

The Spectrum of Officer Like Qualities (Olqs) For Women Officers in Indian Armed Forces: Concerns And Contentions

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-----ABSTRACT-----

Contributing in Indian Armed Forces as an Officer is an apparent responsibility followed by the challenging scenarios both for serving men and women. With its ethos, in Indian Armed Forces, to be an Officer one must possess the Officer Like Qualities (OLQs) and ironically it is believed that such kinds of qualities are present in everyone, but responsiveness may alter from person to person. Substantially, the challenging environment in the Indian Armed Forces, its influence and individual thinking; together all develop a person as he or she is and with multi faceted service like Indian Armed Forces, it becomes absolute to have some special skills; like Honesty, Integrity, Leadership, Physical Fitness and Psychology with various intensities. This paper provides detailed suggestions for developing dynamic Officer Like Qualities in future officers, men and women. The paramount target of this paper is especially aspirant women and young scholars in general, having desire to join Indian Armed Forces; however authors with all level of proficiency may find useful intellection in the paper.

KEY WORDS – Women, Women Officers, Indian Armed Forces, OLQs, Officer, Leadership, Honesty, Integrity

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I. PREFACE - THE ETHOS OF INDIAN ARMED FORCES

“An Army Is A Nation Within A Nation. It Is One Of The Voices Of Courage.”

India’s Armed Forces are the most significant national establishments that have to serve with highest efficacy for provision of potent National Security, as they are the basic component of National Power. Indian Armed Forces serves the nation by preserving National Interests, safeguarding Sovereignty & Territorial Integrity with the utilization of threat assessment, deterrence against proxy war conditions or by proceeding with war. They also assist the government by providing the assistance against Internal Security Challenges like internal turmoil or unrest. Ultimately, Indian Armed Forces is an essential National ingredient, which preserves Indian National Unity & Integrity against external as well as internal threats by practicing its ethos with kosher personnel. The Indian Armed Forces endeavour on its soldier-at-arms, who are unceasingly triggered with a notion of Patriotism to sacrifice their lives, whenever the nation needs.

“To Be A Soldier One Needs That Special Gene, That Enables A Person To Jump Into One On One Combat, Something, After All, That Is Unimaginable To Most Of Us.”

Indian Armed Forces are extensively holding the responsibility of silent sacrifices of its warrior personnel, with gigantic heritage of their institutional appearance, attitude and approach. As the famous dictum says, “A

ZNation’s Army Is As Good Or Bad As Its Officer’s Corps”, accordingly diversity flows with hierarchy and for trenchant institutional integrity Indian Armed Forces are united upholding the de rigueur individuality aspect of its personnel, called Officer Like Qualities (OLQs).¹

Vibrant and valour structure in the Armed Forces is a multiform subject, both in terms of vision and in terms of its more pragmatic, administrative meaning. It elaborates one of the utmost symbolic yet critical provocations for human resource management, especially regarding women recruits, that military leaders of Armed Forces have faced over the past few decades. Preeminent diversity in recruitment, reinforcement and services has challenged long established institutional norms, values, beliefs and attitudes in Armed Forces. Utilization of Women under human resource philosophies, policies, programs and practices have been adapted and revised. These revolutionary changes are accumulating evidence of the progress of Women in Armed Forces, which has been made in inspecting and responding diversity in the Armed Forces, along with the problems that remain unresolved; mainly focusing on complete synthesis of Women in Armed Forces, which seen as the most problematic; as many nations have yet to resolve gender-related issues. These forethoughts apply to numerous differences, which are essential to discuss, for enhancing efficacy of Women at War in general and Armed Forces in specific mannerism.

With relieve importance of civilians; it is not only exception what the Indian Armed Forces transact, but also how they effectuate it, which augments the public expectancy, for laudable way of life of Armed Forces Personnel. The Indian Armed Forces have established the ethics of soldiering with ingrained passion and solicits absolute responsibility from its corps. In an interview to DSA during 2011, former Indian Army Chief General V. K. Singh had said, ***“The Moral And Ethical Value System In The Armed Forces Is Not An Abstract Concept. In Fact, It Is The Very Foundation, Upon Which, The Entire Edifice Of The Service Organization Has Been Built. By Virtue Of A Strong Moral And Ethical Value System, The Armed Forces Are Held In High Esteem, By The Citizens Of The Country.”***ⁱⁱ

