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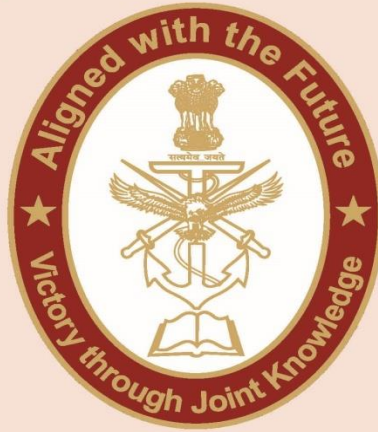
ISSUE BRIEF

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NEXT GENERATION OFFICERS: DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES FOR THEATRE COMMANDS IN INDIA

COL VARUN DIKSHIT

CENTRE FOR JOINT WARFARE STUDIES



CENJOWS

NEXT GENERATION OFFICERS: DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP QUALITIES FOR THEATRE COMMANDS IN INDIA



Col Varun Dikshit is a second-generation army officer and was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers in December 2001. The officer commanded an Assault Engineer Regiment in the western theatre and has the unique distinction of having served in all commands of the Indian Army during his service.

“The need of the hour for the armed forces is to embrace change, adopt cutting edge technology and theaterise for greater operational efficiency.”

- Gen Bipin Rawat, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, ADC

Abstract

The impending Integrated Theatre Commands will certainly develop with common organisational goals and culture, but are likely to face operational, administrative and management challenges initially. Development of its large population of officers with a truly integrated professional ethos and approach, distinct from single service ethos would be one such challenge, alongside developing an integrated, functional, and professional ecosystem. Previous researches have drawn comparisons of the Next Generation Officers with Gen Z in terms of personality traits. These studies have not only dwelt on aspects of organisational design, but also provided insights into the strengths and limitations of the generation.

It now clearly emerges that future Theatre Commands must demonstrate inter-service synergy, harmony and integrated functioning, driven through theories of change management. Next Generation Officers are best suited for this future, with their technological mindsets and capabilities. While their strengths must be leveraged to adapt effectively to an evolving integrated ecosystem, their limitations should be improved through structured and institutionalised development programs. Continuous and traditional processes of grooming, in sync with traditions and customs of the Armed Forces, will go a long way in accomplishing these targets. This article examines

their leadership qualities in backdrop of evolving organisational climate and culture of Theatre Commands.

Introduction

The Indian Armed Forces are in the process of evolving new organisational structures of Integrated Theatre Commands (ITC) which are soon going to become a reality. These ITCs, once established, would have common organisational goals and culture, functioning under a common professional umbrellaⁱ. These organisations will certainly face operational, administrative and management challenges in the development phase that would require prognosis of reforms or redesign. Few areas of concern have been identified and are envisaged at this stage. Development of its large population of officers with a truly integrated professional ethos and approach that is distinct from single service ethos being one of the foremost challenges. Alongside this, development of an integrated, functional, and professional ecosystem to keep the organisation effective too shall be important. The organisation will also aim to achieve interoperability and integration of philosophies, doctrines, processes, systems and capability development programs of the three Services to operate under single service umbrellas. **All these endeavours will be intended to converge for accomplishment of integrated planning, decision making, and execution.**

Since the key elements of any organisation are People, Technology, Task and Structure, all being interrelated and interdependent; and within these People being the most dynamic component who contribute the maximum to its effectiveness, **it is prudent to analyse the leadership qualities of Next Generation Officers of the Indian Army to develop them as Future Military Leaders of Tri Services Theatre Commands in India.**

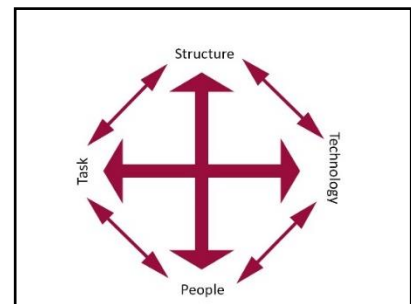


Fig 1. Human Resource as a Factor in Organisational Change

Background Research

The revolution of reforms in the Indian Armed Forces will be experienced first-hand by its '**Next Generation Officers**' (NGOs) who are defined as the cadre of officers born between 1997 and 2012. This generation draws parallels to the Gen Z and is considered to be in military service with effect from 2018 onwardsⁱⁱ. This generation is mindful of their own strengths and weaknesses and are currently in the midst of major transformations in their respective organisations.

