

# Work Motivation of Older Workers: A Case Study from Bangladesh

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## Abstract

Demographic shift becomes a major problem as ratio of older people is increasing in the total population of world and that leads to more number of older workforces in the total labour force which should be a blessing due to how importance older workers have at workplace. But instead of blessing, the increased number of older workforces becomes a curse for many developed and developing countries due to low participation of these older workers to work at workplace mainly because of voluntary early retirement from the work and young workers are not replacing older workers proportionately that might lead to shortage of labor supply in near future which has serious economic and social consequences. Bangladesh is not free from such problem as recent trend shows that the rate of participation of older workers in the total workforce is in declining rate and 60% of the total workforce consists of middle age and older workers. One of many ways to retain these large numbers of older workers to work at workplace is to motivate them to work. But contrasting result in this study shows that if research is not being conducted in the area of work motivation of older workers then Bangladesh might suffer from serious economic and social consequences in future that are not desirable.

**Keywords:** Older workers, Younger worker, Work motivation, Motivational factors, Demographic shift.

## Introduction

The term *motivation* derives from the Latin word for movement (*movere.*) and the earliest approaches to understanding human motivation can be traced back from the time of the Greek philosophers who focused on the concept of hedonism as a principle driving force in behavior and the topic of employee motivation plays a central role in the field of management—both practically and theoretically (Steers *et al.*, 2004) but motivation drew the attention of the researchers after the Hawthorne Studies conducted by Elton Mayo during 1924 to 1932 (Dickson, 1973) which compels the managers to put attention towards the motivation of the workforce that actually opens a new horizon of human relations approach to management (Bedeian, 1993) as social scientists tries to investigate ‘why workers work?’ or ‘what motivates workers to work?’ (Kovach, 1987). Major motivational theories include Maslow's need-hierarchy theory (Maslow, 1943), Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman, 1959), Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), Adams' equity theory (Adams, 1965), Skinner's reinforcement theory (Skinner, 1953) which emerged after researchers being inspired by the Hawthorne Studies. Motivation of the workforce is essential for survival of the organisation (Smith, 1994) as it is the workforce or employees that run the organisation not the machines.

Workforce of the organisation is made up of both older workers<sup>1</sup> and younger workers<sup>2</sup>. Demographic shift due to lower fertility rate and increased life expectancy, number of older population is increasing among the developed and developing countries, hence as a result potential workforce is aging (Kooij *et al.*, 2008; BBS<sup>3</sup>, 2000) since older workers will constitute 32 percent of the potential workforce in 2050 as compared to 25 percent in 2000 of world's total labour force (United Nations, 2007).

Due to the demographic shift in different regions of the world, employees and workforce would be expected to work until older age where economists suggest that the main challenge would lie in the utilization of the fewer employees who would be forced to work for the large group of retired older workers since young workers are not replacing the older workers proportionately (United Nations, 2007; Kooij *et al.*, 2008).

Besides it becomes a major challenge for the employers to retain the older workforce in the workplace since labour participation among older workers is comparatively very low mostly due to early retirement in most of the developed and developing countries, this number is in increasing trend (Kooij *et al.*, 2008) that reflects lack of interest from older workers to continue to work and if such negative attitudes sustain among older workers towards workplace of the respected countries, then in coming days, a scenario might arise when workplace would suffer from scarce workforce since it comprises of both older and younger workers and lack of participation from older workers would give rise to scarcity among labour force due to demographic shift, and younger workers are not replacing older workers proportionately that will affect the economic growth of the respected countries as labour is one of the important factor of economic growth of any nation and lack of labour participation would lead to slow or negative economic growth of nations.

Therefore scarcity of labour would directly affect the economic growth of these countries and this leads to serious economic, social consequence and a deteriorated standard of living and for developing countries the outcome can be disastrous, hence consequences due to shortage of skilled and knowledgeable employees bring out the reality that has inspired and encouraged scholars and researchers with a new interest for society to understand as to how to motivate an older workers (Latham, 2007; Kooij *et al.*, 2008).

