CHAPTER VI

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Performance appraisal, as the name connotes, is an evaluation of the performance of an individual on his job. The periodicity of this is usually one year. The document on which the performance appraisal is recorded is called the Annual Confidential Report. Historically, this evaluation has been used for increments, salary increases, promotions and at times for transfer and training.

The stress in the annual confidential report has traditionally been on certain aspects of personality such as integrity, loyalty, reliability, honesty, judgement, initiative, cooperation and resourcefulness. However, recent developments in management and research in personnel administration have led to stress being shifted from 'appraisal of personality' to 'analysis of performance'. McGregor stated that performance appraisal is designed to meet three needs, one for the organisation and two for the individual.¹ For the organisation, it provides a systematic judgement to back up salary increases, promotions, transfers and sometimes demotions or terminations. As regards the individual, it lets him know "where he stands", how he is performing and what changes he needs in his behaviour, attitudes and skills. It also provides a basis for counselling and coaching the individual.

McGregor suggested communication of appraisal results to the individual. According to his theory an employee should no longer remain a passive object in his appraisal, but become an active agent. The emphasis thus shifted from appraisal to analysis. Peter Drucker in his theory of 'Management by Objectives' (MBO) introduced the idea of setting goals with employee participation. These would be assessed by the superior in consultation with the subordinates. Self appraisal then became an important feature of this system to assess strengths and weaknesses, and to formulate plans to accomplish future goals.

Self-appraisal assists the subordinate to analyse his present performance and helps him to identify his strengths, weaknesses and potential and also asks him to make plans for improving his performance. Management by objectives on the other hand, gives him an opportunity to evaluate operational results. When he is discussing results he is actually appraising himself and also gaining insight into how he might improve his attitude, methods and behaviour.

In India, research in this area has been done by authors like Ishwar Dayal and Malathi Bolar. Ishwar Dayal’s contribution lies in recognising the cultural factors in the Indian situation. The individual, in his view, sees himself as a member of a family or of a community. Indians do not evaluate their performance as individuals but as members of an identifiable group. "This may be the reason why seniority has such a premium in
most organisations."² People compare themselves with others above them and with those below them and their evaluation standards are the community and not the individual goals. He also feels that self-appraisal and the capacity to see one's shortcomings are highly limited amongst Indians. The need to be liked universally and as part of a group though with some kind of hierarchy (which inhibits communication with subordinates) is inherent in the culture of this society.

Inspite of the basic theories having been debated in the Indian context, the instructions issued on writing of annual confidential reports are most inadequate. The Administrative Reforms Commission observed in 1967 "no studied attempt has been made to tackle the problem at its root", and this still remains true.³

In Himachal Pradesh, instructions have been issued from time to time which are now being compiled into a set of instructions. However, most of them deal with specific points rather than provide overall criteria of writing the confidential report. They are based on Government of India instructions.

The annual confidential report which is written for each employee by his immediate superior and reviewed by the next senior officer, is countersigned by the designated accepting authority. It is thus, written by the reporting officer, reviewed

by the reviewing officer and accepted by the accepting authority. The employee is also historically categorised in the end as 'outstanding', 'very good', 'good', 'fair' or 'poor'.

The major issues will be dealt with later in this chapter. However, two major sets of instructions issued by Himachal Government will be briefly introduced first and discussed in detail later.

The first set of instructions were issued in Himachal Pradesh in 1969 from the Chief Secretary's office. These instructions emphasised the need of maintaining the record properly and recording the annual confidential report by 30th of April every year. These instructions also clarified that conscience alone should be the guiding factor in recording the annual confidential report. The annual confidential report should record the employee's relations with fellow employees, discipline, conduct, accessibility to the public, systematic touring and integrity. The reporting officer should bring to the knowledge of the subordinate any adverse opinion and record the same only as a means to remedy the defects and not as a discouragement. It was stated that the high assessment of 'outstanding' or 'very good' should be given by the reviewing officer (rather than reporting officer). It was clarified that an officer should not write the annual confidential report unless the officer reported on has worked under him for at least three months. The standard ACR form was circulated. The ACR form of stenographer and class IV employees were prescribed. The

4 Letter No.8-3/63-Aptt.-II dated 17.2.69.
standard form for other categories could be suitably modified by
the Departments with the approval of the Department of Personnel.

