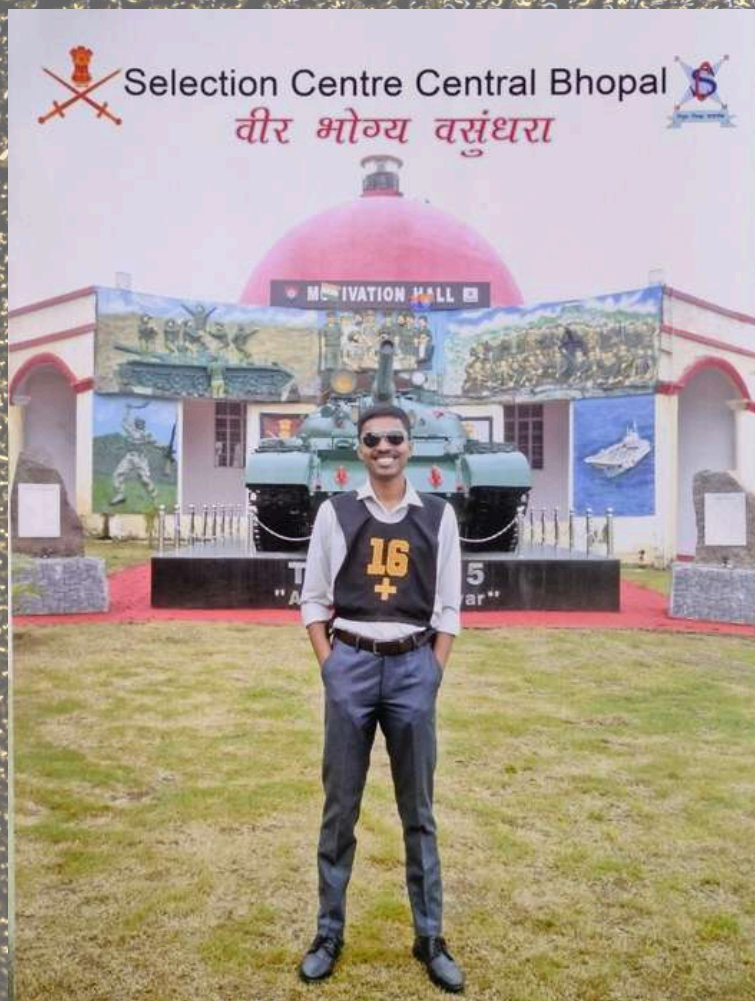


VALUES NETWORK E MAGAZINE



SSB: Delve. Develop. Deliver.
– Lt Col (Dr) KP Saggi (Retd)

**ANKIT
KUMAR SINHA**

Dus Sawaal: Beyond the
Battlefield – Sqn Ldr AK Panda
(Retd)

**AIR COMMODORE
ARABINDA**

**MOHANTY, VSM
(RETD)**



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BOOK REVIEW



"We create Big Value by being Together and adding Incremental Value Individually"

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S LETTER

Dear Readers

I am very sure that you all enjoying our every month's edition and what makes me say that is the increasing popularity amongst the readers and increasing contributors of the articles.

Find the E magazine on the LinkedIn page as well under the name of @Value Talks & Value Network E Magazine. Also in addition we have started a segment for our defence aspirants where in we shall put some light on their preparation bringing the Recommended Candidate's interview.

These endeavours are solely with the purpose of giving you all the required platform and for all to grow exponentially.

We would like to expand our horizons with many of you dignitaries giving out your view points on our current geopolitical scenario, the History's role in shaping today's India, our Defence standpoint.

We invite all our start-uppreneurs to come and use this platform to promote yourself.



You can share your feedbacks on the Whatsapp 70826 85295

This edition has plethora of insights on Travels, future roles of CISO and CSO, some nostalgic moments, some guidance on your transition moments and many on the mental health.

To all who have contributed to this edition — Col Rajvinder Singh, Jasbir Dhaliwal, Col Nandkishore (Retd), Wg Cdr Saxena (Retd), Lt Col Batra (Retd), Fizan Sharma, Sqn Ldr AK Panda (Retd) — your wisdom, time, and presence have given this issue its depth and heart. Your stories are the threads that strengthen the fabric of this network.

To our readers — thank you for walking alongside us. With every word you read and every reflection you carry forward, you become part of a movement that believes in building a better, truer way of living and leading.

With gratitude and conviction,

Editor-in-Chief

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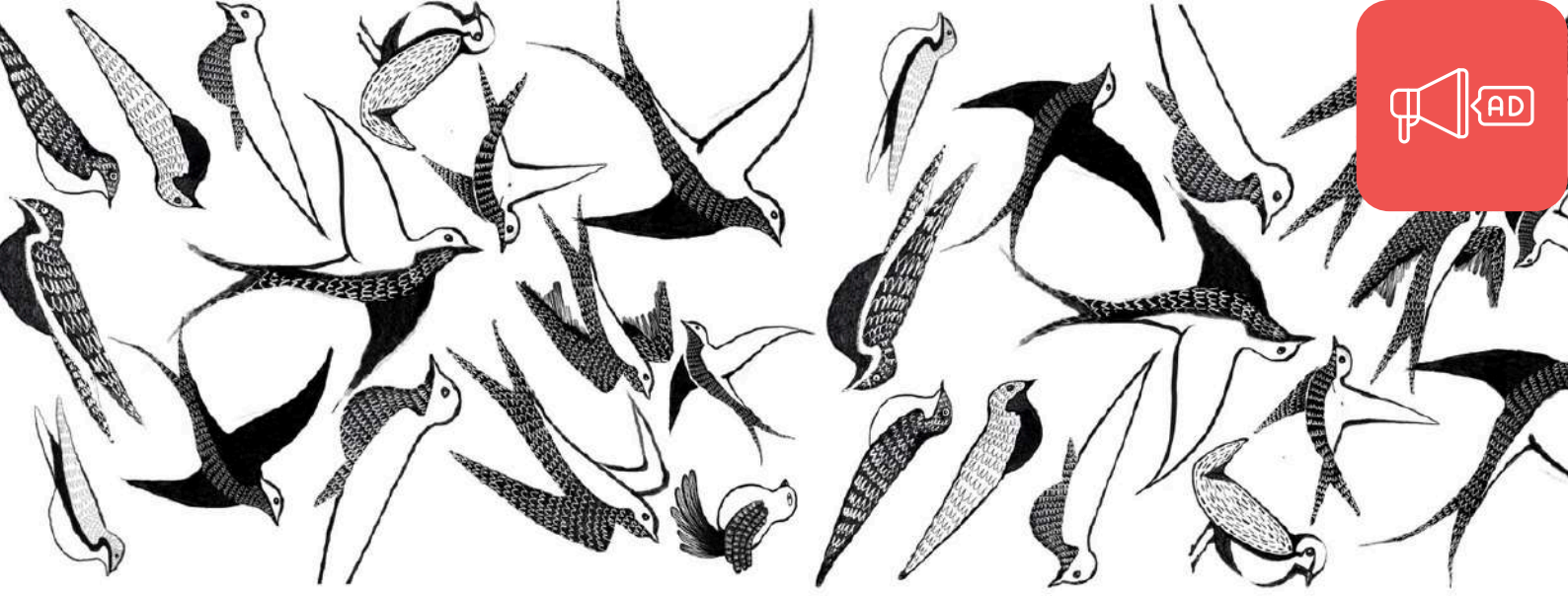


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**STAYING IN BIG TOWERS WITHOUT
PROPER DRAINAGE SYSTEM,
CREATED HAVOC DURING
MONSOONS.**

BY -
COLONEL RAJVINDER SINGH



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The Madlife ★★

CELEBRATION OF TOMORROW'S LEADERS - YOUR MISSION BEGINS HERE.

MADLife: Celebration of Tomorrow's Leaders

In this special section, we bring you the stories of grit, passion, and never-say-die spirit from aspirants who have cleared one of the toughest gateways of leadership — the SSB — and are now all set to march towards the Academy.

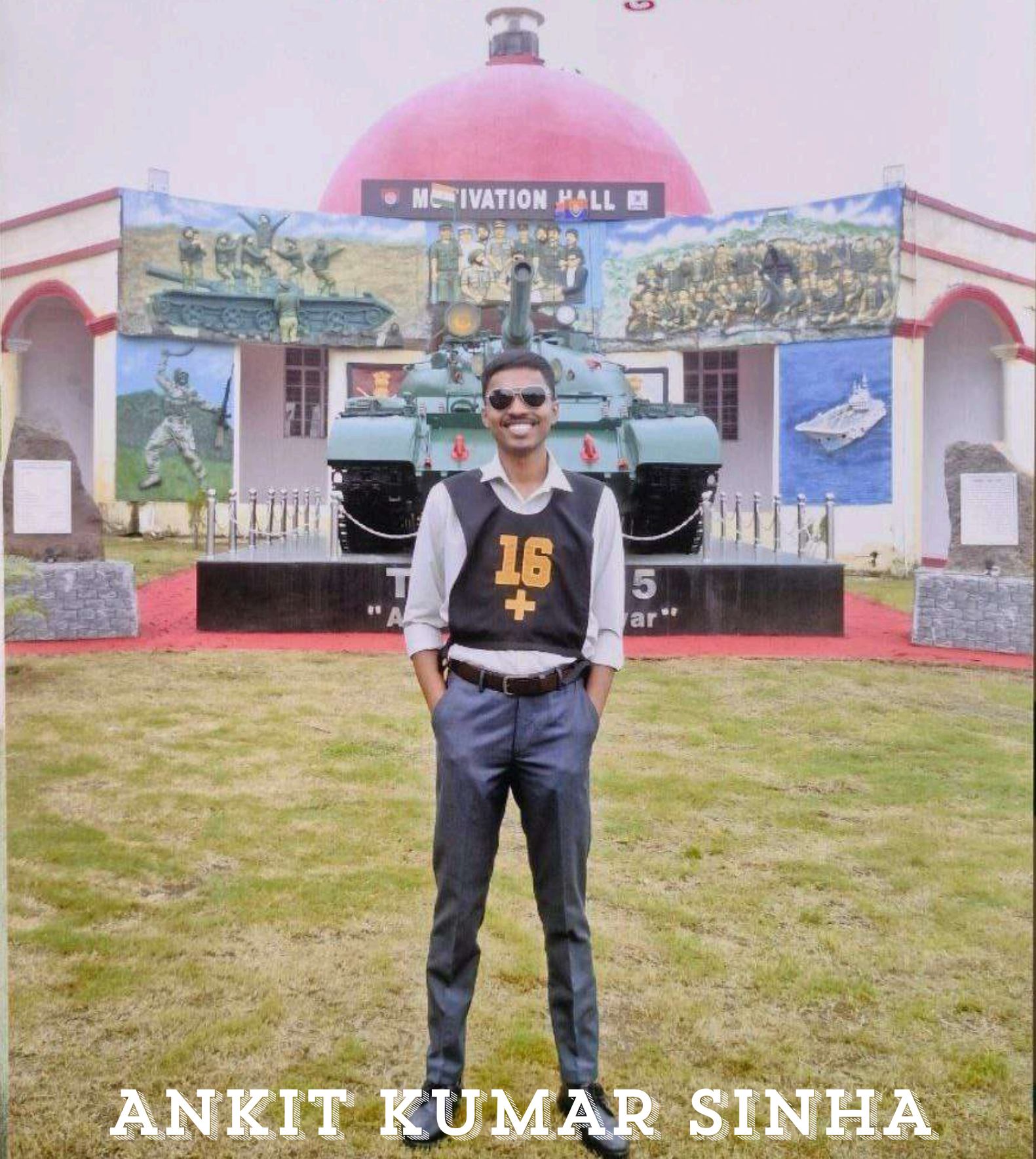
Every success here is not just about a recommendation letter; it is about resilience, courage under pressure, and the clarity of purpose that sets future leaders apart. These young men and women carry the Josh of the nation in their hearts, the determination of warriors in their minds, and the humility of true leaders in their actions.

Through their journeys, we will learn that clearing the SSB is not a stroke of luck but a triumph of preparation, self-belief, and relentless consistency. Their stories will remind us that leadership is forged in challenges, polished in failures, and proven in the moments when giving up was the easier option — but they chose to fight on.



Selection Centre Central Bhopal

वीर भोग्य वसुंधरा



ANKIT KUMAR SINHA

ALWAYS A WINNER



"We create Big Value by being Together and adding Incremental Value Individually"

SSB: DELVE. DEVELOP. DELIVER.