II. THE CULTURE AND CODE OF THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES

“Men Are Alike In Their Promises. It Is Only In Their Deeds That They Differ.” - Moliere

The profession of arms in India has a high sense of purpose. It calls for certain qualities and characteristics such as courage, sense of duty, professional competence, initiative, loyalty, discipline and a sense of urgency.ⁱⁱⁱ Army ethos embodies service to the nation, the pursuit of professional excellence; Initiative, self discipline and physical and mental robustness. In other words a soldier (Officer, JCO or OR) is expected to inculcate initiative, self-discipline, physical and mental robustness to achieve a high degree of professional excellence in the service of the nation.^{iv} Along with the emulating burdens of the developing societal ideologies and an evolving entangled operational environment; notion of Individualism or establishing the identity, is dominating the physical and psychological preparedness of our Armed Forces personnel, predominantly as their customary professional praxis.

The ethos of Indian Armed Forces are synonymous with honour, discipline, integrity, loyalty, courage, duty, respect, sense of sacrifice, patriotism, selfless service, moral values and ethics. It would not be erroneous to say that the expectation level of integrity and moral values of defence personnel is much higher than their civilian counterparts who gladly enjoy the liberty to abdicate under conditions of stress! They have earned India’s profound appreciation and reverence for their unwavering commitment to these virtues in war as well as in peace, at home and abroad. Endorsing ethics and morals is an absolute requirement to sustain the solemn trust of the society for men and women in uniform.^v

The societal structure and its philosophy is moderating in an expeditiously altering arena; where the separation between Non-Combat and Combat Roles; has become obscure by the concepts of Asymmetrical Threat in the context of Modern Warfare. Given this uncertain world scenario, the circumspect for not allowing Women to voluntarily serve in Combat Roles; is no longer determinative; because it is positioned on the biased conclusions and false conjectures of those; who refuse to accept that men and women are equal. In spite of it is clear that, many women have neither the ability, nor the desire to serve in combat roles, “If Women Have What It Takes And A Desire To Serve, Why Not Let Them?” With the virtuous training and the support from authorities of the Armed Forces at all levels, there is no reason not to employ qualified Women Soldiers in Combat Roles and Warfare. The Armed Forces of various Nation-States has faced many convokes to contest over the past few years, and the commissioning of Women in Warfare, if ever approved, will be no different.

“Being A Soldier Requires More Than Courage. It Is Sacrificing Yourself For Something Greater Than Yourself.”

India as a Nation apprehends The Armed Forces as an essence of morals and ethics and its Military Organizational framework is an epitome of ethos, which always are the source of strongest arm of Security within the State. Though social order is witnessing devolution in moral values and ethics, The Indian Armed Forces are being admired as the last bastion of ethically potent organization.

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Spectrum of Officer Like Qualities (OLQs)

“Quality Is Job ONE.”

The abilities of a person to perform the job of an army officer were enunciated by the possession of some qualities called as the Officer Like Qualities (OLQs).^{vii} The process of apperception of the natural traits, as the substructure for the capabilities for the job is a major study, while counting the OLQs. Rating scale for OLQs was made initially by PRW in 1950.

At that time it was aimed at providing a clear concept of these qualities. In an effort to prepare this rating scale, PRW sought the opinions of various people connected with selection or otherwise. These included members of selection boards, senior officers and members of PRW itself.

The opinions of the senior officers were based on their military experiences and their expectations of officers on their job performances. The opinions of these people were then classified into 186 qualities. Taking into consideration similar type of work undertaken at other vocations, 186 categories were clubbed to make 29 qualities.^{viii}

With retrospections of contemporary course of time, the paradigm shift is Women have joined the all manner of ranks of the Armed Forces in most Western nations and now in developing Nation-States too. At the same time, elementary disapproval and defiance appear to have been defeated; as there is still debate over the proficiency of employing Women in some and specific occupations, roles and areas of expertise in Armed Forces. Many stagnant nations do not allow Women to serve in Combat Roles, specifically in the course of Warfare and this thought highlights some of the core concerns, some edging on myths regarding the participation of Women in the Armed Forces and distinctively in Warfare; thereby intended to add some clarification, to what has become a continued debate. The context of this debate is the general experience of the nation-states in expanding the portrayal and performance of Women in their military units. The fundamental impediment for Women in participating utterly in the Combat and Non-Combat Roles of Armed Forces today, has little to do with their “physical and mental abilities”, but in a certain degree revolves around “social and cultural issues” characterizing a “Warrior” frame of reference; which is considered to be masculine in natural appearance.

