

## Addressing Stress-Related Issues in Army

The biggest problem is the soldier's helplessness in resolving property disputes back at home that makes a soldier feel tense and helpless. There are several instances of neighbours or even own brothers making use of soldier's long absence from home to encroach on his property. The exigencies of service prevent the soldier from being able to pursue the case. This problem had been identified several years ago, but little has been done except for every defence minister writing routine letters to chief ministers requesting sympathetic disposal of land disputes involving soldiers. It is almost a joke in the ministry that every defence minister's first action after taking charge is to write to chief ministers to help expedite soldiers land disputes. And it ends there. The stress-related issues in a soldier's life are closely linked with welfare and need to be addressed most sincerely by all agencies concerned with the welfare of soldiers.



A Research Fellow at IDSA, Col. K. C. Dixit is an alumni of National Defence Academy. He was commissioned into the Army in 1983. He has commanded a Corps Operating Signal Regiment in Counter Insurgency Operations (OP RHINO) in the Eastern Theatre. He is an experienced communication planner and executor and was awarded the COAS Commendation Card for displaying exceptional devotion to duty and tact in handling men and resources and dealing with local population and civil administration in CI

environment.

He has planned and handled mobilization and subsequent administration of a division size force on western borders during OP PARAKRAM.

He was Director ISTT at Integrated HQ of MOD (Army) before joining IDSA, and was responsible for training and HRD of more than 90,000 personnel of Corps of Signals.



**K C Dixit**

### Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses

No.1, Development Enclave, Rao Tula Ram Marg,

Delhi Cantt., New Delhi - 110 010

Tel. (91-11) 2671-7983 Fax.(91-11) 2615 4191

E-mail: [idsa@vsnl.com](mailto:idsa@vsnl.com) Website: <http://www.idsa.in>



Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi

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**K C Dixit**



**Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses  
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Delhi Cantt., New Delhi - 110 010  
Tel. (91-11) 2671-7983  
Fax.(91-11) 2615 4191  
E-mail: [idsa@vsnl.com](mailto:idsa@vsnl.com)  
Website: <http://www.idsa.in>

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# Introduction

No human being is exempted from stress. Stress causes a number of biological changes and is intended to activate the body's fuel reserves. The soldiers are no exception except that they are comparatively in an ideal stress breeding environment due to frequent and large number of uncertainties/ changes vis-à-vis civilian counterparts with similar service conditions. When we are stressed, our pulse, blood pressure and breathing rate increases. This in turn augments the amount of available energy. The heart beats rapidly under stress and begins to pump a greater quantity of blood with each beat. The bronchial tubes now expand to channelise extra air with each breath. The blood vessels supplying the muscles expand as well. The palms of the hands and the soles of the feet begin to sweat. Stress is evidenced to be one of the causative factors for lifestyle disorders such as backaches and sleeplessness, hyperacidity, gas, chronic fatigue syndrome, heart disease, diabetes and even cancer.<sup>1</sup> In addition, hormonal imbalances caused by stress responses can cause fibroid tumours and endometriosis. Stress is also linked to infertility problems among couples.<sup>2</sup> The chronic stress responses can either lead to aggression or depression in people, depending on the personality traits of individual. While the individuals with aggressive attitude suffering from chronic stress are prone to commit fratricide, the individuals with depressive tendencies are prone to commit suicide.

There were as many as 635 cases of suicide including attempted suicides and 67 cases of fratricidal killings in the three services of Armed Forces during the years 2003 to 2007. These statistics also indicate that Army was worst affected by this malady in terms of

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1. Based on inputs from Dr Mukesh Batra as published in his article "Stress Causes a Number of Biological Changes" in Bangalore Times, *The Times of India* dated October 16, 2010, p.21.
  2. Ibid.

number of cases of suicides and fratricides in each of the year during this period.<sup>3</sup> The statistics are chilling. According to Ministry of Defence, every third day a soldier is killing himself, at a rate higher than the toll taken by the militants. From 2007 to May 2010, 208 soldiers lost their lives in actions against militants while 368 soldiers killed themselves during this period. Another 15 to 30 soldiers try to kill themselves every year, but fail. The worry is that they might try again.<sup>4</sup> This alarming trend of suicides and fratricidal killings in the Armed Forces during the recent past is attributable to enhanced stress environment leading to psychological imbalance in the soldiers. The 31<sup>st</sup> Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence have been informed by the Ministry of Defence that seven studies on issues related to stress management have been conducted by the Army since 2005 besides an internal study the Indian Air Force on suicides reported during the period 2002-2007. An in-house study by Indian Navy on 'Occupational Stress in Naval Personnel' has also been conducted.<sup>5</sup> As per these studies, the main causes identified among troops are changing socio-economic environment in the country and domestic problems and there is apparently no systemic failure as suicides attributable to work-related reasons are few.<sup>6</sup>

Till a year ago, the suicide rate was more than 100 a year. Improved psychiatric help and better manpower coordination brought down the number to 89 in 2009. Yet, it remains a subject of serious concern since there have already been 43 suicides in just five months from January to May 2010. The Army has been putting up a brave face saying that the suicide rate per thousand is still lower than that among the civil population.<sup>7</sup> However, Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani, a

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3. Fourth report on Action Taken by the Government of India on the Recommendations Contained in the 31<sup>st</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (2009-2010) (14<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on "Stress Management in Armed Forces", pp. 01-39.

4. Syed Nazakat, "The War Within", *TheWeek*, August 1, 2010, p. 01.

5. No. 3, p.12.

6. Ibid, p.12.

7. Syed Nazakat, no. 4, p. 1.

member Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence which recently examined the issue of stress management in the armed forces, would not buy the argument. He said that the suicide rate within the Army is shocking and does not stand to logic. Since soldiers are theoretically screened for mental illness frequently and are being medically examined at least once a year, it may not be right to compare the statistics of general people with the armed forces' personnel. Soldiers have access to counselling and health services that millions of ordinary people can not afford.<sup>8</sup>

The million-strong force, according to the analysts, is under tremendous stress. In fact, it is true that army is losing more soldiers in suicides and fratricides than in action against the enemy. Most experts attribute the growing stress to deteriorating morale, poor service conditions, denial of leave at the required time, unattractive pay and promotions, early retirement ages, communication gap with superiors etc.<sup>9</sup>

This paper attempts to discuss the main causes of stress in army including cases of suicides and fratricides, studies on stress-related incidents, actions taken by the organisation/ government to address the issue and finally recommend focus areas. The methodology adopted involved study of literature, reports, journals, interaction and survey during a field trip.

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8. Colonel P.K. Vasudeva (retd), "Rising Suicides in Army Restore Dignity and Improve Pay", New Delhi, August 3, 2007, retrieved from [http://www.sarkaritel.com/news\\_and\\_features/infa/august07/03suicide-in-army.htm](http://www.sarkaritel.com/news_and_features/infa/august07/03suicide-in-army.htm) on July 28, 2010.

9. Ibid.

# Main Causes of Stress in Soldiers

The author carried out a field trip to interact with the Officers, JCOs and Other Ranks in formations and units of northern command in November 2009. The interaction was through a set of two separate questionnaires. After obtaining the responses from the respondents, an interactive questions and answers session was also organised. The survey sample data consisted of 100 officers, 100 JCOs and 300 Other Ranks. The questionnaire along with responses placed at ANNEXURE-I was aimed at evaluating operational and domestic environment.<sup>10</sup> The questionnaire along with responses placed at ANNEXURE-II was aimed at assessing presence of stress among army personnel.<sup>11</sup>

The stress can be triggered among soldiers due to any change or event that happens. It is not necessary that all factors brought out in this paper cause stress in all individuals. These factors do not cause stress in a mathematical measure. It could be a single factor or it could be a number of factors depending upon the personality traits of an individual that make him react to a stressor. The effort here is to bring out all the factors that may initiate stress reaction in soldiers due to typical working environment, compulsions and restrictions imposed on soldiers during their service period.

One of the most significant parameter which needs to be digested before analysing stress-related issues in soldiers is the importance of welfare in their lives. It has to be remembered that welfare, motivation and stress-intensity in a soldier's service to nation are closely interlinked and mutually inter-dependent. A soldier whose

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10. Refer to ANNEXURE-I of this paper. The responses were obtained during a field trip to J & K during November 2009.

11. Refer to ANNEXURE-II of this paper. The responses were obtained during a field trip to J & K during November 2009.

professional, social, financial and domestic needs are met adequately remains motivated to give his ultimate to the nation and stress-intensity in such a soldier remains within the optimum limits depending upon his personality traits.

