



Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS)

Seminar on

Human Resource Development in Indian Army

At Seminar Hall, CLAWS, New Delhi

08 August 2013

Seminar Report

A Seminar on '**Human Resource Development in Indian Army**' was conducted at CLAWS Seminar Hall on 08 August 2013. The seminar was chaired by Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch, SM, VSM (Retd), Director CLAWS. The speaker panel consisted of Lt Gen Mukesh Sabharwal PVSM, AVSM**, VSM (Retd), Lt Gen SA Hasnain PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM** (Retd) and Lt Gen KR Rao, PVSM AVSM, VSM (Retd). The seminar was attended by serving officers and veterans of the Indian armed forces and members of the strategic community.

Opening Remarks: Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch, SM, VSM, (Retd), Director, CLAWS

The Director welcomed the audience and the distinguished speakers and thereafter emphasised the importance of human resource development in the Army. Quoting from a book by Bernard Lewis, the Director stated that when things go wrong, two types of questions could be asked. One is, 'who did this to us?' and the other is 'what did we do wrong?' The first is accusatory and the answer is usually to place the blame on external or domestic scapegoats. The response to the second however forces one to look inwards and leads to discussions on how to put things right. Today's seminar will focus inwards on what we need to do within the Army to improve its internal health. This is not to assume that there is serious erosion within the value systems in the Army, which continues to perform well operationally. However, new challenges constantly appear and we need to be abreast of the situation to optimise human potential within the Force. With that in view, the seminar will look into three specific issues as under: -

- The quantity and quality of intake of officers.
- Management of officers in service.
- Post retirement empowerment of officers.

Officers' Recruitment: Adequacy and Quality of Intake – Lt Gen Mukesh Sabharwal, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), former Adjutant General**

The presentation will focus on the three aspects of adequacy of intake, quality of intake and the efforts to make up the shortage of officers. The current status indicates that there is an overall deficit of officers to the tune of 22 per cent while 24 per cent shortage of officers is in the rank of Lt Cols and below. The shortage at junior levels has operational implications. The officer's commitment has increased manifold as there is no reduction in their employment, rather the number of units have increased substantially. The posting of officers at hard scale in the units may have adverse effect on efficiency. There are concerns of junior leadership constraints. A major issue is that the quality of leadership has been affected due to lack of officers.

The recent trends indicate that there is no dearth in the number of applicants; in fact the number of candidates applying has been on the rise steadily. The final quantum of intake after complete selection process has increased as compared to the authorised intake. The inflow at training academies is 15-30 percent above their respective capacities. However, the two areas of concern where the intake is less than the authorised capacity are the non technical entries at Indian Military Academy (IMA) and Officers Training Academy (OTA). The success stories have been the Technical Entry Scheme (TES), Technical Graduate Course (TGC), Short Service Commission (SSC - technical) and University Entry Scheme (UES). Hence, going by the numbers of intake, the statement generally heard that the number of candidates wanting to join the Indian Army has decreased is false.

There has been no compromise in the quality of intake of candidates. The quality of intake has been religiously ensured by adhering to stringent selection criteria in that the SSB standards have not been lowered over the years. Out of all the entries, TES has been a success story. The technical threshold of officers has been enhanced. As newly commissioned officers from TES entry are being commissioned into non-technical arms also. Also, a fair percentage of the cadets joining at IMA (non technical entries) are qualified engineers. The surplus qualified candidates in NDA are being absorbed by Indian Navy. In the women entry scheme, the quality of women officers is excellent at the time of intake/commissioning.

The efforts required to make up for the shortage of officers include modifying the cadre structure, making SSC attractive by granting leave for professional enhancement training, providing lump sum grant, extending ECHS and CSD facilities and age relaxation in civil services examinations. A major boost is required in the form of capacity building in the form of enhanced vacancies, building

infrastructure (accommodation, training areas, firing ranges, sports fields etc), employing more serving and civilian instructors etc. It is recommended to introduce SECOM entry and restructure Permanent Commission (SL).

In addition, there is a requirement to empower the officers post retirement. As far as the government is concerned, the gestation period for various proposals to fructify is very long. There is an urgent need to work on this front for timely formulation of policies and their efficient implementation.

