



# BUILDING CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP



## CHAPTER

# 10

WHEN THE IFS WAS TO BE CONSTITUTED, THE INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED BY DR. BRANDIS FOR THE SELECTION OF PROBATIONERS IN 1866 INCLUDED THESE POWERFUL WORDS, "THE FOREST OFFICERS IN INDIA FREQUENTLY LIVE ISOLATED, FAR FROM IMMEDIATE CONTROL OF THEIR SUPERIOR OFFICERS; THEY REQUIRE TACT, CONSIDERATION AND SOUND JUDGEMENT IN THEIR CONSTANT AND OFTEN DIFFICULT, DEALINGS WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION. MOREOVER THE FATIGUE AND EXPOSURE, WHICH THE WORK NECESSARILY ENTAILS, ARE GREAT AND THE MALARIA IN MOST OF THE FORESTS IS AN UNDEBTABLE FACT. WE REQUIRE, THEREFORE PRE-EMINENTLY PICKED MEN OF A HIGH MORAL CHARACTER, A GOOD CONSTITUTION, EVEN TEMPER AND SUPERIOR ABILITIES."

Though articulated about 145 years ago, these words still convey the requirements for the profession of forestry in India today. Forest officers, in addition to possessing sound professional knowledge, also need strong leadership qualities. This aspect of training has always been in focus in IFC/IGNFA where the institute works actively to instil the desired leadership qualities in the budding leaders. When the IFC was started in 1938, the traditions of training from earlier IFS programs were again revived. The motto of the IFC was "Mens Sana in Corpore Sano" which means, "A Sound Mind in a Sound Body." In the academy's desire to develop high quality officers, the following activities are undertaken to inculcate leadership qualities in the budding foresters.



*Sports and Adventure activities*





Morning PT



## Physical Training and Games

The forestry profession demands members with sound health and good physique. Therefore, physical training and games are an essential part of the programme. When on campus, the probationers start their day with a half an hour session of physical training which includes exercises, jogging, etc. And again after the classes and practicals, every probationer is required to play outdoor games for one hour. For this purpose, the academy provides excellent sports facilities. They include a beautiful sports ground for games like hockey, football, cricket, volleyball etc. There are tennis courts with synthetic base, badminton courts, basketball courts, squash court, a billiards room and a table tennis room. Two gymnasias are also set up near the hostels, as well as a two-storied pavilion adds distinction to the IGNFA sports facilities.

Physical training is not limited to the on-campus parts of the program, for during tours and excursions the probationers undertake the rigours of long treks. The famous Thadiar march, covering about 70 kilometres, is an integral part of the Chakrata tour dating back to the initial years of the IFC. Many other adventure activities like river rafting, etc. are also organised for the further development of the trainees.

*IGNFA play ground and pavillion*







→ Honing Other Skills

→ Evening games



## Extracurricular Activities

As an integral part of personality development for the IFS probationers, various extracurricular opportunities are also provided. The probationers are encouraged to organise social, artistic, cultural and literary activities through IGNFA Club, which is an amalgamation of the different clubs and acts as a hub organisation for facilitating a wide variety of extracurricular activities by the probationers during their stay in the academy. The IGNFA Club is headed by the Director of IGNFA, who serves as President of the Club. The Director nominates one of the Faculty Members to serve as the Vice President.

The post of Secretary for the different clubs is manned by senior batch probationers and the post of Joint Secretary is manned by junior batch probationers. Some clubs also have an advisor from the Faculty.

The IGNFA Club is a composite entity of the following clubs:

- Computer Club
- Sports Club
- Wildlife/ Nature and Photography Club
- Literary Club
- Cultural/ Fine Arts Club
- Lounge Club
- Movie Club

The Officers' Club provides facilities for probationers, faculty, and members of the staff for indoor as well as outdoor games. Inter- and intra-institutional matches are organised for various sports disciplines in order to develop competency and sportsmanship among the probationers. The Club organises several matches involving other institutions in Dehradun and Mussoorie. The Club also arranges cultural programmes, movie shows for members, wildlife related activities and other similar events. In addition to this,

the Club also celebrates important days like World Environment Day, World Forest Day, Wildlife Week and Vana Mahotsava. To develop the trainees' organisational skills and to provide opportunity to showcase other skills, activities like fete, cultural programmes, quiz competitions, debates, painting competitions, making of small documentaries, preparation of business plans, book reviews, etc. are also organised.