SELF ASSESSMENT

The standard form prescribed till recently is at Annexure XI. The form was revised further in 1976 though in between
instructions referring to various other aspects have been issued
and will be referred to in the subsequent paragraphs. The
instructions of 12th October, 1976 provide for self appraisal in
three hundred words by the officer reported on. The reviewing
officer should give his comments on the quantitative as well as
qualitative aspects, besides recording his assessment on various
other aspects. The reviewing officer was also expected to play a
more important role by discussing the report (specially adverse
remarks) with the reporting officer or making other enquiries.
There would be no mention of 'fit for promotion' or 'not fit for
promotion'; this would be left to the departmental promotion
committees. It went even further and said that the grading also
would be done by the promotion committee. It was specified
that there should be no inhibition on writing about the
reputation of any officer, based on general reputation without
citing specific cases of dishonesty. The annual confidential
report was dispensed with in case of class IV employees. It was
also decided that the Deputy Commissioner would have the power to
record appraisal in the annual confidential reports of the

5 Letter No. 8-3/63-DP (Appt.II)Vol.V dated 12.10.76 (Self-
assessment ACR form at Annexure XII).
district level officers belonging to various departments. The Deputy Commissioner would record remarks in regard to some general areas which were prescribed. The form now prescribed incorporates most of these details as at Annexure XII.

There has been a slight change in the form for different categories though by and large the principles have remained the same. The column on implementation of the Prime Minister’s 20 Point Programme and attitude to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were however added.

The form of all India services were modified vide letter dated 27.2.82\(^6\). (Annexure XIII). The self appraisal was to be done by the officer reported on in 300 words. This self appraisal form was adopted for most state services. The idea of setting targets was debated and introduced in 1986 in the Indian Administrative Service. The form of annual confidential report which has been prescribed for all India services officers is at Annexure XIV. Here the officer reported on was to specify quantitative/physical/financial targets, objectives of 8 or 10 items that were set for him or that he set for himself. He was also to give reasons for shortfall in targets if any, along with reasons for higher achievements if any. This has not yet been introduced in other services in Himachal Pradesh. It has also created lot of controversy in the centre where the senior personnel officers felt that targets could not be laid down for staff working in the secretariat.

\(^6\) Letter No.8-3/63-DP(Aptt.II) dated 27.2.82.

There were various shifts of stress in annual confidential report from a descriptive rating where standards and languages of officers vary and interpretation becomes ambiguous to an itemised rating where tick marks are made. It was seen that annual confidential reports of class-IV employees were redundant (since promotions were to be by seniority subject to rejection of unfit) and hence punishment sheets would be enough. Also filling the column relating to integrity remained a problem in view of requirement of definite proof of lack of integrity and hence it was decided to record the same based on general reputation.

The problem of recording the annual confidential reports as well as the solutions attempted from time to time and implications will be dealt with below.

TIME SCHEDULE

The need for regular and punctual recording of annual confidential reports is well recognised. Instructions have been issued from time to time to lay down the time schedule. If these annual confidential reports are not written in time, promotions are held up. The first instructions of February 17, 1969 laid down that the heads of departments should submit a certificate by May 15, certifying that all annual confidential reports have been written. Subsequently these instructions were modified on Nov, 2,1973 and time schedule prescribed as given below.  

7 Letter no. 6-16/73-DP(Appt.II) dated 24.11.73.
1. Initiation of the report by reporting officer
   ..By May 15 of each year

