

Effectiveness and the Armed Forces

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Abstract: Organizations as well as executives need to work systematically on effectiveness and need to acquire the habit of effectiveness. They need to learn to feed their opportunities and to starve their problems. They need to work on making strength productive. They need to concentrate and to set priorities instead of trying to do a little bit of everything. But executive effectiveness is surely one of the basic requirements of effective organisation and in itself the most important contribution towards organisational development. Only executive effectiveness can enable this society of ours to harmonise its two needs, the needs of the organisation to obtain from the individual the contribution it needs, and the need of the individual to have organization serve as his tool for the accomplishment of his purposes. The experience of three to four years of service in military provides young men with the opportunity to encounter a variety of unusual or stressful circumstances and as a result, they may emerge from their service with an enhanced sense of their ability to cope with various problems and master hardships, which they consider to be a central component of their adult personality. Most men profit from this opportunity. A large number of youth acquire interrelated traits. The changes that occur during military service are increase in Independence, Self-confidence, and Responsibility. This is the 'trio' which is referred to as "maturity." As one becomes stronger and learns to be responsible for their professional duties, one also learns to be on their own and cope with adverse situations of life. Army is one that produces this change. It uncovers ones real nature. In army one chooses the hardest course and makes a man of him. One applies one's own will and this builds self-esteem. The army is the real test of adulthood. Thus, goes the famous words – "An officer for the time being, a gentleman for life." The Armed Forces are a talent pool for Corporate India – If Military is to be a means for preparing youth to be effective Managers in civilian sector, a key question is – Do corporate employers value these skills more or less than skills obtained in civilian sector? This is an emerging issue which has been explored. The present study may be conceptualised as developing the youth during military service so as to enable them to perform effectively in the corporate sector. Is Conscription the Answer for developing effective executives.

Keywords: Conscription, Effective, Youth, Armed Forces, Corporate

1. Introduction

Having seen and experienced what "managing" was all about in Air Force for over a period of five years, post uniform life made me inquisitive about management, and 'manager' is one who never stopped fascinating me till date. As a 'soldier turned into academic' I started delving into this exciting field of management, by matching the experience gained in those five years with academic insights accrued as a result of my foray into intellectual arena as a management educator.

Thus, began the journey, to investigate the individuals acquired and enduring traits, which speak of his/her personality and how through experience, he/she could develop certain skills and capacities. These are necessary as, managerial wisdom, knowledge, thoughts, energy and actions are going to inspire and motivate people towards an individual level and at the organizational level.

At the age in which young men leave their sheltered homes for college life or for a job, in the spring of their years, there are those who join the Armed Forces and begin their journey of being a "soldier". This age span known in psychological literature as late adolescence, youth or the transition to adulthood, has recently become a focus of interest and research. The social conditions and life experiences, which one has undergone during these formative years have important effects on personality development, values, and the course of growth of young men.

The Armed Forces, through its multifaceted programs, moulds young men and women into responsible and disciplined citizens with values of secularism, national unity and selfless service. It, at the same time, provides the youth with ample opportunities for personality and character development as well as for channelizing their abundant energy towards nation building.

1.1 Is Conscription the Answer

Conscription (also known as Compulsory service, The Draft, the Call-up or National Service) is the compulsory enrolment of people to some sort of public service, most often military service. It is a general term for involuntary labour demanded by an established authority. It is most often used in the specific sense of government policies that require citizens to serve in the armed forces.

The Conscription dates back to antiquity and continues in some countries to the present day under various names. Used by the Royal Navy between 1664 and 1814, it was called impressment, or "the press" Most countries that maintain conscripts now refer to the practice as national service. Many countries do not maintain conscription forces instead relying on a volunteer or professional military most of the time, although many of these countries still reserve the possibility of conscription for wartime and during time of crises.

1.2 Arguments for Conscription

- Valuable Training

Some communitarians argue that peacetime conscription is an ideal tool for teaching population basic important skills, such as first aid, swimming, and wilderness survival. They also argue that conscription makes for a more disciplined and skilled workforce, as men and women leave the military and take the skills which they honed their back to their civilian jobs.

- **Rite of passage**

In many countries, conscription serves as a rite of passage. The prospective man is tested, to see whether or not he can endure the hardships of military training and earn the right to be called a man. Military service, in countries that have it, may then be seen as the test of manhood. Conscription may inspire camaraderie, unifying a people: all able-bodied males together as a union have had the same experience and are soldiers, and that may create unity and a national spirit. As to whether the creation of a 'national spirit' is a positive thing remains to be decided.

