CONCLUSION
CHAPTER 6

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Where does the way forward then lead to? The future will depend on what is initiated now. Every small effort towards strengthening the core competence and enhancing the true status of the military in the society will impact on the watchful and discerning youth. There are miles to go, and every step will reach that much closer. There is a vision of a professionally sound, intrinsically happy and upwardly mobile force, much sought after by the large sections of the aspiring youth as a premier career option. A perspective view of the next few decades does show promise - but how it will eventually unfold - only time will tell.

The Indian Army has been playing a very significant role in the nation’s security. Its role in countering the militancy in the North East and J&K is universally appreciated. It has been carrying out all these tasks against great odds. Its men have been operating in the most difficult and hazardous working conditions round the clock and providing to the nation a very effective security. However, security cannot be ensured without proper officering of the Army - both in quality and quantity. This most important input of human resource has been posing very serious challenge to the Army and to all policy makers for quite sometime. Required numbers of youth have not been opting for the Army as a career for a variety of reasons - ranging from the relatively risky and hazardous career, wide range of choices in today’s developing and modern corporate world, attractive pay and perks and the flexibility to move from one job to another at a very short notice. All this emanates due to the falling image of the Army in the eyes of the youth as a career option - that too in a country which has one of the best youth profiles and high unemployment rates in the world. The shortage of officers in the Army has a significant effect on the effective and efficient functioning in the Army. Units are running on reduced or hard scales, with the available officers being forced to overwork and getting over stressed. It also has an effect on the time available for the officers for a very effective inter-group relationship and quality of in house training.

Inspite of wide ranging publicity campaign in the print and electronic media and in person and various activities for enhancing enrolment, through the Command Headquarters and Army Recruitment Organization, required results are not visible on the ground. This has therefore proved that the Hypothesis H1 stands tested.
The present study analysed various measures being undertaken to improve the intake and pointed to the inadequacies in the same. It offers very practical and innovative solutions to reach a wider base of recruitable age group so as to get the desired numbers meeting the laid down criteria for selection. The raising of issues in pay commission and other ex-servicemen forums regarding the requirement of all round improvement in the pre-service, during service and post service environment has therefore proved that the hypothesis H2 stands tested.

With the changing role of the armed forces from holding army of a country to an important force in the subcontinent and further a reckonable force in the world order, awareness and appreciation about military matters is as imperative if India is to become a key player in the subcontinent. This in turn requires appropriate manpower policies, the need of which can hardly be over emphasized. There cannot be a long term solution to the problem until the society and the governments together come to grips with it and solve it.

The in-service conditions have been a cause of concern not only to the many affected officers but also to the organisation as a whole. The single most important factor is the steep pyramidal structure which places the Army at a great disadvantage as far as the Civil Services are concerned. This has been resulting in very slow and less promotions, due to which there has been a lot of disgruntlement in the officer cadre, coupled with this are the other equally unattractive conditions – low pay and allowances, partly opaque performance appraisal system, frequent transfers, adverse effect on children’s education, sacrifice of career of wives, lack of services within the cantonment etc. All these have a bearing on the morale of the serving officers. Growing numbers of officers seeking premature retirement is an indication that a lot needs to be done to improve the in-service conditions. These officers do become a national asset and hold successful careers indicating if given correct opportunity and resources would have done wonders within the forces. These officers set wrong indicators in the society from where the next intake has to come. It is as important to retain the officers with a good morale, as it is to attract candidates to choose Army as a career. It has been established in the study that that there is a requirement to reduce the base of the regular officers' cadre so that their promotion prospects can be well looked after or a major mid career absorption plan is implemented to grow in outside avenues. This will be possible only when we have a wider cadre of the short service officers or lateral induction is
correctly implemented. However, there are problems to achieve this since the SSC is falling short of the expectations of the youth. Unless it is made attractive enough, it would not be possible to make the base of these officers wider.

On the pay and allowances front, it is a practice all over the armies in the world to compensate the Armed Forces adequately by reasonably catering for a ‘X’ factor. The peculiar conditions of working in the Army can be better appreciated by the Pay Commission if a member from the Armed Forces is incorporated in it or a separate armed forces pay commission is implemented. This has not been happening. It is important that this aspect is addressed by the Government.

There can be no Army without officer leadership. The words of the Pakistan army after the 1971 debacle still hound our ears that “if only we had Indian Army officers to lead”. And no Army means, no India. The nation must find ways to attract and retain the talent and maintain them in a constant state of high morale so that the onerous responsibility set upon the shoulders of these officers is discharged as extremely well as they have always have been doing. The nation must share its responsibility towards its security. It is of vital concern to a nation and its security apparatus to ensure that the Armed Forces remain in the highest state of readiness and morale at all times.