2. Review of the report by the reviewing officer
   ..By June 15 of each year

3. Acceptance of the report by countersigning authority
   ..By July 15 of each year

4. Communication of adverse remarks, if any
   ..By September 30 of each year

These dates were further changed in 1974 as follows.\(^8\)

a) Initiation of report by reporting officer By 15 May

b) Review of report by the reviewing officer(s) By 15 June

c) Acceptance of the report by accepting authority By 15 July

d) Communication of adverse remarks if any By 15 August

e) Representations by employees against communicated remarks, if they so wish one month

f) Maximum period that can be taken for report/comments of the authority recording adverse remarks on the representations against adverse remarks 1 - 1.5 months

g) final date for taking a decision on report 31st Oct

Pendency of representations

One of the problems that was being faced was that representations against adverse remarks remained pending for a long time. It was not possible in the departmental promotion committees to arrive at a conclusion in view of the pendency of

the representation. It was noted that representations were pending generally on account of non-receipt of comments of officers who gave adverse remarks. The Government took the view that if comments were not received for one and a half months from the authority which had recorded the adverse remarks/comments, the representation would be decided without taking these into account. The departmental promotion committee was supposed to take into account the annual confidential reports for the previous year after 15th July.

Self appraisal time schedule

However, when the self-appraisal was introduced the time schedule to be followed was fixed as under :-

a) Self appraisal of the officer to be reported upon 30th April

b) Initiation of the report by Reporting Officer 30th May

c) Review of the report by the Reviewing Officer(s) 30th June

d) Acceptance of the report by the accepting authority 15th July

e) Communication of adverse remarks 15th August

f) Representations by employees against communicated remarks, if they so wish. 3 months from the date of receipt of intimation regarding adverse remarks

g) Maximum period upto which the report/comments of the authority recording adverse remarks on the representations are to be awaited 1-1.5 months

h) Final date for taking a decision on representations against adverse remarks End of February

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It was decided that if the officer does not write his self appraisal by April 30, the report will be initiated by the reporting officer. It was also decided that in view of the revised schedule, the annual confidential report of the preceding year will not be taken into account by the Departmental Promotion Committee for various purposes.

However, inspite of these instructions, the annual confidential reports are not written in time. Ishwar Dayal said that officers avoided and postponed writing appraisal till the last moment and wrote them only when required, for example when they are required for the purpose of promotion.

The Government reiterated that confidential reports must be written in time. Instructions dated July 17, 1984 laid down that failure to write annual confidential reports in time may earn a bad annual confidential report for the reporting or reviewing or accepting officers. This showed to what extent the Government was prepared to go to ensure timely recording of annual confidential reports.

In case of the Education Department, however, a different time schedule was prescribed because the writing of the annual confidential report in the teaching department was directly linked with the declaration of the results. The time schedule in respect of teaching staff under Education Department was as under.
Time Schedule for Teaching Staff of the Education Department

a. Self-appraisal of the officer to be reported upon 7th September

b. Initiation of the report by Reporting Officer 15th September

c. Review of the report by the Reviewing Officer 22nd September

d. Acceptance of the report by the Accepting Authority 29th September

e. Communications of adverse remarks if any 31st October

f. Representations by Government servants against communicated remarks, if they so wish 15th December

g. Maximum period upto which the report/comments of the authority recording remarks on the representations are to be awaited 15 days

h. Final date for taking a decision on representations against adverse remarks 31st December

A study of the records of receipt of confidential reports in the two departments however revealed that while the date prescribed for completion of the report after it is accepted by the accepting authority is 15th July they were written after a long period of time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of employees</th>
<th>ACRs accepted by due date</th>
<th>ACRs completed within 3 months of due date</th>
<th>ACRs completed within 6 months of due date</th>
<th>ACRs completed within 1 year of due date</th>
<th>ACRs pending beyond 1 Yr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was seen from the records that annual confidential reports are expedited after repeated reminders and hastily completed before departmental promotion committee meets. In the Public Works Department also it was seen that the ACRs are very rarely written in time.

TABLE VI.2

Delay in the writing of ACRs in the P.W.D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of employees</th>
<th>ACRs completed by 15th July</th>
<th>ACRs completed within 3 months of due date</th>
<th>ACRs completed within 6 months of due date</th>
<th>ACRs completed within 1 year of due date</th>
<th>ACRs pending beyond 1 year of due date</th>
<th>Total no. of employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A perusal of these tables indicates that the writing of annual confidential report (till its final stage) is almost invariably delayed. In the case of the agriculture department only about half of the reports had been finalised even after six months had elapsed since the due date. In the case of the Public Works Department, more than half had yet to be finalised after the expiry of six months. About one third of the reports in the department of agriculture were finalised only after a delay of one year and about one fourth in the case of Public Works Department were delayed for about one year.

