



International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research

ISSN : 0972-7302

available at <http://www.serialsjournal.com>

© Serials Publications Pvt. Ltd.

Volume 15 • Number 5 • 2017

Impact of Socio-economic Conditions on Qualities of Youth Affecting their Selection in the Defence Forces

Col Ravinder Kumar Gosain¹, Parul Agarwal² and P.S. Siwach³

¹Research Scholar, JECRC University

²JECRC University

³Mangalayatan University

ABSTRACT

With time the societies also change. From the time immemorial to present era, history is replete with examples of changes which have occurred in the minds of the youth directly or indirectly impacting the personality of the youth as such. The armed forces always need youth who possess certain qualities and are capable of leading the men in war. These qualities depend upon the attitude of the child which develops at a very young age, i.e. at home and at early stages of schooling. This attitude after sometime becomes part of the habit and forms qualities in an individual. All such qualities depend upon the kind of exposure the children get in the environment. However, since the environment is made of socio-economic conditions to which the child is exposed, his qualities develop according to the type and extent of exposure. This paper aims to study the impact of socio-economic conditions on the desired officer like qualities and intake of officers. For the purpose of data collection, all the three Service Selection Centres of Indian Armed Forces (Allahabad, Bhopal and Bangalore) were chosen. 449 Junior, middle and senior level officers responded the multiple choice questionnaire. The response was put through SPSS software system and analysed. The study revealed that the social and economic changes have direct bearing on the minds of the youth. They develop qualities according to the environment they are exposed to. The qualities they develop get reflected in their behavior and thereby have an impact on their personality which makes them suitable/unsuitable for the armed forces.

1. INTRODUCTION

Socio economic changes have direct bearing on the society. Since the youth is exposed to the same very society, they gain experience according to their own socio-economic status at that time and the extent of exposure. So, any changes in the society will obviously have some impact on the minds of the youth.

It is a well-known fact that every individual thinks differently. No two individuals, even twins have same personality. Every-one amasses know-how every-day and what our personality is a product of our experiences and so personality is distinctive for every individual. Thus, the personality is a set of qualities one has developed through inheritance or acquaintance and experience over the years. Every- one knows that the role of the armed forces is unique and hence young people who are conferred with certain abilities and potentials known as Leadership qualities or Officer Like Qualities (OLQs) are needed for the armed forces.

2. LEADERSHIP QUALITIES (OFFICER LIKE QUALITIES)

“There are three marks of a superior man: being virtuous, he is free from anxiety, being wise, he is free from perplexity, being brave, and he is free from fear.” Confucius

Mature leaders are self-assured, knowledgeable, and compassionate and abhor employment of any coercive measures for implementation of their orders. As per (Sood, 2006), they can earn respect of their command since they lead through personal example. Such leaders employ personal charisma to lead. He cites an example of Sam Manekshaw as one such leader. But every leader is not charismatic. Different leaders display different qualities. About twenty- five centuries ago, the great Chinese Military thinker and warrior, Tzu (1963) wrote in his book “Ping Fa” (The Art of War) as translated by Samuel: “The first of the five fundamental factors of war is moral influence, the second weather, the third terrain, the fourth command and the fifth doctrine”. He qualified moral influence by saying, “By moral influence I mean, that which carried the people to be in harmony with their leaders, so that they will accompany to be in harmony with their leaders, so that they will accompany them in life and unto death without fear of mortal peril”. About command, he wrote “By command I mean the general’s qualities of wisdom, sincerity, humanity, courage and strictness”. To emphasise the greatness and necessity of leadership, he further wrote: Now the general is the bulwark of the state: if the bulwark is complete at all points, the state will be strong: if the bulwark is defective, the state will be weak”.

