

## CHAPTER V

### VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN AGRICULTURE, BUSINESS AND COMMERCE IN WEST GERMANY ( Two Concrete Examples)

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#### AGRICULTURAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Federal Republic of Germany is a highly industrial country. Yet agriculture occupies no less importance. All efforts are made to improve the agricultural vocational training. The present technological, economic and political changes have made it necessary that the farmers get the best possible training.

Today agricultural apprenticeship constitutes the basic training for the boys and domestic apprenticeship for girls. Under new regulations, pupils who have completed their elementary schooling (Volksschule) can accomplish two of their three years' apprenticeship on the family farm. Thus he works and gets practical training and experience on the family farm itself for a period of two years. But the system demands that he must work for at least one year in an undertaking other than the family farm. So he works and gets practical training for one year on some other

farm under the new farmer's supervision and guidance.

Normally no farmer is allowed to train more than two apprentices at a time. When they are getting practical experience and training on the farm, it is also compulsory for them by law to attend part-time vocational agricultural school to take related instruction courses. These agricultural vocational schools have become an important link in agricultural training.

After completion of training the young candidates can appear for skilled farm worker examination (Gehilfenprüfung). During the training period, generally the apprentice is systematically initiated in all the tasks performed on a farm. Gradually he is entrusted responsibilities according to his abilities. The condition that he should serve on a farm other than the parental farm for one year provides him new environment for varied experience.

#### Number of Apprentices

A few years back there was a continuous fall in the number of apprentices in agriculture. For example, between 1955 and 1961 the number of agricultural apprentices fell from 19,000 to 16,500. But since 1961, again these figures have been gradually going up slightly. In 1962/3 there were 17,495; in 1963/64 there were 18,184; in 1964/65 there were 19,535 and in 1965/66 there were 20,127 agricultural apprentices.

Naturally some apprehension for the future of agricultural vocational schools had been caused by the decrease in the number of trainees over the past ten to twelve years. But some experts considered the decrease in the number of trainees since that period as a return to a more normal situation. It was caused by the gradual disappearance of five social groups which had inflated the agricultural vocational school population and which did not normally constitute the agricultural vocational school population.<sup>1</sup> These groups were :

- Unemployed groups during the years after 1948;
- 'Supernumerary' rural workers who had been employed in great numbers owing to the fact that almost no mechanisation had taken place in agriculture since 1939; they disappeared when mechanisation began again with the economic recovery of the country;
- Refugee farmers who in most cases could not re-establish themselves in agriculture in Western Germany and who consequently gave up agricultural employment and went into industry;
- Small holders who took up more rewarding industrial employments; this trend was reinforced by the disappearance of many uneconomic small farms;
- Younger sons and daughters of farmers who left agriculture for industrial employment.

The disappearance of these groups reduced the agricultural vocational school population to the two social

<sup>1</sup>Lippmann, K. 'Schülerzahlen' (Trainee Statistics) in the Journal Die Landwirtschaftliche Berufsschule, München, Vol.13, No.3, March 1963, pp.33-34.

groups which have always been its natural sources.

- The first-born children of farmers; and
- Those young rural workers who can count on finding permanent employment in agriculture.

It is expected that these two groups will continue to provide a relatively stable agricultural vocational school population.

Let us also remember that over and above farming there are various agricultural trades and occupations like milker, poultry, farming, gardening, fishing and dairy business. The following table shows the number of apprentices in various agricultural trades and occupations in Germany from the period 1962 to 1969.

The table shows that there has been a steady increase in the total number of apprentices in agricultural trades and occupations from 1962 to 1968.

It is interesting to note that according to 1960 census figures, 37% of farm managers on 25 to 50 acre farms had received vocational training at school; 28% had undergone at least one year's on-the-job training on a farm other than the family farm. On owner-managed farms of 50 to 125 acres, 53 percent of the owners had been trained at school; this proportion rises to 76 percent for farms larger than 125 acres.

It is believed that on the whole, the agricultural vocational training at present is far from satisfactory.