Discussions with some senior officers revealed that they could not give reasons for delayed writing of annual confidential reports except that they were busy in other day to day work and some in crisis management. They also felt that this delay did not harm the individual in any way. In a few cases however, it was noticed that the delay could also be attributed to reasons such as keeping the employee under some kind of submission and anxiety. Some of them also wanted to watch the future behaviour before writing the previous year’s annual confidential report.

It was also noticed that the conveying of adverse remarks did not take very much longer than what was prescribed but the decision to expunge or retain the adverse remarks took much longer than the prescribed period. This was mainly because comments from the officer who recorded adverse remarks took unduly long to come. At the stage of sending comments, a point wise reply on the representation of the employee is to be given.
which has to be checked from the records. Since the officer is not always on the same post as he was when he gave the remarks it takes even longer if he has to check the record from another office.

RECORDING OF ADVERSE REMARKS AND THEIR EXPUNCTION

The Reporting Officer is supposed to make an objective assessment on the subordinate's work and give him necessary advice, guidance and assistance to correct his deficiencies and faults. Before recording such deficiency in the confidential report, he is supposed to bring it to the notice of the officer reported upon orally or in writing. It has been stated that it would be desirable if a register is maintained by the superior officer indicating when advice or a warning was given. This would be helpful to make entries in the annual confidential report. The accepting authority is supposed to take a decision on whether the remarks recorded in the annual confidential report are adverse or not and if they are supposed to be communicated along with the contents of the entire report, specially what may have been said in praise of the officer. The remarks are then communicated to the officer reported on (without indicating who is recording them) and he is given an opportunity to represent. This representation is examined parawise after obtaining comments of the person who has recorded the adverse remarks. In case the representation is rejected, the officer is informed accordingly. However if it is accepted or the remarks are toned down, the entry to that effect is made in his confidential report. However by instructions dated October 9, 1975, it was also decided that
the letter communicating adverse remarks should also be taken out of the confidential report dossier so that no one is prejudiced while reading his confidential report. It was also decided that adverse remarks when ordered to be expunged should be properly pasted over so that the same may not be deciphered or taken notice of by any authority at the time of promotion.

It is not always easy to decide whether remarks are adverse or not. This is because proper language is not used. Instructions in November, 1962 give example of the following type of comments:

"Has too much hot blood, needs cooling"

"Stone hearted and stone headed"

An example which is often quoted in Himachal Pradesh is:

"Hard working" & "Even sleeps in Office" (different columns.)

It has repeatedly been stressed that remarks should be clearly recorded and that the officer should specifically record where remarks are not intended to be adverse but could appear to be so.

Subsequent improvement of an employee would enable him to avoid adverse remarks for the future but would not entitle him to have the earlier adverse remarks expunged. It is also noticed

10 Instruction No. HP-SAD-I 1163/57 dated 2.11.62.
that it is mostly the junior level employees who get adverse remarks and very few officers have the courage to give these to senior level employees. Even at the lower levels the officer reporting would rather have the employee transferred and get out of the hassle of giving adverse remarks. However, it was seen that in the few cases adverse remarks are given, the officers also recommend their expunction. Expunction of adverse remarks can be done only on misinterpreted information, wrong judgement or on technical points (for example, officer recording them was not competent to record as the person reported on had not worked under him for 3 months) and not because of any understanding that is arrived at with the employee and he improves later.

In response to a query regarding adverse remarks given and recommended for expunction and finally expunged, the replies received were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE VI.3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverse remarks given &amp; expunged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 118 | 4 | 3 | 3 (1 partly) |
The above data indicates that out of 118 employees only 4 were given adverse remarks and that too at a lower level (class-II and class III). Out of these three were recommended for expunction and were expunged. However, the fourth was also partly expunged. Thus though all remarks are not always expunged, the tendency is to follow the path of least resistance. In one case here political pressure was also used for getting them expunged.

