

# LIKELY DEMANDS ON FUTURE LEADERS

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Over the past two decades, many aspects of military operations have changed profoundly,<sup>1</sup> with the potential for equally profound effects on the things that military leaders must know and do. Tangible threats have been replaced with ill-defined challenges. One of the clearest and most compelling reasons for this change has been the new strategic environment where a few aggressors pose a degree of overt challenges which imposes a degree of caution that encourages conventional force capabilities while, at the same time, fielding new technologies as well as non-state threats while gradually enhancing flexible combat power in a time of relative peace and stability.<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously, the focus has also changed towards military operation other than war. There are many reasons for this and a primary one is that the generally the cost of an offensive operation or counter-insurgency operations to destroy terrorist cells has tended to go beyond the budget for humanitarian operations.<sup>3</sup> As a result, considerations that were once in the periphery have now started taking centre-stage. There has been enough attention towards humanitarian and peace-keeping operations.

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1. Henry A. Leonard, J. Michael Polich, Jeffrey D. Peterson, Ronald E. Sortor, S. Craig Moore, *Something Old, Something New: Army Leader Development in a Dynamic Environment* ( Santa Monica: RAND, 2006), p.xii.
2. Lt Col Larry Weaver and Col Anthony C. Cain, "Task Force Concepts of Operations," *Air and Space Power Journal*, vol. XVII, no.2, Summer 2003, p.54.
3. Damon V. Coletta, *Trusted Guardian: Information Sharing and the Future of the Atlantic Alliance* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), p.9.

**It is imperative that we undertake an examination of the recent changes in the operational environment which would have effects on the leadership requirements.**

These changes have created a dynamic situation which is volatile, unpredictable and novel in many respects, making conduct of military operations, and, hence, the demand on leaders, more complex and varied than in the past.

The Indian armed forces have taken many steps to adapt to these changes, but so far the adaptation has centred largely on the more tangible elements and mechanics of war, doctrine, logistics, and unit organisation. Less attention could be paid to the contemporary environment which affects the armed forces personnel, and especially the leaders. Since it seems likely that the new environment will call for officers to have different skills, greater knowledge in certain areas, or a different intellectual orientation toward command and decision-making, it is imperative that we undertake an examination of the recent changes in the operational environment which would have effects on the leadership requirements. This is so because there is a view that in many developing countries, the military is often a uniquely modern, rational institution. Why so? Because of the concern for efficiency and the advantages to be gained out of the management methods which were interchanged constantly from way back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Armed forces personnel were borrowed, most often for administrative and logistical operations and after World War II, the trend was also seen of civilian consultants and ad hoc study groups instructing the armed forces, again in administrative and logistical activities.<sup>4</sup> This gives reason to believe that military structures reflect industrial models of specialisation and their training serves to rapidly prepare individual attitudes, behaviours and skills which are necessary for building a modern society.<sup>5</sup> So, ultimately, it is the military training which becomes the important pillar in the foundation of the military leadership.

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4. Charles R. Shrader, *History of Operations Research in the United States Army, Volume II: 1961 - 1973* (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 2008), p.8.

5. Peter B. Mayer, "Militarism and Development in Underdeveloped Countries" in Lester R. Kurtz, ed., *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict* (New York: Academic Press, 1999), pp. 438-439.

## FOUNDATIONS OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP

Many of the attributes that the armed forces seek in officers are timeless values and these will remain at the core of leadership. The strategic leadership of the armed forces reinforces and sustains a military culture that promotes the evolution of professional expertise which is emphasised with the timeless values, laying the stability of the foundation for Service members.<sup>6</sup> The enduring attributes in the timeless values would include character and integrity among other values as well as many basic military technical and operational skills. There would be three critical aspects that have to be considered:<sup>7</sup>

- What the leader must *Be*;
- What the leader must *Know* ( from very general to very specific areas of knowledge and skill, over a range of disciplines), and;
- What the leader must *Do* (the kinds of actions leaders must take to make their organisations accomplish their task and function).

In the category of *Be* will be self-discipline, initiative, judgment, self-confidence, intelligence and cultural awareness. This is because the leader faces a counter-force to the role she/he is expected to take, and if the role displays an attitude of superiority and condescension, then there is a tendency not to be accepted.<sup>8</sup> Some attributes may well have to be developed, like cultural awareness for this purpose. The level of development does not indicate additional findings in various studies made which suggest that a leader's attribute of initial state of development is similar in underdeveloped, developing and developed countries.<sup>9</sup> Intellectual acuity is always a desirable trait and will be required in different decision-making processes to deal with new challenges. Why do we refer to intellect and acuity? Because

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6. See Don M. Snider, Lloyd J. Mathews, Gayle L. Watkins, *The Future of the Army Profession* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2002), p.495.

7. Leonard, et. al., n 1.

8. John H. Zenger, Joseph R. Folkman, *Extraordinary Leader* (New Delhi: Tata Mcgraw -Hill, 2009), p.217.

9. Mostafa Rejai and Kay Phillips, *World Military Leaders: A Comparative Analysis* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1996), p.13.

what is true of intellect and acuity is also true of memory and judgement.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is important to develop officers with well-grounded intellectual and critical thinking abilities, practised intensively across a range of situations. The judgement factor has to be developed and be strong so that she/he can be in the role of the leader.

