

Restructuring of A Zonal CE Headquarters for Productivity Enhancement

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Abstract : 1. A Zonal CE Office is the main pillar of technical capability and competence of MES Organisation. However it is seen that over the years, this main pillar of MES organisation edifice is crumbling under the weight of faulty organisational design and personnel policies resulting in internal frictions, low productivity and working in silos. Alternative experimental models have emerged like CCEs, CC (R & D) and MAP which are based on outsourcing and are likely to make MES loose its expertise and technical prowess in long term. Zonal CEs despite of being staffed with large no. of officers have very poor productivity in terms of productivity per officers and most of the officers are working in the non core/ non productive sections of the zone much below their actual potential.

The paper discusses the flaws in the existing organisational design of Zonal CE office and suggests a new framework of organisational design of Zonal CE for enhanced organisational productivity, enhancement of technical competencies, redesign of process flow of work and capacity building of the organisation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Executive functions in MES are performed by following organisations/ levels¹ :-

- (a) Chief Engineer Zone/ Project
- (b) Commander Works Engineers
- (c) Garrison Engineer
- (d) AGE (I)

There are two more levels over the above mentioned organisations, namely E-in-C's Br and Command CEs however they are not charged with performing executive functions. These two top levels are more concerned with monitoring, personnel management level besides acting as advisors to respective CFAs e.g. Ministry of Defence Govt of India, Chiefs of Army/ Navy/ Air Force/ Coast Guard etc. Policy Making Function is performed solely by E-in-C's Br being the Apex level of the organisation. At present there are about 30 Zonal Chief Engineers spread at all corners of the country.

Prior to 1991, Zonal Chief Engineers were functioning as integrated units providing engineering services to all types of formation whether Army, Navy, Air Force, Ord Factories, DGQA etc. The entire MES executive organisation was Army centric and users like AF, Ord Factories, Navy R & D felt neglected. Due to persistent demand of these organisation to have dedicated works services organisation for them, MES was divided into dedicated executive formation up to Zonal CEs with creation of CE AF, CE Navy, CE Ord Factories etc. At present, same mode continuing with some exception due to functional requirement. For example CE Delhi Zone, although dedicated for Army is also providing Services to Navy formation at Delhi. This dedicated executive services concept has worked satisfactorily in the last more than two decades and has addressed the concerns of both users formations as well as the requirement of having a one infrastructure organisation for entire Ministry of Defence due to essentially same nature of engineering works, uniform works policy and scales for all organisations for Ministry of Defence. Also providing professional services of a high quality is not possible unless a critical mass of professionals engineers is there, which is not possible in small organisations.

Zonal Chief Engineers exist at the top of the executive engineering organisation which have built in capacity to plan, design and execute and manage infrastructure projects as well as provide maintenance services including utilities. However it is observed that Zoanl CEs have degenerated into a highly dysfunctional, bloated, compartmentalized and bureaucratic organisations unable to perform the mandate they are assigned to i.e. time bound and efficient planning, design and execution of projects and provide efficient maintenance services. Of course there are other administrative functions entrusted to the Zonal CEs however core functions remains as stated above.

¹ Para 21, Regulations for the Military Engineer Services

The responsibilities of MES executives are defined in para 30 of Regulations for Military Engineer Services. From these regulations, MES executives organisations are expected to perform in dual role- one that of service provider and other on that of enforcement of govt. policies and regulations.²These dual functions are often in conflict and engineering executives are under very often under tremendous pressure to this conflict of interest.

2. PROBLEM WITH EXISTING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF A ZONAL CE OFFICE

(a) *Compartmentalized Organisation*

Entire MES is highly compartmentalized organisation, not to talk of just Zonal CE HQ alone. Employees are more loyal to their section rather than to their role as member of the team to achieve the organisational goal of a particular office, be it E-in-C's Br or Command CE or Zonal CE. The Zonal CE is divided into sections starting from E-1B, E1C, E1D, E1O, E-7, E2 Plg, E2-Wks, E2- Design, E-3, E-4, IEM, E-5, E-6, E-8. These numerous sections slow down of the work processing and result in loss of focus in the project planning and execution.