An analysis of factors in the sample survey related to operational as well as domestic environment suggests that the cumulative effect of the professional and domestic pressures induces varying levels of stress in the army personnel. The operational environment has been covered with relation to facets of job satisfaction, living conditions including recreational facilities, service conditions including pay and allowances, food, leave, promotion, postings and tenures in operational and high altitude/ difficult areas, and aspect of inter-personal communication among peers, colleagues and subordinates. As far as domestic environment is concerned, the factors that play significant role in performance within constraints of the organizational climate have been addressed. The domestic factors considered during the interaction, the compounded effect of which bears significance in discharge of duties by army personnel are domestic worries regarding housing problems, education of wards, marital discords, medical problems of family members, financial problems and inability to resolve disputes during leave. The organisational climate and service conditions including growth in organisation (promotions) have been considered based on the interaction and feedback. The causes of stress are enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs.

### **Responsiveness of Civil Administration**

As per the Director General of Armed Forces Medical Services, Lt Gen N.K. Parmar, more often it is the problem back at home that makes a soldier feel helpless and drives him/ her to suicide than work-related stress. In its report of 04 April 2010, Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence pointed out that the inability of the soldiers to solve their family problems due to operational requirements and other constraints within which they have to work results in enhanced levels of negative stress which leads to behavioural problems including

suicides and fratricides.<sup>12</sup> Suicides and fratricides do not happen suddenly. There are warning signals, such as poor motivation after returning from home, sudden mood changes, high irritability and at times drug addiction or alcohol dependency. Such signs are accompanied by sleep disorders and growing pessimism. These lead to problem with spouse or superiors and then total dysfunction. Depression then worsens into panic, anger and rage. According to the battalion commanders, the biggest problem is the soldier's helplessness in resolving property disputes back at home that makes a soldier feel tense and helpless. There are several instances of neighbours or even own brothers making use of soldier's long absence from home to encroach on his property. The exigencies of service prevent the soldier from being able to pursue the case. This problem had been identified several years ago, but little has been done except for every defence minister writing routine letters to chief ministers requesting sympathetic disposal of land disputes involving soldiers. It is almost a joke in the ministry that every defence minister's first action after taking charge is to write to chief ministers to help expedite soldiers land disputes. And it ends there.<sup>13</sup>

The 31<sup>st</sup> Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence had asked the Ministry of Defence to make institutionalised arrangements in close coordination with state governments / officials and put in place a computerised mechanism to monitor progress of each complaint received from defence service personnel or their family members.<sup>14</sup> The defence ministry replied that the matter relating to possibility of making statutory provisions in the Services Acts had been examined in consultation with the ministry of home affairs and it had not been found advisable by the ministry of home affairs since public, police,

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12. <http://week.manoramaonline.com/cgi-bin/MMOnline.dii/portal/ep/the-war-within>, retrieved on July 28, 2010.

13. Ibid.

14. No. 3, p. 18.

local governance, land and revenue etc happen to be state subjects.<sup>15</sup> This does not resolve the problem. Are states not part of Indian Union?

### **Inter-Personal Relationship**

Another major reason for stress in the armed forces relates to conflict in inter-personal relationships. Armed forces community has a culture of its own, where sense of belonging and responsibility are cultivated in an individual to display camaraderie.<sup>16</sup> Admittedly, the existing mechanism in this regard needs to be strengthened because of fresh environment of stress and strain. Needless to say that the officers and junior-commissioned officers posted at platoon/ company/ unit level have to be sensitised towards the needs of soldiers both as an individual and a group. This assumes greater significance as the soldiers now being inducted in the armed forces possess a better educational and awareness level. There is definitely a need to change mind set of senior officers in the armed forces. The appropriate improvements in the existing system are the need of hour to ensure better interaction between armed forces personnel at various levels. The soldiers have to be encouraged to share their problems with their seniors and emphasis has to be laid to redress their genuine grievances.

### **Shortage of Officers**

As on March 4, 2010, there was a shortage of approximately 12,000 officers in the Army and this shortage adversely affects the functioning at the unit level.<sup>17</sup> Vide Ministry of Defence India Press Release of July 15, 2009; there was a deficiency of over 14,300 officers in the three services as per details given below:

<b>Army</b>	<b>Navy</b>	<b>Air Force</b>
11387	1512	1400

15. Ibid, p.19.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid, p.21.

The Army in particular is having a large pool of deficiency in the number of officers. This shortage of officers is leading to greater stress among junior and middle level officers owing to the need to perform multiple functions and inadequate time and opportunity essential for intimate administration of personnel under command. Considering the fact that such shortage of officers coupled with stressful conditions in the most inhospitable climate, terrain and environment, particularly in counter-insurgency operational areas, impinge upon performance of both officers and soldiers. Hence, it is high time to initiate concrete and result-oriented steps to reduce stress at unit/ sub-unit level.

### **Tenure Policy**

Tenures of armed forces personnel in counter-insurgency and high altitude areas need to be further streamlined so as to contain stress levels specific to personnel posted in such environment.

### **Ambition Fulfilment of Officers**

During the course of discussion with the middle rank officers, it came out clearly that performance reporting system does not take into account the real worth of individuals and in the existing system, the pen-picture and figurative assessment in Annual Confidential Reports hardly match. There is a strange tendency to inflate/overrate reports of officers posted in peace stations. Almost every officer in a peace station is rated above average and many are outstanding. What are the objective conditions that permit such an inflated performance appraisal in a peacetime environment? What are the practical challenges and difficulties that the officers face here and must measure up against? There is a tendency towards an exaggerated emphasis on peacetime spit and polish and event management/hospitality related chores, as the only measurable indices of performance. This can lead to a distortion of basic values and combat ethos.

Beneath the lip of his helmet, an army officer is a common man with family having related problems and career ambitions. In addition, the officer suffers from stress of combat. The only way to stay alive is to

keep all their senses on full alert at all times.<sup>18</sup> After partial implementation of A.V. Singh Committee Recommendations, the select grade full colonels have lost out miserably. The stress in these officers is expressed to be tremendous after their respective command tenures. Drop in their satisfaction level has been noticed during various interactions. They felt that a gap of mere one increment between a time-scale and select grade colonel is not commensurate with the assigned responsibilities. There is also a point in what these officers make about their relative status within forces after missing a promotion to the rank of a brigadier. While majority of para-military officers in BSF, CRPF, ITBP and Police make it to the post of one-star official (DIG), all select grade colonels in army do not become a brigadier. In Indian Navy, all select grade captains (colonel equivalent) become commodores (brigadier equivalent) after putting in five years of service as select grade captain. This is not practiced by the army under the pretext that commodore rank is for holding non-command appointments. There is definitely a need for an immediate cadre review to ensure grade pay and perks at par with civilian counter-parts with similar service brackets.

### **Non-Availability of Quicker Appellate Mechanism**

One of the reasons for increasing stress in armed forces relates to non-availability of quicker appellate mechanism to deal with service-related problems and disputes etc.

Keeping in view the fact that a large number of cases relating to service matters of a personnel from armed forces are pending for a long time in various courts of law, there is definitely an urgent need to make earnest efforts for establishing the armed forces tribunals at remaining places.

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18. No. 3, p. 21.

## **Psychological Effects of Low Intensity Conflict Operations (LICO)**

A number of studies have been carried out on psychological effects of low intensity conflict operations on officers and soldiers. Such operations are characterized by limitations of armaments, tactics and levels of force applied. The troops trained in conventional warfare experience significant stress in LICO environment.<sup>19</sup> In such operations the security forces end up fighting an elusive enemy (in the absence of reliable intelligence) and have to face active resentment of the local population. Ambiguity of aim, lack of visible success and high casualty rates tend to erode morale among security forces.<sup>20</sup>

### **Unpredictable Factors**

Several unpredictable factors such as battle fatigue, unseen threats, extended field tenures, absence of adequate recreational avenues, domestic feuds, problems related to denial of leave at the time of requirement, unplanned railway travel, inability to ensure quality education to children and inability to meet aspirations of spouse and children increase the level of frustration, leading to stress.<sup>21</sup>

### **Social Apathy**

As per Dr. G.R. Golencha, who has served as a psychiatrist with army for over two decades, social apathy has been identified as another reason for troop frustration. A soldier believes that he is facing all sorts of difficulties to serve his nation and countrymen. The soldier has this sense of honour and duty that motivates him to face any challenges. But when people do not even bother to give him a seat in the train, he starts questioning his commitment towards his profession and the

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19. Shailender Singh Arya, "Stress Management in the Armed Forces", *Journal of the USI of India*, New Delhi, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009, p. 191.