The other two elements in the leadership construct cover what the leader must *Know* and *Do* which are closely interlinked. Under the must *Know* category, successful leadership will require conceptual, inter-personal, technical and tactical skills. The leader has to believe that the leader understands their needs and has their interests at heart. Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue.<sup>11</sup> To enlist any support, whether of people or ideas that will be accepted, the leader must know the people's hopes and vision. In the must *Do* requirements will come the understanding of one's capabilities and limitations relative to the situation. Therefore, before acting or making a decision in certain sets of conditions, the leader must develop the ability to adapt and the ability to learn new things in the changing circumstances. Now, what new things does the leader learn and is it possible to learn every new thing that is evolving in the world? Not really; the leader adapts to learn a few things. It may seem ironic that to become a leader, one must be able to do many things well, but in order to remain a leader at the top, the leader must do fewer things with great excellence.<sup>12</sup> In fact, successful leaders figure this out as they transit from the middle to the top level.

## DEMANDS ON FUTURE LEADER DEVELOPMENT

**Military Professionalism:** The essential characteristics that are important for a leader to be are:

- A war-fighter.
- A member of the armed profession.
- A leader of character.

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10. Jerry A. Fodor, *The Modularity of Mind: An Essay on Faculty Psychology* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1983), p.16.

11. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 2007), p.17.

12. John C. Maxwell, *The 360 Degree Leader Workbook: Developing Your Influence Anywhere in the Organisation* (Nashville, Tennessee: Nelson Impact, 2006), p.54.

In keeping with the above and briefly abstracting from these attributes necessary to be a leader, the undermentioned also help to explain why this construct should receive increased attention:

- A war-fighter, because the society at large, recognises and values the professional's special expertise. Thus, just as people turn to physicians to solve medical problems and to lawyers to handle litigation and criminal matters, the leader has to enjoy a special status and authority in dealing with defence and security matters. In fact, it was the bureaucratic experts who recognised the logic and created the machinery to be led by a selected few who could show off the paces of professional expertise for getting things done at breakneck speed on a large scale.<sup>13</sup> This connects closely with foundational matters which further confers trust and legitimacy to the leader to perform as one. It is important to note here that while the armed force's model of leadership is incorporated in professionalism (which is also expressed in the values of duty, loyalty and selfless service), it is important to understand that for the military to be an effective instrument of national power, the understanding of duty and loyalty is consistent with the requirements of its legitimacy.<sup>14</sup> The supportive traits of negotiation and diplomacy encourage relations and grant legitimacy,<sup>15</sup> and the military leader has to be consciously aware of this factor.
- A member of the armed profession exercises decisive control over activities that constitute its focus, like the police over public places, and doctors in hospitals; each of these areas is of importance as they all really matter to the country. Jurisdiction is tied to professionalism and legitimacy. With professional jurisdiction emanates responsibility because professional jurisdiction will be able to provide resource and

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13. Harold James Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.190.

14. Rudolph C. Barnes Jr, *Military Legitimacy: Might and Right in the New Millennium* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p.115.

15. When related to military operations other than war, this aspect becomes clearly understandable and relevant.

**Most of these attempts recognise a need for leaders to adapt in response to the new environment (as connected to alternate leadership which generally deals with situational response).**

procedural support for the exercise of responsibility,<sup>16</sup> and successful execution of responsibility gives legitimacy.

- A leader of character, as the profession enjoys considerable autonomy in key functions which gives immense powers to influence and create impact (like when to use force or when not to, whether to kill or incapacitate) and virtually codify a body of professional knowledge, inculcating it in new members and people under command, embedding ethical qualities, and assessing the quality of professional practice. In matters as

critical as the decision on whether another human being is to live or die, a military leader has to exercise immense strength of character. The autonomy grows out of the profession's specialised expertise and strength of character, which are often impenetrable to the layman, and, therefore, the society's trust in the profession to "do the right thing" even when the public cannot be certain what the right thing would be. In this context, we can quote the example of Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, chief of Japan's combined fleet, who planned the attack on Pearl Harbour. His career was filled with contradictions but the strength of his character gave him the jurisdiction to plan the impossible and most imaginative. He was able to force the entire Japanese naval establishment to back down and his planned attack knocked out almost all the battleships of the US in the Pacific fleet.<sup>17</sup>

**Skills Needed for the Changing Environment:** There have been numerous attempts at formulating leadership concepts, responding in part to a sense that current events present new challenges for the officer cadre

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16. Robert E. Sanders, "A Neo-Rhetorical Perspective: The Enhancement of Role Identities as Interactive and Strategic" in Stuart J. Sigman, ed., *The Consequentiality of Communication* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers, 1995), p.90.

