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Leadership-Management Continuum in the Armed Forces :Lessons for Training



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Abstract

The popular debate pitching management against leadership in the military is an old one, with the later always being the dominant factor. Military Leadership is a complex function involving many intangibles wherein management and leadership skills are intricately interwoven. A military leader must learn, understand and apply leadership as well as managerial principles successfully to be a good military leader. The popular approach employed in the military to differentiate and compare the two is too simplistic and merits a detailed analysis. This debate is equally complicated and needs an in-depth understanding in light of the challenges the militaries face in today's world. Leadership training in the armed forces must effectively match the competing expectations and paradoxical tensions in the hybrid and complex organisational structure. Leadership and

Key Points

- Military Leadership popularly views managerial roles as secondary.
- The extreme context of military is different from civilian or corporate organisations and varies in its managerial and leadership content at different levels.
- The corporate- military paradigm varies in its goal orientation— the former focusses on 'tangible goals with process efficiency' and the later on 'intangible goals and effective outcomes'.
- Armed Forces leadership training must be guided by its leadership doctrine and characterised by competency based training at various levels of hierarchy.

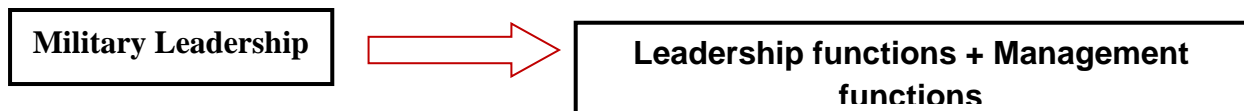
Management are inseparable as far as organisational context and training curriculum is involved. The relative content of such training must be aligned to the functional requirements of military commanders at different levels across diverse operational spectrum and emerging environmental challenges.

The Military Context of Leadership

Military Context

Leadership is a contextual phenomenon— constantly evolving, changing and being applied in a specific environment.¹ It is embedded within the organisation and gets affected by its main task, delegation of work authorities, the organisational structure and organisational culture. Accordingly, military leadership is both a theoretical and practical discipline that is discernible from civilian/ corporate leadership and incorporates both generic and unique

context based elements. The extreme context of military is characterised with dangerous and potential psychological, physical or material harm to its members which is not only different from civilian or corporate organisations but also vary in its managerial and leadership content at different levels. The perception of leadership as “core ability” in a military organisation and military career, lends itself to a parochial treatment of management as a minor subset of overall phenomenon of Leadership.*



Leadership Functions

Leadership training in the military primarily focuses on human factors that is personality, individualism, case studies, and is devoid of the management aspects. It is a commonly held belief that ‘good leaders will make good commanders’. The training curriculum of Pre-Commission Training is primarily aligned to training for combat leadership and value based leadership skills. Management skills are given a broad brush and considered to be implicit in leadership training. In reality, while many of the leadership skills are inborn in individuals, most can also be learned on the job. On the contrary, most management skills need formal training.

