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CHALLENGES OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

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CHALLENGES OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more,
do more and become more you are a leader."

\- **John Quincy Adams**

The current geo-political environment indicates the enhanced challenges placed before military leadership, more so in the Indian context, as it experiences both external threats imposed by China & Pakistan and internal threats imposed by various actors with varied allegiances, aided & abetted by external forces.

The improved literacy level, advent of social media resulting in enhanced awareness and breakdown in the joint family system has affected the psyche of the entire society and led to a substantial rise in the aspiration and expectation level. Our soldiers, who come from such a background are no more immune to such societal changes. There has been a significant shift in the psyche of the armed forces personnel too whose aspirations & expectations have also taken an upward revision. The breakdown in the Joint family culture has taken away the social security apparatus that the soldiers of earlier days enjoyed even in the absence of today's communication means. In essence, the nuclear family system has led to social insecurity and enhanced family turbulence which in turn has significantly contributed to

the shift in the psyche of the armed forces personnel. This change or shift in the attitude of armed forces personnel is one of the major challenges being faced by today's military leadership.

Revolution in Military Affairs, blurring of boundaries between the military and non-military domain, advent of fifth generation warfare and many other novel forms of warfare, namely, Hybrid Warfare, Info Warfare, Cyber Warfare, Space Warfare coupled with rising fundamentalism, shift in world order from being unipolar to multipolar, increased inter-dependence of states and global compulsions due to politico-economic considerations have altered the entire perception and resulted in newer challenges of military leadership. In the Indian context, the challenges for military leadership hinges around their appreciation as to how these factors are going to manifest or impact the battlefield environment and influence the planning and preparation for future conflicts. Thus, the higher military leadership has to appreciate these realities and find ways for their amelioration.

Analysis of Higher Military Leadership

Armies do not fight wars; nations fight wars. War is not a military activity conducted by soldiers, but rather a social activity that involves the entire nation. Passion, probability and policy each play its role in war. Any understanding of war that ignores one of these elements is fundamentally flawed.

The passion of the people is necessary to willingly endure the sacrifices inherent in war. The statesmen must stir these passions to a level commensurate with the requisite sacrifices by the populace. The biggest error he can make is to commit his nation to a great conflict without

galvanizing popular passions[1].

To prevail, higher military leadership must provide policy makers and the public with a correct estimation of strategic probabilities. The military leadership is responsible for estimating the likelihood of success in applying force to achieve the aims of policy. While doing so, the military leadership describes both the means necessary for the successful execution of war and the ways in which the nation will deploy those means. **If the policy maker's desired end state for which the means he provides are insufficient, the military leadership is responsible for advising the statesman about this incongruence.** The statesman must then scale back the ends of policy or mobilize popular passions to provide greater means. If the military leadership remains silent while the statesman commits a nation to war with insufficient means, he shares equal or may be even greater culpability for the consequences. Military leadership must therefore ensure that they give unbiased inputs in their area of expertise i.e. the estimation of strategic probabilities[2]. The correct estimation of strategic probabilities can be further sub divided into the preparation for war and conduct of war.

To prepare forces for war, a General must visualize the conditions of future combat. The higher military leadership must visualize the material requirements of future engagements. To train military forces properly, military leadership must visualize the human demands on future battlefields, and replicate those conditions in peace time exercises. Of course, not even the most skilled General can precisely visualize how future wars will be fought[3]. According to British military historian and soldier, Sir Michael Howard, "In structuring and preparing an army for war, you can be clear that you will not get it precisely right, but the important thing is not to be

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1   Lieutenant General Sardeshpande, op cit, pp 66.

2   Palit, General D K, War in the High Himalayas.

3   Singh, Lieutenant General Harbaksh, A Soldier Remembers.

too far wrong, so that you can put it right quickly."

The most tragic error that higher military leadership can make is to assume, without much reflection, that wars of the future will look much like wars of the past. After visualizing the conditions of future combat, the General is responsible for explaining to civilian policy makers the demands of future combat and the risks entailed in failing to meet those demands. Civilian policy makers need to be assisted in gauging strategic probabilities in the distant future[4]. Generating military capability is the labour of decades. If the higher military leadership waits until the public and its elected representatives are concerned with national security threats before finding his voice, he has waited too long! Failing to visualize future battlefields represents a lapse in professional competence, but seeing those fields clearly and saying nothing is an even more serious lapse in professional character. Moral courage is often inversely proportional to popularity and this observation is nowhere more true than in the profession of arms[5]. An inability to undertake a correct estimation of strategic probabilities has a detrimental effect on the performance of higher military leadership and this in turn can lead to the following weaknesses: -

    a.   Absence of comprehensive offensive doctrine and strategic foresight.

    b.   Absence of proactive strategy in management of national security.

    c.   Absence of professional integrity and courage of conviction.

    d.   Lack of assertiveness in putting across the military point of view in national security policies.

    e.   Lack of unity, jointness and integration to achieve synergy in the three

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4   Samuel P. Huntington. 1957. *The Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, viii.