*Probationers show casing their talent*



## Officers' Mess

The Officers Mess is an important institution in the academy. It's more than a place to eat; it's a place to learn! All the probationers are members of the mess, and they run it themselves under the supervision of an academy faculty member.

The Director of IGNFA appoints the President and Vice President of the mess from among the faculty members. The President of the mess is the overall administrative head of the mess. The Vice President supervises the activities of the mess on a day to day basis, but the actual functioning of the mess is controlled by a Mess Committee which is an elected body of probationers. This elected body is headed by the Mess secretary and is responsible for the efficient running and proper upkeep of the Mess, observance of the highest standards of mess life by the members, control of mess employees and maintenance of the mess accounts.

Each day, one of the probationers acts as the Mess Duty Officer and looks after that

day's work in the mess on behalf of all the members. There is a roster drawn up in order to keep this organised. For the particular day when a probationer works as Mess Duty Officer, he/she is exempted from attending classes. The mess committee also organises all formal and ceremonial dinners held in their mess.

[Top to Bottom](#)

→ [Hari Singh Auditorium](#)

→ [Officers' Mess](#)





the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, and are also given sufficient opportunities to practice and demonstrate their written and oral communication skills.

The visits of dignitaries to the academy for lectures and workshops provide probationers with another opportunity for growth. Trainees are assigned the duty of Escort Officer, allowing them to informally interact with senior officers or dignitaries, which helps shape the probationers' personalities.

→ Adventure Activities

→ Below : Trekking

## Other Activities

Whether the probationers are on campus or away on tours, one probationer always carries the role of Duty Officer (formerly Orderly Officer) to manage the communications needs for the batch. All communications either to or from the batch are routed through the Duty Officer. The assigned Duty Officer serves in that role for 1 week, and a roster is drawn to keep the schedule and names of those who are serving.

Tours are an essential part of the training, and provide opportunities to build and hone the leadership qualities of the probationers. For each tour, one of the probationers is appointed as Group Leader, and another one is appointed as Assistant Group Leader. They assist the accompanying faculty member to organise the various activities that take place during the tour. They are also responsible to distribute equipment, keep activities moving on schedule, and maintain the expense accounts throughout the tour.

The academy is also committed to helping probationers refine their all-important communication skills. The trainees are privileged to receive expert input through specialised institutes like





# STAFF COLLEGE FUNCTIONS OF THE ACADEMY



CHAPTER

# 11

THE INDIAN FOREST COLLEGE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1938 AND ITS PRIMARY ROLE WAS TO TRAIN CANDIDATES SELECTED FOR THE SUPERIOR FOREST SERVICE OF THE VARIOUS PROVINCES AND STATES OF INDIA. HOWEVER, EVEN FROM ITS BIRTH THERE WAS A VISION THAT THE COLLEGE WOULD SOME DAY PROVIDE "REFRESHER COURSES" FOR OFFICERS ALREADY IN SERVICE. IT TOOK ABOUT A QUARTER CENTURY FOR THIS VISION TO BECOME A REALITY, AND IN 1965 A REFRESHER COURSE WAS STARTED FOR RANGERS WHO WERE PROMOTED TO GAZETTED SERVICE. THESE SPECIAL COURSES CONTINUED FOR ABOUT 10 YEARS.

One other course offered at the college was a diploma course in Wildlife Management and was conducted for about 6 years during the 1970s. Up until 1990, after more than 50 years of the institute's operation, these two courses remained the only achievement in this area of Refresher Courses.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, when the IFC had become IGNFA, the added role of serving as the Staff College for officers of the Indian Forest Service was taken up by this institute on a continuous and long term basis. The original vision for offering Refresher Courses was finally taking shape. This chapter details the training courses provided at the IGNFA for senior officers.