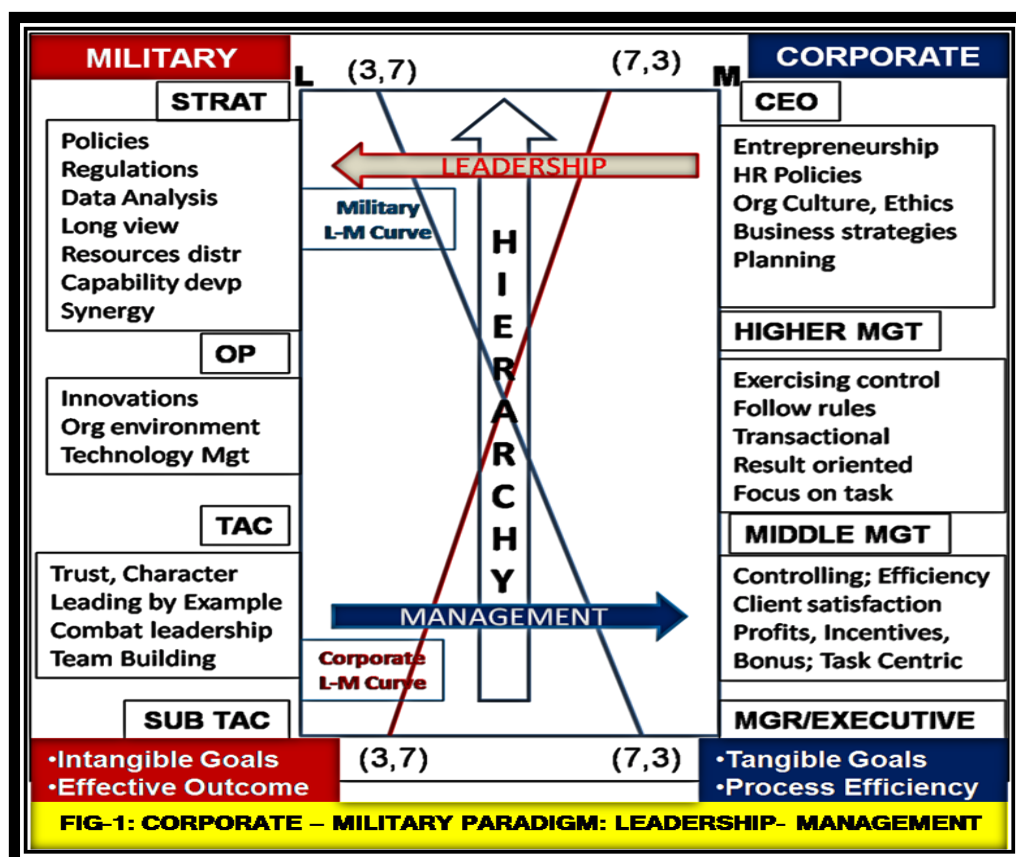
* Leadership in this document has been used in two ways, one as leadership distinct from management and second as a command function (Leadership) inclusive of both components of Leadership i.e. management functions and leadership functions.

Management Functions of Leadership

To deal with HR management, budget, acquisitions, logistics, capability development & sustenance, disruptive technologies, and land/ real estate, management expertise are required— it needs well founded management practices and skills to be addressed effectively. The leadership (leader cum manager) at middle levels and higher echelons is required to accomplish myriad complex tasks and must be trained for managerial skills. On the pyramidal escalatory ladder of career, most officers reach middle and senior levels only in the last one-third of their service and find themselves ill prepared for the challenges of management. The perception that a good leader will make a good manager is ill founded. Management and leadership are complimentary, interdependent and reinforcing requirements.

Corporate Military Paradigm: A Comparison

Figure 1: Corporate-Military Paradigm



Source: Annotated by Author

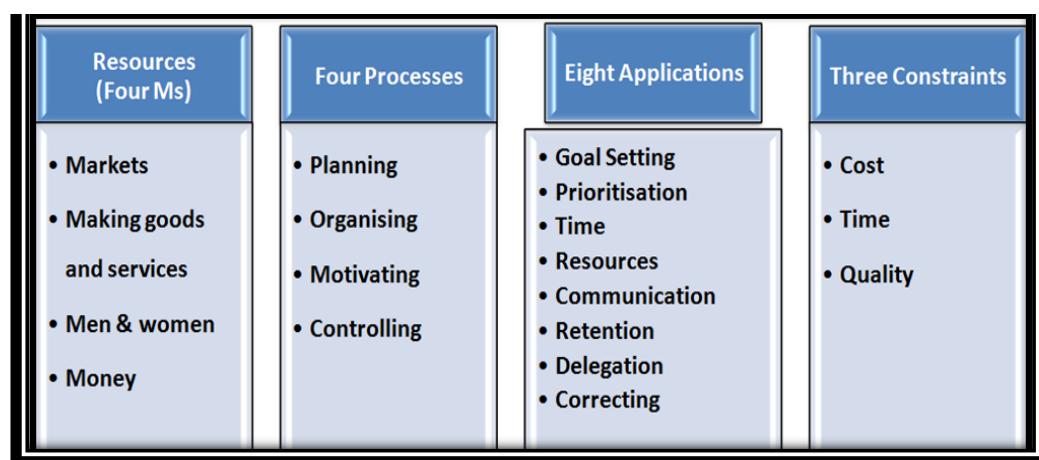
The peculiar conditions of military also affects the relationship between leadership and management requirements at different levels. In fact, the leadership- management mix varies ‘from organisation to organisation’ and ‘at different levels in the same organisation’. The organisation culture and value system of the military may call for greater reliance on leadership tools than corporate/ commercial organisations.² The required leadership skills at lower levels are much higher in the military vis-a-vis corporate. On the contrary, at higher levels military leaders have to primarily rely on relatively higher management skills whereas corporate leaders need evolved leadership skills at higher levels. This particular paradigm is related to organisational tasks, goals, operating environments and the peculiar organisational structures and hierarchies (**Refer Figure 1**).