5   Ibid.

services at the highest levels.

f.   Lack of basic core values, which form the corner pillar of the armed forces.

Keeping the above facets in mind, one of the most challenging problems in   preparing for the future battlefield is that of assuring the availability of capable higher military leaders, who will occupy key command and staff positions.

Internal Environment

Having said this, let us now take a look at the challenges being faced by the military leadership in an Indian context.

Changing Social Ethos and Aspirations. There is an ever upward escalation of expectations and aspirations. Fixated economic goals have gradually replaced the general lack of economic motivation of the earlier intake. Equally, a larger intake from the urban background has brought in more self-centred individuals, with narrower social commitment[6]. The present-day Indian society has witnessed a tremendous change which has also affected the basic psyche of the armed forces. These are as follows :-

1.   **Materialism**. In a materialistically driven world, attracting the bright and the best to opt for profession of arms is the biggest challenge. The modern military environment is providing a decreasing economic attraction in an increasingly commercial society. Higher military leadership will have to find ways to attract the best amongst the youth and train them to attain military goals.

2.   **Breakdown of Joint Family System**.   With the joint family system breaking down, the soldier is forced to become self-serving, with rise in

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6   https://www.scribd.com/doc/87566928/The-Changing-Socio-cultural-Environment-in-India.

family complications and feuds. Separated families living alone in insecure conditions add to the emotional, physical and self-actualisation turmoil of the soldier[7].

3. **Self-Esteem**. Regrettably, over the years, one of the most important attributes required in a soldier, namely that of self-esteem, has been corroded. The assured career progression, Non-Functional Upgrade (NFU) benefits and faster promotion avenues in civil services has skewed the military-civil equivalence.

4. **Violence**.   The recent spate in violence arising out of factionalism in the society based on religion, economic lines, etc adds to the already shifting attitude of the soldier. The cascading effects of these factors on his family, do affect his attitude, judgement and affiliation. It is humanely impossible to remain immune to these factors and their effects.

5. **Political Climate**. Influence of political conflicts & competitions are adversely affecting the domestic & social lives of soldiers and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the soldiers to remain immune to them.

6. **Media and Information Explosion**. Information revolution has changed the world of yesteryears beyond recognition. It has made every man, including soldiers, more informed of the world at large. Higher military leadership often finds that activities are being reported in media even before they are themselves aware of it.[8] Media and public opinion combined, tends to often raise sensational view. Moreover, society becoming more aware and involved in the process of war leads to greater transparency and public accountability from the higher military leadership.[9] The increasing rhetoric and narrative created on social media, platform and media continues to influence the

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7   https://www.ukessays.com/essays/business/business-socio-economic-and-cultural-environments-of-india-business-essay.php.

8   Cooke, Sandra D. "Information Technology Workers in the Digital Economy", in Digital Economy 2003. 2003: Economics and Statistics Administration, Department of Commerce.

9   "Technology and Workforce: Comparison between the Information Revolution and the Industrial Revolution" by Mathias Humbert, University of California, Berkeley.

attitude and power of judgement of all, especially the armed forces personnel who because of their isolated deployments are unaware of the truth. As a consequence, they tend to rely on this unverified information to form their opinion.

External Environment

Global Environment Scan. The dynamic global strategic environment is witnessing the inviolable nature of changing political equations, maintenance of national interests above all, aggressive foreign policies and military interventions by extra-regional forces. A transcendental shift from a US centric world to a bipolar (US – China) or even multipolar (US – China – India- Russia) world and degradation in the image and independent functioning of world bodies such as UNO has taken place. While vast multitude of people are clamouring for a peaceful world having reached a stage of spiritual fatigue, narrow nationalism and sub-nationalism seem to be coming to the fore leading to resultant instability. In post September 11 scenario, a major security impact has been emergence of fundamentalist ideologies and the draconian threat of global terrorism which has now become the prime focus of the concept of global coalition towards war against terrorism. With Taliban coming to power, the dynamics in the Central Asian Region have drastically changed, with multiple players having stakes in maintaining the stability of the region. The ongoing Ukraine crisis has shaken the foundations of our international peace and security system and appears to be having far reaching effects on global security & prosperity.

