

A large, leafy tree with a thick trunk and sprawling branches dominates the foreground. The tree is set in a lush green field. In the background, a large, multi-story building with a red-tiled roof is visible, surrounded by more trees and a clear sky. The overall scene is bright and verdant.

**THE INDIAN  
FOREST COLLEGE  
BECOMES  
THE NATIONAL  
FOREST ACADEMY**



CHAPTER

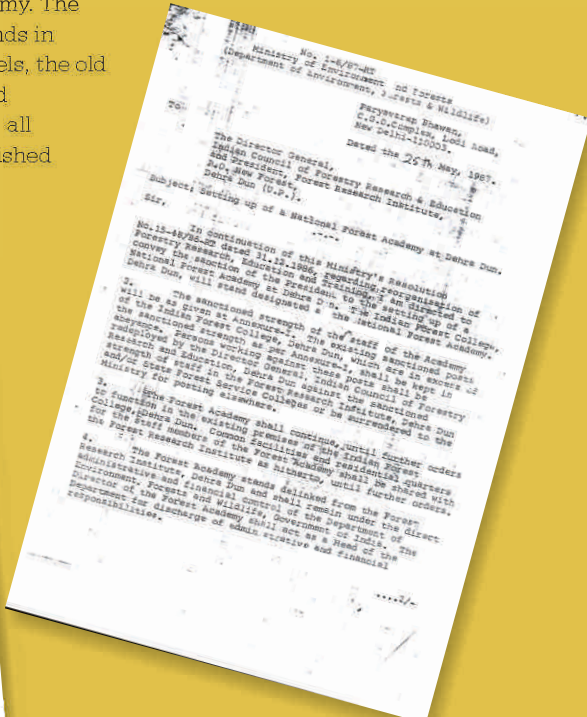
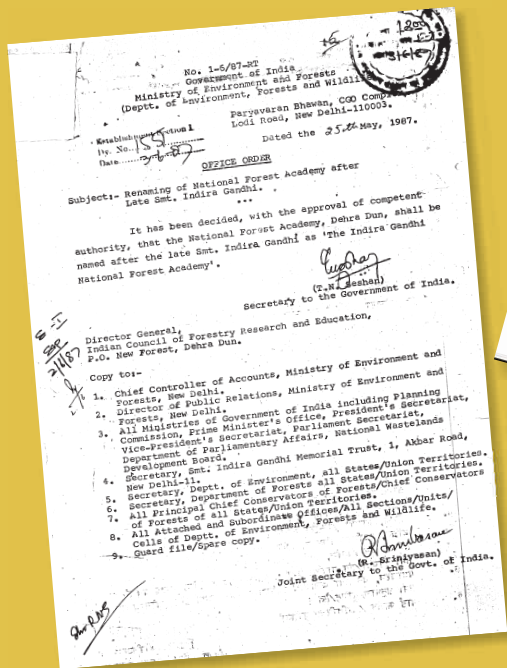
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THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, ON 31ST DECEMBER 1986, ISSUED A RESOLUTION THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (MOEF) DETAILING THE REORGANISATION OF FORESTRY RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND TRAINING. THAT RESOLUTION PRESCRIBED THAT THE INDIAN FOREST COLLEGE WOULD BE RENAMED THE NATIONAL FOREST ACADEMY OF INDIA AND WOULD BE DIRECTLY ADMINISTERED BY THE MOEF (PREVIOUSLY, IT HAD BEEN UNDER FRI AND COLLEGES).

1987–2012

Just a few months later, on 25th May, 1987, the Government of India implemented the resolution, issuing an order to upgrade the IFC to the National Forest Academy, which was given the formal name of "The Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy." The MoEF also set the size of the faculty, as well as the size of the staff of the academy. During these changes, the 1986-1988 batch was in training, and Sh. P Keswani of the Maharashtra cadre was serving as Director of the academy. The IFC building with the two grounds in front of it, the old and new hostels, the old hostel mess, the playground and associated sports facilities were all brought under the newly established

academy. However, for the time being, residential accommodation continued in FRI quarters, as it had been earlier (separate residential colony of academy came up in 1992, along Chakrata road). The function and purpose of the academy remained the same: the training of new recruits to the Indian Forest Service. But with the passage of time, the academy has grown in size, its activities have become more diversified and the infrastructure has continued to improve.

