

# Young officers in pakistan and sri lanka army



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1. General. The combat efficiency of a fighting force depends upon the total strength and effectiveness of its military leadership, especially, the junior leaders. The history of warfare is replete with examples where personal bravery and leadership has averted many disasters. Qualities of junior leaders therefore warrant substantial emphasis to yield optimum results both during peace and war. Over the years, the effects of perpetual changes in national, psycho-social and political conditions have altered the leadership environment so radically that applications of leadership and growth of junior leaders appears to have suffered.

2. Degradation of military leadership is not a new phenomenon. The historical record of military performance of United States Army in Vietnam War, and before and since, suggests that something was terribly wrong with the then prevalent military structure.[1]Critical to any assessment of the problem was the role of the officers' corps, which, had to bear a large portion of the blame for what went wrong and what remained so. In Vietnam, the officers' corps grew in inverse proportion to its decline in quality defined by its ability to act as a cohesive force around which combat units could cluster. Further, as the number of officers proliferated, and expansion of the rank structure concurred so that second lieutenants did the sergeants' job and majors did captains' jobs.

3. Background of the Study. In view of the development of materialistic approach and good job opportunities in the private sector, talented youth prefer to join the job which can give them handsome pay and allied facilities. Besides, staying away from family and being exposed to numerous dangers, parents also prefer their children to opt for a profession which is relatively

safer and more rewarding. Due to aforementioned reason, it is generally believed that the youth who do not find a way out in other sectors opt for the Army. They are more of job seekers and less of professionals. Demonstration of their leadership qualities is negatively affected by the non acceptance of faults in our military environment. Resultantly they lack initiative and risk taking.

Research Problem. While professional competence has improved over the years, negative trends like careerism and zero error syndrome has severely affected the quality of junior leaders in Pakistan and Sri Lanka Armies.

Research Question. Despite the improvement in education standards and computer literacy, the quality of young officers in Pakistan and Sri Lank Army is declining with the passage of time.

Objectives of the Study. The reasons for conduct of this study are as follows:

To elaborate upon the importance of the role played by young officers both in peace and war.

Determine and dilate upon the factors determining the outlook of the young officers of today.

Carry out an in-depth analysis of the prevalent psycho-social environment and its impact on young officers.

Proffer viable recommendations to act as long and short term remedial measures for controlling the further growth of this negative tendency.

Significance of the Study. Young officers of today are the flag bearers of tomorrow. The diversified nature of threats and employment places very high responsibility on them. The aim of all military training is to produce leaders of men in both peace and war. Young officers remain the most intimate segment in the chain of command between the commanders and troops. Quality of leadership of the young officers has a direct bearing on the quality and morale of the outfit.

Limitations of the Study. The scope of the study shall remain restricted to the quality of young officers in Sri Lanka Army. An effort will be made to correctly identify the reasons which are likely to have contributed to the problem under research. Armies of the then British colonies are mostly trained on identical lines. General opinion about the same issue in Pakistan and Bangladesh Armies and its comparison with Sri Lankan Army will be included in the study. The study is being conducted with following limitations in mind:

The study is being limited to the quality of young officers in view of the improved education standards and technological advancement; computer literacy level of the youth at present.

Armies defend the geographical and ideological borders of its countries. The source of inspiration differs from country to country due to different religions, society, culture and military traditions.

The word quality in this research paper refers to their professional attitude only and does not have make any reference to character or other personal qualities.

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Organisation of the Work/ Introduction to Chapters. The research is being intended to be completed in following chapters:

Chapter 1 - Introduction.

Chapter 2 - Literary Review.

Chapter 3 - Young Officers as the Back bone of Army.

Chapter 4 - Factors Determining Psycho-Social Out Look of Our Young Officers.

e. Chapter 5 - Factors Responsible For the Deterioration in Quality Leadership in Young Officers.