Draft as protection against democracy-destroying military coups

Some argue that conscription should be connected to democracy. A professional army can possibly become a dangerous state-within-a-state. Military virtues such as obedience to orders and respect for the chain of command can possibly be abused by aspiring dictators. Armed forces can attract consciously or unconsciously people who prefer authoritarian systems. The army can even become the only chance for a job and decent life in times of unemployment (this was crucial in the rise of Japanese militarism), or for despised minorities. Such people may come to regard the army as their home and elevate it above the state.

However, conscription creates numbers but not quality. The quality of the reserve must be maintained by steady refresher exercises. In several countries where conscription is in use, the length (and quality) of the training is virtually similar to that of professional armies.

The losses to conscript armies on the battlefield are often large, but waste of manpower is limited by the fact that the supply of able-bodied males in a nation is not inexhaustible. In addition, any government waging a prolonged war with conscripts will risk losing popular support and following loss of power. For a democratic government, this limits the use of conscript forces for wars that are fights for existence.

- **Conscript quality**

The manpower quality of a conscript force is considered poor in many countries and conversely, governments are reluctant to invest in professional-quality training of conscripts, giving poor-quality- forces. However, in some countries with conscription, the personnel diversity of the conscript force is considered its greatest strength. Admittedly, there are persons who would not be employed by a professional force, but these are a minority and can be discharged for medical reasons in extreme cases.

However, the conscript force may also receive the best of the youth, who would never join a professional army. Many conscripts are from such social strata that they would have

much more lucrative employment or would be studying, were they not obliged to serve. These persons provide talented manpower that can easily be trained for technical and leadership duties. As junior NCO and commissioned officer positions are filled with leadership- trained conscripts, the size and cost of the professional cadre is much smaller.

The worst problem is that the training must be designed by the physical fitness and the learning ability of the least able of the youth. However, this can be at least partly avoided by differentiating the conscript training. Even the least able can usually fulfill important roles in relatively easy logistics duties, while the most able can be trained quite well as specialists.

- **Political and moral motives**

Jean Jacques Rousseau argued vehemently against professional armies, feeling it was the right and privilege of every citizen to participate to the defense of the whole society and a mark of moral decline to leave this business to professionals. He based this view on the development of the Roman republic, which came to an end at the same time as the Roman army changed from a conscript to professional force. Similarly, Aristotle linked the division of armed service among the populace intimately with the political order of the state. Some ideologies and cultures, and those based on collectivism, value the society and common good above the life of an individual. Those ideologies and world-views justify the state to force its members to protect itself and risk their lives for the common good. In states based on society-centered ideologies, world--views and religions, conscription is the natural way of raising the army. Other proponents such as the late William James consider both military and national service as ways of instilling maturity in young adults as well a -way to entail a sense of "sacrifice" and "self-denial".

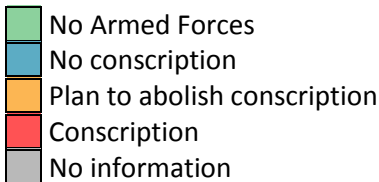
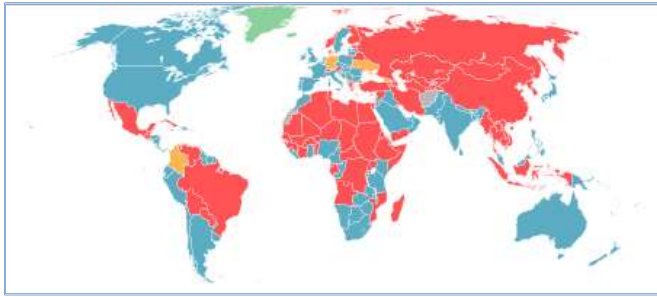
In the era of total war, the conscription is the only alternative for a small nation to build an army of credible strength without depending on alliances. This is particularly the case when the opposing state is significantly larger. In such a case, a voluntary force often cannot, regardless of its quality, stand against the sheer numbers of the opposing force.

- **Economics**

In a very large war, (such as World War II) raising a large enough volunteer military would require dramatic increases in taxes or budget deficits. In such cases conscription can have lower negative impact than the impact of these higher taxes and possibly be more equitable (higher taxes would penalize those out of service much more than those in service). Research into fiscal impacts of conscription in World War II suggest a volunteer army raised to the same size would have had worse economic impact in terms of economic growth.