TABLE 54

The Number of Apprentices in Various Agricultural Trades and Occupations in Germany from the Period 1962 to 1969.<sup>1</sup>

Total	Period	Apprentices in Various trades and Occupations					Dairy man	Total
		Farmers	Country woman	Milker	Poultry farming	Gardening for earning cemetery gardening	Fishing	
33408	1962/63	17495	9366	309	282	5016	66	638
35000	1963/64	18184	9873	317	239	5307	77	646
37053	1964/65	19535	10290	297	224	5427	84	620
38264	1965/66	20127	10933	247	196	5449	73	556
46123	1966/67	23829	13831	264	214	5999	104	645
49805	1968	29136	11923	232	196	6320	91	534
45766	1969	27228	10376	203	76	6007	88	438

<sup>1</sup>Deutsches Statistisches Jahrbuch (German Statistical Year Book), 1970, p.129.

There is a need to modify the training of young agricultural workers to adapt to the new conditions. The teaching methods and syllabi should be modified according to new economic and social situation of the rural population and to changing agricultural production techniques. The training standard should be raised. An attempt should be made for still better co-ordination between theoretical instruction and practical training.

Some experts also advocate that wherever possible, block-release courses (four to eight weeks a year) should replace the day-release system (usually spread over the whole school year) at the agricultural vocational schools.

The idea of transforming agricultural training into a genuine training in farm management has recently been gaining ground.<sup>1</sup> Such training should be designed for students who have already acquired some training and experience.

Some experts also believe that agricultural training should be started at an early date, as farm children perform work on family farms which is devoid of interest to them and this impairs their career prospects. They should be taught trades connected with agricultural machinery

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<sup>1</sup>Hartan, Hans; 'Trends in the Development of Agricultural Vocational Training in the Federal Republic of Germany,' in the Journal *Berichte über Landwirtschaft*, Hamburg, Vol.43, No.1, April 1965, p.106.

industries, and forestry or forest administration and so on.

It is also advocated that related instruction classes (Berufsaufbauklassen) should also be instituted for young village workers in the same way as for town apprentices. These classes will enable them, without interrupting their work, to prepare for the secondary vocational education entry examination. (Fachschulreifeprüfung<sup>n/</sup>); this opens up prospects of future education right through to university level.

Moreover, the 'second channel' to higher education (Zweiter Bildungsweg) gives intelligent people who have not completed secondary education which is a prerequisite for entrance to university, the opportunity to accede to higher education through vocational training and part-time further education. This opens career possibilities in administrative services, government administration and other fields to farmers' children who cannot remain on the parental farm (which ordinarily goes to the eldest son).

### Three Phases for Agricultural Training

Some experts advocate that full scope and ample opportunities should be provided through various phases for thorough training and further development of young farmers.

Apprenticeship is the FIRST PHASE of agricultural training. Practical training on the farm and related instruction at the

part-time vocational school should enable him to be systematically initiated in all the tasks performed on a farm.

The SECOND PHASE of training should equip the trained farm worker to become a full-fledged farmer. They advocate that the present agricultural college (Landwirtschaftsschule) should be made into a school for farm managers (Betriebsleiterschule). If this were to be done, some of the subjects now taught would have to be dropped in favour of management subjects like commercial, legal and social administration.

The THIRD PHASE should consist of training capable farmers and farm managers to give practical on-the-farm training to apprentices. These apprentice trainers should be carefully selected. Their training should also be arranged in special courses.

#### BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL TRAINING IN GERMANY

West Germany, being a highly industrially developed country, attaches great importance to the training of industrial apprentices. These skilled workers keep the wheels rolling and are responsible for highly efficient productivity. But distribution is also as important as production and hence business and commercial trades are of equal value as of industrial trades. The Germans being fully aware of the great importance of business and commercial trades also attach equal importance to training in business and commercial trades.



The numerical strength of trainees in business and commercial occupations far surpasses the number of trainees in industrial trades. The following table shows the number of apprentices registered in industrial and commercial trades from the years 1964 to 1966.<sup>1</sup> (Registration with the Chambers of Industry and Commerce).

TABLE 55

Year	No. of recognised Industrial Trades	No. of Registered apprentices in industrial trades	No. of recogni- sed commercial trades	No. of registered apprentices in commer- cial trades
1964	286	240122	33	465618
1965	286	243859	33	468898
1966	286	254444	33	483624

This table clearly shows that though the recognised trades in commercial sectors are only 33 as against 286 in industrial sectors, the number of registered apprentices in commercial trades is almost double the number of apprentices registered for industrial trades.