Bangladesh is one of the developing countries where there is a demographic shift in the population and as a result, Bangladesh is following the trends which characterise the demography of other Asian countries, for example the rising proportion of older people in the population and as a result, middle age and older people constitute 59.4 percent of total labour force (Table-01; Appendix-A). But data obtained from BBS (2008) show that, percentages of labour force participation of the age group of 40 years and above in 2006-2007 have been in declining trend from the previous year i.e. high rate of decline in the participation of the older workers in the over all labour force participation (more discussion in section 1.6) and this declining trend has been continuing and this is mostly due to the early retirement of the older workers from the work place due to lack of interest to work at workplace (Uddin, 1994) when this is the period when Bangladesh has been having better economic growth, over all high labour force participation and positive growth of labour force participation in the major industry of Bangladesh

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<sup>1</sup> The term "older worker" has been used to refer to workers from the age of 40 to those aged over 75 depending on the purpose and field of study (Bourne, 1982; Warr, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Younger Worker refers to workers between the ages of 15 and 24 (Loughlin and Barling, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics BBS the centralized official bureau in Bangladesh for collecting statistics on demographics, the economy, and other facts about the Bangladesh.

(Table-02; Table-03, Appendix-A) but declining trend of labour force participation from older worker of age group of 40 years and above becomes an important concern as ‘what leads to lack of interest of older worker to work at workplace?’ or ‘What demotivates older worker to work at workplace?’ When knowing the motivational factors of the employees at workplace gives a company an added competitive advantages over the other company (Kovach, 1987) then definitely it is important to know, what motivates older workers to work at workplace in context of Bangladesh due to the fact that approximately 60% of the labour force constitutes of middle age & older workers and lack of participation from them would create shortage and scarcity of labour supply that would lead to serious economic, social consequence and a deteriorated standard of living for a developing country like Bangladesh. But before going into the discussion on the importance of work motivation of older workers in context of Bangladesh, it is important to know why work motivation of older workers working at workplace are important discussed in the next section.

### ***Importance of motivation of Older worker***

From the latter half of the last century, with the advancement of latest technology, organisation also moves from manual operations to automated operations where machines are replaced by human resources. But at the end of the day management has realised the fact that no matter how important the role of the technology is in the organisations’ success, still the people or the employees behind the operation of the latest technology are the most important asset to the organisation, as a result it draws the attention of researchers and scholars across the globe towards the development of motivational theories that has been modified and changed its dimensions with the passage of different time period in order to answer the question as to how organisations manage workforce at workplace (Latham, 2007). The realisation by the management about the workforce as valuable asset to the organisations have compelled them to create and retain productive employees as a result companies have been keeping their employees productive for centuries that leads companies to be successful through maintaining greater productivity of capital, where as knowledge based industries do it by putting emphasis to the productive employees, that is why motivating aging workforce have economic incentives which highlights the fact that management place greater value in the employees and their experiences, expertise, skills and knowledge (Lord and Farrington, 2006).

Kauffman in 1987 already pointed that motivated older workforce can be a key indicator for the flourish of any business and in this regard she referred to the importance of report published in August 1982 by U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, under the title “Aging and the Work Force: Human Resource Strategies”, where report encourages human resource department to put special attention to train and educate its staffs and managers to design appropriate HR strategies for older workers. According to Khauffman, phased retirement can bring benefit to both employers and employees, where newly recruited employees can educate themselves from the experienced workers through phases of effective and efficient introduction period and on the other hand retiring employees would enjoy more free and flexible time along with low income. The obvious conclusion drawn from Khauffman’s argument is to retaining and motivating older workforce that benefits both the organisations and older workers as well. But what do existing motivational theories explain about the work motivation of older worker?

### ***Motivational Theories***

The field of work motivation has already encouraged and drawn social scientists and scholars around the

world to involve themselves in vast amount of researches and some of the major work done by renowned scientists such as Bandura, Deci, Latham, Locke, Vroom are well known for their contribution for providing intensive amount of theories in the field of work motivation. But in the theoretical models, the nature of work motivation and the way it changes over time are often implicit assumptions as Latham (2007) argued that the aging factors have an effect on work motivation, where as empirical studies conducted in the field of work motivation emerged with the theories that is mostly based on young people where aging factor has been overlooked, neglected, played a minimal role in these theories (Latham and Steele, 1983; Locke and Latham, 2002). Empirical studies that identify age as an independent variable normally don't follow or use framework provided by conventional motivational theories that can be found in the works of Eskildsen *et al.*, (2004); Lord and Farrington, (2006). Hence aging factor can't be neglected or overlooked in the theories of work motivation.

