

# CONGRUENCE BETWEEN ASPIRATIONS OF JCOs AND JAWANS AND THAT OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

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## **Introduction**

1. Management of human resources in the Indian Army is an extremely complex issue, given its size, spread and diversity. The key ingredient in any Army despite all the technological upgrades is the soldier, who is the man behind the weapon. It is therefore, vital that adequate care be taken to ensure that the morale of the soldier be maintained at the highest level at all times. For ensuring the same there is a requirement of working out healthy balance in the organizational needs meeting with the aspirations of its human resource in particular the JCOs and jawans who form the major component of the Indian Army. More specifically, the process of Human Resource Management in Army consists of four main functions Viz acquisition, development, motivation and maintenance of human resources. Translated into the requirement of the army the functions would be: intake men most suited to Army requirements; training them including inculcating service ethos and culture along with developing their ability to handle technological advanced weapon systems; providing them leadership which motivates them to fight to win, when needed be prepared to make the supreme sacrifice and finally preparing them to hang up their uniform with the sense of achievement and pride. Today there is a need to anticipate and respond to traditional and new challenges in Human Resource Management in the army and try to keep the interest of organization as well meeting individual aspirations.

## **Aim**

2. The aim of this paper is look into the congruence between aspirations of JCOs and ORs and that of the organizational needs and suggests ways to achieve the same.

3. This paper is divided in following parts:-

(a) Part I. Task and role of the Indian Army and its impact on human resource management.

(b) Part II. The aspirations or job satisfaction at JCOs and Jawans level.

(c) Part III. How can organization help to achieve these aspirations and improve job satisfaction while keeping its tasks and needs accomplished in a most professional way.

### **Part I. Task and role of the Indian Army and its impact on Human Resource Management.**

4. Being the last bastion, the Nation invariably looks towards its Armed Forces with pride and a lot of expectation, it is a fact that Armed Forces is one of the best functioning institution of the country. Among all services, the Indian Army is the largest component of its Armed Forces. The primary mission of the Indian Army is to ensure national security and unity, defending the nation from external aggression and threats, and maintaining peace and security within its borders. It conducts humanitarian rescue operations during natural calamities and other disturbances, and can also be requisitioned by the Government to cope with internal threats.

5. As on today Indian Army is required to man its large land frontiers around the clock though the task actually mandated to be carried out by Border guarding forces like BSF,SSB,ITBP. Unfortunately, these forces could not match up with emerging circumstances and challenges created by India's adversaries coupled with lack of leadership in these forces which compelled the regular Army being committed for prolonged periods. At the same time the Army commitment in proxy war and in dealing with insurgency continuous to increase due to PMF inadequacies from which moving out from is nowhere in sight in near future. Some of the adverse impacts of such commitments are:-

- (a) Image of the army.
- (b) Affects preparation for primary role of Army.
- (c) Increase in stress level due to prolonged exposure to unhygienic working conditions.
- (d) Troops not able to get leave when required.
- (e) Less time to rest, re-coop and refit.
- (f) Increase in unethical practices and discipline cases.
- (g) Affect training and physical fitness level of troops.
- (h) Affect mindset and fighting skills of soldiers.

(j) Not able to work on new emerging challenges in war fighting strategies.

6. Due to above stated issues the human resource management has become even more complex issue in the Army. There are also large number of other factors like changing socio economic issues, not getting the right intake, increased social awareness and hygiene factors etc which are also affecting the operational preparedness and resulting in de-motivating the troops at large. Hence, it is imperative that Army leadership understand that its policies are required to concentrate to develop its soldiers fighting skills, motivate them to high levels of performance and ensure that they continue to maintain their commitment to the organization.

## **Part II. The aspirations or job satisfaction at JCOs and Jawans level.**

7. The work force of the Army i.e. the JCOs and Jawans are joining the army at a young age between 18 to 21 years. Their recruitment is done on a state quota system based on the recruitable male population in the state which actually militates against merit. These men are drawn from all parts of the country and recruited through various recruitment rallies. These rallies attract large turnout and see great enthusiasm. However, it is a fact today that army is considered as a lower priority with these men. The major reason is that earlier soldiering implied recognition in society, patriotism and élan where now the values of social, political and economic necessities have taken over on earlier important tenants of soldiering hence, the impact on human resource at recruitment itself.

8. The inducted personnel have varied experiences of life depending on place (urban/rural) he belongs to and has come through an education system which have not been able to arm them with adequate rudiment knowledge from where he could be further trained. Considerable effort and time is to be spent to bring them to require standard. The physical standard of the intake has also been affected due to overall decline of physical standard in the society. Once an individual is inducted he is trained to become a soldier. During initial training focus is on physical fitness, drill, basic weapon handling and tactics. Lot of emphasis is also given on character building, moral values, ethics, service culture and building regimental traditions and military values to bring in efficiency and attitudinal change in the individual. On passing out the individual joins the unit/Regiment and gets into different milieu of activities for some he is trained and for others on the job training is imparted. Also, during his career individual is made to go through regular training curriculum to hone and improve his various soldiery skills.

9. Trained soldier has a life cycle of 15 to 40 years in service depending on his exit, which he spent as an important member of Army. Considerable amount of resources is spent to meet his basic needs like food, clothing, accommodation etc. so that the optimum level of job satisfaction can be achieved and he is kept well motivated to perform his duties. Job satisfaction is important facet which keeps the work force motivated to achieve organizational goals and has direct linkage with aspiration of an individual. Job satisfaction as defined by Locke (1976) “is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. There are several components that are associated with job satisfaction in Army, some important ones are: recognition for one's achievement, equitable compensation, ability to grow in the position and responsibility commensurate with compensation, challenging work, opportunity to do something meaningful, involvement in decision making, sense of importance to an organization that give positive satisfaction. Some of the other organizational negative irritants are frequent transfers, isolation from family, inadequate attention to hygiene factors particularly married accommodation, inadequate hospital facilities, children’s education, low pay in comparison to the risk involved, slow promotions, high levels of stress and rough life in field areas, fear of unknown, opaque redressal system, lack of communication and interpersonal relationships, early retirement and tough lifestyle. If today, due to various intrinsic reasons the aspirations of soldiers are not being met or the job dissatisfaction is on the rise it surely have a direct linkage with the components of job satisfaction not being met.