Fourth Generation Warfare. It is characterised as violence by non–state actors. Of course the main participant in this form of warfare worldwide are the Islamist jihadists, however in case of India, we have the Maoist and North East Insurgents too. With a booming population, high illiteracy rate and non-governance, many deprived youth get easily indoctrinated

to become the part of various proscribed banned militant outfits. At the same time, the Maoists are easily swayed to pick up arms, due to a number of factors. While we talk of globalisation, it is also true that the economic disparities have not narrowed. Likewise, while the number of millionaires has grown rapidly, the numbers of people below the poverty line are not reducing commensurately. This is an ongoing and vicious circle. Fourth Generation Warfare is not a result of religious idealism only, but also as a result of class struggles as seen in the case of the Left Wing Extremism. The future battlefield of Fourth Generation Warfare will be highly complex urban terrain, defined by well-developed built up areas, impacting operational tactics and strategy. Our own military superiority guarantees that these new adversaries will not fight according to our notions of fairness: they will come at us by surprise, asymmetrically, at our weakest points, as they often have done in the past.[10]

Asymmetry gives terrorists and cyber criminals their strength, since such adversaries operate beyond accepted international norms and value systems on a platform where atrocity is a legitimate form of war.[11] Further, the enormous size of our democratic institutions makes military planning and weapons procurement both cumbersome and publicly accountable, whereas our adversaries will be under no such compulsion. As the world acknowledges a progressive nation with a conscience, we are required to behave in a particular fashion, even in conflict. Our forces are expected to adhere to world conventions on use of ammunitions, explosives and weapon systems. We are expected to handle the injured and captive soldiers of the adversary, including those of non-state actors as per Geneva Conventions. However, no such compulsions and bindings exist for non-state actors. It

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10   Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, 'Four Generations of Warfare' in *The Sling and The Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, St. Paul, MN. 2006, p 293.

11   Frank G, Hoffman,'*Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*'.

is in this new environment that the future military leaders have to function and take effective decisions.[12]

360° Battlespace. Post Galwan crisis, the security environment of India has undergone a massive shift. India is now facing hostilities on Northern & Western borders as well as in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) due to collusivity factor. During any future war, India will need to fight in a 360° battlespace with two enemies on one continuous front.

Revolution in Command

The problem of leadership, commanding and controlling armed forces, and of instituting effective communications with and within them, is as old as war itself.[13] Its dimensions have grown exponentially in modern times because of the following:-

a. Increased demands made on command systems by the peculiarities of present day warfare.

b. Technological developments that have multiplied the means at the disposal of command systems of both self and that of adversary.

c. Changes in the nature of command process resulting from the interaction of the above two factors.

d. The appearance of new weapon systems that when coupled with structural changes inside command systems themselves, have increased the vulnerability of command systems.[14]

e. The overwhelming burden on the national economy caused by the above factors.

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12   Frank G. Hoffman, '*Wars Like No Other*', U.S. Army War College, April 21, 2008.

13   https://www.quora.com/What-are-problems-faced-by-the-Indian-Army.

14   https://swarajyamag.com/defence/turbulencein-officer-ranks-of-the-indian-army-comprehending-a-problem-that-needs-immediateresolution.

f.   Higher military leaders will have to respond to the emerging challenges of technology, the impact of which will be as follows: -

- Greatly enhanced complexity, mobility and dispersion of armed forces and therefore dynamic doctrines, tactics and force structures.

- Development of communications and data processing technology and their safeguard from enemy attacks and counterattacks.

- Complex demands made by modern forces and modern warfare on one hand and the appearance of technical devices capable of meeting that demand. Constantly evolving technology will make weapon systems obsolete in a shorter time frame.

- Protection of command systems to enable them to function effectively, especially in the wake of modern technological advancements, which can cripple communication system even virtually.

- Directive style of command will be essential, with more scope for individual initiative.[15]

- High battlefield transparency owing to advancement in technology will reduce difference in conduct of operations by day and night.[16]

- C4I2SR systems will have to incorporate joint operations and joint command and control requirements. Theaterisation is the call of the hour. Operations will no more remain service specific or front specific.

