



GLOBAL JOURNAL OF HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: C
SOCIOLOGY & CULTURE
Volume 21 Issue 2 Version 1.0 Year 2021
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Human Resource Management of Telecommunication Sector in Bangladesh: An Evaluation

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GJHSS-C Classification: FOR Code: 160899, 200299



Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:



Human Resource Management of Telecommunication Sector in Bangladesh: An Evaluation

Farhana Alam Khan ^α & Dr. Mizanur Rahman ^σ

Abstract- Human resource management has emerged as a key concept in recent times all the organization irrespective of geographical location, values, nature, and performance. This paper aims to analyze the current status of Human Resource Management in the telecommunication sector of Bangladesh. It also tried to examine to what extent the telecommunication companies have incentives and career development opportunities. The study finds that the telecom companies provide adequate incentives to employees to motivate them in achieving organizational goals and targets. In the case of a communication system, downward communication exists in most mobile telecom companies. Employees receive orders and notice what task is needed to be accomplished. Finally, the study finds that the employees do not get timely promotion due to encumbrance in existing organizational process, rules, and regulation that impede the Human Resource Management of the telecom companies in Bangladesh.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Human resources management or personnel management as a part of the organization is very crucial to run an organization. This department or part of the organization is responsible to recruit prudent personnel for the organizations. It is also responsible to arrange training facilities for employee development, promotion of the personnel, and transferring so that they can operate the organization efficiently. The HR department is also responsible to make a good relation between employee and employer and this congenial relation helps to achieve the organizational goal and individual goal (Legge 1995; Armstrong 2006). Human resource management helps to improve individual performance through a systematic process within the organization (Tahiri et al. 2020). Even, it also helps to improve organizational performance in the long run. The shift from management to Human resource management was momentum in a sense that emphasizes creating a better understanding between the organization and employees. Thus, managerial actions can easily be accomplished resulting in achieving organizational progress (Nielsen et al. 2011).

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In the 1980s Bangladesh for the first time has entered the circular mobile phone era. To meet the need of the huge population of Bangladesh, the government has opened the door for the telecom market for national and multinational companies. In 1989, Citycell started its operation for the first time in Bangladesh being 3rd mobile operator in South Asia. That time only Citycell mobile phone operator was monopolized their business in the mobile telecom business and operated their business with a limited number of the subscriber. As a result, they could not face any big problem to operate their business. But, with time, the number of subscribers was started to skyrocket and the new multinational mobile phone operator like Grameenphone has started to operate their business in Bangladesh. At the same time, the mobile phone company had to increase their personnel as the number of users has increased rapidly. So, they had to think differently.

The study has evaluated the existing status of Human Resource Management in the telecommunication companies of Bangladesh. Further, it emphasizes identifying the career opportunity of the employees in the telecommunication companies of Bangladesh. The paper finally identifies some challenges to applying human resource management policy in the companies' accomplishment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent times, mobile companies have been a key factor to enhance the scale of economies all over the world. Gradually, the demand for this sector has raised intensely resulting in keeping the impact on the overall economy (Asogwa et al. 2013; Bertschek et al. 2015; Matalqah & Warad 2017). Hamel & Prahalad (1996); Jamison (1998); Heeks et al. (2008); Rashid & Elder (2009) highlight the significant contribution of mobile telecom industries in the competitive environment. The mobile industry had a significant contribution that is helping a country to get a competitive advantage. Employees of this sector require high skills, technical knowledge, and capacities. Employees' satisfaction is highly required in the telecom sector that helps to expedite organizational performance. Telecom companies should emphasize formulating a competitive marketing policy for getting a competitive advantage.

Shah, Biswas, and Qayum (2006) emphasized initiatives of public and private telecom industries in Bangladesh. Both these sectors took lots of initiatives and measures to improve the overall condition in the market economy. But this sector is multifaceted with series of complexities including inadequate connectivity, limited network transmission, and so on. Thus, these telecom industries are getting lag behind. To over this problem, the study recommends allocating more funds to the annual development program. In this way, this sector can get more technical facilities.