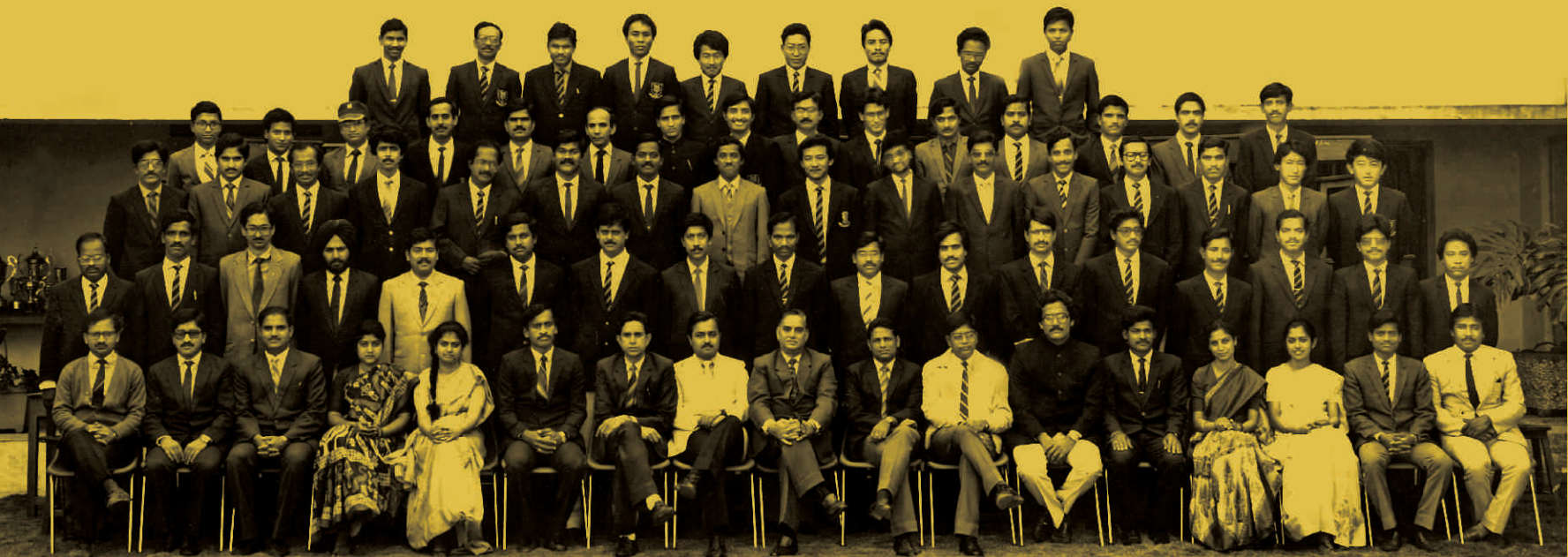


### The Training

Although the 1987 upgrade caused no major change in the training activities of IFS probationers, the awarding of diplomas upon completion of the training was stopped and convocations were no longer held. Beginning in 1991, instead of the convocation, a valedictory event was given, where course completion certificates and awards were distributed. This continued until 1998 when the more formal convocation ceremony was reinstated.

A new enhancement was the introduction of a one week long Parliament Attachment. This feature was designed to familiarise the probationers with the procedures and functioning of the Parliament of India. The 1986-1988 course of IFS probationers was the first to undergo this training, and its success resulted in making it a regular component of training for all probationers. A computer centre was also established in academy in the year 1990.

Below: Group photo of 1986-88 course



→ Keeping Pace with Technology

→ Left: Inauguration of Computer Center of IGNFA



The awarding of a new diploma, the "Associate of Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy" (AIGNFA), was introduced by the Government of India on 21st January 1998. Then in April 1998, the diploma was declared to be equal to the M.Sc. Forestry degree approved by FRI University. The trainees of the 1995-1998 course were the first to be honoured with these new diplomas, receiving them during the newly re-established convocation event. These upgraded diplomas were also sent to all those officers who had successfully completed the programme during the 10 preceding years. There had been a total of 788 graduates during that period from 1986 to 1997.



In February 2000, a special award ceremony was held, honouring officers of 1986 to 1988 batches who had won prizes because for these batches there had been no convocation or valedictory functions to recognise their achievements.

*Above & Left: First Convocation of IGNFA in 1998*

*Below: Special award ceremony for 1986 to 1988 Batches*



## The Training Curriculum and Training Schedule: Periodic Improvements and Modifications

The Foundation Course (FC) at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), all the way up through the 1988-1990 course, had always taken place at the end of the professional training programme at IFC/IGNFA. But beginning with the 1989-1991 course, the sequence of courses was modified and the FC was shifted to the beginning of the professional training. This caused the curious result that the probationers from the 1989-1991 course actually took the FC before the 1988-1990 course.

Some unavoidable problems caused the entrance examinations for the 1993 batch of IFS probationers to be delayed until it was nearly time for the next batch to start. So both of these batches did their training together as the 1994-1997 course. Beginning with this combined course, the pattern of training was changed. Up until now, the training schedule was two

complete years of training at the IGNFA, followed by a third year for field training in the state cadre. Now the field training portions would be spread throughout the whole 3-year period, creating a "sandwich style" calendar with the following five major phases:

- i) Induction phase at IGNFA (4 months)
- ii) Foundation course at LBSNAA (4 months)
- iii) Professional phase at IGNFA (14 months)
- iv) On the Job training (OJT) in respective cadre states (8 months)
- v) Advanced phase at IGNFA (6 months).

In 1994, the Indian Forest Service (Probationers' Final Examination) Regulations were amended and there was

a revision made of the training syllabus. The revised syllabus, though not officially registered until 1995, began to be implemented in 1994 (for the 1994-1997 course), as per instructions of the MoEF. The most significant changes were the following.

- i) The addition of the following courses:  
Computer Applications, General Management, Advanced Forest Management, Remote Sensing and GIS, Biodiversity Conservation as part of Wildlife Management and People and Forests subjects.
- ii) The elective subject of the previous syllabus would now be addressed as a Special Paper to be done during OJT.
- iii) Range Management and Working Plan (Theory) were eliminated as



## Syllabus of 1995

separate subjects.

- iv) Botany and Engineering, which previously required two papers each, now required only one each.
- v) In regard to exercises, Integrated Watershed Management was introduced while Entomological Collections and Engineering Plates were removed from the list.
- vi) Forest Administration and Accounts Procedure as a subject was added to the list of qualifying subjects.

As mentioned above, On the Job Training (OJT) was now following the "Sandwich Style" pattern. OJT was developed in order to expose the probationers to real field conditions and to acquaint them with the practical realities of forestry, as well as to impart a knowledge and

understanding of the Forest Department's functioning. With a view to standardise the OJT module, a workshop was organised at New Delhi on 8th November 1995. Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (PCCFs) and Chief Conservators of Forests (CCFs) from most of the States and Union Territories participated. There were 21 state representatives and 6 Government of India representatives who attended and contributed to the discussion. This workshop was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Environment and Forests, Sh. Rajesh Pilot. On 1st March 1996, the MoEF issued a letter to the Chief Secretaries of all states regarding OJT for IFS Probationers. The letter outlined the following features that would compose the new OJT programme.

Sl No.	Component of Training	Duration in Weeks
i	Training in a Territorial Forest Division	6
ii	Administrative Institute of the state	1
iii	State headquarters and Tour	2
iv	Range Training	16
v	Training in territorial Forest Circle	2
vi	Attachment with District Collector	1
vii	Attachment with Superintendent of Police	1
viii	Attachment with Chief Judicial Magistrate	1
ix	Attachment with special wings/depts. of local importance	4
<b>Total Duration</b>		<b>34 weeks</b>

## INDIAN FOREST SERVICE

(Probationers Final Examination)

### Amendment Regulations, 1995



INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL  
FOREST ACADEMY

During OJT, probationers would work under the supervision and control of the respective state government through their trainers and mentors. The trainer would be the Divisional Forest Officer - DFO - of the Division where they were attached. The Mentor was the Senior Officer of the level of Conservator of Forests or Chief Conservator of Forests of the State Forest Department. Throughout the OJT programme, officially appointed academy counsellors would stay in touch with probationers. These counsellors were appointed to provide supervision, assessment and guidance to the probationers. The counsellors would maintain contact with the probationers as well as with their trainers and mentors through correspondences and personal visits. The probationers themselves were also required to submit their tour diaries to the academy counsellors through their trainer DFO.

