

# Current themes and shortcomings of the indian army



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1. When the Indian Army was initially called out to combat insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, it set out to accomplish the task at hand with full zeal. The Indian Army, however, was poorly trained, ill equipped and unprepared for the task at hand. Errors, resulting more by default than by design brought such a wave of bad publicity that it had the army reeling under it's impact. The typically assertive army that had in the past successfully combated the Mizo and the Punjab insurgency, was put on the defensive. The situation has changed little till date.

### **Existing Themes**

2. The themes that have been employed by the Army till date are as follows :-

(a) The Army has made attempts to project it's power and highlight the fact that, eventually, the army will prevail over the terrorists. In doing so the Army has highlighted the success achieved by it in combating the terrorists.

(b) The Army has widely publicised the surrenders of hardcore terrorists and their joining the mainstream so as to encourage the other terrorists to follow suit.

(c) The Army has time and again highlighted it's apolitical nature.

(d) The rise of the nation as an economic and military power and the asymmetry it enjoys over both, the terrorists and Pakistan.

(e) The fact that Pakistan is surviving on foreign aid and that it is on the verge of collapse.

(f) There have been passing references to the rising fundamentalism in Pakistan.

(g) Pakistan, though a democracy, has not been able to stabilise as one and has been governed more by military dictators than by democratically elected governments.

(h) In front of the international community, India has tried to highlight the fact that the state government of Jammu and Kashmir has been elected by the people as a result of free and fair elections.

(j) The Army has tried to portray its clean image in front of the citizens of the country in general and the population of Jammu and Kashmir in specific.

(k) To some extent, the army has tried to motivate the people of Jammu and Kashmir to assist the government in rewinding the clock to the era of peace and prosperity that existed in the state.

(l) The government and the army have made efforts to lure terrorists into surrendering by promising them monetary compensation and assured jobs.

(m) The Army has laid a large emphasis on winning the hearts and minds of the local populace by carrying out civic action so as to project a people friendly image to the masses. The centre of gravity of any counter insurgency/counter terrorist campaign is the hearts and minds of the people. Op Sadbhavana commenced in 1998.

## **Shortcomings**

3. The Army has been unable to execute a Psychological Operations campaign for combating the insurgencies in the country. More often than not there have been missed opportunities which, if exploited, would have improved the credibility of the Army manifolds.

4. The inability of the nation and the Army to comprehend the potential of psychological operations is evident by the fact that there was, till recently, no formalised course for training the personnel on conduct of psychological warfare. This fact is itself an indicator of the quality of psychological warfare that would have been waged by us in the past and speaks of utter lack of foresight of the Army. It is not surprising to note that there exists no coherent policy on psychological operations at both the strategic and the operational level.

5. The themes that are developed and eventually pursued by the Army are decided by the desk officers in the command and army headquarters. These officers have little or no formalised training or experience in the planning and conduct of psychological operations. The appointment of these officers is tenure based with no surety of their being employed for the same purpose in their future assignments, thus leading to lack of continuity.

6. There is an absolute disconnect between the Army, Navy, Air Force, Police and CPOs on issues concerned with psychological operations. Sometimes these organisations seem to be having conflicting agendas. They often contradict each other, confusing the target audiences and making it easier

for the adversary to counter any mileage gained by the country while waging psychological warfare.

7. The Army may be omnipresent in Jammu and Kashmir but it still requires support from the government and the state administration for conduct of psychological operations. The security forces can be the instrument for planning and executing most psychological operations but they require policy, material and financial support from the government.

8. The tactical commanders are mostly unaware of the psychological operations'

themes being employed, which results in contradiction of the themes by their actions on ground, further diluting the effect.

9. There exists no organisation for planning and conduct of psychological operations either within the defence forces or at the national level. This leads to a lot of adhocism in the planning and execution stages.

10. A great deal of intelligence is required for successfully waging psychological warfare. Dedicated intelligence agencies required for the collection of this data do not exist as on date.