LtColKPS : What inspired you to join the Armed Forces?

AKS. My father served in the Indian Air Force for about 20 years as a technician on the MiG-21 (Type-96 variant). This inspired me deeply, and as I started learning and reading about armed forces I realised that this profession would be exciting.

LtColKPS : How many attempts did you take before getting recommended?

It took me a total of eight attempts before this one — five for AFCAT (2 C/O and 3 S/O), two for CDS (both C/O), and one for Navy SSC IT (S/O).

LtColKPS : What kept you motivated through rejections or failures, if any?

AKS. I believe my habit of journaling helped me immensely. After every SSB, I used to write in detail about everything that happened during those five days. This helped me identify my mistakes and create a plan for my next SSB. Fortunately, I cleared almost all the CDS and AFCAT written exams, so after every rejection, I always had another SSB lined up.

LtColKPS : How did your family and friends support you in this journey?

AKS. I strongly believe that without their support, it wouldn't have been possible. My parents and elder brother constantly motivated me. Two of my friends, Dipanshu and Hardik, also helped me a lot. We often connected over Google Meet to discuss TAT themes and current affairs, which helped me immensely.

PREPARATION STRATEGY

LtColKPS : How did you prepare for the written exam (NDA/CDS/AFCAT)?

AKS. I completed the syllabus using YouTube videos from well-known educators and analyzed past-year question papers to identify frequently asked topics. I attempted numerous mock tests to find my weak areas and focused on repeated revision for every subject.

LtColKPS : What was your daily routine like during preparation?

AKS. I used to wake up at 7:00 a.m. and go for a run. After returning, I studied for about two hours before leaving for the office. In the evening, I returned around 7:30 p.m., had dinner by 9:00 p.m., and then studied again for 2-3 hours. On weekends, I devoted almost the entire day to preparation.





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LtColKPS : Did you join any coaching/mentorship, or did you prepare on your own?

AKS. Yes. I was associated with Lt. Col. Kamalpreet Ma'am for psychology tests and took guidance from Lt. Cdr. Nikhil for GTO tasks. Both mentors helped me understand the purpose and approach of each test, which benefited me greatly.

LtColKPS : How did you prepare for psychology tests like TAT, WAT, SRT, and SD?

AKS : TAT: I practiced using publicly available pictures, brainstorming different themes relevant to each image. While writing, I ensured that every story had a proper background and logical flow. Initially, I used to include too many irrelevant issues, which weakened the story, so I began clearly defining the hero's objective and kept the story focused on it.

WAT: I realized that negative words troubled me the most, and I took longer to write sentences for them. So I started associating such words with positive social actions (e.g., Hijack – Educated voters can't be hijacked). Reading newspapers helped me understand word usage in different contexts. Practicing within the given time limit also trained me to think faster.

SRT: Since the test demands candidate to solve the primary issue and move forward, I started inculcating that in my responses. This helped me in attempting 55+ situations.

SD: I analysed opinions of people around me and what all I felt, this requires good amount of time to analyze everything and then I wrote my SD.

LtColKPS : What was your strategy for group tasks and GD?

AKS Since most GD topics are based on current affairs, I regularly read newspapers and focused on India's international relations, especially with neighboring countries. This helped me present well-informed points. I also made it a point to listen to others and build upon their points during the discussion.

LtColKPS : How did you work on improving your communication and body language?

AKS After reading an article each day, I used to record a short video explaining it in my own words. This 10-minute activity gave me valuable feedback. I realized that my tone often made me sound under-confident, so I consciously worked on improving it. I also watched Amy Cuddy's TED Talk on "Power Posing," which helped me stay confident during the testing phase.



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LtColKPS : How was your Day 1 screening experience (PPDT, OIR)?

AKS. OIR was quite easy, and I attempted all the questions as I had practiced well. In PPDT, the picture showed a boy and a girl discussing something in a cafeteria, so I built a story around hackathon participation. Most candidates had similar stories. During the discussion, I remained calm and contributed only meaningful points. When the group was divided by the assessors, I got more opportunities to add my ideas.



LtColKPS : What was the most challenging part of the psychological tests for you?

AKS. I think TAT was the most challenging because it requires a calm and composed mind to write a complete and logical story within four minutes — with a background, defined characters, clear actions, and an appropriate conclusion.

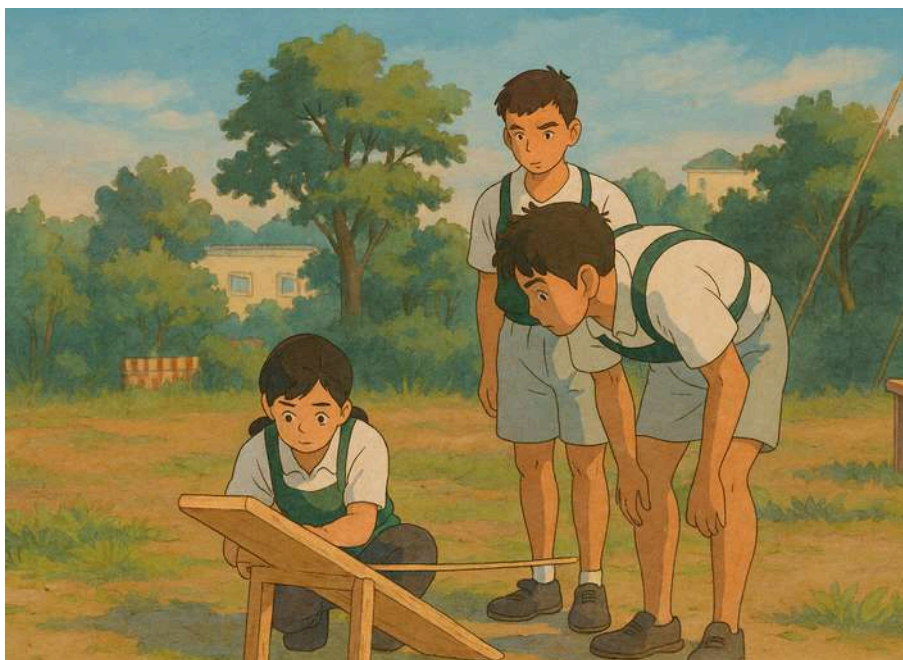
LtColKPS : How did you handle GTO tasks like snake race, command task, and lecturette?

AKS During GD, I always tried to raise the level of discussion through relevant points. For GPE, I focused on making rational decisions and prioritizing issues.

In PGT, HGT, and FGT, I helped the group with solutions and ensured I never damaged the structure while crossing it. During the Snake Race, I aimed to help my group win — assisting those struggling and motivating others by shouting the war cry.

In the Command Task, I first tried solving it myself and called subordinates only when required, giving clear and concise instructions to save time.

For the Lecturette, regular newspaper reading helped me.





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LtColKPS : How did you keep yourself calm and confident during the interview?

AKS. The interview mainly revolves around the PIQ, which includes questions about decisions taken in the past. I analyzed commonly asked questions and prepared accordingly. Since the interview is conversational, it's important to know what to share and what to avoid. Over-exaggerating in the PIQ can be counter-productive.

LtColKPS : Did you ever feel nervous at SSB, and how did you overcome it?

AKS. Yes. I reminded myself to focus only on the task at hand. I tend to get nervous when I think about past or upcoming tasks.

My simple mantra was: "Take one step at a time."

LtColKPS : What OLQs (Officer Like Qualities) do you think helped you the most?

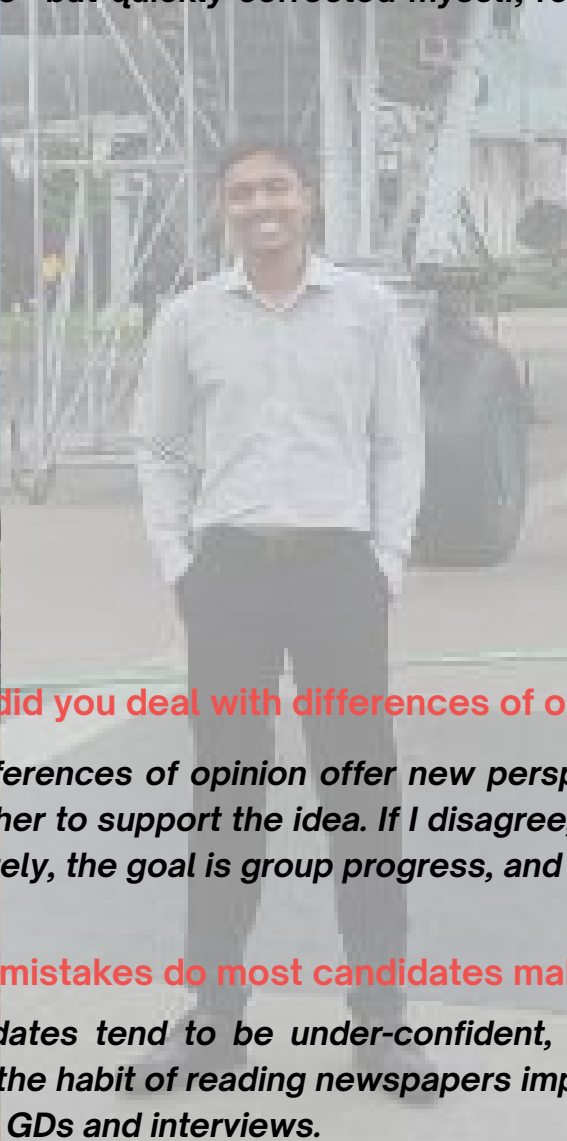
AKS. I believe liveliness helped me connect quickly with other candidates and create a positive environment. Effective intelligence also helped during the interview — for example, when the officer asked how depth is measured in submarines, I initially replied "using sonar waves" but quickly corrected myself, realizing that submarines operate in stealth mode.

LtColKPS : How did you deal with differences of opinion during group discussions?

AKS. I believe differences of opinion offer new perspectives. I first listen carefully and then decide whether to support the idea. If I disagree, I politely present my view backed with facts. Ultimately, the goal is group progress, and keeping that in mind helps me stay balanced.

LtColKPS : What mistakes do most candidates make at SSB, in your opinion?

AKS. Many candidates tend to be under-confident, which affects their performance. Also, not being in the habit of reading newspapers impacts their general awareness and confidence during GDs and interviews.





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LtColKPS : How important is natural behavior compared to “prepared” responses?

AKS. *Being natural is extremely important. When we rely on memorized answers that don't fit the given situation, it creates pressure and reduces authenticity — doing more harm than good.*

LtColKPS : What did you learn about yourself through the SSB process?

AKS. *I learned that I am a calm and cheerful person. I also realized I need to improve my non-verbal communication, as I take a bit of extra time to open up with strangers.*

LtColKPS : What is your success mantra for SSB aspirants?

AKS. *SSB is a holistic evaluation process; ready-made answers won't work. Analyze your past decisions and experiences — they are the best material for your responses. Also, focus equally on improving verbal and non-verbal communication.*

LtColKPS : If someone has faced multiple rejections, what should they focus on?

AKS. *Try to analyze where things are going wrong. If you can't identify it yourself, connect with your SSB batchmates and seek feedback. If you still face difficulties, consult a DIPR-trained SSB mentor — they are the best guides. Alongside, keep improving your physical fitness, communication skills, and awareness of current affairs.*

LtColKPS : How should aspirants balance studies, fitness, and personality development?

AKS. *Maintain a daily routine. Every Sunday, set weekly targets to track progress and manage time effectively. Dedicate at least 30 minutes daily to running or exercise. For personality development, stay updated on current affairs through newspapers and engage in meaningful interactions with people.*

LtColKPS : What's one myth about SSB you want to bust?

AKS. *If you allow me, I'd like to bust three myths:*

1. *“Your TAT stories must match your PIQ.” – Not true; write stories relevant to the picture shown.*
2. *“PGT is more important than GD.” – False; all tasks carry equal importance.*
3. *“If you can't answer all technical questions in the interview, you won't get recommended.” – Incorrect; answer honestly, and if you don't know, admit it confidently.*

LtColKPS : Finally, what advice would you give to those appearing for their first attempt?

