

SHISHTACHAR

87th FOUNDATION COURSE

Sheelam Param Bhushanam

"Nothing is ever lost by courtesy. It is the cheapest of the pleasures, costs nothing and conveys much. It pleases him who gives and him who receives, and thus, like mercy, it is twice blessed."

Erastus Wiman

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INTRODUCTION

Good manners and etiquette lend confidence and charm to an officer's personality. They help smoothen the sharp edge of authority and ease the course of personal relations. The principles underlying the form and behaviour suggested in the following pages are **courtesy, politeness and consideration for others.**

The issues covered are important to an officer's life, both during &/her probation and in the later stages of his/her career. A major part of Shishtachar is of immediate relevance for life in the Academy.

Most of the prescriptions in this manual have their origins in western cultural practices. However it is important to remember that manners and etiquette are culture specific. India with its rich cultural heritage offers a wide variety of cultural Practices it is, therefore, important to be sensitive to these variations and adapt one's responses according to the cultural traditions of the person or group of persons one is interacting with.

Keeping the importance of business lunches and dinners in mind, we have added a chapter on Formal Dining Etiquettes. We hope that the Officer Trainees would go through this booklet carefully and liberally use the guidelines/tips for displaying dignified, courteous behaviour on all occasions

Course Team
87th Foundation Course

CHAPTER - I

ETIQUETTE IN THE INSTITUTE

DRESS REGULATIONS

1. All Officer Trainees should be properly dressed whether in class, outside the class, in the Officers' Mess, etc. The dress should be sober and not flamboyant or frivolous. *Jeans, T-shirts, sneakers, tennis shoes and slippers are forbidden in classes as well as in the Officers' Mess.*
2. During the cool season gentlemen Officer Trainees are expected to wear a buttoned up coat or coat & necktie with leather shoes in the classrooms. It is compulsory for all the gentlemen Officer Trainees to wear necktie during office hours. In addition to traditional Indian clothes like sarees, salwar kameez and churidar-kurta, lady officer trainees may wear western style formal trouser suits to the classes. Lady Officer Trainees may however, wear sandals. casual or frivolous attire shall not be worn. This code will also apply to other premises like the Main Institute Building, Mess Lounge, Dining room and the Library.
3. On formal occasions, e.g. formal dinners, Independence and Republic Day celebrations etc. gentlemen Officer Trainees should wear:

Black or white Sherwani and white churidars or

Black or white Jodhpuri coat and black or white trousers or

Dark lounge suit or

Dark coloured jacket and tie.

Black shoes should be worn on such occasions.
3. Lady Officer Trainees should wear sarees of sober colours.

4. **LAPEL CARDS SHALL ALWAYS BE WORN ON ALL FORMAL AND INFORMAL FUNCTIONS AND WHILE ATTENDING CLASSES.**

GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

1. **At no time or occasion should an officer trainee conduct herself/himself in a manner not befitting an officer.**
2. Officer Trainees are expected to treat each other politely and with due regard to decency and courtesy. Consideration for the feelings of others should be a dominant concern. This becomes even more important during outdoor programmes like the trek and the village visits. Conduct on these occasions should be such as to instill confidence and trust.
3. It is only natural that intelligent men and women have an opinion of their own. However courtesy demands that **if you have to disagree, do so politely and in an urbane manner.**
4. When dealing with subordinates special care should be taken to ensure politeness. This is especially true in your dealings with mess staff, room bearers and non-teaching staff of the Institute.
5. Officer like behaviour should be maintained outside the Academy as well, in dealing with shopkeepers etc and the public at large.

