

Sustainable Employment: An Ethical Approach for Smart Bangladesh

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Abstract

Bangladesh, a South Asian country, has been advancing significantly in several fields to create a smarter and more developed society. The term "Smart Bangladesh" describes the country's ambitious and continuous initiatives to use innovation and technology to build a more productive, interconnected and wealthy society, and sustainable employment ensures economic sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability. This paper proposes a new model of employment called sustainable employment which will be an ethical approach in Smart Bangladesh because it mainly focuses on economic, social, and environmental sustainability. In the context of Smart Bangladesh, this research examines the moral need to resolve these issues through creating sustainable employment prospects.

Key Words: Sustainable employment, utilitarianism, Kantian theory, Rawlsian theory, Smart Bangladesh.

Introduction

Nowadays, Bangladeshi policymakers and economists have traditionally focused heavily on achieving economic growth and a Smart Bangladesh, which presents tremendous possibilities for productivity and development. In Bangladesh, the traditional model of growth based on the exploitation of natural resources and cheap labour has led to unsustainable practices and widespread economic inequality. A more equitable and sustainable economic system is therefore being understood to be necessary in order to advance everyone's well-being and coming generations, and the essential component of such a system is the creation of sustainable employment. The main objectives of sustainable employment and Smart Bangladesh are to promote economic expansion, enhance productivity, and ensure sustainable development. In-depth consideration of the ethical aspects of employment in Smart Bangladesh is provided in this research paper, along with recommendations to create sustainable employment practices.

Sustainable Employment

Nowadays, "Sustainability" and "Sustainable Employment" have become a rising concern in business. The word "sustainability" is derived from the Latin word '*sustinere*', which means to hold, maintain, keep, or support. As Andrew & Dirk define it, "Sustainability refers to the long-term maintenance of systems according to environmental, economic, and social considerations", (Crane, Matten, Glozer, & Spence, 2019).

An employment or job that is economically feasible, socially responsible, and ecologically beneficial is referred to as sustainable employment. The most used definition is given by The Royal Netherlands Standardization Institute (NEN), a Dutch standardization institute. As NEN puts it;

"Sustainable employment is the ability of the employee to provide added value for an organization now and in the future, while also experiencing added value themselves", (Ruud, 2019).

It means that the capacity of an employee to give a business value both now and in the future while also benefiting individually is what is meant by sustainable employment. So, sustainable

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employment is thus, the employment that focuses on the concept of sustainability and places emphasis on the sustainability of the economy, society, and environment. The three pillars of 'sustainability' or 'sustainable development' are equally important for sustainable employment, such as:

- i. Economic sustainability
- ii. Social sustainability and
- iii. Environmental sustainability

Economic Sustainability: This pillar centers on the idea of an efficient and responsible use of resources that leads to long-term profitability. Profitability is the main goal of business. Profitability means not short-term profit, and it means long-term profit which makes a company or business sustainable. Access to employment, income, and other economic opportunities are all included in this. In business, economic sustainability has two concepts. As Andrew Crane & Dirk Matten put it;

This definition of economically sustainable behavior is extremely constrained because it only considers the financial performance of the corporation. To avoid short-term profit "explosions" that can be detrimental to a company's long-term success, it's important to focus on strategies that increase a company's share price, revenues, and market share over time. A broader definition of economic sustainability would take into account the company's perceptions of and effects on the economic environment in which it operates (Crane, Matten, Glozer, & Spence, 2019).

It indicates that the role of management is to create, produce, and sell those items that ensure the long-term economic success of the organization. This is a narrow definition of economic sustainability because it only considers the financial performance of the business itself. On the other hand, the broader definition of economic sustainability would take into account the business's perceptions of and effects on the economic environment in which it operates. Economic sustainability is the capacity to uphold or enhance a society's financial stability, which is important for sustainable employment.

Social Sustainability: In business, the social pillar of sustainability remains a relatively new development than economic perspective. It focuses on social sustainability initiatives, often include promoting fair labour practices and wages; employee health, safety, wellness, and work-life balance; and diversity and equity. It focuses on the ability to preserve or enhance a society's social wellbeing. This specific inclusion of social concepts is marked as significant for the issue of sustainability. In business, this concept measures how socially responsible an organization has been throughout its history (Andrew & Drik, 2010).

It can be observed that the explicit inclusion of social issues in the corporate discourse on sustainability first appeared in the 1990s, especially in reaction to worries about how economic operations would affect indigenous groups in less developed nations and areas. Yet, the incorporation of social factors like these into the particular field of sustainability signified a substantial change in the way ideas of sustainability were conceptualized (Crane, Matten, Glozer, & Spence, 2019).

