



## Impact of Environmental Factors on Selection of Defence Services Officers

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective** – “Change is the only constant” is a cliché but it is important to identify the factors which are changing to emerge as challenges before the military leadership of tomorrow. The societies are bound to be affected by the changes taking place in the environment. Generally, every society is affected by the four types of environmental factors. These are political, social, economic and technological. Since in India, democracy is deep rooted and the philosophy of the defence forces is same and has neither changed nor is likely to change, this factor is not under study here. So, the purpose is to study the impact of other environmental factors on selection of Defence Services Officers.

**Methodology/Technique** – The study has been carried out by personally visiting all the Service Selection Centres of the Indian Armed Forces and presenting a questionnaire to large number of junior, middle and senior level serving and retired officers at various places. Only 449 officers responded which included 190 junior officers, 133 middle-level officers and 126 senior officers. The response was put through SPSS software system and analysed.

**Findings** – The analysis clearly revealed that environmental changes in the society over a period of time do impact the qualities in the youth which have direct bearing on their selection for officers in the armed forces. Since the selection is based on finding the officers like qualities available or trainable in the youth, the impact of environmental factors is directly affecting the intake of the youth resulting in deficiency of officers' cadre in the armed forces.

**Novelty** – The research contributes to develop scientific knowledge in environmental change effect on selection of defence officers.

**Type of Paper:** Empirical

**Keywords:** Qualities; Environment; Socio-Economic Changes; Armed Forces.

**JEL Classification:** H56, J11.

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### 1. Introduction

Socio economic changes always have direct bearing on the society. Since the youth is exposed to the same very society over a protracted period, they adopt qualities according to their own socio-economic status at that time. The extent of exposure also matters in shaping the character and qualities of the individual. Since most of the society is made up of young people, any changes in the society will obviously have some impact on the

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minds of the youth. Thus, the important question arises, what all factors have direct bearing on the change of mind of the youth and does this changed mind changes the personality of the individual? Socio-economic status of an individual is the combination of social and economic measure of a person's work, experience and of an individual or family's economic and social position relative to others. Therefore, the personality is a set of qualities one has developed through inheritance or acquaintance and experience over the years. It is a known fact that the role of the armed forces is unique. The officers are required to motivate and lead men in war. They should be capable of winning wars for the nation and to accomplish this goal, they should be ready to sacrifice their own lives. Thus, a particular set of qualities is needed in the youth who aspire to become defence officers. And so, people who are endowed with those qualities known as Leadership qualities are best suited for this profession.

## 2. Literature Review

Different authors have defined leadership differently. Stogdill (1974) says that the term "leadership" turned up in about 1800 A.D. However, as per Sinha (1995), the word "leader" appeared in the English language around 1300 A. D. (Oxford English Dictionary, 1933). But it is certain that issues of leadership are as old as human civilisation. Aiyengar (2014) introduces ethics as the most important quality of a leader. As per him, a military officer is considered a gentleman, not because Nation wills it, nor because it has been the custom of people in all times to afford him that courtesy, but specifically because nothing less than a gentleman is truly suited for his particular set of responsibilities. However, Buckingham (1985) has put it more succinctly when he remarks "Standing firm ethically can exact a cost, perhaps a steep one. As professionals, we must be willing to pay it." But Tead (1935) mentions that leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward some goal which they come to find desirable. Leader should be able to lead. When, Calhoun and Kirkpatrick (1956) put it as two directions in the relationship, and the effective leader receives as well as leads, Blakely (1959) argues that leadership is an art. But Marrow (1957) says, "Leadership is a skill." It involves two way communications, a continuous feed-back. He further goes on to say that true leadership is characterized not by domination, but by service." Schleh (1955) mentions that leader should have the quality of being a catalyst. He is the one who stimulates others to action. However, Lindgren (1954) argues that leaders ---in various ways guide, control, counsel, advise, teach, influence, and help others in the conduct of their public and private lives. But, as per Given Jr (1949), leader should possess the quality of making the objective clear, he should be able to chart out the course and hold the organization to it. Sarin (2010) has said that military service and leadership is a serious profession. It is not a craft or a typical nine to five job where one need not feel the necessity to bond with his subordinates or peers if he is good at his trade. However, Ordway (1935) said that leadership is the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward some goal which they come to find desirable. Stogdill (1974) views that although leadership is not just one person; it is easier, of course, to see it embodied in an individual. (Hollander, 1968) brought in the word, "Situation" in between leader and the follower while defining the social exchange theory. However, Jacobs (1970) adds that influence involves persuasion. It is not the same as power which leaves little choice. The real "power" of a leader lies in his or her ability to influence followers without resorting to threats. Kelley (1991) added that leaders must fit their followers' expectations and be perceived as the "best of us" and "the most of us".