11. Thorough knowledge of the history of the state including the adversary's version is a must for the themes to be precise and for countering the propaganda of the adversary. However, this is lacking across the board.

12. The personnel planning psychological operations have little knowledge of the local languages being spoken by the people of the state.

13. There are hardly any psychological operations being planned to target the minds of the administration, the security forces or the population of the country living outside the state.

14. The perception management of the international community to mobilise their opinion in favour of the country, is woefully inadequate.

15. There is a dearth of specialist and dedicated equipment to include surveillance, dissemination, communication and training equipment for the conduct of psychological operations.

16. There is a requirement of training the personnel who would be involved in the planning and conduct of psychological warfare. The infrastructure, equipment and specialisation required for the said training does not exist. Psychological analysis of the personnel, to test their aptitude, so as to arrive at their suitability for the job at hand, is an essential prerequisite.

17. The state government promises jobs, monetary benefits and rehabilitation as a bait to lure terrorists into surrendering. However, these promises are seldom fulfilled, thereby leading to fewer surrenders of terrorists.

18. In order to gain political mileage, the various parties, seldom support the state or the central government and exploit all opportunities to discredit the state/central government and the security forces. This, in turn is exploited by the adversary to carry out propaganda against the country.

19. Fear as an instrument of persuasion has not yet been exploited by the organisation for the attainment of the objectives of their psychological operations.

20. The sizeable Non Resident Indian population residing in the Western countries, has not been exploited for influencing the outcome of elections and using it as a leverage for a favourable stance on issues concerning India.

21. The Army as an organisation, has failed to use it's experience in combating terrorism in Punjab and the North East, for the planning and conduct of psychological operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

22. The government and the Army have been slow in reacting to situations and hence have not been able to exploit such situations as psychological operations themes.

23. The government and the Army, have, despite a huge superiority, in terms of availability of resources and their quality, failed to exploit the media to their advantage..

## **SUGGESTED THEMES FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS**

### **The People of Jammu and Kashmir**

24. The population is the centre of gravity in any insurgency and the outcome will

favour the side which can win over the support of the local population. Some themes to target the local population are as under:-

(a) Propagate amongst the youth their ethnic and religious background

and its similarities with Buddhism and Hinduism over their foreign supporters[1]:-

(i) Worshipping idols or relics is anathema to Sunni Muslims but the Kashmiris indulge in this practice. The holy relics at Hazratbal, Tsrar-e-Sharif and Baba Rishi in Gulmarg are the holiest of Sufi shrines in the Valley.

(ii) Zain Shah Sahib is revered by Muslims and Hindus alike. A Hindu by birth, Janak was born at Kishtwar. Janak changed his name to Zain Shah and lived in a cave, seeking communion with God and emancipation from the terrestrial world. Every year, both Hindus and Muslims jointly celebrate Zain Shah Sahib's Urs.

(iii) The Amarnath Cave was discovered by the Muslim Mallicks of Pahalgam. Even till today, 10 per cent of the offerings by Hindu devotees at the Holy Shrine are distributed amongst the Mallicks.

(iv) The manner of reciting the Koran in Kashmiri mosques is similar to the incantation of the verses of the Gita. This is peculiar to Kashmir only.

(v) Hindu surnames like Dar, Rishi, Pandit, Beetab and Bhat are as common as Johns and Smiths and Sharmas.

(vi) Kashmiris do not eat beef.

(b) Propagate Muhammed Baksh's popular epic Saif al-Muluk: Safar al- Ishq which is the richest gift that Mirpur (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) has given to



Punjab, Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and the non- Kashmiri speaking parts of Jammu and Kashmir[2]. This saga has been narrated metaphorically in the form of human relationships and speaks of the love between humans and the permanence of God. This is one binding factor not only between the Muslims and the people of other faiths in the state but also between the people on both sides of the Line of Control.