Generation	Born between	Time Period (years)	Identified by
Greatest Generation	1901-1927	26	Fought in WW-II
Silent Generation	1926-1945	20	Post WW-II
Baby Boomers	1945-1965	20	Post War, high birth rate
Gen X	1965-1980	15	Dropping birth rate
Millennials	1981-1996	15	Turn of the millennium
Gen Z	Late 1990s to early 2010s	15	Spenders of tomorrow
Gen Alpha	Mid 2010s to mid 2020s	12	21 st Century

Fig 2. Chronology of Social Generations

Some seminal research has been undertaken earlier by premier institutes like College of Defence Management, Secunderabad which have analysed relevant dimensions of the 'Next Generation Officers' (NGOs). The author has drawn inspiration from various aspects studied earlier and attempted to carry them forward.

Previous research has dwelled on some very important characteristics of this generation and drawn significant inferences. These studies have not only drawn comparisons of the NGO with Gen Z in terms of personality traits, but also outlined their strengths and weaknesses. Significant deductions have emerged from these earlier works which identify a set of characteristics desired in an NGO that make him a good leader and another set of attributes that preclude him from becoming one. Other important findings relate to their basic personality, values, personal qualities driving behaviour, motivation, career drivers, blocks to creativity and areas for improvement.

Problem Statement

In its approach towards establishment of ITCs, the Organisation understands that its officers are at the centre of this change and their development will go a long way towards optimal effectiveness. It is seized with addressing the professional aspirations of this generation and the existing generation gap. It has also been realised that there are certain areas of strengths in the NGOs that are typical of this generation, and which can be harnessed for effectiveness.

Similarly, there are few areas for improvement that weaken their abilities. These aspects not only impede

Key Issues

- Development of leadership qualities of NGOs of the IA to prepare them as future leaders of integrated tri-services theatre commands.
- Expectations of the Organisation and NGO from each other.
- Leadership qualities that require development for preparing NGOs for the ITCs.
- Development Plan for enhancing the identified qualities of an Army NGO to enable him as a future leader.

the socialisation of NGOs, but also impact the functioning of the organisation that is attempting to integrate all three services. If the concerned issues are not addressed timely, then their growth as Future Leaders might be affected. Concurrently, the Theatre Commands may also not evolve and integrate efficiently due to sub-optimal functioning. Therefore, in addition to harnessing the strengths of these officers, such aspects of their personalities will also have to be developed to empower them to contribute effectively during the *ibid* Organisational Change.

Thus, the **development of leadership qualities of NGOs in the backdrop of the evolving Organisational Climate and Culture of Theatre Commands** must be timely examined. This article will bring out key derivatives on the aforementioned subject.

Generational Shift of the Indian Armed Forces

Integrated Theatre Command. A lot has already been written and spoken about the ITC, which is now understood to be a single, multi-disciplinary and multi-services agency for common strategic orientation and unity of command in a given Theatre of War. The dynamic and challenging strategic environment has necessitated India to adopt an integrated approach in order to protect its National Interests. Thus, the focus of the proposed Theatre Command will be to enhance operational effectiveness of the Indian Armed Forces. This would be achieved by having an authority at the theatre or the apex level to institutionally coordinate inter-service plans, reconcile perceptions and expectations.

- The ITCs are seeking to evolve out of existing structures and the deficiencies therein. The change has been necessitated due to shifts emanating from regional threats, technological advancements, highly advanced platforms, information revolution, battlefield transparency, cyber capabilities, space capabilities, grey zone warfare, etc. The organisational change, thus, warrants specialisations, economy of efforts and joint efficiencyⁱⁱⁱ.
- The ITC would also intend to provide a better intelligence picture, adequate resources, inter-service communication and information networks, and an integrated staff work.