The qualities were clubbed due to various reasons; overlapping of qualities; difficulties in assessing some qualities having moral implications; retaining qualities considered essential and eliminating qualities considered desirable; difficulty in identifying tests suitable for assessing some qualities. It can be seen that the 29 qualities were identified as a process of trial and experimentation with some reliance on psychology.^{ix}

“There Is Nothing So Powerful As An Idea Whose Time Has Come.” - Victor Hugo.

And consequently, Four Fundamental Factors were classified as an outcome of review of correlations between Qualities, Statistical Procedures and Opinion Surveys.

These 15 Qualities are :

Officer Like Qualities (OLQs)			
Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Planning and Organizing	Social Adjustment	Social Effectiveness	Dynamic
Effective Intelligence	Social Adaptability	Initiative	Determination
Reasoning Ability	Cooperation	Self Confidence	Stamina
Organizing Ability	Sense of Responsibility	Decision Making	Courage
Power of Expression		Ability to Influence Group	

		Liveliness	
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Discrepancies of developing significance in the prospects of Role of Women in Armed Forces include those of Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Family Status, Disability Status, Language, Race, National or Ethnic Origin, and Religion. Some are biologically determined aspects like Skin Colour, Sex, etc.

However in reality all of the differences that are important to the services like Military, the Ethic and Habits, Leadership Capability, Preferences for certain type of work, Intellectual Orientation, etc. which can be developed through Education, Training, and other forms of training, Socialization, Experience and Ethical Molding. Furthermore, there is such spacious exception within apparently homogeneous groups that a general impression or stereotype of a group tells us very little about any given individual. The same holds for generalizations from an individual to a group.^x

OLQs - The Pre-Requisite for The Indian Armed Forces

“What Is The Next Thing You Need For Leadership? It Is The Ability To Make Up Your Mind To Make A Decision And Accept Full Responsibility For That Decision.” - Sam Manekshaw

Officer Like Qualities (OLQs) is simply, the revelation by the person itself about his/ her physical and psychological awareness; especially the aspirant with a passionate desire want to be a part of Indian Armed Forces and being its part, the successor develops these OLQs with vibrant training programs under the institutional framework of the Armed Forces.

“The Armed Forces Had Given The Power Of Knowledge And Skill To Lead. But A Soldier’s Demonstrated Character And Courage Under The Most Difficult Of Circumstances Had Earned Him The Right To Lead.”

Based on this dictum the OLQs get initiated in every soldier.

Overall these OLQs incorporate -^{xi}

- ✓ Being self aware and accepting that something needs a calibrating in your personality.
- ✓ Identifying the grey areas of your personality through introspection of previous performance and by taking professional help of a mentor.
- ✓ Having identified the problems, putting in relentless, conscious and focused effort to modify your approach and thought process.
- ✓ Ascertaining if the desired modifications in your personality have actually occurred by participating in competitive environment (Like Mock SSB Interviews) and taking feedback from others.

This classification of OLQs requirement explains itself as, ***“Excellence Is Not A Skill, It Is An Attitude.”***

And to rejuvenate this excellence it is essential to understand the requirements of the Indian Armed Forces by placing the OLQs as primary things through which its institutional structure is shaping up and on.

III. FACTOR 1- PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

(1) Effective Intelligence - It is the intelligence utilized in coping with practical situations of varying complexity. It is different from basic intelligence, which is the capacity to perceive relations or do abstract thinking. Basic intelligence is assessed by the help of intelligence tests. Effective intelligence includes practical intelligence and resourcefulness;

(a) Practical Intelligence - It is the capacity to evolve independent solutions to practical problems and situations.

(b) Resourcefulness - It is the capacity to use the available resources for the desired goals. It also encompasses the ability to improvise a solution.

(2) Reasoning Ability - It is the ability to grasp the essentials well and arrive at conclusions by rational thinking. It includes receptivity, inquiring attitude, logical reasoning and seeing essentials of a problem. It is the ability to reason logically and arrive at conclusions by rational thinking in solving problems of varying complexity. It excludes emotional factors.

(3) Organizing Ability - This is the ability to arrange the resources in a systematic way so as to produce effective results. It is the competence to put to order one's resources so as to achieve desired results with economy of time and effort.