AKS. *Avoid content from unverified sources — especially those not trained by DIPR. Be cautious with YouTube content, as some videos may be misleading. Focus on genuine preparation and self-reflection instead.*



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Rapid Fire Round

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- Screening or Conference – which was more nerve-wracking? : Screening
- Psych tests or GTO tasks – which did you enjoy more? : GTO tasks
- One OLQ you think is your strongest? : Social adaptability
- One OLQ you consciously worked on improving? : Self confidence
- Your favorite outdoor task at GTO? : Snake race
- PPDT or Lecturette – which was tougher for you? : PPDT
- One word your friends would use to describe you? : Determined
- Your go-to stress buster during SSB? : Having light hearted conversation with other candidates.
- If not the Armed Forces, what career would you have chosen? : Air traffic controller
- The most inspiring officer you met at SSB? : Lt Col Kamalpreet and Gp Capt AK Shrivastava
- One mistake you saw others making at SSB? : Having low self confidence
- One tip you'd give a fresher in just 5 words? Have faith in you capabilities.

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DUS SAWAAL: BEYOND THE BATTLEFIELD



FROM COMMAND TO COMPASSION:
LEADING THE MISSION FOR VISION

Interviewed and Compiled
By
Squadron Leader AK Panda (Retd)



"We create Big Value by being Together and adding Incremental Value Individually"



***Air Commodore Arabinda Mohanty,
VSM (Retd)***



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Dus Sawaal: Beyond the Battlefield, the flagship series of the Values Network eMagazine that showcases extraordinary Armed Forces veterans who continue to serve the nation long after their uniform is retired.

In this edition, we feature Air Commodore Arabinda Mohanty, VSM (Retd), a visionary leader whose second innings is transforming lives across Odisha through his pioneering work in community eye care. After three decades of distinguished service in the Indian Air Force, where he held key command and administrative positions, Air Cmde Mohanty chose a new battleground, the fight against preventable blindness.

From building Sankara Eye Hospital from scratch into a 200-bedded multi-speciality eye institution performing over 27,000 free surgeries between 2016 and 2022, to spearheading Kar Vision Eye Hospital and establishing the Odisha Eye Health Network uniting more than 100 eye care organizations, his journey reflects leadership with purpose.

On 15 August 2025, he was nominated as the President of the Air Force Association, Odisha, continuing his lifelong commitment to service, this time for veterans and communities alike.

ABOUT THE VETERAN

Air Commodore Arabinda Mohanty, VSM (Retd) is a distinguished veteran of the Indian Air Force, known for his visionary leadership, operational excellence, and compassionate service. During his illustrious 33-year career, he held critical appointments in logistics and administration, leading teams with discipline, integrity and a relentless commitment to mission success.

After retirement, he channelled his leadership experience into the healthcare sector, playing a pivotal role in the creation and growth of Sankara Eye Hospital, Odisha, transforming it into a leading multispeciality institution that has restored sight to thousands through free surgeries.

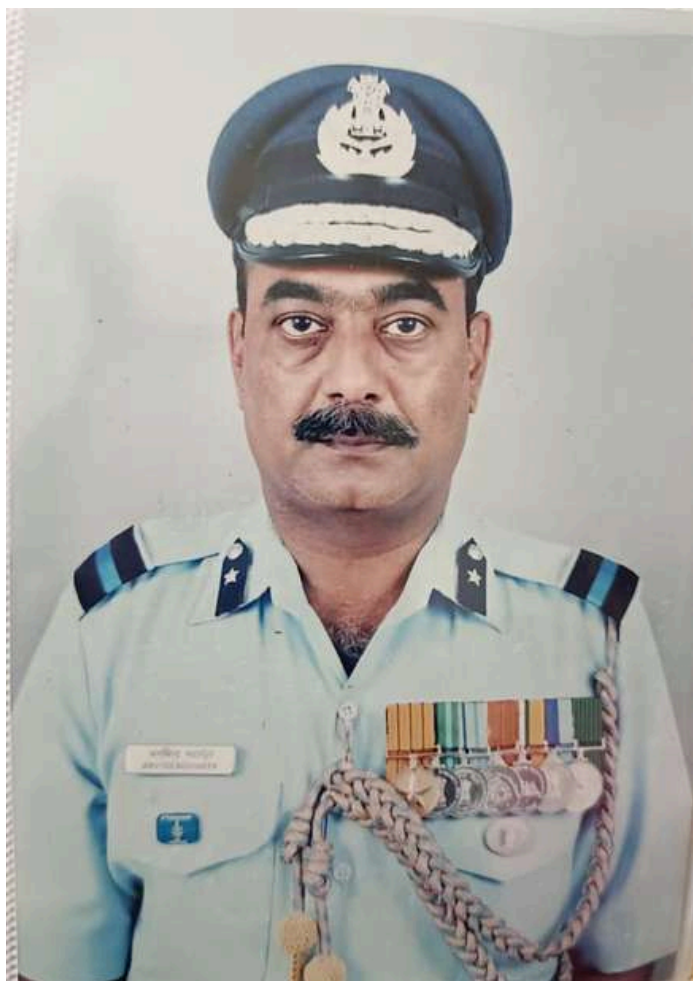
Since 2022, as part of Kar Vision Eye Hospital, he continues to drive innovation in patient care and outreach, while also serving as the Chairperson of the Odisha Eye Health Network, a unique alliance of over 100 organizations devoted to community eye health.

In recognition of his continued public service and contribution to veteran welfare, Air Cmde Mohanty was appointed President of the Air Force Association, Odisha Branch, on 15 August 2025. His journey stands as a shining example of leadership beyond uniform, where compassion meets command, and service finds new meaning.



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Let's explore ten questions that uncover his values, vision, and the mission that continues to define his flight beyond the skies.



Sqn Ldr AKP : From Airfields to Eye Care — After 33 years in the Indian Air Force, what inspired you to dedicate your post-service journey to community eye health and social impact?

Air Cmde AM.: Your first question from Air Fields to Eye care needs more clarifications from my side. On opening of Sainik School at Bhubaneswar in 1962, my curious father somehow was attracted to send me to the Armed Forces despite being the eldest son which then was unheard of in our society to send first child to the Armed forces. Years rolled by in discipline, enthusiastic environment of Sainik School where forgiveness, zeal, enthusiasm, to do something for yourself were ingrained

in our young minds which have stood the test of time so far. Frankly, had no clue what the Armed Forces were, what was in for me there. However, in the first attempt at 14 years of age cleared the UPSC exam for entering into NDA, the cradle of leadership wherein boys were turned to Men & importantly taught to lead from the front. 3 years of NDA followed by Air Force training left an indelible impression in my young mind to reach the highest & learn there was no prize for runners up in War. The first shock of life God had ordained for me wherein after my 6 months of flying training I was declared unfit to become a Pilot- there crashed the lifelong ambition of soaring high in the skies. The debacle while leaving long lasting trauma also taught me whatever happens maybe good for me, so reconciled to the idea & joined the logistics branch and successfully served in various challenging portfolios including the Kargil Operations and activation after the terrorist attack on our Parliament.

33 years passed by learning various lessons for life & the future and the most important lesson was "Pursuit of excellence was a reward in itself"!! At the climax of the career as an Air officer (1 Star) again the ego was crushed when Air Force refused the Promotion to 2 Star Rank giving me an option to opt out for a second career.



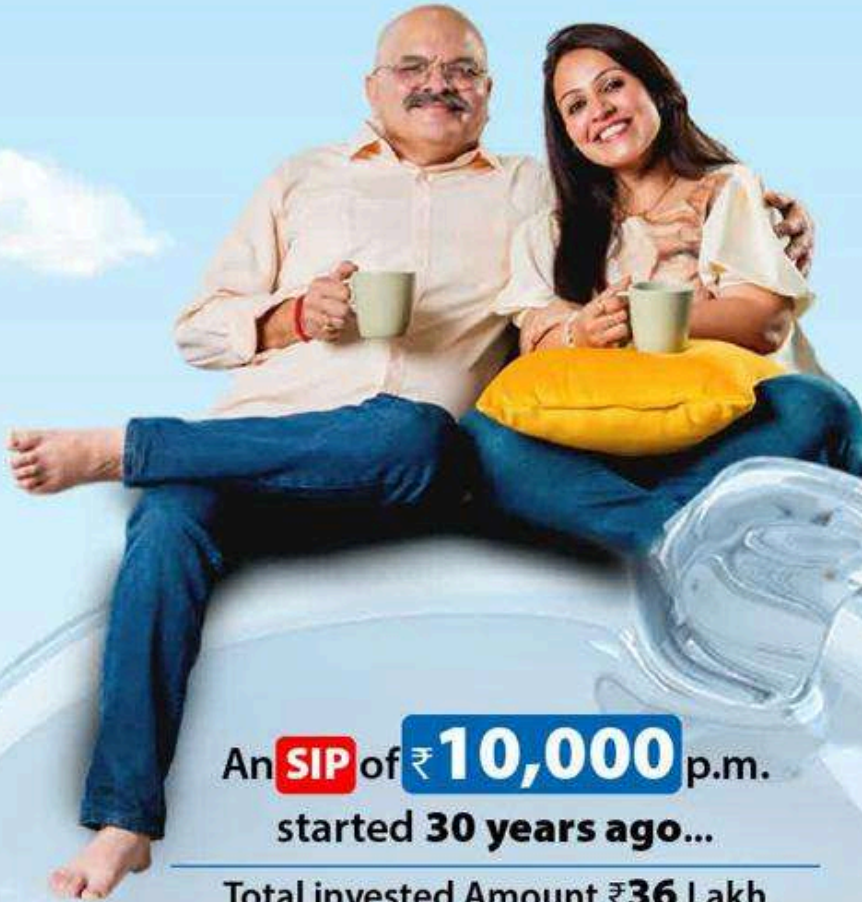
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Starting with in the Civil Streets required acceptance, perseverance & more specially to the hap-hazard style of working unlike services where Planning is done way ahead of D Day. Civil Life started with the unknown like when I embarked in to service environment and the first company which introduced to me to the material pleasures like vehicles, remuneration & palatial accommodation etc. The first assignment was trading in Paper, followed by heading an infrastructure company as the head of purchase department & then moved on to a company which was involved in Rural Electrification work wherein, I was solely responsible for providing succour to the down trodden in 3 districts of Odisha namely Puri, Gajapati & Ganjam. The job was hard but rewarding when we could provide electric connections to more than 28000 households under Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Yojna. Moving on to selling of transformers & then on moving onto hardships of Kargil wherein provided Turbine based power to villages under PPP mode. Another shock waited for me then- a bolt from the blue, I was invited by the Sankara Group of Chennai dealing with eyecare to build & run a multi discipline Eyecare Hospital in suburbs of Berhampur, precisely in Hijlicut hamlet. The only expertise to run the hospital I had was no knowledge of sickness & that I suppose was enough for me to operate without any baggage. Observing my predicament the Management of Sankara at an age of 62 years sent me to Aravind Eye Care Systems in Madurai for learning about Eyecare. No looking back from then 2015 was the year. Built the hospital from the first brick & inaugurated the Hospital in 13 months which was a 200 bedded Eye Hospital under the CSR scheme of TATAs. 07 fruitful years in Sankara, Samarjholia with more than 27000 free Eye surgeries. Further continued 07 years in Eye care in Sankara & was elected as President of Eye Health Network with more than 150 Eye care organizations joining in to work for quality & efficiency in Eye Care. Presently working with Kar Vision Eye Hospital, Bhubaneswar with special emphasis in providing Eye care to the down trodden. In one sentence the travel has been diverse and full of learning.

Sqn Ldr AKP : Building from Scratch — You helped establish the Sankara Eye Hospital from the ground up into a 200-bedded multi-specialty eye hospital that performed over 27,000 free surgeries. What leadership lessons did this mission teach you?

Air Cmde AM. Sankara Eye Hospital was a virgin land in absolute rural settings where the population had hardly seen a General Practitioner, forget an Ophthalmologist. The Hospital mandated free treatment to the down trodden which meant 70% of the patients & the Hospital revenue was from the 30% patients who could pay. A tall order but we succeeded by following a dictum of no cutting corners & clear Mission & vision statements and following them to the hilt. Also, nothing is impossible when one has fixed its goals and wants to achieve that honestly.

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Sqn Ldr AKP : Mission with Vision — What were the biggest challenges you faced while taking Sankara Eye Hospital from concept to one of Odisha's leading centres for community eye care?



