

# OUR TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS

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**A**N officer during his career attends, on the average, six to ten courses, at various training establishments. The schools and colleges provide him means and know-how to develop leadership. They keep him abreast of military thoughts and doctrines.

In this article an attempt is made to analyse training establishments in the light of some of our conditions. I must caution that such a study needs detailed analysis and expertise. My intention is primarily to generate thought on the subject.

## THE EXISTING DESIGN

We will first draw a design of training establishments in our army. The DMT exercises overall control and issues directives. The organisational structure is federal where federated units i.e. training establishments enjoy considerable freedom. The establishments run various types of courses. For our study, we can divide the courses under three categories:—

- (a) *Departmental Courses*: Such courses are run by the departmental training establishments e.g. Infantry School, Armoured Corps Centre and School, ASC School and so on. These courses provide proficiency in one's own arm or service.
- (b) *General Courses*. Such programmes are run by establishments like College of Combat, Staff College, IAT, IDM and so on. The courses run are on subjects generally applicable to the army. The establishments teach concepts and doctrines.
- (c) *Courses of Skill*. These courses are run by training establishments for teaching a particular skill such as PT, D and M, WT and so on.

## THE FUNCTION OF TRAINING ESTABLISHMENTS

The training establishments strive to achieve a limited aim within the framework of the overall aim of training in the army. We will examine the function of training establishments in a different manner. Let us take the case of Capt B, who is attending a course of instruction—say JC.

Capt B is a keen and smart young blood. He is by no means raw in command and tactical problems at his level. He has read GS publications several times over. He has commanded a company and has taken part in war. In the latter respect perhaps he has an edge over his instructors.

Capt B is not happy in the beginning of the course. He finds nothing great in the instruction though he may not say so. Capt B suffers from a very normal phenomenon called ego and change resistance. Towards the middle of the course, he sees some significance in the instruction but finds it difficult to admit. Towards the end of the course, he does see meaningful content in the instruction but is more occupied with the activities connected with "Thank God it is over". The real change in Capt B is discernible only after he has rejoined the unit. He now practises and advocates, knowingly or unknowingly, what he was taught in the college.

Capt B is a case of an average officer under normal distribution. There will be few with different reactions on either side of the curve. Their case is immaterial because of small numbers.

And this is what training establishments do. They mould the thinking process of students and in due course all applicable officers are turned over in a similar manner. The ends achieved in establishments where skill as against concept is taught, are different. In their case students are made proficient in that particular skill.

We can now analyse some of the major flaws in the system. These are :—

- (a) The process is very slow. It is incapable of crashing. If we want to do crash teaching on some new ideas, weapons, or developments, the training establishments are not the answer. One has to look some where else—say formations and units. However, if we desire expertise, the specially formed training teams will provide the answer by visiting formations and units.
- (b) In the federated structure uniformity, even in concept, is difficult. One establishment does not know what the other is teaching. One never hears of anything such as conference of commandants of category A establishments. The control mechanism on attainment of objectives is loose. It is not my contention to advocate tight control, but the flaw is there and fairly glaring. The relationship between federated units i.e. training establishments is not well defined.
- (c) Was the training of Capt B effective? Such analysis is indeed difficult and depends on the consideration of aim of training and feedback. We will leave this question here for the time being.
- (d) Capt B is likely to be detailed on the next conceptual course after—say six years. Has the present course covered this gap? Has Capt B been prepared for the next six years? How much insight has he gained to cope up with future developments?

## LEADERSHIP AS AIM OF TRAINING

We had asked a question earlier—was training of Capt B effective? This question, amongst other things, entails consideration of aim. The aim for the various courses are laid down in the directives. In any analysis, consideration of aim in itself is very important. The idea is not to dispute the aim, but consideration shows many areas which have been left out and places where emphasis has been wrongly placed.