Akhter & Jahan (2020) in their study identified that the telecom sector has contributing to accelerate the economy in Bangladesh and helping to ensure digital Bangladesh. Since the beginning of the telecom business has been helping to digitalized the government and private services (such as mobile financial services and government utilities services) and make the services easier, user friendly, and door stops. It has also been working to find the knowledge gap and making a bridge to make a bridge between the service provider and service recipient. As Bangladesh has a huge population and day by day the per capita income has started to increase, the new multinational mobile phone like Grameenphone limited company, a Norwegian based multinational giant, has started to operate their business in Bangladesh with the assistance of Grameen Bank. At the same time, the Bangladesh government is taking a huge amount of money from the mobile phone operator based on their revenue as the number of mobile subscribers is skyrocketing. The mobile services have ensured inclusiveness in the service delivery process by providing various information, news, facts, and happenings. Thus, users are easily getting access to various services very fast in Bangladesh.

As we have discussed that the HR department is the crucial part of any organization to run the business, the mobile phone company is not different from the other. Hossain (2019) has studied and analyzed Grameenphone and Teletalk so that the study can understand the practice of human management of these two companies. The study found that the Grameenphone mobile operator becomes the number one top mobile operator in terms of their number of subscribers and their financial profit over the period. At the same time, this multinational company becomes one of the topmost companies for the employment generation and it's become one of the lucrative companies among the Bangladeshi young fresh graduate. On the other hand, Teletalk, only one government-funded mobile operator is the least company in terms of the number of subscribers, financial profit, and the number of employees is operating their business without making any profit. At the same time, the male-female ratio of the employee is very high between the male and female employee in the

Teletalk. But both of the companies have a very good image in terms of corporate social responsibility. However, Grameenphone has done very well with the assistance of very qualified personnel and the HR department is playing a crucial role to operate their business and hold the first position in the mobile phone company in Bangladesh. However, GP has an outstanding performance in profit-making which is increasing day by day. In contrast, the opposite picture of profit-making is seen in the case of Teletalk limited. One important thing is that both the companies have failed to comply with the codes of ILO and Labor Law of Bangladesh (Rahman 2010; Islam 2012).

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Communication is a two-way relationship between two parties to give a particular message (Caldwell & Gulbrandsen 2019). In every organization, it is required to keep better relations between superiors and subordinates (Karma 2008, Wińska 2010 & Babalola et al. 2014). Every organization either public or private has certain rules and regulations that guide the organization. By rules and regulation, it means internal specific rules that will guide employees on what to do. Internal rules and regulations help to maintain the discipline of HR in the organization (Opatha & Mithani 2016; Wanjiku 2018; Opatha 2019; Nwinyokpugi & Robinson 2019). Remuneration is an important aspect of human resource management in every organization. Though the structure of remuneration varies from one organization to another, all the organizations have a specific remuneration structure. By remuneration, it means giving employees a certain amount of money for his/her services or work. The organization must have handsome remuneration to sustain the potential human resource of the organization in the long run (Rynes et al. 2004, George 2017, Urbancová & Šnýdrová 2017; Radvila & Šilingienė 2020). Another important aspect of human resource management is promotion in the organization. Employees eagerly wait for getting a promotion after passing a certain period in the particular organization. Promotion is the process of up-gradation an employee's position from one stance to another. It helps to improve the employee's status. Experienced employees can contribute to the development of the organization (Phelan & Lin 2001; Wickramasinghe & Samarasinghe 2016). Organization requires to give incentives opportunities for the employees whether it is financial or non-financial (Gibbons 1998, Alfandi 2014, Mansaray-Pearce et al. 2019). In every organization, employees have expectations for career development opportunities. Without this opportunity, employees will no longer exist in the organization. So, it is an important factor to attract potential and merit employees who will stay in the organization and give support in the long run. Career development opportunity is a motivating factor

for the employees to go ahead. It helps to expedite employees' performance (Songan et al. 2003, Kaya &

Ceylan 2014, Pillay et al. 2015 and Parvaiz & Ahmed 2016).