Chapter 6 - Recommendations

## CHAPTER 2 - LITERARY REVIEW

Primarily the research is being conducted with the help of books, articles and studies done by various individuals and groups mostly associated with different Armies. Besides, separate questionnaires are being distributed in the Army for getting the input/views of the majors and commanding officers respectively. The material having been consulted so far is given in the succeeding paragraphs. However, it is felt pertinent to mention that additional books are being studied and will be added subsequently.

Pakistan Army Green Book 1990 - Year of the Junior Leaders. In order to understand the correct place of junior leaders, identify the weak areas and recommend remedial measures to improve upon the quality of junior

leaders, including young officers, the annual Green Book was dedicated to junior leaders. It included the Junior Commissioned Officers and Non Commissioned Officers. It includes articles written by serving and retired Army officers giving their opinion about the quality of junior leaders. The book emphasizes upon the specific areas which warrant immediate and long term attention to improve upon the leadership traits of the young officers.

Major General (Retired) Aubrey Newman, USA, What Are Generals Made Of. The general has very comprehensively written about the selection of young officers, their training, grooming and ultimate product as future leaders and general officers. He supports his ideas with historical events and towards the end gives advise for the young officers. This book provides in insight into the areas which needs to be looked into and improved upon the aimed leadership quality of the young officers.

Richard A Gabriel and Paul L Savage, Crisis in Command. The historical record of the American military's performance in Vietnam, and before and since, suggested that something was terribly wrong with the then military structure. Critical to any assessment of the problem was the role of the officer corps, which, had to bear a large portion of the blame for what went wrong. In order not to allow the mistakes of the past to shape the future, an impartial study was carried out to analyze all the problems that arose during the war mainly due to the inefficiency and poor quality of young officers inducted in haste for war. By reading and critically analyzing this book one can safely assume the areas which a junior officer can go wrong and also realize the anticipatory measures to avoid it happening. Ultimately the aim of quality junior leadership can be achieved.

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Major Paul Yinling and Major John Nagi United States Army, *The Army Officer as War Fighter*. This book is about the role of Army officers both in peace and war. The military officer must fill a number of roles, often simultaneously. He has responsibilities as a war fighter, as the Nation's servant, as a member of the profession of arms, and as a leader of character. These four roles are interrelated almost to the point of inseparability, but examining each separately allows a better understanding of their inherent complexities. Professionalism is a combination of competence and devotion to service that grows over time and growth occurs differently in each individual.

United States Army Pamphlet Number 600-2, *The Armed Forces Officer*. General George C. while serving as Army chief of staff, had inspired the undertaking due to his personal conviction that all American military officers share common ethical and moral ground. Individual services were commanded by men of integrity, honor and great leadership. It is about the love of duty and the knowledge that there is no higher calling than that of an Armed Forces officer. To this end, the Army Pamphlet Number 600-2 was written. It examines the qualities that have led to greatness. Even though the book uses examples of great leaders in American history, it is not about generals and admirals. It is about those special obligations, responsibilities, demands and standards that all military officers must maintain.

Field Marshal Slim, ' *Defeat into Victory*.

Training Directive 2010 Sri Lanka Army. The training directive clearly gives the vision of The Commander of The Army as " Professionalism to meet challenges in the Service of the Nation". The objectives of Officer Cadet

Training, Junior Command Course and Senior Command Course amply stress upon the training of young officers to meet the future challenges both in peace and war.

Other Reference Material. For further study, books as mentioned below are being considered:

Cristopher D Colenda, Leadership: The Warrior's Art.

Alvin and Heidi Tofflers, War and Anti War.

Strategic Analysis Volume XXV. 6 September 2001. p. 762, Major General V. K Shrivastava, Indian Army 2020.

Journal of the Royal United Services Institution.

Websites: Mentioned below are some of the websites which have been approached for getting necessary information:

[www.combat-online.com/terror.htm](http://www.combat-online.com/terror.htm) "Terrorism-A Global Phenomenon".