We have noted above that out of 118 employees only 4 mentioned that adverse remarks were given in their annual confidential reports. The researcher has been told by several senior officers who were interviewed that they did not give adverse remarks as it led to a lot of controversy. Often it led to the formation of a clique in the department under the leadership of the disgruntled employees. In other cases it led to some of the affected employees putting in anonymous complaints against the reporting officer. Other pin pricks were also there leading to tension. It is difficult to throw a person out of service in view of the protection provided under Article 311 of the Constitution. The officers who were interviewed said that it was no use adding on to the number of disgruntled employees.

REVIEW OF ACRs BY COURTS

It is a well established principle that recording an adverse entry in the character roll is not protected under Article 311 of the Constitution.\textsuperscript{11} Article 311 of the Constitution

\textsuperscript{11} Kedar Nath Agarwal V State of Ajmer, AIR 1954 Ajmer 22(5).
provides protection by providing for an enquiry and a reasonable opportunity before removal from service. In the case of K.J. Antony Vs Public Service Commission it was held that the head of department is a superior officer and it is within his right to disclose his feeling about the conduct of his subordinate by making remarks which he thinks that the employee deserved and such remarks are not liable to be reviewed by the Court, except when arising out of malice.  

One area however where the court has intervened is where adverse remarks are not communicated to the employee. It has been held that communication of adverse remarks must be done so that as a principle of natural justice, the employee can be aware of his defects and also have an opportunity to represent against them. It has been held that non-communication of adverse report means that adverse remarks cannot be acted upon while considering the concerned official for promotion.

REPORTING, REVIEWING AND ACCEPTING AUTHORITIES

One aspect of annual confidential reports on which detailed instructions have been issued is regarding who should be the reporting, reviewing and accepting authorities. Instructions issued on July 6, 1972 laid down that the annual confidential

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reports of the secretaries would be initiated by the minister in charge and accepted by the chief minister. The annual confidential reports of the joint secretaries/deputy secretaries/under secretaries and heads of departments will be initiated by the secretaries concerned, reviewed by the minister in charge and accepted by the chief minister. It has also been laid down that the reports on the work and conduct of the headquarters officers working under the head of the department will be submitted to the Minister Incharge for final acceptance irrespective of the fact that they are class-I or class-II officers. So also, the work and conduct of class-I officers working in the field would be submitted to the minister in charge, for acceptance. However, regarding the superintending engineer and conservators of forests,(though they are also working in the field) the accepting authority will be the chief minister. For class-III officials the accepting authority was declared to be the heads of departments and for class-IV officials, the head of office. Annexure XIV gives details of reviewing, reporting and accepting authorities which were prescribed.

Instructions issued by the government in their letter dated March 18, 1974 lays down that the annual confidential reports of the officers working in the departments of which the state ministers (junior ministers) are the minister in charge should be submitted to the state ministers either as a reviewing officer or as accepting authority. It also provided that the annual

confidential reports in respect of the joint secretary/ deputy secretary/ under secretaries concerned after having been initiated by the secretaries concerned shall be submitted to the chief secretary for recording his views before the same are reviewed by the minister incharge. The instructions also laid down that reporting, reviewing and accepting authority of the corporations would by and large be the secretary, reviewing authority would be the chairman or minister incharge and the accepting authority would be the minister incharge or the chief minister.  

The annual confidential reports of the managing directors of the corporation will be accepted both by the minister incharge and the chief minister was also laid down.  

It was prescribed that annual confidential reports of the heads of department shall be initiated by the administrative secretaries, reviewed by the chief secretary and minister incharge and accepted by the chief minister. It was clarified that where a managing director of a corporation/ board happens to be senior to the secretary of the department concerned, the reporting officer will be the chief secretary, reviewing authority the minister incharge and the chief minister would be the accepting authority. It was also laid down that where minister/chief minister is the chairman of the corporation or board, the annual confidential reports of the managing director will be initiated by the secretary incharge of the

19 Letter No. Per(AP-II)-B(15)/82 dated 6.5.1986.
department, reviewed by the chief secretary and finally accepted by the minister and chief minister. Similarly where a non official is the chairman of the corporation or board, the annual confidential reports of the managing director will be initiated by the chairman, reviewed by the chief secretary and finally accepted by the minister and chief minister.