It is estimated by the British military that in a professional military, one company deployed for active duty in peacekeeping corresponds to three inactive companies at home. Salaries for each are paid from the military budget. The draft is still used in many countries, notably in Asia, as a way to enlist their military. In contrast, volunteers from a trained reserve are in their civilian jobs when they are not deployed.

Figure – 1.1, presents an overview of the countries with and without military service and the conscription map respectively.



Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscription>

1.3 Making Military Service Mandatory in India

Insofar as India is concerned, there is little merit in “compulsory military service” as a universal concept. Notwithstanding the fact that the Indian Armed Forces are still held in high esteem in society at large, there can be little disagreement that the status of the “man in uniform” has been steadily degraded in the 64 years since Independence. Even so, in the context of the high levels of unemployment in the country there is no dearth of volunteers for recruitment in the rank and file. The material may not be the best, but volunteers are forthcoming, and are being moulded with training into effective military professionals.

A problem exists in the officer cadre primarily because the terms and conditions for short service commissions are unattractive. This can only be remedied by equipping officers appropriately for re-entry into civilian life after they complete the terms of engagement, and ensuring that the quality of life and the status they enjoy are worth making sacrifices for. An oft-repeated refrain that youngsters seeking commissions in the Indian armed forces are not of the desired standard is patently untenable because young officers have never been found wanting. They have laid their lives on the line ever since Independence, in leading from the front; in Jammu and Kashmir in 1947-48, in the 1965 and 1971 wars, in the Kargil conflict, and on a daily basis in the ongoing counter-insurgency operations.

The profession of arms has always been seen as a noble one. The young people who volunteer for service as officers or in the ranks are not looking only for monetary benefits. They look for a certain quality of life and a status in society that make up for the relatively meagre emoluments. The other motivation for our young officers and soldiers has always been the pride of the platen or the regiment.

If that pride is to be preserved and a sense of discipline induced in society, two measures are recommended. Firstly, “military service” for a period of three to five years in the armed forces

be made mandatory for everyone seeking employment in central and state government service, including police, paramilitary forces, and in PSUs, etc. Secondly, joining the NCC be made mandatory for all students at senior school and university level.

1.4 Transition from Armed forces to Corporate sector

It is said that an Army officer’s life starts and ends with serving his/her country and protecting it. But many a times, in the contemporary scenario, an Army officer chooses to let go of his/her defence career or retires and joins the corporate life as a simple civilian. The ex-army men begin their second innings to conquer the corporate world by working mainly in key position fields like administration, human resource development, IT, marketing, corporate communications, strategic planning and teaching. What one learns in the army is equally relevant to the corporate world, in the former it is about winning and in latter it is about profit maximising. They make effective use of their experience in the Armed Forces to combat the corporate battlefield. It is a transformation from a soldier to a ‘corporate warrior’.

Experts suggests that executives who are equipped with an Armed Forces background play the role much better than a regular professional, since the job in the Armed Forces offers new challenges everyday and one comes across various new situations on a regular basis. The Armed Forces fosters leadership in every individual that focuses not on short term results but also on long term requirements to improve the organisation. The Armed Forces men are perfectly blended with the latest hi-technology, training techniques and strategic doctrines that help them to excel in various avenues. The army also teaches the importance of teamwork and that is the key learning, as it offers a platform to practice your skills in various fields as an individual and as part of a team.

If one follows the Armed Forces tradition in civil life too, one will get better appreciation and respect. The Corporate sector respects army people for their discipline, honesty and leadership quality. But an Armed Forces man does need some type of grooming before he enters the corporate domain since he needs to keep himself abreast with the latest trend. Re-skilling is certainly required, as in the armed forces career, the skills imparted are mostly specific to the Armed Forces needs.

The experience of three to four years of service in Armed Forces provides young men with the opportunity to encounter a variety of unusual or stressful circumstances and as a result, they may emerge from their service with an enhanced sense of their ability to cope with various problems and master hardships, which they consider to be a central component of their adult personality. Most men profit from this opportunity.

It is indeed a proud moment for Corporate India to have these Armed Forces people on board. With their level of commitment and discipline, they are certainly great asset to any organization.