[http://www.army.mod.uk/training\\_education/training/](http://www.army.mod.uk/training_education/training/)

[www.hqda.army.mil/ari/](http://www.hqda.army.mil/ari/)

## CHAPTER 3

### Young Officers as the Back Bone of Junior Leadership

11. The military officer must perform a number of roles, often simultaneously. He has responsibilities as a war fighter, as the Nation's servant, as a member of the profession of arms and as a leader of character.

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These four roles are interrelated almost to the point of inseparability, but examining each separately allows a better understanding of their inherent complexities. War fighting's complex arrangement of activities includes generating, applying, and sustaining combat power to achieve the aims of policy. Developmental process begins when an officer receives his commission and continues throughout a career. Professionalism is a combination of competence and devotion to service that grows over time and growth occurs differently in each individual. There is no rank or position or level of education that clearly delineates the professional from the mere jobholder. Mastering the art and science of war fighting encompasses every aspect of the human experience; physical, intellectual, and moral. To understand fully the officer's responsibilities as a war fighter, we must explore in detail each of these aspects.

a. The Physical Dimension[2]. War fighting always has been and always will be a struggle, not only against hostile forces but also against hostile environments. The officer as war fighter has a duty to prepare himself and his subordinates to cope with such physical rigors. This duty begins at the earliest stages of an officer's service. After arriving at his first duty station, a second lieutenant is expected to set the standard for his platoon in physical toughness. That the lieutenant be in excellent physical condition is necessary, but not sufficient. More important is his willingness to share his soldiers' physical hardships. The importance of leader presence in the worst possible conditions-in the mud and rain during training or at the point of maximum danger during combat cannot be overestimated. When the officer endures such hardships alongside his soldiers, the hardships become the

glue that binds the unit into a cohesive fighting force. If the officer uses his rank or position to exempt himself from such hardship, the effect is exactly the opposite. As an officer grows in seniority, the obligation to endure hardships alongside his soldiers becomes ever more important. Senior officers exposing themselves to the dangers of combat have an energizing effect on soldiers that defies rational calculation.. Military theorist Carl von Clausewitz prescribed the commander's presence as an anecdote for the soldier's exhaustion: " As each man's strength gives out, as it no longer responds to his will, the inertia of the whole comes to rest on the commander's will alone. The ardor of his spirit must rekindle the flame of purpose in others; his inward fire must revive their hopes." [3]

b. The Intellectual Dimension.[4]The Nation that will insist on drawing a broad line of demarcation between the fighting man and the thinking man is liable to have its fighting done by fools and its thinking done by cowards. (Sir William Francis Butler). Courage is a necessary attribute in every soldier, but courage alone can never be sufficient for the officer to exercise his duties as a war fighter. A comprehensive knowledge of the theory and practice of warfare must govern his courage. Such knowledge enables him to win the Nation's wars at an acceptable cost in blood and treasure. In the absence of such knowledge, warfare becomes " simply murder." The officer as war fighter is duty bound to educate himself and his subordinates on the theory and practice of war. Such an education trains an officer not what to think but how to think. Every officer basic course graduate is expected to demonstrate an elementary understanding of the theory and practice of small unit combat operations. The theoretical aspects of such operations are expressed in Army

doctrine. Commanders expect second lieutenants to accomplish missions by applying Army doctrine and resources to real-world problems.

Noncommissioned officers, with their wealth of experience, help young officers put doctrine and resources into practice. Every commander worth his salt advises the new lieutenant to “listen to your non commissioned officers (NCOs).” However, that advice does not mean, “do what your sergeants say.” Rather, it means, “understand what your sergeants know.” As officers advance in seniority, their responsibilities increase and their education must keep pace. A commander’s intellect might well mark the difference between success and failure, and the Army must continue to recognize and encourage its war fighters’ intellectual development so they know when to follow doctrine, when to violate it, and when to write it by their actions on future battlefields.

d. The Moral Dimension.[5]While every aspect of war fighting is demanding, only the moral aspect of war fighting is paradoxical. To protect the State from the dangers of anarchy, the war fighter must be fierce enough to kill the State’s enemies, but to protect the State from the dangers of tyranny; he must be gentle enough to respect the freedoms of its citizens. Faced with this paradox, Socrates despaired of founding a republic that was both secure and just. Morally, the officer’s authority is derived from his role as a servant of society. The officer who subordinates his personal safety and comfort to the security of society inspires subordinates to do likewise. The unit held together by an officer who only threatens punishment will soon dissolve in the face of the enemy. However, the unit bound by a shared belief in what is true, right, and just is actually made stronger in the crucible of combat.