- Enhanced visibility with resultant political and public pressures make it mandatory for the future leaders to take actions which are acceptable to the conscience of the society.

Future Battlefield

The future battlefield milieu will be characterised by high lethality, as a result of enhanced firepower, which in turn will necessitate integrated

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15   Ibid.

16   https://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/shooting-straight/infantry-on-the-transparent-battlefield/.

reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition, including intelligence inputs, resulting in increased transparency, making surprise difficult to achieve. Simultaneity of operations & non linear application of forces will shape the battlefield. The nuclear factor and global compulsions may force future wars to be short and intense[17] whereas on the other hand as the Russia-Ukraine crisis have revealed that wars could also become a prolonged affair.

The higher military leaders will have to take into account the future's expanded battlefield scenario and the nature and character of war they are likely to confront. It will have quantum jump in precision and lethality of weapon systems and increasing rates of attrition, reliance on manoeuvre and mobility rather than on attrition, increased threat from short, medium and long range missiles, improved battlefield transparency and quantum improvement in real - time surveillance with effective C4I2 and C3I, increased reliance on information technology, non -linearity, simultaneity and synergy of ops and emphasis on joint operations.[18] Future battlefield will be characterised by frequent shifting of 'Centre of Gravity'. As the battle unfolds, the leaders will be exposed to newer capabilities of their adversary and newer battlefield environments which were not incorporated in initial battle plans. As a consequence, they will have to keep revisiting his plan. Their terminal objective will undergo frequent changes & so will be the notion of victory for either of the parties. Case in point is the current Russian-Ukraine conflict.

MDO. Leaders will have to prepare forces to fight future battles in Multi Domain environment. The emerging domains of space, cyber, and information/psychology have gained prominence in recent wars.

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17   http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2017/10/6/army-prepares-for-complex-lethal-battlefields-of-the-future.

18   Ibid.

Capabilities of non-contact & non-kinetic vectors are increasing & need to be explained. Technically oriented & trained personnel are required to prosecute such operations in future.

Multi Agency Integration. Wars will be fought with 'Whole of a Nation' approach. Integrating of forces across services & with other government/ civil agencies & industries is required to maximise application of own military power. Leaders should be capable to operate in such multiagency environment.

Changing Character of War.   The military needs to be prepared for all type of war extending from grey zone to conventional domain. Leaders should be able to foresee the changing character of war & develop capabilities & train own personnel to fight not only the above continuum of hostilities but also those which include sub conventional actions & calibrated dynamic response.

Impact of Technology

Information technology has not only changed the nature of what we know today as War and Operations Other than War (OOTW), but has also spawned a new set of activities that will become familiar to future generations as constituting warfare in the 21st century.[19] The future conventional battle space will be neither contiguous nor orderly. Tempo will be extraordinarily high by today's standards. Variety of other considerations will determine the appropriate action to be taken. Some of these considerations will be the possibility of collateral damage, the relationship between target and the desired effects, and the availability of non-lethal means. Survival of targets will depend upon organic defensive capabilities, suppression and stealth. Concepts of operation will centre on amassing effects rather than

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19   David S. Alberts. Loc.Cit. P49.

forces. Command and control will involve dynamic trade-offs.[20]

The biggest effect of information technology on warfare will be the elimination of the concept of a front. If fronts persist at all, it will be in cyberspace where information warriors will battle not over turfs, but over control of routers, operating systems, and firewalls. Some thinkers, however, argue that there will be no electronic "Pearl Harbours" in the emerging battlefield of "bits" because disabling a nation's information technology (IT) infrastructure will be too hard for even the most sophisticated cyber-warriors. Well-timed, pinpoint computer network attacks will be much more likely.[21] Military operations will be inevitably impacted and transformed. Satellite communications, video teleconferencing, battlefield facsimile machines, digital communication systems, personal computers, the Global Positioning System, and dozens of other transforming tools are already commonplace.[22]

During the last two decades, technological advances have surged across the world affecting almost every facet of our daily lives. Unlike any time in history, it is imperative that leaders are cognizant of the consequences of new technological changes and, in particular, developments in IT as they apply to leadership practices. The Revolutions in the Military affairs (RMA) will be primarily driven by the technology[23]. While sophisticated weapons and sensors have greatly enhanced the combat efficiency, developments in IT have enabled greater connectivity and information sharing among widely spread force components thus resulting in enhanced situational awareness.