The following table shows the percentage of apprentices and learners (Semi-apprentices) registered with Chambers of Industry and Commerce for training contracts in industrial trades and commercial trades from 1950 to 1966.

<sup>1</sup> 'Berufsausbildung 1966/67', Deutscher Industrie-und Handelstag, Bonn, 1967, p.69-70.

TABLE 56

Year	Percentage of trainees registered for apprenticeship in		Percentage of trainees registered for learnership (Semi-apprenticeship) in	
	Industrial Trades	Commercial Trades	Industrial Trades	Commercial Trades
1950	39.59%	53.40%	4.06%	2.95%
1955	34.48%	58.35%	3.88%	3.29%
1960	31.22%	63.44%	2.04%	3.30%
1965	32.54%	62.64%	1.83%	2.99%
1966	32.76%	62.29%	1.87%	3.08%

So one fact to be remembered is that the number of trainees in commercial and business trades in Germany is higher than the number of trainees in industrial trades.

The second fact worthy to note is <sup>that</sup> among <sup>st</sup> the trainees in business and commercial trades, the big majority is of the females. The first ten important commercial trades are retailer, commercial and administration clerks in industry, wholesale (export-import) clerks, Bank clerks, office clerks, cooks, insurance clerks, druggists, shop-window decorators and forwarding agencies. It is self-evident that most of these trades are preferred by females and hence they constitute the majority. In the year 1966, of all the commercial trades, the female trainees constituted approximately 60.2% as registered apprentices. The following table of commercial apprentices and learners of 1965 also proves the same fact:

TABLE 57

Commercial and Business Trades	No. of apprentices Registered			Percentage of the Total	
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Apprentices	186039	282859	468898	39.6%	60.4%
Learners	495	21964	22459	2.2%	97.8%
Total No. of Trainees	186534	304823	491357	37.8%	62.2%

This table also shows that in 1965 about 60.4% of the trainees in commercial trades were girls; apprentices. It also shows that it is exclusively girls (97.8%) who offer learners' trades for training as they are short-termed which is preferred by females.

At present, in Germany, the commercial trades system provides for three categories of trades.<sup>1</sup>

- Trades requiring full apprenticeship;
- Trades requiring a shorter learnership;
- Trades requiring only a short period of induction training.

Some experts feel that the present system of commercial apprenticeship has become obsolete. The image of the independent merchant still dominates the training objectives. It is not a realistic approach, since the great majority of commercial trainees will never occupy an independent position or have a wide range of decisions to make. Some also feel that rapid changes in the

<sup>1</sup>Lisop, Ingrid, 'Reform of Commercial Training' in the Journal Berufspädagogische Zeitschrift, Braunschweig, Vol.12, No.7-8, July/August, 1963, p.148.

structure of economy have produced a hiatus between business realities and vocational training regulations. So a reform is inevitable to keep abreast of economic and technical progress.

#### Some Structural Changes in Employment

According to the views of the Association of German Graduate Commercial Teachers some radical changes are taking place in the employment structure. They are as follows :<sup>1</sup>

- Employment in public services is expanding fast.
- There is a tendency for the concentration of undertakings, whose average size is growing. The number of large undertakings (1000 employees and over) is increasing sharply.
- The nature of work in business firms and in administrative services is completely changing. Today, there is one more opening for management and middle management staff. Managers are increasingly delegating part of their decision-making and executive responsibilities.
- The growing application of mathematical and statistical processes (e.g. electronic data processing) has led to series of new occupations and the employment of all kinds of machines and technical equipment in offices and government services.
- In future, employees will be expected to understand and show interest in technical matters also which are becoming closely associated with office work.
- They will also be required to have a better understanding of human relations questions.

This means that the commercial and business training syllabus

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<sup>1</sup> Zum Entwurf eines Bildungsprogramms (Contribution to a Training Programme Scheme) in a Journal Wirtschaft und Erziehung, Wolfenbutter Vol.17, No.6, June, 1965, pp. 1-24.

should stress sound occupational training, greater understanding of economic principles and mechanism, and the development of personality. There is no need to mention that the accumulation of heterogeneous knowledge and its application as a routine has become out of date. What is needed today is the cultivation of higher standards of professional ethics and ability to take decisions.