20. *Ibid*, p.191.

21. *Ibid*, p.191.

nation. There is a direct link to apathy in some of the cases of suicides.<sup>22</sup>

### **Humiliating Remarks**

Most cases of fragging (killing of superiors) result from humiliating taunts by seniors on mundane matters. Due to shortages of officers, the commanding officer is unable to devote necessarily required time to his troops for counselling. The commanding officer's inability to spare time for his troops demoralises a soldier. Junior leaders tend to over-step their powers and indulge in passing humiliating comments to their aggrieved subordinates at critical moments. This triggers emotions of revenge in the already aggressive soldier and generally results into fratricidal killings. In case such an affected soldier is under depression, he tends to commit a suicide.

Any incident or attempt of a suicide or fratricide in a unit makes the commanding officer answerable and it gets reflected in his confidential report as a negative point.<sup>23</sup> Such a practice causes stress even among commanding officers and other senior officers, looking up for a higher promotion.

### **Poor Leadership**

Armed forces need proper leaders instead of psychiatrists and psychologists to treat the soldiers. The call of the hour is quality leadership to motivate their soldiers in thick and thin.<sup>24</sup> Poor leadership leads to uncontrolled spread of stress among soldiers not only in counter-insurgency environment but also in peace stations. The poor quality of intake of military officers is due to fall in standards of

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22. <http://week.manormaonline.com/cgi-bin/MMOnline.dII/ep/the-war-within>, retrieved on July 28 2010.

23. Ibid.

24. Colonel P.K. Vasudeva (retd), "Rising Suicides in Army Restore Dignity, Improve Pay", *Infā*, New Delhi, August 3, 2007, retrieved from [http://www.sarkaritel.com/news\\_and\\_features/august07/03/suicide-in-army.htm](http://www.sarkaritel.com/news_and_features/august07/03/suicide-in-army.htm) on July 28, 2010.

candidates applying to join forces. Joining armed forces is the last priority of the capable youth simply because of poor service conditions and poor/ limited promotional/ growth avenues. Today's youth is competent enough to observe the deteriorating standards in status and pay packages of defence services officers despite harsh working environment vis-à-vis their civilian counter-parts with similar service-bracket and service conditions.

### **Retiring Blues**

The soldiers retire at a comparatively much younger age. Most of the soldiers retire after 18 years of service when they are hardly 36 to 40 years of age. The real burden of looking after their children, spouse and old parents begins at this crucial age. Bulk of the officers retire at an age of 54 years due to early retirement ages strictly linked with higher promotions which are limited in number due to pyramidal hierarchy in organisation. This is the time when they are expected to share major domestic responsibilities<sup>25</sup> like higher education of children, construction of a house, marriages of children, attending to obligations towards aged parents. It is at this age that their source of income suddenly shrinks and they find themselves on roads despite all qualifications and experience. Starting a fresh career at this age is not an easy proposition. This leads to high level of stress among officers and soldiers by adversely impacting their social standing including their spouse, children and other dependants like aged and ailing parents, unmarried sisters etc.

### **Memories of Unintentional Slaying**

The combination of combat exposure and ready access to guns can be lethal to anyone mulling suicide. Combat exposure can at times lead to trauma-such as seeing flashbacks of combat, killings or face of a fallen comrade who might have told you about his wife or children just before quitting this world. Memories of unintentional slayings can also haunt them for long. "We had laid an ambush for militants in one

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25. Ibid.

of the villages in Kupwara”, a service officer recounted a June 1993 incident with pain in his voice. “After a while, we saw three men in kashmiri pheren (a long dress) moving around. The troops asked them to stop for security check. Instead of stopping for security check, they started running away”. Troops shouted at them saying, “Stop, do not run, we will fire if you do not stop.” They did not stop and continued to run. The troops fired. On body search all three men were found to be innocent villagers. For almost four years, the officer was haunted by violent flashbacks of that incident. He still would not reveal who pulled the trigger.<sup>26</sup>

### **Reluctance in Seeking Psychiatrists Help**

The personnel in the armed forces are prompted to hide their mental problems as the referral to a psychiatrist for treatment is considered a 'stigma' which may adversely affect the career of service personnel. Since such cases have been identified to be causative factors for stress,<sup>27</sup> the system of referring a soldier for psychiatrist's evaluation by the commanding officer needs a re-look. Retaining the conditional option of AFMSF-10 defeats the very purpose and stigma associated with this ailment continues to bother the affected soldiers.

### **Absence of Mental Health Professionals and Religious Teachers in Units**

While the strength of mental health professionals in army hospitals is lower than the required, the units in army have no mental health professionals authorized to them. Even the religious teachers to whom the soldiers can confide their worries and problems are not posted to all the units. This leaves a void in the system despite increasing instances of stress among soldiers. This difficulty is not which can not be surmounted.<sup>28</sup>

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26. No.21, Ibid.

27. No.3, p. 25.

28. Ibid, p. 25.

## **Denial of Leave at the Required Time**

The existing leave policy is being constantly monitored to ensure that everyone gets his due without compromising operational requirements. Leave under normal circumstances is generally not denied. The ministry of defence mentioned that the operational and functional requirements have to be kept in view while granting leave and this aspect can not be compromised.<sup>29</sup> Here lies the catch. Under this clause, a soldier fails to get leave when he actually needs. This is a major cause of stress in army.

Denial of leave even in times of extreme need ostensibly on the grounds of exigencies of service, operational requirements and shortage of manpower in field units does not stand to logic. It becomes a sensitive issue if the affected soldier is not able to attend social obligations in his home-town/village; it becomes a cause of stress. In case of an emergency due to open declaration of war against an enemy, no soldier would even project his requirement of leave due to deep-rooted patriotic feelings in him.

## **Travel Concessions**

Under the existing rules, one passage in entitled mode and class is authorised to service personnel and their family members every year. Now that service personnel and especially officers have been permitted to avail annual leave in three parts, travelling by train consumes a long time. The officers are permitted 40 per cent concession on rail travel on form-D and PBOR avail 50 per cent concession on concession voucher. If entitled concession is to be availed, one has to perforce travel by train only and as a result waste time enroute. Today, with cheap air travel, denial of air travel to officers for the sake of form-D utilization does not stand to logic. There is a need to extend 40 per cent concession on cheapest actual fare paid for air ticket, in case one prefers to travel by air.

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29. Ibid, p. 24.

## **Familial Reasons for Stress**

Bulk of army personnel are unable to provide quality education to their children due to reasons well known. The families and children mostly stay away from the soldiers. Since most of the soldiers are unable to provide necessary personal support, their children are unable to cope with the tough competitive requirements for seeking admission in reputed professional educational institutes for higher education. They also find it difficult to support their children financially in case they manage to seek admission. While discussing with a group of soldiers with college-going children, it was revealed that positive impact of 6<sup>th</sup> pay commission is more or less neutralized by enhanced cost of education, food-items, vegetables and rising inflation across the board. Army Welfare Education Society (AWES) runs 126 schools with a population of 1.7 lac children and 13 professional colleges in popular disciplines exclusively for the wards of armed forces personnel. The list of these professional institutions is placed as ANNEXURE-III.<sup>30</sup>

It may be noted that 126 schools and 13 professional institutions run by AWES for the wards of armed forces personnel are not sufficient to cater for the need of the entire armed forces personnel.<sup>31</sup> Also the cost of school education as well as higher education is not within reach of soldiers. This puts tremendous pressure on soldiers when they find themselves helpless in meeting the legitimate aspirations of their children.

## **Married Accommodation Shortage in Military Stations/ Cantonments**

There is still acute shortage of married accommodation of entitled for officers and men in most of the cantonments/ military stations. The situation is even worse in metro cities and other class X cities like

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30. No. 3, p. 8.

31. Ibid. p. 32.

Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune, Bangalore etc. Managing an accommodation of near entitled class in peace stations within entitled HRA is a difficult proposition, especially in class X cities. The situation is worse for soldiers posted to military units on over and above authorisation of establishment either on compassionate grounds or to perform additional duties in Delhi. Such personnel are not even considered for allotment of government married accommodation by unit located in Delhi since there is a paucity of married accommodation. This fact was revealed during an interaction with a group of soldiers at CSD complex in Delhi Cantt. This puts undue pressure on soldiers.