We will consider aim in the large perspective. What is the aim of training? To my mind, the aim of training is to provide suitable kind of leadership at all levels. We do not run any specific leadership courses, but this is precisely what we are trying to achieve from the various training establishments. And therefore, one has to consider the aim of courses in relation to leadership requirements.

Some time back Mr Stefan Geisenheyner, editor-in-chief, Aerospace International, West Germany, had drawn my attention to the problems of leadership in a paternalistic society. The development of right kind of leadership is indeed difficult. In the game that we play, if other factors are even, the quality of leadership decides the issue. Wars are fought by leaders at all levels.

And therefore, what kind of leadership do we desire in the army? We know that leadership varies with levels. At section and platoon level, leadership is required of the kind "follow me". At company level, it is of the kind "I am with you". At battalion level, the leadership requirement takes a turn. It is of the kind "I am watching you, I will be with you when you need me". At brigade and higher level, the leadership requirement takes a complete turn. It becomes of the kind—"Well, here is a task for you. These are the difficulties as I foresee. Think it over and discuss with me. Let me know what assistance you need from my side".

Thus the leadership requirements vary. For our study we will take two extreme cases i.e. that of Nk Josh Ram and Brig Hoshiar Singh.

"Nk Josh Ram is alert, conscious of his rank and full of pride. He knows the complete background of every man in his section to an extent that he knows who is going to return late from leave. If he has his way, he would like to punish the defaulters but is so attached that he does not like matters going up. Where skills are concerned, he is the best man in his section e.g. weapon training, drill, physical training and so on. Nk Josh Ram is still sore about an incident which took place almost six months ago. Commanding officers had given a prize to a vehicle mechanic. Nk Josh Ram cannot reconcile himself to this. The vehicle mechanic may be a good craftsman but the fact remains that he had failed in range classification."

"Brig Hoshiar Singh is a man of few words. His strong points are versatile knowledge, clear concepts and understanding of human behaviour.

If you pose a problem, he straightway brings out a number of points for and against which you had never thought of. He is calm and cool; some times subordinates wonder how he can punish without raising even an eye brow. At times, the Brig is queer. The other day a young officer was marched before him for drunkenness and jazzy behaviour. The Brig left him free and what more—called him to his house for a drink. And for what earthly reason? The Brig quietly said "things may change". Others thought—like hell!"

So much for leadership levels. The problem is how to bring about this change from '2 Lt level' as the officers go up? How much can training contribute for the development of variation in leadership styles? Needless to say, if officer as they go up the ladder, carry with them "follow me" style, they will bring disaster.

In our army we can well be proud of leadership style that we have developed since independence. In this respect our superiority stands out when compared to our adversaries. The change has largely come about because of the democratic environments and the national heritage of philosophy and culture.

Leaders can be classified under three categories i.e. autocratic, laissez faire and democratic. We can safely discard laissez faire leaders. The ideal mix in our army under the present conditions is to have junior leaders as autocratic and senior leaders as democratic within the frame work of paternalistic society.

The problem is how to develop such a mix? As already stated, we have done well but we need a conscious and deliberate effort to develop suitable leadership. And here our courses of instruction can help.

A course of skill is essential for "follow me" type of leadership. It is applicable to a larger base. A course of concept, on the other hand, broadens the horizon and is suitable for the development of higher levels of leadership.

### FEEDBACK AND PARAMETERS

Are our courses effective? It is difficult question and we haven't yet answered. The effectiveness has to be studied, in the light of results and feedback. We will, of course, not be over-influenced or misguided by spectacular achievements of the last war. Let us therefore have a look at the feedback from the units. I will record some of the statements heard by me at different periods of my service.

"I have only one company commander who is JC qualified. What am I to do with the other three?"