17. William Weir, *50 Military Leaders who Changed the World* (New Jersey: Career Press, 2007), p.207.

which generally provides the leadership in the military system. Most of these attempts recognise a need for leaders to adapt in response to the new environment (as connected to alternate leadership<sup>18</sup> which generally deals with situational response<sup>19</sup>), but they also try to place the need in this context for general attributes and skills. In discussing the derivations of these traits, the aspects of leader development that need more emphasis will be suggested here. Translated into more specific terms, the following can be listed:<sup>20</sup>

- A station commander who masters leadership with visualisation and specialty skills. He can be a pilot but when entrusted with managing the air and ground security of the station, he amalgamates skill oriented visualisation to carry out the responsibility.
- A staff officer, expert in operational and instructional appointments. This allows him the vision to strategise and conceptualise.
- A squadron leader having served both in operational and training command. This allows him the perspective to understand the limitations and boundaries of Service specific functions.
- An armament specialist who is both a technical specialist and a war-fighter. Should the need arise to take charge of the station, it should not pose a skill related constraint.

In the above, a set of specific competencies and supporting skills conceived as necessary to operate in the modern environment can be wide-ranging and challenging, as the skill set, among many other things, will call for abilities to deal with:

- Non-linear battlefields. Sustainment in the initial stages of an intense war will be difficult as there will be degeneration of the battlefield<sup>21</sup>

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18. George B. Graen, *New Frontiers of Leadership* ( Charlotte, North Carolina: Information Age Publishing, Inc, 2004), p.22.

19. Ibid. The example of project leaders as compared to formal supervisors has been cited. This is akin to military leadership where a mission can be led by one leader and then another by a different leader. The long-term mentoring relationship is not warranted as could be generally applicable to infantry units of the army. Rather, leadership is skill-based and can be applicable both in field and staff roles.

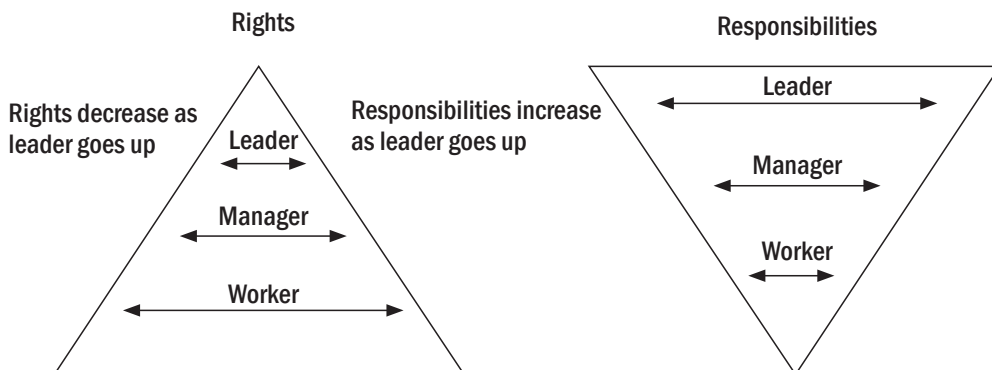
20. These have been mentioned related to the air force and separate instances can be derived for the other Services, as well.

21. Frances Hesselbein, Eric K. Shinseki, *Be, Know, Do: Leadership the Army Way* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2004), p.xvi.

where hardly any plan would seem to work. The requirements on the leaders to bind the force cohesively will be of utmost importance.

- Fluid adaptation with participating forces. The human relations model is instructive in this case where individual motivation with leadership can enable higher-order needs.<sup>22</sup>
- Diverse cultural demographic and physical environments.
- Multiple simultaneous operations.
- Asymmetrical threats.
- Accelerated informational and operational tempo.
- Functioning in combined forces and inter-agency elements representation situation in a widely dispersed combat environment.
- Emerging technical systems redundancy situation that promises loss of information control in an environment having a growing array of technically sophisticated digital systems for collecting and disseminating information, exercising command and control, and supporting decision-making.

**Fig 1: Responsibility-Rights Principle**



**Outcome of the Likely Demands:** It is imperative to find a person who can take on responsibility because the demands on future leaders, among many other requirements, will bring the need to be entirely responsible in accepting any assignment, to see it completed conscientiously and

22. Robert L.Flood, Ewart R. Carson, *Dealing with Complexity: An Introduction to the Theory and Application of Systems Science* (New York: Plenum Press, 1993), pp.79-80.

effectively. It may seem rather simplistic to state this obvious fact but the real task in front of the leader is to earn his/her rights, and rights will not come by just carrying out responsibility, as one would be inclined to believe.

Responsibilities will increase as a person starts emerging as a leader while going up the ladder in the organisation but the rights will decrease.<sup>23</sup> Now why should the rights decrease when we see that the privileges seem to rise as a person rises up the ladder? First, there is a distinction between

privileges and rights. Second, it is also true that only a leader can turn the pyramid around to claim increasing rights, and this will happen when the leader is able to carry out his/her responsibility without the requirement of interruption, of peer attention. Therefore, what must the leader do to earn the rights, and in an overtly non-meaningful expression, the privileges? The leader has to adapt to the demands that are being created, and it is important that we see these like never before because of the rapid pace of change. We all want change, and the future leader will be under pressure to bring about change, but when the changes occur, it will create the demand for the leader to handle those changes and lead others to manage those changes, so that the necessary benefits can accrue. If not, then there could be reasonable chances of cascading chaos. Every one of us wants to become a leader, and so it would be wise to view and understand the downturns.