Air Cmde AM. The biggest challenge people had to be moved from their homes to the Hospital which they had never visited so we got into a pattern of reaching their door steps by inducting Men & Women from their villages to educate them by preaching "Miracles cannot cure blindness but together we can". Regular camps were conducted by sending Optometrist & Ophthalmologist who examine population at site & people requiring surgery were transported in our vehicles to the tertiary Hospitals and after carrying out further tests conducting surgeries all free of cost alongwith providing food & accommodation. The Patient after surgery were transported back to their villages the next day after their surgeries. These camps were regularly carried out in all the -30- blocks of Ganjam District and peripheral Gajapati, Nayagarh & Khorda districts. The Hospital also created 08 vision care centres in Ganjam district & the patient could come there for initial scrutiny and medicines as well as spectacles were provided to them there. Patients requiring tertiary care were shifted to the Hospital and taken care off. Many of these vision centres provided expertise once in a week to BPL category free of cost.



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Sqn Ldr AKP : Kar Vision & Beyond — After joining Kar Vision Eye Hospital in 2022, what new goals did you set for advancing quality and accessibility in ophthalmic services across Odisha?

Air Cmde AM. Kar Vision Eyecare was a different ball game where Elite & Town Folk visited them. The concept of opening up the Hospital to down trodden was introduced to my good fortune the management was magnanimous enough to accept the same. To proliferate our footprint in the villages surrounding were touched through Eye screening camps for which a fully modernized latest equipment onboard was bought and used which saw surgeries to the tune of 200+ for the down trodden from single figure surgeries from before. A school was opened to teach Optometrist in certification courses at very nominal charges. The Hospital now boasts of approval of community Eyecare by the National Board for accreditation for Hospitals (NABH).

Sqn Ldr AKP : Odisha Eye Health Network — As Chairperson, you built a network of over 100 eye care organizations. How did you manage to unite so many institutions under one vision for public health?



Air Cmde AM. There was a time when the UNO mandated stringent fight against reduction in unwanted blindness in the country. The Govt of India & the State Govts opened up various schemes in Eyecare to fight this menace. These schemes added revenue to Eyecare Units which hitherto to was not available. This had a negative fallout; it encouraged fly by night operators and many Eye



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care units mushroomed overnight to take advantage of these Govt. schemes and the quality suffered. At this juncture, right thinking organizations like Vision 2020 & Sight Savers India appealed to the Eye care units who were like minded to battle against this menace. 06 Hospitals namely Kar Eye Vision, Bhubaneswar, JPM Rotary, Cuttack, CARE Hospital, Bhubaneswar, Kalinga Eye Hospital, Dhenkanal, Mahatma Gandhi Eye Hospital & Research Institute (MGEHRI), Rangamatia, Mayurbhanj & LEPRASociety Eye Hospital, Subarnapur formed the core group to take the lead & I was nominated for Kar Eye Hospital to head the core committee. The core committee right earnestly worked to advertise the aims & more than 100 Hospitals joined the cause to improve quality in Eye care. Every year CMEs are being organized for all willing Hospitals to relentlessly fight unwanted blindness while not compromising quality.

Sqn Ldr AKP : From Command to Collaboration — How has your military experience in logistics, leadership and administration helped you navigate the complex challenges of healthcare management?

Air Cmde AM. Military leadership has a very clear mandate to lead from the front for eg. In case there is a meeting the organised in the open & there is sunshine then the leader is expected to be suffering in the sunshine and allow its members to be in shade. The other aspect of military leadership is clarity, brevity, camaraderie and facing the challenge upfront till you achieve the goal. You know there is no price for runners up in War so all your activity must be directed towards that. In civil life one major aspect is Return on Investment (ROI) which obviously is one of the main considerations. The planning and SOPs of the Military are very accurately written and are very difficult to alter. In the Civil set up the situation is volatile and market oriented therefore the leader has to have intuitive eye to catch up to the situation otherwise he will not be able to survive. The example of Mobiles is very valid with their advent many other industries in photography just went out of market.

Sqn Ldr AKP : Sustainability in Service — Community eye care often depends on donations and outreach programs. What strategies have you used to ensure long-term sustainability and impact?

Air Cmde AM. While Eyecare has challenges but a clear-thinking leader with aim to achieve the Goal will definitely succeed. Yes, one of the help the community Eye care receives is from like-minded organization & philanthropic individuals but the leader has to ensure the self-sustainability of the Hospital minus donations by keeping a close watch on manpower, multi-tasking & building up efficiency amongst all the staff & consultants. It is possible to sustain an organization by providing 70% needy population with minimal cost to them and ensuring sustenance by the revenue received from affordable 30%.



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Sqn Ldr AKP : Recognition & Responsibility — Being nominated as the President of AFA Odisha on 15 August 2025 is another milestone. What priorities have you set for the association and the welfare of veterans?

Air Cmde AM. Nomination as President of AFA, Odisha on 15th August 2025 has reposed a trust which I have to fulfil at any cost. The first in my Agenda is to disseminate the purpose of the organization, secondly to build up such volunteers who are ready to give their time without only looking for accolades, thirdly to rewrite the By-laws & SOPs to bring in clarity of duties & responsibilities of each one. Periodical get-togethers at the State level & at the 16 chapters level to be organised meaningfully. One target set for one chapter is to bring in transparency what they are doing by planning the events well ahead so that adhocism is avoided. Another important aspect which has been drilled into the functionaries is to maintain the accounts meticulously by following financial canons.

Sqn Ldr AKP : Vision for Odisha — What is your dream for Odisha's eye health ecosystem and how do you see technology, training and teamwork playing a role in eliminating preventable blindness?

Air Cmde AM. Eye health in Odisha is far behind States like Tamil Nadu & Gujarat. Not that we don't have adequate facilities but the cohesiveness is lacking while individually all are striving for excellence but the same is not showing collectively. Advocacy, Training, Teamwork, Multi skilling approach & bringing in selfless workers may help us to move forward in eliminating unwanted blindness as stated earlier together we can.



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Sqn Ldr AKP : Beyond the Uniform — Looking back, what message would you like to give to today's officers and professionals about redefining service beyond the boundaries of the uniform?

Air Cmde AM. I wore Uniform as a 9 years old child and continued to don the Uniform till 2007 i.e 45 years making it half of one's life. The discipline, camaraderie, loyalty, unflinching integrity & pride in Uniform gives us a different outlook in the Civil World. We with our multi discipline ability can take up assignments beyond uniform as long as you have selected a correct assignment. To be successful I would like to tell such aspiring service personnel to follow a small dictum "Do what you like".

Conclusion

Air Commodore Arabinda Mohanty's story beautifully redefines what it means to serve the nation. From commanding operations in the Indian Air Force to leading the fight against avoidable blindness, he exemplifies a rare blend of precision, purpose and philanthropy.

His leadership philosophy, rooted in discipline, empathy and vision continues to uplift communities and inspire professionals across sectors. Whether building institutions, mentoring leaders, or connecting veteran organizations, he demonstrates that service, when driven by values, has no retirement.

Email: arvind13414@gmail.com

Contact: +91 99585 93331

Stay tuned as Values Network eMagazine continues its Dus Sawaal: Beyond the Battlefield series, bringing you inspiring stories of veterans who lead, serve and transform, long after the uniform is folded.



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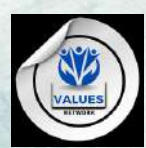


"We create Big Value by being Together and adding Incremental Value Individually"

MADRID



Col Nandakishore Kulkarni (Retd)



"We create Big Value by being Together and adding Incremental Value Individually"

Col Kulkarni, who served for more than 30 years in Indian Armed forces, now lives a happy life at Pune and is reachable at +91 8902403198. He is an Expert in the field of, General Administration, Leadership, Liaison/Coordination, HR Management, Process Modification, Operation & Maintenance, Relationship Management, Safety & Security. Till 2019, he gained and then spread his expertise as Operations Director Dairy Farm and after that till 2021 Director, Bhartiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF), Pune. He has been felicitated with Awards :

- 1995 - Chief of Army Staff Commendation for distinguished service.
- 2004 - General Officer Commanding in Chief Commendation, Central Command
- 2015 - General Officer Commanding in Chief Commendation, Eastern Command
- 1987 - Citation by Zilla Parishad Sindhudurg for distinguished Service
- 1983 - Barrister Gundu Dashrath Patil award for academic excellence in Animal Science & Dairy Science subject during BSc(Agri)



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MADRID MEMOIRS: JOURNEY THROUGH SPAIN'S BEATING HEART

Barceloneta Beach – A Farewell to Barcelona

Before bidding farewell to Barcelona, we spent some quiet moments at Barceloneta Beach. With its golden sands, sparkling waters, and lively promenade lined with cafés and restaurants, the beach was the perfect place to unwind. The relaxed atmosphere offered a gentle contrast to the bustling city, and it felt like a fitting pause before we moved on to our next destination—Madrid.

Arrival in the Capital

After two delightful days in Barcelona, we boarded a scenic three-hour rail journey to Madrid. The passing landscapes of the Iberian countryside set the stage for our arrival in Spain's vibrant capital—a city at the geographical heart of the peninsula, brimming with history, culture, and energy.

Upon checking into our hotel and taking some rest, we wandered into the central district. The wide boulevards, lively markets, and graceful blend of medieval and modern architecture were captivating. A highlight was encountering Madrid's emblem—the statue of the Bear reaching for fruit on the Strawberry Tree—a symbol cherished by locals. Dinner at an Indian restaurant brought a comforting close to our first evening in the city.

Morning in El Retiro Park

The following day began with a hearty breakfast before we set out to explore El Retiro Park, Madrid's 125-hectare green oasis. With over 15,000 trees, the UNESCO World Heritage Site offers respite in the heart of the bustling capital. Rowing boats

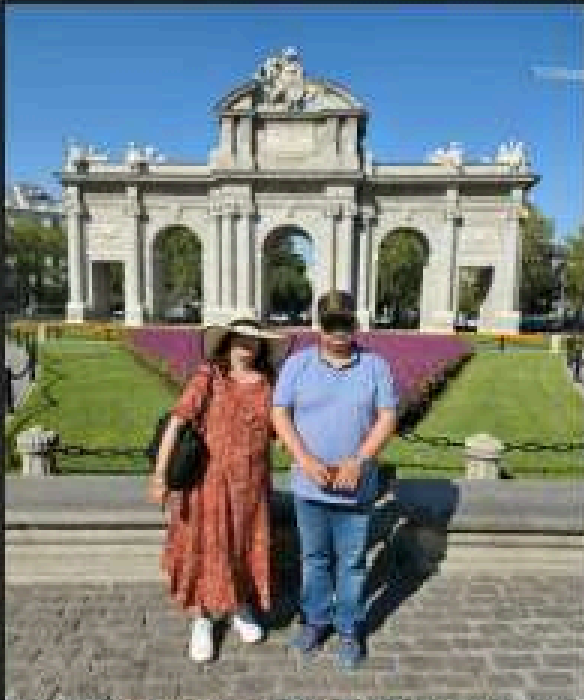




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glided across its artificial lake, while the majestic Monument to Alfonso XII stood watch. From its observation deck, open since 2018, breathtaking vistas stretched across the city.

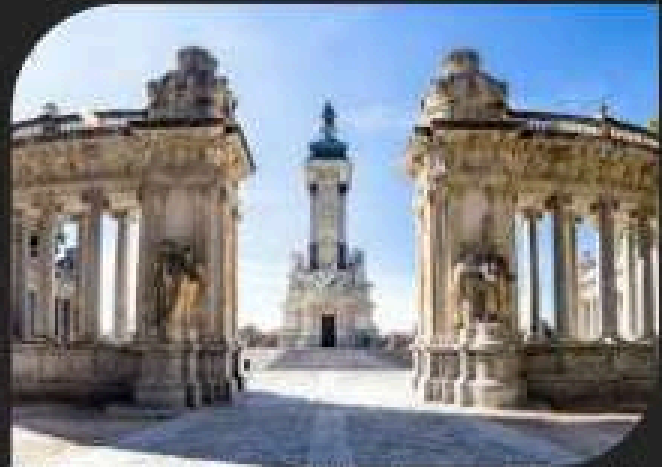
Not far away, the neoclassical Alcalá Gate at Independence Square welcomed us with its grandeur. Seasonal blossoms in the surrounding gardens made the view picture-perfect.



Puerta de Alcalá — Madrid's iconic gateway amidst a riot of colour

Royal Grandeur

No visit to Madrid is complete without experiencing the splendour of the Royal Palace. Built in the 18th century, it is the largest palace in Western Europe, spanning 135,000 square metres and boasting over 3,400 rooms. Once a royal residence, it now serves as a ceremonial and cultural landmark. Inside, opulent halls adorned with intricate ceilings, masterpieces of art, and exquisite craftsmanship spoke of Spain's rich legacy.