It indicates that it can be observed that the explicit inclusion of social issues in the business discourse on sustainability first appeared in the 1990s, especially in reaction to concerns about how economic operations would affect indigenous communities in less developed nations and areas.

Environmental Sustainability: Environmental sustainability refers to the ability to maintain or improve the health of the planet. This entails safeguarding and maintaining natural resources, cutting down on pollution, and minimizing the effects of climate change. It also entails supporting the use of sustainable techniques in forestry, agriculture, and other businesses as well as promoting the use of renewable energy sources like solar and wind power.

This pillar of sustainability concerns the effective use of physical resources that are needed for the future. The UN held its first conference on environmental issues in 1972 and stated the importance of the protection and improvement of the human environment and emphasized the need to protect wildlife and natural habitat." In 2000, the UN declared Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); to be achieved by the global community by 2015. And out of eight goals, the 7th one was set to "ensure environmental sustainability. By reducing the waste use of non-renewable resources, reducing carbon footprints, waste, and the production of damaging environmental pollutants can provide both environmental and financial benefits, and to achieve the goal of sustainable financial benefit, it is necessary to reduce the negative impacts created by business activities on the environment.

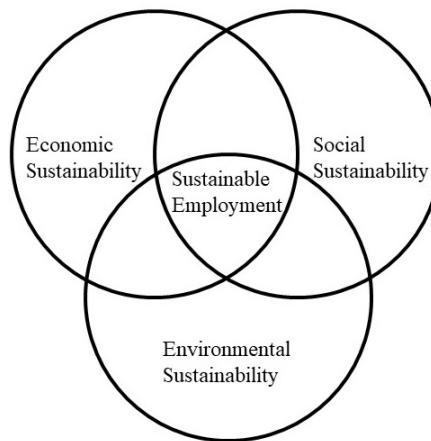


Figure 2.3. Sustainable Employment

So, to address the issue of sustainability in employment, the interrelation among the three pillars and the implication of them for business have to be realized and followed accordingly.

Smart Bangladesh

Smart Bangladesh is a long-term development and comprehensive plan that outlines the country's goals and plans for achieving economic prosperity and technical advancement that was announced by the Government of Bangladesh by the year 2041.

Smart Bangladesh is a vision and policy of the Government of Bangladesh to build a digitally enabled, smarter, and more sustainable country. It aims to leverage the power of technology to improve the quality of life for all citizens, create new economic opportunities, and drive sustainable development (Talukdar & Lamagna, 2024).

The main objectives of Smart Bangladesh are to raise the standard of living for the populace, promote economic growth, enhance productivity, and ensure sustainable development. According to Sheikh Hasina; the prime minister of Bangladesh;

The ‘Vision 2041’ has been adopted in line of ‘Vision 2021’ to provide impetus to the development dream of the nation. Its aim is to end absolute poverty and to be graduated into higher middle-income status by 2031, and eradicate poverty on way to becoming a developed nation by 2041. Learning from the experience of higher middle and high- income countries, we will deliver all facilities of a modern city at the village level transforming our villages at the center point of development. The Perspective Plan 2021- 2041 has been prepared to translate the policies and programmes enshrined in the Vision 2041 into development strategies. This document is the development vision of the government of a prosperous Bangladesh, a strategic description of the goals and objectives and a roadmap for its implementation. The institutional basis of this plan is fourfold, such as, good governance, democratization, decentralization and capacity building. The main beneficiary will be the people of Bangladesh and they will be the key driving force of growth and transformation (Vision, 2020).

It means the goal of Smart Bangladesh is to make Bangladesh a wealthy, technologically advanced country that is ready to take advantage of the possibilities and challenges of the twenty-first century. The main goals of the vision are to eliminate poverty on the road to becoming a developed country by 2041, end absolute poverty by 2031, and advance to make Bangladesh a knowledge-based economy by concentrating on certain important industries by that year. It aspires to increase employment and raise living standards for all Bangladeshis.

The concept of “Smart Bangladesh” can be structured around four pillars that encompass key areas of focus for the nation’s transformation. The four pillars of Smart Bangladesh are essential parts of the country’s aim to develop into a highly technological and sophisticated nation. These pillars seek to build a wide-ranging digital ecosystem that uses technology to raise the standard of living for people and promote economic development. The “Smart Bangladesh” goal is based on the following four pillars:

Smart citizens: Modern civilization depends mainly on its citizens, who use technology and innovation to better their lives and the lives of those around them. Every person has the ability to influence good change and aid in the development of the country. Smart citizens are essential to building a healthy and inclusive society because they can access services, participate in the democratic process, and use technology responsibly and sustainably.