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#### **ADAPTATION TO THE DEMANDS: ADAPTING TO THE CONTEMPORARY OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

To identify the demands on future leaders, the challenges posed by the new operating environment have to be examined and there would also be a requirement of analysing what could be necessary to adapt to, and then

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23. John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1993), p.42.

**After World War I, all military leaders agreed that new technology was profoundly important, and both politicians and Generals alike vowed never to be “technologically surprised.”**

develop in, the key areas of skill, knowledge and creation of ability.

**Specific Operational Skills:** Analyses of recent and ongoing operations in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), and the northeastern states suggest that several areas require emphasis because they have become more important as they have become complex. There have been areas where significant changes have been noticed when compared to confrontational situations faced in the past.<sup>24</sup> These have also become requirements at the lower echelons of leadership and they include:

- Operations in urban and restricted terrain. Lower echelon leaders will be expected to look at least two levels up.<sup>25</sup>
- Integrating with forces and special operations. This entails the most difficult of situations one can face, of finding or getting into a situation which can fail, yet being able to gain total control in a variety of innovative ways to achieve the maximum possible, gain success and move on to the next task/mission.<sup>26</sup>
- Understanding the situation and situational awareness. The challenges of transition in a situation will depend on the situational factors. It is essential that the strategy to be adopted matches the situation.<sup>27</sup> What would be the point of strategising various options, if they do not work? Thus, any practical advice or option must be tailored to the situation.
- Use of technology. After World War I, all military leaders agreed that new technology was profoundly important, and both politicians and Generals alike vowed never to be “technologically surprised”.<sup>28</sup> It is

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24. Leonard, et. al., n.1, p.103.

25. Russell W. Glen, Gina Kingston, *Urban Command in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2005), p.43.

26. William A. Cohen, *Secrets of Special Ops Leadership Dare the Impossible, Achieve the Extraordinary* (New York: AMACOM, 2006), p.19.

27. Michael Watkins, *The First 90 Days: Critical Success Strategies for New Leaders at all Levels* (Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2003), pp.10-11.

28. Chris Hables Gray, “Military and Technology” in Sal P. Restivo, ed., *Science Technology, and Society: An Encyclopedia* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p.334.

not only important to develop and know that new technology exists but to acquire and use it that will be prove the capabilities of new age leaders.

- Force protection. It has often been expressed, especially by leaders in the lower rungs, that full force protection can become a serious impediment to mission success. Casualty aversion can often lead to casualty phobia.<sup>29</sup> By no means should the concern to protect own troops be avoided but overcautiousness can lead to increased casualties at times. The concern should not be resting on only defensive actions but on the art of balancing an offensive posture, and action if necessary, and a defensive stance.
- Interacting with the media. One may be wary of this factor, but the more successful Generals of World War II (Montgomery, Slim, Bradley) struck a balance between personal leadership and remote direction.<sup>30</sup> They were greatly assisted by war-reporting through newspapers, newsreels, radio and television. They could reach out to their men through the media. The media allowed commanders to regain contact with their troops. The trend of media reporting has accelerated and will continue in the future. When the war becomes fast paced, it will help to handle and use the media well to project own achievements at every possible level. It will be an art that will need constant development.

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**Intellectual and Cognitive Abilities in Decision-Making:** The contemporary environment places a heightened premium on making decisions quickly in unfamiliar situations amid a greater deal of ambiguity and uncertainty than

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29. Robert Mandel, *Security, Strategy, and the Quest for Bloodless War* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2004), p.24.

30. D. Reichel, "Command", in Andre Corvisier, ed., John Childs and Chris Turner, trans., *A Dictionary of Military History and the Art of War* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), p.169.

what may have been seen in the past. It is not that such conditions did not exist in the past, but at that time, 'recognitional' decision-making was less prevalent. Dependency was on natural decision-making<sup>31</sup> and that is why we still quote from the past. Based on models from their experience, leaders took conscious and informed decisions. Decision-making has also become increasingly transparent to the outer world. This transparency is not related to what becomes available in the public domain through the media but rather what is given out within the system as a result of the decision made by a leader. As an example, a concept of total asset visibility in the logistic information system is generated so that the entire system is transparent. The decision-making of the leader also becomes transparent as a result of the action taken by the leader, which gets translated into the total logistic picture.<sup>32</sup>

The recent years have also seen renewed recognition that the modern environment calls not just for specific skills, but also for better developed intellectual abilities. This has also led to the requirement of operational research where the long-term consequences of actions can be attempted to be quantified.<sup>33</sup> Leaders will need to know how to think about novel situations and demands, and how to devise a course of action fitted to those demands. They will also need to learn, and become confident that they can acquire new skills and knowledge quickly when they confront new challenges. These skills and attributes underscore the key ability in operational command, to make a good enough decision, and soon enough to count.