To provide for a regular review of the OJT programme, and for soliciting suggestions from the trainers and mentors, the Academy started a Meeting of Mentors. The first such meeting was held on 15th February 1996, and these meetings continued until 2007.

*Below: Mentors' meet*



From 1996 to 1999, the course's Advanced Phase was reduced from 6 months to 4 months, and the Professional Phase was increased from 14 months to 16 months.

In February 2000, the pattern for the training of IFS probationers was modified slightly from the 1994 style, eliminating the Induction Phase to make the professional training component a single sandwich pattern rather than a double sandwich one. So beginning in 2000, the training of IFS probationers was scheduled as follows:

- i) Foundation Course at LBSNAA, Mussoorie (4 months)
- ii) Professional Phase at IGNTA (20 months)
- iii) On the job training in respective cadre state (9 months)
- iv) Advanced Phase at IGNTA (3 months)

The pattern for OJT was also modified a little bit at this time. The Range Training component was expanded from 16 weeks to 20 weeks and the time for attachment with special wings/departments of local importance was reduced from 4 weeks to 2 weeks. These improvements caused an overall increase in the OJT period from 34 weeks to 36 weeks.

The Convocation for the 2002-2005 batch was honoured by the presence of the Hon'ble President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who came as chief guest for the occasion.



*Above: Convocation of 2002-05 course*

Noteworthy changes to the IGNTA programme took place in 2005: the Indian Forest Service Probation Rules of 1968 were amended, and the duration of probation was reduced from three years to two years. Then in 2007, the new Indian Forest Service (Probationers' Final Examination) Regulations were announced, and the "Sandwich Style" pattern for training was done away with. An uninterrupted pattern of training at the Academy was once again implemented. The MoEF ordered that the revised syllabus and the changed pattern of training be put into practice beginning with the 2005 batch of probationers, even though those changes were not officially notified until 2007. In the new syllabus, final examinations were once again divided into three parts as they had been in earlier syllabi: (1) written and practical examinations, (2) exercises, tours and excursions and (3) qualifying tests.

In the new syllabus of training, Forest Administration and Accounts Procedure was upgraded from a qualifying subject to a full-fledged subject. Elective Subject was introduced again, but this time, instead of prescribing a list of subjects for the probationer, he was required to select one of the Advanced Study topics which he would research under the guidance of an assigned resource person. Other changes to the syllabus were these: Biodiversity Conservation was made a separate subject; one more tour, known as the Central India tour, was made part of the touring feature; and the Exercises category grew to include Wildlife Techniques, Wildlife Crime Detection, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Micro Planning.

### Upgraded Posts

The post of Director IGNTA was upgraded from a CF level post to a CCF level post in 1987. This promotion corresponded with the IFC's upgrade to IGNTA. In the year 2000, the post of Joint Director IGNTA (a CF level post) was upgraded to Additional Director IGNTA (a CCF level post) and the post of Director was upgraded to the level of Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF).

In 2009, nine IGNTA posts were upgraded by the MoEF. They included the Director of IGNTA post (from APCCF level to PCCF level in the apex scale of Rs. 80,000), two professor posts were raised to Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) level from Conservator of Forests (CF) level, and six associate professor posts (Deputy Conservator of Forests level) were upgraded to additional professor (CF) level.



### New Awards and Prizes

In 1991, an outstanding member of the IFS, Sh. P. Srinivas, from the 1979-1981 course from the Karnataka cadre, was killed on duty by the dreaded sandalwood smuggler, Veerapan. The IGNTA instituted an annual award named the "P. Srinivas Memorial Prize for Forest Protection" in honour of its alumnus. This prize is awarded to the probationer who scores the highest marks in the subject of Forest Protection. In 1998, the D.H. Kulkarni Gold Medal award was instituted as a new prize for recognising the probationer with the best working plan. In 1999, three new donors' prizes were instituted. They were: 1) the Dr. Barin Ganguly cash award for all round outstanding performance; 2) the Sh. K.M. Tiwari Memorial Gold Medal for maximum marks in the subject of "People and Forests"; and 3) an award organised by a group of senior foresters who attended the workshop in 1998: The Senior Forester's Prize for the best field forester (as demonstrated during tours and exercises).

In 2002, the "Sanjay Singh Memorial Prize," in the form of a medal, was instituted to honour the sacrifice of the late Sh. Sanjay Kumar Singh. Sh. Singh, an IFS officer of the 1991 batch of the Bihar cadre, had given his life for the protection of forests. This memorial prize is awarded to the student securing the highest marks in Forest Management, Environmental Conservation and Advanced Forest Management. Another prize was developed in November 2007, while the officers of the 1982 batch of IFS were having the 3-day workshop for their batch, on entering their 25th year of service. These officers decided to institute a cash prize of Rs.10,000/- for the IFS probationer who demonstrates the best performance in communication skills. After its approval, this prize was named "The Spirit of 1982 Award," and was first awarded during the 2007-2009 course.

## Cadre Allocation Policy

In 2009, a change was made to the policy of cadre allocation of IFS probationers, modifying the 1985 protocols. In the new system, state governments indicate vacancies by the 31st December of the year prior to the year of examination. Vacancies are to be displayed by category on the MoEF website before the commencement of the examinations. The candidates are to give their choice, in order of preference, from among the various state cadres, including their home cadre. Cadre allocation is made on the basis of merit, preference and vacancy available, maintaining the required insider to outsider ratio of 1:2. This policy continues in force today (time of printing, July 2012).

## Strengthening of Training : Some Initiatives

In order to strengthen and enrich the training imparted at IGNFA, the training content is routinely subjected to in-house monitoring. Whenever developments in forestry science or management cause a gap to emerge between the curriculum and current realities, effort is made to bridge that gap, and bring the training programme back up to the leading edge of forestry education. Because of this commitment to excellence, the IGNFA will not only make periodic changes in the training curriculum, but will also pursue additional initiatives that enhance the overall quality of training. Some such initiatives are described below.

## Training Curriculum and Effectiveness Review Project

In the year 2000, the IGNFA launched an ambitious project called "Training Curriculum and Effectiveness Review." The project was primarily designed for the development of two new types of modules: a module that addresses Gender Issues; and module on Participatory Forest Management. At the same time, this project also sought out advanced training for faculty members in the important area of Teaching Methodologies. The Ford Foundation granted US \$50,000 in funding for the project, with the initial expectation of a 1-year timeframe, beginning in December, 2000. Later, time extensions were granted, and the project continued until March, 2007.