(c) Highlight the fact that the people in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir are also not pro-Pakistan[3]. The Mirpuris were funding the terrorist outfit of JKLF but lost their enthusiasm once the pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujhaideen and Lashkar e- Toiba started dominating the scene. They converted the JKLF into a political organisation and almost stopped funding the terrorists.

(d) The Jaish- e- Mohammed claims to be following the Deobandi sect and the Lashkar -e- Toiba the Ahl- e- Hadis sect. However their ideologies are at a variance with the teachings of the respective sects. They follow only those ideologies that suite them while discarding the others.[4]

(e) Highlight the fact that the state of Jammu and Kashmir has the lowest percentage of population below the poverty line as compared to the other states in the country.[5] This has been possible due to the host of developmental activities undertaken by the government and the financial package provided to the state.

(f) Bring to light the fact that economic conditions in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir though better than rest of Pakistan due to the remittances by their migrant relatives in United Kingdom are still not as good as in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.[6]

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The fact that a large section of the population in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir considers that the worst damage to the Jammu and Kashmir cause has been because of the Jihadis and that Jihad has no future.[7]

(h) Highlight the fact that Pakistan is causing a demographic change in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir where as contrary to the rhetoric of the separatist leaders the Muslim population in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has increased.[8]

(j) Publicise the fact that the Deobandi scholars gathered in Deoband in Feb 2009 and issued a Fatwa against terrorism.[9]This should be exploited against the people supporting the terrorists.

(k) The fact that the so called ‘ Azad Kashmir’ is not actually ‘ Azad’ with the govt in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir having almost no power in it’s hand and it’s survival depending on the whims and fancies of the government of Pakistan.[10]

(l) The current phase of violence, hatred and bloodshed has harmed the valley the most as in the era when peace reigned in the valley the income of the people was much higher as compared to the Jammu and Ladakh regions because of the flourishing tourism. Hence the return of normalcy in the state is most in the interest of the people of the Kashmir valley.(Refer Appendix P)

(m) The fact that most terrorists coming to the state are criminals who were serving prison terms in Pakistan and have come to Jammu and Kashmir not to fight any Jihad but have come lured by the promise of good times, money and their prison terms being commuted by their mentors in Pakistan.

(n) Highlight the exploitation of the women by the terrorists on the false pretext of Jihad.

(o) Highlight the development projects undertaken by the government in the state.(Refer Appendix P1)

(p) Highlight the achievements of prominent citizens of the state in the service of the nation and how the nation has awarded them/ recognised their achievements. (Refer Appendix P2)

(q) Highlight that the birth of Bangladesh proved that the two nation theory was flawed. Highlight the atrocities committed by the Pakistani regime of West Pakistan on their Muslim brethren in East Pakistan.(Refer Appendix P3)

(r) Highlight the fact that Pakistan is surviving on the aid from USA and Saudi Arabia and that without this aid Pakistan would be a failed state. Also highlight the aid given to Pakistan by India both during the 2005 Earthquake and the 2010 Floods. (Refer Appendix P4)

(s) Highlight the fact that the children and the relatives of the separatist leaders are studying abroad while they are instigating the masses to stop sending their children to schools. Also highlight the lavish lifestyle of these separatist leaders indicating that they are being paid by their mentors in Pakistan to misguide the population. (Refer Appendix P5)

(t) System of rewards and awards be instituted for those individuals or organisations that don't pay heed to the calls for strikes and boycotts by the

separatists. Case in point is the call centre in Srinagar that continued its operations with full attendance during the recent political and social turmoil in the state.

(u) Highlight the atrocities of the terrorists towards the innocent civil population. (Refer Appendix P6)

(v) A system be instituted wherein the army is tasked to run a large number of schools in the state as part of Sadbhavana projects. All children enrolling in these schools and completing their education in these schools be assured of employment. The education in these schools be made free for all children. The teachers in these schools be psychologically evaluated and then tasked to mould the impressionable minds of the children so as to make them more responsible citizens of the country and the state. The aim has to be to influence the next generation in the state to support India and to deny the terrorists the intelligence, material and moral support.