CONDUCT IN CLASS

1. **Punctuality and decorum** in class are to be maintained both within the class as well as during PT/Yoga/Jogging and other scheduled activities.
2. **Officer Trainees should enter the classroom and take their allotted seats well before the time designated for the commencement of the lecture. Attendance will be noted according to the seating arrangement.**

3. The need for punctuality is equally applicable to Jogging / PT / Yoga classes. The doors of the lecture halls/class rooms will be closed immediately after the time fixed for the commencement of the session. Officer Trainees will not normally be admitted after the doors have been closed.
4. Smoking is not permitted inside the classroom, in the Library, during cultural events/film shows and any other public place within the Institute premises.
5. Officer Trainees are expected to be attentive and conduct themselves with due regard to the feelings of the lecturer and fellow Officer Trainees. Questions addressed to faculty members / guest speakers should be clear, precise and polite. Please stand up when asking a question. Officer Trainees must remember that guest faculty are invited by the Institute. As such, they are honoured guests; and their dignity should be upheld under any circumstances .
6. Talking or whispering during a lecture not only disturbs the speakers but other Officer Trainees also. Effective listening is an art and essential as a matter of courtesy to the speaker as well as your colleagues.
7. The posture adopted while sitting in the classroom is extremely important. One should sit with the back upright, without slouching in the chair, either to the front or to the back. One's arms should not be crossed behind one's head while sitting. This is extremely impolite.
8. While applauding guest speakers, thumping on the table should not be done. This is a bad manner. One should clap with hands only.
9. When a lecturer takes classes, Officer Trainees are expected to remain standing after the lecture concludes till the speaker leaves the class.

CONDUCT IN HOSTELS

1. Officer Trainees are expected to behave decently in the hostels at all times. Shouting, loud music, noisy parties / revelry must be avoided as it is a source of inconvenience and nuisance to others. As a consideration to other residents in the hostels, music after 2200 hrs is to be heard only through ear-phones.
2. **Keeping or consuming alcohol in the hostels is prohibited.**
Inebriated conduct will result in disciplinary action.

CHAPTER -II

MESS ETIQUETTE

DINING IN THE MESS

1. Every officer trainee is a host. You are expected to be present 10 minutes before the guests arrive to receive them and to see that no guest is left unattended to. Move around freely and look after the guests. Do not leave the mess until after all the guests have left.
2. Officer Trainees appointed as Escort Officers to guests or Faculty Members and their spouses should receive their guests at the entrance and remain in attendance throughout. Escort Officers are expected to look after their guests and should introduce them to other Officer Trainees and faculty members if the guests have not met them earlier. On conclusion of the meal, Escort Officers are expected to see their guests off.
3. Do not monopolise the senior guest or leave him/her abruptly. Request to be excused when you leave him/her.
4. Unless on the Mess Committee, Officer Trainees have no authority to reprimand a mess employee. Even officers on the mess committee are not to use intemperate language or conduct themselves in a manner not befitting an officer. They can report matters needing attention to the President, Secretary or a member of the Mess Committee. While making any complaint (e.g., about the quality of food), do not use intemperate language.
5. Courtesy and consideration is to be shown to all the colleagues during meals. Due consideration is to be paid to correct table manners.

CONDUCT IN THE LOUNGE

1. When you enter the lounge, if there is a lady or a senior staff member present, please greet them appropriately. When any lady or a senior staff member or a Mess Guest enters the lounge, you should stand up and greet him/her.
2. You need not be rigid in your movements inside the lounge, but should avoid being sloppy or slovenly.
3. Do not sit in the lounge with your legs up on a table or chair.
4. Do not fail to wish staff members, their spouses or senior guests.
5. Do not form your own exclusive groups.
6. Do not play music too loudly. It may disturb others.
7. If you are sitting near a fan or in front of the fire when a senior staff member or a lady arrives, and if there is no other comfortable seat available, offer your seat to him or her.
8. Avoid controversial subjects, which may lead to a heated discussion.
9. While in conversation, do not interrupt a person who is talking.
10. Do not gossip about other people. It is said: "Cultured people talk about ideas, where uncultured people talk about persons".
11. Do not disturb the lounge arrangement. In case, it has been necessary to move the furniture, please rearrange it before leaving.
12. Please don't be loud or brash in your behaviour, and show consideration to others present in the lounge.