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20   http://www.computersciencedegreehub.com/faq/social-media-affect-information-technology-professional/

21   Bruce Berkowitz The New Face of War: How War Will Be Fought in the 21st Century Intelligence in Recent Public Literature.

22   David S. Alberts Loc.Cit. P50.

23   "Technology and Workforce: Comparison between the Information Revolution and the Industrial Revolution" by Mathias Humbert, University of California, Berkeley.

Network Centric Warfare (NCW)[24]. The nature of combat and combatants has altered. Future conflicts are expected to be fast paced and intense. In both pro-active and reactive roles, early prediction of information would become a key to success. Information has become time-sensitive and continuous. NCW[25] is about military response to the information age. This military response is directly proportional to the quality of military leaders our armed forces possess. The present - day military leaders need to keep pace with the technology and put their best foot forward to learn the know-how of the technology available in the armed forces. That said, in spite of technology being a modern - day leadership tool, it cannot account for many intangibles which fall under the purview of leadership such as discipline, motivation and morale. Some of the best military decisions in the past have been based on what a leader "felt" and were the best course of action.[26]

Battle Field Transparency. Armies in the information age will develop a shared situational awareness resulting from having common, up - to - date, near complete friendly and enemy information distributed among all elements of a task force. First, an information age army will be able to locate enemy forces quickly and precisely, whether those enemies are agrarian war lords, industrial armies, or an information age peer. Second, information age armies will know where their own forces are, much more accurately than before while denying that kind of information to their foes. Finally, information about enemy units and friendly formations will be distributed among all committed forces viz. land, sea, air, and space to create a common perception of the battlefield. This shared situational

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24   Lt. Gen. Harry D. Raduege Jr., "Net-Centric Warfare Is Changing the Battlefield Environment", Defense Information Systems Agency.

25   Alberts, David S.; Garstka, John J.; Stein, Frederick P. (August 1999). Network centric warfare : developing and leveraging information superiority (pdf) (2 ed.).

26   Ibid.

awareness, coupled with the ability to conduct continuous operations, will allow information age armies to observe, decide and act faster, more correctly and more precisely than their enemies. All the elements of the battlefield, armour, artillery, infantry, air platforms and command centres will be linked digitally in Information Age Armed Forces. Furthermore, in future, warfare will be conducted jointly with the whole of any force being greater than the sum of its parts. Speed and precision are becoming the dominant military requirements.

Fifth Generation Warfare. Computer networks create new avenues for those with malicious intent. While still vulnerable to actual destruction by physical attacks, such as bombs or arson, these networks are targets of threats of mass disruption. Our economy can be crippled by strategic information warfare in the form of computer intrusions, scrambling software programmes, undetected insiders within computer firewalls, or cyber terrorists around the world.[27] Computers revolutionize terrorism in the same manner that they have revolutionized everyday life. Terrorism in the information age will consist of conventional terrorism, in which classic weapons (explosives, guns, etc.) will be used to destroy property and kill victims in the physical world; techno terrorism, in which classic weapons will be used to destroy infrastructure targets and cause a disruption; and cyber terrorism, where new weapons (malicious software, electromagnetic and microwave weapons) will operate to destroy data in cyberspace to cause a disruption in the physical world. The advent of cyber terrorism may force a shift in the definition of terrorism to include both disruption and violence in cyberspace in the same manner as physical destruction and violence.[28] Through the use of new technology, terrorist groups may have

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27   Security In The Information Age New Challenges, New Strategies. Joint Economic Committee United States Congress May 2002.

28   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyberterrorism.

fewer members and yet still have a global reach. This is just a fraction of Fifth Generation Warfare as it is still an evolving field.

The skills of mastering technology so as to use it as an effective supplement is one of the foremost challenges facing the armed forces leaders of developing Nations in the 21st century. Leaders, in addition, have to skilfully ensure the integration of a wide range of diverse technologies likely to be encountered in the joint operations of the future.[29] They would have to be thorough in the understanding of the individual nature and synergistic applications of air, space and cyber systems of the future. Thus military leaders have a responsibility to become technically proficient with new informational technologies centred on computer literacy.

Organisational Challenges

Many military sociologists believe that the strength or weakness of military structure by and large depends on the conditions and climate generated by the organisation. When officers join the services from a civilian background there is a drastic change in the environment that they are pushed into and thus adjustments need to be made by them. Whether these officers turn out to be useful or not depends to a large extent on the organisational climate into which they are pushed.[30]

Besides this, there are a few other challenges of which need to be addressed. They are as follows: -

   a. **Sharing of Vision**. The military leaders need to spell out to their command what they expect out of them and share their vision.