(w) The army, in order to generate employment and opinions in favour of the country, has to increase the number of people of Jammu and Kashmir in JAK RIF and JAK LI regiments and Territorial Army(Home and Hearth) battalions of the Army as also raise the GUJJAR and BAKARWAL SCOUTS on lines of the other Scouts battalions in the Army. This will make a larger number of people in the state, stake holders in the continued accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India.

(x) Highlight the fact that the Muslims who migrated to Pakistan during the 1947-48 war are called Mohajirs and are considered second grade citizens in Pakistan.

(y) Larger number of developmental projects be undertaken in those areas which are either neutral or supportive of the government/ India with minimal development (so as to ensure hardships to the people) in areas that are pro-Pakistan or supportive of the terrorists.

(z) The relatives of terrorists be harassed/ penalised to cause hardships and mental stress so as to coerce them into convincing the terrorist to surrender.

(aa) The existing rift between the Gujjars, Bakarwals, Paharis and the Kashmiris be exploited to gain intelligence of terrorists of the other community leading to their neutralisation.

(ab) After every successful operation in which terrorists have been eliminated, the Over Ground Workers in that area be rewarded in public view for supposedly providing intelligence, leading to the successful neutralisation of the terrorists. This may breed suspicion in the minds of the terrorists and they are likely to retaliate against them, which would further alienate them from the locals.

(ac) Inter religion marriages should be encouraged as these would eventually help reduce bitterness between the religious communities. Those girls or boys marrying outside their religion should be provided free housing and one family member be assured of a job.

(ad) The Kashmiri Pandits who had migrated from the state under threat to their lives should be encouraged to come back to the state and start their own businesses with government support. This would also send the correct message to the international community while simultaneously the numbers supporting accession to India would increase in the state.

(ae) Big industrial houses should be allowed to set up businesses and made to adopt one economically backward village each.

(af) The extortion of money being carried out by the terrorists be highlighted.

(ag) Women are the ones who suffer maximum as a result of the terrorism in the state. The women empowerment to include education, vocational training and employment opportunities be provided. This will allow them to speak up and oppose the terrorism in the state.

(ah) The maximum mileage is gained by the terrorists and the separatists by the misinterpretation of the Holy Koran, to suit their selfish interests. Correct interpretation of the Holy Koran be carried out by religious scholars to prevent exploitation of the masses by the terrorists, separatists or certain religious heads.

(aj) The state of Jammu and Kashmir has, since time immemorial, suffered from a leadership crisis. The centre has to give up its short sighted approach and allow the balanced leadership to rise and take root amongst the masses. These leaders will slowly wean away the people from separatist tendencies.

(ak) The government should discredit the political parties/ separatists that are trying to gain political mileage out of minor incidents and come down  
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heavily on the erring individuals. The fear of being exposed in front of the masses should be the restraining factor for such people.(Refer Appendix P7)

(al) The vernacular press be penalised for false reporting and trying to whip up communal passions. They should be discredited by giving out correct facts and figures and if these publishing houses do not mend their ways, they should be banned and shut down.

(am) It must be highlighted that the terrorists live a life of constant fear and are afraid to engage in fire fights with the security forces. They live a life of disrepute and die a death of anonymity. This will deter impressionable youth from being lured by dreams of adventure, woven by the terrorists, to recruit them into their cadres.

(an) Prompt and fair investigation into allegations of human rights violations be carried out and those found guilty be punished. This will help win over the trust of the local population and project a clean image of the security forces and the administration.

(ao) Prominent Muslim personalities be used in conveying the messages of peace, brotherhood and impartiality in the country. They should project India as the land of opportunity, where talent and brilliance are recognised irrespective of the caste, creed and religion. The success achieved by people from the state needs to be highlighted to drive home the message.