CHAPTER-III

SOCIAL CALLS AND VISITS

1. Calls are both a social and an official obligation. They may be made alone or in a group. Besides being part of the etiquette expected of an officer, they are functional in building inter personal relations and creating a better work environment.
2. Social calls are to be made after checking the convenience of the officer.
3. Calls should never be made before 9.00 a.m. or after 7.30 p.m. except on the suggestion of the officer called on. Usually calls should be made between 6.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. depending upon the season.
4. The first call may be brief and should not last more than 30 minutes. Later, when friendly calls are made, they may last as long as desired and appropriate, always taking care not to keep the hosts from their meals and other engagements.
5. The question often arises whether a senior officer or a junior officer should make a social call first. This depends upon circumstances. Senior officers newly posted to a station should, unless there is great disparity in rank, call socially on a junior, after the junior has paid an official call. Where their ranks differ greatly, the junior should make the first social call.
6. Do not go away if you find other visitors already present. Knock or ring the bell if the door is closed and send in your card if a servant or a minor child opens the door. If the door is opened by the host/hostess or an adult member of the family, you should introduce yourself and offer your card only if it is asked for.

7. Calls should be returned in person as early as possible. If there is great disparity in rank or if the call is at a mess, the return call will usually take the form of an invitation to a meal.

OFFICIAL CALLS

In the Institute Officer Trainees are expected to call on the Course Coordinator, Counsellors and other faculty members soon after they join the Institute. They must also call on the Director and the Joint Director. One should call on members of the faculty only after ascertaining their convenience.

- * *Please note that having met an officer at some party or function is no substitute for a regular call.*

CONVERSATION

1. Never talk with your hands in your pockets or on your hips or crossed in front of the chest.
2. If you have to withdraw from company say, "Excuse me" while doing so.

DRAWING ROOM MANNERS

1. Gentlemen will stand when ladies enter a room, and officers will stand when seniors enter.
2. Officers' wives normally rise only when the President, the Vice-President, the Prime Minister, the Governor or the Chief Minister enters. Officers will stand up when they are introduced. Shaking hands on being introduced is quite normal but not with ladies unless the lady makes the first move. Otherwise, a 'Namaste' or an equivalent word in any other Indian language is the proper form. Never shake hands with gloves on, though ladies can exercise this privilege.

3. **Introductions are made as follows:**

Gentlemen are introduced to ladies, juniors to seniors and young persons to old, with the exception of VIPs, to whom others are always introduced. The person making the introduction should say, "May I introduce..." or "Let me introduce Mr/Ms.....". Add a few words of description to help them make contact e.g. "Mr. & Mrs. Alpha have just returned from Utopia wherein they were researching beta radioactivity of unicorns. Mr. Gamma is the Counsellor of the Star Ship Enterprise". The reply to "How do you do" is "How do you do" and never "Quite well, thank you" or "Fine".

4. If you wish to smoke in company, especially in the presence of ladies or elders, always seek permission. Also offer your companion a cigarette. Deposit ash only in ashtrays and when stubbing a cigarette do so completely to prevent it from giving out smoke.
5. Do not sit aloof but conduct a conversation with your neighbours. As far as possible, avoid talking shop. As educated young officers you would have sufficiently wide interests to start and sustain a conversation on many subjects.

RECEIVING VISITORS

1. Receive your visitors at the door or, if they are senior officers or old people, on the drive as they alight from their cars. Open the door for them and see them into the house. Offer them a seat and, after a while, a drink (soft drinks, tea, coffee, etc.)
2. On conclusion of the visit, see your visitors off to their car or to the gate. **Do not shut the door on them.**