Contours of Future Wars. The types of threats and challenges that currently exist and those that are likely to arise in the future are indicative of building a threat-cum-capability based force structure. This structure should be able to counter the potential adversary's capabilities and threats by acquiring a full spectrum capability in an integrated manner, without overstretching the country's resources. The contours of future wars which emerge clearly would comprise the undermentioned.

- Highly uncertain wars where **technology** will play a predominant role in designing the conduct and outcome of war.
- **Asymmetric Warfare** by weaker states to fight opponents that are powerful, while the powerful states use **technological capability** to deliver significant lethal and non-lethal effects with precision, speed and crushing power.

- Operations in **Grey Zone** which will involve ambiguous political, economic, information or military actions that primarily target domestic or international public opinion and are employed to advance nation's interests without provoking war.
- Technologically advanced countries having independent capability in cyber and space domain will prefer **non-contact non-kinetic means** through aggressive use of Electronic Warfare, Information Warfare, Communications, and Intelligence to force the adversary to give up all resistance and terminate the war without resorting to conventional or sub-conventional options.
- **Selective use of military power in an integrated and synergetic manner** and with increasing discrimination in choosing means as well as ends.
- Globalisation and interconnectedness will make wars **transparent**, thus challenging the political utility of using armed forces.
- Two or three generations of warfare will, thus, co-exist in **multi domain operations**.

Felt Need for Organisational Change. The future integrated organisations will have at its core, joint structures, and joint doctrines. However, core operating system would remain the organisational culture that would run it on a day-to-day basis^{iv}. The omnipresent working environment will certainly be defined by its organisational culture that could raise or reduce system efficiencies. Correct understanding and adoption of these aspects can either create synergies or repeat systemic flaws which would then again require a reset. It is, thus, imperative for all three services to understand each other's characteristics and constraints in order to attain situational connect for joint planning. This will require integration of response frameworks of common situations. This seamless jointness can ideally be created utilising the benefits of organisational culture, doctrines, and implementation frameworks.

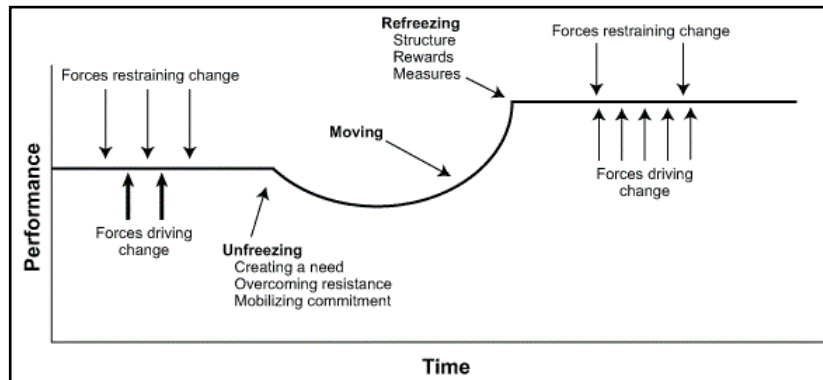
Organisational Essentials. For the Theatre HQs to be effective in the long run and function efficiently, there are few imperatives. Army, Air Force and Navy have different organisational cultures which is quite evident in their day-to-day functioning. There is a high likelihood that in any joint structure, these differences might impact the routine functioning of that organisation leave aside in the operational dimension. The norms, procedures and systems that operate for each service are different and they hardly synergise. The demand of the times ahead is that the efforts and strengths of all the three services are harnessed to nurture a common organisational culture. The Armed Forces must have a common thought process and joint operational philosophy. The cultural uniqueness of each service which has been developed over a period, works well within the service silo. However, the same service specific culture might become an impediment in a joint structure. These are pertinent in realms of service vocabulary, communication techniques and protocols, varying operational processes and procedures, and HR management. The future ITCs will have to be strengthened through reviewed HR policies, joint doctrines, integrated capabilities, and renewed philosophies^v.