### **Peace Station Miseries**

Though a majority of suicide cases in army have been stated to be taking place at peace stations, it is surprising that adequate efforts are not being put to control this menace. Whenever officers and soldiers are posted in peace stations after a hard tenure in field/ counter-insurgency area away from families, they are required to spend quality time with their families and children. More often than not, they end up finding it a difficult proposition due to peace time station commitments, excessive training exercises, lack of basic amenities etc. The peace time routine tends to be perceived even harsher than operational area routine due to difficulties experienced in balancing the organisational requirements and familial aspirations. This causes stress on the officers and soldiers.

Welfare is a misunderstood term in the armed forces which needs clarification and enforcement at institutional level. Welfare of troops and their families does not mean organising barakhanas and herding families together for so-called family welfare meets.<sup>32</sup> Welfare today means good pay, proper medical, educational and housing facilities for the troops and ensuring that they get adequate time to spend with their

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32. Shailender Singh Arya, "Stress Management in the Armed Forces", *Journal of the USI of India*, New Delhi, Vol. CXXXIX, No. 576, April-June 2009, p.193.

families through timely leave from field areas and reduction in commitments in peace stations.

Peace stations are hard-won interludes between intense counter-terrorist operations and border guarding tenures. These have become 'battlefields' in other forms.<sup>33</sup> The armed forces in general and army in particular, need passage of strict instructions on 'activities' which may be permitted in peace stations to enable the troops to rejuvenate and do not remain in a state of constant alert.

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33. Ibid, p.193.

## Stress Related Studies

Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR), a laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), had conducted two studies. One of the study dealt with “Psycho-social aspect of optimizing the operational efficiency of Security Forces to combat insurgency” during September 2000 - May 2005 in the North Eastern Region. The major outcomes of the study are:<sup>34</sup>

- The three main operational stressors, like fear of torture, uncertain environment and domestic stresses are responsible for most of psychological problems in various groups of armed forces. Middle rank officers as compared to soldiers and Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) were found to be more vulnerable and stressed out.
- Mental disorders in the form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) have been observed in traumatized troops, which form the basis for various somatic symptoms.

Another study was carried out by DIPR in December 2006 on “Suicide and Fratricide among troops deployed in counter-insurgency areas”. This study suggested a number of remedial measures to deal with stress related issues in the army. Some of the suggestions of the study are:<sup>35</sup>

- Liberalised leave policy.
- Deployment of psychological counsellors in counter-insurgency areas.
- Periodic review of affected personnel by psychiatrists/psychologists.

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34. “DRDO Conducts Studies on Stresses on Indian Soldiers Dated 21/11/2007”, <http://www.india.defence.com/reports-3626>, retrieved on July 28, 2010.

35. Ibid.

- Monitoring and analysis of stress-related incidents.
- Organising stress management training programmes and dissemination of reading materials on stress management in appropriate languages etc.

There are as many as nine studies undertaken in the armed forces on suicides and matters relating to stress management. Though these studies reportedly identified specific causative factors for stress among various ranks deployed in different areas in the three services, there has been an impression that no effective follow up actions have been taken on crucial areas such as sensitizing the officers, improving basic facilities in the field etc.<sup>36</sup> Thirty-first Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence pointed out that one copy each of the only two reports relating to suicide and fratricide and on stress management was made available marked as 'secret'. The committee wondered why reports of these studies should not be made public which do not appear to contain anything sensitive or strategic and expressed that such studies can yield desired results only if the reports are made public and there are concerted actions by all concerned. The committee further suggested that the veil of secrecy should be removed from such studies and reports placed in public domain. However, the government was of the view that studies are marked 'secret' or 'confidential' since sensationalisation or selective publicity of results of these studies could have an adverse impact on the morale of the personnel of armed forces.<sup>37</sup> The government also informed the committee that the causative factors identified by these studies are being addressed and remedial measures have been undertaken.

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36. Fourth report on Action Taken by the Government of India on the Recommendations Contained in the 31<sup>st</sup> Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (2009-2010) (14th Lok Sabha) on "Stress Management in Armed Forces", pp. 13-16.

37. Ibid, p. 16.

# **Actions Taken by the Organisation: Government's Perspective**

## **Sensitisation of Military Leaders**

At appropriate level, the issue of stress and strain in service is being addressed by commanders in a comprehensive manner. Group discussion, workshops, counselling sessions and stress management courses are being conducted on regular basis to sensitise the military leaders in handling human resource under stressful conditions. Some of the measures initiated by the organisation are:<sup>38</sup>

- Addressing the grievances of service personnel by more frequent interaction with junior leaders.
- Personnel at high risk of combat stress are identified and counseled by unit commanders, regimental medical officers and junior leaders.
- Religious teachers are utilised to preach and counsel vulnerable troops.
- Training of doctors and junior leaders by service psychiatrists have been undertaken, to deal with personnel at high risk of stress-related problems.
- Regular and frequent spells of leave, turn over and rotation of personnel deployed in sensitive and stressful situations.
- All personnel returning to unit after leave are interviewed and medically examined by the regimental medical officer, who looks for any stress mark or overt sign of psychiatric illness.
- During routine medical care duties, authorised medical attendants are trained to keep an index of suspicion for symptoms or signs of psychiatric illness or stress disorders

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38. Ibid, p. 13.

among servicemen and promptly attend to them or refer them to appropriate level of specialist care.

- Buddy system is being actively pursued. Here the persons from same state, ethnic backgrounds etc are made 'buddies'. They are expected to share their problems with each other and take care of each other.
- Conduct seminars and workshops to train the trainers.
- Analysing case studies to draw out lessons and take remedial measures in cases where aspects pertaining to leadership, inter-personal relations and man-management need attention.
- Enhancement of traditional group activities such as organised physical training, games, roll-calls, sainik sammelans, sub-unit level training, field firing and recreational activities which act as stress relievers and foster spirit-de-corps.

### **Creating Pool of Psychological Counsellors**

Psychological counsellors from para-medical staff are being trained through courses at various service hospitals, as a drive to combat stress-related problems in armed forces personnel. This will help in providing timely treatment to affected personnel.

In-house training to selected Personnel Below Officers Rank (PBOR) from non-medical units has also been undertaken, to augment the existing trained counsellors. The training in the form of short courses / training capsules is being conducted at Department of Psychiatry at seven military hospitals.

To minimize the number of cases of suicides and fratricides, a mental health programme for the armed forces has been prepared and approved. This programme along with action plan for its implementation has been disseminated to all concerned. The Army has been constantly evolving steps to improve mental health of its troops.<sup>39</sup>

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39. No. 3, p. 15.

## **Welfare Organisations**

There are numerous agencies in the armed forces which are supposed to take care of the legitimate needs of personnel, ex-servicemen and their families. Distressed families of serving personnel are provided requisite help by the C & W Directorate of Adjutant General's Branch in the following manner:<sup>40</sup>

- Financial assistance based on projected requirement and merit of the case.
- Assistance in solving family problems due to criminal and civil disputes of serving personnel by approaching concerned authorities of civil administration.
- Grant educational scholarships to deserving children of serving personnel.
- To look after war widows, war disabled soldiers and their dependents. Rehabilitation Welfare Section has been established after OP VIJAY.
- The Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (ESW) is supposed to take care of the welfare activities for ex-servicemen under various schemes through organisations under it like Kendriya Sainik Board, Directorate General of Resettlement (DGR) and Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS).

## **Improving Rations and Clothing**

Based on the feedback from troops and formation commanders at various levels, the following measures have been taken to enhance the specifications and scale of rations for the troops:<sup>41</sup>

- Upgradation and enhancement in specifications of rice, pulses and tea.

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40. Ibid, p. 17.

41. No. 3, p. 10.

- Introduction of pre-cooked chicken in retort pouches, broilers in place of culled chicken and provision of chicken for all days as against five days in a week.
- Replacement of powder/ tinned milk with TPM (tetra pack milk).
- Authorisation of in-lieu items like suji, flour, bread, coffee, butter and eggs to PBOR so as to provide variety in rations.
- Provisioning of special rations to all troops deployed above 12,000 feet in areas of northern and eastern commands.
- Enhancing the condiment allowance by 84 per cent and LPG scales by 55 per cent.

Steps have been taken by the government to ensure supply of better quality of weather appropriate clothing to service personnel.

