

EvSum497

TRAINING IN BRITAIN FOR THE INDIAN COAL INDUSTRY

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The Project

Between September 1977 and March 1986, 299 managers from the Indian coal industry received training in Britain under the Aid Programme. Their training was related to the introduction of mechanised longwall mining equipment in certain underground mines. A variety of training courses were organised by the British coal industry including:- programmes directly related to mechanisation, training for trainers, general management courses, mine planning and geology. The ODA funded a total of 69 person-years of training at a cost of about £2.1m (at 1986 prices), excluding British Council overheads.

The Evaluation

The evaluation was a joint exercise conducted by a senior official from the Indian Department of Coal (IDC), the General Manager (Human Resources) from Coal India Limited, a British Professor of Mining Engineering and an ODA Economist. They considered the overall effectiveness of the training programme and made recommendations for its future development.

Overall Conclusion

Training in Britain was worthwhile and had a very beneficial impact on the Indian industry, especially in longwall mechanisation and developing Coal India's training capability.

The Main Findings

- Training in Britain made an important contribution to installing longwall faces and then to providing invaluable practical experience of their operation which was not available in India.
- The effectiveness of training trainers in Britain has been reduced by the weaknesses of CIL's training effort as a whole. It has, however, been generally worthwhile and especially effective when closely linked to inputs by British consultants in India.

- It is not possible to judge the practical effects of general management training in Britain but, although study fellows have gained important insights there must be a question mark over the cost-effectiveness of such programmes when general management-training is available in India.
- Selection was generally appropriate with the exception of a few technicians whose English was poor. But 17% of those interviewed were inappropriately deployed after training.
- There were three underlying weaknesses in managing the training programme: lack of adequate advanced planning, a lack of specific objectives for some courses and a lack of complementary inputs for some programmes.

Lessons

- Training in Britain is an important part of Indo-UK collaboration in the coal sector and was particularly useful in the management, operation and maintenance of longwall mechanisation because such specialised training was not available in India.
- Special courses should only be considered where a well-defined need is perceived. General management training in Britain now has lower priority than the mounting or supplementing of courses in India.
- Training 'projects' should be defined within the programme so that objectives are clear, the training required is defined closely, and complementary inputs are specified.
- Returned trainees should be posted for at least three years to the jobs for which they have been trained so that the benefits from training can be obtained.
- Nominees for training need to have a good command of English.
- To ensure that employer and employee get the maximum benefit from training, good communication is needed between all parties to the provision and receipt of training: e.g. by closer course definition; specific selection criteria; thorough briefing of trainees by sending-institutions; and early briefing of providers of training on special course needs.

Further Information

The "Synthesis of Training Evaluation Studies," EvSum525 (1991), is also available.