Leadership versus Management: A Conceptual Framework

Leadership

Leadership *has been defined as* “the aggregate strength derived from the use of deep reservoirs of personal awareness, skill and professional best practices, uniquely applied to a set of challenges that call out individual authenticity and set new precedents in professional capacity and personal effectiveness to support the common good”.³ It is well established that leadership is distinct from management in terms of the primacy of Human resources in the former and thus underlining the importance of understanding human behaviour. Leadership primarily is concerned with influencing human behaviour and optimising human capacities through an integrated process of self-awareness and people awareness in a fulfilling experience. The understanding of self and behaviour of people requires an understanding of the role of psychology in influencing human behaviour.⁴

Figure 2: Management Theory: Resources, Processes and Applications



Source: https://www.ripublication.com/gjmbs_spl/gjmbsv3n3spl_14.pdf



Management

Management is the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which individuals, working together in groups, efficiently accomplish selected aims. Management is defined as the 'process involving Resource (four Ms), Triple Constraints, Four Processes, Eight Applications (**Refer Figure 2**) by which a co-operative group directs actions towards common goals'. Even when the resources are specified, the definition of a manager as "someone who uses resources in an efficient and effective way so that the end product is worth more than the initial resources" is still inadequate. It still includes too many people. Management of other people is sometimes also considered as a defining characteristic of management.⁵ Over the years, the terms 'management' and 'leadership' have, in organisational parlance, been used both as synonyms and with clearly differentiated meanings. It also reflects an awareness of the distinction made by Burns between 'transactional leadership' (characterised by emphasis on procedures, contingent reward, management by exception) and 'transformational leadership' (characterised by charisma, personal relationships, creativity).⁶

Peter Drucker has treated the subject of Leadership at par with Management. In fact, he has at times considered 'Leadership' as a sub- set of larger 'Managerial' paradigm. He compares management to liberal art—'liberal' because it deals with the fundamentals of knowledge, self-knowledge, wisdom, and leadership; 'art' because it is also concerned with practice and application. Managers draw on all the knowledge and insights of humanities and the social sciences—on psychology and philosophy, on economics and history, on ethics—as well as on the physical sciences. For these reasons, management will increasingly be the discipline and practice through which 'Humanities' will again acquire recognition, impact, and relevance. He further rubbishes the 'traits theory of leadership' by citing historical examples of leaders who have nothing in common.⁷ In distinguishing the two, he treats a manager not as a leader but part of a leadership group with greater responsibility and accountability vis-a-vis an individual leader quality which is confined to few individuals and their personalities.

Although management and leadership are dissimilar, but each has its place in the military. The recognition of this will forever change the way officers and soldiers are trained to handle the complexities of their duties— gone are the days in which soldiers could simply say

leadership is good and management is bad. There is an assertion that ‘leading is different from managing’. The ways that these assertions are made can cultivate the view that the activities of planning, organising and coordinating are somehow less important than leading. The assertion can also convince others that they are grand and gifted leaders who can ignore the mere activities of planning, organising and coordinating —they can leave these lesser activities to others with less important things to do in the organisation. Systems cannot be led and budgets cannot be inspired⁸. There are similarities as well as places where leadership and management overlap and this distinction between the two disciplines cannot be drawn over the preference of the individual (Refer Figure 3). The difference between establishing and implementing organisational vision is often blurred. Where leaders frequently create vision, formulate strategy and increase employee commitment to vision, managers are more often charged with implementing that strategy. This is just another way in which leadership and management overlap in organisations.