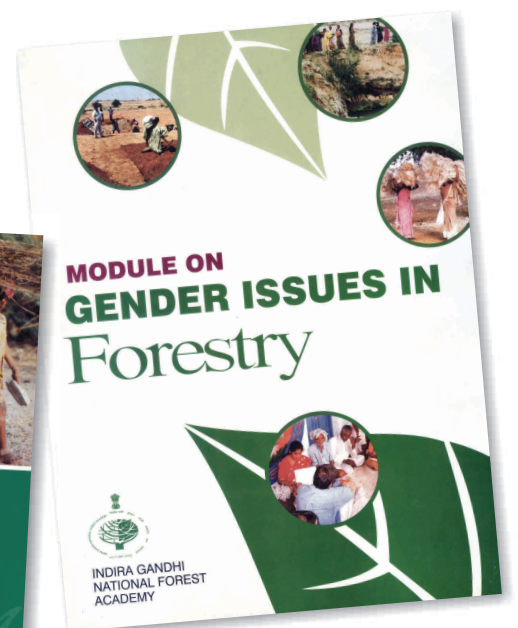
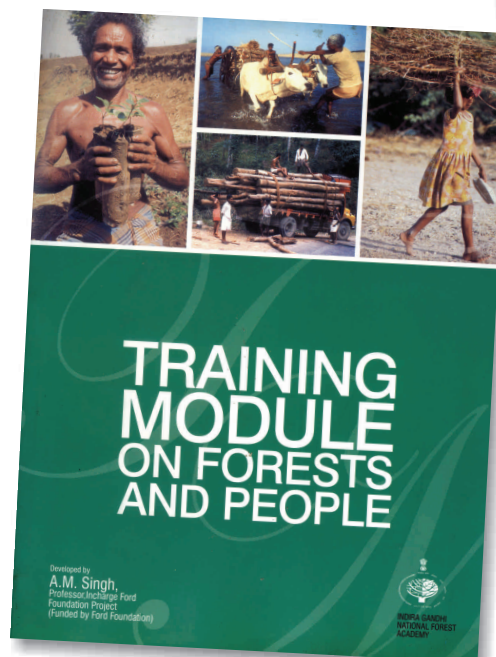
As part of this project, the IGNFA conducted two regional workshops in



collaboration with State Forest Departments. The workshops took place at the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) and Xavier's Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (Orissa).

In November-December 2003, under the scope of this project, five faculty members were sent from IGNFA to a 3-week course at the training centre for Tropical Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability (TREES), Los Banos, Philippines. The course was specially designed by the institute to give training in experiential learning to the faculty members. The project also provided for one faculty member to visit ICIMOD in Kathmandu, Nepal, as well as some other institutes within the country in order to further enrich the new resources being written.

In October 2004, a National Workshop was held at IGNFA in order to discuss the two topics of Gender Issues and Participatory Forest Management (PFM). In this workshop, these important themes were discussed, along with the recommendations which had come from the two regional workshops. This workshop resulted in the creation of two modules for the IGNFA programme: a module on Gender Issues and one on PFM. The project produced two new written resources: "Training Module on Gender Issues in Forestry" and "Training Module on Forests and People."



## The Management Module

Beginning with the syllabus of 1995, each batch of probationers would receive a module called "General Management." But in the 2005 syllabus, this module had been eliminated. It didn't take long to notice the gap that had been created. So in 2007, emphasising the importance of management issues, and especially HR issues, a proposal was submitted to the MoEF to introduce a management module for IFS Probationers at the Indian Institute of Management. The Ministry approved this proposal on 4th October 2007, and a 6-day module on General management was introduced for IFS Probationers in IIM Bangalore. The 2006-2008 batch was the first to take the module.

## Introducing Concurrent Assessment

In 2008, the practice of Concurrent Assessment was introduced as part of course examinations. Instead of the probationers' marks depending completely upon the examinations given at the end of a phase of training, these mid-way assessments would also play an important role, carrying as much as 20% weighting in the calculations of final marks for the given subject. The modes of Concurrent Assessment and the particular weightage for each mode within the overall limit are decided by a committee consisting of the Professor Academics, the Course Director (Convener) and the internal faculty members teaching the subject. The particulars are communicated to probationers at the beginning of the subject by the Course Director and the concerned faculty.

## The Training Need Assessment Unit

Another step taken by the IGNFA in order to keep the training programme running at the highest levels of effectiveness was to establish the Training Need Assessment Unit (TNAU). This took place in 2008 with the approval of the MoEF.

One of the first projects of the TNAU was to perform a thorough review of the Wildlife Management syllabus for IFS probationers. The Unit engaged the Wildlife Institute of India as well as other wildlife management experts both from inside and outside the government as they considered design changes in the course. These efforts resulted in a decision to devote about 20% of the overall training input at IGNFA to the important subject of wildlife management. A Wildlife laboratory is also established in the academy to strengthen the practical aspect of subject Wildlife management. The trainees from the 2008-2010 batch were the first to benefit from this improvement.

*Below: Inauguration of Wild Life Laboratory in IGNFA*



The TNAU has also gathered with officers from the State Forest Departments (SFDs) in order to discuss training related issues, and to solicit their suggestions for any course improvements.

In 2011, when the MoEF constituted a committee to review the overall syllabus of the IFS training, the TNAU assisted that committee in formulating the report which was submitted to Government of India in December of that year. The TNAU is also currently active in developing a revision of the Forest Law Syllabus for IFS probationers.

## Hari Singh Fellowship

The Hari Singh Fellowship (named in honour of the former Inspector General of Forests) was instituted by the MoEF in 2010 to promote specialisation in the IFS. At the commencement of training for each batch of IFS probationers, the IGNFA undertakes a formal screening of each probationer to assess their aptitude for the specialisation programme. The screening is done at two points during the probationer's time of training: first, upon their entry into the academy, and again sometime during their second year of training. The assessment is based on the probationer's academic record, background qualifications, evidence of prior achievements and interest, and indicators of any extraordinary commitment to developing high levels of proficiency in a particular field of specialisation.

A committee was set up to manage the Fellows programme under the chairmanship of the Director of IGNFA. Serving together with him as members of the committee are the head of the Advanced Institute, one subject matter specialist from outside the programme,

one nominee from the head of the Advanced Institute, one professor of IGNFA and the Course Director.