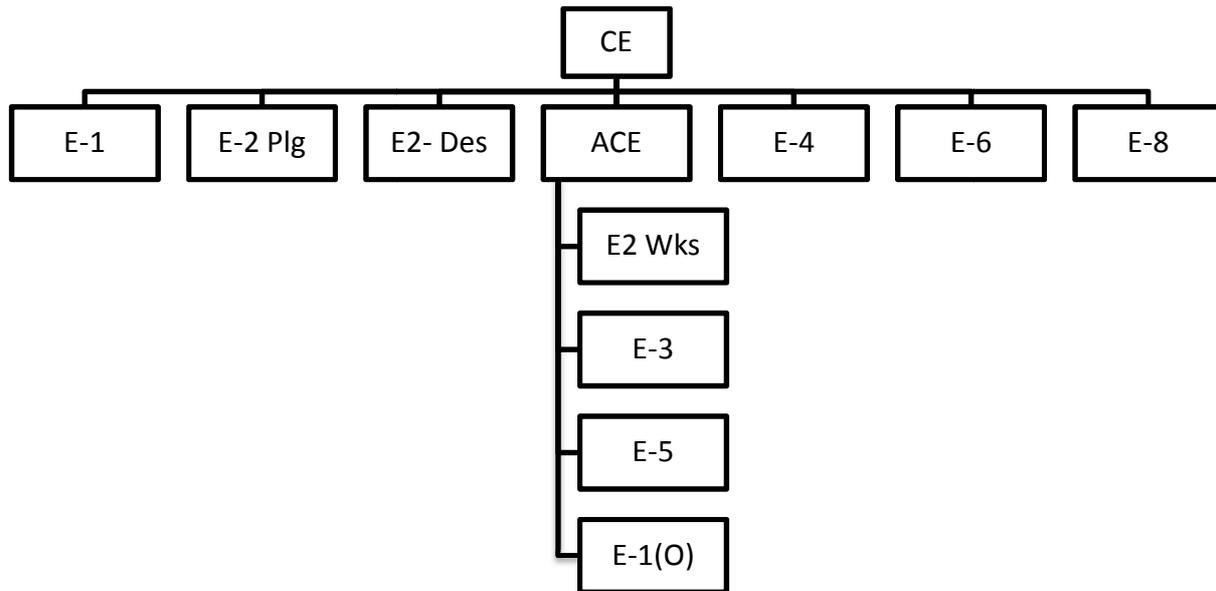


Fig. 1. Present Organisational Structure of Zonal CE

(b) *Work without any value Addition- Correspondence Up and down the Chain*

Almost all the section are performing post office job without any value addition. A large number of officers think that by signing such forwarding letters up and down the chain they are doing good job. However the fact remains, this work is without productivity and value addition. However in sections like E1-O, E-1, E2 Wks, E-5 the quantum of such non productive work is very high. Despite of wide spread use of computers, age old system of ION (inter office note) system of correspondence is being followed for internal correspondence between different sections. Often it takes more than one week time to reach a letter/ document from one section to another.

(c) *Irrational division of project into pre contract and post contract*

The main task of the Zonal Chief Engineer is to plan and execute projects, which require team work of the experts of various domain areas. However with current division of process flow into division like the pre-contract and post contract monitoring, planning, Wks, Budget, Resources, E/M, E-6 and Contracts destroys the team spirit leading to delays and poor quality of projects. The division of responsibility of pre contract work to planning section and post contract monitoring to E2 Wks is irrational and results in over all poor quality of project as there is no real value addition at E2 Wks section except that of monitoring and doing post office job.

(d) *Majority of Officers engaged in Non Productive Work*

The analysis of the kind of work being handled by different officers/ no. of officers posted in different sections in any Zonal office will indicate that majority of the officers are engaged in non productive, non value addition, noncore work in sections like E-1, E2 Wks, E-5, all of which can be eliminated once e-governance is implemented. Present division of work flow is providing a shelter to inefficient and un professional officers by giving them opportunity to get posted in para engineering sections like E2 Plg and non technical sections like E2 Wks, E-5 and E-1 sections which are soft appointments. No

² Para 30 (f) *ibid*

engineering office want to be posted to hard appointments like E2 Design as the design work cannot be delegated down the line, while in other sections work can be easily be delegated to the junior officers/ subordinates. After being posted to such soft and non technical appointment, such officers can pass their entire tenure in Zonal CE office without any real value addition. The present system is promoting opportunity for manipulation for inefficient officers to be posted in softer appointments./ avoiding hard appointments.

(e) Inherently flawed concept of authorization of Establishment

The concept of authorized establishment of approximately 40 officers in a Zonal CE HQ along with around 80 No. staff is inherently flawed. There is no linkage of productivity of the organisation with officers and staff strength. Most of Chief Engineers are interested in having more and more no. of officers as per their officers establishment irrespective of the planning work load/ productivity of the officers/ their zone as a whole. The exact cost of establishment expenditure have never been computed due to the fact that pay and allowances of service personnel to MES is not accounted for in cost of establishment. As MES is a work charged establishment, it is necessary that pay and allowances of Services personnel are booked in the MES head of account, so that real cost of establishment is known and steps may be taken for improving productivity of organisation as a whole. Further there is no mechanism to compare the real productivity of different Zonal CEs on real time basis which is easily possible with the now with information technology.

3. PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN OF ZONAL CE

(a) Concept of Fixed and Variable Component of Officers Establishment

The officers and subordinates establishment need to be divided in two components – fix and variable. While fixed component will be the minimum to be provided in every zone. Variable component will be provided as per demand by concerned Zonal CE.

Fixed Component will be the bare minimum officers and subordinates required to run a Zonal CE HQ in ideal condition. Every Zonal CE will be provided with this establishment. Variable component will be based on demand of Zonal CEs keeping in view the project work load and productivity per officer achieved by Zone.

(b) Productivity Per Officer Concept – Ranking of Zones

All Zonal CEs should be ranked on the basis of productivity per officer. Which should be calculated on the basis of Total Wks included in AMWP and Sanctioned during the Financial Year / No. of Officers. All the Zonal CE where productivity per officer is less than the average productivity, their officers establishment should be reduced and where productivity is more, additional officer/ subordinate establishment may be increased, if requested so by chief engineer. The ranking of Zonal CEs (HQ) on the basis of productivity per officer should be available on line to enable chief engineers to compare their performance with others. Such ranking will also induce competition among different Zonal CEs.

(c) Impact of E-governance - E-2 (Wks), E-5 & E-3 sections to be disbanded, ACE to be re-designated as Director (Maint & Coord)

Once e –governance / ERP is implemented in MES, all the reports and returns will not be required and this type of non value adding work will be eliminated straightaway. Similarly post office type of work like forwarding of policy letters down the chain and forwarding and compilation of reports and returns up the chain will be eliminated as all policy letters and all documents required for official purpose can be downloaded from website. It is estimated that the work of E2 Wks, E5 will be greatly reduced and all these sections may be omitted from establishment. ACE (Wks) will be re-designated as Director (Maint & Coord) all existing work of (albeit greatly reduced) E2 Wks, E-3 and E-5.

(d) Concept to Commissioning Project Team

The present division of project work into pre contract and post contract is illogical and dysfunctional. Pre contract work is handled by E2 Plg while post contract monitoring is done by E2 Wks. The entire project from initiation of demand/ Board stage (concept) to completion (CR Part 'B') need to be handled by E2 Plg only and there is no requirement of E2 Wks. In fact there should be two independent Directors (Plg) so that there is internal competition between the two Director Planning.

(e) Personnel Policies for Better Productivity in Zones

Every graduate officer need to be compulsory given at three years tenure in Design section at AEE/ EE level to develop technical expertise. Similarly service officer should come to MES for a fixed minimum tenure of five years when they are coming for the first time in MES. First two and half year tenure should be spent in staff at Zonal CE in design/ planning appointment before being posted to executive appointment of GE. Only those officers who have done this first tenure of five years in MES should be eligible to come at higher appointments at Col / Brig/ Maj Gen rank in MES. Thus a partial works stream will be created and it will be for professional development of service officers as well as for MES.

(f) No work to be outsourced without NOC from ADG (D & C)

Due to dysfunctional organisational design of Zonal CEs as explained above, the productivity of the organisation as a whole and that of individual officers is far from satisfactory. Over and above this Chief Engineers have got an escape route in the form of consultants, in case they have a non performing officer. Rather than utilizing their managerial capacity to correct/ motivate/ counsel the concerned officer to give the desired level of output, they resort to consultancy indiscriminately, on the various pretext of workload/ shortage of officers/ complexity of project etc. We have no doubt in saying that MES organisation technical capacity are on a downhill due to rampant consultancy by Zonal CEs and time is not far that MES will start functioning in the ways of CCE (R & D) without any inherent engineering, planning design architectural and contract management capabilities – time is not far when MES function itself will be outsourced.

To arrest the loss of in house design and technical capability in structural and civil design, Architecture, E/M PHE, pavement design, runways, hospital etc., at zonal level, Consultancy of any type should be permitted only after a NOC from AGG (D & C) Pune. Two more no. of ADG (D & C) need to be opened. So that there is internal competition between ADGs and Chief Engineer should be free to approach any of the ADGs for consultancy.

4. CONCLUSION

The gradual rot being set in MES in general and Zonal CEs offices in particular due to causes identified above need to be arrested immediately through the various measures suggested in the paper. There is most immediate need to implement ERP in MES. Consultants need to be brought in only selectively and not indiscriminately as being the practice in certain zones. It is hoped that measures suggested in Technical paper will be helpful in enhancing the productivity of the Zonal CE offices and in improving the workflow.

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