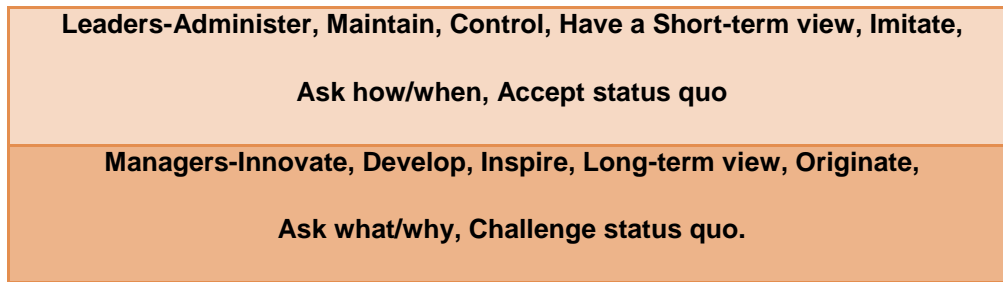
Figure 3: Organisational Resources versus Style of Leadership Correlation

Organisational Resources	Style of Leadership
People	Leadership
Material	Management
Abstracts(Time, external environment, Social, Economic factors, Org structures)	Leadership cum Management

Source: <https://hbr.org/2010/12/robert-s-mcnamara-and-the-evolution-of-modern-management>

Managers and good leaders differ in how they approach their jobs. For example, ‘managers administer’, while ‘leaders innovate’.⁹ While leaders, like managers, must also keep the organisation running smoothly; as a leader you must constantly ponder the next steps, come up with better ways to accomplish the goal, and relatively engage your subordinates to produce more or better results. By providing purpose, direction and motivation for the subordinates to operate in support of the mission, you train them to operate independently. A pure management mindset is never able to let go and lead. By the popular perception, Managers and Leaders do different things (**Refer Figure 4**) which may not be totally correct.

Figure 4: Leader- Manager Functional Approach



Source: College of Defence Management

Hence, Leadership and Management can be rated positively. Why, then, are the leaders so admired? Are they really so brilliant? The initial euphoria of leadership, which culminated in the 1970s, started to fade at the end of the century. Even the creators of leadership theory began to point out the dangers of overestimating the role of leaders at the expense of managers. Maxwell questioned the role of leaders in his regular column—“against the leaders”.¹⁰

- The leaders are really less important than you think.
- Leaders are only as good as the situation in which they are required.
- Leaders often manipulate people and if they are not controlled, they can often derail the entire organisation from the right direction.
- Leaders do not appeal to extremely creative and educated people.
- The bigger is the participation of management, the lesser is the need for leaders.

Analysis of Training for Leadership – Management Functions in Military

Figure 5: Leadership Training Curriculum in Armed Forces



Source: Annotated by Author

- **Military Leadership Training.** As a concept or term, Military Leadership has not been defined anywhere distinctly. It is generally treated as a 'special case of leadership under situation peculiar to the military'. In Indian Military, the study of military leadership is primarily concerned with study of biographies of military leaders and their characteristics, personalities, case studies, combat leadership etc.¹¹ The exercise of military leadership is distinct due to its adverse, challenging and extraordinary situations under which our forces operate. Human behaviour, under such circumstances, is vastly different and hence needs a deeper understanding of the psychological aspects of human behavior and how it 'varies from organisation to organisation' and at 'various levels within the same organisation'. The leadership training at various levels has confined itself to study of various theories and approaches to leadership besides case studies and biographies (**Refer Figure 5**). Leadership training in the Armed Forces is imparted right from Pre-Commission Training Academies and continues through the Young Officers Training and through various professional courses in military training institutes at various levels of command. Leadership training is also imparted to Junior Leaders— NCOs/ SNCOS/ JCOs/ Warrant Officers and equivalent ranks in all services.
- **Management Applications Training.** The management process has four functions: planning, organising, motivating and controlling. These functions offer an interesting mechanism for the discovery of potential management applications for the Army. It's a crosswalk between the management processes that are depicted in **Figure 2** above and Army leadership applications. The leaders in the army currently conducts substantial management functions throughout the course of their careers, and are asked to exhibit abilities within the new operational environment that are rarely communicated to them in a cogent fashion. Eight such tasks and applications of management in Military are identified as: goal setting, prioritisation, time, resources, communication, retention, delegation, and correction.¹² Principally, 'tasks are married to functions of the management process' (**Refer Figure 6**) to determine their applicability in operations within the Army.