Sergeants teach young officers to speak to soldiers not by threatening punishment for doing wrong, but by explaining the necessity of doing right. In 1879, Major General John Schofield advised West Point cadets that “ the discipline which makes the soldiers of a free country reliable in battle is not to be gained by harsh or tyrannical treatment.”[6]

12. Changing Challenges of Leadership. The world has changed dramatically in only a few years' time, which has caused profound implications for the military profession. The events of 11 September 2001 are not only what have provoked changes in officer-ship challenges. Officers of the 21st century have shed none of their responsibilities to be competent war fighters. The current prospect of a conventional invasion of Iraq constantly reminds us that competence in heavy armored operations remains essential to the Nation's survival. As an officer's challenges become more unique and complex, doctrine recedes into the background, drawing into sharp relief the senior commander's creative intelligence. Similarly the phenomenon of terrorism going beyond the limits of national boundaries and becoming an international phenomenon makes the future more challenging for the young officers who will have to mostly operate independently leading small groups like combat teams of platoons.

13. 21st Century officer. The only purpose for war is to create a better peace. As the officer applies his expertise in war fighting, he must constantly keep that better peace in mind. The 21st-century officer must be able to transition rapidly across the spectrum of operations. To create a better peace, he must have the ability to lead troops in the conduct of offensive, defensive, and stability and support operations. These operations might occur

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simultaneously, and the transition from one to the other will often be made at the discretion of junior leaders. The officer who wins the war and loses the peace is no more professional than the physician who saves a patient's leg at the expense of his spinal cord.

Succeeding in the long twilight struggle that has been thrust on us demands all of the physical, moral, and intellectual energies that young officers can bring to bear to prepare for the responsibilities that they must bear as war fighters and as officers.

#### 14. The Common Denominators of Leadership.

a. Proficiency and Knowledge. First, the ability to inspire trust and confidence. It can not be achieved only by some heroic act of weight of ranks on one's shoulders. It is an outcome of the professional competence of the officers in their respective arms and services. The officer's ability to demonstrate proficiency and knowledge will start to inspire people. If the under command are convinced about the professional competence about their immediate commander, they will follow orders and even risk their lives to achieve the assigned mission.

b. Duty, Integrity and Courage. Integrity is another important segment of a leader's qualities. The concept of integrity includes personal courage. Courage can be defined in a number of ways peculiar to the situation. It can be argued that courage under combat conditions cannot be known until combat. When an officer demonstrates that every action is based on duty and the right thing to do and that no personal gain is the reason for the action, people will follow willingly.

c. Leadership is Communication. Demonstration of knowledge, integrity, duty and courage is a part of this process. So is the ability to listen and to direct action. Listen first! Nature provided two eyes, two ears and one mouth. Use them in that ratio. By demonstrating the basics of leadership, an officer learns that the people working with him or her have information that will help to make the right decision. All information is based on perspective. It may be accurate and correct as far as it goes. Part of the leader's job is to collect all of the information and act.

d. Leadership is Warranted Ego. Leaders actively seek responsibility and power because they believe they can do the job. Ego, balanced by humility, causes a George Washington-on the eve of his inauguration-to say, " I am probably the least well-equipped man in the room to take this job."

e. Leadership is Vision. Leadership demands of the leader to always look at the bigger picture. He should be able to read the situation well both in peace and war and continuously carry out mental appreciation to meet the impending challenges in a befitting manner.

f. Leadership is Innovation. Young officers and the future leaders must think out of the box and use innovative ideas and actions to outnumber the adversary. Innovation based on knowledge makes innovation the middle name of successful leaders. General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower put it in these words: " The commander's success will be measured more by his ability to lead than his adherence to fixed notions."

g. Command Presence. Soldiers always look up to their officers. In any situation, the presence of the commander as close to the troops in combat

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as possible will augment the soldiers' confidence and raise their morale.