Socrates, 470-399 BC was perhaps the first person to provide us a comprehensive summation of the qualities of a leader. He said, “The General must know how to get his men their rations and every other kind of stores needed in war. He must have imagination to organise plans, practical sense and energy to see them through. He must be observant, untiring, shrewd, kindly and cruel, simple and crafty, a watchman and robber, lavish, and miserly, generous and stingy, rash and conservative, all these and many other qualities, natural and acquired, he must have. He should also, as a matter of course, know his tactics: for a disorderly mob is no more an army than a heap of building materials in a house.” Asper Sood(2006) The “General Staff Publication-1976” of the Indian army on “Leadership” outlines these qualities in a more pointed manner. It says that —Alertness, Bearing, Courage, Decisiveness, Dependability, Endurance, Enthusiasm, Initiative, Integrity, Judgement, Justice, Knowledge, Loyalty and Sense of Humour as the essential qualities of leaders. It further adds that some other traits although not listed here are, Truthfulness, Esprit de corps, Unselfishness, Humility and sympathy, Tact without loss of moral courage, Patience and a sense of urgency as appropriate, Self-confidence, Maturity and Mental including emotional stability. These qualities are desirable and the degree, to which they are prevalent, varies from one individual to another. Sam added two more to it—a leader must be lucky and he must be: “A bit of a lad!” However, Adair (1973) has quoted some different qualities to be possessed by leaders. Some of these are: Enthusiasm, Confidence, Toughness, Integrity,

Warmth and Humility. Later, Thompson and Bailey (1993) recognised that military leaders, overall, must have a breadth of long-term vision, be decisive and independent, act and stand firm, be a warrior, speak openly, plainly and frankly, learn quickly from defeats and mistakes, go forward with unswerving fortitude, and know and appreciate the requirements and interests of subordinates. The qualities and skills of a leader are unlikely to be totally intrinsic and they would have to be developed over many years and with much appropriate experience. Yet, to a great extent, there would have to be an innate and solid foundation laid down for these qualities to develop.

In the Indian context, an article published in the newspaper “The Hindu” by (Ram, June 2005) described 39 qualities a military leader should possess; Ability to influence groups; Ability to keep secrets; Alertness; Capacity for right and quick decision; Cheerfulness; Communication skills; Cooperation; Courage; Determination; Discipline; Discrimination; Energy; Fairness; Grit for facing challenges; Honesty; Initiative; Innovative mind; Integrity; Intellectual curiosity; Intelligence; Justice and fairness; Liveliness; Loyalty; Maturity; Optimism; Organizational ability; Originality; Physical health; Positive mental attitude; Reasoning ability; Resourcefulness; Self-confidence; Selflessness; Sense of responsibility; Social adaptability; Stamina; Team spirit; Willingness to delegate responsibility; Willingness to face criticism cheerfully. It is credible, but no doubt it is not only impossible to find a person with these qualities, it is also difficult to check so many qualities at the time of interview.

Officer Like Qualities (OLQs)

To select an armed forces officer endowed with so many qualities, the Service Selection Centres have been provided with fifteen OLQs to be checked, comprised of fewer than four factors as evolved by the Psychological Research Wing (PRW) in 1956. These qualities under each factor are as explained below:

- **Planning and Organising:** It includes effective intelligence, reasoning ability, organising ability and power of expression.
- **Social Adjustment:** It means social adaptability, cooperation and sense of responsibility.
- **Social Effectiveness:** It includes initiative, self-confidence, speed of decision, ability to influence the group and liveliness:
- **Dynamic:** It means determination, courage and stamina.

Research Study

The research has been carried out to find out whether the socio-economic changes in the environment affect the personality of the youth which in turn effect their selection in the armed forces. To carry out necessary study, a structured approach has been devised and the study has been carried out under three heads as listed below:-

- Effects of socio-economic changes on conditions of society,
- Impact of changed socio-economic conditions on the youth,
- Effects of socio-economic changes on personality/qualities (OLQs).

The above studies are discussed in detail in the succeeding paragraphs.

3. EFFECTS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES ON CONDITIONS OF SOCIETY

It is well known fact and understood that change is inevitable and is the only permanent phenomenon. The factors that have impacted the society and considered for the study in the last few years are as given below:

Economic Conditions

Globalization: The world has shrunk and connectivity has improved tremendously. Availability of real time information sitting at home has awakened the society to the happening in the world. The world has become smaller and global. Anything happening any- where in the world is known all over in a few seconds. The real time information has acted like a stimulus and has awakened the people to their rights and privileges.