These instructions issued from time to time show an attempt to find solutions to problems as they arise. The stress however was on the minister's control through recording annual confidential reports which is also tampered with by the chief minister's control. The chief secretary being involved in comments of the corporation seemed to stem out of an attempt to give administrative guidance to public sector undertakings.

WRITING OF ANNUAL CONFIDENTIAL REPORTS OF DISTRICT LEVEL OFFICERS

A part of an colonial heritage is the office or post of the deputy commissioner (DC) who has become part of the system. In addition to looking after collection of revenue (in which capacity he is called the collector) judicial cases (in which capacity he is known as the district magistrate), development and general duties (in which capacity he is known as deputy commissioner), he also coordinates between different specialised departments in the district, for example, health, forest, education, public works department, agriculture and so on. Targets of national programmes of any department are usually

assigned through deputy commissioner. Hence it is felt that the deputy commissioners should be able to record the performance of officers in their annual confidential reports.

As early as 1964, it was laid down in the instructions issued by the state government that the remarks of the deputy commissioner in the confidential reports of the district level officers relating to development work will be sent to the chief secretary who would see what part of the report should be included in the annual confidential reports of the officer concerned. It was also laid down that the Head of Department on receipt of chief secretary’s communication would be expected to fully quote the remarks of the chief secretary though he would be liberty to add his own opinion. However for officers directly working under the deputy commissioner like the agriculture officer, animal husbandry officer, cooperative and panchayats officer and the district development and panchayat officer he would record the remarks in the annual confidential reports of non-gazetted employees with the approval of the deputy commissioner. The deputy commissioner would record the remarks in the annual confidential reports of all the gazetted employees and forward them to development commissioner to take further action in the matter. With regard to allied departments, that is education, forests, medical health and public works, the deputy commissioner would record his remarks only in so far as development work is concerned and forward it to the next superior officer of the department concerned and also in triplicate to the

development commissioner. They would in turn include it in the officer’s annual confidential report.

It is laid down that the deputy commissioner would be empowered to take disciplinary action against all non-gazetted and gazetted staff of integrated departments. He would be authorised to suspend non-gazetted staff of such departments and if he is of the opinion that any member of the gazetted staff of such departments merits suspension, he would report full facts of the case to the development commissioner. In case of employees of the allied departments, he would communicate full facts to the head of department directly and act on the instructions received from the head of the department. However, with the passage of time, the deputy commissioner’s authority has eroded.

The practice of the deputy commissioners writing annual confidential reports of the departmental officers of allied departments had been slowly dispensed with. Instructions quoted above laid down that the deputy commissioner shall have the powers to record appraisal in annual confidential reports in respect of district level officers of the various departments like PWD, forest, public health only in these specified areas.21

- Reputation for honesty
- Dealings with public
- Cooperation in implementation of National Policies and programmes
- General Remarks

Instructions were again issued dealing with the point that the deputy commissioner’s remarks will be made in triplicate and will be sent to the reporting officer of the district level officer being reported on, to the secretary of the concerned department and that the secretary will see that the deputy commissioner’s remarks are being incorporated in the annual confidential report file.22

This review shows that the government has time and again realised the importance of having deputy commissioner’s views on the working of the district level officers. These views are required not as opinions of the deputy commissioner personally but as being responsible for planning and coordination. Many schemes are under implementation in the district such as 20 point programme, population control for which cooperation of all the departments is required. The Administrative Reform Commission’s report had stated that the deputy commissioner should be considered as writing his confidential reports not in any capacity as a superior officer or a monitor of all people working in his district, but as referee rather in the manner of an umpire in a game of cricket or hockey. With government far away in the secretariat and with the developmental schemes in the field requiring much coordination of work, it is the coordinating authority who as a neutral observer can send notes to Government on the state of affairs in the district. From this point of view, it is most essential that this practice of Deputy Commissioner

writing confidential reports on officers of other departments should be continued."23

However, resentment and lobbying have been going on against the deputy commissioner writing annual confidential reports and that is why the Himachal Pradesh government has withdrawn orders of the deputy commissioner writing the annual confidential reports of the superintendent of police. Law and order is the direct responsibility of the deputy commissioner and if something goes wrong the deputy commissioner is held responsible. However, neither in the matter of writing of confidential reports nor in matters like sanctioning of leave the deputy commissioner has any authority thereby showing a tendency to bow before lobbies.