Organisational Change and Development

Theories of **Organisational Development** address change and how they affect organisations and the individuals within those organisations. An effective organisational development can assist the future theatre commands and its HR to cope with this change. Strategies have to be developed to introduce this change in a planned manner^{vi}. Connected to this aspect is **Organisational Change** which is the process by which organisations move from their current state to a desired future state to increase their effectiveness. The goal of a planned organisational change is to find new or improved ways of using resources and capabilities in order to increase an organisation's ability to create value and improve returns to its stakeholders. HR being the most important assets of our Armed Forces, the distinctive competences of our organisation lie in the skills and abilities of its people. Therefore, targeting our HR as part of change management and within it our officer cadre would be prudent.

Demographic and Social Forces. Leading and managing a diverse tri-service in the future theatre commands would be one of the biggest challenges to confront the Armed Forces. Changes in the composition and structure of the tri-service organisation and its workforce along with its diversity will pose both challenges and opportunities. The NGOs might currently be in the midst of this change, however in future as military leaders they would be the ones who would be driving the evolved organisations. Therefore, understanding change and development from their prism is imperative. During the current phase, it is important that the manning of billets is by well qualified, experienced, and domain experts.

This will allow building of a strong foundation through capable officers, best practices, and Standard Operating Procedures. The mid-level officers and senior officers would thus be required to collaborate and adapt to address increasingly demanding security challenges, whilst stabilising the armed forces through its reform and redesign. They would also have the onerous task of being the Change Agents, eventually passing on the baton to the next generation.



Forces for Change	Resistances to Change
Competitive Forces Economic Forces Political Forces Global Forces Demographic Forces Social Forces Ethical Forces	<u>Organisational Level</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure • Culture • Strategy <u>Functional Level</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences in sub-unit orientation • Power and Conflict <u>Group Level</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norms • Cohesiveness • Groupthink <u>Individual Level</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Biases • Uncertainty and Insecurity • Selective Perception and Retention • Habit

Fig 3. Forces for and Resistances to Change
 (Source: Kurt Lewin's Model of Change Management)

Leadership Contours in the 21st Century

Generation Z. "Generation Z" is being studied extensively in management circles as they gradually surpass the population of Millennials at the workplace. Understanding this new cohort and devising strategies to accommodate the new generation into the workplace thus assumes significance and can help organisations successfully onboard the new generation. The Gen Z is considered to be early starters, entrepreneurial, outcome oriented, tech-savvy, independent, who prefer autonomy at work^{vii}. The personality traits of the Gen Z are unique and carried forward from the Millennials. They are **Digital Natives** having grown up in the Information Age and have a low threshold for mistakes and system issues. This generation chooses skills over paycheque, experiences over career and have **little patience** for societal norms and parental approval. Gen Z is **well informed** and **open minded** and tend to adopt

various career options. They prefer a **solo approach** to completing tasks and are primarily **entrepreneurial** who multitask. They look for flexibility, openness, and meaningfulness in work. This generation is devoid of patience, possess **short attention span**, but can **multitask**. They can be termed as **Self Expressive** for whom Privacy is no issue and who are always on social media^{viii}. They are **Extroverts** and need constant feedback and information. Lastly, Gen Z have a **high need for achievement**. However, they possess **low social awareness and skills**.

Tenets of Leadership for Gen Z. Research states that Gen Z look up to few for shaping their ideals and perceptions and as their role models. They consider their parents, teachers, coaches, peers, and fictional characters as their leader role models^{ix}. On the other side, bosses, religious leaders, professional athletes and celebrities, and political leaders are not taken as role models by the Gen Z youth^x. This generation is likely to view effective leadership as leveraging the capacity of others, engaging in complex thinking and innovative problem solving, utilising a collaborative and interdependent approach, communicating effectively, being adaptable, guiding others to greatness, being optimistic, persevering through adversity, and employing honesty and altruism^{xi}.

Military Leadership Requirements of the 21st Century. This century has seen a boom in disruptive technologies and information access. Keeping the core values in place, the leaders of the future will have to possess some more skills to operate successfully in a demanding high-tech battlefield and lead highly expecting soldiers. The leaders in the future will have to develop systems thinking and the capability to develop combat teams that grow through team learning. Leaders would not only have to develop mental agility themselves but also be able to share ideas and concepts with their subordinates and peers in a mutually beneficial way. They will have to lead the way in managing and responding to changes to reduce various barriers. The qualities of management skills, empathy, and caring will hold even more importance in the dynamic future. Future military leaders would have to demonstrate resource management skills, greater flexibility, adaptability, initiative, foresight, creativity, innovativeness, intuition in decision making, inter-agency skills, and joint warfare competences^{xii}.