Regardless of the danger to his person, a young officer should always remain in the forefront if he has to demand the ultimate sacrifice of giving one's life for the country's integrity and sovereignty.

## CHAPTER 4

### Factors Determining Psycho-Social Outlook of Young Officers

15. General. Officer cadre in Pakistan and Sri Lanka Army is mostly the blend of middle and lower middle class who have the urge to rise in their financial and social stature and the Army provides them a best testing ground to explore their talents. In order to pursue their aim of excelling in the Army they, at times, tend to aim at seeking their personal interests and in turn may put their professional interests at lower priority.

16. Depending upon the family background, grooming and technical expertise some of the factors determining the outlook of today's young officers is:

Religion. Religion is the most powerful motivational force of human history. It is a ray of hope and a grand source of all the virtues. Religion remains one of the most effective tools in motivating an outfit and ultimately making them quality leaders and lead.

Ideology. Ideology may be based on religion, national faith or a cause. Young officers having joined the Army follow the ideology and work according to it. National pride is a driving force enabling an individual to offer supreme sacrifice to serve and save the motherland.

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Educational Environments. Young officers are selected from the society where the education system is plagued with mere memorizing the bookish knowledge with little application abilities imparted to the students.

Resultantly the youth, especially from the middle and lower middle class, is under confident and has less exposure to the modern era of information and technology.

Neglected Social Sector. A matter of serious concern today amongst the populace of third world countries is the gradual decline of the basic infrastructure of the country. Such a situation has negative impact on the development of personality with special reference to attitude.

Advancement in Technology. The magnitude of psychological and sociological changes that have been brought about by inventions such as internet, cable TV and mobile phones can not be quantified. However, such inventions have also brought about personality changes in our youth; the only source from where we can select young officers; the future leaders.

Social Trends. The profession of arms demands devotion, supreme sacrifice and total commitment to follow the laid down code of conduct and discipline. Unfortunately, with the setting in of high technology era, the trends for choice of profession have undergone radical changes. Aristocratic office environments, push button gadgetries, high pays and care free work environments have generated a magnet like affect on young minds. They have rather become non volunteers to lead a rigorous, disciplined and synchronized life.



Family Life. The practice of living in joint families is diminishing day by day. This phenomenon has compelled the parents to search for a job wherein they could be able to live with their immediate family. A reluctance in acceptance of jobs that involves prolonged stay away from the families has made the profession of arms comparatively less attractive.

## CHAPTER 5

### FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DETERIORATION IN QUALITY LEADERSHIP IN YOUNG OFFICERS

17. General. An endeavour was made to identify the factors that are of can be termed as responsible for the deterioration of quality leadership in young officers. To this end a questionnaire was distributed amongst 40 majors of various arms and services. Besides, interviews of Major General E P de Z Abeyssekera USP, Adjutant General Sri Lanka Army, Brigadier Farooq Afzal (retired) of Pakistan Army and Major Faisal Baten of Bangladesh Army were conducted. Based on the input received through the questionnaire and the interviews with the aforementioned officers, following are some of the glaring reasons responsible for the deterioration in leadership quality of our young officers:

Reluctance to Join Armed Forces Due to Uncertainty/Insecurity. In view of the prolonged involvement of both Sri Lanka and Pakistan Army in counter insurgency operations, a sharp decline in number of young people joining the Army has been observed. Besides, terrorists threaten and harm the families of the personnel of Armed Forces. In this backdrop, people have been reluctant to get their sons enrolled in the Armed Forces. Selection boards

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had no other choice but to select individuals from the lot that applied for enrollment.