However, in the context of Indian Armed Forces, the leadership qualities expected from military leaders have been defined under four different factors. These are:

- Factor Planning: It includes Effective intelligence, reasoning ability, organizing ability and power of expression.
- Factor Social Adjustment: It has social adaptability, cooperation, and sense of responsibility.

- Factor Social Effectiveness: It includes initiative, self-confidence, speed of decision, ability to influence the group and liveliness.
- Factor Dynamic: It means determination, courage and stamina.

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### 3.1 Environmental Changes

Environmental Changes that have impacted the leadership Qualities and Intake of Officers. Some of the factors which have been studied and analysed are as given in succeeding paras:

**Economic Factor:** Certain factors which have an influence on the economy of the society and have further impacted the qualities in the youth are:

**Globalization:** Availability of real time information sitting at home has awakened the society to the happenings in the world. The real time information has acted like a stimulus and has awakened the people to their rights and privileges. When the officers were asked if globalization has impacted the qualities in the youth, the answer was as shown below:

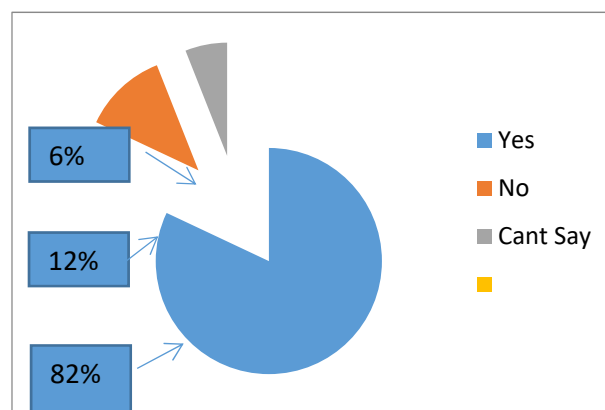


Figure 1. Impact of Globalisation

As is evident, 82% officers gave affirmative answer meaning that globalization has impacted the qualities in the youth.

**Urbanization:** Large numbers of people have already moved from rural to urban areas in search of jobs. The response of officers to a question whether the urbanization has any effect on qualities of the youth is given below:

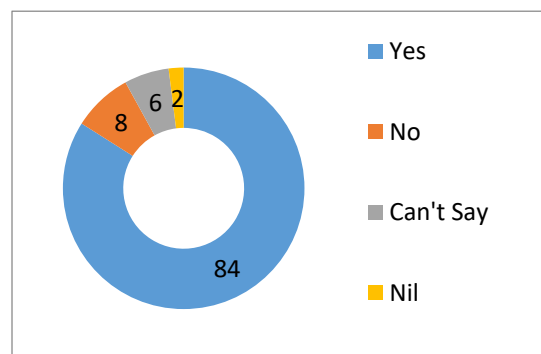


Figure 2. Impact of Urbanisation

The result shows that 84% officers feel that urbanization has direct bearing on the qualities of the youth.

**Increased Job Opportunities:** With more and more MNCs coming in and overall development everywhere, job opportunities have increased manifold with improved pay perks. The response of officers to increased job opportunities is as given below:

Table 1. Impact of Increased Job opportunities

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Most Necessary	84	18.7	18.7
Just Necessary	67	14.9	33.6
Necessary	205	45.7	79.3
Not Necessary	84	18.7	98.0
No Response	9	2.0	100.0
Total	449	100.0	

As is evident, 79.3% officers gave affirmative answer.

**Flow of Money:** The income and expenditure of the people has increased many-fold resulting in regular flow of money in the market. 84% officers agree that regular flow of money has impacted the qualities as shown below:

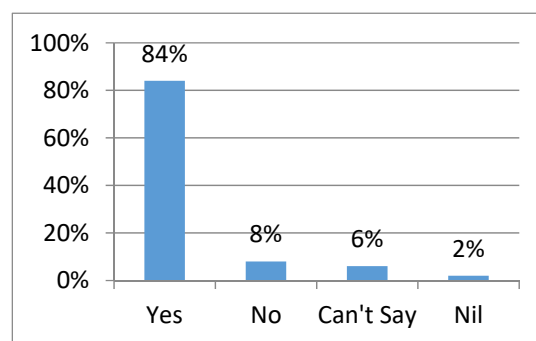


Figure 3. Impact of Flow of Money

**Government vs Private Jobs:** Though people prefer government jobs, the private sector also provides similar benefits with higher pay packages and many other incentives. The response of officers in this regard is as given below:

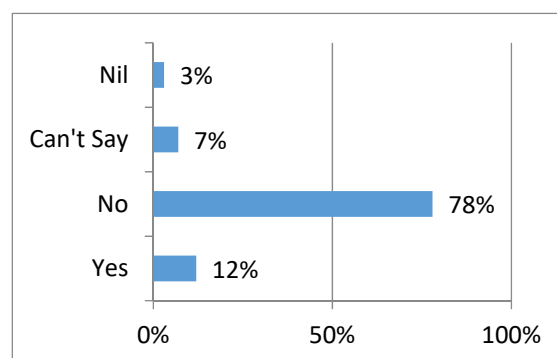


Figure 4. Impact of Private Jobs

78% officers are affirmative that private jobs have impacted the qualities of the youth.

**Technological Advancements:** Today's age is described as the age of Information Technology (IT), microchips, lasers and satellite applications. Information is regarded as the fifth dimension of warfare after land, sea, air and space. As Roman (1997) puts it, there is a general consensus that the nature of warfare in the 21st Century will become increasingly complex. Within 50 years, from an era of face –to-face (visual range) combat we have come to the age of nuclear ballistic missiles, “smart” bombs, drones and cruise missiles. 92% officers responded positively in favour its impact as given below:

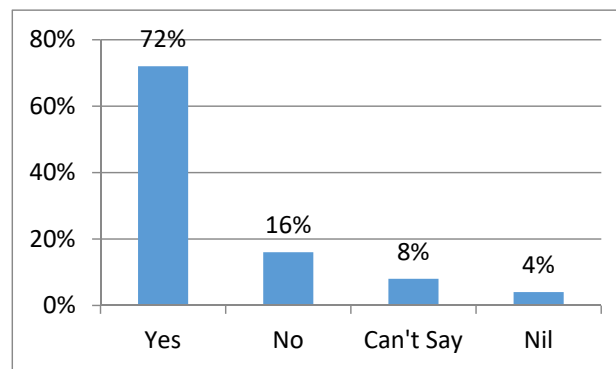


Figure 5. Impact of Technological Advancement

### 3.2 Social Changes

**Joint Family System:** The joint family system has been replaced by the nucleus family system. Kind of values and growth environment which the children use to get in a joint family system is not there any- more. The officers response to this shift is as shown below:

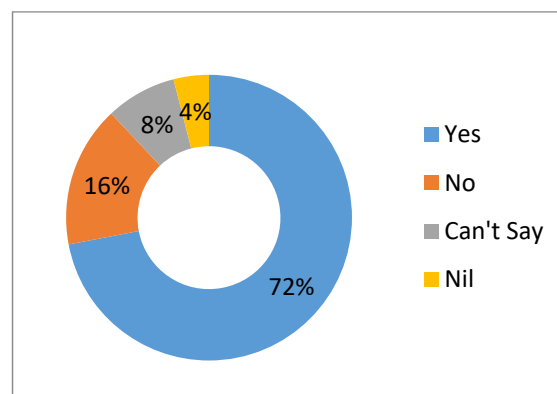


Figure 6. Impact of Nucleus Family System

Clearly, 72% officers view that shift from joint to nucleus family system has impacted the youth and only 16% think that it has no impact.

**Double Income:** The present trend is that both the parents work to earn more money thus youth being left on its own. The personal touch of the parents is missing forcing children to grow in a hostile environment resulting in degradation of values and culture and development of negative attitude. The officers' response in this regard is given here:

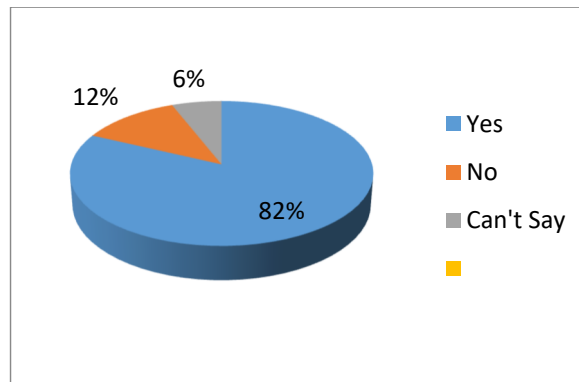


Figure 7. Impact of Working Parents

82% officers agree that both the parents working have an impact on qualities in the youth.