Smart Citizens are individuals who leverage technology and innovation to enhance their lives and the lives of those around them. They are proactive in using digital technologies,

such as mobile devices and the internet, to access information, engage with their communities, and improve their quality of life (Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041, 2022).

It means smart citizens are people who actively participate in their communities and are not only knowledgeable about technology but also advance the country as a whole. In order to participate in and gain from the digital economy, all citizens must have access to and understanding of technology.

The success of the other pillars—smart governance, smart economy, and smart society- depends on fostering the growth of smart citizens. Bangladesh can guarantee that the advantages of technical progress are dispersed fairly and contribute to the general prosperity of the country by cultivating a culture of engaged, knowledgeable, and accountable citizenry. Smart citizens have an important role in determining the future of the country in “Smart Bangladesh,” and their active involvement in a variety of social activities is essential to realizing the shared goal of development, prosperity, and sustainability. So, "Smart Citizens" are an essential component of “Smart Bangladesh”.

Smart Government: Modern public administration must include smart governance because it gives the government the resources and tools it needs to effectively serve its citizens and deliver public services. Indeed, “Smart Governance” is a key component and a cornerstone of “Smart Bangladesh”. Smart governments aim to improve citizen services and government institutions’ decision-making (Wahid, 2023). It serves as a cornerstone for the other pillars, combines them, and is crucial to achieving the goal of a nation that is inclusive, progressive, and technologically sophisticated.

Smart Government is a critical component of modern public administration, providing the government with the tools and technologies needed to better serve citizens and improve the delivery of public services (Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041, 2022).

It means the other pillars of a “Smart Bangladesh” are complemented by smart governance, which offers a responsive and efficient administration that can change with the quickly evolving technology environment. It makes sure that all citizens have access to the advantages of digital transformation and innovation, promoting a setting that encourages economic growth, development in society, and environmental sustainability. So, smart governance is an important part of “Smart Bangladesh.”

Smart economy: Smart economy is a vital element in building “Smart Bangladesh”. Innovation, technology-driven growth, sustainability, and economic diversity are traits of a smart economy. It is said that;

Smart Economy is an economic system that leverages technology and innovation to drive economic growth and development. It is characterized by a focus on digital transformation, data-driven decision-making, and a shift towards a more knowledge-based and sustainable economy (Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041, 2022).

It means that smart economy is an economic framework that makes use of innovation and technology to promote economic progress. It refers to the application of digital technologies to increase the efficacy and efficiency of economic operations. Businesses may save operating costs, improve competitiveness, and automate difficult operations by utilizing technology. In a “Smart Bangladesh,” the creation of jobs, sustainable growth, and general living standards are all made possible by a smart economy. The smart economy enhances the other pillars of “Smart Bangladesh” by offering the capital and commercial climate required to fully actualize the potential of smart citizens, smart government, and smart society. A prosperous and sustainable economy depends on the smart economy, whether it is for increasing competitiveness, cutting waste, or building a more sustainable future.

Smart Society: Smart Society is an essential component in building “Smart Bangladesh”. Building a strong, welcoming, and empowered community that combines innovation, technology, and education to raise everyone’s standard of living is the main goal of a smart society. “Smart Bangladesh” aims to give all people and businesses, regardless of income level, access to digital technology and innovation.

It is said that; a smart society is a community that leverages technology and data to improve the quality of life for its citizens, enhance sustainability, and increase efficiency in its systems and services (Wahid, 2023). It means that smart society places a strong emphasis on using digital technologies to boost citizen involvement, improve public service delivery, and build a more effective and efficient public sector. A smart society fosters an atmosphere where people are healthy, educated, engaged, and empowered in “Smart Bangladesh”. It expresses an ideal of a connected, peaceful society that makes use of innovation and technology to solve problems and

improve the general pleasure and well-being of its citizens. Through the use of technology, a Smart society may save expenses, increase accountability and transparency, and enhance service accessibility. It enhances the other pillars of “Smart Bangladesh” by making sure that the advantages of economic expansion and technical innovation are shared fairly, with an emphasis on improving everyone's quality of life for all citizens.

Overall, the Bangladeshi government intends to accomplish the objectives of Bangladesh Vision 2041 and transform the nation into a developed one by 2041 by putting these pillars into practice. The main goal of Smart Bangladesh is to create a society of equality with no discrimination and equal opportunity for everybody. The government intends to make significant investments in economic growth, health care, and education in order to realize this ambition. As well as the creation of programmes and regulations that encourage the use of technology to encourage innovation and advancement, this may include the acceptance of new technologies and methods in a variety of industries, including transportation, energy, and agriculture.