Urbanization: Large numbers of people have already moved from rural to urban areas in search of jobs. The rural areas are also experiencing urbanization due to development all around thereby affecting the flow from rural to urban. The rawness of the youth from the rural areas is missing.

Increased Job Opportunities: With more and more MNCs coming in, job opportunities have increased manifold with improved pay perks. Development plans at all levels in villages as well as in cities has created many jobs next door which are preferred by the youth today. They do not wish to go away from their homes that too when similar and may be better perks are available next door.

Flow of Money: Both parents working has become a culture. The income of the people has increased many-fold and with income, the expenditure power has also increased resulting in regular flow of money in the market. The people now-a- days are also keen to spend money on themselves rather than saving it as they feel confident of earning more due to regular availability of the same. This has resulted in change in their attitude as the youth today look for quick and more money rather than an adventurous job like serving the nation.

Government Jobs: Though people prefer government jobs due to assured future and other benefits like pension and assured growth, the private sector also provides similar benefits with higher pay packages and many other incentives and hence more and more people prefer corporate jobs as compared to government jobs.

4. TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

Media, movies, internet and mobile phones have changed the way youth looks at them now. These things have become necessity of the day and no more treated as options available. With the latest information available, the youth feels empowered. The army's outlook has also changed due to technological advancement. The kind of new weapon system and the thoughtful changes in the infantry weapons due to availability of real time information may force the armed forces to deal with this situation separately at a different platform.

Social Changes

Joint Family System: The joint family system has been replaced by the nucleus family system. Kind of values and growth environment which the children use to get in a joint family system is not there any- more.

Parents tend to pamper their children since they have very little time for them. All the decisions are taken by the parents only thus rendering the children indecisive by nature. They become more and more dependent on parents and others and do not learn to take initiative and decisions.

Double Income: Both the parents are working to earn more money thus youth being left on its own. The personal touch of the parents is missing forcing children to grow in a hostile environment resulting in degradation of values and culture and development of negative attitude.

Western Culture: The western culture has seeped in resulting in inter-caste and inter-religion marriages, pubs and clubs culture, live-in relationships etc. The awareness amongst the youth is on the negative side and hence they are more concerned about their rights, perks and privileges rather than responsibilities towards the nation.

Materialistic Thinking: The youth thinks in terms of materialistic comforts and not interested on value based hard lives. They are born and brought up in a very comfortable environment and hence they look for those comforts as their rights when they grow up. They are unable to co-op up with the difficult or unexpected situations which they are likely to face in their lives.

Changes in Rural areas: The youth is now more aware of his rights and privileges. Developments of the areas, better roads, transportation system, education system, better degree etc. are the demands of the day. The outlook of the rural youth has totally changed. He is no more simple, raw youth. He is more aware, alert and connected to the world all over today.

Educational Changes: Large number of educational institutes has affected the quality of education; urge to get degrees, parental and peer pressure, etc. has further impacted the minds of the youth. Youth is keener to get degree rather than gain knowledge. Even the educational institutes are only aiming to prepare the youth to earn living and not teach them how to live.

Study on Impact of Changed Socio-economic Conditions on the youth

Due to some of the changes in the society owing to changes in socio-economic conditions listed above, the observed impact of the changes on the youth are listed below-

- Today's youth is more interested in theoretical knowledge and so application part of learning is missing. They tend to take short term decisions and can't take long term or strategic decisions. They are unable to grasp the situation, see the essentials and be able to provide workable solution to a simple day to day problem also. Their comprehension power is lacking. For them, output is more important than the methodology.
- They are becoming more self-centered, selfish, non-cooperative, and immature and lack social values. Their social communication is poor. They also become careless, casual, un-concerned, irresponsible and individualistic by nature.
- They tend to become addict to TVs and computers, avoid focused working, look for personal comforts, and also become impatient by nature. They are also not able to confront un-familiar situations.