### **Improving State of Government Married Accommodation**

Stay with families is permitted in peace areas only. Border areas and high altitude areas are classified as field areas where stay with families is not permitted for operational reasons. No family accommodation exists in these areas as it is not authorised. Local formation commanders at times permit keeping of families in border areas for very short duration in existing accommodation under formation arrangements.<sup>42</sup> Government says that it is making efforts to complete the married accommodation project (MAP). In phase-I, out of 57,875 dwelling units under execution, 40,123 have been completed.

### **Liberalising Leave Policy**

Although liberalised leave policy has been put in place permitting the officers to split their annual leave into three parts with no restriction

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42. Ibid. p. 6.

on splitting of annual leave by PBOR, the ground realities present a different picture.<sup>43</sup>

As per the government, the existing leave policy is being constantly monitored to ensure that everyone gets his due leave without compromising the operational requirement. Leave under normal circumstances is not denied. However, as already mentioned, the operational and functional requirements have to be kept in mind while granting leave.

### **Tenures in Counter-insurgency/High Altitude Areas**

Tenures in counter-insurgency and high altitude areas for all ranks have been streamlined after necessary validation with respect to operational and medical requirements by the concerned authorities.<sup>44</sup> The manpower is being turned over promptly on completion of their prescribed tenure.<sup>45</sup> This is a positive achievement and needs to be highlighted.

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43. No. 3, p. 23.

44. Ibid, p. 22

45. Based on the interaction of the author with officers, JCOs and soldiers of various arms and services deployed in counter-insurgency, high altitude and low intensity conflict operations environment.

## Recommended Focus Areas

After analysing likely causes of stress in armed forces personnel which could lead to suicides and fratricides and actions taken by the government to tackle this menace based on their internal studies and studies carried out by DIPR, it is clear that all is not well. The shortage of officers in armed forces in general and army in particular is a cause of serious concern. A shortage to the tune of 12,000 officers in junior and middle ranks in army alone adversely affects the functioning. This is leading to greater stress among junior and middle level officers owing to the need to perform multiple functions and inadequate time and opportunity for intimate administration of personnel under command. Considering the fact that shortages of officers coupled with stressful conditions in the inhospitable conditions, particularly in counter-insurgency operational areas, impinge upon performance of both officers and the soldiers, it is high time that concrete result-oriented steps are taken to reduce the stress at unit level

Traditional group activities such as, organised physical training, games, roll calls, sainik sammelans, sub-unit level training, field firing and recreational activities such as barakhanas, religious and social functions, which are supposed to act as stress-busters, have become an eye wash in the absence of desired supervision due to shortage of officers, and sound impressive only during briefing of visiting dignitaries.

Mere theoretical knowledge of stress through management courses is going to yield very little in the absence of junior and middle level officers. JCOs are unable to fill the void despite best efforts. Many old-timers argue that JCOs did very well during British era, but they forget that times have changed.

Stress can actually be addressed effectively only when junior and middle level officers are continuously visible in unit / deployment areas. Mere presence of officers in difficult situations makes a soldier happy. Any one who is happy remains miles apart from stress. Need of

Indian Army today to tackle stress, is motivated junior and middle level officers. However, this will be possible only if adequate measures to assure career protection of officer cadre are implemented. To make up for the shortages of officers in Army, the service conditions have to be made attractive. There is a need for an immediate cadre review to attract right youth to join army/ other defence services. A suggested model which may attract youth to join army as an officer is placed as ANNEXURE-IV. This model will take care of satisfaction level by granting them grade pay and promotions at par with other central government employees with similar service-brackets and service conditions. Such model will also be able to take care of early retirement age in army by assuring them a service up to 60 years of age. Such arrangement will also ensure availability of officers in the ranks of Captains/ Majors/ Lt Colonels in the units and effectively be able to address stress-related issues.

The efficacy of religious teachers and para-medical staff in handling stress-related issues is questionable. Religious teachers will be able to deliver goods only if they are well trained on this issue and they understand the psychology of soldiers. The religious teachers with good educational background and self motivation can produce results provided they also have a proper relief. It is worth considering having officers, as religious teachers with Diploma in Psychology and graduation in religious science, through special recruitment. A unit should always have special dedicated staff to assist a religious teacher. Thus a religious team would be in a position to address negative effects of stress by assisting in preparing soldiers physically, emotionally and spiritually before and during deployment. Such practice will assist soldiers draw upon their personal religious faith, spiritual strength and values to share strength and confidence during any operation. Counselling by such teams is bound to allow soldiers to work through stress, fear, anxiety, anger and frustration.

Junior leaders are the first ones to identify the signals in a potential suicide risk person. Such a person has to be provided aid without delay. Suicide awareness information must be made available to all ranks and buddies be tasked to watch out for such signs/signals in their

colleagues. The prevention keys against likely suicide attempts must be used with out delay. Suggested suicide awareness information and prevention keys are placed at ANNEXURE-V.

Some of the suggested stress reduction techniques for military leaders are given at ANNEXURE-VI. These must be practiced religiously. The unit's encouragement and support of colleagues to cope with stress have a decisive effect. The unit's ability to cope with stress in operations depends primarily on how rigorously and realistically training has been conducted.

Tendency to deny leave to personnel under the pretext of operational reasons or service exigencies during normal times other than extreme emergency must be curbed. In view of cheap and readily available air travel facility, travel by rail on form-D or concession voucher or free railway warrant need to be reviewed. Re-imburement of similar concession on actual air-fare will be worth considering. This will help in saving on travel-time and thus allow service personnel to spend more time with their family members.

Shortage of PBOR in units is mainly due to excessive attachment of personnel with higher headquarters for additional administrative tasks. This tends to upset leave planning of remaining manpower and induces stress among affected lot. Such attachments need to be minimized. The requirement of manpower, for additional administrative tasks at various higher headquarters, need to be addressed by authorising suitable additional manpower on establishment. Tendency to resort to easier path by attaching personnel and extending their attachment periods indefinitely needs to be curbed ruthlessly by the higher commanders.

There is a serious need of evolving statutory provisions mandating the district authorities to address the problems and grievances of serving defence personnel within a stipulated time-frame. Mere examination of the issue relating to possibility of making statutory provisions in Services Act, in consultation with Ministry of Home Affairs, and rejecting it on the plea that public, police, local government, land and revenue etc happen to be state subjects is something that needs

correction. The central government can very well promulgate directions to state governments on this issue connected with national interests. A re-look is therefore a need of the hour to minimize the stress levels among members of the armed forces.

As far as rations in armed forces are concerned, the quality should never be allowed to be compromised under the pretext of economy. Best system of procurement to ensure quality is decentralized system.

126 schools run by AWES for the wards of armed forces personnel all over India are grossly inadequate. The members of armed forces are always worried about education of their wards. Therefore, there is a need to increase the number of schools and professional institutions for the wards of armed forces personnel.

The officers, JCOs and PBOR have to remain separated from their families even after their posting to peace stations due to non-availability of appropriate government accommodation of entitled class. There is a need to expedite married accommodation projects under execution as also undertaking more projects to overcome shortages at class X stations like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Pune, Kolkata, Chennai etc. It is worth constructing high-rise buildings instead of single/ double storey buildings.

The man-management of armed forces personnel through effective leadership is the key to controlling stress. But this issue can only be addressed if shortage of officers are overcome and mindset of senior officers gets suitably melted and gets re-casted as per the psyche of present/new generation of officers and soldiers. There is a need to adapt to newer society norms and the styles of functioning practiced by kings in the yesteryears. It is the time of simple practices and outsourcing. The leaders have to adapt quickly for creating stress-free environment. Hence need to improve inter-personal relationship be fulfilled on priority. It has to be ensured that self respect and dignity of human resource is not compromised at any cost. Protection of value and importance of an officer or a PBOR after vacating certain appointments is the organisation's responsibility towards keeping the stress levels within acceptable limits.

All hygiene and familial stress factors must be addressed realistically. Lip services to these issues can only add to frustration. Improving health services for service personnel, ex-servicemen and their dependants must be given due importance.

Training of personnel for sub-conventional warfare at par with conventional warfare from the time of recruitment has to be ensured in all training academies and training centres. Progressive cadres and on the job training even in peace tenures must be done to keep manpower always confident in their profession. A professionally confident soldier is able to cope with stress comfortably.

Studies to address stress-related issues should be permitted to be done openly if real solutions are to be found. There is nothing secretive about it. In fact troops feel good when they hear that their genuine requirements and needs are being recognised and addressed.