The candidates selected through this process are known as "Hari Singh Fellows." Immediately after completing their training at IGNFA, they are sponsored for a 1 year post-graduate diploma/degree in the assigned field of specialisation at a suitable advanced institution. During this period, salary and allowances are drawn from IGNFA. The fees paid to the advanced institutions are paid directly by the government or through the IGNFA.

Upon completion of the specialised training, Hari Singh Fellows proceed to their respective cadres where a series of attachments and short term charges will be taken in a compressed fashion in order to catch up with their batch mates, and complete the training in the time period provided by the respective state governments. Upon completion, the Fellows will be given their regular postings, as will their batch mates in the cadre. The state governments are to provide the Fellows with training charges and their first two postings according to

their areas of specialisation. Currently, there are eight fields identified for specialisation under this programme.

The Hari Singh Fellowship for specialisation was first implemented during the 2010-2011 academic year, for pursuing an Advanced Diploma in Wildlife at the WII in Dehradun. Seven probationers from the 2008-2010 batch were awarded the fellowship. For the 2011-2012 year, it has been extended to the fields of Remote Sensing & Geomatics at the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS), Dehradun and the Genetics and Tree Breeding programme at FRI with input from the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) Coimbatore.

In addition to the Hari Singh fellowship, there are two other fellowships expected to be established soon: the S.K. Seth Fellowship and the C.R. Ranganathan Fellowship. These will both be for mid-career, advanced studies.

*Below: A Hari Singh Fellow receiving the fellowship Certificate from Dr. P. J. Dilip Kumar, DG Forests*



**Dr. P. J. Dilip Kumar, IFS**  
(1974-76 Course)

Director General of Forests,  
Ministry of Environment and Forests,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

It's been some 38 years now since I joined the Indian Forest Service, and what a journey it's been! I am happy to share a few reminiscences and ideas with my colleagues, young, old and retired, to mark this wonderful occasion of the anniversary of the Academy.

First, a little about how I got into the Service. I almost stumbled into it, but not in the way candidates do who try one service after another in a descending order of attraction. In my case, I was a deviant who actually loved nature and rambling in the woods. I used to get on my bicycle at 3 in the morning as a schoolboy in green Kerala, and wander off into the countryside. The blue hills around Bhadravathi used to entice me on and on (I learnt that these were the Antargange forests when I became DFO there... but driving up in a jeep isn't as thrilling as going up the tough way on your own power!). I spent my final school years at the IIT Central School at Chennai (then Madras), and used to slip into the Guindy Park and Raj Bhavan through a gap in the fence and watch the deer and birds... I wonder if the blackbuck still gather in the sand bars at the back of the campus, where bee-eaters used to take their dust baths. My time in IIT Powai in Mumbai (Bombay those days), with its lake and surrounding hills, further strengthened my interest; we had quite a gang for trekking in the Borivli woods. The sad fact was that there was no viable career visible for a naturalist. I even applied to the Delhi Zoo for a keeper's job (a la Whipsnade), and got a kind letter from Mr. Adkoli, the Director, advising me to finish my B.Sc. and keep animals as a hobby. Strangely he did not, as far as I remember, suggest trying for the Forest Service. This I came to know about for the first time only because my M.Sc. course-mate in IIT Bombay had got the UPSC forms for the IFS; that gave me the idea of my writing the exam, too. I remember when I came for the UPSC interview in the cold of February, it was my senior Rantala Chandrashekhar, who is now the Telecom Secretary, who put me up in his room at the JNU, and got me a decent shirt to wear. The Chemistry professor from Calcutta University, a fearsome bearded figure, castigated me on my ignorance of chemistry; I retorted that if I were so good at it, I wouldn't be there at the viva at all; my interest was in

nature. That directed the discussion to subjects more to my liking, and helped me into the Service.

I have met many forest officers, at home and abroad, to whom I usually put the question whether they would have been better off in some other profession. One and all, they stoutly declare that this is about the best job anyone can have, and given the chance they would do it all over again. The latest such response was from the Deputy Chief of the US Forest Service on my trip there with the MCT (Mid-Career Training) batch in April 2012. I agree with them; this has to be the best job ever. I can declare that the present post I am holding, the DG Forests, is about the best post at the Centre. But every post I have held down the line has been equally challenging, equally filled with a variety of activities and possibilities. Because the IFS officer is more or less the boss of all he surveys in most of his career, it actually lengthens his or her lease of life, as it is well known that giving orders is much less stressful than receiving them!

It will be appropriate here to acknowledge the yeoman service rendered by our unsung field staff, right down to the daily-wage watcher in the remote corners of the country. We officers tend to take them for granted, as we usually have little time to bond with them as individuals, except possibly in our first posting. They get a raw deal, with poor wages, frequent delays in salary and wage payment, unpredictable flow of works funds, unpredictable bosses, and a relentless pressure of work. But whatever success the department has had must rightly be credited to their dedication and competence. They are ready to give their lives to the cause, and some of them indeed do so.

I think the nation in general has little awareness, and less appreciation, of the actual service our department is rendering. We are not only safeguarding a quarter of the nation's land resources, but also ensuring the very survival of our teeming millions by preserving the crucial catchment areas of our rivers and our centres of biodiversity. The

administration only sees us an impediment to "development". Of late, they have taken to laying all the nation's problems at our door, as if we are a law unto ourselves and not carrying out our constitutional duties. They are not even acknowledging the pioneering work done by our Joint Forest Committees. Thank goodness for the Honourable Supreme Court and the higher Judiciary, for coming to our rescue and upholding the cause of sustainable use of natural resources and the interests of future generations. For our planning experts are doing nothing but killing the goose that lays the golden eggs, by adopting an intensely resource-hungry mode of development that is like sawing off the branch we are sitting on.

In conclusion, I would request all members of the IFS, and all foresters, to stick together and uphold the cause of protection of our country's natural resources. We should find our voice and speak out forcefully and firmly in defence of the mute forest and its living creatures, in defence of our hard-working field staff, and in defence of the neglected people in the fringe villages who depend on these resources and who are being deprived of them in the name of development. We should also be communicating more with the "general public", and the more so with the large and growing numbers of nature lovers and enthusiasts, a constituency that was hardly there when my batch joined in the 1970's. Indeed I wish the UPSC would devise ways to get more of them into the Service, because what is happening now is that they are becoming hostile critics out of sheer frustration at their lack of an official role in the forestry and wildlife sector. We need to talk about the more interesting things that happen in the forests, about the flowers and birds and habitats, rather than only about timber and revenue. I wish all the foresters of yore, and those in service and the many more to come, all the best, and the Academy, another hundred glorious years of service to the nation and the cause of natural resource conservation.