Challenges of the Future. Military leadership is also seen with a different viewing glass as it requires extremely high levels of motivation to achieve objectives, sometimes endangering own interests. Considering that the essentials for military leadership shall remain the same, the ever-evolving future will continuously pose fresh challenges. The changing socio-economic milieu is leading to rising aspirations amongst the soldiers as well as in the value systems and perceptions. The evolution of jointness is forcing the armed forces towards synergising efforts and optimisation of resources. Leaders to be successful in the future will have to reinvent themselves to handle the technological driven change and be proactive engineers of change^{xiii}.

The Next Generation Officer (NGO)

Organisational Requirements from a Young Officer (YO). The organisation desires that a YO must be a Good Leader who possesses adequate Communication Skills, Ability to Motivate, Determination and Resoluteness, Courage of Conviction, Physical Fitness, Positive Attitude, Self-Discipline, Self-Motivation, the feeling of Service before Self, adherence to Customs and Traditions, Initiative and Ingenuity, Technological Expertise, Operational Orientation, and the ability to undertake Subordinate Development^{xiv}.

Strengths of NGO. Research has brought forth that the NGOs exhibit certain strengths which can be leveraged towards attainment of organizational goals. They have a large capacity to shoulder additional responsibilities, which also motivates them to work harder. An NGO values open mindedness, honesty, and hard work. They are action oriented with a strong ability to respond to challenges. The NGOs are extremely vocal about their opinions, and are emotion driven, with ability to regulate their own emotions. They are highly creative, driven by Self, ambitious and possess a high need for achievement.

With his current set of characteristics, an NGO can be a good leader because of his trait of enjoying and shouldering additional responsibility; because of his broad mindedness, honesty, and ambitions. He can be good leader as he works for self-respect, is driven by a sense of achievement, and desires to gain expertise. Also, because he believes that he gets adequate independence at work and is tasked as per his capability, an NGO is ideally suited for leadership roles. The fact that he is able to gauge what is expected of him assists him to moderate his actions and responses.

However, since the NGOs belong to the Gen Z, they too possess distinct personality traits and certain facets which require improvement. These facets require development to better harmonise them towards the organisation which shall be discussed subsequently.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

There will be certain **tenets of theaterisation** that will lead to its efficient and effective functioning. The evolution, establishment and stabilisation of Tri-Services Theatre Commands will therefore need appropriately oriented Military Leaders. **Inter-service synergy** for combined effects, **integrated functional environment** custom made for integrated functioning, processes of **Change Management** to overcome initial challenges connected to structure, systems, people, and even managers, **harmonisation** of tri-services functioning in pursuance of common organisational goals, and lastly, **organisational culture** – all these aspects will have to be addressed to attain the highest objectives.

The ITCs will necessarily have an evolved identity to work under a common professional umbrella and organisational culture/ climate. This identity will contain facets that interact and influence each other for **effective functioning in a Theatre Command Environment**.

In order to prepare themselves as future military leaders for Theatre Commands, the **NGOs will need to accordingly develop their Leadership Qualities**. The leadership requirements of today and in the future would remain complex, which involves complex thinking, adaptability, and interdependence. Further, focus will also remain on Strengths-Based Leadership rather than focussing on weaknesses. This strengths-based approach promotes polishing talents into strengths rather than trying to fix deficits or improving weaknesses, thus providing a fresh take on developing capacities of people^{xv}.