# Conclusion

The data of the armed forces personnel indulging in suicide and fratricide speaks that there is stress among officers and soldiers. It implies that organisation can not afford to avoid this menace. Mere teaching of stress theories in various schools of instruction is not the remedy to manage stress among all ranks in the armed forces. It is more important to tackle the factors that cause stress. There is a need to do a lot to overcome post-retirement worries of defence personnel. This issue has to be handled with all the seriousness that it deserves. Our para military forces are the best organisations where the trained officers and soldiers can find lateral placements. The technical manpower of the armed forces including officers must be absorbed by organisations like DRDO, DGQA, ITI Limited, BEL, MTNL/ BSNL etc without any loss of seniority and status. Such arrangements will not only be able to take care of early retirement ages in armed forces but also reduce training costs of those organisations. Such initiative is call of the hour to reduce tension among armed forces personnel.

Making up of shortages of officers in the junior and middle levels by making the service conditions more attractive and ensuring grade pay and promotions at par with civil services counterparts with similar service conditions and length of service is essential to address stress problems effectively. An immediate need to carry out a cadre review to ensure faster promotions to permanent commissioned officers must be recognised and implemented. The promotion policy must be transparent and designed to enhance the overall effectiveness of the Army. It must:-

- Meet Army branch/functional area and grade requirements.
- Provide career incentives.
- Be based on a “whole person concept” and potential to serve in the next grade.
- Equally identify and eliminate ineffective officers or those that

show any signs of moral turpitude or physical cowardice in the field of battle.

The Indian Officer Evaluation System must identify and nurture talent displayed in combat. Towards that end it could go for accelerated promotion for officers who put up excellent performances on the battlefield. The initial SSB (Services Selection Board) procedure involves clinical, psychological testing and forms a valuable input. This initial report and merit list must be given a basic weightage. Schools of Instruction (Important Career Courses) must carry additional weightage for promotion as this is an objective and universally accepted parameter of worth. Inflationary reporting in peace stations must be ruthlessly curbed. Joint appointments/experience must be encouraged. Uniformity of procedures must be ensured within the services. It might be worth considering removal of BOX GRADING awards in the ACRs of the officers. This shall definitely remove the biases in judging the performance of officers in various appointments since inflationary trend in awarding OUTSTANDING grade in the BOX places rates at an advantage which can harm the career of other officers with consistent profile in the existing quantified promotion-model in Army.

Unpredictable factors that contribute to stress can be addressed with open mind through change in mindset, continuous interaction and taking actions to resolve the individual and group grievances in coordination with various agencies including civil administration. The government should not shy away from enacting laws for the welfare of soldiers and their families where state governments have to play their role. Those requiring psychiatric help must be handled with utmost care and looked after. Monitoring of these cases at all levels generates confidence among ranks and file. This practice will reduce the tendency to avoid seeking psychiatric help.

The same leadership skills that apply to troop welfare and combat operations can effectively reduce or prevent combat stress reactions. Military leaders should take preventive actions and address stress symptoms as they appear. Ignoring the early warning signs can

increase the severity of stress reactions. Positive action to reduce combat stress also helps armed forces personnel cope with normal, everyday situations and makes them less likely to experience harmful combat stress reactions. Some positive actions that could help in managing stress among soldiers are:-

- Recognise that operations duration and intensity increase stress.
- Recognise that individuals and units react differently to the same stress.
- Learn the signs of stress in yourself and others.
- Recognise that fear is a normal part of combat stress.
- Rest minor stress casualties briefly, keeping them with their unit.
- Be aware of background stress sources prior to combat; e.g., family concerns and/ or separation, economic problems.
- Provide an upward, downward and lateral information flow to minimize stress due to lack of communication.
- Practice stress control through cross-training, task allocation, tasks matching and task sharing.
- Look for stress signs and a decreased ability to tolerate stress.
- Practice and master stress coping techniques.
- Face combat stress; it is unhealthy to deny the stresses of combat.

Individual and unit effectiveness is dependent upon initiative, motivation, physical strength, endurance and ability to think clearly, accurately and quickly. The longer a soldier or a military officer goes without rest and sleep, the more his thinking slows down. Continuous work declines speed and accuracy more rapidly than intermittent work. Therefore these parameters have to be monitored periodically by the senior military leaders and wherever corrections are necessary, no time should be wasted.

A junior/ middle level leader is the key to building and maintaining high morale and peak efficiency by knowing his troops and

understanding their strength and weaknesses. To maintain the same level of morale and efficiency in combat, a junior/middle level officer must understand how to recognise, prevent and personally contend with reactions to combat stress when it occurs in his outfit.

As an organisation, it has to be realised that every soldier and officer has to be treated as a human being with self respect and dignity. Before expecting the society and civil administration to display care for service personnel, the services themselves have to carry out introspection. The human resource of armed forces should not be allowed to feel neglected or unwanted after vacating certain appointments. If this aspect is sincerely addressed by the services themselves, a sharp decline in the stress levels of officers as well as PBOR will be noticed.

## ANNEXURE I

### Evaluation of Org and Domestic Environment

**Sample Size: Officers-100, JCOs-100, OR-300**

Sl. No.	Factor/ Issue	Officers	JCOs	OR
1	Marital status- Married (M)/ Unmarried (UM)	M-85 UM-15	M-99 UM-01	M-234 UM-66
2	Education - 5-8/ 8-10/ 10-12/ Graduate (GR)	-	5-8 - 02 8-10 - 37 10-12 - 48 GR - 13	5-8 - 18 8-10 - 141 10-12 - 96 GR - 45
3	Background - Village (V)/ City (C)/ Town (T)	V-22 T-20 C-58	V-66 T-30 C-04	V-216 T-48 C-36
4	Family type- Joint (J)/ Separated (S)	J-36 S-64	J-69 S-31	J-132 S-168
5	Relations with family members Happy (H)/ Troubled (T)	H-93 T-07	H-84 T-16	H-264 T-36
6	Fin Problems-Yes (Y)/ No (N)	Y-10 N-90	Y-22 N-78	Y-87 N-213
7	Any birth in family in last two yrs- Y/ N	Y-32 N-68	Y-21 N-79	Y-102 N-198
8	Any death in family in last two yrs-Y/ N	Y-28 N-72	Y-08 N-92	Y-69 N-232
9	Job loss of relative/ close friend in last two yrs- Y/ N	Y-04 N-96	Y-04 N-96	Y-54 N-216
10	Theft/loss of property / Natural calamity- Y/ N	Y-0 N-100	Y-07 N-93	Y-36 N-264
11	Marital Discord- Y/N	Y-02 N-98	Y-0 N-100	Y-24 N-276
12	Ill health/handicap in family -Y/ N	Y-22 N-78	Y-03 N-97	Y-48 N-252
13	Are you happy with your posting- Y/N	Y-81 N-19	Y-46 N-54	Y-147 N-153
14	Have you get posting of choice- Y/N	Y-42 N-58	Y-37 N-63	Y-57 N-243
15	Have you been denied/missed out on promotion- Y/ N	Y-19 N-81	Y-10 N-90	Y-36 N-264

Sl. No.	Factor/ Issue	Officers	JCOs	OR
16	Have you failed in promotion cadre- Y/ N	Y-0 N-100	Y-35 N-65	Y-39 N-261
17	How many times did you go on leave in 2007 1/ 2/ 3/ >3	1-12 2-40 3-38 >3-10	1-04 2-88 3-05 >3-nil	1-108 2-123 3-60 >3- nil
18	How many times did you go on leave in 2008 1/ 2/ 3/ >3	1-13 2-38 3-41 >3-08	1-08 2-80 3-09 >3-3	1-66 2-162 3-72 >3-nil
19	How many times did you go on leave in 2009 1/ 2/ 3/ >3	1-48 2-33 3-19 >3-nil	1-39 2-59 3-02 >3-nil	1-165 2-90 3-45 >3-nil
20	Did you get leave when required - Y/ N	Y-89 N-11	Y-88 N-12	Y-213 N-87
21	Were you sent on leave when not required- Y/ N	Y-12 N-88	Y-45 N-55	Y-96 N-204
22	Are You satisfied with professional job - Fully satisfied (FS) / Reasonably satisfied (RS)/ Unsatisfied (US)	FS-50 RS-43 US-07	FS-72 RS-22 US-06	FS-168 RS-108 US-24
23	Any task other than professional job given- Y/ N	Y-74 N-26	Y-22 N-78	Y-72 N-228
24	Are you happy to do any task other than professional - Y/ N	Y-63 N-37	Y-62 N-38	Y-150 N-150
25	Senior's style of functioning- Easy (E)/ Copeable (C)/ Difficult (D)	E-27 C-62 D-11	E-48 C-48 D-04	E-81 C-177 D-42
26	Rules & regulations are very tough and maintaining the discipline is very difficult-Never (N)/ Sometimes (S)/Always (A)	N-21 S-79 A-0	N-40 S-58 A-02	N-54 S-96 A-150
27	Do you take decisions at work- N/ S/ A	N-02 S-50 A-48	N-23 S-55 A-22	N-57 S-177 A-66