This set of skills and attributes includes the main attributes that support 'recognitional' decision-making.<sup>34</sup> Suffice to mention here that such decision-making is related to the C2 (Command and Control) situational aspects which form virtually the central nervous system of a combat military force:

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31. Rebecca M. Pliske, Michael J. McCloskey, Gary Klein, "Decision Skills Training: Facilitating Learning From Experience", in Eduardo Salas and Gary Klein, eds., *Linking Expertise and Naturalistic Decision-Making* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., Publishers, 2001), pp.39-41.
  32. Moshe Kress, *Operational Logistics: The Art and Science of Sustaining Military Operations* (Massachusetts: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), p.119.
  33. N. K. Jaiswal, *Military Operations Research: Quantitative Decision-Making* (Massachusetts: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), p.1.
  34. See *Defence Analysis*, vol. 1 and 2 (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1985), p.132.

- **Pattern recognition:** This will involve drawing current and future events to past experiences and determine the fit.<sup>35</sup> The pattern recognition activity triggers a set of action scripts that enable a leader to consider a potential action plan by mentally simulating whether that plan will be effective. If so, they act. If not, they consider a different option.
- **Ability to gain situational understanding:**<sup>36</sup> This is the ability to develop an understanding of the situation and produce effective solutions.
- **Mental simulation:** This faculty is closely related to the aspect of pattern recognition, as explained above. There is a certain view, based on certain naturalistic models, which supports the natural power of decision-making as opposed to training a leader to make decisions through mental simulation. Training and experience go hand-in-hand and as such, when experience is counted, it may at times lead to sub-optimal or negative outputs.<sup>37</sup> In considering, the negative impacts of experience, it could very well be counted alongwith the fact of the type of experience: good, beneficial or just bad enough to be discounted.
- **Critical thinking:** Good critical thinkers do not always recognise just their own point of view, and consider, even empathise with, the other's view. Empathy is not a characteristic of a soft leader, rather it is a characteristic of a smart, thoughtful and reflective leader.<sup>38</sup>
- **Adaptability:** Future operations will always be joint in nature. Team diversity will fluctuate and change within missions, making the ability to adjust strategies appropriately based on the environment a necessity.<sup>39</sup> For example, sometimes in a single mission, the role of air power will be dominant and on occasions, land power would be more necessary. There would be a plan but enemy actions may cause the

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35. Michael A. Roberto, *Know What You Don't Know: How Great Leaders Prevent Problems Before They Happen* (New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2009), p.76.

36. Leonard, et. al., n.1., p.xviii.

37. Bruce Newsome, *Made, Not Born: Why Some Soldiers Are Better Than Others* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007), p.84.

38. Stephen Gerras, "Thinking Critically About Critical Thinking", in Mark Grandstaff and Georgia Sorenson, eds., *Strategic Leadership: The General's Art* (Vienna: Management Concepts, 2009), p.50.

39. Janet L. Sutton, C. Shawn Burke, Linda G. Pierce and Eduardo Salas, "Cultural Adaptability" in C. Shawn Burke, Linda G. Pierce and Eduardo Salas, eds., *Understanding Adaptability: A Prerequisite for Effective Performance Within Complex Environment* (Oxford: Elsevier Ltd, 2006), p.143.

**Combining intellectual grounding, and the application of such skills in operational environments, using simulations or practical exercises, will help in honing general and specific skills.**

plan to fluctuate as everything within a phase of the operation may not be just clock work. Traditionally, air power goes in first but at times, it may have to hold back, allowing the ground component commander to precede. This does not mean the land force commander continues to dictate; when the environment changes, the air commander takes precedence.

All of the above skills are inherently cognitive processes (modes of thinking) and should be inherently present, to be developed further.

In fact, intellectual capability actually refers to cognitive skills.<sup>40</sup> Thus, they are amenable to development in an academic or institutional setting and their development calls for reflection on past experience, ferreting out the essential elements of a new problem, entertaining alternatives, and thinking through the consequences of actions that have not yet been taken. Institutional education has long proved its worth in teaching these kinds of skills, and, thus, it can play a key role in developing and refining the meta-competencies for operational command: the ability to develop comprehensive situational understanding and the ability to use it to produce effective solutions and decisions. Combining intellectual grounding, and the application of such skills in operational environments, using simulations or practical exercises, will help in honing general and specific skills. While some of this may be accomplished in fast-paced operational environments, practical constraints and time limits mean that the predominant role in developing intellectual skills must be played by academic institutions. I will argue that there is a role in this process both for the army's institutional schools and for graduate civilian education.