(ap) Actions by the locals, against the terrorists and their contribution in the fight against terror be given wide publicity. Such individuals be rewarded

handsomely to inspire others to rise up against the terrorists.(Refer Appendix P8)

(aq) Exploit the recent disclosure by Hurriyat Conference leader Professor Abdul Ghani Bhat that Hurriyat leaders Mirwaiz Maulvi Umar Farooq and Abdul Ghani Lone were killed by terrorists and not by security forces, as earlier alleged by the Hurriyat Conference all along. This can be used to discredit the Hurriyat and at the same time inciting the people against the terrorists. (Refer Appendix P9)

## **The Administration**

25. The suggested themes to target the administration are as under :-

(a) First and foremost the administration has to be made aware of the fact that the problem in the state is a result of bad governance.

(b) The administration be made aware that there exists no military solution to the problem and that the military's actions can facilitate the functioning of the civil administration but can not substitute the civil administration entirely. The solution to the problem is a political one.

(c) The administration has to realise that the success of the military operations hinges on the support of the civil administration. Even the outcome of the psychological operations will depend on a clear policy formulated by them.



(d) The administration has to be insulated from the harmful effect of the psychological operations and the propaganda of Pakistan, the separatists and the terrorists.

(e) The administration has to be provided a secure environment for it's functioning smoothly. The personnel in the civil administration must be made to feel safe and secure.

(f) Fear as an instrument of psychological operations has to be exploited so as to send the right message to the corrupt and de-motivated personnel and the informers of the anti national elements.

(g) Psychological evaluation to test the aptitude of bureaucrats being employed in sensitive locations and handling sensitive assignments is a must so that the right personnel are employed for the right job.

## **The Terrorists**

26. The terrorists are either of Indian or foreign origin. The psychological operations themes for the terrorists are as mentioned below :-

(a) Nostalgic themes wherein the separation from the family members is exploited. The local terrorists be convinced that they are fighting for a lost cause and would lose their lives and never be able to meet their family and friends. (Refer Appendix Q)

(b) The futility of the cause of the terrorists can be highlighted while at the same time the shortages of ammunition, weapons, resources, finances and

manpower being faced by the terrorists be exploited to further de-motivate them and convince them to surrender/ return to their country.

(c) Sensitivity of the local terrorists towards their family members be exploited by mentally harassing their families. This may lead to their de-motivation and eventual surrender. The involvement of surrendered terrorists in the campaign would convince the terrorists and their family members of the genuineness of the government's offer of amnesty and jobs, thus contributing to the success of the theme.

(d) The fact that India enjoys the support of the international community in its fight against terrorism and Pakistan is under constant pressure from the international community, to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure must be highlighted.

(e) The elimination of the LTTE, the best motivated and organised terrorist organisation of modern times must be highlighted, to drive home the point that sooner or later the terrorist tanzeems in Jammu and Kashmir will meet the same fate.(Refer Appendix Q1)

(f) Tracking of the terrorist commanders and their elimination will impose terror in the minds of the terrorist leadership and prevent their operating with impunity. It will also make the cadres hesitant to become commanders.

(g) Propagate Muhammed Baksh's popular epic Saif al-Muluk: Safar al- Ishq which is the richest gift that Mirpur (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) has given to Punjab, Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and the non- Kashmiri speaking parts of Jammu and Kashmir[11]. A large number of terrorists from either side of the

Line of Control are aware of the epic and have great reverence for the teachings of Muhammed Baksh and Nand Rishi. This may lead to a change of heart in the terrorists.

(h) The trust deficit that exists between the local and the foreign terrorists must be exploited by highlighting the fact that the foreign terrorists exploit the women, carry out extortion and have a good time while being least concerned for the cause of the local terrorists who are used for menial tasks.