INTEGRITY

One of the columns most difficult to fill up in the annual confidential report has been the column of integrity. It is provided that "if anything adverse has come to your notice please specify it alongwith assessment of Integrity". Instructions issued vide letter dated 7/8th April, 1960 specify a certificate of integrity "Nothing has come to my knowledge which casts any reflection on the integrity. His general reputation for honesty is good and I certify his integrity." It was also provided that in cases where he has not seen the working of the officer long enough, the reporting officer should make an entry in the integrity column to the effect that "he has not watched the

officer's work for sufficient time to be able to make any
definite remarks or that he has heard nothing against the
officer's integrity, as the case may be".24 The purpose of these
instructions appears to be that no adverse remarks regarding
integrity should be recorded unless there is definite proof of
the person's integrity being doubtful.

However, if some definite proof comes to the notice of the
senior officers, departmental action is taken in any case
including 'suspension'. There is then no point in having a column
in the annual confidential report only for recording the case
where definite proof has come to the notice of the reporting
officer. It became extremely difficult to fill in this column and
hence the matter was being reviewed by the Government. Vide
instructions dated October 12, 1976 it was decided that there
should be no inhibition about the recording the reputation of any
officer, specific instances of dishonesty are no longer necessary
to record an opinion on integrity.25 However, when this opened
the gates of controversy, government again issued instructions
vide letter dated June 6, 1985 further reiterating instructions
that in doubtful cases steps should be taken to ascertain the
integrity before recording it.26 The underlying principle of
justice is that a guilty person can go unpunished but no one who
is innocent should be punished and this seems to be the reason
here as well.

24 Letter No. 51/4/64-Estt.(A) dated 15.9.65.
The annual confidential report is not an end in itself but a means to an end of measuring an employee’s work against performance standards, of motivating the employee, instead of discouraging him. It is a measure, qualitative and quantitative of an employee’s work, and not an assessment of the employee’s personality of "what an employee does and not what someone thinks of him".\(^{27}\) The manner in which they are being written tends to emphasise the qualities rather than the job and its performance. The moment it becomes an instrument of opinion, subjectivity takes over the whole process and the exercise may generate into a fault finding exercise till the superior sees himself more as a keeper of a little black book, a holder and wielder of the stick with which to beat the subordinate to compel compliance and conformism if not to force personal loyalty (as distinguished from a goal). In such situations, the ethics of appraisal begins to be questioned. It is not actually appraisal but the subjectivity which is being criticised. That is why the shifting of stress from the employee to his work with non-descriptive language is a welcome trend. A 1976 survey showed that 8 out of 49 companies which had adopted Management by Objectives, the old problems of reliability of rating and credibility of those rated still persisted.\(^{28}\) The interview with employee helped but often it was a "mere ritual" which the employee tries to get over with


"where necessary, with training and developing, and frequent seminars". Preparation beforehand however has helped. In an public sector enterprise which proposed to reorganise its structure and introduce performance appraisal and promotion by merit, G.K. Suri and Rana J. Joshi has shown how workshops and re-orientation programmes and later discussions helped its acceptance.  

Experience has shown that, performance appraisal, to be effective, must be linked with human development and training. It should integrate the expectations of the employees and their cultural background with the philosophy of the organisation, its management style and work organisation.

The merits of performance appraisal are well accepted. This is in contrast to personality appraisal which contains as much of the personality of the person who is writing the annual confidential report - as of the person written about. The need for assessment against objectives, the need to incorporate what the employee feels he has done, the need for the reporting officer to try and assess performance is recognised, however all this seems to be lost in day to day pressures and working. The result is "the system usually does not have adequate resources, the training is superficial, monitoring inefficient, and evaluation non-existent".