**NURTURING  
PROFESSIONALISM**



## CHAPTER | 09

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN ARMED WITH DEGREES IN SCIENCE SUBJECTS COMPETE IN AN ALL INDIA LEVEL, OPEN COMPETITION CONDUCTED BY THE UPSC TO FULFIL THEIR DREAM OF BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE PRESTIGIOUS ALL INDIA SERVICE, THE INDIAN FOREST SERVICE. THE UPSC USES A WRITTEN EXAMINATION TO SCRUTINISE THE LIMITS OF THE ASPIRANTS' KNOWLEDGE. FOR THOSE WHO CLEAR THIS EXAM, THEY PROCEED TO THE NEXT STEP: A PERSONALITY TEST WHICH DELVES INTO THE INNER WORLD AND SOCIAL SKILLS OF THE WOULD-BE CANDIDATE. AFTER DEMONSTRATING THEIR MENTAL PROWESS AND STRENGTH OF PERSONALITY, THE APPLICANT IS THEN TESTED FOR PHYSICAL ENDURANCE. THE MEN MUST BE ABLE TO WALK 25 KILOMETRES IN 4 HOURS AND THE LADIES 14 KILOMETRES IN 4 HOURS. FINALLY, THEIR OVERALL HEALTH IS SCREENED IN A THOROUGH MEDICAL EXAMINATION. THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO PASS SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH ALL THESE STAGES WILL BE REWARDED WITH ACCEPTANCE TO ENTER THE IGNFA TRAINING PROGRAMME. THE MOEF WILL GIVE THEM AN APPOINTMENT LETTER WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO BEGIN TRAINING AS IFS PROBATIONERS AT IGNFA.

The life of a probationer begins when they join the IGNFA. As soon as the new probationers arrive, they are received by senior batch trainees who familiarise them with the academy, and introduce them to its important traditions. For batches of normal size, all probationers are accommodated in the New Hostel which has about 110 single occupancy rooms, one dining hall, an auditorium and a lounge. For bigger batches, the Old Hostel and Old Mess are also brought into use.

*New Hostel of IGFA*







Entry into the IFS is formalised by completing the joining formalities as specified by the Government of India. This is followed by the course inauguration which involves an introduction of probationers and faculty, followed by addresses by the course professor, the Additional Director and the Director of the academy. These speeches mainly throw light on the forestry sector, forestry professions, the ethos and traditions of the Forest Service and the challenges ahead for these aspiring officers. For each batch of trainees, one faculty member is nominated as Course Director and he/she is responsible for the planning and execution of the course, under the supervision of the Professor, Additional Director and Director.



- *Top: Probationers in new hostel lounge*
- *Middle: Course inauguration*
- *Left: Joining of new Batch of Probationers*
- *Right: During Foundation Course in LBSNAA*
- *Top Right: Probationers during a trek in Himalayas*

## Foundation Course (FC)

To begin their training, probationers are sent to attend the Foundation Course in Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie. They take this 4-month course together with probationers of other All India and Central Services. The FC provides the probationers with helpful insight into the administration and bureaucracy of the country. The course also aims to impart an understanding of the other services and to create a bond among members of the different services in attendance. This sense of unity lays the foundation for future co-operation and co-ordination which translates into the provision of good governance to the citizens of the country.

The FC provides the probationers with training in basic subjects like Law, Basic Economics, Political Concepts and Constitution of India, Indian History and

Culture, Management and Behavioral Science, Information and Communication Technology and Public Administration. The trainees also participate in extracurricular activities including trekking, cultural activities, debate, essay competitions, social service, sports, etc. Trekking includes a few 1-day treks and a 1-week trek to Himalayan locations like Gangotri Glacier, Pindari Glacier and Rupkund. During the FC, one essential component is a week-long village visit. During this excursion, probationers are sent in small groups of four to five to different villages where they live and interact with the community for the entire week. This village visit exposes them to the realities of rural life, and gives them first hand knowledge of the challenges and problems that people face in rural areas. The trainees also participate in beneficial activities like "Shramdan" while they're on the academy campus.



## Professional Training

After completion of the FC, probationers come back to IGNFA for 20 months of professional training.

Professional training is aimed at transforming a common university student into a hard core forester; a change which lasts a lifetime. This is achieved through imparting a deep knowledge and understanding of forestry through both compelling classroom interaction and hands-on field exposure. Along with the transmission of this knowledge, the IGNFA also equips the probationers with vital forestry skills during this 20 month phase of training.

## Knowledge Building

Forestry, being a complex, multidisciplinary subject, demands a working knowledge of a variety of fields. In order for foresters to carry out their duties effectively they need a certain level of expertise in areas well beyond the management and inter-relationships of flora and fauna. They also need a grasp of subjects such as forest soil, rocks, entomology, pathology, aspects of engineering, forest surveying, economics, forest and general laws, accounts and administration and more. They are even required to have some familiarity with the latest techniques in management planning and crime detection. In order to

accomplish such broad learning objectives, the 20 months of Professional Training is divided into four phases covering nearly 30 subjects through classroom interaction and laboratory practicals. The four phases are described below.

Introductory Phase consists of Elementary Biology (Theory)/Elementary Mathematics, Biology (Practical), Overview of Forestry, Forest Statistics, Geology, Soil Science, Soil, Water and Land Management and Computer Awareness and Applications in Forestry.

