TRAINING IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

3.1 In this era of transformation and with the pressing needs and requirements of the public, Government has initiated a number of reform strategies aimed at improving the quality of life of the citizens, and creating new government machineries to establish efficient and effective management systems.

The effectiveness with which the new policies are implemented is largely dependent on the quality of civil service administration and the ability of its staff to operate effectively in the changed environment. It goes without saying then, that the reform of public administration must be built on the development of human resources. This implies a large investment in training. It has been said that Civil Servants are our most important assets. An important part of valuing and managing them effectively is to ensure that they have access to relevant, high quality, accessible and ongoing training.

To ensure the successful implementation of the reforms undertaken as well as to enhance capacity in the Civil Service, Government has spent some Rs 262 million on training during the past six years as shown in Table 3-1. The amount spent yearly has been decreasing over the years, from Rs 54 million in 2002-03 to Rs 40 million in 2006-07 and a slight increase to Rs 41 million in 2007-08.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Actual Expenditure Rs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-03</td>
<td>54,383,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>43,449,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>42,095,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>41,836,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>39,999,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>40,646,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>262,410,867</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.1 Budget Allocated to Training

An analysis of the financial resources allocated by Government to training showed considerable differences among Ministries and Departments. This is illustrated in the sample in Appendix IA. It appears that there is no basis on which the amount has been allocated as can be seen from further analyses carried out in the next pages.
3.1.2 **Budget Allocated to Training as a Percentage to PE Budget**

Analysis at Appendix IB shows that the training budget of Ministries and Departments as a percentage to the Personal Emoluments budget ranges from nil to 7.08 per cent. In fact, in most cases the percentage is less than 1 per cent. Except for the Civil Aviation Department in 2002-03, the percentage is insignificant compared to the average of 4 per cent in other countries.

It can also be observed that the percentage budgeted for training over the years by a number of Ministries/Departments has decreased and varies considerably. For example in 2002-03 the average percentage for the sample was 1.19 while in 2007-08 the percentage has decreased to 0.74. Individually, for the Ministry of Health the percentage in fiscal year 2002-03 was 0.94 while in 2007-08 the percentage has decreased to 0.54. Similarly the percentage for the Civil Aviation Department decreased from 7.08 in 2002-03 to 1.40. Conversely for Police Department, it has increased from 0.59 in 2002-03 to 0.79 in 2007-08, and for Energy Services Division, the percentage has increased from 0.71 to 1.46 respectively. Even within the same Ministry/Department in all cases, the percentages vary between the different Divisions.

3.1.3 **Annual Training Budget Allocation per Staff Member.**

The above results are further confirmed in terms of the amount invested on each staff member on training per annum. As can be seen in Appendix IC, the amount budgeted per annum per staff ranges from nil to Rs 5,555 in fiscal year 2002-03, and from Rs 98 to Rs 6,158 in 2007-08. This is not sufficient to cover participation for even a one-day seminar of eight hours. Yet, it is reckoned by Government that each staff member of the Civil Service should undergo 40 hours of training annually. In this analysis also the trend of budget allocation is mixed. Some cases have shown an increase while others a decrease.

These results may reflect the different approach to training and the nature of training provided in individual Ministries and Department. It may also reflect the level of support for training by top management.

3.1.4 **Comparison of Actual Expenditure on Training with Budgeted Provisions**

A comparison of the actual expenditure on training against the budgeted provisions of some Ministries and Departments is shown Appendix ID. It can be seen that the actual amount spent on training varies from a low figure of 14 per cent to as high as 236 per cent of the budgeted provision. Even within the same Ministry/Department, the amount spent is erratic.

The above results together with an overview by the NAO of the training offered by some Ministries/Departments indicate that there is a fragmented approach to training and that they are being dispensed just for the sake of it. They are neither needs driven nor designed to enhance competence, nor focused on identified situations where the learner is required to attain new skills or behaviours supporting skills. There are no strategic plans and therefore the training is not linked to specific strategies, challenges or problems in the organisations.
There were no evidences of review procedures or follow-up actions to ensure that:

➢ The training organised was effective, or whether a different training methodology would have been more effective.