According to Kooji *et al.*, (2008), in their meta-critical study showed that most aging factors have negative effect on the work motivation for the older workers where they suggested conducting more research in this field. Besides studies conducted by McCain, *et al.*, (1983) and Rhodes (1983) concluded that aging workforce or employees with lower motivation have higher tendency to quit from the job and another research conducted by Clark *et al.*, (1996) on a random sample of 5,000 employees in UK showed that relationship between work motivation and age tends to be U-shaped with greater job satisfaction among young and old workers. On the contrary to this, the study conducted by Eskildsen *et al.*, (2004) showed that age has positive linear relationship between work motivation and work satisfaction as well, which simply contradicts the findings from these studies to the existing motivational theories where the end results are shown in an isolated framework.

According to Kooij *et al.*, (2008) in their meta-critical analysis explains that different aging factors may affect work motivation in different ways that can lead to rise of conflicting results in the past studies conducted in the last century, that can actually create doubt in the mind of practitioners about the validity and applicability of conventional motivational theories. In this regard Locke (1999) points out that one of the major problem relating to the motivational theories is the difficulty of integration as most conventional motivational theories explain different dimensions of motivational sequence that leads to the fact that if work motivation is many-sided and better understood as motivational sequence then it's possible that different stages of the empirical model might be affected differently by aging factor. Hence this could be one of the answer to the question as to why different empirical studies provide conflicting and varying characteristics of effects of age factors on work motivation.

From above can it be concluded whether work motivation increases with age or not? This is not easily answered as past empirical studies did not show any consistency as to whether work motivation increases with age or not, this can be explained from the conclusion drawn from the study conducted from Noe *et al.*, (1990) that older workers have found career path of their choice, hence being more motivated to work where as on the other hand empirical study conducted by Hansson *et al.*, (1997) showed that older employees could not see any future in their career path and hence reflecting lower motivation towards their work. Hence this theoretical inconsistency raises another question that what actually motivates older employees to work at workplace.

### ***Past research relating to what motivates employees***

In this study, according to Daft and Marcic (2004) work motivation refers to the forces either within or external to a person that arouse enthusiasm and persistence to pursue a certain course of action that

actually highlights basic concept of understanding motivation i.e. motivation is what makes people want to work (Reece and Brandt, 1990). In the past literature, four decades of researches relating to ‘what motivates employees’ have been found that had been done during 40’s, 80’s, mid 80’s and in the late 90’s (Wiley, 1997) where studies have been conducted over all the employees ranging from below the age of 26 years to above 55 years i.e. these studies include respondents of both younger and older workers. These studies had been conducted on ten motivating factors (Table-08; Appendix-A) from 40’s to late 90’s (Kovach, 1987; Silverthorne, 1992; Wiley, 1997; Fisher and Yuan, 1998).

Four decades of previous studies conducted on the factors that motivates employees include different subgroups such as gender, age, employment status, occupational category, annual income level, job type, organisation level which can be found in the studies conducted by Kovach (1987) and Wiley (1997) respectively where in both the studies inclusion of aging workforce i.e. age range between 40 years to above 55 years have been one of the sub category of age group that clearly indicates the less importance given by the researchers towards motivators of older workers at workplace when baby boomers in the late 90’s were about to step into the category of older workers (Taylor *et al.*, 1989) and many other European nations along with developing nations are having more number of older workforce in their total labour force (Eskildsen *et al.*, 2004; Kooji *et al.*, 2008; BBS, 2008) due to demographic shift. Then question is why researches relate to work motivation of older workers having been limited or neglected? One reason might be importance and focus given to younger workers believing that youth would be the leaders of tomorrow and as a result majority of the researches conducted in the field of work motivation have been mainly focusing towards younger workers as evidence supports the fact that both the major studies conducted by Kovach (1987) had 450 respondents out of total 1100 respondents were aged 40 years and above and Wiley (1997) had only 75 respondents out of total 460 respondents of aged 45 years and above (Table-04; Table-05, Appendix-A). Another reason could be that management already knows about the motivation of older workers at workplace since importance of older workers cannot be neglected due to the fact that knowledge and expertise older workers possess and role of educating the newly recruited younger employees to take up the positions of the older worker (Khauffman, 1987) but in reality younger workers are not replacing older workers proportionately due to demographic shift and older workers prefer early retirement than continue to work. In such situation, it is even more important to put emphasis on what motivates older workers at workplace than the importance given by the social scientists in reality and in order to identify that motivates older workers there is no alternative than to conduct research regards to work motivation of the older workers.