Figure 6: Potential Management Applications and Military Tasks

Management Processes	Army Applications	Leadership Tasks/Competencies
Planning	Goal-Setting	Data Handling, Forecasting, Systems Analysis
	Prioritisation	Allocation of Resources, Analysis of threats
Organising	Time	Financial Planning; Forecasting
	Resources	Supply Chain Management, Allocation of Resources, Budgeting, Change Management
Motivating	Communication	Policies, Regulations, Media, Information Analysis, Team Building
	Motivation	
Controlling	Delegation	Conflict & Dissent Management
	Correcting	Mentoring, Counselling

Source: <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA416451.pdf>

- Leadership Management Correlation with Command and Control Functions.**

Large number of management functions in the military have been characterised as functions of leadership. It is important to understand as to what functions are better defined as management applications. An analysis of ‘command and control’ terminology and its scope as prevalent in the military, also helps us understand a correlation between leader and management applications. The characteristics of command includes dealing directly with soldiers, inspires, motivates element of will and accomplishment of mission. The characteristics of control includes dealing with systems, processes, monitoring, correcting, distribution of resources, information and so on. An analysis reveals a direct analogy between ‘command and leadership functions’ and ‘control and management functions’. The illustrated relationship between command and control can also be construed to depict how command is a ‘commander and leaders responsibility’ whereas control is a ‘staff and manager responsibility’ (Refer Figure 7).

Figure 7: Command-Control Paradigm

Command (Leadership)	Control (Management)
Deals directly with soldiers	Deals with systems and processes
Inspires / Motivates	Monitors / Corrects
Involves an element of will	Governs the distribution of documents, information and material

Source: <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA416451.pdf>

- **Leadership-Management Correlation in Command and Staff Functions.**

Leadership is one of the most important ‘organisational function’ and management is one of the most ‘important skill’ required to discharge such functions. Management proficiency must be accepted as a positive aspect of leadership functions at all levels, particularly at middle and higher echelons. Command and Control being main functions of military hierarchy, it would be prudent to align command and staff functions with leadership and management skills respectively. The following correlation in such functions and skills will help to train and equip leaders with required skills **(Refer Figure 8)**.¹³

Figure 8: Leadership as Command and Management as Control

Leadership(Art) Command: Commanders	Management(Science) Control: Staff
Form the vision	Translate vision into reality
Form the concept of operations	Analyze, define limits, compute Requirements
Prioritise missions	Analyse and recommend
Prioritise resources	Allocate resources
Assess risk	Analyse risk
Assign missions/people	Develop specific instructions from general guidance



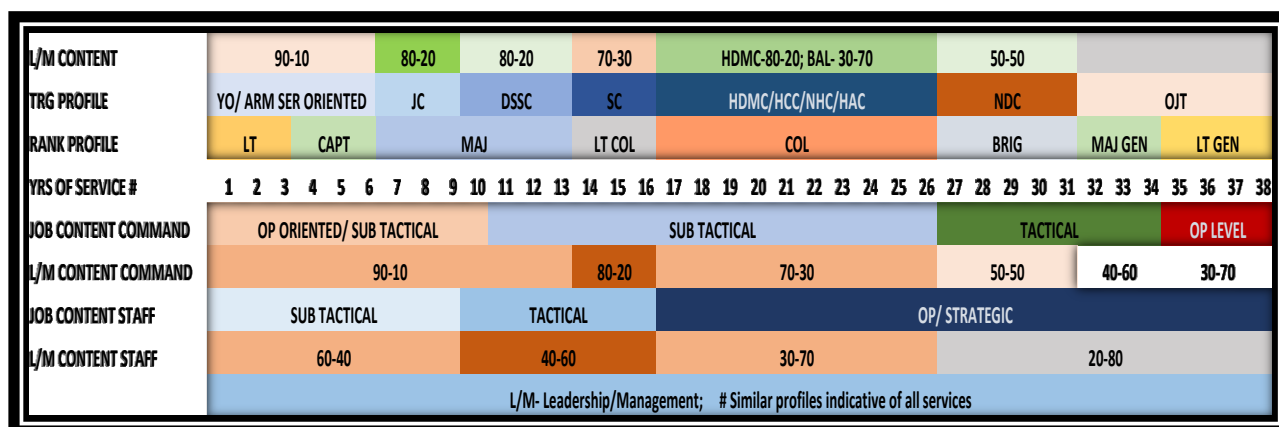
Select critical time and place	Monitor, measure, analyse, and report performance
See, hear, and understand	Research and recommend
Make decisions	Anticipate and project change
Anticipate change	Identify and correct deviations from guidance
Lead, guide, and direct subordinates	Direct subordinates' actions to accomplish the commander's intent
Focus the entire unit's energy to accomplish clear objectives	Clear and consistent communication for smooth and uncorrupted passage of information/ instructions