**Breadth of Knowledge and Perspective:** While intellectual abilities are essential, they are not sufficient for effective decision-making. Leaders will need a broad base of experience and background knowledge for making

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40. Carol McCann and Ross Pigeau, "Research Challenges for the Human Command", in Carol McCann and Ross Pigeau, eds., *The Human in Command: Exploring the Modern Experience* (New York: Plenum Publishers, 2000), p.393.

informed decisions, particularly in fluid and unfamiliar environments.<sup>41</sup> This base will require both a tactical and an operational component (exposure to a wide array of operational environments) and a broader intellectual component (knowledge and appreciation of non-military environment, like foreign affairs and diplomacy). Since officers' daily routine is so full with "demands" to attain the daily deadlines, attaining this breadth will always be a challenge.

Breadth is becoming more important for leaders, for two main reasons. First, as cognitive skills become important, their successful application rests on a base of wide experience and knowledge. Familiarity with a wider range of possible operational situations will give an officer a wider array of knowledge on which to draw when evaluating possible courses of action. The broader the base, the greater the likelihood that a leader will find a similar situation on which to base such evaluations.

Second, familiarity with external institutions and cultures (e.g., other Services, joint commands, and government agencies) aids not only in planning and conducting operations, but also in gaining support from, or influencing, the actions of external players. The same understanding can apply to familiarity with foreign institutions, both military and civilian. The recent operational experiences of our armed forces at all echelons of the three Services—in Afghanistan and peace-keeping missions—have brought this point home. This kind of breadth is achievable only through contact with external institutions, and its importance argues for greater exposure of officers to graduate in education and broadening of assignments outside the country.

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41. Leonard, et. al., n.1, p.19.

### PROFFERED RESPONSE OF FUTURE LEADERS.

Two key competencies that can be identified are self-awareness and adaptability that stand above others as enduring intellectual attributes of the leader. These can be referred to as “meta-competencies;” overarching traits, that make it possible to use the more specific skills needed in the contemporary and future operating environments. The response towards these two key competencies becomes important as we understand that all of us may not become great leaders but we can become better leaders and this can be done when we release the potential within us, and potential we all have.<sup>42</sup>

Self-awareness is the understanding of one's own capabilities, knowledge, skills, and limitations, and 'knowing enough to know when you don't know enough' and must seek to learn more. Self-awareness is necessary, so that leaders can recognise when things have changed and when one needs new information, skills, or resources. Consistent with this thinking, it can be suggested that in the context of commanding operational forces, 'self-awareness' would extend to a comprehension of the capabilities and condition of forces. This would be an extension where a cadet undergoes sleep deprivation and extreme hardship to get the awareness of the incidental demands as well the typical ability in the transition from a cadet to a soldier and then a leader.<sup>43</sup>

Adaptability, along with related terms such as flexibility, refers to one's capacity to recognise changes in circumstances, learn what is needed to be effective in the new circumstances, and modify behaviour accordingly. It is not necessary that a military leader always has to set forth on a military solution. Adaptability is characterised as the ability to understand the context, to recognise and seize an opportunity and the ability to look at a problem or crisis and see an array of unconventional solutions. The operational dimension of a strategy need not necessarily

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42. Maxwell, n.12. p.16.

43. Robert K. Gifford, “ Psychological Aspects of Combat”, in Thomas W. Britt, Amy B. Adler, Carl Andrew Castro, eds., *Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006), p.25.

be a military inclined one.<sup>44</sup> Taken together, such concepts expand a good deal on the knowledge dimension, especially in the sense that leaders must not only have a wide range of technical and tactical knowledge, but must also be able to synthesise the collective parts of their knowledge and adapt their thinking to unusual solutions under a set of circumstances.

Given the proffered response that can be expected from future leaders, the one single most important attribute of military leadership that any leader has to possess is integrity.<sup>45</sup> This will include professional integrity which will facilitate all learning and education that will assist in meeting the future demands of tomorrow's leadership. In fact, it has also been stated that we give great importance to, and invest in good measure in, training, but give very little importance to education.<sup>46</sup> It is education that will bring in self-awareness and adaptability in a person, while training will serve to hone the skills acquired during and after the learning process.

#### **FUTURE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

In order to forecast future leadership requirements, it is important to also gain a clear understanding with a conceptual framework. It will also help us to proceed within the framework model and institute the applications so that the process is in a state of evolving and improving mode, rather than being static. The transient and changing operational environment gives rise to these requirements. Why do we have these requirements in the first place? The answer may not be easily forthcoming but when we view the table given below, the answer can be demonstrated.

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44. Robert J. Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defence: A Gandhian Approach* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), p.38.

45. Air Cmde Jasjit Singh AVSM, VrC, VM (Retd), "Demands on Future Aerospace Leaders", in Jasjit Singh, ed., *Military Leadership for Tomorrow* (New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2009), p.135.

