CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the study one thing comes out very clearly: there are several strategies for evaluation of training. One just can not lay down one type of strategy for others to copy in all situations. Evaluation basically is a need-based approach. Some one may be interested to find out the cost-benefit ratio and emphasise on the financial aspect, in evaluation. Another may look for the impact of the training on organisational change and how it helps in organisational development. A third approach to evaluation could be to find out how performance of people undergoing training has improved; in other words the focus is on job performance. The fourth view is, evaluation should be based on achievement of the objectives of the programme; that is, learning objectives for each programme have to be set in advance, and attainment of those objectives should be the basis of evaluation. Evaluation of reaction of participants who attended the training programme, is another way of assessing, the success or otherwise of a training programme. The last one, quite often followed, is the training-centred approach - so long some training activity is carried on, it is alright. The type of training has also a great part to play in deciding the strategy. A training on Safety can better be evaluated on cost-benefit ratio criteria than a training programme on Attitudinal change, which perhaps will provide better guidelines if evaluated under the third strategy of job performance. Hamblin (1974)\(^1\) has termed the strategies as i) the ultimate value (cost-benefit) approach, ii) the organisation development approach, iii) the job-related approach, iv) the learning-centred approach, v) the reactions-centred approach, and vi) the training-centred approach. One tends to agree with Hamblin's conclusion that choice of strategy must be left to the judgement of the individual concerned in the particular situation, which may be referred to as partly a political decision.

Necessarily one will go for that strategy which is most likely to produce the desired results in the particular situation. Any strategy, to produce desired results, must satisfy two tests - the test of relevance and the test of acceptability; in other words, one has to decide on the questions to which one really needs the answers and on the methods most acceptable for securing those answers. Different people have different views about relevance, which creates

\(^{1}\) Hamblin, AC, The Evaluation and Control of Training, McGraw-Hill, 1974
the problem of acceptability. So it is better to settle the issue at the initial stage by discussion, negotiation or bargaining among the contending parties.

Today in the 90's we have moved a lot from the concept of training for training's sake, putting up, in the game of identity, a mark of class. Every paise that is spent on training, has to be explained in terms of results to the organisation. This is a very important role of the training manager. If he has to continue with his training activities, he must be able to justify the expenses under training head. It is therefore to the interest of the training department that evaluation should bring out results as expected to find out how the investment made under Training & Development head is giving results in terms of organisational performance and individual job performance vis-a-vis cost.

To meet this requirement, any exercise on training must start with drawing up its objectives, specifying the number of personnel to be trained, the specific areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes to be learnt, the desirable level of learning and the criteria for evaluation. After determining the objectives, the task will be to design the actual training. The objectives of the training, broken down elementwise will comprise of Reactions Objectives, Learning Objectives, Performance Objectives, Organisational Objectives and Ultimate Objectives.

Reactions Objectives - will create involvement and generate interest. This can be measured by means of reactions scales at the end of each training session and at the end of each week of training on the job.

This leads to Learning objectives - which will help the participants acquire specific knowledge, skills, and attitude towards their jobs. Multiple-choice tests of knowledge, and role-playing exercises designed to measure skill and attitude, are useful means for measurement. All of these tests can be carried out at specified intervals during training period and can be repeated later to measure retention of learning.

Job-Behaviour objectives come after learning objectives - it makes possible for the trainees to apply this learning on the job by carrying out certain specific tasks. Assessment of
application of skill can be done by observation of specified job incidents, by self-appraisals and appraisals by bosses, which may be carried out at specified intervals after the end of training.

This will lead to Organisational objectives - assessment is made by obtaining reports about on-the-job-performance after a considerable length of time, and where possible, in some quantitative measures.

This in turn will take to the final one, the Ultimate Objectives - measurement of the ultimate goal achieved can be conveniently done in quantifiable terms from the increased profitability.

However simple it may sound, in spite of very clear-cut objectives, as Hamblin (1974)\(^1\) rightly points out, there is every possibility of complications cropping up:

1. Participants, although had acquired the desired learning, may not be able to apply it on the job. When such a situation arises, it becomes necessary to examine how far the behaviour objectives were in fact realistic, thereby necessitating change in the entire sets of objectives.

2. The intrusion of other factors besides training may influence the evaluation findings. There may be improvement in performance, for example due to change in market situation also, and not solely due to training. In such a case it will be necessary, to specify in the objectives the range of extreneous factors, which will have to be taken into consideration.

The problem of finding techniques for evaluation is often equated with the problem of measurement. In looking for systematic evaluation techniques, people have a tendency to look for ways of measuring the effects of training in quantitative (numerical) form while

looking for techniques. It is often held that evaluation data presented in numerical form is in some way more real, objective and precise than data presented in descriptive form. This, however, is not always true since many of the important effects of training can not be exactly measured in terms of numbers; we have noticed that the importance of supplementing quantified evaluation with non-quantified information for interpreting the quantified data can not be ignored. What we should therefore bear in mind is that quantified and non-quantified methods have complementary advantages and disadvantages and they should be employed together whenever possible.

