



Know your Army: Judged and Misjudged

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Abstract

The Indian Army is the land-based branch and the largest component of the Indian 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, like Operation Surya Hope, and can also be requisitioned by the government to cope with internal threats. The Indian Army has played a crucial role in the past, fighting insurgents and terrorists within the nation.

Keywords

Weapons; Military force; Democracy

Introduction

The army has strength of about a million troops and fields 35 Divisions within 13 Corps. Its headquarters is located in the Indian capital New Delhi and it is under the overall command of the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), currently General Dalbir Singh Suhag. Initially, the army's main objective was to defend the nation's frontiers. However, over the years, the army has also taken up the responsibility of providing internal security, especially in insurgent-hit Kashmir and the Northeast. Recently it has been proposed to enhance the strength of the army by more than 90,000 to counter the increasing presence of Chinese troops along the LOC. Did we, the civilian know any of these organisations, whether the PAST or THE PRESENT, not even THE FUTURE!

The ignorance among the civilians of Indian Army is an absolute reality which majority Indian don't know.

The Misconceptions of Civilians about the Organisation

No actual ground realities misjudgement among the population resided in the disturbed area. Insurgency, instability, indirect war is doomed to create a situation where mostly the Indian Army takes over to stabilised any threats or situations. Essentially because there is no clear enemy and there is no war front. Each house is a potential nest of insurgents in certain areas where we termed as the disturbed area, each person becomes a suspect. The situations there in Kashmir or Northeast India, it is because of selfish moves of India's troublesome neighbours [1].

Commoners have a rather simplistic understanding of this conundrum between insurgents and Indian army. Instead of asking this question, try and ask the same to the government that why the term "disturbed" the status quo within the area and hurled millions of innocent people in a state of uncertainty about why the Army deputed in those areas. Kashmir was and still a favourite destination among us. It is evident by so many movies shot in Kashmir before 1989 that it was a peaceful state. Instead of bringing in the awareness how these states should understand the basic presence of Indian Army, they perceived psychological as a threat of War.

If we really are a reasonable enough that we pretend to be, we will understand that it's not fun for us as taxpayers to spend crores of rupees on a single region when that money we can use on for awareness of security/safeguarding and providing better education to the younger generation [2].

Army follow orders which cannot be the decision of one individual. As per like the other organisation, they take the decision commonly for the safety and safeguarding the nation. We the civilians, never took an oath/pledge that we would serve our country, the first priority. Indian army were given orders to suppress insurgency in such that there shouldn't be any harm to people residing in that region. They are on their guard for safety and security whiles us, just bother only about our own security and our families only. Hypothetically misguided youths backed by misguided people were at that part of India. Indian army created fear psychosis in the mass to discourage youths from joining militancy.

Reasons of Ignorance among the General Population

- Because people dwelling in other places simply don't know or have any clue how it is to be in a place that is administered or controlled by army.
- Because most Indians don't know how it is to be living in a place that is still war torn.
- Because most Indians don't know how it is to be in a place where terrorist infiltration, bombings, attacks, etc are regular events.
- Because all people care is to secure Kashmir from Pakistan and are not much concerned about the life of people living there.
- Because people see activities of army personnel merely as a pride but fail to understand how much human right are compromised. Of course, the intention of army activities is also to secure peace in the area. But things can have negative consequences. Army is a disciplined body, they have missions to achieve and do with fatalities. People are not much sensitized about these.

Much about the activities of the Indian Army in Kashmir and North-East are that they follow orders and carry out their duties accordingly. In war like situations, some army personnel's could engage in brutality- we cannot rule this out. As like in any other professions, a person finds a way to deal with a situation in such a way to get back to its stand and what the person deserves. Why others don't judge the profession? Why is it people judge in this profession?

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Just because they have a license to hold the weapons, why don't people judge the teacher or professor's pen if he mishandled the students?

It is a kind of propaganda made by a group of media as well as some high profile writers. Indian army has loosed many soldiers, many became disabled for life and loosed their employment in army because of being disabled, many sons became orphans before they realised the reality of life, the question is Why we, the civilian failed to understand that side of the story? It was their affection for mother land and country. Kashmir is not exceptional case. Some exceptional cases may have happened in Kashmir or North-east which was not expected but, the truth behind is prolonged duty of soldiers under harsh condition, less family life, few holiday and Post traumatic stress, compounded with harsh climatic conditions in glaciers and valley, which ought to create frustration and aftermath effect, but same cannot be defined as atrocities.

Understand and Be Aware of What and Who are They

The Indian army has its personnel hailing from the lower and middle-income group. These men/women are loyal to their India. They have faced the usual problems of sny lower/middle income family in India. But nothing can depreciate their patriotism and spirit to safeguard their loyalty to India. It is impossible to believe that these great army personnel are unscrupulous in their activities. They are not politicians or film stars or authors who deride India to adopt a halo of 'patriots'! They are our brothers, sisters, parents, sons/daughters who earn their livelihood by standing to sacrifice for the nation.