AS GUEST AT A PARTY

1. When invited to a party, make it a point to **inform** the host/hostess of your **acceptance or inability well in advance**. Remember that without knowing the exact number of their guests, it is impossible for anybody to provide adequate food and drink.
2. **Arrive on time**. Punctuality is politeness and should be cultivated as a habit.
3. Search out your host and hostess, if it is a big party, and greet them.
4. A good host will usually name the drinks available. Make your choice and politely state your preference. **Do not ask for something that has not been mentioned**. Do not mutter or say something vague like "I don't mind". Never omit "Please" and "Thank you".
5. After adding sugar and milk to your coffee/tea do not keep the bearer waiting while you stir it in the tray. Remove your cup at once and let him move on.
6. Do not start on your drink straightaway. Put it down on a side table and sip it from time to time. If snacks are served, the bearer will usually offer you a small plate and a serviette. Hold the latter under the plate while helping yourself. Place the plate on the side table when done with.
7. **Do not sip your drink with a slurp**. When eating a sandwich, cake or other snacks, hold it between the thumb and the first two fingers.
8. On leaving, never fail to thank your host and hostess. It is a good idea to phone your host/hostess the following day expressing your thanks for an enjoyable party.
9. At large parties, it is not necessary to take leave of everyone present individually. It is enough to take leave of the person with whom you may be sitting or talking and of the host and the hostess.

10. Leave taking should be brief and unobtrusive. Officers must neither depart ostentatiously as some VIPs like to do, nor should they slink away.
11. Government officers are not expected to drink alcohol in public, even in places where there is no prohibition. It is essential to familiarise yourself with government instructions and the conduct rules. If you are a teetotaler, do not refuse an invitation to a cocktail party only on that account. When offered alcohol you may decline politely. If anyone wishes to abstain from drinking alcohol do not urge him or her to reconsider.

CHAPTER - IV

CIVIC MANNERS

ROAD MANNERS

1. If walking, keep well to the side of the road, especially in a group. Do not edge others off the road. Do not stop to talk in the middle of a road or footpath.
2. If accompanying a lady, always keep between her and the traffic. You may offer to carry her coat, but not her handbag.
3. Greetings on the road may be made by just wishing the time of day or by saying "Namaste" or any appropriate greeting in a regional language. If you have a friend with you and you stop to talk, you should normally introduce him. If for some reason you do not wish to do so, say, "Excuse me a moment". He will walk on slowly, in which case you should get through your conversation as soon as possible. Always be properly dressed on the street even if you have gone out only for a short errand.
4. As a junior officer, be observant, try to catch the eye of your senior officer and greet him. Never be seen avoiding a greeting and never permit your juniors or subordinates to do so to you.
5. Make it a point to greet all faculty members, guest speakers and visitors to the Institute whenever you cross them.

PLACES OF ENTERTAINMENT (In the Auditorium, etc.)

1. Always be punctual lest you cause inconvenience to others during the performance while finding your seat. If late, wait a while and take your seat with the least disturbance to others.
2. If with a lady, lead the way to your seats. Do not leave her alone to go out during intervals and if it is necessary, ask her permission.
3. Do not smoke in an auditorium.
4. During the show avoid loud comments or predictions about the course of the play and do not hiss, murmur or get excited at embarrassing moments, others would like to follow the show and, if it is live, the performers should be shown the courtesy of silence. Even if the performance does not appeal to us we must respect the dignity of the artiste and the right of others to enjoy the show. Dignified Behaviour befitting an officer is expected in all public places.

GENERAL BEHAVIOUR

1. Attention to personal hygiene and especially mouth odour is essential. Noses should be cleared, finger nails cut, and ears cleaned at home and not in company. Natural functions like belching, yawning, sneezing and coughing, clearing of throats, noses, etc., should be done as silently as possible with an "excuse me" if in company.
2. If possible, use a handkerchief to sneeze or cough into.

3. Sharing a room and bathroom with others imposes social obligations. Leave bathrooms as clean as you would like to find them. Bathroom floors should be left clean, basins emptied of soapy water, commodes properly flushed or covered after use.
4. Litter must be thrown into waste-paper baskets; ashtrays must be used for ash or for stubbing out a cigarette. Cigarette stubs, etc., should not be disposed of in wash basins and water closets.