#### Various Agencies for Commercial Education and Training

In West Germany, Commercial education and training is provided through the following agencies :

##### 1. Commercial Vocational School (Kaufmännische Berufsschule):

This type of school is the cornerstone of the entire training system. It provides part-time related instruction on the basis of 2 days' instruction per week - minimum 12 hours. The syllabus also includes instruction in subjects not directly related to the trade or occupation (e.g. German, Foreign languages, religion etc. ). Obviously the effectiveness of these courses largely depends on the extent of the collaboration between the school and the undertaking.

##### 2. Upgrading Courses (Berufsaufbauschule) :

These courses are part of the related instruction system.

##### 3. Commercial School (Handelsschule) :

These schools normally provide courses of full time general and commercial education, comparable in level to middle-school education. In some areas the schools have a 3 or 4 year

programme. Now they are catering to almost half the total number of commercial trainees.

4. Commercial Secondary School (Höhere Handelsschule) :

These schools train middle-level management staff. They should give more time to foreign languages and technical processes applied to office work.

5. Business College (Höhere Wirtschaftsfachschule) :

These are recently instituted upgrading institutions of secondary school level. They provide specialised business training. They also provide for education to develop the personality and training in personnel management methods.

6. Secondary Schools of Economics and Social Studies (Wirtschaftsoberschule) :

These are also the secondary schools with a 3-year programme preparing their students for the secondary school certificate (Abitur).

The most striking recent reform has been the formal recognition of the occupation of clerical worker. Until this occupation was officially recognised in 1962, clerical employers had been trained separately for each of the former wholesale, retail, import-export etc. trade groups. The growing number of apprentices for this new occupation shows that its recognition was justified.

Training by Stages in Business and Commercial Occupations

Some experts believe that introduction of a system of

training by stages is the only satisfactory method which will solve the problems inherent in an increasingly differentiated employment structure. The first stage would provide very general basic training common to all business and commercial activities. The second stage would emphasise the characteristics of particular fields; the third would be reserved for more highly specialised training. The system implies proceeding from general to the particular. The boundaries between the stages should remain fairly flexible. Examinations would be held at the end of each stage, which would encourage the less capable trainees.

The following are some of the results or outcome of a survey of 62 undertakings in 1961<sup>1</sup>, which help to understand the real position of commercial<sup>and business</sup> training in West Germany today:

- Some undertakings consider that training, as it is carried out today, is too general and imprecise and does not correspond to reality.
- Some consider that the final apprenticeship examinations are scholastic and not practical enough.
- Some undertakings train no longer, or hardly train apprentices at all. They claim that the present training procedures are no longer suitable.
- Frequently, very limited training (4 to 6 months) for specific jobs<sup>is</sup> considered sufficient by some undertakings.

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<sup>1</sup>Mann, Werner; Molle, Fritz. 'Der Funktionswandel Kaufmännischer Angestellter des Büro- und Verwaltungsbereichs in Berufspolitischer Sicht.' (The changing functions of business and commercial employees, seen from the viewpoint of their vocational training). Köln and Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964, p. 182.

- Certain firms have adopted a system of accelerated training; the young employee is trained in a limited field and once he has mastered it, is methodically trained step by step in related fields. Thus, after 2 years, the firm has well and broadly trained employee capable of being used immediately. This type of training may be admissible for adults; for young people it runs the risk of limiting their horizon to the needs and necessarily narrow conditions of one specific undertaking.
- The survey also showed that several big firms make a point of taking on secondary school graduates, at least for prestige if not out of real need.
- It was also found that at few places, employers who had no formal training did the same work and even received the same salaries as the others.
- On the other hand in few cases, trained employers often did not perform the jobs for which they had been trained.
- A considerable number (41.9%) needed training for a new occupation.
- Almost all the firms stated that they had a set programme for training their young employees.
- The inquiry also showed that the theoretical instruction given in the undertakings to supplement the related instruction given at the school is hardly two to three hours per week. It is mainly concerned with pre-examination coaching.
- One might also expect that the firms would be active in providing further training, since they consider the basic training inadequate. This is not so. Hardly 3% of the clerical workers take courses of further training. Economic



prosperity, disinterest in the courses, lack of co-ordination and lack of information of training facilities outside the firm, are some of the reasons for this low percentage of further training.

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