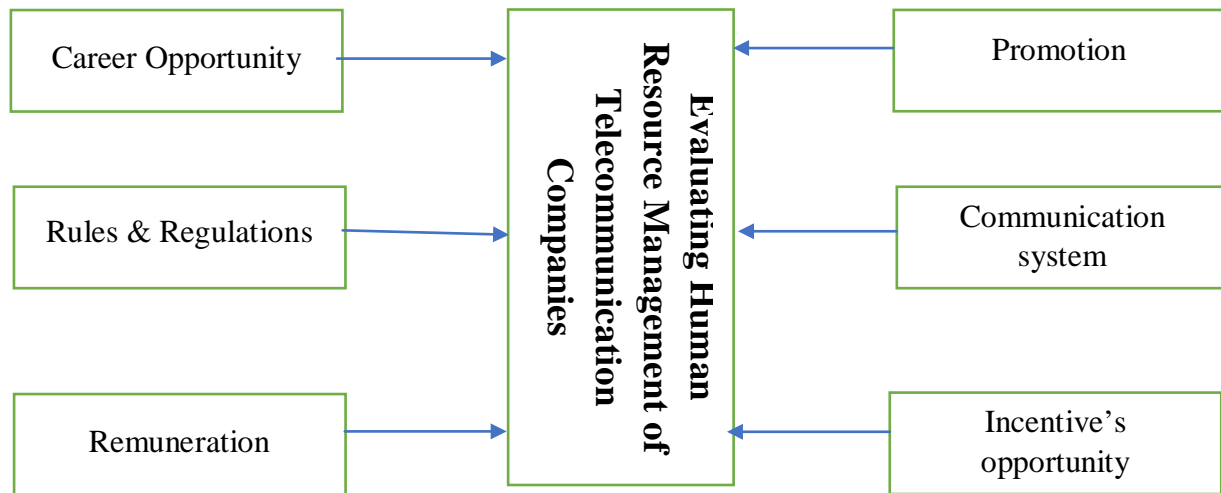


Figure 1: Evaluating HRM in Telecommunication

IV. RESEARCH QUESTION

The primary question of the study is as follows:

- a. What is the existing status of Human Resource Management of Telecommunication Companies in Bangladesh?

Besides, there are some secondary questions as follows:

- b. What is the existing promotion and remuneration system?
- c. To what extent, the telecommunication companies provide incentives to the employee?

V. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the study is to evaluate existing Human Resource Management in Telecommunication Companies in Bangladesh.

Besides, primary objectives, there are some specific objectives:

1. To analyze the existing status of Human Resource Management in the telecommunication sector of Bangladesh
2. To identify the career opportunity of the employees in the telecommunication sector of Bangladesh.

VI. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study has obtained data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data for the study has been collected using Survey Method including interviews and questionnaires. The questionnaire is composed of both close and mixed ended. The study has included close-ended questions so that relevant data can easily be arranged. Besides, some open-ended questions would have helped to get detailed

answers to the question. The questionnaire has been administered to a total of 115 employees in the telecommunication sector. The study has adopted Cluster sampling, Random sampling, and multi-stage sampling. After clustering, GrameenPhone, Banglalink, Robi & Airtel have been taken into account to collect data. Random sampling has been followed here in selecting employees from telecommunication organizations.

Evaluating Human Resource Management of Telecommunication Companies

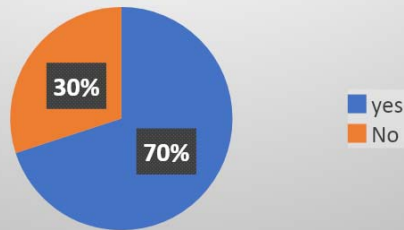
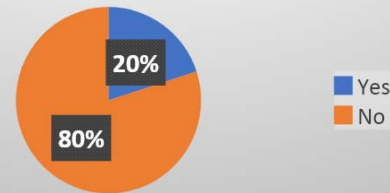
- Communication system

Communication is the process of exchanging information within the organization (Adu-Oppong, & Agyin-Birikorang 2014; Keyton 2017). For organizational improvement, effective communication is highly important in every organization (Hargie 2016). Effective communication mostly helps to keep better connections among employees and executives. Employees asked whether their respective organization maintains proper communication with the employee.