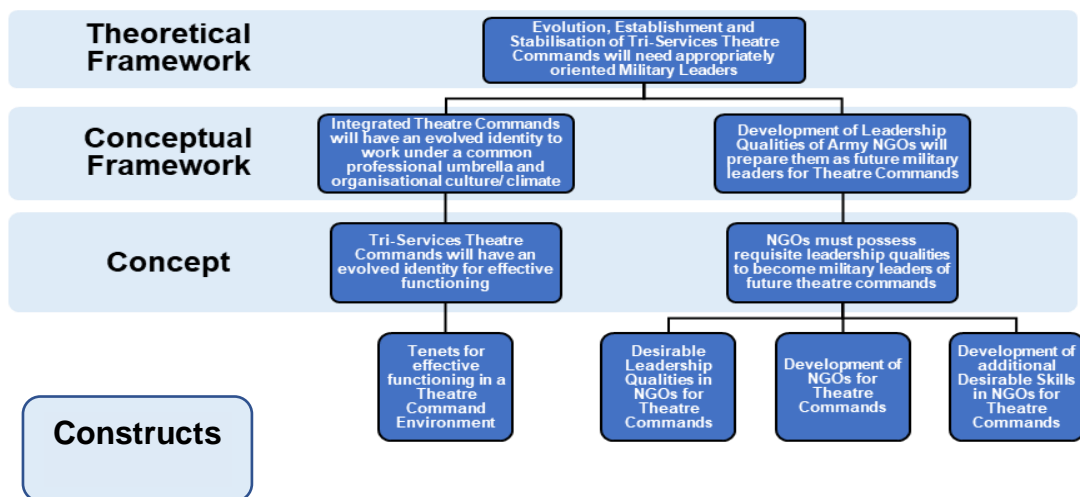


Fig 4. Research Framework
(Source: Author)

Qualitative Perspective

The future Theatre Commands will need to have common organisational goals which can be achieved through **Inter-service Synergy**, which in turn can be accomplished through interaction, cooperation, common professional culture, integrated staff functions, coordination, compatibility, and interoperability amongst the three services.

The Theatre Command HQs can be better served in case it customises its working environment to achieve an **integrated functioning**, which in turn can be achieved through interoperability, integration of philosophies, doctrines, processes, systems, and capability development programmes.

The future military leaders must have an **open mind and a flexible approach** to accomplish higher level organisational goals. This will be greatly aided if the efforts of the three services are **harmonised**, which in turn can be achieved through mutual reliance, trust, and by leveraging each service's strengths.

Establishment of Integrated Theatre Commands will necessarily have to be driven by theories of **Change Management** to avoid systemic turbulences. During all this, the officer cadre will have to **retain the identity of their respective Services** and **adapt to a modified work culture with flexible approaches**.

The **NGOs are ideally suited for their envisaged future roles** in the theaterised environment. They must, however, be empowered to tenant their future roles through a **structured and institutionalised Development Program**. Additional skills like Organisational Behaviour, Social Skills, and Social Awareness will also be useful to the NGOs in the complex leadership conundrum. The **strengths of the NGOs have to be leveraged** to bring in more effectiveness into the future organisations and systems.

These Leadership Qualities that would be desired in the NGOs for Theatre Commands, are produced below as a **Leadership Matrix for Theatre Command Environment**.

Role of NGO in the Theatre Command Environment	Desired Leadership Qualities in NGOs	Leadership Challenges likely to be faced by NGOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Management • Harmonisation • Building Mutual Trust • Building Interdependence • Staff Functioning • Bridge Tech Barriers • Service Ambassadors • Alignment to Org Goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical Decision Making • Analytical Decision Making • Intellectual Orientation • Operational Orientation • Tolerance to Ambiguity • Seeing the Big Picture • Emotional Intelligence • Flexibility • Communication Skills • Risk taking Ability • Professionalism • Devotion to Duty • Selflessness • Humility • Creative Thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience • Communication Skills • Emotional Intelligence • Inter Personal Relationship • Attention Span • Intellectual Orientation • Tolerance to Ambiguity • Ability to see Big Picture • Flexibility at Work • Competition • Knowledge Deficits • HR & Appraisal Policies • Different Privileges • Senior Generations • Social Skills • Cyber distractions • Maintenance of Focus • Differing Service aspirations • Differing Emotional Quotient

Fig 5. Leadership Matrix for ITC Environment

(Source: Author)