Creating Sustainable Employment

Sustainable employment is required if we want our business to succeed and make an ethical approach to the scope of employment in Smart Bangladesh. Now the question is how to create sustainable employment. There are many ways to do so. Among the alternatives, the following are most important:

Re-humanized Workforce

A business organization is made up of people, but that doesn't mean that it's humanized. Over the past few decades, there has been a growing concern about the de-humanization of the workforce. In the present time, we can see the division of labour in workplace, in which many employees just repeat the same monotonous and tremendous actions over and over again, and due to that they mainly get little satisfaction, or involvement in their work. According to Garry's example; now we can see a series of meaningless “McJobs” in many factories such as service industry, food restaurant, call center etc. These jobs are frequently criticized for having negative impacts on workers, the economy, and society as a whole. These impacts include low pay, lack of benefits, negative impacts on health, and decreased economic growth (Garry, 2023). Thus, to create economic sustainability in any company or business, we need to re-humanize the workforce. This means taking steps to create a more supportive and collaborative work environment that emphasizes the value of human interaction and connection.

Re-humanizing the workforce is not a new idea. The idea of returning humanity and compassion to the workplace as opposed to treating employees as mere machines or means in a broader system is referred to as “re-humanizing the workforce.” This idea means treating human beings more like humans and less like machines. The emphasis on employee wellbeing and work-life balance is one of the major components of re-humanization, and it ensures that employees have access to tools and support to manage stress and maintain their mental and physical health, providing chances for professional development and progress.

James Petrossi says that for organizations to create change from within, they will need to re-humanize the workplace. In his words: “Re-humanization” does not mean abandoning technology investments but, rather, using them as tools, along with in-person experiences, to teach employees about themselves, each other and how to flourish (James, 2021). So, re-humanization refers to the process of teaching staff members about themselves, one another, and how to thrive while employing technological investments as tools in addition to in-person learning opportunities. Now the question is; how can we re-humanize the work force? Here are several strategies that organizations can use to promote re-humanization in the workplace:

Emphasis on employee well-being: The emphasis on productivity and efficiency at the expense of employee well-being is one of the main causes of dehumanization in the workplace. Organizations must give their employees' emotional and physical health top priority if they want to create a more sustainable and humane workforce. Initiatives like flexible work schedules, wellness programmes, and mental health support services can help achieve this.

Emphasize the value of relationships: Emphasizing the importance of human relationships in the workplace is an important factor in re-humanizing the workforce. This can be achieved by encouraging teamwork, collaboration, and open communication. It is also important to foster a sense of community and belonging among employees, which can be achieved through social events, team-building activities, and shared experiences.

Promote creativity and innovation: Promoting creativity and innovation among employees is an important part of re-humanizing the workforce. This entails granting employees the freedom and autonomy to generate fresh concepts and solutions as well as to test out effective interventions. Initiatives like brainstorming sessions, and innovation challenges can help with this.

Overall, it can be said that by empowering the employees, focusing on employee well-being, emphasizing the importance of relationships, and encouraging creativity and innovation, an organization can re-humanize the workforce. Humanization in the workforce mainly helps to make the employee more productive and skilled, which is necessary for economic sustainability.

Equity for All in Workplace

Currently, discrimination (economic and social) in workplace is a common phenomenon. In a business context nowadays, we can see discrimination against employees in many cases where employees receive preferential or less preferential treatment for reasons (his or her race, ethnicity, gender, religion, color, nationality, or disability) that are not directly related to their qualifications or performance in the job. So, discrimination is an injustice treatment for employee. As Andrew and Matten say that, Discrimination in the business context occurs when employees receive preferential (or less preferential) treatment on grounds that are not directly related to their qualifications and performance in the job. The most common bases for discrimination in the workplace are race, gender, age, religion, disability, and nationality (James, 2021).

If we want to create sustainable employment and ensure social sustainability, then we have to make workplace discrimination illegal because it violates social justice, which is an obstacle to social sustainability. Discrimination is a violation of Rawls' Theory of Justice's second principle, which is called the "Principle of Difference".

According to Rawls, Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged; and attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (Andrew & Dirk, 2010).

Discrimination first excludes some people's rights, and then it is claimed as an act of discrimination. For erasing or decreasing discrimination, many companies take many steps to maintain equality in the workplace to give employees equal opportunities, which is called Affirmative action. Affirmative action is those action targets the less advantaged or discriminated minorities, like woman, disabled and racial minorities often, people who are thought to be underprivileged are given additional benefits (Andrew & Dirk, 2010).