Chart 1.1 shows that 70% of employees did not experience better communication from their telecom companies. According to them, Organizations do not care about employees. One of the employees shares his expression in the following ways:

"I am enrolled as an entry-level officer. My organization always gives me pressure in work. The team management always imposes tasks from the top management. So, there is no scope of giving feedback at the team level or management level."

The rest of the 30% opined that they have good communication with the organization. The means of communication are essentially email, SMS, website, HR bulletin, HRBP, and HRQB.

Chart 1.1 Does the company communicate with the employees?**Chart 1.2 Does companies' reporting manager maintain communication with the employees?****Chart 1.1:** Does the company communicate with the employees?**Chart 1.2:** Does companies' reporting manager maintain communication with the employees?

In any organization, keeping good relation between reporting manager and employees is highly important. Employees were asked whether their reporting manager or line manager maintain proper communication with them or not. Chart 1.2 answers that reporting managers of the organizations do not maintain proper communication with employees in most cases. Only 20% of employees said that reporting manager

maintains proper communication with employees. In that case, the communication process is completely informal like a chat on social media, chatting, group discussion, etc. It means most of the companies are highly centralized, rigid, and unyielding. So, it will be very difficult to improve the HRM of the company. One-sided communication may hamper productivity.

Case Study:

Employees hardly get the opportunity to communicate properly with the supervisors. Most of the time, team management imposes their decisions and orders to follow them properly. Employees are bound to follow the central guidelines in their work process. If we have the platform to give opinions not only on all issues but also issues related to employee's interest, it will be helpful to improve the performance of the employees easily. But the organization does not care about it and no attempts were made for the upliftment of employees' job status and dignity. As a result, employees lose their energy in the work setting resulting in demotivating carrying out the responsibilities. Generally, the company takes informal feedback from the employees but it is not adequate enough. So, there is not any feedback mechanism about the ongoing activities of the organization. Employees often feel unknown about some technical issue in the operation process. In that case, the opinion of the employees can be helpful to decide by the organization how to solve the problems immediately. Thus, hierarchal communication impedes the smooth functioning process in the telecom company. Even employees do not feel any interest to get engaged in the feedback process. It means that the employees are less empowered in the telecom organization in Bangladesh.

- Incentive's opportunity

Employees of the companies require motivation for better performance. Incentives help to motivate employees in any organization. Companies can give

financial or non-financial incentives to the employees. Employees were asked whether companies provide incentives to employees or not.

Chart 1.3 Respondents who have received incentives from the companies or not**Chart 1.3:** Respondents who have received incentives from the companies or not.

Chart 1.3 shows that 80% of respondents received incentives from the organization. The nature of

incentives includes festive bonus, target bonus, performance bonus, profit bonus, and target bonus.

20% of respondents replied that they did not get incentives.

One of the respondents said his views-

"Companies recruit employees through outsourcing. I am enrolled here as an outsourced employee. Company does not give me incentive."

- Career Opportunity

Career development is an integral part of Human Resource Management. Without the flourishing

career of the employees, the performance of the organization cannot be promoted easily. Employees have been asked whether there exists any career opportunity in your respective organization.



