

II

BACKGROUND

3. The occasion for this project has been a severe shortage of experienced and qualified Foreign Service Officers -- particularly at the middle levels -- to cope with the various demands that have been placed on the Department. Many officers who have been concerned with personnel management over the last twenty years, however, share the impression that while this shortage may be more or less acute at any given time, the situation has been virtually chronic since the war. Quite apart, therefore, from the immediate deficiency in the middle rank levels, (122 officers on strength as compared to 199 positions in grades 3 and 4) there is a sizable problem of long standing nature which demands a root and branch enquiry and a fresh approach to a solution.
4. Against this history of chronic and occasionally acute shortage of FSOs to do the work assigned to the Department, we have explored the problems identified in our terms of reference under three main headings -- staffing or manning the foreign service, the training and development of FSOs, and the utilization of FSOs. Our methods have been slightly different in each case.
5. With respect to the manning problem, we analysed the Department's past practices in this field to identify the reasons for the chronic and acute shortage of officers that were the original occasion for the enquiry, and went on from there to design a manpower planning programme that should enable the Department to avoid the recurrence of such shortages in the future.