### ***Why conducting research relating to older worker’s motivation?***

In usual circumstances it is common phenomena that at some points in life, every human will work either for their own livelihood or for others’ livelihood i.e. for families, children etc (Wiley, 1997) and for decades, scientists have been trying to find out ‘What motivates people to work?’ or ‘What factors motivates people in their jobs?’. But it is not easy to find answer to such questions as to ‘Why do workers work?’ and if an organisation knows what is the driving force behind the employees to work then the organisations would be in good position to stimulate them to perform well (Kovach, 1987). Appropriate training can be given to the employees if they lack ability, if workforces suffer an environmental problem then altering the environment could be a key to enhance employee performance but if motivation becomes the problem then the problem is not easily solved, rather more complex and challenging (Wiley, 1997) and when it is question of investigating motivational factors of older workers,

the answer is even more difficult to obtain as mentioned earlier in this text that most of the motivational researches done on the past focused on the younger workers, besides the inconsistent trend exists in motivational theories relating to effect of aging factor on motivation due to its varying characteristics make it even more problematic to find the motivational factors of older workers to work at work place, hence one way to overcome this problem is to conduct research relates to work motivation of older worker.

Work motivation is considered to be one of the major problems faced by business organization today (Watson, 1994) due to the changing nature of the employees' work motivation i.e. at different times and periods, different factors become important motivator for the employees at the work place to work, as it becomes more evident when highlighting the results of the past research studies conducted in the last four decades. In the 40's employees ranked 'Full appreciation of work done' as number one motivating factors, in 80's and 90's employees ranked 'Interesting work' and 'Good wages' respectively number one motivator to work at workplace (Table-08; Appendix-A) and it was not different for older workers as the study conducted by Kovach (1987) found out that employees aged between 41 to 50 years old ranked 'Feeling of being in on thing' as number one motivator where as employees aged between 50 and over ranked 'Interesting work' as number one motivational factors to work at workplace. Similarly the study conducted by Wiley (1997) showed that employees aged between 45 to 54 year ranked 'Good wages' as number one motivator where as employees aged between 55 years old and above ranked 'Full appreciation of work done' as number one motivational factors to work at workplace. This implies that employees ranked different factors as their top motivators in different time periods reflecting the changing nature of employee work motivation over different time periods. This is because workers coming from different time periods i.e. 40's, 80's, 90's were having different social and economic situations as during 40's world was going through from the recovery of great depression & world war II and the life styles of the people during 40's were different from that of the people in the 80's as standard of the life styles rose up due to the prosperity and progress (Dawson and Dawson, 1991; Ravenhill, 2008) made within the span of periods of forty years and picture is no different from that of late 90's from that of 80's when again world had undergone economic recession in the 90's that had made an impact in the overall life styles of the workers of 90's from that of 80's (Wiley, 1997; Ravenhill, 2008), hence led to different factors being the top motivators for the employees of different time periods.

