



By Anurag Verma

Dr RATNAKAR ADHIKARI

general secretary – South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment

DNA Communication

Number of years in current organisation 17 years with a few breaks in the middle

X factor Rationale

Dr Ratnakar Adhikari, who is associated with South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) as its general secretary, believes that the reason why the country has not been able to progress in practically any sphere is the lack of implementation of policies. “We frame some of the best policies but do nothing concrete when it comes to implementing them,” he rues. He also says that the sight of people playing carom board on the roadsides shows that we Nepalis are basically lazy and are willing to spend our time on such activities rather than doing something productive.

Besides this, Adhikari also feels that we as a nation are not enterprising. “I wouldn’t say that they are no enterprising people in Nepal at all but the number is negligible,” he shares. There are some businesspeople, he believes, who have now and again tried to bring in innovation but the majority is not willing to take risks. “If a person does identify a sector and starts generating profits then everybody tends to join the bandwagon which I think is the reason for the downfall of the real estate, garment and carpet sectors to name just a few,” states Adhikari. But that trend he feels is gradually changing and says that it is encouraging to see the younger generation have the appetite to take risks.

Regarding the trade scenario of Nepal, Adhikari says that the major constraint has been our inability to manufacture any product in desired volumes. “We have to manufacture in surplus and then be able to competitively supply that surplus in the international market, but there are a number of obstacles that we have to first overcome,” he shares. Adhikari personally

feels that there are five major problems that have to be sorted out if Nepal wants to have any substantial trade advantage. The first problem, he says is inadequate infrastructure and points out the load-shedding problems and transportation system as examples. “The other is low productivity. Wages are always linked with productivity but we have very low productivity and one of the highest wages in South Asia,” he comments.

Another reason behind the manufacturing sector not doing well, feels Adhikari is lack of access to finance. “There has been some improvement in the recent past but the sad part is that access to finance has become easier only for big businesses and

it is still very difficult for small and medium enterprises,” he shares. The complicated customs facilities too have added to the woes of traders, he says, and points out that in the last six years Bangladesh has gone through tremendous reforms but we are still in a semi-stagnant position if we are to look at the trading across borders indicators. “The final hurdle I think is lack of access to technology,” Adhikari points out. He says that technology can either be acquired through imports or by creating it ourselves for which we have to invest in research and development but that is not happening in the country. “The government needs to provide incentives to promote R&D and we had provided suggestions regarding this before the 2004/05 budget session but nothing has happened till date,” he says. Adhikari strongly believes that R&D is where the future of our economy lies.

Management style

My management is based on communication. I have always laid emphasis on face-to-face communication. Supposing you need any information it is always good to go to the



Posh Raj Pandey
executive chairman

The Boss **SAYS**

It is such a difficult thing when you have to judge people but speaking about Ratnakar, I would say that he is a self-disciplined and highly self-motivated person. One of the better qualities that has helped him in his career is his adaptability. I would also say that he is a very friendly person and gets along with any person.

concerned staff to get that information rather than calling the staff to your room. There are a few benefits linked to it. One is that there is always better communication when you directly meet a person rather than talk on the phone. The second is that the staff feels honoured that the boss has come to his desk. The third is that, informally, you are also monitoring your staff – with all the social networking sites available these days.

Boss management The best way to handle any boss is to work and deliver results. You have to prove that you are doing what you have been hired for. As a boss what I do is negotiate with my staff. I never dictate anything. We have to negotiate and find a middle path. For example, we have a staff meeting every month and we listen to all the problems and we solve them collectively there. You have to provide a sense of ownership to the staff. Another example is that if we have to complete any task within a deadline, I do not say I want it on this or that day. I sit down with my staff and we decide on a relevant deadline. But what I make clear is that once we have negotiated a deadline then it has to be done within it. And before the deadline I never ask 'where have you reached'. I always ask 'where are we in terms of our deadline' so that the staff feels that I too am a part of the assignment.

STAFF comment

Niraj Shrestha
senior programme officer

I have had the opportunity to learn a lot from him. He is a very competent person and his approach towards the staff is also very friendly. We are in a professional set-up but he goes out of his way to bring in that family atmosphere. One of the best things about him is that his door is always open for us to walk in and learn about things that we are confused about.

Staff management I have always had this principle that we must lead by example. If I want my staff to come to office at 9 o'clock, I myself have to be there at least 15 minutes earlier. Another example is the construction of our office building where we contributed from our salaries. I was the first one to start contributing. We also have free lunch for our staff which is part of our strategy. We work in a team and I won't say that I was the one who did everything. Providing lunch incurs huge costs but it has its hidden benefits. The first benefit is communication which is important. The other is health. The third is financial motivation for staff. Fourth is that you cannot avoid politicisation completely but to some extent having lunch together in the office minimises that risk. We have

medical insurance too for all our staff. Staff need to be motivated in some way or the other if you want the best out of them.

Crisis management You should always be ready with Plan B in anything that you do. You have to have a fallback position ready. Any organisation will face a crisis sometime or the other. Even when we were constructing our office building we knew that there would be load-shedding problems so we made a plan of installing a solar backup. But at times even when you have a Plan B in place you face a crisis and in such times you have to be tactful. You have to use your own and your colleagues' expertise to overcome it.

Strengths It is my interpersonal skills and communication. The other strength that I possess is knowledge of my subject. I am also very confident with public speaking and can make presentations in any type of gathering. Consistency is another aspect that I have worked on. Any person in a responsible position has to be consistent in terms of application of rules, procedures, and in what they say and in how they communicate.

Weakness I tend to lose my temper quite quickly. If I do not get the result that was expected during a negotiation then I tend to lose my cool. I have been working on this 'temper' issue and have managed to control it to a great extent.