Chart 1.4: Career opportunity of the employees

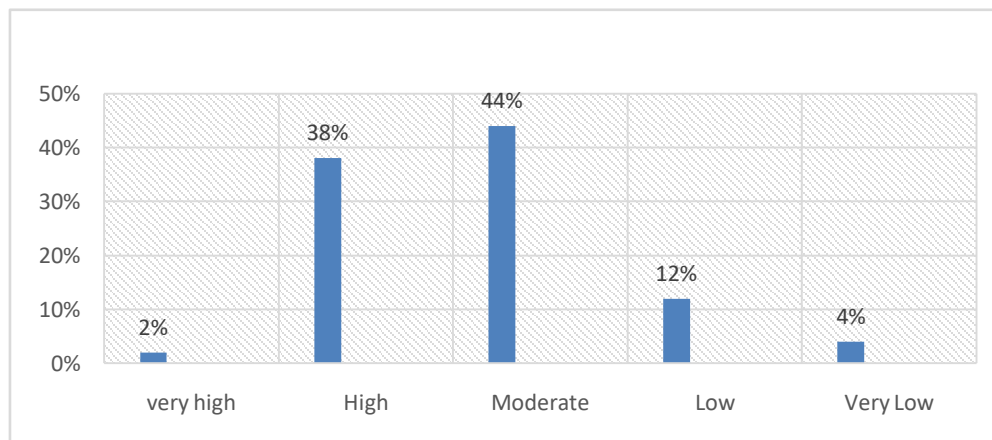


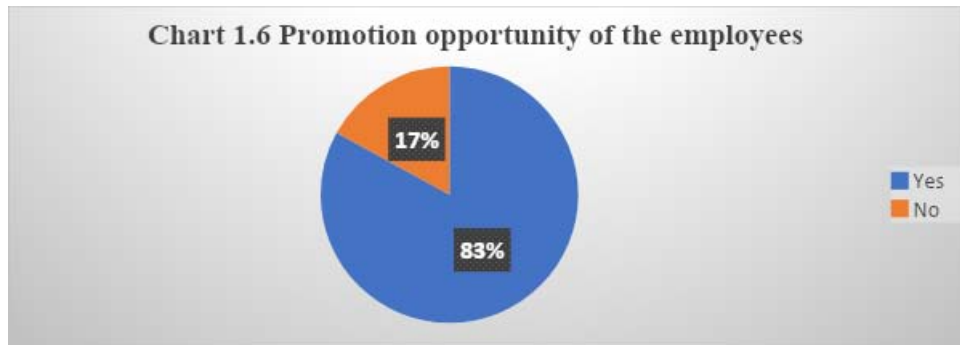
Chart 1.5: Support of the organizations to employees

60 % employees opined that career opportunity does not exist in the respective organization. They said that they received preliminary training while joining the organization. After that, the training session was hardly conducted. The rest of 40% viewed that they have the opportunity to promote their career.

To promote the career of the employees, the support of the organizations is highly important. Employees responded to what extent they receive support from the organizations. Chart 1.5 shows that 44% of employees got a moderate level of support from organizations. 38% opined that they had high-level support from organizations. 16% opined that they had received low and very low-level support from organizations.

- Promotion

Promotion is an important issue to promote Human Resource Management. Employees were asked whether they got their promotion timely.

Chart 1.6 Promotion opportunity of the employees*Chart 1.6:* Promotion opportunity of the employees

83% of employees replied that they did not get a promotion timely. According to them, various issues impede the smooth promotion process in the organizations like proper promotion guidelines, limited job vacancy, limited recruitment, etc. Only 17% opined that they got a promotion on time.

Public sector organization is getting puzzled with bureaucratic complexities that are found in case of teletalk. There are not any promotion policy guidelines in the telecommunication organization. Teletalk being a state-owned organization has promotion rules to follow but these rules are not being practiced effectively in the organization. If the promotion policy is not structured, the organization will not get proper talent who have the qualifications to contribute to the organization.

One employee got a promotion and shared his experience:

"I got a promotion very fast from my organization. I did better perform in the organization and received the best employee award. As a result, it was an easy issue for me to get a timely promotion. Otherwise, it could have been difficult to proceed in the future. I admit it is not very easy to get timely promotion for all the employees. The organization is very strict and follows hard rules regarding the promotion of the employees."