Professional Phase I covers Forest Mensuration, Forest Biometry, Systematic

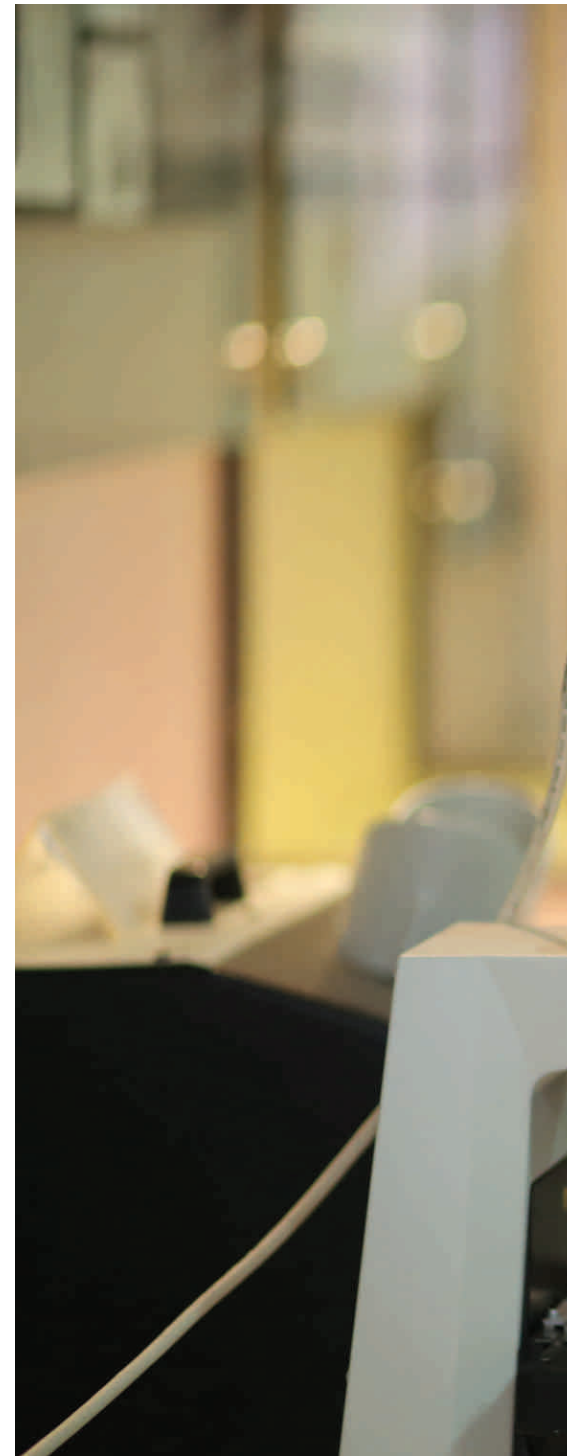
*Botany practical*



*Theory class*



*Practical in Wild Life Laboratory*



Botany, Forest Ecology, Silvicultural Practices, Forest Economics, Silvicultural Systems, Forest Policies, Laws and Conventions and Biodiversity Conservation.

Professional Phase II deals with the subjects of Forest Survey, Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System, Forest Engineering, Wildlife Management, Forest Production, Non Timber Forest Produce, Wood Technology, Harvesting and Industries.

Convocation Phase takes the trainees through Forest Protection, Forests and People, Environmental Conservation, Forest Administration and Accounts

Procedures, Silviculture Viva Voce and Elective Subject. For the elective subject, the particular topics are not specified because the probationers are required to select one from the list of suggested topics given in the first phase of probation. This topic will then be the focus of their advanced study under the guidance of an assigned resource person.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of classroom instruction, the rooms at IGNFA have been outfitted with all modern facilities.



*Probationers learning forestry-a theory class in progress*



Seeing is believing - *Geology practical*



*Soil Science Practical*



*Histological details of plants*



*Tranquilization of Wild animals*





### Know your resource well

*Tours to different ecosystems of the country*

## Field Exposure

When IFS training was shifted from France to Cooper's Hill College in England, the field tours were conducted in German forests as England did not have suitable forests. Later, when the Islington Commission recommended that forestry training be shifted from England to India, the major objection was that none of the Indian forests had been under management for the required one full rotation, rendering India an unsuitable venue for training foresters. Hands-on experience in strategically managed forests is of utmost importance, and is the reason behind IGNTA's commitment to field tours for all who enlist in forestry training. Extensive field tours form a significant component of training in IGNTA, occupying about one fourth of the total time of training. During the tours different forest ecosystems and forestry activities are studied in different regions of the country. Spread throughout the entire course of training, six strategically planned tours are used to expose probationers to the different management practices employed in a variety of forest ecosystems in the country. These six tours are detailed below.



### Introductory Tour

As the name suggests, this tour takes place at the beginning of professional training. It is usually conducted in a nearby forest area of Dehradun. Probationers stay in a camp and are familiarised with forest flora and fauna, terminology, altitudinal zonations, techniques to identify a species in the forest, etc. This is a 1-week tour.

### Hill Tour

The next tour is called the Hill Tour, and is conducted in the months of May and June in the first year of professional training. The states covered during this tour are Himachal Pradesh and parts of Jammu and Kashmir. This tour is designed to expose the probationers to the Western Himalayan Ecosystem, working plans and management of coniferous forests and temperate broadleaved species, Botanisation, etc. This is a 3-week tour.



### West India Tour

This tour is conducted in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan and the Agra area of Uttar Pradesh. The duration of this tour is around 1 month, and usually takes place in September, as the second year of training begins. This tour serves to educate the probationers in the vital subjects of soil conservation, grassland management and pasture development, ravine and wasteland reclamation, combating desertification and arresting sand dunes, habitat management of wild ass sanctuary, habitat management of Gir National Park, semi- and arid conditions, saline areas and soil and moisture conservation works.

### South India Tour

As the name suggests, this tour takes the trainees to visit forests in the southern part of India. It usually takes place in October of the probationers' second year, and lasts about 1 month. The South India tour gives the trainees valuable

experience and deeper understanding of the shola forest, the rain forest ecosystem, silviculture and management of the main species of South India, biodiversity of tropical forests in the Silent Valley and coastal zone regulations.

### East India Tour

Another essential part of touring during training is the tour to the Eastern and North Eastern parts of the country. This tour takes place in January and February, and covers the states of Odisha, West Bengal, North Eastern states and Andamans. The probationers also visit the neighbouring country of Bhutan during this tour. The duration of this tour is about 1 month, and the principal areas of study are coastal ecosystem management, marine resources, Protected Area management, Mangrove management, Zoo management, shifting cultivation, natural regeneration of Sal and high altitude protected area management.

### Central India Tour

This tour is conducted during the months of February and March in the trainees' second year. It is a 3-week tour to parts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhatisgarh. Studies focus on silviculture and the management of the main species of central and peninsular India, management of teak forests, protected area management, eco development and ecotourism.

Details of each tour are finalised every year by the director of IGNFA depending on the requirements of the course. In addition to the themes mentioned above, the probationers also gain valuable exposure to forest management best practices in the states being visited. Additionally, instructive meetings with senior officials of state forest departments and other dignitaries of the state are arranged during the tours.