→ Updating ourselves

→ Above - Participants knowing the details of climate change experiments in IFGTB Coimbatore



Left : Participants during their visit to IFGTB Headquarters at Coimbatore

### Professional Skill Upgradation Course (PSUC)

As per IFS rules, there are two avenues for entering into the Indian Forest Service. Two thirds of the positions are filled through a national level, open, competitive examination, conducted annually by the Union Public Service Commission of India. The remaining third are filled by way of promotion of eligible officers from the State Forest Services (SFS). Initially, IGNTA only trained officers recruited through the competitive examination, but subsequently started training officers inducted into the IFS through the state forest services also. The training provided to promoted SFS officers is called the "Professional Skill Upgradation Course" (PSUC). This 10-week training course was started in 1996.

The main objectives were to sensitise the inducted officers to the ethos and functioning of the All India Service and to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

The course module includes classroom/interactive sessions for 8 weeks and an outstation study tour for 2 weeks. For this course, the upper age limit of participants is 52 years on 1st January of the year in which training is scheduled. The cost of training is carried by the respective state governments as per rates fixed by the Government of India. The first PSUC had a batch of 25 officers and was conducted from September to November 1996. As of December 2011, there have been 25 such courses, and more than 600 officers have participated.

Below: At Ecotourism side near Coimbatore



Above: At institute of Wood Science and Technology at Bangalore



Above: In Mangrove Forests of Andamans

### Refresher Courses for In-Service Officers

When the IGNSA started refresher courses for IFS officers at various levels, it was part of a foreign-funded project. Later, the Government of India (GOI) took complete responsibility for the management and funding of these courses. Over a period of more than a decade these courses have evolved significantly and have been made mandatory for IFS officers in the progression of their career.

### Advanced Forest Management (AFM) Courses

In the year 2000, the British Department for International Development (DFID; previously the ODA) launched a 2.02 million pound project with the GOI. The aim of the project was to contribute to the GOI's efforts to promote changed approaches and attitudes throughout the forestry service in light of the 1988 National Forest Policy. The project would focus on deepening and broadening the professional skills of the Forest Service officers. This bold project was scheduled to take place over a 27-month period, beginning in April 2000.

As a result of this project, in-service training courses for IFS officers at their 10th year, 17th year and 21st year of service were started. These courses were called the "Advanced Forest Management (AFM) Courses." The duration of the training courses at the 10th year of service was 3 weeks, while for other two levels it was 2 weeks. These courses engaged topics such as Information Technology and Computer applications, Project Management, Protected Area Management, Policy and Legal Issues





*Above : Executive Hostel*

and Advancement in Forest Management and Research. The basic objectives of this training were to update the knowledge, sharpen the skills and further develop the expertise of IFS Officers. The first such course was conducted from 6th August to 1st September 2000 for the 1990 batch of the IFS. Later on, after the project funding from DFID had expired, the MoEF started covering the expenses of these training modules. These courses continued from 2000 to 2009, during which time a total of

95 AFM courses were conducted and nearly 2500 IFS officers participated. The project funding for the AFM courses also provided two excellent enhancements to the IGFA campus facilities in 2004-2005. The administrative building was expanded by adding what's called the New Block or Library Building and a 30-room hostel, the Executive Hostel, was also added for accommodating officers that are taking in-service training courses.

## AFM Courses become Mid-Career Trainings

→ Knowledge knows no boundaries- Beyond the borders of Indian Forests

→ *Left : Participants of MCT in US Forests*

→ *Bottom : Participants of MCT In Finland Forests*



Beginning in 2009, the IFS refresher courses were modified and renamed Mid-Career Trainings (MCTs). This approach to training was developed as a result of the Civil Services Reforms which were approved by the Prime Minister's Office for the three All India Services. This training, like the AFM programme, was also given in three phases for different levels of officers.

Phases I and II are part of the initial training given during probation, but Phases III, IV and V are part of the MCT. Phase III is for IFS officers of 7-9 years seniority, Phase IV is for IFS officers of 16-18 years seniority and Phase V is for IFS officers of 26-28 years seniority.

The duration of the trainings is 2 months for Phase III and IV officers, and 1 month for Phase V officers. In all the programmes, there is a 1 week module to address management issues and is conducted by leading management institutes of the country (Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Bangalore and Lucknow). Each of the three phases also include a 2 week foreign exposure component at a leading international university/institute. During the foreign exposure visit, presently trainees are taken to Yale University (USA), Maxwell school of Public Policy, Syracuse (USA), Colorado State University (USA), University of British Columbia (Canada),



→ *Left & Below* : Foreign exposure visit during MCT



Swedish Forest Agency (Sweden), or Joensuu University (Finland). Aside from the management module and the foreign exposure module, the rest of the training is conducted at IGNF. In each programme 60 officers are trained. For the foreign visit, they are split into two groups of 30 trainees, and each group visits a different country.