Monument to Alfonso XII — elegance mirrored in the tranquil waters of El Retiro Park



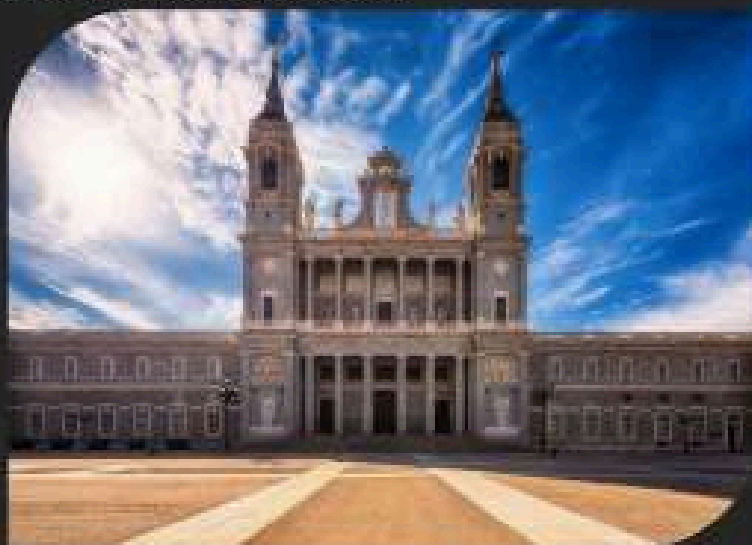
The magnificent Royal Palace of Madrid — grandeur at every step.



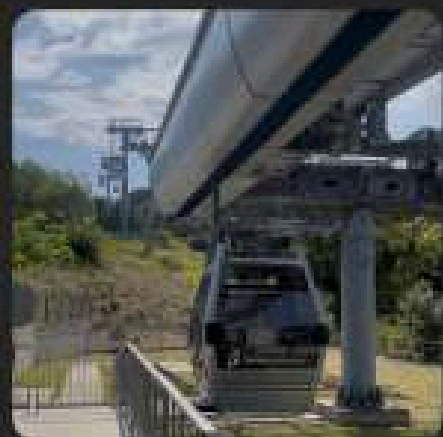
The royal crown on display – a glittering symbol of Spain's regal history; Lavish interiors, gilded ceilings & exquisite artwork reflecting centuries of Spanish legacy.

Spiritual Madrid: Almudena Cathedral

Directly facing the palace stands the Almudena Cathedral, a striking counterpart. Its neoclassical façade harmonises with the grandeur opposite, while its interior reflects a blend of Gothic revival and Byzantine inspiration. The soaring nave, colourful murals, and the Neo-Romanesque crypt with over 400 uniquely carved columns made a lasting impression. The dome, offering panoramic views of the capital, crowned our visit.



Almudena Cathedral – a majestic blend of neoclassical and Gothic revival splendour facing the Royal Palace



Madrid Gondola ride



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Panoramic Madrid from the Gondola

Among the highlights of our trip was a marvellous ride on the Madrid gondola. Stretching over 2,000 metres, it links the Parque del Oeste with the Casa de Campo. The 20-minute journey offered sweeping glimpses of the city's skyline, including the Royal Palace and the vast urban sprawl beyond. It was fun, exhilarating, and perhaps the most enjoyable experience of our stay in Madrid. The ride even reminded us of the gondolas at Gulmarg and the ropeway at Girnar back in India—familiar yet uniquely enchanting in this Spanish setting.

Art at the Prado

Art lovers find their paradise in the Prado National Museum. Founded in 1819, it houses masterpieces from the 12th to early 20th centuries, with a special focus on Spanish masters like Velázquez and Goya. Wandering its vast galleries was like stepping through centuries of European art history.

A Quiet Evening and Reflections

Though Madrid is famous for its vibrant nightlife, we opted for a quiet evening, saving our energy for the next leg of our journey—to Sintra, Portugal, for our son's wedding.

Our Spanish sojourn drew to a close with a sense of fulfilment. While time did not permit us to see everything, the grandeur of the Royal Palace, the serenity of Retiro, the spiritual aura of Almudena, the thrill of the gondola ride, and the artistic treasures of the Prado etched indelible memories. Madrid, with its warmth and vibrancy, truly captured our hearts.



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Commander Ram, a former Indian Navy Submarine branch officer with 22+ years of service, transitioned to corporate consulting. Leading world bank-funded IT/E-Governance projects and skill development initiatives for over 5 years, he now serves as a freelance coach and mentor. For the past 2+ years, he has dedicated himself to assisting transitioning veterans in resume crafting, LinkedIn optimisation, interview preparation, networking, and job search. Passionate about his mission to support 10K transitioning veterans, he has already impacted 1000+ members through talks and pro-bono workshops, mentoring 120+ veterans personally.



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"I can just use ChatGPT or any other GPT tool and get the best resume within minutes."

I hear this often during my mentoring sessions with transitioning veterans. And honestly, there's nothing wrong with that thought. In fact, I encourage veterans to use AI tools to simplify their transition journey.

But here's the truth – tools can assist, not replace, your personal touch.

When I transitioned from the Navy to the corporate world nine years ago, the biggest challenge I faced wasn't writing about my responsibilities – it was translating my story.

I had led teams, managed crises, and delivered under pressure, but I struggled to present those experiences in a language that resonated with hiring managers.

Today, with the help of AI tools like ChatGPT, that translation process has become easier. But here's the catch – if you use the **same** prompts as everyone else, you'll get the **same generic output**.

As one of my favourite quotes says,

"Technology is a great servant but a poor master." – Christian Lous Lange

AI can help you organize your thoughts, structure your achievements, and even polish your language. But it cannot capture your individuality – your leadership style, your moments of resilience, your motivations, and your future aspirations.

That's where you come in.



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I tell veterans I mentor to look at the resume-building process as a partnership between three elements:

Your Raw Experience + GPT + Personalization = A Winning Resume.

Here's how you can make it work:

1. Start with your own draft.

Write your achievements in simple words. Don't worry about grammar or formatting. Focus on facts — what you did, how you did it, and what changed because of your efforts.

2. Use GPT as your co-pilot.

Ask it to reframe your experience in corporate terms or tailor it for a specific job role. Use it to get ideas for structure, keywords, or phrasing.

3. Add your personal essence.

Go back and review the AI-generated output. Replace generic phrases with your real experiences, numbers, and leadership nuances.

AI may say, "Led a team to achieve objectives," but you might say, "Led a 50-member team to restore communication systems during a critical naval operation."

That's what makes your resume stand out - not the tool, but your authenticity.

Over the last four years, I've mentored 150+ veterans and interacted with over 1,500. Many started with AI-generated resumes. But the ones who succeeded didn't stop there.

They refined, tailored, and aligned every line to the role they were targeting - and the results showed.

Remember,

- Your resume isn't just a document - it's your story on paper.
- Use technology to speed up the process, but never outsource your story.
- Because when you combine your lived experience with the precision of AI, you don't just create a resume - you craft your narrative.

And that narrative is what opens doors.



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From Uniform to Corporate

Your Next Mission Begins

I have Walked the Path

- 22 years in the Navy's Submarine Arm
- 5+ years in corporate career leading IT & e-Governance projects.
- 3+ years in Coaching & Mentoring



How I Can Help You Win

- Translate military experience into a corporate-ready, results-driven resume
- Build a LinkedIn profile that gets noticed by the right people
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- 1,500+ reached through talks & workshops

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Mission: Corporate Landing for Other Ranks from the Military



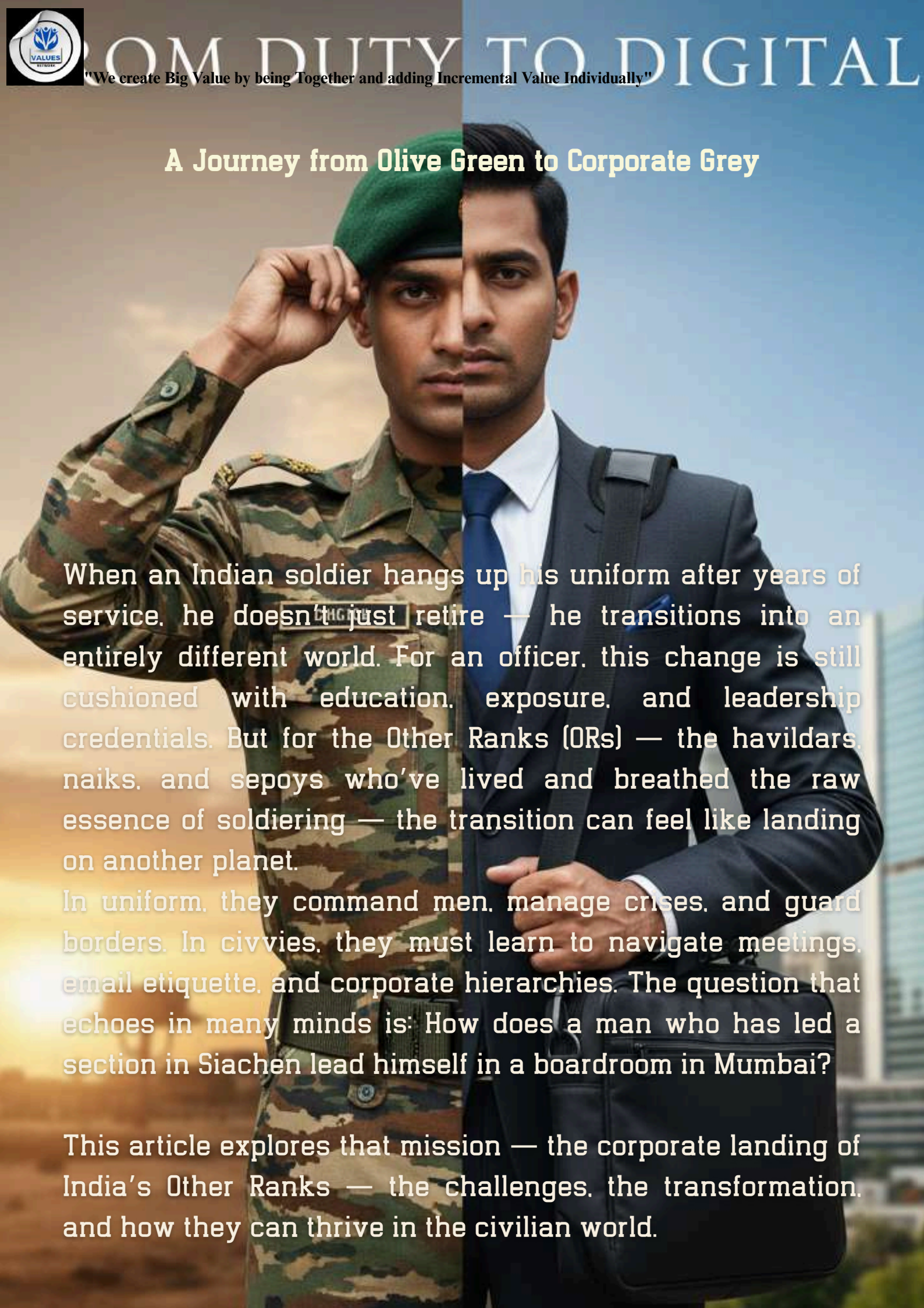
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FROM DUTY TO DIGITAL

A Journey from Olive Green to Corporate Grey



When an Indian soldier hangs up his uniform after years of service, he doesn't just retire — he transitions into an entirely different world. For an officer, this change is still cushioned with education, exposure, and leadership credentials. But for the Other Ranks (ORs) — the havildars, naiks, and sepoy who've lived and breathed the raw essence of soldiering — the transition can feel like landing on another planet.

In uniform, they command men, manage crises, and guard borders. In civvies, they must learn to navigate meetings, email etiquette, and corporate hierarchies. The question that echoes in many minds is: How does a man who has led a section in Siachen lead himself in a boardroom in Mumbai?

This article explores that mission — the corporate landing of India's Other Ranks — the challenges, the transformation, and how they can thrive in the civilian world.



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The Reality Check: Challenges After Service

When soldiers leave the forces, they often face three types of challenges — emotional, professional, and social.



1. **Identity Crisis** : For years, their uniform defines who they are. The day it comes off, many feel stripped not just of rank but of identity. The salute, the respect, the belonging — everything fades. In a corporate setting, nobody cares about the medals you earned or the snow you stood guard in. The soldier must now prove himself all over again.