2. Research Methodology

Selection and adoption of appropriate scientific methodological approach is the most important element of conducting a research investigation. It adds to the precision, reliability and validity of the research findings. The study was carried out on 120 officers of corporate and armed forces sector. The sample was chosen by Stratified Random Sampling. A well-constructed questionnaire was constructed and administered on the sample to elicit their response. The questionnaire contained both open ended as well as close-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed in such a manner so as to elicit maximum information from the respondents. The questions were simple, clear, undisguised, well organised and to the point. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done and some questions were reframed after it. The data collected was statistically analysed using various tools. Data analysis was done in order to search out meaningfully the trend and establish relationships that exist among various data groups. The primary data collected through survey method with the help of the questionnaire has been analysed by using MS Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 19.0 version. Various tools and techniques were used to analyse the data gathered.

3. Results and Findings

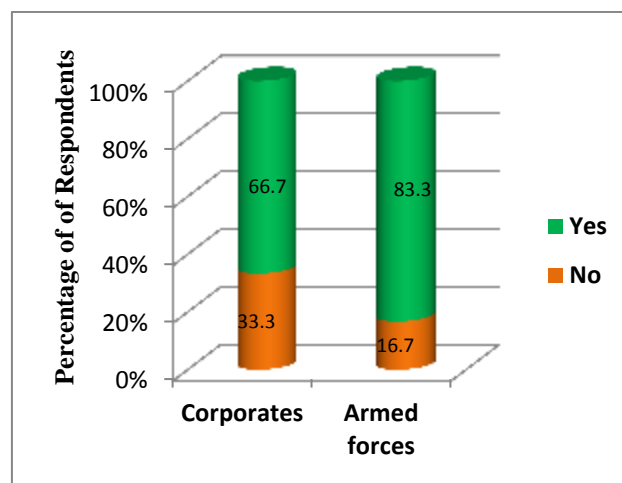
The responses were as follows –

Conscription ie mandatory military service for youth in the country in order to meet the shortage of officers in the Armed Forces, is an issue often discussed by the government. Although no final decision has ever been arrived at, the views of executives were sought regarding this matter, and a surprising 67% of Corporate executives were in favour of it. When asked to switch over the job, a majority of them refused. As expected a whopping 83.3% favoured conscription (Table No. 1) and (Fig- 1)

Table No. 1 Views Regarding Conscription

CONSCRIPTION	CATEGORY			
	Armed Forces		Corporate	
	N	%	N	%
No	10	16.7	20	33.3
Yes	50	83.3	40	66.7
Total	60	100.0	60	100.0

Figure – 1 Conscription



4. Conclusion

If Managerial effectiveness is a leader's ability to achieve desired results. How well he applies his skills and abilities in guiding and directing others determines whether he can meet those results effectively. If he can, his achievements are poised to help the organization gain a competitive edge against rival organizations heading into the future.

The Armed Forces, which are the fourth largest in the world, are well prepared to take on any sort of eventuality. NCC was raised as a second line of defence, however, today one of the aims of the NCC is to have a well disciplined, trained and motivated reserve which can be used at the time of any crisis and provide leadership to the youth.

India is a great nation; it is globally emerging economic power. Tremendous responsibilities lie on their shoulders to lead the nation. The NCC or SSC in Armed forces is one way for the youth to discipline themselves and carry the nation forward. The parents should understand the need of the nation and encourage their children to join NCC.

The grooming provided by the NCC at the school/college level is unparalleled is evident from the fact that large number of ex-cadets are now occupying high offices in government and private sectors, corporate and armed forces, and in fact, all walks of life. Many of them are successful businessmen also. Hence, it provides a nursery for grooming of future leaders in various walks of life. Compulsory enrolment is definitely an option to be sought.

Is compulsory military service the answer to the woes of the Armed Forces, which is fighting a losing battle on two fronts? On one side, it's not managing to attract enough bright youngsters for its officer cadre and on the other; it's haemorrhaging under the onslaught of serving officers wanting to jump the ship. The availability of evidence suggests that there is shortage of manpower in the Armed forces, and hence, compulsory military service could be one of the avenues before the government sometime in the future.

Initially, selected conscription can be opted for in a vastly populated country like India. It means that conscription can be imposed firstly on Government employees and personnel of

PSU's. Later on the focus can slowly shift to the Corporate Sector, Entrepreneurs etc.

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Author Profile

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Moving to Academics from Air Force where she is credited with having presented many papers on Managerial Effectiveness. With more than 15 years of experience in the Indian Air force as well as at University College of Commerce and Management Studies, MLSU, she is a perfect blend of Industry and Academy, and has unquenched passion for training. She has designed and conducted development programs in behavioural areas.