**Materialistic Thinking:** The youth thinks in terms of materialistic comforts and not interested on value based hard lives. They are unable to co-op up with the difficult or unexpected situations. When the officers were asked if materialistic thinking does not have any impact on the qualities in the youth, the response was that it has an influence. The same is shown below:

Table 2. Does Materialistic Thinking have NO Impact on Qualities in the Youth?

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	82	18.26	18.26
No	325	72.38	90.64
Can't Say	22	4.90	95.54
No Response	20	4.46	100
Total	449	100	

Clearly, 72.38% officers view that materialistic thinking have an impact on the qualities in the youth. Only 18.26% think that it has no bearing.

**Changes in Rural Areas:** Developments of the areas, better roads, transportation system, education system, better facilities etc. have changed the face of rural areas also. The officers response is 79% in favour as given below:

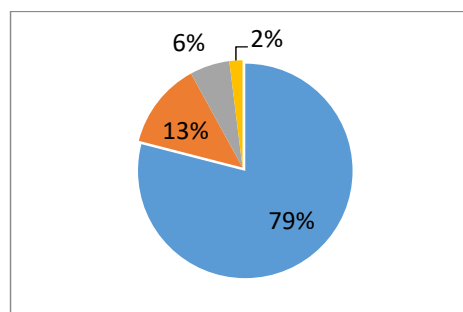


Figure 8. Impact of Rural Area Development

**Educational Changes:** Large number of educational institutes has affected the quality of education. The degrees are being purchased and have become a fashion of the day. So, once again, the same set of officers were asked a question, “Has educational changes in the society effected the qualities in the youth”? The replies were analysed and depicted in the form of a chart here:

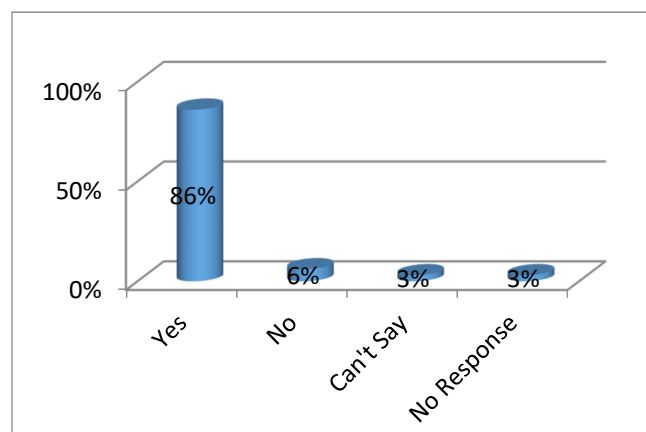


Figure 9. Impact of Educational Changes

As is evident from the fig, overwhelmingly the officers affirmed the idea that educational changes in the society do impact qualities in the youth.

#### 4. Conclusion

As put by Raisinghani (2014), perhaps, the single greatest difference to the environment affecting command philosophies is that both leader and the led are increasingly reflecting a divergent set of values and beliefs, to those traditionally held by the Indian Armed Forces. In the last 20 years or so, there have been dynamic economic, social and technological changes within society and, as a result, society is more “permissive” with the emphasis now on individual rights rather than responsibility towards the community or traditional organisations such as Armed Forces.

The analysis of impact of socio economic and technological advancement clearly shows that these factors have immensely affected the minds of the youth which has resulted in poor development of qualities needed for the officers of the armed forces. Globalisation (82%), urbanization (84%), increased job opportunities (79.3%), flow of easy money (84%) and preference of private jobs to Govt. jobs (78%) all have hugely impacted the minds of the youth. Technological advancement has taken a big leap and 72% officers agreed that this has resulted in a changed society. When it comes to social changes, breaking of joint family system (72%), increased income due to both the parents working (82%), more emphasis in materialistic thinking (72.38%), development in rural area (79%) and changes in educational a system (86%) have all resulted in development of non-ethical qualities and degradation of values : two most important qualities needed in armed forces. Obviously, the minds of the youth have changed according to the economic, social and technological changes in the society. However, the armed forces selection system based on 15 Officer Like qualities (OLQs) remains unchanged for almost last 60 years now. Keeping in view the changes in the youth and requirements of the armed forces, there is a need to change certain qualities and selection process. The changes should be as per the armed forces requirement keeping in mind the changes that have taken place in the warfare techniques. No compromise can be made on the qualities of officers as defence of the nation cannot be relegated to second grade citizens. The battlefield of 2050 may still be different. With more changes in the society, technological

changes, nuclear warfare etc., the training and standard expected from the candidates will have to undergo a drastic change.

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