This type of training for IFS officers is carried out by the finest, most qualified institutes in the country. Institutes are screened based on their capacity to conduct such training, and then the selection is finalised through a bidding process. These select Institutes will host the MCTs for the first 3 years of the

programme (2009-2012). After the initial 3 years, the opportunity will be open again for Institutes to seek selection for conducting the next 3 years of the trainings.

The first MCT course started on 14th December 2009. It was for Phase III officers coming from the 2000, 2001 and 2002 batches of IFS. So far 16 courses have been conducted and more than 900 officers have participated.



### MCT Follow-up Workshops.

To assess the impact of MCTs, four follow-up workshops were conducted in 2010-2011. Officers from each region who had participated in the MCT programmes were invited in order to discuss the field application of knowledge gained through the MCTs.



## Senior Foresters' Workshops

Senior Foresters' workshops at IGNFA started in 1998. To commemorate the 50th year of independence of the country, the academy organised a Senior Foresters' Workshop on 5th and 6th March 1998. There were 115 participants (including two officers from Nepal and one from Pakistan). They came from batches starting with the 1938-1940 batch (the first batch of the IFC) to the 1959-1961 batch. The workshop was designed for reviewing the development of forestry in India during the previous 50 years. Then in 1998 and 1999, there were two more of these workshops for officers who had belonged to batches from 1964 to 1976. These seasoned veterans gathered together to apply their wisdom and experience to a discussion of contemporary forestry issues.

Beginning in the year 2000, with an aim to hold regular discussions about policy level issues in the forestry sector, the Senior Foresters' Workshop (SFW) for officers with 25 years of IFS service was started. The first such workshop was organised for the 1975 batch of IFS officers on 24th and 25th May 2000, and the SFWs continued unchanged through 2005.

On the basis of feedback from the workshops, the MoEF decided in 2005 to increase the duration of the SFW at the 25 years level from 2 days to 3 days. Approval was also given at that time to start a workshop for officers who have completed 30 years of service. Accordingly, the first SFW for 30 year veterans (from the 1975 batch) was held from 30th May to 1st June 2006. There were 19 officers who participated in the workshop.

Beginning in 2009, the SFW at the 25 years level was stopped because in the revised pattern of in-service courses, Phase V of the MCT was now providing advanced training for officers of 26-28 years of seniority. The SFW for 30 year veterans continues to be a part of IFS training.

- Learning is a continuous process
- Below: Senior foresters' workshop in progress



## Reunion Workshop for Retired Officers



→ Time to pass on the baton

→ Above - A Reunion Workshop in progress

In the year 2008, the Academy started a 2 day annual workshop for retired IFS officers completing 50 years since their joining of the Forest Service. The first such workshop was held on the 13th and 14th of October 2008, for the "Re-Union of the 1958-61 IFC course".

The purpose of these workshops is to provide an opportunity for probationers undergoing training at the academy to learn from the experiences of senior foresters, which are shared with the trainees in the course of the workshop. The senior foresters also take this occasion to share forest service ethos and traditions with the new entrants to the service.

These Reunion Workshops have proven to be very valuable and continue to be conducted each year.

## Other Courses

Other courses conducted by the IGNA for the benefit of IFS officers include theme-based compulsory courses organised by the MoEF. This is part of the Ministry's annual efforts to involve leading institutes of the country in providing advanced training for officers. The courses range from 2-day workshops to 1-week courses. As part of this programme, the IGNA has conducted courses on themes like Policy and Legal Issues in Forestry, People's Participation in Forestry, Project Formulation for External assistance and International Conventions on Forestry. The MoEF also occasionally assigns a special workshop theme or training topic to be conducted by the IGNA.



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## ADVANCED FOREST MANAGEMENT COURSES - MY MEMORIES...