Source: <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA416451.pdf>

A Reality Check: An Illustration

Military hierarchies are typically steep pyramids with need for young officers profile at tactical levels. Consequently, for a major portion (2/3rd or upto 26 years of service and 48 years of age) of his career, an Officer generally deals with tactical and sub tactical levels of organisational functions wherein he is trained only for operational and leadership skills with minimal formal training on management skills. Paradoxically, in later years, (1/3rd of his service) his command responsibilities grow exponentially in a very short period of time with concomitant increase in management functions for which he is either not trained at all or trained only in much senior ranks when his faculties have already matured. The table below refers only to army specific analysis for sake of simplicity; the same can be extrapolated to the other services too. The mismatch between job content and training profile is too glaring and cannot be overemphasised **(Refer Figure 9)**.

Figure 9: Age-Rank-Job Content: Training Profile of Officers in Armed Forces



Source: Annotated by Author

A Formation Commander with 35 years of service in command needs to have formal understanding of management functions of decision making, data analysis, system analysis, organisational structures, command correlations, change management, financial and budget management etc. An Officer- in- Staff posted in the Service HQs holding a high rank needs all these skills besides an in-depth understanding of the national policy making, functioning of government machinery and a long view of all actions by SHQ under the ambit of overall government policies. Likewise, a Colonel- in- Staff in Formation HQs and Service HQs will have to be formally oriented in the above management skills and their applications so as to be able to present cogent and relevant solutions and analysis to the hierarchy. More importantly, such training will need to start early in the career of officers say at Sr. Major/ Lt Col levels.

The foregoing illustrations and analysis is only a way of representing how leadership-management functions can be correlated to the existing organisational functions in the military. It is important to distinguish leadership as a holistic function of a leader/ commander from its two component techniques namely leadership and management. Leaders/ Commanders at all levels are invariably performing both functions in varying degrees. The need is to identify the requirement of training of such commanders in line with the management skills and practices required of them in discharging their functions. The Indian Armed Forces need to adopt a Leadership Doctrine to pave way for a holistic guideline for training of commanders at all levels. It will also act as an important reference for formulation of HR policies in tune with the evolving civilisational aspirations of the new generation of millennials.



Recommendations and Way Ahead: Towards a Leadership Doctrine

The Armed Forces are a hierarchical organisation with rigid command and control set up functioning in a complex and volatile environment. Nowhere are the distinctions between leadership and management more complex and overbearing, at functional levels, with direct bearing on short and long term effectiveness of organisational goals. In this regard some of the recommendations particularly for the Indian Armed Forces are as under:

- **Formulation of a Joint Leadership Doctrine.** The need for formulating and adopting a joint leadership doctrine for the Indian Armed Forces cannot be over-emphasised, particularly in view of the current focus on achieving jointness and creation of Joint Theatre Commands. The Doctrine must clearly establish the organizational requirements of leadership and management domains. It should encompass identification of various skill sets in leadership and management domains at different levels of command.
- **Application of Management in Armed Forces.** There is a need to identify the gap between responsibility of leaders at various levels and their management/ leadership training. Specific management skills/ applications at various levels of command must be identified.
- **Leadership (Management) Training.** Future leadership training in the Armed Forces must flow from the Leadership Doctrine and empower commanders at various levels and in specific skillsets. The importance of management skills and applications must be clearly understood and suitably incorporated in the training curriculum.
- **Alignment of HR Policies.** An optimum exploitation of management qualifications/ experience by military commanders can only be appropriated if they are suitably posted in specific fields/ appointments requiring those skills. It will be imperative to tweak the HR policies at various levels to ensure optimal exploitation of management/ leadership skills as specialised domains.

The Indian Armed Forces are at the cusp of achieving long pending jointness and raising of Joint Theatre Commands. It is an ideal opportunity to review its multifarious training philosophy and doctrines. The human resource of 1.6 million strong Indian Military must be in tune with modern civilisational aspirations of the youth, the technological advancements



and the burgeoning socio-economic dynamics of the society from which its rank and file is drawn. It also needs Leaders who are trained to grasp the myriad challenges of the day in a complex security environment. A Joint Leadership Doctrine should pave the way for an integrated training philosophy. The training at various level of hierarchy should have right mix of management skills along with leadership to enable and empower commanders and staff at all levels to achieve their aims.

End Notes

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