Sl. No.	Factor/ Issue	Officers	JCOs	OR
28	Do you find any difficulty in taking decisions- N/ S/ A	N-50 S-49 A-01	N-54 S-42 A-04	N-132 S-99 A-69
29	Do you complete your task in time- N/ S/ A	N-04 S-42 A-54	N-08 S-29 A-63	N-69 S-75 A-156
30	Is your working schedule overloaded- N/ S/ A	N-25 S-64 A-11	N-41 S-39 A-20	N-69 S-123 A-108
31	How many times have you been delayed in transit camp- N/ S/ A	N-66 S-33 A-01	N-57 S-36 A-07	N-96 S-51 A-153
32	Can you plan your leave- N/S/A	N-0 S-59 A-41	N-17 S-64 A-19	N-108 S-102 A-90
33	How many times have you gone on leave without reservation- N/ S/ A	N-43 S-57 A-0	N-31 S-59 A-10	N-78 S-99 A-123
34	Do you get your pay on time- N/ S/ A	N-0 S-0 A-100	N-0 S-0 A-100	N-0 S-123 A-177
35	Do you think negative - N/ S/A	N-54 S-46 A-0	N-74 S-25 A-01	N-168 S-81 A-51
36	Do you criticize yourself- N/ S/ A	N-34 S-64 A-02	N-52 S-48 A-0	N-153 S-75 A-72
37	Do you over analyse your self- N/ S/ A	N-37 S-62 A-01	N-19 S-71 A-10	N-150 S-118 A-33
38	Are your aspirations being met-N/ S/ A	N-01 S-68 A-33	N-15 S-39 A-46	N-66 S-177 A-57

Sl. No.	Factor/ Issue	Officers	JCOs	OR
39	Do you take things personally - N/ S/A	N-34 S-62 A-04	N-40 S-50 A-10	N-138 S-120 A-42
40	Do you feel your colleagues make you angry -N/ S/ A	N-24 S-73 A-04	N-50 S-45 A-05	N-132 S-126 A-42
41	Do you feel hurt when scolded - N/S/ A	N-10 S-83 A-07	N-29 S-66 A-05	N-132 S-96 A-72
42	Do you feel angry with actions /decisions of your Seniors- N/ S/ A	N-14 S-79 A-07	N-74 S-23 A-03	N-108 S-111 A-81
43	Do you feel angry with actions /decisions of your Juniors- N/ S/ A	N-17 S-79 A-04	N-49 S-48 A-03	N-144 S-111 A-45
44	Do you feel angry with actions /decisions of your colleagues- N/ S/ A	N-26 S-67 A-08	N-35 S-43 A-22	N-144 S-108 A-48
45	Are you satisfied with your food- N/ S/ A	N-0 S-16 A-84	N-12 S-21 A-67	N-105 S-138 A-57
46	Are you satisfied with your living conditions-N/ S/A	N-0 S-48 A-52	N-31 S-47 A-22	N-108 S-120 A-72
47	Are you satisfied with recreational activities in your unit-N/ S/ A	N-0 S-35 A-65	N-26 S-26 A-48	N-84 S-120 A-126
48	Do you feel comfortable communicating your problem to Seniors(S) - Y/ N Colleagues(C) - Y/ N	S-Y 100/N C-Y 100/N	S-Y 89/N11 C-Y 88/N12	S-Y 204 /N96 C-Y 213/N87
49	Does your buddy disclose his problems to you-N/ S/A	N-0 S-54 A-46	N-16 S-32 A-52	N-87 S-126 A-87

Sl. No.	Factor/ Issue	Officers	JCOs	OR
50	How much duration are you comfortable working in CI Operations - <1/ 1/ 2/ 3 (years)	<1- 0 1- 15 2- 72 3- 13	<1- 0 1- 19 2- 79 3- 02	<1- 0 1- 57 2- 132 3- 45
51	How much duration are you comfortable working in High Altitude Area -<2/ 2/ 3/ >3 (years)	<2- 05 2- 84 3- 11 >3- 0	<2- 06 2- 86 3- 08 >3- 0	<2- 91 2- 186 3- 33 >3- 0
52	Are you being relieved/posted out in time-N/ S/A	N-02 S-36 A-62	N-08 S-55 A-37	N-81 S-144 A-75
53	Do you feel your grievances are being addressed appropriately-N/ S/A	N-02 S-48 A-50	N-05 S-54 A-41	N-102 S-117 A-81
54	Do you have a history of any previous illness- Y/ N	Y- 05 N-95	Y-12 N-88	Y-96 N-204
55	Did you resort to any suicide attempt- Y/ N	Y-0 N-100	Y-0 N-100	Y-30 N-270
56	Do you use alcohol-Y/ N	Y-46 N-54	Y-34 N-66	Y-123 N-177
57	Have you increased alcohol/ tobacco consumption-)Y/ N	Y-0 N-100	Y-0 N-100	Y-30 N-270
58	Do you use drugs- Y/ N	Y-0 N-100	Y-0 N-100	Y-0 N-300
59	Do you do daily exercises-Y/N	Y-78 N-22	Y-87 N-13	Y-214 N-86
60	Do you have religious habits - Y/ N	Y-87 N-13	Y-96 N-04	Y-271 N-29

# ANNEXURE II

## Stress Assessment

Sample Size: Officers-100, JCOs-100, OR-300

Sl. No.	Event	Offrs	JCOs	OR
1	Do you feel tense, nervous, anxious or upset - Occasionally (O)/ Sometimes (S)/ Most of the times (M)	O-65 S-35 M-0	O-63 S-27 M-0	O-63 S-174 M-63
2	Do you feel low in energy, exhausted and tired- O/ S/ M	O-62 S-38 M-0	O-73 S-25 M-02	O-66 S-174 M-60
3	Do you feel sad, Depressed- O/ S/ M	O-66 S-34 M-0	O-66 S-31 M-03	O-72 S-171 M-57
4	Do you ever feel that life is not worth living- O/ S/M	O-0 S-11 M-0	O-01 S-29 M-03	O-72 S-192 M-36
5	Do you find yourself preoccupied with personal problems- O/ S/M	O-73 S-22 M-0	O-54 S-32 M-14	O-81 S-180 M-39
6	Do you feel hopeless in unpleasant situations- O/ S/ M	O-04 S-16 M-0	O-08 S-32 M-10	O-51 S-153 M-36
7	Do you feel tired in the morning - O/S/ M	O-03 S-25 M-0	O-09 S-37 M-07	O-09 S-37 M-07
8	Do you find problems in concentrating - O/S/ M	O-09 S-42 M-0	O-25 S-38 M-10	O-33 S-114 M-39
9	Do you find no self control over events in life - O/ S/M	O-05 S-25 M-03	O-08 S-29 M-03	O-63 S-153 M-30
10	Are you able to achieve the required standards- O/ S/ M	O-36 S-21 M-43	O-71 S-25 M-04	O-36 S-162 M-63

Sl. No.	Event	Offrs	JCOs	OR
11	Are you unable to solve your problems - O/ S/ M	O-81 S-19 M-0	O-49 S-36 M-15	O-27 S-147 M-78
12	Do you feel close to/by the people around you- O/ S/ M	O-20 S-11 M-69	O-51 S-30 M-19	O-54 S-168 M-57

**Note:** Certain EVENTS have not been responded by few. This means that either they have no such problem/ event in their life or they are doubtful (confused).