FORMAL DINING ETIQUETTES

Before the Meal:

- **Prepare to be conversational:** Read national and local newspapers ahead of time so that news and events can be discussed.
- **Punctuality:** It is important to be on time. Always allow extra time as no one wants to be kept waiting. If a delay is unavoidable, try to contact the host.
- **Greeting and introductions:** A good handshake is important. It should be firm and should continue for three to four seconds. Introduce a younger person to an older person; introduce a non-official person to an official person; and in business, introduce the junior to the senior. Use full names unless you are told to use a first name.
- **Seating:** In most cases, wait as a group to be seated. Women go first, followed by men. Purses / briefcases should be placed on the floor as the bottom of these items may be dirty and should not be placed on the table.
- **Ordering:** Hold the menu so that it does not hide you from everyone else at the table. Skim the menu quickly and when a decision is made, place the menu off to the side signaling to the server that you are ready to order. Unsure of what to order? Ask the host what he or she would recommend. The recommended meal may give a clue as to the price range the host has in mind. Or, let the host take the lead when ordering. Always talk softly to the server and do not hesitate to ask for advice. Order food that does not distract from the ability to converse.
- **Napkin:** Sometimes locating the napkin can be tricky. It can often be placed in a coffee cup, wine glass, or other clever location. Traditionally, it is placed at the left of the dinner plate. As liquids are always to your right, once you determine your place setting territory, you can easily decide that the napkin in the cup to the right is yours. The meal begins when the host unfolds his or her napkin. Immediately place the napkin on you lap after

everyone at the table has been seated. If you must leave the table, place the napkin on your chair.

- **'Reading' the table setting:** Begin using utensils from the outside and work your way in. In the place setting has two forks that are the same size, begin with the fork on the outside. Food is generally served from the left and beverages are poured from the right.

During the Meal:

Begin eating when everyone has received his or her food. Eat at the same place as your host.

- **Conversation:** Relax and keep the conversation focused on business-related or casual topics. Avoid dominating the conversation.
- **Napkin:** Your napkin should not get dirty during the dining process. It is meant to catch food that falls in your lap and is used to gently blot your mouth or dust the crumbs from your lips.
- **Soup:** Make a circle: spoon away from you, bring around to your mouth and back to the bowl. Soup is eaten from the side of the soup spoon, not inserted into your mouth.
- **Bread:** Bread / rolls should be broken into smaller, more manageable pieces, buttering only a few bites at a time. Toast and garlic bread, however, may be eaten whole as they are usually already buttered. Avoid making a sandwich!

After the Meal:

- **Napkin:** The host will signal the end of the meal by placing his / her napkin on the table. Place the napkin (loosely folded) to the right of your plate (never on the plate).

- **Place Setting:** Leave plates in the same position that they were presented. Do not push them away or stack them. Any unused silverware is simply left on the table.
- **Used Utensils:** Do not leave a fork or spoon in a bowl or cup. Place used utensils on a flat dish. That is why a flat dish is usually under the soup bowl. When finished, place the knife (blade edge toward you) and fork diagonally across the centre of the plate so they do not slide off when the plate is removed by the server.
- **Thank the host:** Shake hands and thank the host for providing the meal. Remember to maintain good eye contact.

Unusual Situations:

- If a piece of silverware falls on the floor, pick it up and let the server know that you need a clean one. If you cannot reach it, tell the server you dropped a piece of silverware and that a clean one is needed.
- If someone you are dining with is left-handed, it is best for the left-handed person to sit at the left end of the table or at the head of the table. If the host is not aware that you are left-handed, do not mention it.
- Never spit a piece of bad food into your napkin. Attract the least amount of attention by removing the food using the same utensil used to place the food in your mouth. Place the food on the edge of your plate and, if possible, cover with some other food from your plate.
- Remember to take dining etiquette seriously. Regardless of whether you are having with a prospective employer or dinner with a business associate manners can speak volumes about you as a professional.