10. Job satisfaction is strictly an individual response and apparently distinct from the group morale. Also, the work force decides how satisfied they are with their jobs by observing others on similar jobs and making inferences about others’ satisfaction, i.e. cues provided by others on the job; on this aspect social media has a great role to play.

11. It is not that overall health and environment of Army is totally negative or uncongenial. It is to the credit of Military leadership that inspite of many odds the Army has been able to accomplish its task well however, there is a need to address and take corrective measures on some of issues to ensure that morale of its troops is kept high.

**Part III. How can organization help to achieve these aspirations and improve job satisfaction while keeping its tasks and needs accomplished in a most professional way.**

12. Army being a large organization, its human resource management issues are not only complex but also have specific variable issues depending upon arm and service. Army organization being hierarchical in nature is rigid and at times stonewalls better ideas hence,

whenever, there is policy change for improvement implemented the results seen are apparently slow. This aspect may be given due credence by policy makers.

13. India is an emerging economy and job prospects being offered for motivated and educated youth are in plenty naturally better material will not join army and prefer available greener pastures in civil street. Army has to improve its service conditions and make job options attractive so as to get right talent. To achieve the same major effort is required to improve the overall image of the army. This has to be addressed at highest policy makers level i.e. Political, MOD and service headquarters. They have to understand that they cannot afford to compromise on the issues pertaining to defence and sovereignty of the nation accordingly human resource management be given top priority.

14. Measures that should be adopted to fulfill the aspirations of soldiers are as follows:-

(a) More number of schools be opened which should act as feeder to the Army where preference to wards of soldiers may be given which will achieve twin aims including quality education for the soldiers wards.

(b) Major initiative needs to be taken to improve the hygiene factors in the army particularly in authorization of the quantity and quality of family accommodation. With the break in joint family structures in the society this is a dire need of the day and is a major reason for stress among troops.

(c) Need to create more facilities to improve the family life of soldiers including avoiding frequent moves and thus reducing turbulence. This can only be possible if engagement of Army is reduced in those tasks which are required to be carried out by Border guarding force and PMF. Also, Army itself needs to look into and cut out those tasks where human resource is wasted, adopt technology and automate areas where manpower engagement can be reduced.

(d) Need to upgrade education levels at intake so that the right material is recruited who can handle latest technical weapons and adopt new war fighting techniques. Psychological and better scientific methods should be adopted to test and select those personnel who can cope and withstand tough service requirements.

(f) Training of personnel needs revisit. Modern methods of imparting training be adopted, training curriculum to be made more innovative, realistic, challenging,

interesting and should also enhance individual educational standard and further motivate him to accomplish organizational goals.

(g) One of the major causes of dissatisfaction stems from a lack of transparency. There is a need to establish rapport with all ranks by senior military leadership and establish two way communication and feedback system so that any apprehension what so ever be cleared timely. Back to basics in the units be adopted with proper unit dastoor. Time tested drills should not be changed or compromised.

(h) All efforts needs to be put to inculcate pride in oneself and uniform .The higher needs of soldiers must be addressed by improving the professional job content of the soldier. They must be assigned challenging tasks couple with more responsibility and accountability. This will improve job satisfaction; self esteem and self respect of the soldier.

(j) Redressal system to address various grievances in army needs to be revamped so as to restore the faith of all ranks in the system. The time taken to address them must be minimised and should follow policies and rules justly irrespective of personalities involved. Policies and rules are made known to all ranks. These should be regularly updated and kept current.

(k) The judgments given by AFTs must be complied with and it should be a rare occasions where there should be a need to approach Supreme Court. Even such decisions should be taken after due consideration and deliberation by highest authority.

(l) Conducive tension free and dignified atmosphere needs be created in units where the soldier is made to feel that he is a useful member of the team and that his contribution to the unit is important. Creation of a good organisational climate leads to higher motivation levels.

(m) The biggest asset of the army is that it is apolitical organization and the character of the same needs to be maintained any deviation to this may cause heavy penalty to the nation and adversely impact the morale of troops.

(n) The soldiers retire at a very young age compared to other services in fact he has the major burden of family responsibility at the time he hangs his boots. It is the service requirement to retire soldier early so as to keep the army profile young, hence

rehabilitation post retirement is the government's obligation. It is unfortunate that a disciplined trained manpower gets wasted out due to poor empathy. Welfare of ESM, War widows and disabled soldiers is quite often carried out as if it is a favour being done or an act done due to sympathy. A doctrinal shift in attitude is essential to consider welfare as an obligation and a duty.

## **Conclusion**

15. For the soldiers to stay motivated and give his best, both the Government and the Army has to make a conscious effort to ensure basic needs and aspirations of the soldier are met at all times. First and foremost there is a need to view soldiers as human capital and rightfully appreciate their significance. To value their potential and understand their infinite contribution and invest in this human capital so that it grows and out performs its potential. Soldier is a living being who improves with age, given the necessary training and exposure gains experience and if given due respect, dignity and motivation, he can easily perform beyond his designed capacity. Putting it differently, one can say that he can achieve results far in excess of his estimated optimal capabilities. It is the need of the hour for the Army to recognise the significance of the available human capital, change its mind set and reap positive dividends of its trained disciplined force.