Although in-service training was started in 1990 but it was theme based and the participants were heterogeneous (different levels & seniority). But there was no training course exclusively for homogeneous group (officers of same level and rank) focusing on the roles and responsibility of that rank. After analyzing the professional career of IFS officers in a span of 33-35 years, it was decided to design the training modules at 3 levels (3 Tier Training Programme) at 9 years, 17 years and 21 years of their service. The idea to train in-service officers at three levels is that during this particular time they change their roles/duties such as at 10 years they are at resource level, at 17 years at supervisory level and at 21 years they are at the policy or decision making level.

Initially, the discussion started with externally aided agencies in forestry section under Colombo Plan but finally a project was prepared named as "Forestry Training Project" and submitted to DFIDI in 1998. It was approved in 1999 with a grant of 16 crore for infrastructure development, training for faculty members abroad, consultancy, etc. The Govt. of India (MoEF) had given its concurrence to provide regular budgetary allocation to support training for In Service

Training Courses from the regular budget.

I joined the Academy in July 1999 and this was the first major task assigned to me with lots of challenges which was accepted wholeheartedly by me. Major challenges such as to interact with both the Academy, NPA and LBSNAA (they had just started their in-service training courses), to design modules for all the three levels, short listing of the resource persons/Developing a data base of Resource persons, to develop the reading material/compendium for different levels, finalizing the field visits exposing the participants to good case studies/lessons from the field and to make arrangements for boarding and lodging not only for the participants but also for resource persons were taken care with the team support. The first In Service Course was started from the main building of IGNFA in 2000 with minimum support and resources. Another challenge which was faced at that time was to conduct these 3 tier training programmes with a good set of resource persons for all the 3 levels and to make them sustainable on a long term. There was lot of debate for naming this course whether it should be named as "In-Service Training Course" or "Forest Management Course." Since it was

an advanced course for in-service officers to update their skills & knowledge, it was finally named as Advanced Forest Management Course (AFMC).



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## **OPERATIONALISING MID-CAREER TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR INDIAN FOREST SERVICE OFFICERS**

The second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) in their report recommended Mid Career Training (MCT) Programme for all the officers. These MCT programmes started for Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in 2006. In the year 2006, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India advised that these Mid Career Training to be also imparted to the officers of other services - Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service. The letter to this effect from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) was received in November 2006. However, the work could be initiated only in August 2008. By this time the MCT programme for IAS was in the 3rd year of implementation and the police service had in process about six months earlier. The forest service therefore had to catch up with other services to implement MCT programme for the IFS officers.

The entire MCT Programme of IFS officers had to be visualized, designed, sequenced and implemented. Since, IGNFA was given the responsibility, regular discussions were held on conceptualization designing and sequencing of various modules for different phases of MCT training programme. Phase III training programme for IFS officers

between 7-9 years of service was considered to be the training programme for IFS officers at DCF level and was basically oriented towards 'execution' and 'implementation' of government programmes in the field. It was, therefore, felt that a significant component of entire programme of these officers needed to be skill based. The MCT programme for officers at 16-18 years of service, which is for the officers at conservator level was considered to be one of the very important training programmes for forestry sector, because these officers by this time have had good experience of working in the field and left with good number of years to serve the forestry sector and therefore, could contribute significantly for up scaling the conservation practices and efficiency in the forestry department. The programme for these officers therefore incorporated basically monitoring and evaluation and planning which needed exposure to some quantum of skills and some components of policy frame work. The training programme for these phases (Phase III and IV) were designed to be of 8 weeks. The MCT programme for Phase V for the officers belonging to 26-28 years of service was envisioned to be oriented basically on policy

and planning level working. This programme of Phase V was recommended for 4 weeks only.

The Expert Committee before considering the bids discussed at length the condition of forest service, the requirement of capacity building at various levels and the intentions of Administrative Reforms Commission. MCT is an opportunity for broadening of horizon of IFS officers, who otherwise do not have enough exposure and continue to work in the remote areas of states in isolation. In this context it may be relevant to state that on one occasion one Secretary of Government of India MoEF had remarked that with all their commitment, good qualification and intelligence the IFS officers are away from the happenings. Two points which distinguished the MCT from AFM courses, apart from being compulsory in nature for promotion and increment, were the incorporation of management module and two weeks of thematic exposure visit abroad. In view of these, the Expert Committee desired and therefore decided to give the maximum weightage to technical capabilities of the institutions. The cost consideration of the training programme was considered to be of secondary importance.