(j) The rift between the Kashmiri terrorists and the Gujjar, Bakarwal and the Pahari terrorists be exploited so as to cause infighting and splits in the various tanzeems.

(k) There has been a split in the Jamaat-ul-Dawa and the once regimented structure has become a loose group due to intra group rivalries between various sections of the leadership. It must be highlighted that Hafiz Saeed has been accused of promoting his Gujjar Muslim clan while ignoring the rest of the leadership[12].

(l) Highlight the fact that in Khyber Pakhtoonwala and FATA, Pakistan is fighting the same terrorists that it once raised, trained and equipped. It is a matter of time before they turn on the other tanzeems that are operating off their soil.

(m) The terrorists should be made to believe that just like the Taliban (which was raised by Pakistan), one day they too would be abandoned by Pakistan. This would make the terrorists more insecure and de-motivate them further.

(n) The correct interpretation of the ' Holy Koran' be propagated so that the terrorists who have been misguided and made to believe that they are fighting a Jihad (holy war) understand the true meaning of the word and give up the path of violence.

(o) The fact that in Feb 2009 Deobandi scholars have declared a Fatwa against terrorism be highlighted so that those terrorists who follow the Deoband sect revert back from the path of violence.[13]

(p) Highlighting the surrenders of terrorists, especially the terrorist commanders, may act as a trigger for other terrorists to surrender.(Refer Appendix Q2)

## **The Security Forces**

27. The term security forces includes the Army, the state police and the Central

Police Forces. The suggested themes for the security forces are as under :-

(a) Psychological conditioning of troops prior to induction be carried out so as to mentally equip them for the conduct of operations. The following needs to be included :-

(i) The people of Kashmir have been peace loving and generally secular in their outlook.

(ii) The ideologies of the various terrorist groups, separatist organisations and their modus operandi.

(iii) The majority in Jammu and Kashmir do not want to be a part of Pakistan and even in the areas infested by terrorism most people just consider Pakistan as an ally in their struggle for independence.

(iv) The solution to the Kashmir problem is political and the security forces are merely assisting in reducing the levels of violence. Normalcy in the state can be achieved only by winning the hearts and minds of the local population and not by coercion.

(v) The purpose of the security forces is to make the situation on ground conducive for the state machinery to take over and hence there is no requirement of competing with other organisations or within the organisation for the 'Body count'.

(vi) The security forces are fighting for a just cause and ultimately they will win.

(vii) The security forces are better trained and equipped and have better leadership. The terrorists are on the run and avoid contacts with the security forces.

(viii) The terrorists are de-motivated as a result of major shortages in manpower, equipment, and finances, whereas, there is no dearth of the same for the security forces.

(ix) The peculiarities of Low Intensity Conflict environment, the importance of maintaining soldierly conduct, respect for the culture, religion and traditions of the people.

The importance of media and projecting the correct image of the security forces.

The whole nation is with them and is looking up to them.

They belong to the best army in the whole world and that they have to live up to the expectations of the nation, their organisation, their units and their families.( Refer Appendix R)

Human rights violations and indiscipline shall not be tolerated and the defaulters shall be dealt with severely.

(b) The apprehensions of the soldiers on the following issues should be addressed to reduce stress :-

(i) Promotions and awards would be fair and transparent.

(ii) Expert legal help and support would be provided by the organisation to fight the false and fabricated legal suites.

(iii) Posting and leave profile of the men and the officers will be managed effectively.

The next of kin of all casualties would be looked after by the organisation in case of any fatalities.

(c) Fear as an instrument of psychological operations should be employed so as to prevent unethical practices by battalions.

(d) The personnel in the state police should be assured of the safety of their family members from attacks by terrorists.

(e) In addition, the state police personnel should be well paid, equipped and trained so that they motivated.

## **The Population of The Country**

28. The term population of the country includes all the citizens of the country and the Non Resident Indians. It however excludes the peopl