In service Management of Officers in Indian Army – Lt Gen SA Hasnain, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Retd), former Military Secretary, IHQ of MoD (Army)**

When the current Chief of Army Staff, Gen Bikram Singh took over, around 70 per cent of the issues raised as part of Key Result Areas (KRAs) were concerned with the Adjutant General (AG) and Military Secretary (MS) branches. A major issue concerned with human resource development in the Indian Army relates to the delays in decision making. In addition, the problem of trust deficit leads to delayed outcomes on promotions, appointments etc. Several other issues that are identified as deterrents to effective in service management of officers in the Army include lack of confidence in the MS branch, uncertain policies due to lack of continuity, complex quantification selection system, Ajai Vikram Singh Committee (AVSC) cadre management issues, issues related to women officers, support versus regular cadre, management of senior officers and legal issues.

The MS branch is always involved in the above mentioned issues seeking access to the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Army Chief periodically. But, the silver lining is that transformation is on its way. Without transformation of manpower issues, Army cannot move forward as far as transformation of equipment, operations and technology is concerned.

A very crucial issue of officer management pertains to the emotional aspect. A happy and content officer cadre is required to maintain a happy Army. To look into the emotive aspects, officers with Human Resource managerial skills are required in the MS branch which has evolved a policy of playing the role of friend to the officers rather than playing 'God'. Some positive changes brought about in the MS branch to facilitate efficient officer management are implementation of interactive postings where officers can give their preference of stations, introduction of an interactive website where officers can directly interact with the MS branch officers, efficient management of field to peace and peace to field postings.

The MS branch needs to emulate the Indian Air Force (IAF) example to maintain stability as far as postings and officers' tenures per posting are concerned. As of

now, the practical implementation is very difficult because of the sheer numbers involved in the Army. Due attention must be given to exploitation of officers' talent and their placement in the right branch with extended or rotational tenures and a better man management system.

Some issues that need to be given a thought pertain to requirement of Emergency Commissioned Officers (ECO) during a war like situation, optimising the time period of training and courses, requirement of a lean regular cadre and large support cadre, management of artificial inflation, management of challenges related to the command exit model, higher level management and the appraisal system.

Post Service Empowerment of Officers of Indian Army – Lt Gen K R Rao, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), former DG Arty

A look at the induction and retirement pattern for officers in the Indian Army shows that intake per year is approximately 1800 officers whereas premature retirement and superannuation is about 1475. The statistics of cadre strength stands as follows:

- Lt Gen - 90 (0.3%)
- Maj Gen - 297 (1%)
- Brig - 1127 (3.6%)
- Colonels - 5128 (16.5%)
- Lt Col and Below - 31,000

When the average service span of an Army Officer is considered, one finds that there is a need for a second career. However, the jobs generally demanded out of retired army officers in the job portals generally direct towards a consultant or for a security officer. But the fact of the matter is a retired Army Officer is capable of much more than such offerings. Therefore, there is a need for training for duration of 1-2 years to prepare officers for a second career. However, it is also worth mentioning here that there is also a lack of political will when it comes to lateral placements. It has been argued that expenditures to the tune of Rs. 6000 crore can be saved if there is a lateral transfer from the Armed Forces to the paramilitary forces (Assam Rifles), Central Armed Police Forces (BSF and CRPF), and other central/state government services.

As far as the selection process of the Armed Forces is concerned, it is considered one of the best in the world, which produces great officers. As a matter of fact, an

officer whose tenure extends upto 32 years imbibes the culture, which takes him/her towards achievement in any given area of employment. Within that timeframe, there is also an evolvement among the officers of certain character with analytical approach, which enables problem solving which highlight the efficiency of an officer. Not only this, they are also capable of taking initiative with stress management capability which enables forward movement of any given initiatives while functioning in diverse groups. Also, while fitness and tenacity of an army officer is acknowledged, they are also capable of persuasion and motivation.

When one looks at absorption of an army officer in the corporate world, one has to keep in mind the corporate need for a good leader. A good member will be a good leader. Reorientation is important to get into civilian domain as there is lack of domain knowledge amongst officers about the nature of their job and intricacies of labour laws. This in turn hampers officers' adjustment in the new environment. Officers should shed rigidity in their approach. Reorientation helps in making an officer more flexible and capable to survive in any non-military domain. Corporate world has realised that there is immense potential among the retired army officers. In their view army officers are confident and with good leadership skills; however, there is a need to have a mindset to learn while on the job. Army officers' knowledge of finance is weak and needs attention.