*Left: Bird Watching*

*Right: Measurement of trees*

## **Excursions**

The tours and field activities detailed above are supplemented with local excursions as well. These are usually 1-day events, taking place on Saturdays, and provide additional, local exposure to field botany, bird watching, night patrolling, visits to timber depots and other forest based industries, disposal of seized or unclaimed timber through tender, impact of soil erosion, entomology, pathology, wood harvesting, biodiversity, etc.

## **Imparting Skills**

Training at IGNFA is not only about knowledge and field exposure, but also about equipping probationers with essential forestry skills. Practical exercises are designed and organised to impart those skills which the trainees will require in their future careers in forest management. For this reason, the following exercises are undertaken as part of the training in IGNFA:

## **Working Plan Exercise**

Forestry operations have a lengthy gestation period and the results of management efforts only become known after many, many years. This makes continuity of policy and action an absolute necessity, and is protected and fulfilled through the process of forest management planning. A long-term plan of action is prepared, generally covering a 10-year period, and forests are managed according to the prescriptions in that plan. The Working Plan is clearly the most critical of all resources for foresters and is rightly known as the "Bible of Forestry." IFS officers are responsible for its preparation and implementation, and it is used to guide foresters at every step throughout their career.





*Left: Finding the location with GPS*

*Right: Looking for the direction*

To equip the probationers with a thorough understanding of how Working Plans are prepared, a 3 week long exercise is undertaken in the forests of the Dehradun area. The trainees camp in the forests, collect the required data and then analyse it. Next, based on their findings, they make prescriptions for the future management of the assigned area.

Over the years, the basic steps used in developing the Working Plan have remained pretty much the same, but there have been many changes in the method of preparation. These changes include the use of computers and new instruments like the Densimeter, Range Finder and GPS for data collection. The introduction of new technologies like the Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System has also enhanced the sampling and analysis of data for Working Plan preparation. At the end of the exercise, probationers prepare a Working Plan and the quality of their work is evaluated.

### **Road Alignment Exercise**

Foresters work in very remote, interior areas where most of the time they have to work in isolation. In order for them to carry out the work of forest protection, patrolling, silvicultural operations and the extraction of timber and non-timber products, it is essential that they have an adequate network of roads. To develop this communication network, foresters need skills for laying and maintaining roads and building causeways, small bridges and culverts. During training they gain practical experience in these skills through the Road Alignment Exercise. This exercise takes place in the forests of the Dehradun area for about a week.







All the skills are important

- Above: Different Exercises
- Left: Measuring Height of Trees

### Integrated Watershed Exercise

Watershed is the natural unit for the management of natural resources. To impart the necessary skills for watershed-based management, a 1 week long integrated watershed management exercise is conducted. In this exercise, training is given for selection of macro and micro watersheds, socio economic survey, treatment plans for drainage channels and formulation of sectoral developmental plans.

### Forest Mensuration Exercise

This exercise is designed to teach probationers about the growth pattern of trees. It is taken up in the first year of training, in the forests of the Kanasar area of the Chakrata Forests of Dehradun. A camp is established and stem analysis, stump analysis, increment boring, etc. is done by the probationers. The probationers also do treks to Thadiyar, Mundali and Deovan as part of this exercise.

### Wildlife Techniques Exercise

Over the years, wildlife management has become a more and more essential component of forestry management. To equip the probationers with the key techniques of wildlife management, this 10 day exercise is undertaken in a protected area, and is conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India. In this exercise, trainees learn critical aspects of wildlife management such as wildlife management planning, population estimation techniques, man-animal conflict studies, habitat studies, ecotourism and eco development.

### Wildlife Crime Detection

Illegal trade in wildlife has assumed alarming proportions. It is reportedly the second largest illegal trade in the world after illegal narcotics trade. To equip the probationers to handle this important challenge of forest management, a 1-week wildlife crime detection exercise is undertaken in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

National Police Academy, Hyderabad. Important wildlife crime control procedures, intelligence gathering, evidence collection, etc. are demonstrated for the probationers.

### Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) And Micro Plan Exercise

Since the development of the 1988 forest policy, the voice of local communities is being taken into consideration in forest management planning and decisions that affect those communities. But to engage and involve the people of the communities, certain skills need to be learned by foresters. To meet this need, the PRA and Micro Plan exercise has been created for the IFS probationers. In this exercise, they gain valuable experience in key areas such as rapid rural appraisal, participatory rural appraisal, socio economic surveys and preparation and finalisation of micro plans.

## Additional Skills

Keeping in mind the actual job requirements of foresters, probationers are also equipped with some skills which do not relate directly to forestry works but are still essential in the field. The probationers are tested in these skill areas as part of their qualification according to the rules of probation. The Director of the academy fixes the proficiency standards for probationers with respect to each test. They are grouped as qualifying tests and are detailed below.

### First Aid

In the interior areas where foresters generally work, immediate medical help is not available. To deal with medical problems in this type of situation, knowledge of first aid is absolutely necessary for foresters. This subject was introduced right from the initial days of forestry training, and is still taught today.

### Weapon Training

With the increased demand for forest and wildlife products, the protection of forest resources has become more and more challenging. Due to the high stakes, the smugglers and poachers that come to loot the forests are often armed. To keep pace with such a situation, the forest departments also had to arm themselves. Therefore, it is necessary to equip IFS probationers with the basic knowledge of firearms. This is done through a qualifying test called "Weapon Training" which is conducted in the adjoining Indian Military Academy. This excellent training provides probationers with instruction in the use of weapons such as light machine guns, rifles, pistols and revolvers.



- Foresters need these too
- Left & Above : Weapon training in IMA
- Top Right : Swimming classes in IMA
- Right Middle : Horse Riding lessons in IMA



## Swimming

Since swimming is another skill required by the foresters, the IFS probationers are also trained in swimming. Again this qualifying test is conducted through the Indian Military Academy.

## Equitation Training.

IFS probationers are also trained in the skill of horse riding. This training is also conducted through Indian Military Academy.

## Motor Mechanics and Driving

IFS probationers are familiarised with the basics of Motor Mechanics during probation. They are also given lessons in driving light motor vehicles.



The professional training culminates with award of diplomas in a very important and well organised Convocation for the passing out batch. Based on examinations, written and other evaluations, the results are announced and diplomas and prizes are given away by the chief guest who is a very high ranking dignitary of the country.

→ Now I am a trained forester

→ Left: Getting the Diploma on successful completion of training