2. Skill Translation Gap

Ask any OR to handle logistics, discipline, or security, and he'll deliver flawlessly. But how do those skills translate into a PowerPoint presentation or an Excel report? Many veterans struggle to translate military experience into corporate language. A havildar who managed 100 men and equipment worth crores doesn't realise that's called "operations management" or "asset control" in the corporate world.



3. Communication & Cultural Shock

The military speaks in orders and clarity; corporates' speak in discussions and diplomacy. In the Army, "**Yes Sir**" is standard; in corporate, "**I suggest**" or "**Let's align**" replaces it.

The tone, pace, and structure of communication change drastically — and adapting takes time.



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4. Qualification Barrier

Many ORs joined the forces right after school. When they re-enter civilian life in their 30s or 40s, they find the job market ruled by degrees and diplomas. Even though they possess unmatched discipline and commitment, HR filters often reject them for not fitting a checkbox.



5. Emotional Disconnect

In the Army, your team becomes your family. You eat, fight, and celebrate together. The corporate world, however, is driven by performance metrics and personal growth. For many ORs, this shift feels lonely and transactional.

From Battlefield to Boardroom: Finding the Path

The transition from a soldier to a corporate professional isn't easy, but it's far from impossible. Thousands of veterans are already proving that their foundation of integrity, discipline, and commitment can shine in any industry — from manufacturing and logistics to security and administration.

Here's how they can make the shift smoother and more successful.



1. Start with Self-Assessment

Every soldier has a strength. For one, it might be *leadership*; for another, *mechanical skills*; for a third, *logistics* or *security*. The first step after service is to honestly assess what one is naturally good at — not in Army terms, but in civilian terms.

For instance:

- A Company Quartermaster Havildar (CQMH) has strong inventory management experience.
- A Radio Operator understands communication systems and coordination.
- A Cook or Mess NCO knows supply chain and kitchen operations.

Translating these experiences into corporate terms is half the battle won.



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2. Upskilling Is the New Weapon

In the Army, you train before every operation. The same applies to the corporate world. Online and government platforms now offer several reskilling opportunities for veterans:

- **Directorate General Resettlement (DGR)** courses on facility management, industrial security, and fire safety.
- **NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation)** tie-ups for logistics, project management, and IT.
- **Online certifications** through Coursera, Udemy, and Skill India — covering topics like Excel, communication, and management basics.

A three-month effort to learn business communication or computer literacy can open many doors. Upskilling doesn't mean studying for degrees — it means adapting your skills to a new environment.

3. Start in Familiar Terrain

Many successful ex-servicemen start in security management, facilities, logistics, or administration — areas that naturally align with military life.

These roles allow them to use existing strengths while learning the corporate culture. Once comfortable, they can climb into higher administrative or operations roles.

A former Naib Subedar managing site security at an MNC once said,

"I started with guarding the gate. Now I manage the entire facility. The difference was mindset — I kept learning instead of complaining."

That's the spirit that makes the mission successful.

4. Learn the Language of the Corporate World

In the Army, results matter; in the corporate world, how you present them matters too. Many ORs are naturally good leaders, but their message gets lost in translation.

Simple steps like learning email etiquette, corporate dressing, and meeting manners can go a long way.

Practical tips:

- Avoid "Yes Sir" and use "Sure, I'll take care of it."
- Replace "Command given" with "Task assigned."
- Learn to express opinions politely — "I recommend" or "We can consider this."

These small adjustments help break the communication wall that often holds veterans back.



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5. Build a Network

- In the military, your posting decides your circle. In the corporate world, your network builds your opportunities.
- LinkedIn is today's parade ground for professionals. Creating a strong profile, connecting with other veterans, and joining veteran groups can help in finding job leads and guidance.
- Many retired JCOs and ORs are willing to mentor others. A single conversation can sometimes change the direction of a career.

6. Adapt the Mindset. Not the Values



- Corporate life runs on hierarchy, deadlines, and targets — just like the Army, but with softer commands. The key is to adapt without losing military values.
- Discipline, punctuality, and integrity are rare qualities in the corporate world. These are assets, not liabilities.
- A soldier who can wake up at 5 AM in Siachen can surely handle a 9 AM meeting. The mission is to keep the same spirit — but channel it through modern tools.

7. Patience Is the New Courage

- Many ORs expect immediate recognition, as they're used to respect coming automatically in uniform. But in the corporate world, you earn it slowly.
- There will be moments of frustration — a younger manager giving orders, a peer with less life experience getting promoted. The key is patience.
- Remember, the corporate world values results over rank.
- And with time, a veteran's reliability, honesty, and commitment naturally stand out.

8. Success Stories to Inspire

- Ex-Havildar S. Sharma, once managing a platoon in Assam Rifles, now heads admin operations at a large real estate firm. He says, "*In Army, I learned how to get work done without excuses. In corporate, I learned how to explain it.*"
- Naik G. Singh, after 18 years of service, joined as a security supervisor in Pune. Within five years, he became Assistant Manager. His secret? "I treated every new skill like a new weapon course."

These men prove that rank may retire, but leadership never does.



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9. Role of Corporates and Government

- The government has started various initiatives like Skill India for Veterans, Army Welfare Placement Organisation (AWPO), and DGR tie-ups with corporates. But what's equally important is the corporate mindset.
- Companies need to see veterans not as retired soldiers but as experienced professionals who bring discipline, reliability, and operational strength.
- Creating mentorship programs, conducting orientation sessions, and recognizing military experience as managerial experience can bridge the gap faster.

10. The Family Factor

- Behind every soldier's transition stands a family adjusting silently. Wives learn to adapt to city life, children adjust to new schools, and finances often tighten during job searches.
- Awareness programs for families can help them understand the process, reducing emotional stress.
- A happy, supported family means a confident veteran.

Conclusion: The New Battlefield

The corporate world isn't a battlefield, but it still rewards courage, consistency, and clarity — the same traits that make a good soldier.

Every Other Rank who served the nation has already proven his strength. The next mission is to prove it in a new uniform — a corporate one.

Landing in the corporate world is not about losing identity; it's about redeploying your skills in a new field. The mission continues, only the battlefield changes.

Jasbir Dhaliwal

Ex Armoured Corps Dfr – 63 Cav

AGM- Admin & Security



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How to Raise Strong Problem Solvers?

BY
LT COL AMIT BATRA (RETD)
FOUNDER DIRECTOR OF AB KIDS
LIFE COACHING

Being able to solve your own problems is not a skill recognized by many. When we have it, we don't even realize it. But, we start seeing the 'problem' when we lack it.

If we want our children to be independent and self-sufficient, problem-solving is a majority part of it. But, how will our children learn it, if we never allow them to handle the issues in their life? We have to ensure that our kids can get out of any situation without your, or anybody else's, help. So, instead of doing it for them, we have to teach them. And, here is how you can do it.



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LT COL AMIT BATRA - AB KIDS LIFE COACHING

He is the founder director of AB Kids Life Coaching. The organization is working primarily with young children to help them overcome their barriers. Founded in 2018, it has achieved some miraculous results in short span of time.

Lt Col Batra is an expert in the field of subconscious mind and science of handwriting Analysis. He firmly believes that our present is nothing but extension of our childhood. Our beliefs, fears, strength, and weaknesses are outcome of our childhood experiences.

He has transformed many young lives aging from 2 to 30 years by helping them overcome their biggest psychological challenges and put them on the path of success.



But all this has not come easy to him. As a young Army Officer, he had a bright future. Just when everything seemed to be going right, the circumstances took an ugly turn and they became difficult. It made him extremely negative and cynical. When all his peers were focusing on their career, he decided to work on his mind. He spent next 17 years to correct his attitude and outlook and to become an extremely positive and optimistic person that he is today. Not only that, he also cured himself of all the diseases which once doctors had said were incurable.

But all this came at a price. Lot had been lost in the meanwhile. Notwithstanding with his new found life his spirits were high and he decided to hang his uniform in April 2018 to serve the young generation.

He lives with a personal mission of

Carving Diamonds

Creating leaders

and is looking to mentor 20 young leaders who can be the change makers at the world level 😊



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1. Have faith in them.



Our children borrow from our energy. If it is positive, the entire atmosphere is pleasant. But if there is negative energy, the entire family is going to reciprocate. So, as parents, our first job is providing an environment where they can thrive.

And how do we do that?

When we want our children to do something, first of all, we have to believe in them. We have to have faith that they can do it. And, just showing that you 'believe' will not do it.

You have to feel it. Because your children will definitely feel it. Just saying "I have faith in you," and actually thinking it a thousand leagues different.

2. Let them make mistakes.

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

-Thomas Edison

Making mistakes is the first step to learning. If you haven't made mistakes, you haven't really explored anything. Making your child a problem solver means you have to first make yourself strong enough to let them make some blunders along the way. When you are sending your child on a mission, you cannot be on tiptoes waiting to pull them out of it at the slightest sign of trouble. Let them do what they can think of in every situation.



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It will not be right all the time. Especially in the beginning, the ratio of the times they solved a problem to the times where they created ten new is going to be very low.

And, now is the time to let them experiment. We are looking at the bigger picture here. If you solve their problems for them in the first twenty or so years of their life, they are going to struggle for the next forty-fifty years of their lives.

3. Guide them through their problems and concerns.

In a parent-child relationship, the most valuable thing that parents bring to the table is 'experience.' You have lived many years before them in this world, and you have been fighting your own battles. Now, it is time for you to pass on the knowledge.

You can guide them through their problems and issues that they are going through. It means that you can advise them about the way that they can go about an issue, or when they are stuck you can give them a little nudge.

Remember, any problem can be big or small for them. So, what may seem very silly to you, can be quite a huge hurdle for them. Therefore, instead of criticizing them for it, try and guide them through it to the best of your abilities.

4. Prepare them for problems and their plans.

Problems are a part and parcel of everybody's lives. So, it is better that you go in prepared, rather than clueless about what to do. Every problem that your child faces is unique to them, then how do you ready them for something that is not known yet?

You have to develop their mind. You have to make them capable. In every field, there are practice rounds or training, which is not exactly like the real challenge. However, these drills equip you to handle real-time issues. And that is exactly what we are supposed to do with our children.

Don't keep them in a bubble where they have no care in the world, or don't even know that 'problems' exist. When there are obstacles in the path, trying to hide them will not work, dealing with them is essential.





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5. Encourage



Only having faith isn't enough. Your faith has to be of some use for your child. You have to channel that belief to encourage them. There will be times when they will want to give up on trying to fix a problem, that is where you have to motivate them.

You have to give them the energy and patience to try 'one last time' every time they say they are done. To become successful, having a strong support system is so important. And you have to be that for your child.

6. Share your experiences



When your children know that they are not the only ones to have the problems, dealing with it becomes that much easier. So, tell them your stories.

It will give your children the boost that they need. Also, our children will never listen if we tell them that, 'this is the right way, follow it.' Instead, we can tell them our stories and if they want they can take the lesson.

Providing them with all the necessary equipment is your job, what they want to use, and how they want to tackle a situation is up to them.

Another benefit is bonding. You and your child can have a good time together sharing experiences and getting to know each other better.



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7. Narrate stories.



There are plenty of stories that will inspire children to deal with their own challenges. You can tell them these stories regularly.

Storytelling is not just for toddlers, you can do that with your grown-up children too. Find out stories about successful people who have overcome their hurdles to be where they are. It will not only motivate your children, but it may also give them an idea about dealing with their own problems.

Your children are not going to become experts in a day, you need to be patient and let them take their own time to get there. You have to remember your goal and relentlessly work towards it.

