

Integrated productivity improvement for supporting industries

There are many ways to enhance productivity in a manufacturing and service company. Some of the more traditional and commonly used techniques are: production management, industrial engineering, production planning and control, plant layout and materials handling, quality control, productive maintenance, and IT applications. These techniques can be integrated into a cohesive whole to boost productivity within an enterprise. This approach is especially useful to the supporting industries as they have to provide goods and services to the larger enterprises, most of which have high expectations of quality and value for their purchases.

It was in this context that the APO organized a workshop on “Integrated Productivity Improvement in the Supporting Industries” in Bangladesh, 27–31 October 2002. Sixteen participants from 10 member countries took part. The workshop was inaugurated by the Bangladesh State Minister for Industries, Prof. M. Rezaul Karim. Other speakers at the opening session were Al-Ameen Chaudhury, Secretary, Ministry of Industries and APO Director for Bangladesh, and M. Zamirul Akhter, Director of Bangladesh NPO. The event was graced by about 70 guests representing governmental agencies and business associations.

State Minister Prof. Karim said that the Government of Bangladesh is giving top priority to industrialization, poverty alleviation, human resources development, increasing per capita output, and improving the quality of life of the people. In its endeavor to overcome poverty, unemployment, and underemployment, the country is depending on the development of a dynamic small

industry sector to generate employment and industrial diversification, he added. In this regard, the APO workshop on “Integrated Productivity Improvement for Supporting Industries” was most timely and important for Bangladesh, said Prof. Karim.

The State Minister told the meeting that quality and productivity are never accidental. They are always the result of intelligent efforts and a positive will to produce superior products and services. He spoke of the need for Bangladesh to embark on an intensive campaign to create productivity consciousness at the national, sectoral, and enterprise levels. To make this possible, the government will strengthen the National Productivity Organization of Bangladesh and utilize the electronic and print media to bring the productivity message to every nook and corner of the country.

The workshop was conducted by four resource persons, two from the host country and one each from Thailand and Sri Lanka. The topics they propounded on included: Basic IE techniques: Kaizen approach to problem solving; Application of 5S; Techniques for productive work environment; Total quality management; Total preventive maintenance; Problem solving with QCC; and Working conditions and social accountability standards as means to improve productivity. Participants were taken to visit Micro Electronics where they were briefed by the CEO and other executives on the company’s business strategies and watched a quality circle presentation on how the members successfully resolved a problem in the painting section. This presentation created much enthusiasm among the participants for initiating similar QC activities in their own organizations. 