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29   Ibid.

30   https://idsa.in/issuebrief/
        IndianArmyInternalChallengesInCapabilityBuildingAndRetention_
        RumelDahiya_111012

b. **Risk Vs Ethics and Duty Vs Conscience Dilemmas**. Service in the armed forces is risky. Risk takers are more prone to making mistakes and getting into troubles. If one crucifies the person committing an honest mistake, then it will lead to a loss of initiative and courage. Balancing the risk versus ethics and duty versus conscience dilemma is of essential importance for military leaders at all levels.

c. **The Intangibles**. Combat, peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations run the risk of failure despite all the training, contingency planning and tactical brilliance, and at times the only intangible element that propels the final push and transforms defeat into victory is a leader's ability to call upon hidden reserves of endurance and willpower in the men he commands. Invariably, this is possible only if a leader is humane, leads from the front and has a genuine 'feel' for the troops he commands[31]. These are the intangibles of military leadership.

d. **Professional and Personal Ethics**. Unlike the ongoing debate that is raging in 'civvies street and the corporate sector' on the need to separate professional ethics and conduct from personal conduct and ethics, military leaders have no such choice. Their lives are so entwined with those of their command that every action of theirs is a mirror for others to emulate, hence the crying need for consistent ethical and moral standards, both at work and at home.[32]

Decision Making

Decision making[33] is the study of identifying and choosing alternatives based on the values and preferences of the decision maker. Making a decision implies that there are alternate choices to be considered, and in such a case we want not only to identify as many of these alternatives as

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31 Ibid.

32 http://www.dsalert.org/land-power-india/544-challenges-of-human-resource-management-in-the-indian-army

33 Introduction to Decision Making-Robert Harris

possible but to choose the one that has the highest probability of success or effectiveness. Decision making is the process of sufficiently reducing uncertainty and doubt about alternatives to allow a reasonable choice to be made from among them. This definition stresses the information-gathering function of decision making. It should be noted here that uncertainty is reduced rather than eliminated. Very few decisions are made with absolute certainty because complete knowledge about all the alternatives is seldom possible. Thus, every decision involves some amount of risk.

Operations in the future will throw up an undefined enemy, an unfamiliar operating environment and diverse tasks and missions. Every decision is made within a decision environment, which is defined as the collection of information, alternatives, values, and preferences available at the time of the decision. Tactical decisions in future operations will have operational/strategic consequences; mission requirements will cover the entire spectrum of war. Thus, the increased speed of operations will place a greater demand on a leader's decision-making ability.[34]

There will be a requirement for the military leadership to act faster than the enemy, to pre-empt the enemy so as to gain initiative in the battle. This will require quick decision making on the part of the leadership. Thus, the present-day leadership needs to inculcate decisiveness in the present generation so that they cultivate the habit of taking quick decisions, after all "a timely decision is better than no decision".

Despite technologies, uncertainty will continue to exist due to information warfare operations of the adversary, thus it may not be wise to take battlefield transparency due to modern technologies for granted. One will need to work hard and strive to obtain the desired edge, as far as information is

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34   Ibid.

concerned. Decision making will demand smart, decisive leaders with a sound tactical / technical competence. The fog and friction, the change and the uncertainty that Clausewitz propounded two centuries ago will continue to accurately describe the battlefield environment.[35] Technology will however empower decision-makers to reduce the Observe, Orientate, Decide and Act (OODA) Loop by providing real time information and feedback.

Civil – Military Relations

Civil-Military relations are one of the most important factors affecting military leadership. Though debatable, but over a period of time, there has been disparity in the stature of military hierarchy and civilian counterparts causing functional issues leading to strained relations.[36]

In the past, the civilian bureaucracy has felt that military matters are to be addressed by the military itself and it is at the time of grave threat that, this instrument of power will be utilised. This situation has undergone a gradual change.[37] War is no longer an aggression between two belligerent nation states but has transcended all borders. With the irregular, asymmetric and hybrid dimensions increasingly gaining traction, future wars will not be compartmentalised into silos. It would more be a combination of two or three types of warfares, if not all put together. With increased awareness of military matters and civilians acquiring knowledge, accountability of services to the nation has also increased multifold.[38]

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35   http://www.clausewitz.com , The Clausewitz Homepage.