Besides there exists a difference between the perception of employees and supervisors regards to employee work motivation i.e. supervisors think differently than the employees about what motivates employees, this is supported by the fact drawn from the past researches where it shows that factor ranked top by the employees lies at bottom in the list ranked by the supervisors (Table-08; Table-09; Appendix-A) i.e. when both supervisors and employees were asked to rank about what motivates employees then different results were reflected by the supervisors and employees. This can be clear from the study conducted by Kovach (1987) showed that employees aged between 45 to 50 years old ranked 'Feeling of being in on thing' as number one motivator and employees aged between 50 and over ranked 'Interesting work' as number one motivator but when supervisors were asked to rank for the employees then supervisors ranked 'Good wages' the top most motivating factor which was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> by the older workers of age group 45 to 50 years old and 50 years & above respectively. Besides whenever supervisors were asked to rank what motivates employees the most, then irrespective of time and place they ranked 'good wages' top in their list (Table-09; Appendix-A), hence there exists a gap between perception of employees and supervisors.

If management<sup>4</sup> does not know what motivates their older employees at work place then it is most likely that older employees would suffer from lower motivation and chose to retire or quit from the job as older workers already have higher tendency to quit from the job in case of lower motivation (McCain, *et al.*, 1983; Rhodes, 1983). Could this be the reason that older workers tend to quit from the job or prefer early retirement due to management's misconception about what motivates older workers at workplace? Therefore management can't ignore the fact that they must know why their older workers work and what motivates them to work.

From above discussion it brings out one important point that research in context of work motivation of older worker is very important since very little is known about work motivation of older workers, not much studies have been conducted to explore what exactly motivates older workers in particular, employee work motivation has varying characteristics that changes with the time and importantly management does not know about work motivation of their older employees as to why they work and what motivates them to work at work place. Hence research regards to older worker's work motivation has to conduct frequently since along with the inconsistency exists in the motivational theories regards to work motivation of older workers there is another problem that makes motivational theories ineffective due to implementing motivational theories at improper time i.e. when studies are conducted on employee work motivation and by the time results drawn from the data collected from these studies being implemented, it might be too late to take effect in employees work motivation as employees work motivation might have already changed due to rapidly changing technology, crumbling tradition, media influence and so on, as a result it seems that at the time of implementing motivational theories, the theories already become outdated (Kovach, 1980) and as a result aim and objective of the research remain unfulfilled. Now this is needless to say why older worker's work motivation is important and why research regards to older worker is important and why research should be conducted frequently too. If research is not conducted regards to employee motivation then are the existing theories applicable across different culture and nations?

### ***Reality of motivational researches***

As mentioned before, most of the major motivational theories developed by *Maslow, Herzberg, Vroom, Lawler, Adams* in the twentieth century are the results of the studies conducted in United States of America and hardly any major work done outside of USA, what Novak (1968:9) describes as "the overriding myth of American Society" and social scientists already posed a question about the applicability of these theories across the globe where world is divided into different nations believing in different cultures, traditions, customs, rules, regulations. The research conducted by Di Cesare and Golnaz (2003) showed that same motivator can be perceived differently by employees of different nations and cultures as their study shows the differences that exists between the work motivation of the employees of both United States and Japan. This difference becomes highly visible in the work of Silverthorne (1992) where Silverthorne showed the comparison of employee work motivation across USA, Russia and Taiwan. The study shows that 'Full appreciation of the work done' was ranked number one, four and seven by US, Taiwanese and Russian employees respectively that includes the participation of the older workers as one of the sub group of the employees' age group. Similarly study conducted by Fisher and Yuan (1998) showed the comparison of US and Chinese responses regards to

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<sup>4</sup> Seniors or supervisors run the management hence view of supervisors is management's view.

factors that affect employee motivation and these differences across countries are due to the differences in culture, economy, political and management systems (Fisher and Yuan, 1998). Therefore rather than taking a result of study conducted in another country as benchmark standard, it is wise to conduct the research study in one's own country due to the cultural, economical, political and management differences because employee motivation would be the deciding factor of success and failure of the organization (Kim, 2006) in the current century. If knowing the answer, why employees come to work and what motivates them to work lead to competitive advantage of one organisation over other organisation, then keeping oneself in the dark and not knowing the answer can lead to disastrous situation and greatest disadvantage an organisation can have. Bangladesh is one of the developing countries where research on work motivation of older workers has not been conducted much as most of the studies conducted on employee work motivation are based on younger workers (Jahan and Ahmed, 1992) and it is high time when researchers of Bangladesh should focus more on the work motivation of older workers at workplace. Importance of motivating older workers in context of Bangladesh is discussed in the next section.

