who can become pioneers in business and industry. A dearth of capital and efficient management in business and industry should be counteracted by government's capital and entrepreneurship. Means should also be introduced to attract capital from unearned increment sources and foreign investments should also be invited.

In conclusion, it cannot be over-emphasised that any development plan without manpower development would be devoid of meaning and futile. It is the author's view also that for manpower development to meaningfully serve the needs of an agricultural country like Thailand, it should be primarily focussed on the rural sector.

Summarized by Patom Jarnson