36   Samuel P. Huntington. 1957. *The Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, viii.

37   Jump up^ Samuel P. Huntington. 1957. T*he Soldier and the State; the Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 79, 92.

38   Khanna, Lt Gen KK, PVSM, AVSM** (Retired), Art of Generalship, Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, pp 292.

Social Media and Perception Management

Globalization relies on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that enables rapid communications and information dissemination. Today competition among media outlets creates a 24/7 news culture that is always looking for a new story. Rumour and opinion are gaining credibility while investigative reporting is becoming increasingly scarce. In this environment, military leaders especially ones that are operationally deployed, are under tremendous pressure to avoid bad media. Twitter, Facebook, eBooks, news feeds, mobile apps are all information sources that didn't exist just a few years ago, and they are changing the way we perceive and processes information. All of this has significant implications for the future of content and communication both in terms of security and mental makeup of military leaders.

Future Challenges

Strategic Challenges[39]. Today we as a Nation have certain strategic challenges staring at our face. These areas under:-

   a. Identifying, defining, analysing and building a clear doctrine and force structure against internal, external and nuclear conflicts and power projection abroad. This task requires clear vision and State backup.

   b. Past experiences show that the army has been called upon to handle internal law and order/ insurgency situations a bit too late. We must try and get involved with the likely future flash points from early stages, if necessary.[40]

   c. Evolving forces structures (machine versus manpower dominance), and integrating them with other instruments like the paramilitary forces, the

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39   Thomas J. Williams 'Strategic Leader Readiness and Competencies for Asymmetric Warfare'. pp. 19- 21.

40   Ibid.

police forces, the intelligence agencies, the scientist and the administrator, for a better conflict management and management of violence[41].

d. Setting up controlling organisations and orchestrating them properly - like the National Security Council, Core Groups, Unified Integrated commands, Joint Civil Military committees and so on

e. At present there is cooperation within the three services. However, there is vast scope for improvement. Each service still sees larger issues from their service point of view. Larger issues need national Interest foremost than that of an individual service.[42]

Getting the Government to Listen. The government must pay heed to the genuine needs of the Services and the Integrated/Service Headquarters must put across their point in a forthright manner. The apolitical nature of armed forces should be construed as strength and needs to be preserved and nourished.[43] In respect to dealing with political leadership and bureaucracy the challenges relate to:-

a. Projection of military point of view.

b. Giving timely military advice.

c. Evolving foray which will help the military to discharge the above professional duties in a democratic, parliamentary system the country has chosen, and which will help people and the government they choose to understand and utilise the military in a better way.

d. Re-define apolitical nature of military to better serve the interests of the people in turbulent times.

e. Ensure the status of armed forces is kept protected at all times.

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41   Ibid. pp 23.

42   'Joint Vision 2020'. pp.73-75.

43   https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_climate.

Introspection. It's time the higher military leadership seriously ponders over the genuine aspirations and desires of all ranks. Welfare has to be taken in its full perspective. Quality of life in field and peace stations for all ranks and their families need to be raised manifold. Quality education has to be guaranteed to the deserving wards of soldiers. Preparing all ranks for a second career and their placement after retirement has to be taken more seriously. Ethics, Morals and privileges also need to be defined and senior officers and their spouses be seen showing the way for juniors to follow. This aspect should not be swept under the carpet. Last but not the least, after the rank of a Colonel/equivalent all senior officers must shed their 'Regimentation' and think beyond their Arm and Service.

Other Outside Interaction. As regards interaction with other agencies, the following challenges need to be addressed:-

    a.   Overcome its self-imposed isolation and cantonment mentality.

    b.   Interact with intellectuals and academics, wealth builders and scientists, media and the people, to develop meaningful understanding, interests, response and mutual respect.