29 G.K.Suri, Rana K.Joshi, (eds.), The Personnel Management Services, Delhi, Sree Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, 1982.
A lot of research in evaluation was done but performance appraisal has remained almost "An intractable problem and one that has produced frequent disillusionment".\(^{31}\)

Ishwar Dayal’s findings in an on the spot study sums up the major problems in performance appraisal:\^{32}\n
- no significant relationship between evaluation vis a vis promotion or placement
- low reliability about what was reported on paper about a subordinate’s performance and the appraiser’s report in a face to face discussion
- appraisal reports were completed by supervisor only a few minutes before their submission
- supervisors revealed a distinct anxiety about judging their subordinates
- a remarkable variation was noticed when an employee was rated by different people

Management by objectives (MBO) in the recent years has gained popularity. It has been attempted to rate an individual after prescribing objectives - objectives preferably set in consultation with him. But this too measures measurables at the expense of immeasurables.\(^{33}\) Performance Management systems seem


\(^{32}\) Coleman F Glueck, in Michael Beer and Robert A Beck (eds.), The Personnel Administration - Book of Readings, p 177.

\(^{33}\) Ishwar Dayal, "Some issues in performance appraisal and personnel administration,Personnel Administration,Washington D.C., Jan-Feb, 1969.
to have worked better than Management of Objectives. Here using a performance description questionnaire, the senior officer first observes and describes his subordinate’s behaviour and then uses a performance chart to analyse their strengths and weaknesses and then finally with one or more development interviews he attempts to help his subordinates see what changes in behaviour are needed and plans it for them. The ratings are suggested to be made along with employees. This presents a problem as it is a sensitive issue. It remains a controversial issue in our country in the civil.

No method of assessment has been able to grapple with all these problems. No organisation has been able to find a method to remove subjectivity in recording. This subjectivity could be a bias in favour of or perhaps even a different appreciation or difference in standards. In fact objectivity has become some kind of a bogey. It is felt that subjectivity is unfairly equated with the evaluator’s motives of an ulterior purpose.

Asian countries such as Singapore and Malaysia have a special report at the time of promotion. The recording of confidential reports is also done by a Committee and not by an individual. Interview method is used at the time of meeting the departmental promotion committee.

Niazi, in his "Performance Appraisal and Another Look at its Objectives", suggests that in order to overcome the problem of 'ethics of appraisal', 'person to person loyalty', 'use of
appraisal as an instrument of power', other factors namely seniority, experience and education, interviewing, possible imbalances that will be created, stage of pay and the age of the individual and earlier promotions in the past should be considered for promotion.

Mr. Chidambram, the ex-minister for Human Resources has been stressing how and why the confidential report should be called performance appraisal and should be an attempt to appraise performance and guide and develop the subordinates. The role of the superior officer should be envisaged as one a of counsellor, coach and philosopher to a subordinate. An example of the student trusting the teacher and leaving lot of decisions to him shows an ideal system. The recent annual confidential report form of the Indian Administrative Service which envisages laying down of goals by the subordinate and the boss together and reviewing them at the end of the year, discussing the reasons why they were not met along with hindrances if any, is a step in this direction. However, we have yet to think of adopting radical techniques like group appraisal, horizontal appraisal and subordinates' views being taken in account by the senior officer before recording of annual confidential reports.

CONCLUSION

A look at performance appraisal in the historical perspective shows that the format and writing of the annual confidential reports has been based on certain assumptions of human behaviour which were related to reward and punishment.
Recent developments have tended to mould its objective towards training and development. Though an improvement in generic terms, no system seems to be able to distinguish between a vast group of employees and substitute individual judgements for a standardised pattern. Work done in Himachal Pradesh has not been outstanding in any manner in this area. Though the Government has tried to weed out what can be evaluated from what cannot be evaluated to some extent, the psychological (dislike of being unpopular or enter into a controversy) philosophical (different standards of judgement) or even purely administrative norms (like adherence to time schedules, bringing out detailed instructions) have not been fully met. The Gandhian ideal introduced by Malathi Bolar in this area "all life is merely a trust and all power carries with it obligations" is yet to be achieved.