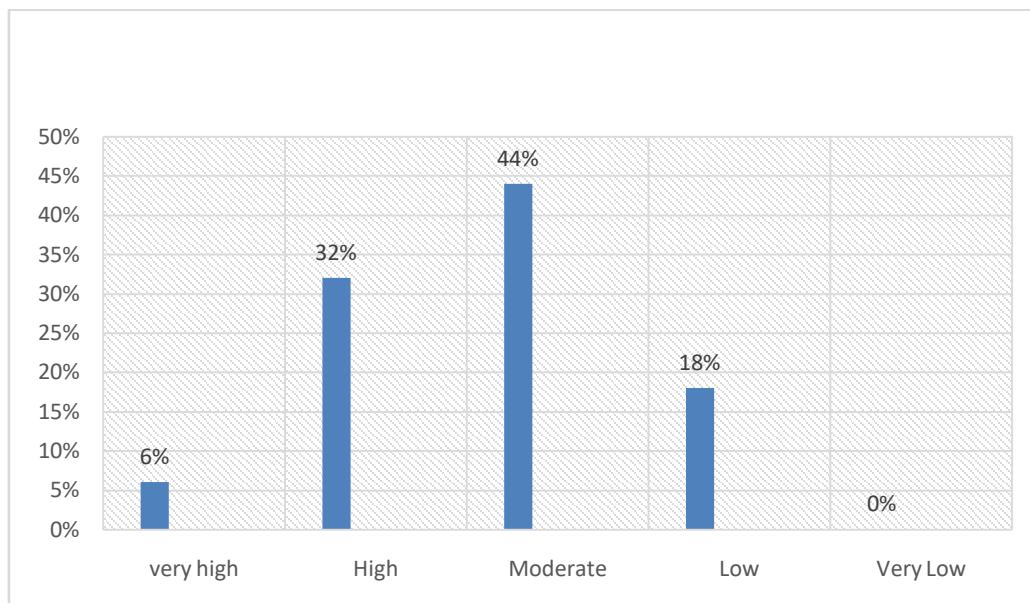
In that context, a smooth promotion process is quite impossible to continue in the organization".

Opposite experience of an employee has las following as:

I got a late promotion from my organization and that was completely unexpected. I fulfilled all the conditions of the promotion in my respective post. But I have no answer why I got a late promotion. I think it is completely under the consideration of the respective organization how they view it or what is their position regarding promotion guidelines in the organization. Employees do not have any platform where they can share their opinion regarding promotion. So, employees' interests are not getting protected in any way that seriously brings sufferings for the employees of the telecommunication sector in Bangladesh.

- Rules, Regulations, safety issues and Remuneration

Rules and regulations are highly imperative in a business organization. Flexible rules and regulations are important to promote human resources in the organization. Employees were asked to what extent rules and regulations are flexible to promote the organization.

*Chart 1.7:* Flexibility of the existing rules and regulations of the companies.

44% of employees responded that the existing rules and regulations of telecom companies are moderately flexible. 32% of employees replied that the existing rules and regulations of telecom companies are highly flexible. 18% of employees viewed that the existing rules and regulations of telecom companies are

very rigid. It means most telecom companies follow rigid ways of operating their management. Even employees do not get basic facilities from the companies sometimes. 40% (Chart 1.8) respondents opined that they moderately get facilities from the organization.