"My MTO, D and M qualified, has been posted out. I am finding a problem of replacement. Brigade HQ tells me that no vacancy is available till the next training year".

creased to 16-20 weeks. It should be comprehensive to include tactics, administration, leadership and future developments. Teaching of tactics without concurrent study of administrative feasibility is futile and absurd. Equally, one cannot teach administration without knowledge of tactics. Afterall, administration for what and for whom? JC, thus is a basic course for all officers after commission. Unless the grounding is good, all subsequent courses are not likely to be very effective. All other courses can be cut in size provided JC is made more effective. The increase in effort for JC can be more than compensated.

### SC COURSE

It is a good course for concepts. I would personally prefer that this course is made compulsory for all officers. However, this may not be possible in view of other constraints. This is all the more reason why JC must be made compulsory. The level of JC therefore should be company with good idea of functioning at a battalion/regiment level.

### HC COURSE

Attendance at this course should be increased. The aim should be to include all officers who are likely to be promoted to higher ranks. The duration of this course should be reduced.

### LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Leadership training should be introduced progressively from basic course onwards. Some of the important subjects are—communications, induction, motivation, human behaviour, discipline, leadership concepts, organisational culture and case studies.

### MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Management training should be introduced at appropriate levels and places. Subjects which should be covered are functions of management and analytical tools. Officers should be introduced to some of the common disciplines applicable to the army such as work study, net work analysis, buying value analysis, operational research, systems analysis and so on.

### AMALGAMATION OF ESTABLISHMENTS

Feasibility of amalgamation of training establishments should be considered. For example Institute of Work Study, EDP Training and so on can be merged with IDM. Similarly AATS and JAW can be merged.

### SEMINARS

Seminars and study fortnights should be encouraged for Lt. Cols. and above.

## BULLETINS

Publication of central weekly bulletins should be introduced. The subjects can be wide ranging such as leadership, analytical tools, economics political developments, new weapons and equipment and so on.

At the end of recommendations, I must introduce once again a word of caution. These are only one set of alternatives. Before any change is introduced a very detailed analysis is essential.

## CONCLUSION

Our training establishments occupy a place of prestige because of their important role. It is time that we analyse our training establishments. With the growth of our army, our training establishments have also grown in quantity and output. We should now think in terms of quality, criterion and character.

While analysing training establishments, we should avoid "bits and pieces" approach. We should consider training as a complete system with the aim of providing suitable leadership at all levels.

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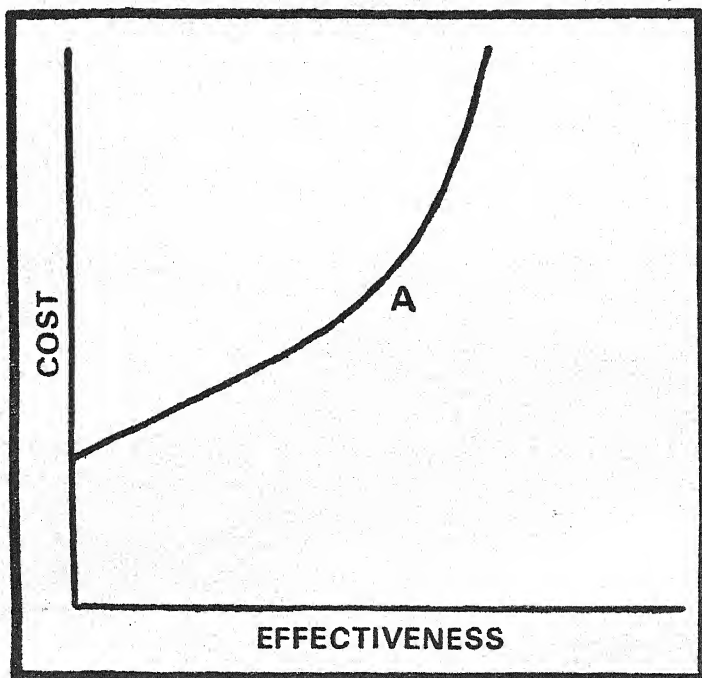
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aspects are illustrated in the following graph :—



We had already assumed that the budget for training establishments has been fixed after due consideration. Within the fixed cost, we choose a number of alternatives for training courses—their duration, emphasis, number to be trained and so on. The problem is to lay a criterion so that suitable alternatives can be selected.