### ***Importance of motivating older workers in Bangladesh***

Bangladesh is one of the developing countries in the world (Jahan and Rahman, 2001) where poverty is one of the major problems along with other problems (USAID, accessed 1st June 2010) and in the beginning of twenty first century, economists and experts of world bank suggest that in order to remove curse like poverty from Bangladesh it is important for Bangladesh to maintain reasonable economic growth of GDP 6 to 7 for consecutive years (World Bank and ADB, 2002) which is not easily achievable. To achieve economic growth of GDP 6 to 7 for consecutive years there is no alternative than to achieve rapid industrialisation and inflow of FDI (Jahan and Rahman, 2001) because economy of Bangladesh has been agriculture based economy since its independence in 1971 (Khanam, 2006) as share of agriculture has been dominant in the GDP but during 90's and onward share of agriculture in the GDP declined as Industrial and Service sectors become dominant and contribution from both these sectors were significantly very high (Table-10; Appendix-A).

Hence during this period, all the major industry of Bangladesh that includes agriculture, hunting & forestry, Fishing, Mining & quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas & water, construction, wholesale & trade, Hotel & restaurant, Transport, storage & communication, Bank, Insurance, & Finance, Real estate, rent & business, Public administration, Education services, Health & social workers, Community, social & personal service activities etc experienced more or less positive growth and economy of Bangladesh has been moving from agriculture based economy to industry and service based economy i.e. towards the trend of industrialization when economic growth increased from 4 percent in the 80's to 5 percent in the 90's (Table-11; Appendix-A) that has been a remarkable achievement (World Bank and ADB, 2002).

This inclining trend of Bangladesh economy continued from 90's to beginning of 2000-01 to 2005-06 and continued to 2007-2008 (Table-03; Appendix-A) and during this period labour participation was relatively higher than the previous years (Table-02; Appendix-A) in the major industries of Bangladesh and labour force participation was also positive in most of the main industries of Bangladesh (BBS, 2008).

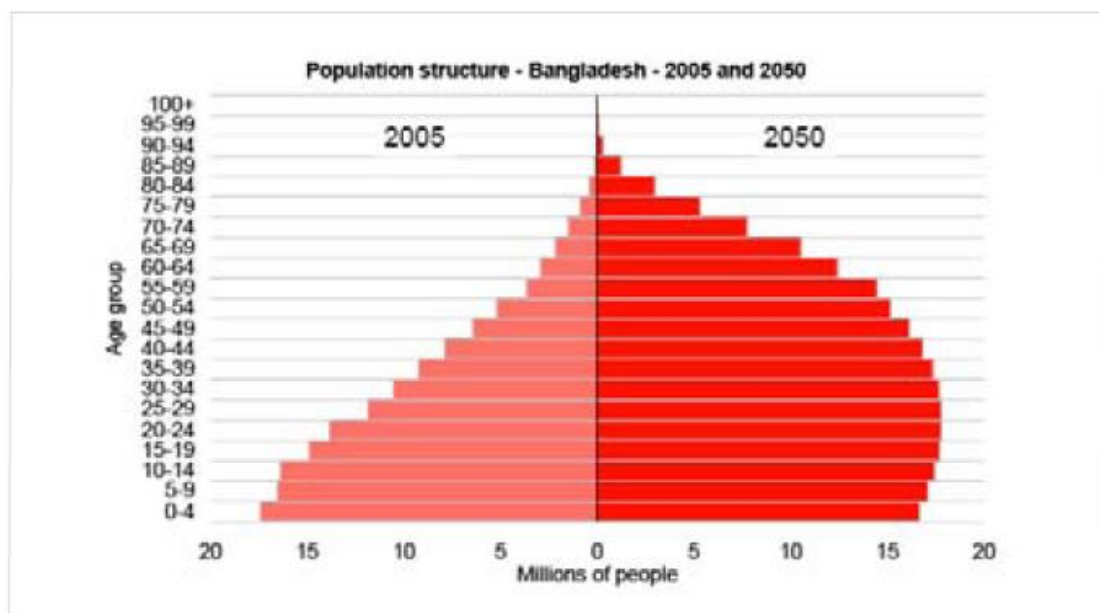
But apart from over all high labour force participation and positive growth of labour force participation in the major industry of Bangladesh (major industry is indeed the soul of Bangladesh economy), if