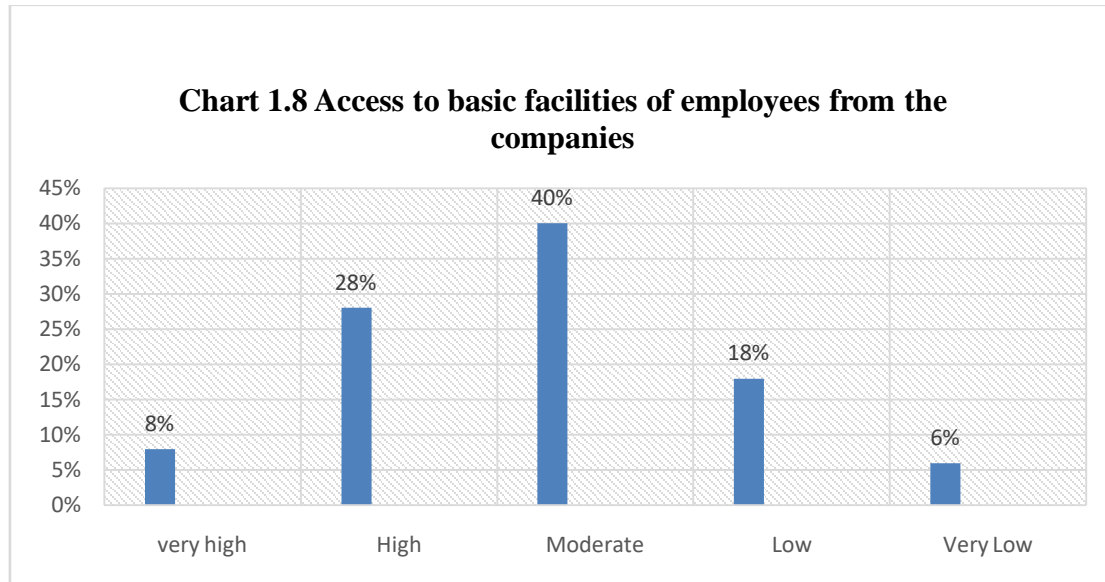


Chart 1.8: Access to basic facilities of employees from the companies.

Employees expect to get expected remuneration. Employees were asked whether they are satisfied with the remuneration provided. 24% of

employees replied that they are moderately satisfied. Only 20% are highly satisfied and 8% have a very high level of satisfaction.

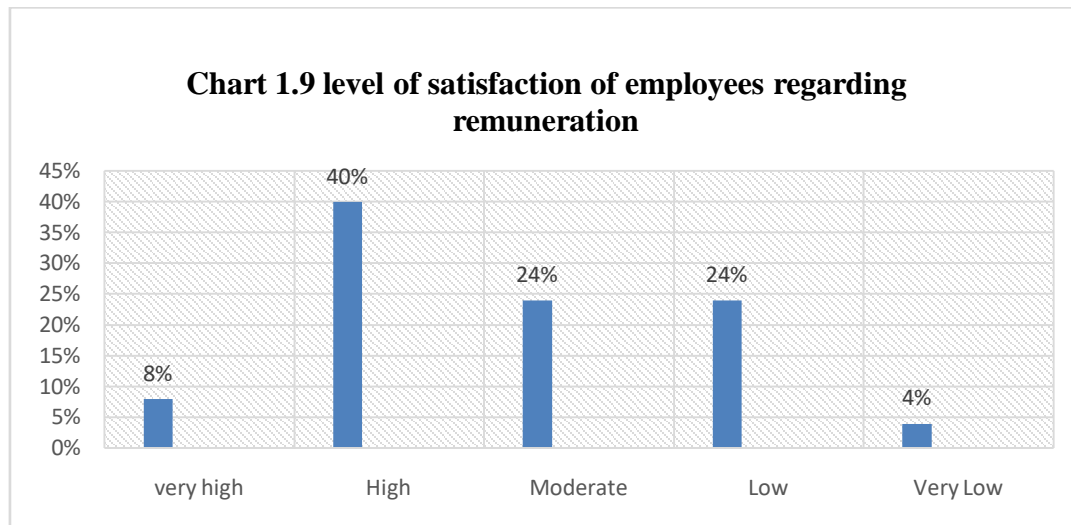


Chart 1.9: Level of satisfaction of employees regarding remuneration.

VII. CONCLUSION

To improve the HRM status of the telecom companies, there is a need to bring change in the existing system. At first, the organization needs to formulate promotion guidelines so that employees are attracted to stay in the job. Besides, a better communication system is highly required with maintaining flexibility. Rules and regulations are needed

to be flexible to run the activities of the organization. The remuneration system needs to be systematic so that employees are fascinated to stay in the job. In the context of Bangladesh, the rules and regulations of the telecom companies are moderately flexible. In the case of promotion, employees do not get timely promotions whereas top management gets their promotion easily. As a result, employees find very difficult to get career development opportunity in the telecom companies in

Bangladesh. So, the overall status of human resource management is not quite satisfactory.

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