The study brought to light the fact that in some limited cases useful data has been collected through evaluation exercises - questionnaires, interviews, follow-up etc. But these data has not been gainfully converted into information for use in the decision making process.

Data on its own is useless unless converted into useful information. There are now various techniques for this purpose. The availability of simple but sophisticated computer software has opened up the field of studies to us. The objective of the study determines the methodology and approach to the data collection. There are generally five main purposes for analysing evaluation results:

a) to summarise data- to reduce it down to a manageable form,
b) to make a comparative study-results from different programmes, etc.,
c) to verify the relationship between data, -the effectiveness of training, the size of training group, etc.,
d) to focus on problem areas -with meeting a particular training objectives, with a particular trainee,etc.,
e) to suggest guidelines for making a training, more effective.

Information may be presented through Diagrammatic approach-with the use of bar charts, pictograms, histograms, pie charts, graphs, scatter diagrams etc.
The most commonly used numerical methods for analysing evaluation data are:

i) measures of location—the mean or average, the median, the mode, the lower quartile, the upper quartile,

ii) measures of dispersion—the range, the inter-quartile range, the standard deviation,

iii) scoring methods—semantic differential scale and Likert type scale, scoring before and after knowledge-based tests,

iv) correlation and regression,

v) sampling and statistical inference,

vi) significance testing.

Though training activities have become a must-do-exercise for all organisations-large or small, and public or private sector- the results in many cases are not as rewarding as desired. The study has shown that training programmes which are need-based give better results. So for giving priority to any training programme it is necessary to concentrate on those areas which contribute towards improving organisational performance. Organisational performance is a function of skill and will of its people, its resources and its structure; so programmes aimed at enhancing skills are likely to give better pay-off, provided the atmosphere for receptivity can be created.

Training activity must receive full support from top management. This support is not to be limited only to financial sanction of training programmes and physical facilities, but also relate to administrative and managerial support. The emphasis given by top management to training programmes and the importance attached by them to training activities provide great encouragement to participants and create an atmosphere favourable to produce results.

One of the most important points to remember in the evaluation of training, is that merely by asking a participant for his attitudes or opinions, the nature of his attitudes or opinions gets changed; his reaction to the evaluation itself, will help to form his attitude. The fact that his job behaviour after training is being watched, may cause him to behave differently;
his behaviour will be shaped by the evaluation as well as by the training. The knowledge that the working of the organisation is being studied, change the way in which they work. Even a cost-benefit evaluation may result in additional benefits. This is a phenomenon realised at the study conducted at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company in Philadelphia. In the Hawthorne experiment, it was found that people behaved differently precisely because they were the subject of study. Attempts are to be made to eliminate the Hawthorne effect as far as possible. One way to eliminate it, is to keep the subject unaware that there is any evaluation. In the case of evaluation at the application level (performance), knowledge of the subject about the evaluation may be an advantage, since we are looking for improvement in the on-job performance of the subject.

Newby and Bramley (1984)¹, in an interesting article, comment:

Most evaluation feedback or research should be useful rather than threatening, but it can be argued that the training product can never be evaluated without also judging the trainer responsible.

They focus on the trainer, probably because a lot of the evaluation that goes on, focuses on the delivery. But that should not cause an apprehension in the trainer; in fact an evaluation is more in the nature of bringing improvement, rather than finding fault. It is true people may have their own agendas about what they want the evaluation process to achieve, and it may affect the way in which people will participate in the evaluation process, either in terms of their willingness to be involved or in terms of whether they will consciously or subconsciously try to subvert the process.

The process of evaluation will be aided greatly if it is clarified in the beginning as to (a) what is the purpose of the evaluation study, (b) who are the clients; along with it also (c) whether the business need has been met, (d) what was the quality of the trainer and (e) how good was support of the managers in the workplace.

It is essential that the evaluator must be clear in his mind about his own objectives. The more the initiator shares his objectives with the person doing the study, it is more likely, the evaluation study will meet the purpose. It is important to determine the client—is it the training manager, or the sponsor of the training or both, because if there is more than one client the problem of finding out the purpose of the study will become more complex.

It is also important to consider, as far as possible, how the results will be used and who will have access to the results. Also it has to be borne in mind that presentation and use of evaluation studies are affected by organisational and political factors. It is natural that the evaluators can not be entirely objective, because they will bring to the evaluation their preconceptions and assumptions. Secondly, there is bound to be concern about what the effects of an apparently critical evaluation will have on themselves, their part of the organisation, etc. In the case of an external consultant it is true that he may not go into the evaluation with any preconceived ideas about what the results of the study will show, but he has a great disadvantage in that he may be operating without any knowledge of the values and concerns of those involved or the organisation as a whole.

It is necessary to consider what impact the findings will have on those who are involved and particularly on the clients and the recipients of the report; if the training manager is one of the clients, to what extent may poor results from the study be seen as criticism of the training function, or, if it is a line manager who sponsored or initiated the training, a reflection on the way they reached their decision to undertake the training in the first place.