Quantitative Perspective

Based on research and literature review, it can be confidently stated that the strengths of the NGO's personality and leadership qualities must be enhanced for most efficient functioning of the ITCs and subordinate organisations. Key aspects are given below:

- **Communication skills** would be an important leadership aspect in NGOs in a tri-services environment.
- The NGOs with better **technological mindsets and skillsets** would be beneficial to the theatre command environment.
- **Emotional Intelligence** will be an important ingredient of military leadership for the NGOs who will have to work towards improvement of this aspect in them. Awareness on EI can be provided through structured training which will positively impact the functional environment of Theatre Commands.
- The NGOs should ideally possess **basic knowledge of other Services** to be effective in a tri-services setting, which could be acquired through structured training regimens and programme.
- The **desirable leadership qualities in NGOs will positively impact** the systems in a Theatre Command and lead to effective functioning.
- Certain **tenets of theaterisation** are essential for effective functioning. These range from cooperation between Services, a 'tri-services' organisational culture, interoperability, communication skills, harmonisation of plans, inter-service functional linkages, technological mindset, and above all mutual trust amongst each other.
- Certain **Leadership Qualities** will be required in the Next Generation of Officers for functioning effectively in a Theatre Command Environment. These would range from service-specific core competencies, empathy, technological adeptness, inter-personal relationships, ability to shoulder additional responsibilities, patience, and an open mind.

Therefore, it is believed that the NGOs will require development of certain leadership qualities to fulfil their future roles as military leaders for effective functioning of the envisaged tri-services theatre command environment.

*"Most of our problems could be solved by leaders who are capable of enacting change.
We are a generation that will have to be creative to solve the problems of the past
generation"*

- A Gen Z student

Prognosis

Important deductions emerge from the synthesis of the two perspectives. In order to achieve the common organisational goals, the future Theatre Commands must demonstrate **inter-service synergy** and **harmony**. The working environment of the

Theatre Command HQs should be customised to achieve an **efficient integrated functioning**. Establishment of ITCs must be driven by theories of **Change Management** to avoid systemic turbulences.

The **NGOs are best suited for the future**, with their **technological mindsets and capabilities** and can suitably drive the Change Management. The **strengths of the NGOs must be leveraged** for creating a conducive and effective functional environment in a tri-services theaterised environment. **Development of communication skills and emotional intelligence of NGOs will improve their leadership qualities**, which in turn will help them to lead the future theaterised scenarios.

A **structured and institutionalised development or training program will be able to impart the requisite knowledge and skillsets** required by the NGOs to function effectively in the theatre commands.

The **leadership qualities that demand empowering** in the NGOs for them to function effectively in a tri-services Theatre Command environment are namely communication skills, emotional intelligence, technological mindset and adeptness, open mind, flexible approach, knowledge (especially of other services), core competencies of own Service, empathy, inter-personal relationships, ability to shoulder additional responsibilities, patience, and open mindedness. The weaknesses in NGOs can be improved upon through a continuous and traditional process of grooming that are in sync with the traditions and customs of the Indian Armed Forces.

Other Relevant and Important Issues

A **Tri-Services Culture or 'Purple Culture'** can be useful in attaining a common and effective functional environment in an integrated HQ. This is an abstract which will have the flavour of an integrated professional ethos and culture and could be adopted through modified HR Policies, tri-services doctrines, philosophies, and SOPs and that resonate equally amongst the three services.

The **Organisational Culture** in turn can be based upon a flexible work culture that accommodates tolerance to ambiguity and relies heavily on mutual trust. This Culture will promote breaking of traditional boundaries, multiplying each other's strengths, healthy competitiveness, cooperation, accountability, and the attitude to view issues from a higher perspective.

A **tri-service component in the training curriculum** of important career courses is considered important. The same can be brainstormed at the decision-making level and researched further for implementation. Establishment of joint training institutes or leveraging the existing Armed Forces Training Institutes is an out of the box solution for imparting basic knowledge of each service to the officer cadre. Another, out of the box idea is to program a tri-services course of 3-6 months duration in a tri-services environment and with tri-services participation.