Some might argue this is necessary to bring the underprivileged forward, but it is causing reverse discrimination. Because of this, people are often deprived of their rights not based on qualification but based on someone else's priority, and this is also a form of discrimination against the mass

population. So, reverse discrimination would be discrimination against the majority. According to Andrew and Matten;

For instance, some countries allow for certain jobs to be subject to quotas that specify that a proportion of a certain minority group must be selected for interview, or even for the job itself, regardless of whether they are less qualified than over-represented groups. In these cases, people suffer reverse discrimination exactly because A.A. policies prefer certain minorities (Andrew & Dirk, 2010).

It indicates that people experience reverse discrimination in these situations precisely because A.A. policies favor specific minorities. To erase both discrimination and reverse discrimination, we have to take some steps. I think we can make a discrimination-free workplace by taking two steps, and they are:

Equity in workplace:

In business, discrimination prevents equitable access to opportunities for many diverse employees. So equity is necessary for creating justice in the workplace. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, “equity” is the situation in which everyone is treated fairly according to their needs and no group of people is given special treatment. In this context, Madeline Mile says that, “Equity in the workplace is the idea that all employees are provided with fair and equal opportunities based on their individual needs. Equity recognizes that not all employees are afforded the same opportunities and addresses the imbalance of opportunities available to them”, (Madeline, 2022).

According to the idea of workplace equality, every person or group receives the exact same resources or opportunities. Expanding the pool of employees who can advance within a business and contribute to a future with more varied leadership is what equity in the workplace entails. Equity in the workplace is trickier to achieve than it first appears. So, maintaining equity is more necessary than maintaining equality in the workplace.

Hiring and recruiting employees is one of the most effective ways to improve equity in the workplace. Employers should aggressively seek out people from underrepresented groups and use blind hiring procedures to get rid of bias in order to establish a diverse workforce. Fair compensation is another crucial component of workplace equity. Employers are responsible for ensuring that all workers receive fair compensation for their labour and that pay is not affected by an employee’s color, gender, or other personal characteristics. This entails carrying out routine audits of pay equity and taking action to remedy any discrepancies that are found. Employers must be ready to hear employee complaints, respond to them, and genuinely endeavor to make their workplaces more inclusive and equitable. This not only benefits employees but also the entire organization by creating a more productive, engaged, and motivated workforce. So, if we maintain equity in the workplace, discrimination and reverse discrimination can be solved.

Ensuring Human rights for employee

Human rights violations or unethical practices are never to be praised in business because these issues cause long-term problems for a company. And often, businesses violate the human rights of employees to maximize their profits in the short term. But to stay in business and make profits in the long run, human rights must be guaranteed. So, ensuring human rights is essential for creating a discrimination-free workplace.

In 2002, the UN Annual Report 2002 discussed human rights against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. The UN declares that if we ensure human rights for employees, then the discrimination will not be erased because discrimination mainly violates the human rights of an individual, which is unethical in all cases. The promotion and protection of human rights is a central purpose and guiding principle of the United Nations, which is why the term “human rights” appears seven times in the UN’s founding charter. Human rights were first codified as a body of international law thanks to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since that time, the organization has worked tirelessly to uphold human rights through the use of legal instruments and direct action (UN, 2023).

The right to work, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of speech are only some of the many essential human rights of employees that must be protected if the International Bill of Human Rights and all related laws are to be ensured by the company. For the sake of protecting human rights, the company should set up policies and handling processes for its commercial activities and internal management, and it should make public the procedures taken against the parties affected in case of a human rights violation. Compliance with internationally recognized human rights of labour, such as the right to a fair wage, freedom of speech, the right to work, and privacy, prohibiting the use of child labour, eliminating all forms of forced labour, and eliminating recruitment and employment discrimination, shall be ensured by the company. For this reason, in every company there is a human resource management (HRM) department.

Overall, if we can ensure human rights in the workplace in business, that will help to create a discrimination-free workplace, which is necessary for businesses to make profit in the longrun. By providing employees with a stable income, benefits, and rights in the workplace, companies can create a more sustainable and equitable economy.

Environment Friendly Jobs

Industrialization has an adverse effect on the environment. It affects others, including employees. Ensuring a good working environment is essential for creating sustainable employment. Without a proper working environment, an employee might face certain hazards. Letting them work in unsafe conditions only to maximize profit is often overlooked, but it should be considered to ensure the workers and employees are working in a proper environment.

