

# The soldiers of the indian armed forces history essay



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27. The Indian Armed Forces basically consist of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force and the Para military forces. The components which are involved actively in the LICO in North Eastern (NE) states of India are the Indian Army and the Para military forces (PMF). This analysis is basically aimed at the Indian armed forces in general & the Indian Army which forms the bulk of the component fighting the LICO in NE states in specific. The forces basically comprise of officers and personnel below officer rank (PBOR). The PBOR or the soldiers would be dealt in detail in the subsequent paragraphs.

28. In the wider terms, the soldiers hail from basically rural India and belong to different states. In the Army, the bulk of the troops which are involved mainly in LICO belong to the Infantry. In Infantry, there is a system of having the fighting units consisting of soldiers belong to a certain state or community, giving it a pure specific nature & status. However, this is not the case with most of the PMF except the Assam Rifles in which the soldiers belong specifically to the NE states.

## **The Social, Cultural & Educational Background Of The Soldiers**

29. The Indian continent can be geographically divided into five regions i. e. the Northern, Western, Southern, North Eastern & the Central regions. However, for ease of carrying out the analysis of the social, cultural & educational background of the soldiers, the entire country would be divided into four regions considering the similarities in the culture & socio-economic status of those respective regions.

30. The Northern Region. This region basically consists of the states of J & K, Himachal Pradesh & Punjab. These states mainly correspond to the Infantry Regiments of JAMMU & KASHMIR RIFLES, JAMMU & KASHMIR LIGHT INFANTRY, DOGRA, GARHWAL RIFLES, PUNJAB, SIKH & SIKH LIGHT INFANTRY. The men from the above stated states basically get enrolled in one of the Infantry regiments as stated above and bring with them the distinct culture of their respective community or state. The peculiarities of the soldiers hailing from this region are as under:-

(a) Mainly belonging to the rural villages & towns with agrarian background.

(b) This region has long been known for the robustness of its people, their industriousness, patriotic spirit and martial qualities. The Indian Army has always drawn a good portion of its strength from this region[i].

(c) The soldiers of this region are a vibrant race renowned for their politeness, chivalry & tradition of military valour. They enjoy a reputation of total trust & faith amongst all those who have associated with them[ii].

(d) They are brave, chivalrous, keenly sensitive to an affront & especially jealous of the honour of their women. In disposition, they are manly & honest combined with gentleness[iii].

(e) Agriculture is their main occupation & extracting a living from the soil is in itself a hard task, which has made the people physically tough & hardy, capable of great endurance & patience[iv].

(f) Basically belong to a male dominated society with more inclination

towards a joint family system. However, with advent of times and increased <https://assignbuster.com/the-soldiers-of-the-indian-armed-forces-history-essay/>

urbanization, nuclearisation of families is on an increase especially in the more developed cities or towns.

(g) This region boasts of a rich, ancient, vast & mixed culture depending upon a specific area. However, the mainstay being respect for one's neighbour, particularly the elders, women & children.

(h) The soldiers hailing from this region are religious & god fearing.

(j) The minimum qualification with which a soldier joins the Armed Forces is matriculation. However, important aspect now a day is a growing trend of increasing number of graduates joining the forces. In addition to this, important factor to note is educational background of a soldiers families i. e., his wife, relatives & children which presently is rising towards healthier standards.

31. The Western & Central Region. This region basically consists of the states of Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh & parts of Bihar. These states mainly correspond to the Infantry Regiments of RAJPUT, RAJPUTANA RIFLES, GRANEDIER, JAT, MAHAR, BIHAR & KUMAON. Most of the characteristics of a soldier as stated in the previous paragraph are applicable to the soldiers belonging to this region. However, certain peculiarities of soldiers belonging to specific parts of this region are as under:-

(a) From the ancient past to the present, religion & caste system provides the main basis of the structure of the society.

(b) The Jats of Haryana, Rajasthan & UP have great physical and moral energy, are admirable cultivators. Besides agriculture, they engage themselves in trade and production of local products in the rural area[v].

(c) Brahmins constitute the most orthodox community. Not only do they keep aloof from others, but also practice taboos among themselves. But now the situation is changing and the Brahmins even take up other profession than the priesthood[vi].

(d) The people of this region are religious & still conservative and they continue to follow old practices as a matter of routine and custom.