Conduct of Officer Cadets Training. The training in military academies mainly revolve around the theoretical aspects followed by limited practical training. However, during the practical training the officer cadets are highly supervised and even spoon fed so as to perform well and safely. Such a scenario has colossal negative effects on the personality of our potential future leaders.

Opportunities to Exercise Initiative. During the training at military academies and even during the young officers courses the young officers are hardly provided with opportunities to exercise their initiative and imagination. They are expected to follow a set pattern so as to avoid any mistakes/faults.

Risk Taking. Young officers look up to their seniors as role models. Seniors are not ready to take undue risk and in turn never encourage the young officers to take any risk. Improvement in leadership quality only comes with doing the difficult tasks which includes a certain degree of physical and professional risk. However, this aspect is found wanting these days.

Overall Negative Trend. Over the last few years an overall negative trend of giving assignments to higher ranks has been observed. One can safely assume that these days field officers are doing the job of young officers whereas young officers are performing the tasks which should be done by the non commissioned officers. As a sequel, young officers are deprived of their place in the chain of command. This is highly detrimental to the personality grooming and leadership development of the young officers.

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Poor Physical Standard. The poor physical of young officers may partially be attributed to the extensive use of computers, internet and video games. Even at the unit level, conduct of regular physical training and sports activities has become a rare phenomenon. This has adversely affected the physical stamina of the young officers to withstand the rigours of battle field.

Careerism. Like leadership, careerism is a state of mind. But unlike leadership, it emphasizes manipulating others in order to further one's own career. A young officer of today is more conscious of his career than in the past. He works hard for his advancement as an individual. The observed tendency to learn the profession and devote whole heartedly to professional pursuits is found lacking.

Weak Intellectual Level. In view of the information available on the internet, generally the habit of reading has diminished. Army officers are equally affected as a consequence. Submission of book reviews, presentations by young officers on military history and current affairs is hardly seen in existence.

Zero Error Syndrome. With careerism taking priority over professionalism majority of the young officers are afraid of taking risks and thereby committing mistakes and have made themselves idealists. Our peace time training and administrative routine is geared to accept no mistakes. Non-acceptance of mistakes by the commanding officers during peace time training and routine work has further aggravated the situation.

Grooming at Unit Level. Unit is considered as a lap for a young officer. Ideally he should undergo organized training to improve upon his leadership

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qualities. Involvement of the units in operations notwithstanding, reluctance in following the training of young officers in letter and spirit exist. There does not exist any sustainable training module of the young officers in the units. The same has been supplemented by the officers who were questioned through the questionnaire. 75 % officers agreed that units do not follow a realistic and mission oriented training of the newly commissioned young officers.

**Gap Between Various Tiers of Command.** Having been British colonies and operation almost on the same old lines, both Sri Lanka and Pakistan Army remains influenced by the Britain culture of maintaining a large gap between the seniors and the juniors. This seriously curbs the moral courage and initiative of the junior leaders.

**Grant of Commission to Other Ranks.** In view of the shortage of officers, brilliant other ranks are given commission to fill the gap. Having stayed in lower ranks for quite a long time even the brilliant other rank can not come up to the standard expected out of a young officer. Experience and qualification notwithstanding, an other rank elevated to a commissioned rank will always be found deficient of the qualities expected out of a young officer.

**Socio-Economic Factor.** Presently, different economic classes of junior leaders exist in the Army. Some have been on deputations and secondments, while others have served on United Nation Missions. Being financially well off they have a different life style within their respective communities. As sole criterion of secondment abroad is good service record,

therefore, our young officers try to follow a career pattern that has least risk. Such an attitude produces conformists and results in careerism.

Materialism. Even though the army is shielded through institutionalized methods from the materialistic transformation, the junior leaders find themselves unlucky and distressed to match their counterparts in civilian setup. A tendency of young officers involved in side business diverts their attention from their profession which