For creating sustainable employment, a job's product and service should be environmentally friendly to ensure environmental sustainability. As Gopal says, during the late 2000s economic slump and discussion over how to rebuild the economy in a more sustainable manner, many politicians and business leaders focused on the concept of generating more “green jobs”, (Gopal, 2009). According to the statement of the United States government, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Green jobs are;

Jobs in businesses that produce goods or provide services that benefit the environment or conserve natural resources. Jobs in which workers’ duties involve making their establishment’s production processes more environmentally friendly or use fewer natural resources (Statistics, 2003).

It means employment opportunities in companies that manufacture products or offer services that protect the environment or preserve natural resources. Overall, we can see that there is a unity in the diversity of definitions of ‘Green Job’ that “Green jobs” have a direct significance for overall environmental welfare.

Green jobs have double effects. They are environment friendly as well as employment friendly. There are many advantages to working in an environmentally friendly workplace or green job, such as improved health, lower carbon emissions, and better mental health for employees. The ecological advantages of a greener job include protecting and restoring healthier ecosystems and wildlife habitats around these workplaces, which can lead to increased biodiversity in the area. So, green jobs help businesses and economic sectors eventually reduce their environmental impact to levels that are sustainable.

Organizations use a variety of methods to accomplish the objective of a greener workplace. Some practices can be started to create an environment of sustainable employment.

Promoting environment friendly small and local business

Promoting local and small businesses, which tend to have a smaller environmental impact than large corporations, can significantly contribute to creating sustainable employment or providing more stable employment opportunities for employees.

By generating sustainability reports, small businesses can improve their effort towards sustainability. A thorough review of their economic, social, and environmental performance is included in these reports. Small businesses can show their commitment to sustainability and involve stakeholders by openly sharing their goals and progress (Wu, 2017).

Encouragement of projects like the use of renewable energy, eco-friendly packaging, and sustainable farming methods can support the growth of such businesses while reducing their negative effects on the environment. As it is stated that;

University research on the effects of sustainability on small businesses and sustainability development is provided by Sustainable Business and Sustainability Development in Small Business (SMP). It also becomes clear that by exchanging and benefiting from one another's sustainable business concepts, small and medium businesses may collaborate to reduce barriers to achieving both economic and environmental sustainability (Kraus, Burtscher, Niemand, Roig-Tierno, & Syrjä, 2017).

For example; supporting regional craftsmen who employ traditional methods and environmentally friendly materials can also strengthen the local economy and protect cultural heritage. This can be accomplished through offering grants, loans, and tax advantages to small businesses, as well as by promoting customer support for locally owned enterprises.

Investing in training programmes

I think another key strategy can be to invest the necessary amount of funds in arranging training programmes that will prepare employees for green jobs in the future's expanding industries, such as sustainable agriculture, green construction, and renewable energy. This will also ensure that workers have the abilities and information necessary to benefit from sustainable employment. In order to achieve this, government, business, and individuals must collaborate with each other.

Thus, for creating environmental sustainability, investing in green infrastructure and renewable energy sources are effective strategies. This not only lessens the effects of climate change but also creates employment opportunities in industries like solar panels, wind turbines, and energy efficiency. So, it is required to ensure environmentally friendly jobs that can prevent future generations from damaging environmental disasters and bring about sustainability in employment.

Sustainable employment: Ethical Approach for Smart Bangladesh

Ethical theory plays a crucial role in determining the principles and values that guide our activities including sustainable employment practices. There are several ethical theories that are supportive of sustainable employment.

Utilitarian Argument for Sustainable Employment

According to utilitarian ethical theory, the ideal course of conduct is the one that maximizes overall happiness or pleasure. It is based on the principle of utility, which holds that actions are right in so far as they promote happiness or pleasure and wrong as they tend to produce the opposite of happiness or pleasure. Utilitarianism has its roots in the ideas of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, and there are several variations of the theory, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. According to utilitarianism, “an action is morally right if it results in the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people affected by the action”, (Andrew & Dirk, 2010).

Jeremy Bentham was one of the most well-known early leaders of utilitarianism. Bentham's version of utilitarianism is referred to as “classical” or “hedonic” because it places a priority on pleasure and happiness as the ultimate result or goal and it is a quantitative approach. He says that the value of pleasure or pain is measurable. For Bentham,

The underlying idea is the notion of utility, which Bentham sees as the ultimate goal in life. Man is seen as a hedonist, whose purpose in life is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. In this hedonistic rendition of utilitarianism, utility is measured pleasure and pain (the 'hedonistic' view), (Andrew & Dirk, 2010).

From this definition it becomes clear that, this approach places the moral worth of an action in the action's consequences and emphasizes the good of the whole society, not the benefits accruing to a single individual or even a group of individuals.