- Decline in participation in team games coupled with too much academic pressure to bear for them, they are satisfied by playing computer games and net surfing. Watching and visiting water kingdoms, amusement parks etc. are the hobbies resulting in lack of adventurism, team spirit and cooperation. Their social habits are poor and they can-not adjust as a part of the team. They tend to live an individualistic life rather than a social life.
- With both parents working, very comfortable life is being provided to the youth resulting in lack of responsibility, decision making and initiative. Parents having lesser time for the children resulting in lesser indulgence and more pampering of the children. It is leading to spoiling their habits to the extent that they become in-disciplined youth.
- Lack of control by parents is resulting in unsocial youth ready to do anything for personal gains only.
- Emphasis on degrees rather than knowledge is resulting in lack of practical skills.

Effects of Socio-economic changes on the Qualities of the Youth

The response from three Service Selection Centres is as follows:

Since this paper is aimed to find out impact of socio-economic changes on the qualities of the youth which in-turn effect their OLQs, the data collected from 449 officers was analysed in SPSS system and T-Test was applied. The findings are enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs-

Table 2.1
One-Sample Statistics

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Standard Error Mean</i>
Impact of socio-economic conditions on qualities of the youth and OLQs	449	4.31	.659	.031

Table 2.2
One-Sample Test

	<i>t</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Significance (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Test Value = 0</i>	
					<i>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</i>	
					<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Impact of socio-economic conditions on qualities of the youth and OLQs.	138.718	448	.000	4.312	4.25	4.37

As is evident from analysis, the t (cumulative value) is 138.718 at 95% confidence level, where as α -(table value) at this level is 1.96. Since $t \geq \alpha$, it proves that there is a significant impact of socio-economic changes on the qualities of the youth which in –turn is effecting the expected OLQs resulting in its influence on intake and quality of perspective officers of the armed forces.

As enumerated above, the OLQs are described under four different factors. The impact of socio-economic changes has also been studied keeping in mind its impact on individual qualities under each factor. The factor wise impression is given below:

Factor Planning and Organising: Under this factor, the SSB centres observe the perspective candidates ability to grasp essentials of a problem, be able to plan and organize available resources, arrive at a simple workable solution and express the same in clear, understandable and logical sequence. To find the impact of socio-economic changes on these qualities in the youth, the respondents were asked as to.

Whether socio-economic changes have a negative impact on the quality education and logical thinking, their views are shown here in the form of a pie chart:

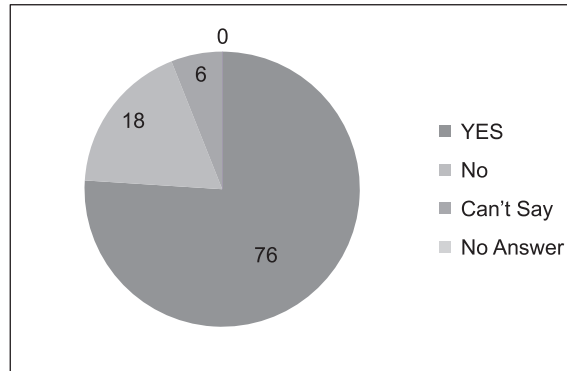


Figure 2.1: Quality Education

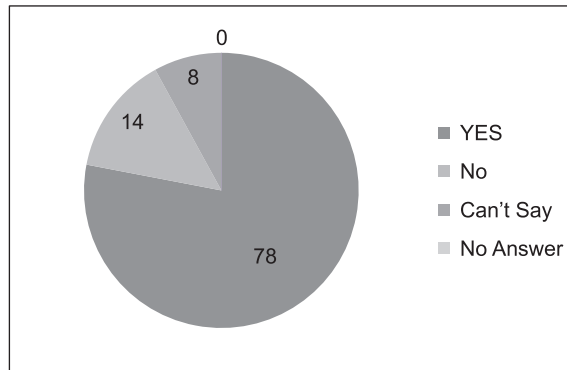


Figure 2.2: Innovative Thinking

As is evident from above, 76% respondents acknowledge degradation of qualities in the youth and as many as 78% said that today's youth lacks innovative thinking. All this is happening because emphasis in education institutions is on quantity and not quality. It is also resulting in lack of logical thinking as the minds are full of too many theoretical ideas and not practical. They do not think out of the box and tend to rationalize problems with in a set piece pattern only. The socio-economic changes have altered the intelligence level of the youth required to develop such qualities as it has become more virtual intelligence than practical intelligence. It has also helped candidates to gather lot of information but without understanding the background or the logic. This has resulted in youth reacting to situations in a haphazard manner without assigning any priorities and rationale.