46. Ibid., p.136.

**Table 1: Armed Forces Leadership Requirements**

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities	Other Characteristics	
Doctrine knowledge	Social and interpersonal skills	Cognitive ability	Achievement Drive	Accountability
Operations knowledge	Tactical skills	Cognitive/ conceptual	Autonomy	Awareness
Sense of history	Technical skills	Communication	Competitive	Confident
Tactical expertise		Conceptual/frame of reference	Conscientiousness	Courage
Technical credibility		Creativity	Determination	Decisive
Use of military power		Handle ambiguity	Dedicated	Disciplined
		Insight	Endurance	Emotional stability
		Integrating	Energy	Ethics
		Judgment	Experience	Flexibility
		Language ability	Fortitude	Honesty
		Mental agility	Initiative	Integrity
		Meta-cognitive skills	Lifelong learner	Moral
		Oral communication	Motivation to perform	Openness
		Physical agility	Patience	Persuasion
		Problem solving	Physical fitness	Positive attitude
		Reflective thought	Positive self-image	Pride
		Strategic thinking	Presence	Professionalism
		Systems thinking	Psychomotor aptitude	Resilience
		Use technology	Responsibility	Self-motivated
		Vision	Self-confidence	Will to destroy the enemy
		Written communication	Willingness to exploit opportunities	Values
			Versatility	

What is very evident is that when it comes to application of military power, it warrants the maximum number of abilities mentioned in “other characteristics”, and, hence, would deserve the maximum attention, though, evidently, there is no scope for skill application. The skill set that has been referred to in the table above comprises inter-personal and social skills, tactical and technical skills. This is so because when faced with a situation of whether to use force or not, it will concern primarily the cognitive sphere. When we view the “other characteristics”, there are “insight, emotional stability, judgement, language ability, mental agility...” and a host of others in the cognitive domain. So, actually

the use of military power, or rather, whether to use it or not, is heavily dependent on the cognitive faculty as opposed to the common thinking which perceives it as just the decision to apply sheer force, and nothing else.

The above aspect will get highlighted when we consider that one of the most influential factors that have altered the way we can use military power in the future is the possession of nuclear weapons.<sup>47</sup> This factor can take us to a general conclusion that the one “overriding factor”<sup>48</sup> that will exist will be the military appreciation of victory by other conventional war-fighting means or total destruction of the country. This becomes critical in view of the obvious fact that both our neighbours have nuclear weapons.

“The strengthening of leadership development for the future would depend on the degree of institutionalised professional military education that we invest in, beyond what an individual pursues as his/her personal interest.”<sup>49</sup> From this, I will draw the basic competency framework which will endorse this acute requirement. Future leaders

**“The strengthening of leadership development for the future would depend on the degree of institutionalised professional military education that we invest in, beyond what an individual pursues as his/her personal interest.”**

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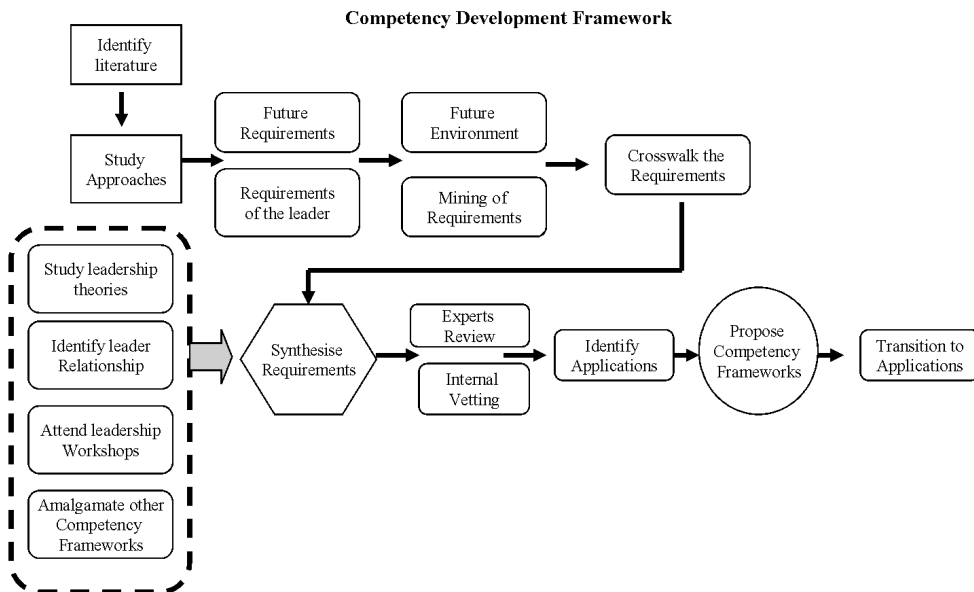
47. Ibid., p.138.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., p.136.

have to think of themselves as intellectual assets of the country, and the necessary support process would require refining as we move into the future. Leaders should be able to leave behind the asset of legacy;<sup>50</sup> this needs investment both by the individual and the institution.

**Fig 2: Competency Development Framework**



The competency development process would require a framework on which it can proceed in developing future leaders. Some are born leaders, while some learn to become leaders. The “born leaders” are few— it would be very optimistic to presume that all leaders are born with all the required qualities fully developed. Rather, some characteristics are predominantly present, while some have to be developed. The demand on a leader in the future will be high enough to necessitate that a developmental process exists to create leaders of high calibre, rather than make do with mediocre and self-centred achievers. However, it is imperative that the competency level is improved so that not only is the overall capability and competency level raised, but the potential leaders get the platform to emerge as achievers.