### THE TRAINING OF UNIT COMMANDERS

The training for the bulk of officers in our army finishes at the level of majors when they have attended SO or equivalent course. Hereafter, they have to find their own way unless they belong to the category of the select few. This means that the important half of the career span is left uncovered.

We had already noticed that leadership style takes a turn at the level of battalion commanders. I cannot provide statistics, but there are a large number of Lt Cols IM GOOD who cannot get the best out of their command due to one-sided personality. Clearly at this stage there is a requirement for the knowledge of human relations, human behaviour, leadership concepts and wider horizon.

Training courses for Lt Cols and above is difficult as prolonged absence is not desirable. One should therefore explore the possibility of seminars and study fortnights. A measure which can be implemented without any difficulty is issue of weekly bulletin on the lines of "Bat Cheet", which will help to broaden the horizon. With suitable filing system, these will, in due course become the proud possession of the unit library. Our professional journals suffer because of subjective treatment and inability to deal with any subject in a comprehensive and progressive manner, while the pamphlets and precis lack liveliness to create interest.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### COURSES OF SKILL

We must define courses of skill. To my mind these are courses connected with skills such as WT, PT, D and M and so on. These courses are essential for the development of "Follow me" leadership, and as such should be attended by the maximum numbers. Such courses should be run by each command or corps and the duration should not exceed four to six weeks. The aim of such courses should be to provide proficiency. Theory should be cut out. The courses should be run on the basis of "Country Fair" system, where instructors remain at fixed stand while batches rotate. Thus large numbers can be trained at low cost.

### DEPARTMENTAL COURSES

Each arm or service runs departmental courses for its NCO's JCO's YOs, Company Commanders and Senior Officers. I will confine myself to the case of officers. The scheme is logical and good. The courses should be strictly confined to teaching on Corps subjects and as such duration for CC or SO should not exceed more than six to eight weeks. There should be no duplication of teaching already covered in JC or SC courses. The scheme of departmental school running courses for other arms and services should continue.

### COURSES OF CONCEPTS

Courses other than those for skill, can be classified as courses, for concepts and general application. Amongst these courses, some are of primary concern such as JC, SC, DSSC and Technical Staff College. Other courses should be cut in size depending on their utility. A case for example is LDM. Nine months is too long a duration. JC, SC and HC Courses require further examination.

### JC COURSE

This course must be made compulsory for all officers. At some stage, all officers must understand how battles are fought by the team of all arms and services and the Air Force. The duration of this course should be in-



"Major P has done JC and staff college. The trouble is—he does not now how to get along with subordinates or superiors. The training has made no difference".

"My four NCOs are qualified in WT. They are good, I wish all my NCOs were trained. Well, the training could be for lesser duration. After all, what do you look for in a unit—average performance or for show pieces" ?

"The scheme of unit instructors training others is becoming topsy turvey. I hope people know about interruptions in normal life during the last few years".

"The courses are becoming a headache. Does someone realise that I need officers to run my unit?"

"The JC was a bit of a farce, you know. The duration has been cut to 9 weeks. I learnt D and M in 12 weeks. After all what can the college teach in 9 weeks. There is something wrong with our emphasis. Anyway, it enables me to appear for staff college."

The comments on effectiveness of our training establishments are numerous. They emanate from students, units and even instructional staff. I have cited only a few to highlight possible alternatives relating to duration, emphasis, numbers and aim i.e. development of leadership.

The designing of courses needs consideration of several parametric issues such as :—

- (a) Number of officers to be trained.
- (b) Acceptable absence from units.
- (c) Frequency of emergencies which disrupt courses programme.
- (d) Aim, emphasis and efforts necessary to achieve the aim.
- (e) Cost.