Director General of Resettlement (DGR) courses are of relevance to enable reorientation of officers to civil life. However, there is a need for DGR to update. This also brings the issue of study leave. Study leave as a tool for officer management need to look at the duration of study leave. More officers can be given study leave of lesser duration thus empowering larger number of officers. It has been argued that three years residual service criteria/ban to quit services after study leave is too long. There is a need to look at an appropriate duration of study leave and the issue of residual service. All in all what is demanded of the Indian Army as an organisation is to find some ways to handle the post retirement years. Industrial attachments for an officer before retirement are some of the suggested ideas.

There is a need for assistance as far as transition is concerned. While there is a recognition of the fact that there are lots of things to be learnt, but during the service no steps are being taken to address such issues. Indian Army officers have also been the best ambassadors for the Force to the outside world. Therefore, there will be no entry in the corporate world if there is no policy for dignified exit from the organisation.

In the present times corporates are aware about the army officers' capabilities and are willing to absorb them. Hence, there is a need for the officers to look beyond

their own domain prior to retirement because there is a need to identify work preference. They should keep in mind that corporates seek core competencies. One of the challenges is that discussing retirement issues seems to be a taboo. There is an element of shyness among the officers to discuss about retirement. This attitude of the officers should be shunned and they should prepare themselves for a second career while looking out for opportunities. They should plan towards getting absorbed sooner rather than later. Everyone who is retiring also needs to attend certain courses in institutions such as the IIM. What is of prime importance for officers who are planning to retire is to talk about and explore options. While there are abundance of opportunities, they will be availed only and only if there is an interaction and proactive engagements.

Discussion

Most part of the discussion revolved around systems in the Indian Army, which demanded updates for better efficiency and relevance. There were comments on the perceived challenges in the Army in the management of senior officers. If the officers at the top are not managed properly, they create problems which affect the lower ranking officers. For the efficient functioning of the organisation, suggestion of consulting with the junior officers as an important aspect was also put forth.

Various queries related to interaction with bureaucrats by the Army, in-service management, data management, quantification system, plight of the veterans, pensionable service, 360-degree aspect in the Army, about SSB standards, about availing specialised services, absorption in industry post retirement, ballot rights for soldiers, etc. were discussed in the seminar.

Responses to the varied queries included and recommendations of the three panellists included the following issues:

- Dealing with the MoD being a frustrating experience, there is recognition of the fact that on an institutional basis there are serious flaws in dealing with the Ministry. The need is to have senior army officers within Ministry who understand the need of the organisation. There is also a need for inter-personnel skills to facilitate better communication.
- There is need for review of the quantification system for promotions/nomination on career courses. The award of SM (D) awarded to officers in CI Ops/war like situations/active hostilities on LC/IB must be considered at par with award of gallantry award SM(G) in the quantification system. There are serious concerns about quantification system for the

officers promotion and should be relooked in totality once it comes up for review in near future.

- The officers should be sent on deputation with the industries/corporate world. The detailed modalities can be worked out.
- Talent management need has been recognised. While it is not only about bringing financial knowledge to the officers, it is also equally important to recognise and harness the right talent.
- The short command and staff tenures have affected continuity in the policies. There is a need for longer tenures in the rank of Maj Gen & Lt Gen for better policy implementation.
- The 360 degree input is only about confirmation of inputs. Some exposure has to be given comprehensively; however, there is a need for a specialised expertise.
- The policy for grant of partial pension exists with the government. As a matter of fact, partial pension is the solution to most of the problems facing the organisation. Pension is the bottomline.
- Non Functional Up gradation (NFU) is applicable to civil services employees and other Category A services but the same is not applicable to armed forces personnel. This is leading to resentment amongst middle level officer cadre and presents avoidable protocol issues especially when these officers have to deal with their civilian counterpart. Though the pay commission mentions that the grade pay will not be taken as basis of seniority; however, on ground this is not the case.
- There are numerous anomalies in the pay and perks of armed forces personnel vis a vis their civilian counterparts. These have been submitted in detail to the central government but no decision has been taken on these issues. These need to be resolved on priority. The perks and privileges affect the morale of officers and the jawans.

Concluding Remarks: Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch, SM, VSM (Retd), Director CLAWS

MajGen Dhruv C Katoch thanked the esteemed panellists for their valuable views on the issues pertaining to human resource management in the Army and their recommendations. He also thanked the audience for their remarks and comments on the subject.