participation of labour force with respect to age group is taken into consideration then it would reveal the fact that workers of age group of 40 years and above have been in declining trend from the previous year i.e. in 2006-2007 rate of labour participation of age group 40 to 44 years old among male declined from 99.7 percent to 97.7 percent in 2007-2008 and for the same period rate of labour participation of age groups 45 to 49 years old, 50 to 54 years old, 55 to 59 years old, 60 to 64 years old and 65 years & above respectively among male declined from 99.5 percent to 97.8 percent, 99.2 percent to 95.4 percent, 97.3 percent to 92.4 percent, 87.8 percent to 82.7 & 66.1 percent to 59.3 percent respectively and labour participation among female of same age group also showed declining trend (BBS, 2008) i.e. high rate of decline in the participation of older workers in over all labour force participation, since male constitutes 76 percent of total labour force as compared to only 24 percent of female and male has high participation rate of 87 percent as compared to 29 percent of female (Table-02; Appendix-A). In reality, this is the period when Bangladesh had remarkable economic growth through industrialisation, rise in per capita income is quite good comparing to developing countries, positive growth of over all labour force participation, age-specific death rate had been in declining trend, besides unemployed rate has declined remarkably also than the previous years (BBS, 2008; Table-03 & Table-02; Appendix-A). Hence lower participation of older worker in the total labour force participation in context of Bangladesh is indeed an alarming indication since approximately 60 percent of the total labour force constitutes of middle age and older people (Table-01, Appendix-A) and there has already been a demographic shift in the population of Bangladesh.

**Conclusion**

Like many other South Asian Countries it is evident that due to greater life expectancy, lower mortality rate among older people due to improved life style, Bangladesh is following the trend of demography of other South Asian Countries i.e. rising in the proportion of the older people in the population (*HelpAge International*, accessed 1st June 2010) and in the near future Bangladesh is expected to have greater percentage of older people in its total population (BBS, 2007) and it can be more clear from graph below.



Source: BBS, 2006-2007

Out of total population of Bangladesh, 37.17 percent of total female population is 30 years and above, similarly 37.97 percent of total male population is also 30 years and above (BBS, 2008) i.e. approximately close to 38 percent of the total population constitutes of middle aged and older people which is more than the percentage of the middle aged and older people of the total population in the previous year and with current rate of increase in population, percentage of older workers in total labour force would be also increased but if rate of participation from older workers continues to have declining trend then in near future there might be time when Bangladesh would suffer from shortage of labour supply as middle age and older group constitutes the majority of the total labour force and if Bangladesh suffers from shortage of labour then this scarcity will hit the backbone of the economy because labour is an important input of economic growth and if economic growth declines then Bangladesh would suffer from serious economic, social consequence and a deteriorated standard of living which is not desirable at all. One of the reasons of the low participation of the older worker from work place is due to going into early retirement or quitting from the job (Uddin, 1994) and there is tendency of older worker to quit from the job when older workers suffer from lower motivation (McCain, *et al.*, 1983; Rhodes, 1983) then only way to retain these older workers is to motivate them to work in their workplace, hence it becomes essential to know what motivates older workers at work place to work. Only way to identify what motivates older workers at workplace is to ask employees about it as they are the best source of information (Wiley, 1997; Kim, 2006) because even the management who employs these employees may not know exactly what motivates their older employees at workplace as it is evident from four decades of research on employee motivation. It aims to answer the following questions:

- (a) What factors motivate older workers to work at workplace most?
  - (b) According to management, what motivates their older workers to work at workplace?
  - (c) What can be concluded by comparing the findings of these two research questions (a) and (b)?
- The aim is to explore work motivational factors of older workers and also assess the importance of conducting research relates to work motivation of older workers in context of Bangladesh.

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