Factor Social Adjustment: The officers in the armed forces are expected to own the quality of social awareness of their surroundings and should be able to be readily form part of any social group. They should cooperate in a group, adapt according to the social milieu at a given point and location and demonstrate sense of obligation towards society. To find whether the present day candidates possess this quality or not,

the officers were asked whether candidates become more individualistic and self-centered due to changing socio-economic conditions. The result is depicted in the pie chart below:-

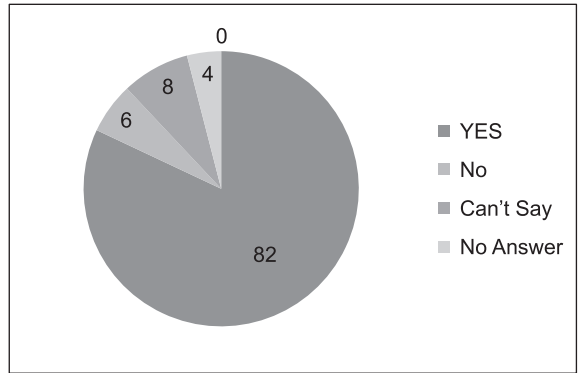


Figure 2.3: Individualistic and Self-Centred Attitude

Overwhelming majority, i.e. 82% respondents agree that youth today is becoming more individualistic, self-centered and selfish. It is happening since today's youth is confining him to the individualistic hobbies they like to prefer. Most of the youth likes to follow hobbies like watching TV, playing computer games, net- surfing, listening to music etc. which inhibits their growth. Such people remain aloof, do not mix-up with others, remain disengaged and do not accept social responsibility.

Factor Social Effectiveness: These are individual traits which the candidates are expected to express in a group. The armed forces officers should anticipate situations and take initiative to lead in a social group, take quick decisions, should be able to leave an impact on the group, be able to influence the group decision and still retain liveliness. He should inspire the group members and motivate them to face difficult situations. To develop this kind of behavior, the candidates must have self-confidence. The same set of officers was asked whether today's youth lacks the quality of self-confidence. The data is once again shown below in the form of a pie chart.

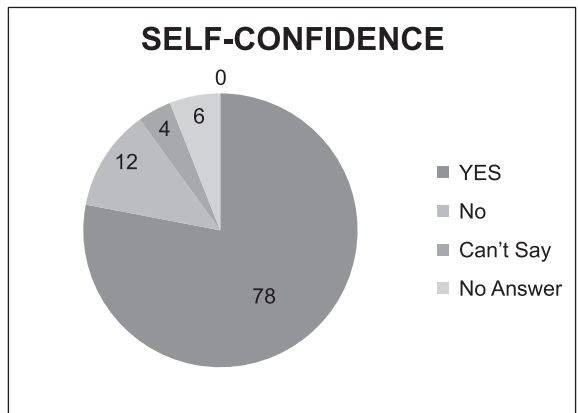


Figure 2.4: Self Confidence

Surprisingly, the chart reveals that 78% respondents find today's youth is lacking self-confidence. They show intolerance and lack of self-reliance. They become shy of taking decisions. They tend to take spontaneous decisions without any rationale and hence remain confused. They do have lot of information basically gathered from internet but do not have the practical experience of applying it to the problem. The

respondents were specifically asked about initiative content in the youth today and the result is as given below in the column chart.