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AGGRESSION/ BACK ANSWERING

SIBLING RIVALRY

UNWILLINGNESS TO STUDY

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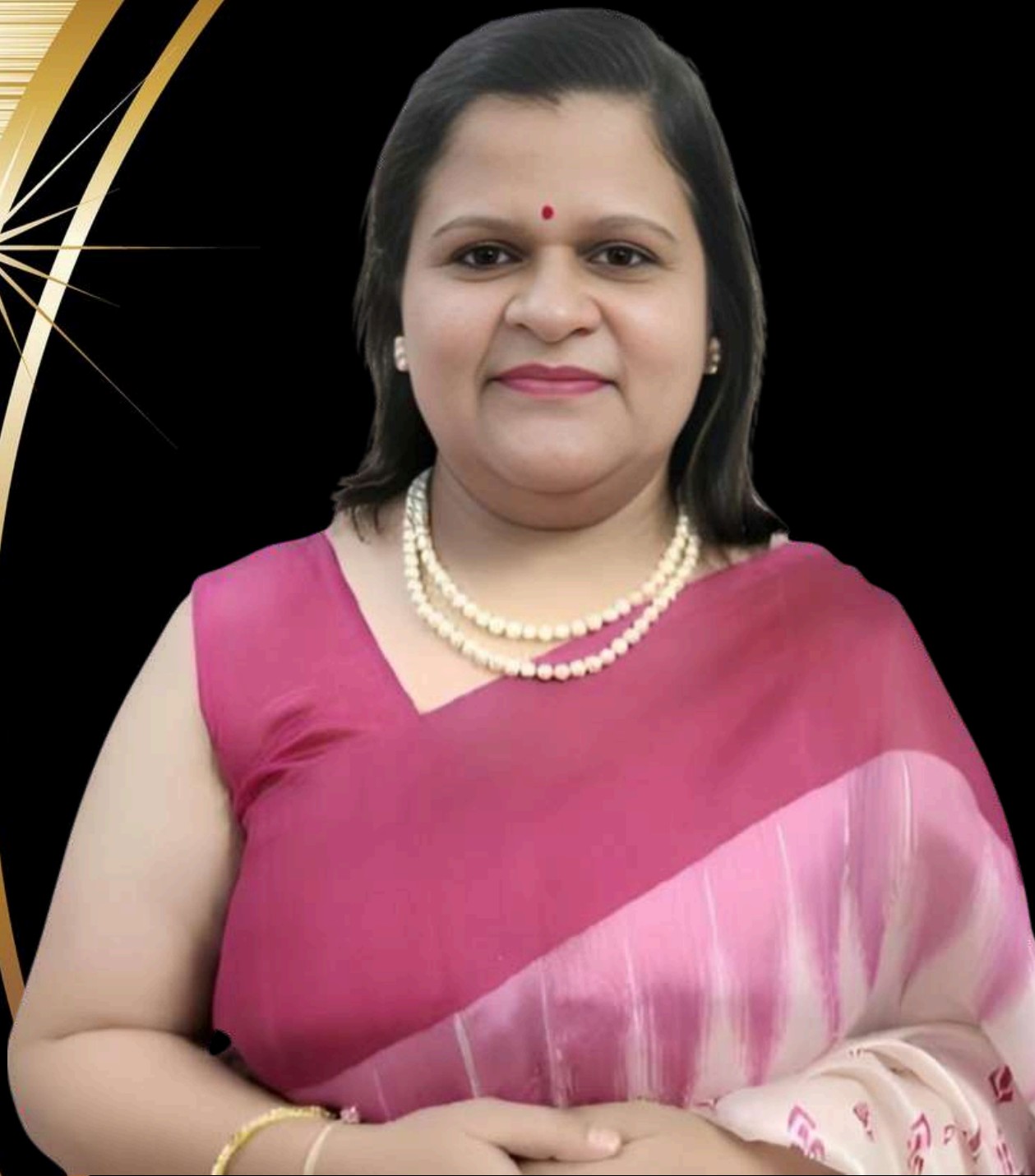
BY

FIZAN SHARMA

The Hidden Power of Praise: Encouraging Effort Over Perfection



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Fizan is a mother, writer and passionate advocate for child mental health. With a background in psychology and years of hands on parenting experience, she brings warmth, empathy and expert backed advice to every column. Her mission is to help parents understand their children's minds and hearts.



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THE SUBTLE MAGIC OF PRAISE

Parenting often feels like a delicate dance, one step forward, one emotional twirl, a little stumble, but always a heartfelt attempt to give our children wings. In India, amidst the hum of academic excellence and the weight of expectation, many parents shower praise upon their kids, celebrating top marks or a flawless dance recital. But what if the real power of our words lay not in honouring perfection, but in nurturing effort?

This month, let's journey together into the science and soul of how we praise our children, discovering why encouraging effort is the true secret ingredient to confidence, resilience and authentic joy.

WHY "GOOD JOB!" ISN'T ALWAYS ENOUGH

Praise is a tool and like any tool, it can build or break. Research published by the American Psychological Association reveals that children praised for effort, statements like "You worked so hard on this!" develop greater persistence and a willingness to tackle new challenges compared to those told "You're so smart!" or "You always win!".

Dr. Carol Dweck, renowned psychologist and the mind behind "growth mindset" explains that when children are praised for innate abilities (like intelligence or talent), they may associate value with achievement alone and fear failure as a threat to their identity. In contrast, praise for hard work fosters a willingness to learn, adapt and keep trying, even when the going gets tough.

In a large study of schoolchildren in Mumbai, nearly 70% said they felt more anxious after hearing praise focused only on results. But when teachers shifted their feedback towards effort like "You tried your best" "I saw you practicing patiently" children demonstrated higher self-esteem and broader academic improvement. Notably, an additional survey from Delhi public schools found that students whose parents celebrated persistence over grades were 55% less likely to drop out of difficult subjects.



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STORIES FROM INDIAN HOMES

Vibha's daughter, little Ananya, nearly cried after a spelling bee where she missed the final word. "All her friends won medals," Vibha remembers, "and I panicked at first, what could I say to comfort her?" Instead of reaching for "You'll do better next time," Vibha knelt and said, "I saw you studying every single evening. I'm proud of how brave you were to stand there and spell those words." Those gentle words calmed Ananya, who later returned to the stage fearless, willing to try again. Or consider Sameer, age 9, in Delhi. He struggled with math, feeling "behind" compared to his classmates. His teacher, Ms. Gupta, changed her approach after attending a workshop based on UNICEF's evidence on growth mindset. Rather than "You're good at math," she told him, "I can see how you keep practicing. That shows real grit!" Within a term, Sameer's test scores and more importantly, his enjoyment of learning, rose dramatically.

Sita, a mother in Chennai, shared a moving anecdote about her son, Arun. After repeatedly failing at riding his cycle, Arun burst into tears. Sita gently hugged him and said, "Arun, what matters is how you got up after every fall and kept trying. That courage and patience make me more proud than winning any race." Over time, not only did Arun master cycling, but Sita noticed him becoming more persistent even in his school studies, all because he learned to value effort over immediate success.

THE SCIENCE OF EFFORT-BASED PRAISE

Research from the University of Chicago found that children praised for effort displayed a 40% greater interest in tackling complex puzzles than those praised for performance. This effect persisted six months later, suggesting that effort-based praise helps build long-lasting resilience and curiosity.





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A meta-analysis published in Child Development, covering data from 60,000 children worldwide, found that effective praise—specific, sincere and focused on process rather than outcome, predicts higher levels of self-motivation and lower rates of anxiety. In India, where peer comparison is often intense, switching to effort-first praise is a protective factor against perfectionism and burnout.

Effort-based praise isn't limited to schoolwork. When children are learning to ride a bike, perform a puja or help in the kitchen, noticing small milestones "You balanced for longer this time!" or "I appreciate how patiently you stirred the halwa" teaches kids that process and progress matter more than getting everything right.

Another survey by the Centre for Child Studies, Bengaluru, reported that children consistently praised for effort were 65% more likely to pursue new hobbies and stay committed even when facing initial setbacks.

WHY CHILDREN NEED THIS NOW

Today's children face greater academic demands, social pressures intensified by social media and in many homes, the unspoken expectation to achieve without fail. The World Health Organization reports a steady increase in childhood anxiety linked to perfectionist standards in South Asia.

As a mother and observer in my own home, there have been countless moments when my son, Naman, wanted to give up, not because he lacked ability, but because he feared not being "good enough." The day I replaced "You're a star!" with "Your effort makes me proud," I noticed a subtle but powerful shift: he began to try, fall and try again, much less afraid of making mistakes.

EXPERT VOICES

Dr. Neha Gupta, child psychologist at Apollo Hospitals, often reminds parents:

"Children measure their worth by your reactions. Praise that celebrates the journey, not just the destination, helps them feel loved for who they are, not only for what they do."



EXPERT VOICES

Dr. Carol Dweck:

"True praise acknowledges the process. It sends a message: You are capable of growing, adapting and persevering."

UNICEF India guidelines recommend using "descriptive feedback", praising persistence, solving problems, collaboration and kindness—not merely scores or wins.

ACTIONABLE TIPS FOR PARENTS

- **Be Specific** : Instead of "Good job," try "I noticed how carefully you coloured inside the lines."
- **Praise the Process** : Recognize strategies: "You tried a new approach to solve this puzzle."
- **Celebrate Mistakes** : Say, "You learned something new because you made a mistake. That's brave!"
- **Invite Reflection** : Ask, "What helped you keep going when it was hard?"
- **Keep Praise Sincere** : Children sense when praise is generic. Focus on what you truly see.
- **Share Your Own Struggles** : Let your child know about times you tried hard, made mistakes and kept going. Storytelling builds connection and normalizes effort.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION

As a mother, praise is one of my most used and sometimes misused tools. Like many Indian parents, I grew up thinking that high marks and medals were the tickets to self-worth. But I've learned to slow down and look deeper, to replace "Wow, you're amazing!" with "I admire how patiently you practiced the tabla today."

This shift is not just for my child, it's for me too. It reminds me that love is not about demands; it's about noticing, accepting and encouraging growth at every step.



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CONCLUSION: FOR RAISING BRAVE, JOYFUL LEARNERS

Dear fellow parents, when your child brings home a test paper, a painting or a story, pause before praise. Look for effort, for learning, for courage, for kindness. Our words become their inner voices. Let's help those voices be kind, hopeful and strong.

Let's raise children who believe in trying, not just winning. Who find pride in persistence and joy in small steps. And let's remember: the real power of praise lies in helping our children love learning, love challenges and most of all, love themselves.

Do share your own stories, questions or reflections in the comments below and join me in next month's warm conversation about resilience!



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Now an entrepreneur and mentor, Sanjeev shares his insights through #MissionFreedom “Gurukul,” guiding others on their journey to success. A DIY enthusiast and avid traveller, he believes discipline is the ultimate differentiator in achieving personal and professional fulfilment.

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INTRODUCTION

"THE SKY IS NO LONGER THE LIMIT—IT'S THE NEW MARKETPLACE."



INDIA'S DRONE REVOLUTION HAS TAKEN FLIGHT—POWERED BY MAKE IN INDIA, DIGITAL INDIA, AND A RAPIDLY GROWING ECOSYSTEM OF STARTUPS AND INNOVATORS. GLOBALLY, THE DRONE INDUSTRY IS PROJECTED TO EXCEED USD 180 BILLION BY 2030, AND INDIA AIMS TO BE AMONG THE TOP GLOBAL DRONE HUBS. THE GOVERNMENT'S FOCUS ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT, SIMPLIFIED LICENSING, AND PRODUCTION-LINKED INCENTIVES HAS OPENED VAST OPPORTUNITIES FOR SKILLED MANPOWER AND ENTREPRENEURS.

THE RECENT GLOBAL CONFLICTS HAVE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT DRONES ARE THE FUTURE OF WARFARE AND TECHNOLOGY. THEY ARE REDEFINING COMBAT STRATEGY, INTELLIGENCE, AND LOGISTICS—PROVING FASTER, CHEAPER, AND MORE ADAPTABLE THAN TRADITIONAL AERIAL SYSTEMS. MANY ROLES ONCE HANDLED BY HELICOPTERS ARE NOW BEING TAKEN OVER BY DRONES FOR SURVEILLANCE, LOGISTICS, AND STRIKE MISSIONS. THE SAME TECHNOLOGY IS FAST ENTERING CIVILIAN AND COMMERCIAL DOMAINS, CREATING IMMENSE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE WHO ACT EARLY.

FOR DEFENCE RETIREES, THIS ECOSYSTEM OFFERS NOT JUST EMPLOYMENT BUT RENEWED PURPOSE—A SECOND INNINGS THAT COMBINES DISCIPLINE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. YOU MAY EVEN START AS A HOBBYIST, FLYING SMALL DRONES FOR RECREATION OR LEARNING, AND GRADUALLY CONVERT IT INTO A PROFESSION OR BUSINESS VENTURE.



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WHY DEFENCE RETIREES FIT NATURALLY



- Defence veterans bring unmatched strengths—technical expertise, precision, and discipline. Having worked with advanced systems, they easily transition into drone operations, maintenance, or entrepreneurship. Their leadership and problem-solving abilities make them natural pioneers in this new-age industry.





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THE EXPANDING APPLICATIONS

- Drones today go far beyond defence and cinematography. They are transforming agriculture, logistics, infrastructure, energy, and media. With India targeting one lakh certified drone pilots by 2030, the sky truly is open for small, agile entrepreneurs.