The factors conflict with each other. For example if we want more numbers to be trained, we will have to accept greater absence and increase in cost. If we want greater effectiveness, the duration of courses must increase and so must the cost and absence ratio. The long courses have disadvantage of disruption due to frequent emergencies.

The factors not only conflict but provide alternatives. There are alternatives and alternatives. To keep the discussion short, I will list a set of alternatives in the recommendation. Each alternative has to be viewed in relation to its cost.

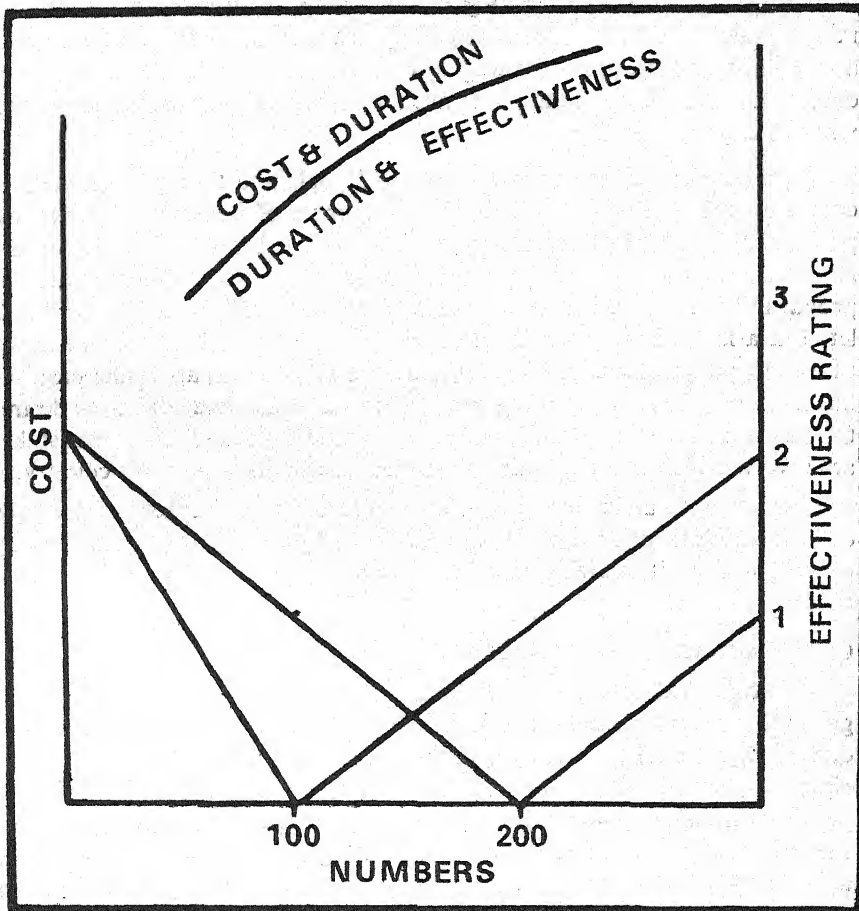
### COST ANALYSIS

The consideration of cost analysis is important, particularly in our context. When faced with crisis, one comes across arbitrary situations such

as 10 % cut in training grant, restrictions in the use of MT, search for amalgamation of schools and so on.

Cost analysis is a long and difficult process. We will assume that within the defence budget weightage on training has been considered and accordingly percentage on training has been fixed. Further, the training budget has also been fixed under the head-training establishments.

There is an inter-relation between cost and other factors. Let us take the case of cost v/s effectiveness, which is illustrated below:—



From the above graph, it will be seen that certain minimum expenditure has to be incurred even for nominal effectiveness, thereafter cost and effectiveness are proportional till point A, after which additional expenditure does not increase corresponding effectiveness. Thus, in practice any expenditure beyond point A is not worth the money.

Within the fixed cost, we can vary the number of officers to be trained. But the effectiveness of training is also related to numbers. Cost is generally proportional to duration of training and duration to effectiveness. These