(e) The most striking feature of Haryana is its language itself; or rather, the manner in which it is spoken. Popularly known as Haryanvi, Bangaru or Jatu (language of Jats), it is perhaps a bit crude, but full of earthy humor and straightforwardness[vii]. This along with certain other dialects spoken by certain people of UP, MP & Rajasthan is a bit different & may sound offensive & rude to the people of rest of the country.

(f) The women in the soldier's family still observe purdah, at least among certain communities. In former days, purdah was observed quite rigidly. It is now considerably relaxed mainly due to economic causes. It is still observed in certain forms. Village girls cover their heads while daughter-in-law covers their face in the presence of elderly persons in the house or outside. The position is different in urban areas[viii].

(g) Women are increasingly replacing men in many fields or participating with them in parallel fields of social work, arts and crafts. Working women

still occupy a subordinate position in social life but they do not observe purdah[ix].

(h) The society in this region is a strongly male dominated with certain stringent rule & regulations for the female community, especially in the rural areas.

32. The Southern Region. This region basically consists of the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, Pondicherry & Maharashtra. These states mainly correspond to the Infantry Regiments of MADRAS & MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY. The peculiarities of soldiers belonging to this region are as under:-

(a) Most of the South Indians with their dark color and heavy lips belong to the Dravidian race or Indo-Aryan stock. They speak languages that are a part of Dravidian linguistic family[x].

(b) South Indian people generally are very traditional and religious in nature yet have a tolerant view of the other religions and a cosmopolitan outlook[xi].

(c) They revere the natural world and believe in lying low where Nature is concerned as manifested in the Shaivite tradition in South India[xii].

(d) Unlike other parts of India, the South Indian community is feminist and motherhood has an upper hand[xiii].

(e) South Indians have very high rate of literacy and education is highly valued in the Deccan part of India[xiv].

(f) The soldier belonging to this region is highly tolerant by nature, can be extremely docile & patient with his leaders. He considers it a point of honour to stand by his superiors even against the greatest odds & his duty to carry out a given mission to the best of his capacity[xv].

(g) He is highly religious but do not suffer from caste prejudice, religious controversies or lingual antipathies. His tolerance for others gives him an aura of fair play[xvi].

33. The North Eastern Region. This region basically consists of the states of Orissa, Eastern Bihar, Bengal the seven North Eastern States & the Gorkhas from Nepal. These states mainly correspond to the Infantry Regiments of ASSAM, GORKHA, NAGA & ASSAM RIFLES. As there are hundreds of tribes involved in this region each having distinct peculiarities, for ease of understanding, the soldiers from this region is basically divided into two groups i. e. the soldiers from the North East India & soldiers from Nepal origin. Their peculiarities are as under:-

(a) Soldiers From North East India.

(i) Broadly can be divided into personnel belonging to tribal, non tribal & scheduled caste regions. They belong to 75 major population groups & sub groups who speak almost 400 languages & dialects[xvii].

(ii) Based on factors like race, language & religion, personnel hailing from various sub regions display distinct socio cultural attributes[xviii]. However, when compared to the soldiers belonging to rest of the country, there is a sort of a resemblance between them.

(iii) The rugged terrain, poor communications resulting in isolation, the climate & the socio economic factors have moulded the character of the soldiers of the NE region. They are physically tough & can bear stress & strain cheerfully. Austere living conditions have gifted them self reliance[xix].

(iv) They belong to a large number of ethnic groups but still have a sense of respect for the widely disparate customs & habits of various tribes[xx].

(v) Women play an important & pivotal part in the society & elders & women are highly respected.

(vi) They belong to a land of fairs & festivals & have their roots in diverse faith & belief of their inhabitants. Also, there is liberalisation in the religious system[xxi].

(vii) The soldiers are not good communicators[xxii]owing to the obvious problems of their language & dialect, however they could be a resource to reckon with while operating in LICO in the NE states.

(b) Soldiers From Nepal Origin.

(i) The soldiers basically are of Nepalese origin either migrated to NE India or are still settled in Nepal.

(ii) The original inhabitants of Nepal are from the Tibeto- Burman & Indo-Aryan races.



(iii) Basically the gorkhas are a martial race and has a rich history of military service filled with gallantry & valour.

(iv) The Gurkhas were designated by British officials as a “ Martial Race”. “ Martial Race” was a designation created by officials of British India to describe “ races” (peoples) that were thought to be naturally warlike and aggressive in battle, and to possess qualities of courage, loyalty, self sufficiency, physical strength, resilience, orderliness, the ability to work hard for long periods of time, fighting tenacity and military strategy[xxiii].