AFFORDABLE ENTRY POINT

- A DGCA-certified 5-day drone pilot course costs around ₹40,000–₹50,000, including a commercial licence. Accredited academies in most major cities make it easy for beginners to get started.





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Drones in Defence and Civil Sectors

Every service—Army, Navy, and Air Force—now uses drones for reconnaissance, logistics, and training. Veterans with UAV experience can apply their skills to civilian projects like industrial surveillance, traffic management, and inspection audits.

Agriculture and Precision Farming

Drones are used for crop spraying, soil mapping, and pest control, improving efficiency and yield. Retirees can offer these services to farmers, agri-tech startups, and government departments.



Drones perform aerial mapping, building inspections, firefighting, and even exterior cleaning of high-rises. Ex-servicemen with engineering or project management skills can partner with smart city and real estate projects.



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Media, Events, and Content Creation

From weddings to tourism campaigns, drones have redefined visual storytelling. Veterans with a creative streak can start drone videography studios or collaborate with production houses.

The Rise of Air Taxis

The world is preparing for electric air taxis—short-range flying vehicles already being tested in Dubai, Japan, and the USA. While drones are currently replacing helicopters in limited roles, their evolution into passenger and cargo aerial platforms is inevitable. India, too, will soon join this movement as regulations mature.



Training, Repair, and Customization

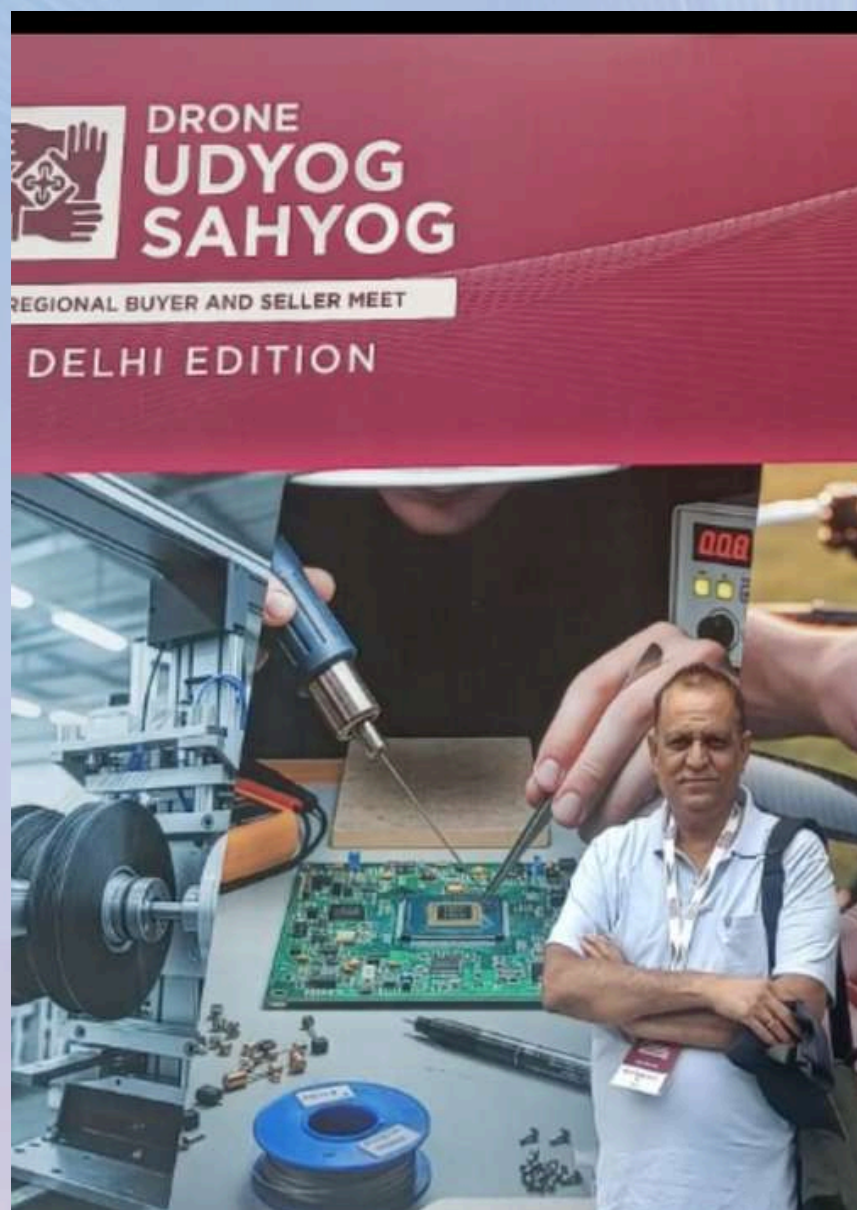
The growing drone population will require maintenance, custom design, and training hubs. Veterans can establish drone repair units or training academies, sharing both technical and leadership skills.



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Government Push: Namo Drone Didi

Under the “Namo Drone Didi” initiative, rural women are being trained to operate drones for agriculture and public service. This landmark program democratizes drone access, and veterans can contribute as trainers, suppliers, or mentors.



The Investment Snapshot

- Training Cost: ₹40,000–₹50,000 (DGCA-approved)
- Equipment: ₹1–2 lakh for a professional setup
- Key Sectors: Agriculture, Real Estate, Energy, Media, Security, Disaster Relief, Training



Flight Ahead

Drones represent India’s next wave of innovation—where technology meets purpose. For defence veterans, it’s more than business—it’s a new mission, a chance to serve the nation once again, wearing a new uniform of enterprise and innovation.



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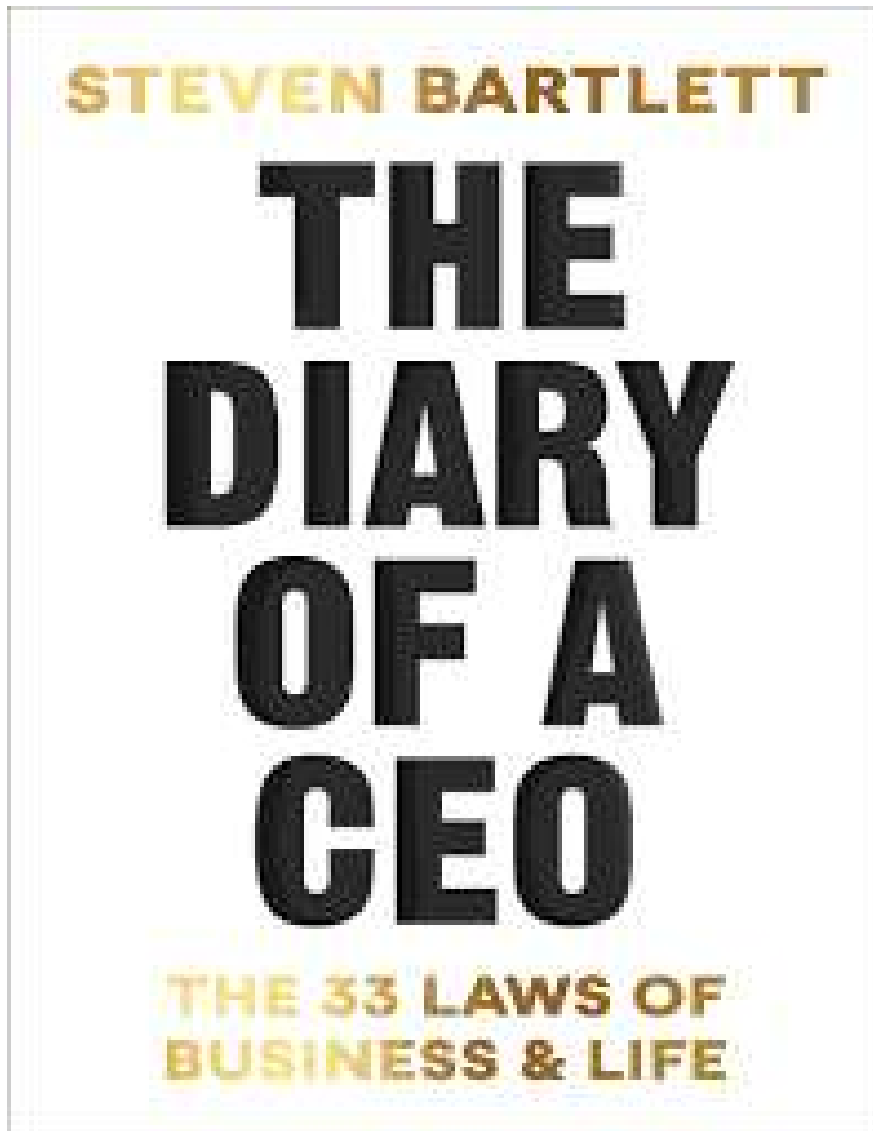
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Lt Col (Dr) Kamalpreet wear various hats; an EME Officer with 22 years of experience in Indian Army, a Mechanical Engineer, a Doctorate in Strategic leadership, a Trainer, a Counselor, a graphologist, a Psychologist and a SSB Psych as well.

Till date she has facilitated 367 Recommendations in SSB.

With about 2 years of experience in Amazon as L-7 & having cleared interviews with various Corporate houses, she carries rich experience of cracking interviews, the recruitment process, logistics, warehouse operations and safety protocols.

Now she dedicates her time for giving back to society in helping Veterans in job selection, welfare of Ex Service Persons and their families.



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What DIARY OF A CEO by Steven Barlett is about

- Diary of a CEO is a business-psychology book written by Steven Bartlett, based on insights he has gathered from interviewing world-class performers, entrepreneurs, psychologists, military leaders, neuroscientists, creators, and CEOs.
- The book is structured around 33 Laws — each law explaining a principle that governs success, influence, behaviour, decision-making, discipline, relationships, and identity.
- Unlike a traditional business book, this one focuses more on the inner world of a leader — beliefs, habits, emotional regulation, self-awareness, discipline, and strategic thinking. Every law is backed by examples, research, and stories from high performers.
- It acts as a blueprint for self-mastery, covering:
 - How to manage your mind
 - How to lead with clarity
 - How to build long-term discipline
 - How to build powerful relationships
 - How to create an unstoppable identity

What works / Strengths

Deep psychological insight: The book explains why we behave the way we do, how identity is formed, and how high performers think differently.

Simple laws, powerful application: Each chapter gives concrete principles that you can apply in leadership, career, relationships, and personal growth.

Real, practical examples : Steven brings stories from Navy SEALs, entrepreneurs, monks, behavioural scientists, and billionaires.

Helps build discipline and emotional strength. : A large part of the book teaches how to regulate emotions, handle tough decisions, remain consistent, and keep your mind trained.

Easy to read and highly engaging. : The narrative style is simple, direct, and very relatable for young aspirants, leaders, and creators.

Applicable for personal + professional life. : Not just CEOs — the laws can be used by students, content creators, working professionals, leaders, and parents.



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What doesn't work / Criticisms

Not a deep business-strategy book : If someone wants hardcore business frameworks (finance, scaling, systems), this book is more psychological than technical.

Repetition of ideas found in other self-help books : Some laws overlap with Stoicism, Atomic Habits, or psychology classics. For well-read readers, parts may feel familiar.

Less actionable worksheets : It gives principles but doesn't give step-by-step exercises or templates for implementation.

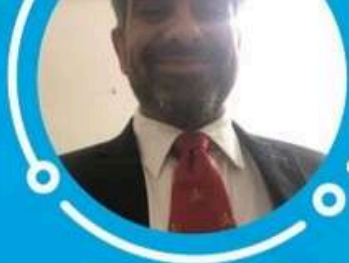
Can feel philosophical at times : Readers looking for purely practical or data-driven content may find it too reflective.

WHO WILL BENEFIT MOST FROM THIS BOOK?

- Students & Young Aspirants (NDA, SSB, UPSC, MBA, Corporate)
- Great for building discipline, identity, emotional maturity, and leadership habits.
- CEOs, Founders, Entrepreneurs
- Helps with mindset, decision-making, people management, and resilience.
- Working Professionals
- Anyone aiming for promotions, better communication, and leadership growth.
- Content Creators & Influencers
- The book explains how identity and consistency shape visibility and long-term influence.
- People Going Through Personal Challenges
- It helps understand how to rebuild oneself mentally, emotionally, and strategically.
- Coaches, Trainers, Mentors
- A goldmine for understanding human behavior and designing stronger guidance systems.



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