Today, military leaders have to realise and accept the shifting loyalties and ambitions of the present generation. The global village effect is evident through the rising materialism and aspirations amidst the younger generation. The young man today is lured by the fruits of capitalism and aspires to climb the ladders of affluence. As a result, a career in Armed Forces is certainly not on the top of the list for most of them. The lure of greener pasture and glitz of the corporate world overtakes the charm of the uniform. Under such circumstances, it becomes extremely important for the military leaders to ensure that those who have chosen to join this noble profession are kept motivated at all times. Their dignity and self-respect is to be upheld at all times. The higher military leaders of today will have to devise means to engage the younger generation to ensure their

excitement never dies down. In doing the same, the higher military leaders of today must be able to infuse sense of pride and nationalism. Hence the yesteryear's authoritative style of leadership may not be the best approach in today's world. However, a completely directive style, at tactical and sub-tactical level, may lead to indiscipline and chaos amongst the junior ranks which may lead to anarchy. As in the movie "Crimson Tide", the Capt of the submarine, Capt Frank Ramsey, enacted by Gene Hackman, tells his sailors-"Gentlemen: We are here to preserve democracy, but not to practice it". Hence, the biggest challenge that remains for today's higher military leaders is to strike the correct balance between an authoritative approach and a directive style, so that the junior officers do not feel either suffocated or lose their focus amidst indecisiveness and chaos.

HRD Issues. In the Indian Army, the Military Secretary (MS) branch is largely involved in the career management of the officer cadre. The current organisational climate necessitates that the MS matters also change with times so as to nurture the aspiration of the present generation. The focus has to shift from "Career Management" to "Career Progression". The system has to become more transparent, more responsive and more interactive. HR issues have to evolve to nurture and preserve the aspirations of the junior officers, as also to uplift their status in the social ladder. The MS branch will need to evolve means to strike a balance between organisational requirement and individual aspirations, with adequate scope for professional growth in sync with his social and family requirements. 'Assured Career Progression' in line with other civil government agencies is the need of the hour. Today, when your social status hinges around your rank and pay, there has to be some semblance of equivalence with parallel organisations. The mass exodus of highly qualified officers is indicative of the challenge. Our organisation's requirements are unique and hence the solution also has to be unique. The need for the same can no longer be ignored. Few other connected issues that can be considered are as under:

a. **ACR System**. Although our organisational requirements demand a hierarchical approach, however there is no denial that the current Annual Confidential Report (ACR) system, certainly needs to become more transparent and objective. The redressal system also needs to be more transparent and responsive. In this regard, the MS Branch needs to undertake a study, preferably through Career management and HR consultants, to revamp the entire ACR system, to make it acceptable to the present and future generation.

b. **Medical Requirements**. Though the medical requirements of our organisation are much different from other organisations, because of our operational and environmental requirements, however there is no denial that our medical standard requirements also need to undergo changes, with lifestyle changes and technological advancements. It also needs to draw comparisons with the standards and systems adopted by the other modern armed forces around the globe. The medical standards need to evolve, become more realistic, with the focus shifting from "Rejection" to "Cure".

c. **Courses**. Our officers undergo various courses at various stages of their career. However, many of these courses are irrelevant and inadequate in today's contemporary environment. Officer's courses need to become more relevant. We need to expose our future leaders to artificial intelligence (AI) technology in various forms, etc. We must enable them to earn degrees which hold good in civvy street as well. We need to implement a long term career progression plan for our junior leaders and train them and thereby equip them with specialisations so as to become military leaders who can fight future wars.

d. **Right Sizing**. The right sizing of armed forces will continue in concert with future requirement. HR transformation steps such as Agnipath scheme will challenge the leadership to maintain balance between organisational requirements & HR reforms.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it has to be understood that the challenges facing our military leadership are multifarious and complex. These range from transition in society, dawning of information age, individual aspirations, complex and dynamic geo strategic relations and fourth/fifth generation warfare. It is also given that future wars will not be fought in a single domain but would be hybrid ones that would transcend numerous domains. In our context, terrorists and cyber criminals have an asymmetrical advantage of operating outside of accepted international norms and values, while we do not. It is in this new and challenging environment that our military leaders have to operate and excel.

It is thus imperative that we as future military leaders acquaint ourselves with the said challenges and find solutions to them so as to prepare the Indian military leadership for the wars of tomorrow!

"A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the quality of his actions and the integrity of his intent."

– Douglas MacArthur

About the VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Vivekananda International Foundation is an independent non-partisan institution that conducts research and analysis on domestic and international issues, and offers a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution. Some of India's leading practitioners from the fields of security, military, diplomacy, government, academia and media have come together to generate ideas and stimulate action on national security issues.

The defining feature of VIF lies in its provision of core institutional support which enables the organisation to be flexible in its approach and proactive in changing circumstances, with a long-term focus on India's strategic, developmental and civilisational interests. The VIF aims to channelise fresh insights and decades of experience harnessed from its faculty into fostering actionable ideas for the nation's stakeholders.

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