➢ Trainees apply their learning in the workplace.

➢ The course contents match the organisation’s learning objectives.

It is even mentioned that there are barriers in the work environment that prevent trainees from applying their learning.

Expert analysis at an international level suggests that much investment in training and development is wasted, as programmes do not succeed in delivering the expected outcomes. (Report No. 38 of the Controller and Auditor General of Ireland, December 2000). The effectiveness of training depends on how well it is integrated into the strategy and business planning process and how well it is supported by top management. It requires each Ministry/Department to develop specific training policies, objectives, strategies and plans derived from an analysis of the Ministry/Department’s needs.

The most significant recent changes in the Civil Service have been the introduction of the Programme Based Budgeting (PBB) and the Performance Management System. Focused on improving performance and service delivery, these new systems are changing the way in which the Civil Service is managed. There is a need for a shift in the mindset of civil servants and this in turn will have important implications for training and development.

As recommended by the Controller and Auditor General of Ireland in his Report No 38 of December 2000 on Training and Development in the Civil Service, there is a need to move civil service training and development to a different plane. This change will involve reinforcement on the move from an old to a new mindset in training and development. Much of this change should be underpinned by the following:

➢ A central policy on civil service training and development should be formulated to provide overall direction and guidance.

➢ Reliable management information should be designed to enable training and development to be monitored and evaluated at departmental level and across the civil service as a whole.

➢ Needs analysis should be introduced which is focused on the training and development, which will provide the outcome, needed to support objectives.

➢ More consistent support for the training and development function needs to be articulated by senior managers and their action to implement this support should be subject to independent scrutiny.

➢ Ministries and Departments should introduce comprehensive evaluation systems based on measuring the effectiveness of training in terms of business outputs and outcomes.
Quite often training programmes are seen as a waste of funds. This leads to reluctance to devote resources towards training. It is therefore imperative to have a proper measurement of the effectiveness of training.

An overall framework within which the effectiveness of training can be measured is through a training cycle analysis as set out below.

**A Training Cycle**

3.1.5 *The training cycle*

The evaluation of training should be considered as a cyclical process within which information is fed back into the design of subsequent training programmes. A training cycle consists of a series of steps, which lead to a training event being undertaken. Evaluation provides feedback which links back to the initial stages of training design. This model emphasises the point that in order to measure the effectiveness of training, evaluation has to be considered before the training event takes place. Moreover, in most cases, evaluation will be most effective when it is part of a system, which examines the entire training process.

The model described here underpins the different types of cycle and takes account of all the major steps:

*Stage 1*

Identification of training need: examining what skills and attributes are necessary for the job to be undertaken, the skills and attributes of the jobholder and the extent of the gap.
The following requirements need to be considered:

➢ A statement of what the training should achieve
➢ For whom the training is intended for
➢ Any other background or helpful information

Stage 2

Design, preparation and delivery of training so as to

➢ Establish a logical approach such that the training attains the target set
➢ Seek for factual evidence to review the progress of the training event
➢ Modify and improve the existing training programmes

Stage 3

Discovering the trainee's attitude to training (reaction) and whether the training has been learnt (learning). Reaction involves the participant's feelings towards the training content, the trainer and the training methods used. Learning is the extent to which the content of the learning event has actually been absorbed by the trainee.

Stage 4

Discovering whether the lessons learnt during training have been applied to the job and are being used effectively in doing the job.

Stage 5

Evaluating the effects of the training on the organisation. This is the area in which there is perhaps most confusion, and subsequently little real action in the workplace.

Stage 6

Reinforcement of positive behaviour. It is optimal that any positive outcome is maintained for as long as possible. It is not a rare event for changes in behaviour to be temporary, with a gentle slide back to previous ways of working.

Training events necessitate a proper evaluation of outcomes. The investment warrants an assessment of the benefits derived. The evaluation exercise highlights the organization's needs to strive for development and improvement of the working skills of its employees.