- a) Indian army is a professional agency without any power to take political decision. So, executives and politicians are responsible for Indian army action.
- b) We can't blame our soldiers for rape and extrajudicial killing when we have given them legal immunity (section 144).
- c) Our media has failed to create a neutral view, they don't even report everything. Report the humanity of the troops whom we depend on the post natural disasters help and support.

The judgement of the crowd over the uniform, we failed to understand the differences in uniform of armed forces. If any organisation with camouflaged involves in any scene or present in any situations, why we fail to be aware that the camouflaged are worn by different disciplined organisations. Even though they are similar in the way they are structured - being uniform, disciplined and armed; there are differences in the way they function. Taking as an example of police force:

- a. The military forces are called into action only at times of war, emergency or natural disaster; the police force on the other hand has a day to day involvement in the affairs of the country.
- b. Police forces are generally unarmed or are just given basic self-defence weaponry compared to the weapons used by the military which are used for defending the country.

Now when the military forces interfere in the domestic politics, it is termed as martial law. Martial law is usually imposed on a temporary basis when the civilian government or civilian authorities fail to function effectively. Usually, the martial law is enforced using military coups - where the military forces illegally and suddenly seize power and establish their dominance over the running of the government. In India, the government has been politically stable and

there has never been wide spread civil disorder or political unrest which could have led the armed forces to think of establishing a martial law to bring about a semblance of peace. Furthermore, the armed forces of India are pretty diverse in their divisions, brigades and battalions and are scattered over a wide area across the country, this restricts and curbs the possibility of a well organized coup which could successfully oust the government. Any army has the mandate to defend and go on an offensive. There will be neither training nor intention to rule a country, by an army [3]. If they start ruling, they will no more be called army. They will be called as politicians and Government. Indian Army not interfering with politics is a good situation, which shows that Democracy is working. Various Executive, Legislative and Judiciary estates are working independently and at the same time in coherence with one another, in our country. Yes, there are times and situations where one can see a lot of friction between these. But, for army to step in, one of the estates needs to completely fail, especially, Legislative, which is not the case. Also, considering the mind-set in Indian armed forces, who are the best example for patriotism, discipline, valour, vigour, righteousness, having clear understanding of their and country's situation in the region, and enough busy in protecting the country (yesterday, 25/05/2015, three army men died while stopping an intrusive attempt), they will never do anything to disrupt the nation. They just followed government's orders and made sure that a nation is secure and peace prevails in the disturbed areas. Why the Kashmir or Northeast India are termed as "Field Station". The answer is simple; the areas are totally disrupted, equipped for observation, experiments and study the land on the verge of disruption and the hope to patch it up in the later days.

The ignorance of the US "The Civilians"

Indian army follows the system of ethos, pathos, logos. Look at the Indian Army. The selection of officers is through UPSC written and SSB. By and large the selected candidates demonstrate exemplary ' officer like qualities ' the key ingredient of which is 'being positive even in fierce opposition and complete chaos'. These traits are well cultivated even in the various arms of the army. In all army regiments/ institutions, you will find all religions given equal importance. The DHARAM STHAL in every regiment/army institution has a temple, a mosque, a gurudwara and church all in the same line. The officers of the Indian army adopt the culture of the regiments they belong to even if their own way of life is different. A south Indian officer in Punjab regiment will fully understand and follow the Punjabi culture of the regiment. In 5-6 years he becomes half Punjabi. Same goes for Gorkha, Dogra, Jat, Madras, Sikh, Bihar etc regiments. All through their tenure, the officers are oriented and reoriented towards rational thinking. For them moral/morale and objectivity/ subjectivity both are equally important. The habit of one up man ship and individual heroism is discouraged in the army. Team work is the key. The army guys are no super heroes yet their ability to choose the right options available and demonstration of rationale judgment is worth admiration. The army as an institution is nurtured in a way where social welfare and institutional priorities take precedence over personal ambitions. Being in the army is not a 9 hours job. You are expected to reflect the pride of the nation. Your conduct is reflective of the institution you are in. And the army guys take that pretty seriously. They really believe in the golden words of FM Chetwode:

"The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first, always and every time. The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and every time". In India, power is highly decentralized.

Military is very strong but its power doesn't lie in the hands of a single or handful of persons. We have different persons as head of army, navy and the air force. All of them are answerable to the defence ministry. One leader is required and in the case of military, people generally don't even know the names of the people in power. Indian military is composed of patriotic and educated bunch of people, and all through the course of their education, they are made to believe that democracy is the best form government which it actually is.

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