Another important figure in the development of utilitarianism was John Stuart Mill, who refined Bentham's ideas by emphasizing the importance of “quality” of pleasure over “quantity”. The more sophisticated kind of utilitarianism opposes the oversimplified notion of seeking the greatest amount of pleasure. This version, some pleasures, like those derived from intellectual pursuits, were of higher quality than others, such as those derived from physical pleasure. According to Steward, the utilitarian philosophy advanced by Mill and Bentham puts the “greatest good for the greatest number” ahead of the happiness of any one individual. By incorporating qualitative standards and privileging mental pleasures over bodily ones, this iteration of utilitarianism rejects the simplistic belief in seeking the most pleasure possible (David, 1996).

So, utilitarianism asserts that the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people should be the guiding principle for all ethical judgments and that the ultimate purpose of human behavior is to promote overall utility or happiness in the world.

Now the question is: what is the implication of this theory for Sustainable employment?

We know that, sustainable employment is a type of work that generates economic, social, and environmental benefits for individuals, communities, and the planet without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs. The utilitarian idea can be used to support sustainable employment as a foundation for moral decision-making in the context of the workplace. In the context of employment, this theory suggests that the most ethical employment practices are those that lead to the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people.

From a utilitarian perspective, supporting sustainable employment can be seen as a way to increase overall happiness and reduce suffering for employees. For instance, sustainable employment can provide employees with stable and fulfilling work, which can lead to increased personal satisfaction, self-esteem, and well-being. This includes fair wages and benefits, diversity and inclusivity, safe and healthy working conditions, job security, and opportunities for lifelong learning and personal development. By implementing these principles, employers can not only create more ethical employment practices but also foster an environment where everyone can thrive. The ethical basis for all these is utilitarianism.

Another way in which utilitarianism can be explained as the basis of sustainable employment is through its advocacy for the principles of fairness and justice. Utilitarianism holds that ethical decisions should be based on impartial and universal criteria, such as the maximization of overall happiness and the minimization of suffering. In this sense, utilitarianism can be the ethical basis for sustainable employment for its aim to promote equal opportunities and access to work, reduce social and economic disparities, and promote a more inclusive and diverse labour market, which can benefit all individuals and communities.

Again, sustainable employment emphasizes the importance of environmental sustainability's positive effects for the benefit of the majority which is utilitarian in nature. It can help preserve the natural resources and ecosystems that are crucial for human survival and well-being. This development not only benefits the employees but also other stakeholders.

Sustainable employment is defined as one that advances the welfare of the greatest number of stakeholders or people, which is the spirit of utilitarianism. So, in the context of Smart Bangladesh, sustainable employment is an ethical approach by implementing utilitarian principles.

Kantian argument for Sustainable Employment

The moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant, sometimes known as Kantian ethics, emphasizes the intrinsic value of actions rather than the results they produce. According to Kant, an action's moral value is decided by how closely it complies with the "categorical imperative." It is a universal principle that dictates the moral duty of individuals to always act in a way that treats humanity, both in themselves and in others, as an end in itself and never merely as a means to an end. This refers to a hypothetical society where all individuals treat each other as ends in themselves and not merely as a means to achieve their own goals.

According to Crane & Matten;

The categorical imperative consists of three parts, which Kant puts forward as follows:

Maxim 1: Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

Maxim 2: Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.

Maxim 3: Act only so that the will through its maxims could regard itself at the same time as universally lawgiving (David, 1996).

All potential actions can be put to the test using these three maxims, and an action is deemed ethically correct if it "survives" all three tests, according to Kant. This implies that there are three key aspects of morality, each of which is put to the test by one of these maxims.

According to Kant, moral rules like the categorical imperative are unchangeable and cannot be altered based on the results of an action. He made the case that an action's moral value is determined by its goal, not by how it turns out. As David Steward stated that;

It also seemed clear to Kant that the rightness or wrongness of an action is not really determined by the action's consequences but by the intentions and motives of the moral agent (David, 1996).

It means Kant believed it to be obvious that a moral agent's goals and motivations, rather than the outcomes of their actions, decide whether a behavior is right or wrong. For example, if a person performs an action that has good consequences; but their intention is not moral, then the action is not morally good. On the other hand, if a person performs an action that has bad consequences, but their intention was moral, then the action is morally good.

Kant also believed that individuals have a moral duty to respect the autonomy of others. This means that individuals must respect other people's right to make their own decisions, even if those decisions conflict with their own personal values or preferences. Interfering with the autonomy of others is considered a violation of their inherent moral worth and dignity. As a result, individuals should refrain from lying, cheating, or using others for their personal gain because doing so is against their moral character. This means that individuals should be treated with respect and given the opportunity to pursue their own goals and desires.