(4) Power of expression - It is the capability to put across one's ideas adequately with ease and clarity. It is the ability to express one's thoughts and feelings in an unconstrained manner fluently and clearly, both orally and /or in writing. It is not to be confused with the command over a particular language.

Factor 2 - Social Adjustment

(5) Social Adaptability - It is the ability of an individual to adapt himself to the social environment and adjust well with persons and social groups. Social adaptability includes social intelligence, attitude towards others, tact and adaptability. This quality includes understanding of the requirements and norms of society as well as the immediate environment.

(6) Cooperation - It refers to the attitude of an individual to participate willingly in harmony with others in achieving a group goal. This implies a belief that collective effort is more productive than an individual effort. Co operation includes the elements of joint effort and team spirit. Team spirit indicates loyalty to the aims and objectives of the group to the extent of subordinating the individual aim to the group aim. In other words, it means attitude of an individual to participate willingly in harmony with others and put one's share in group effort to advance group aim.

(7) Sense of Responsibility - It enables a person to be dependable and willing to discharge his obligation. It includes sense of duty but is much more comprehensive in meaning and scope. It implies sense of duty and discipline. Sense of responsibility therefore means a thorough understanding of the values of duty, social standards and of what is required of an individual and then giving it his energy and attention of his own accord. Doing one's best, carrying out even unspecified and probably unforeseen duties and obligations rather than faithfully carrying out what one is told to do. It demonstrates moral willingness to face the consequences.

Factor 3 - Social Effectiveness.

(8) Initiative - It is the ability to originate a desirable action in the absence of an order or suggestion, to see what needs to be done and be enterprising enough to do it. It encompasses the ability to take the first step; in an unfamiliar situation; in the right direction; sustain it, till the goal is achieved.

(9) Self Confidence - It is the faith in one's ability to meet stressful situations particularly those that are unfamiliar. Correct assessment of one's capabilities would make a person adequately self-confident.

(10) Decision Making - It is the ability to arrive at workable decisions expeditiously. It means the appropriateness of the decisions taken and also the quickness in arriving at the decisions. This is the capacity to take timely decisions and arrive at a firm and appropriate conclusion.

(11) Ability to Influence the Group - This is the ability, which enables an individual to bring about willing effort from the group for achieving the objective desired by him. This influence is the prime cause of co-operative and willing effort of a group towards the achievement of a set objective. Ability to exert influence on the group is the quality, which enables an individual to extract co-operative and willing effort from the members of the group towards achieving a desired objective.

(12) Liveliness - It is the capacity of an individual to keep himself buoyant when faced with problems and brings about a cheerful atmosphere.

Factor 4 - Dynamic

(13) Determination - It is a sustained effort to achieve objectives in spite of obstacles and setbacks. It implies fixedness of purpose, mental concentration and strength of will. It includes Physical application to work and 'Drive'. Drive is the inner motivating power at the disposal of an individual. It is the capacity to force oneself along when under pressure and display urgency towards the achievement of the objective. It may inspire energetic action in others towards the achievement of a common goal. This is fixedness of purpose and putting in sustained effort to achieve an objective in spite of diversions and obstacles.

(14) Courage - It is the ability to appreciate and take purposive risks willingly. It includes the ability to meet appreciated dangers; spirit of adventure; the capacity to keep oneself composed in adverse situations and to remain steady in facing and handling such situations. Courage includes physical as well as moral courage of a person.

(15) Stamina - It is the capacity of an individual to withstand prolonged strains and stresses of life. It includes mental as well as physical stamina. ^{xii xiii xiv xv xvi xvii}

Voluminous discourse have been fired up on the role of women in the Armed Forces up to the present time; and most precisely in relation to the ability of Women to adapt to and perform warfare roles; has been actively motivated by Socio-Cultural panorama, streaming from an exclusively Male-Oriented Warrior Framework and to a certain degree beliefs underlying it. ^{xviii} By the same token; till time, much of the social and behavioral systematic empirical evidences have been downplayed or ignored in favor of anecdotal evidence, personal opinion and/or uninformed conjecture. However, fundamental questions have been voiced, regarding expansion of role of women, which call for responses, planted on the evidence available today. ^{xix} Stated quite succinctly, in a United States Heritage Foundation article, below are five such questions, which permit us to address issues revolving around; First, the physical and mental suitability of women for Warfare Operational Roles; Second, the impact of women on group cohesion and effectiveness and Third, public and personal attitudes toward women in Armed Forces.