## ANNEXURE III

### Details of Professional Colleges for Wards of Army Personnel

Name of Institute	Location	Course Duration (years)	Degree Awarded	Annual Intake	Total Capacity	Availability of Hostel
Army Institute of Technology (AIT)	Pune	4	BE/Four Streams	240	960	Yes
Army Institute of Hotel Management	Banglore	4	BHM	60	240	Yes
Army Institute of Management Kolkata (AIMK)	Kolkata	2	MBA	120	240	Yes
Army Institute of Law (AIL)	Mohali	5	BA, LLB	80	400	Yes
Army Centre of Education (ACE)	Pachmarhi	1	B.Ed	60	60 (girls)	Yes
Army College of Dental Sciences (ACDS)	Secunderabad	5 / 3	BDS/ MDS	40/02	200/ 06	Yes
Army Institute of Education (AIE)	Delhi Cantt	1	B.Ed	100	100	Yes
Army Institute of Management & Technology (AIMT)	Greater Noida	2	MBA	120	240	Yes
Army Institute of Fashion Design (AIFD)	Banglore	2 / 3	PG Dip/BSc Fashion Technology	30/60	270	Yes
Army College of Nursing (ACN)	Jalandhar	4	BSc Nursing	50	200 (girls)	Yes
Army Institute of Higher Education (AIHE)	Pathankot	1	B.Ed	100	100	Yes
Army Institute of Nursing (AIN)	Guwahati	4	BSc Nursing	40	160 (girls)	Yes
Army College of Medical Sciences (ACMS)	Delhi Cantt	4 <sub>1/2</sub>	MBBS	100	500	Yes
<b>Total</b>				<b>1202</b>	<b>3676</b>	

## **ANNEXURE-IV**

### **Proposed Model for Cadre Review to Make Army an Attractive Career for Officers**

#### **Aim**

All permanent commissioned officers should retire at an age of 60 years and all to draw grade pay at par with civil services counterparts with similar-service bracket.

Make up shortage of officers in units at junior and middle level.

#### **Methodology**

1. Recruit maximum officers as short service officers. Permanent commission should be restricted to the number of select grade full colonels in the army. More number of academies should be planned and opened for this purpose. IMA should also conduct training for short service officers after carrying out necessary organizational changes.
2. Assured lateral placement of willing short service officers at a service bracket of 05, 10 and 14 years into para military (NSG, BSF, CRPF, ITBP, CISF, State Police Forces etc)/ other government services (including technical organisations like ITI Ltd, BEL, DRDO, DGQA etc with protection of pay, grade, seniority and growth in new service.
3. Only permanent commissioned officers should be allowed to serve in army for 60 years.
4. Option of lateral placement/ deputation into para military services and government's technical organisations should be available to permanent commissioned officers also with effect from the rank of Colonel.
5. Technical arms/ services should preferably induct technical graduates (B.Tech) at entry level. NDA should grant B.Tech/ BBA/ B.A. degrees after completion of course. B. Tech course after commissioning should be done away with to ensure

availability of officers in the units of technical arms/services.

6. Officers of same rank in senior positions should be allowed to report on other junior officers of same rank.

## **Rank Structure**

1. Abolish rank of a Lieutenant (Lt). An officer should be commissioned into army as a Captain (Capt).
2. An officer should become a Major (Maj) after putting in three years of service as a Capt.
3. An officer should become a Lt Col after nine years of total service.
4. First Selection Board be held for promotion to the rank of Colonel so that after an officer has put in 14 years service, he gets promoted to command a unit.
5. All select grade colonels should be promoted to the rank of Brigadier after putting in four years service as a select grade colonel. There should be no need of a selection board to the rank of a Brigadier.
6. All Lt Cols who could not become select grade colonels be made Time Scale Colonels after putting in a total of 22 years service.
7. Next Selection Board should be held for promotion to the rank of Major General (Maj Gen) after an officer has put in six years of service as a Brigadier.
8. Next Selection Board should be held for promotion to the rank of Lt Gen after an officer has put in six years of service as Maj Gen.
9. Special Boards should be held for selecting Lt Gens to hold appointments of Corps Commander, Army Commander, VCOAS, PSOs, Director Generals of various arms/services etc.
10. All Brigadiers should become Time Scale Maj Gens after putting in a total service of 36 years.

11. All select grade Maj Gens should become time-scale Lt Gens after putting in a total service of 36 years.
12. This will ensure one upgradation as an incentive to every select rank.

### **Upgradation of Appointments**

1. All company commanders will be of the rank of Lt Col.
2. All unit commanding officers will be of the rank of Colonel (select).
3. Brigades and Sub Areas will be commanded by Maj Gens with Brigadier being a deputy commander and all staff officers to be of the rank of colonel.
4. All divisional commanders and Area commanders will be of the rank of Lt Gens (select) with Maj Gens as their deputy commanders and brigadiers and colonels as staff.
5. All Corps Commanders will be of the rank of Lt Gen (after being a GOC of a division and COS at Corps HQ) with Lt Gen as COS and staff in the ranks of Maj Gen, Brigadiers/Colonels).
6. All Army Commanders will be of the rank of Lt Gen (after being a GOC of a Corps) with another junior Lt Gen as COS and staff in the ranks of Lt Gen/Maj Gen/Brigadiers/Colonels).
7. All category 'A' establishments will be commanded by Lt Gens with another Lt Gen as his deputy and faculty commanders/staff/ instructors will be of the ranks of Maj Gens/ Brigadiers/ Colonels.
8. All category 'B' establishments will also be commanded by Lt Gens with Maj Gen as his deputy and faculty commanders/staff/ instructors will be of the ranks of Maj Gens/ Brigadiers/ Colonels.
9. At Army HQ all ADGs will also be of the rank of Lt Gen. All

DDGs will be of the rank of Maj Gen. All directors will be of the rank of Brigadier with Colonels as support staff.

10. Lt Cols/ Maj/Capts will be posted only with the units with Colonel (select) as Commanding Officer.
11. Organisations like Training Centres, Recruiting, NCC, Resettlement, Embarkation HQ, MC/MF dets etc will be manned by time scale officers (Cols and above).
12. All posts presently held by Maj / Lt Cols at brigade /sub-area /division /area /corps/ command/ army HQ will be held by Colonels.
13. All staff appointments at brigade/ division/ corps/ command/ army HQ and category 'A' and 'B' establishments should be upgraded by one rank with no Lt Cols/ Majs/ Capts posted there-in.
14. Consider removal of BOX grading from the ACR form of the officers.

**Note: The proposals are not exhaustive and need to be studied, analysed and suitably modified by the Competent Authority.**

# **ANNEXURE - V**

## **Suicide Awareness Information**

### **Suicide Symptoms**

A person contemplating suicide:-

- Appears depressed, sad, and tearful and/ or may display changes in patterns of sleep and/ or appetite.
- Believes he/ she is in a hopeless situation.
- May talk about or actually threaten suicide, or may talk about death and dying in a way that strikes the listener as odd.
- May display changes in behaviour, appearance or mood.
- May increase or start drug or alcohol use.
- May injure self or engage in risky behaviour.
- Abandons planning for future.
- May start withdrawing from others, including family and close friends.
- May give away possessions.
- May appear apathetic, unmotivated and /or indifferent.

### **Prevention Keys**

The junior/ sub-unit leaders are the first ones to identify the signs of a potential suicide-risk soldier. The following prevention keys will provide aid to persons at anticipated risk:-

- Ask: “Are you thinking about hurting yourself?”
- Intervene immediately.
- Do not keep a secret concerning a person at risk.

- Locate help (JCO/ NCO/ doctor/ nursing assistant/ MI Room/ friend/ family/ help line).
- Inform your chain of command.
- Find someone to stay with the person. Do not leave the person alone.
- Expedite, get help immediately. A suicidal person needs the immediate attention of helpers.

## **ANNEXURE-VI**

### **Stress-Reduction Techniques for Military Leaders**

To reduce stress, the military leader should:-

- Lead by inspiration, not by fear or intimidation.
- Initiate and support stress management programmes.
- Provide information to focus stress positively.
- Ensure each person has mastered at least two stress coping (relaxation) techniques, a slow one for deep relaxation and a quick one for on the job.
- Look out for soldiers' welfare.
- Communicate with soldiers personally to learn about stressors and direct signs of stress.
- Understand that stress in response to threatening or uncertain situations is normal.
- Create a spirit to win under stress.
- Act as a role model for self-control of stress reactions.

Realistic training is the primary stress-reduction technique. It assures soldiers' maximum confidence in their skills and belief that their leaders are doing their best for them. Since the basic necessities of life assume even greater importance on the battlefield, leaders should:-

- Ensure personnel are properly trained.
- Ensure training includes understanding of combat stress and how to deal with it.
- Place welfare of subordinates before personal welfare, but keep them capable.
- Ensure personnel get as much rest as possible.

- Ensure best possible shelters are available.
- Keep soldiers well supplied with food, water and other essentials.
- Provide mail, news and information avenues.
- Provide best medical, logistical and other support.
- Maintain high morale, unit identity and esprit-de-corps.
- Ensure that experienced soldiers take care of and teach new inductees.