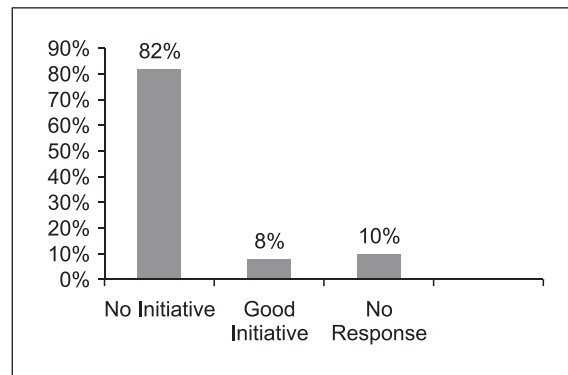


Figure 2.5: Initiative

As is apparent from above, 82% respondent officers approve that today’s youth lacks initiative. Thus, the result overwhelmingly supports the lack of self-confidence quality in the youth also as shown above in the column chart.

Factor Dynamic: It includes qualities like determination, courage and stamina. Officers of the armed forces should be physically and mentally fit to withstand any kind of pressure and still be able to deliver practical workable solution and also implement it with dogged determination. The officers were asked to grade whether the socio-economic conditions have a negative effect on the courage and stamina of the youth. The response of the officers to find out level of courage and stamina amongst the youth today is as shown in the pie chart below:

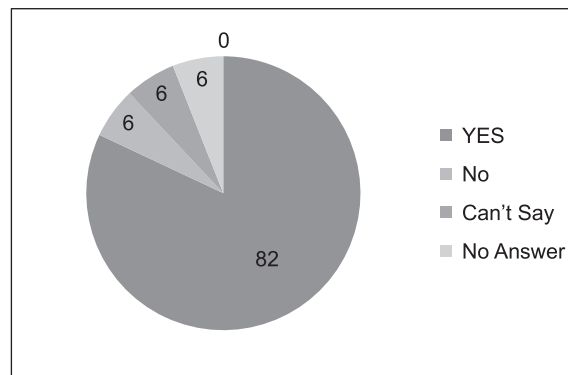


Figure 2.6: Courage and Stamina

As is evident from the analysis, 82% respondents agree that today’s youth lacks courage and stamina since their hobbies are restricted to watching games on net, net-surfing etc. They tend to avoid risks and remain inconsistent in their thoughts and behavior. They lack spirit of preservation and cannot withstand stress and strain. An attitude to carry on regardless of physical or mental tiredness to achieve the desired goal is missing. They tend to give up fast and get confused, cannot think logically and remain cool, calm and composed when faced with adverse situations. Personnel motivation level apparently is low.

5. CONCLUSION

The changes do occur in every society due to socio-economic variations, technological advancement and political situation in the country. The research here was limited to changes in the qualities of the youth due to socio-economic changes in the environment. The armed forces look for those candidates who either possess officer like qualities or have the potential to be trained during army training period and can achieve the desired level. Thus, the paper has been organized to study the impact of socio-economic changes on conditions of society, its impact on youth and then its further influence on the OLQs expected in the potential candidates.

It has been inferred from the analysis that lack of quality education is directly affecting the qualities in the youth. The candidates lack planning and organising ability as candidates lack quality education (76%) and innovative thinking (78%). In case of social adjustment, candidates are developing individualistic and self-centered attitude (82%). In the third factor, social effectiveness, it has been observed that candidates lack self-confidence (78%) and initiative (82%). And finally, 82% officers have agreed that candidates lack courage and stamina.

It has easily be deduced that socio-economic changes do impact the society and the minds of the youth. But most disturbing trend is that its impact on the OLQs is alarming. As is evident from the analysis, majority of officers agree that officer like qualities have declined considerably in the youth. Poor motivational level, lack of communication skills, gaining only theoretical knowledge, poor choice of hobbies and absence of social skills etc. are some of the habits today's youth is equipped with and it is having a negative effect on their qualities resulting in their rejection not only at the SSB level but other fields also. Perhaps, this is one of the major reasons for shortage of officers in the armed forces. The negative impact of these changes will not augur well for the society and the armed forces in particular.

References

- J.E. Adair (1973), Action-centred leadership. McGraw-Hill.
- S. Sood (2006), Leadership, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. SDS Publishers.
- S.Tzu (1963), The Art of War. Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. New York: Oxford University, 65.
- R.W. Thompson R.W.and Bailey M. (1993), "*The Qualities of an Officer*", e How Publishers, New-York.
- Ram N. (14 June, 2005), "*The Hindi*", National Newspaper.