Inter-service exposure is considered important for grooming the future military leader who has to function in a tri-services setting. This, if achieved, will empower him to understand tri-services functions and place him in a better position to enact his leadership roles. Few measures, purely based on hypothetical ideas, are enumerated below:

- A brief 3-6 months exposure in a unit, squadron or ship of other service at a nascent stage of an officer's service (**say in 1-3 years of service**). Grade-2 staff exposures at a young service can also turn out to be useful during senior assignments.
- Cross attachment of YOs to units, HQs, establishments of other services at an early stage of their career (**say in 7-8 years of service**).
- Limited exposures in various appointments as cross-service arrangements to selected or earmarked mid-level officers (**say in 9-11 years of service**). The experience and exposure of such officers can be further leveraged in senior ranks.
- Staff exposures to officers in a tri-services environment can be planned after successful completion of DSSC/ TSOC at say **10-15 years of service**.
- A tri-services staff exposure after HDMC/ Equivalent course in the Colonel rank at **say 25-30 years of service**.

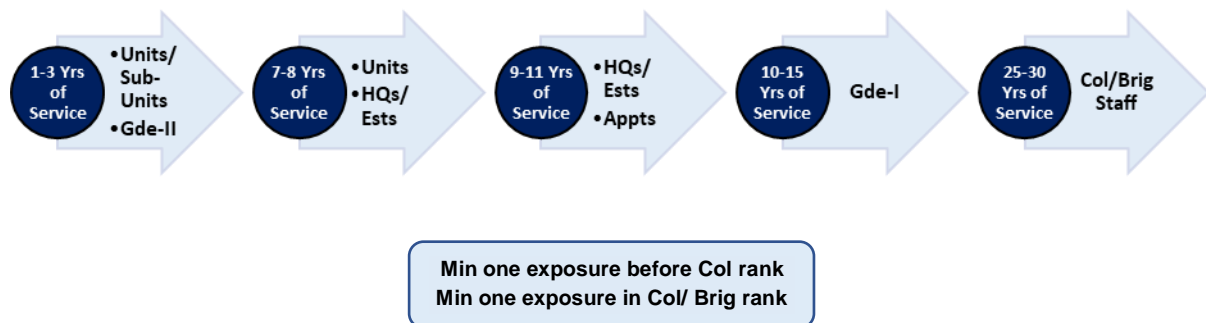


Fig 6. Inter-Service Exposure Flow
(Source: Author)

Conclusion

The preceding paragraphs have endeavoured to identify the tenets of an integrated tri-services Theatre Command environment and the leadership qualities required in next generation officers for functioning effectively in it. This is an attempt to dwell on few aspects that assume relevance during the design and subsequent establishment of the theatre commands. Desirable leadership qualities required in the next generation of officers, and their various personality traits do require analyses.

Consequently, the organisational culture that may ensue from the establishment of the theatre commands and consequent tri-services billets must be studied in depth. A

progressive and structured Development Program for training of officers can be considered for institutionalisation for imparting requisite knowledge or skillsets required by the NGOs to function effectively in the theatre commands. Finally, next generation of officers must be provided leadership experiences and opportunities to enable them to suitably embrace the future of Armed Forces.

The future military leaders will have to be dynamic, enterprising, and tolerant, all this while being ethical, positive and caring. The Next Generation Officers are inevitably going to face a conundrum of leadership challenges, in the midst of organisational change and reforms. It is not only important to identify the likely limitations in the generation, but to also work towards their improvement.

It is, thus, imperative that military leaders of all three services from Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z work together in the organisation, learning from each other's experiences, and infuse maximum efficiency into the system.

In conclusion, the next generation of officers in the armed forces will be facing new challenges and opportunities that require a certain set of leadership skills like adaptability, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, cultural intelligence, and strong communication skills. These leadership qualities will enable them to lead and direct their troops effectively in various missions and operations, and will also enable them to be successful in the rapidly changing global military, political and economic environment.

DISCLAIMER

The paper is author's individual scholastic articulation and does not necessarily reflect the views of CENJOWS. The author certifies that the article is original in content, unpublished and it has not been submitted for publication/ web upload elsewhere and that the facts and figures quoted are duly referenced, as needed and are believed to be correct.

End Notes

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