50. Max De Pree, *Leadership is an Art* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1989), p.13.

The competency development framework model<sup>51</sup> demonstrates a certain process that could be undertaken with certain refinements and in keeping with the specific requirements of different organisations. The process is already in motion in every organisation but in the milieu of deadlines to be achieved by the hour, such initiatives tend to get crowded out. Identifying suitable literature and the relevance of biographies would need emphasis. This requires attention, to a very large extent, at the organisational level. Understandably, to develop future leaders, the organisation also has to build and nurture a developmental framework, and not rest the process only on individual endeavour.

Study approaches would need to be undertaken based on the envisaged future operational requirements. A very important factor is to visualise what the requirements of future leaders would be, get these from them and also get a few extracted from various other studies and models that would have been created and implemented in other countries. All these requirements cannot be catered for together. There will be interlinks and priority requirements based on country specific life skills that have to be worked upon before proceeding to a global basing platform like military-to-military interaction, or politico-military interaction between countries. This could possibly be one factor why there is a subdued response in our country when it comes to military personnel interacting at the political level even in matters which could be strictly military. The situation may be changing but the process may require a further relook as it was an entirely different matter under colonial rule, the legacy of which may be unknowingly trudging along, even today.

Once the requirements and prioritisation have been synthesised, that is, blended, they can be applied to groom future leaders. This would also require a vetting, that is, both experts' review and a simultaneous feedback from the system, so that only the relevant applications are identified to be placed in the competency framework before finally proceeding to the actual application phase. This application phase has been termed as the "transition

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51. Adaptation of leadership competency development process in Jeffry Horey, Jon J. Fallesen and others, *Competency Based Future Leadership* (Virginia: US Army Research Institute for Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2004), p.5.

to applications” because the process would preferably be applied in phases or gradually to sections of graduating leaders.

These will also be the onus on the young leaders to continue identifying studies related to leadership and identify leader relationship. Leader relationships would imply not only handling of situations with management issues but also the identification of qualities which are similar between the graduating leader and the established leader, and the use of such instituted qualities which can be made to work under the circumstances.

To improve upon the process, it will become as important to attend leadership workshops and also learn from incorporating important points from other competency frameworks in other countries which are brought into the discussion either in such learning sessions or by self-study endeavours.

### SERVICE FRAMEWORK CONSTRUCTS: LEADERS TO COMMANDERS

The demands on future leaders will be varied and also be characteristic to an individual Service. Leaders in the three Services will have different requirements to be met and, therefore, would have to proceed with variants to tailor these into individual Service framework constructs.<sup>52</sup>

Table 2

Service/ Characteristic	Air Force	Army	Navy
Working with Others	Motivating	Leading people and teams	Leading and working
Influence	Influencing	Negotiating	Influencing
Communication	Communication for fostering effect	Constant effective communication	Constant communication
Group dynamics	Building and developing	Team training	Team building
Technical	Technical proficiency	Technical credibility	Technical proficiency
Aligning competencies	7 values*	7 values*	7 values*

\* To become best-in-class, requires leaders to improve all seven key leadership competencies simultaneously: results orientation, strategic orientation, functional competence, collaboration and influencing, organisational development capability, team leadership, and change leadership.

52. Adaptation of Service framework constructs in Ibid., p.18.

What would be the experiences within the Service framework that would be most useful for developing the competencies that can make outstanding leaders into commanders? Additionally, what would be the demands that would be created to achieve such competencies? To find the answers, we have to look for a correlation between performance and those experiences to facilitate the development of leadership competencies into building future commanders. In this correlation, we also have to ask whether it is really worth undertaking all of the challenges or better to invest in development of certain characteristics of emerging leaders.

**Future leaders will require more preparation and experience. How much more operational experience can leaders attain, given the time they have in a career among many other things that they must do can only be left to imaginative thinking.**

The demands on those at the staff level or in the combat environment will be developing a better understanding of strategic decision-making and the rationale for particular strategies, thereby improving the leader's ability to translate concept into strategy. It is obvious that senior commanders would have gone through the earlier stages of leadership.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, a correlation exists but the leader has to understand the intent of the commander. The leader at any level will be able to have a better understanding of change initiatives and be a better change agent. Those at the operational and field level, on the other hand, have significant development experience and will be able to provide the required catalyst. The opportunities to work more closely with men and women who execute action improve collaborating and influencing skills. Those at the staff level lend vision and beneficial inputs which are then in need of transformation variables which are highlighted through response in an operational environment.

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53. Air Cmde Jasjit Singh AVSM, VrC, VM (Retd), "On Command and Leadership", in Singh, ed., n. 45, p.192.

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## **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

Future leaders will require more preparation and experience. How much more operational experience can leaders attain, given the time they have in a career among many other things that they must do can only be left to imaginative thinking, and one will never be wrong. The demands will be endless and the process of building leaders and their leadership qualities also endless. To enrich this piece of writing, I would now look forward to comments from future leaders and commanders (both retired and serving), so that I may quote them, and follow them, instead of the ancient past.