(v) The soldiers are religious with a rich background of cultural heritage and prefer to stick to their customs & traditions.

(vi) They are well mannered, soft spoken, jovial and light hearted. They prefer to enjoy the niceties and are quite savvy with the latest trends. However, they could easily do with the meager resources available, especially in the armed forces while operating in remote areas.

## **The Professional Environment While Operating In LICO**

34. Prior to arriving at the probable behavioural peculiarities of a soldier while he operates in the LICO environment, it would be prudent to bring out the professional environment under which he operates in LICO, as this combined with his personal attributes would pose a comprehensive picture of his behavioural pattern.

35. LICO Environment.

(a) Non Compatibility With Conventional Operations. A soldier is trained for conventional war, which envisages the use all available power & is aimed at holistic destruction of enemy. LICO imply an undeclared war with an unidentified enemy which is intermingled with the larger population. The Armed forces are required to use minimum force, safeguard civilian life & property, as also to balance external factors like media, public opinion etc. This mismatch imposes severe restrictions on the armed forces in conduct of their operations[xxiv].

(b) Identification Of Militants. The most difficult task is to differentiate militants from innocent civilians. The anonymity of the opponent leads to unpredictability in this war of wits. This makes everybody a potential suspect & this dilemma is the root cause of many unexpected & unwarranted casualties[xxv].

(c) Intelligence Gap. The lack of intimate knowledge of the militant, terrain, language compounds the difficulties for the armed forces[xxvi].

(d) Psychological Situation Of Soldier. Soldier operates in a far off place away from his family. Relentless operations for months & years in a war like situation , sometimes with no or minimum visible results are bound to case fatigue and further increment the problems for them[xxvii].

36. Regimental Training, Ethos & Traditions. In addition the factors as discussed above, the training which the soldier gets during his recruitment period in the various regimental centers, the ethos & traditions of his particular regiment and the unit, the grooming which he gets in the unit & the experiences he gains over the period of his military service are important  
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factors which shape up his attitude and personal behavioural pattern.

However, for this study, these factors are not discussed any further.

## **Behavioural Pattern, Attitude Of Soldier**

37. Among the various factors that affect human behaviour in life like climate, religion, culture, experience, education and training, and lifestyle; culture and lifestyle have the greatest impact. Culture and lifestyle are the major factors affecting how we talk, dress, relate with and treat people[xxviii]. Social values, norms and beliefs have impact in the way we live as well as on the societal lifestyle. Religion, experience and education may change the influence of culture and lifestyle in our behaviour slightly but not totally[xxix]. After a detailed analysis of the social, cultural, educational background of the soldiers of the Armed Forces and professional constraints in which they operate while in the LICO environment, it would be possible to predict & arrive at certain attitudinal & behavioural traits of a soldier which are as under :-

(a) Majority of the soldiers hail from rural & agrarian background & hence understand the nuances of rural life, the values and importance of the joint family system & the importance of customs and traditions followed in a family.

(b) They are hardworking, honest & truthful due to their core values and also by the effect of the military training.

(c) Owing to their martial races (most of them) or being recruited in a regiment which owes its ethos & traditions to martial races, they are a bit assertive, competitive, confident & not afraid of taking risks.

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(d) Majority of soldiers come from a rural background & understands the customs & traditions with respect to their own community. This makes them sensitive to the value & importance which these customs & traditions have in an individual's life. This is further strengthened during their army training & subsequent regimental life.

(e) Most of the soldiers come from a male dominated (patriarchal) society, which may have an effect on his dominating behaviour over women. However, they understand the importance of elders & women & give them due respect.

(f) The soldiers who hail from the regions where matriarchal society is followed, understand the nuances of it & will be able to empathise with other societies having a similar system.

(g) The soldiers are mostly religious from their origin & are secular from the army training, respecting all religions.

(h) They are adequately educated & have the basic aptitude & understanding of the modern and technical world.

(j) Most of the soldiers are well mannered & soft spoken. However, soldiers hailing from certain regions & communities have a peculiar dialect and accent because of which they may seem a bit loud, outspoken & the language may seem to be a bit rude & offensive to people who are not used to of it.

(k) The soldiers are brave, loyal, trustworthy & have fidelity of highest order.

These qualities come from their culture, past legacy of their ancestors being <https://assignbuster.com/the-soldiers-of-the-indian-armed-forces-history-essay/>

in armed forces & also from training. The most important quality to be seen is that they would obey the orders & instructions of their seniors to the hilt, at any price.