These are:

1. Are women officers physically suited to the rigors of ground combat?
2. What are the potential consequences of women and men officers operating in intimate proximity away from home for extended periods of time?
3. What has been the experience of nations that have men and women officers in mixed combat units?
4. How do women officers serving in the Armed Forces feel about being assigned to combat units?
5. How will bearing and raising children affect a woman officer's readiness to deploy on short notice, as is frequently required of military units?

Most services and roles in the Armed Forces are not based on kosher standards established to perform the tasks. It follows that, in some instances, not tied to authentic occupational standards, the lower physical performance of women, may resolve into simply be irrelevant. Henceforward, it is essential for various developing and developed Nation-States, to mould the defence strategies and policies of respective Armed Forces, which will include, implement and initiate an ethical framework for women as a human resource for warfare, specially to develop the requirements of physical standards of women, by taking insightful consideration of following points;

1. Identification of the operational requirements of warfare
2. Identification of the physical capability required to complete the operations
3. Developing pragmatic assessment which ensue the capability to complete the operation
4. Structuring parity in standards of the warfare operational tasks

IV. CONCLUSIONS- CONTENTION AND CONCERNS

“Never Forget That No Military Leader Has Ever Become Great Without Audacity.” - Carl Von Clausewitz

The emerging and extending combat roles of peace building and peacekeeping; especially the Indian Armed Forces have increasingly confronted a large scale mosaic of warfare situations; ranging from conventional warfare to urban terrorism and guerrilla skirmishes. The weaponry and skill sets needed to perform the duties of the modern military have changed; suggesting the need to consider a range of psychological, physical and cognitive competencies that go beyond absolute brute strength and vigour. This does not mean that physical fitness, physical conditioning and training are not important, but does underline a thought that, instinctive strength and vigour is not an actual occupational requirement of modern warfare. There are ample of evidences, that the requirements of Warrior Framework are developing dynamically and hence the importance of deriving standards of

warfare are based on requirements to actualize the objective of Armed Forces through the prospect of utilizing the efficacy of women officers and warriors ethos and ethics.

“An Officer Is An Ordinary Person, Facing Extraordinary Circumstances And Acting With Courage, Honour And Self Sacrifice.”

The Armed Forces are inseparable part of the society closely associated with the culture of the polity, bureaucracy, social structure. The Women are base of societal architecture and security concerns. The Armed forces, a framework developed for maintenance of territorial sovereignty, safety, security and good will of the nation, obviously have to consider the inseparable asset of the country, Women officers as its own part to perform all the essential work devoted to nation. The need is to develop and promote a set of ideas to press the worldwide society and governments to adopt pragmatic and foresighted policies towards the Women to unfold their life style and permit them to perform all credible operations in the al branches of Armed Forces proven by their efficacy. Therefore various aspects of Women and Armed Forces including issues, efficacy and prospects have to be studied, discussed and analyzed for benefit of not only Women and the Forces but also the society to which they belong.

“Not All Angeles Reside In Heaven, Many Walk The Battlefield.”

Oftentimes the question come to light as whether an individual has the Officer Like Qualities (OLQs) in him/ her, to be an Officer, if that individual is having a desire to be a part of the Indian Armed Forces. But many times, the answer to this question is not factual or specific. The SSB (Service Selection Board) Interview procedures of Indian Armed Forces scrutinize for OLQs in an individual to select him/her in the services, and ironically these qualities are not the identically singular requirements, that an individual finds complex to showcase, but sometimes they are the basics, which can be developed over the period of time or it is the inculcated skill of presenting them, is what concerns the most. Hence, if you must be able to showcase the Officer Like Qualities (OLQs) that you have developed in you, in a systematic way, then you will be apt to get selected in the Indian Armed Forces to serve the nation.

The OLQs indicate the respect of rules, methods and ethos of Indian Armed Forces, which can only be assured by the proficient expertise, because of the complex, secretive and secured structure of Armed Forces. Lastly, ***“Integrity Is Choosing Your Thoughts And Actions Based On Values Rather Than Personal Gains”*** and OLQs are the skills which make the person stand among others with rising bar of expectations, though an individual is not been able to be the part of Military.

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