Now the question is: what is the implication of this theory for Sustainable employment?

In the context of employment, Kantian theory suggests that employers have moral duties, which imply that individuals and organizations have a moral responsibility to make sure that hiring processes are ethical and support the dignity and well-being of employees. This necessitates taking into account both the short-term and long-term effects of employment practices, such as job stability, just compensation, and secure working conditions.

Kantian ethics can be used to argue in the context of sustainable employment for ethical and responsible practices within the workplace, such as fair treatment of employees, equitable compensation, safe working conditions, opportunities for personal and professional growth, and a commitment to the well-being of workers, and this duty principle can be applied to the treatment of employees. The motivation behind these actions is not simply to maximize profits but to fulfil the duty to treat others with dignity and respect.

Another way in which Kantian theory can be explained as the basis for promoting sustainable employment necessitates taking into account the dignity and well-being of employees and recognizing them as ends in and of themselves rather than just a means to an end. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that Kant's theory provides a framework for thinking about the moral obligations of individuals and organizations and provides a basis for advocating for more sustainable and equitable employment practices.

Overall, Kantian ethical theory provides strong support for sustainable employment by emphasizing the importance of duty, universality, and the dignity of each individual. So, it can be said that in the context of Smart Bangladesh, sustainable employment is an ethical approach with the support of Kantian ethics and contributes to the well-being of workers and society as a whole.

Rawlsian Argument for Sustainable Employment

One of the most influential theories of justice is John Rawls' theory of justice as fairness. In the 19th century, the philosopher John Rawls developed his own theory of justice, which is often

referred to as the “veil of ignorance” theory. These guiding ideas of justice as fairness are given institutional form by its two principles of justice:

First Principle: Each person has the same inalienable claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all;

Second Principle: Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions:

- a. They are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of *fair equality of opportunity*;
- b. They are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the *difference principle*), (John, 1999).

The first principle is that everyone has the same unassailable right to a system of fundamental rights that is both completely adequate and consistent with the same system of liberties for everyone, and the second principle is that social and economic disparities must meet two requirements. From these two principles; Rawls argues that a just society is one in which the basic structure of society is arranged in such a way that it maximizes the prospects of the least advantaged members of society. According to John Rawls;

a just society is one in which resources and opportunities are distributed in a manner that is fair and equitable and that ensures that everyone has an equal chance to achieve a decent standard of living. It aims to answer the question of what constitutes a fair distribution of these goods and who should be responsible for ensuring that the distribution is fair.

In the context of employment, Rawlsian theory highlights the importance of ensuring that work is distributed in a fair and equitable manner. The concept of sustainable employment has gained importance in recent years in the global economy and ensures that workers have access to opportunities that provide a fair wage, safe working conditions, and opportunities for personal and professional development, which is essential for the welfare of both individuals and society at large and promotes the common good. The lack of sustainable employment opportunities is a major contributor to poverty and inequality and creates a cycle of poverty and inequality, as those at the bottom struggle to get by and those at the top benefit from their labor. So, the reason for supporting sustainable employment from Rawlsian perspective is that it's an essential component for making a just and equitable society and promoting the well-being of future generations.

Overall, all the above ethical theories support sustainable employment and prove that it is an ethical approach in the context of employment. Each place on emphasis on the value of fostering the happiness and well-being of all stakeholders, including workers, employers, and society at large. So, sustainable employment is an ethical approach in the era of Smart Bangladesh.

Conclusion

Sustainable employment, meaning a combination of a) economic, b) social, and c) environmental sustainability, is one of the most burning issue in business. It is necessary for economic growth, poverty reduction, human capital development, entrepreneurship, and innovation. There are many challenges to creating sustainable employment. In order to address these challenges creating an environment that encourages investment, innovation, and entrepreneurship while protecting the rights of workers and promoting social dialogue is a must. In order to re-humanized workforce, equality for all, and environment friendly job will be essential steps to encourage employers to

engage in sustainable employment that facilitates both the employee and employer for longer term and make employees conscious of sustainability.

Similar to the ideal of an independent nation or its realization, Smart Bangladesh is a recently declared goal that is expected to be realized in December 2041. It may well be said that "Smart Bangladesh" involves four pillars of such as —Smart citizen, Smart government, Smart economy, and Smart society. Creating sustainable is essential as an ethical step to achieving the said goal. It is not matter of economic sustainability but also the matter of social and environmental sustainability which is a moral imperative for developing "Smart Bangladesh". Overall, we don't know what situation is waiting for us or we are going to face in the future. But it can be said that this afford can make an important contribution to creating a more just and to creating an environment towards realizing the expectation of making Smart Bangladesh.

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