



**DAILY NEWSPAPER**  
**ANALYSIS**  
**THE HINDU**  
**(27<sup>th</sup> November, 2018)**



**THE HINDU**  
**Daily News Paper**

## Preventing another scuffle : Deteriorating Civil Military Relations

### Context:-

- Recently there has been conflict between local police and Indian army in Bomdila, Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Bomdila incident is not the first instance of the civil administration and the military having locked horns.
- It is just that earlier incidents did not get publicity in the absence of fast communication.
- Though the issues were “resolved”, tensions have continued to simmer. Social media and near instantaneous communications now amplify the damage, as seen at Bomdila.

### Reason for Deterioration between civil military relations:-

- Lack of **statesmanship** in both the camp
- Lack of respect to others domain of specialisation
- **Deification of military** instead of giving special treatment to finding solutions to the everyday pressures that a soldier and his family face.
- **Extreme utilisation armed forces civil issues** is detrimental to civic administration as well as the

- military philosophy. For example- Army being called in to construct railway foot overbridges in Muramba and even clear up litter left behind by tourists in the hills of north India.

**Suggestions:-**

- There is a **delicate thread that links the uniformed and non-uniformed sections.**
- Pride in one's job should not translate to contempt for another's job.
- **Importance of Civil Administration-** The civil administration has challenges that no uniformed person ever faces, such as the pressures from social strife, economic hardships, and law and order.
- **Importance of Military Culture-** The uniformed services, on the other hand, see themselves as protectors of the nation even at the cost of their own lives.
  - A commander's order is sacrosanct and a soldier on the front line follows it unflinchingly despite knowing that he could lose his life the next moment.
  - It is this implicit faith that permeates the psyche of a uniformed person based on the belief that his commander is supreme and will always look after his interests as well as those of his family.
  - Military effectiveness requires a military culture that is different from that of a civilian's.
  - This is the heart of the 'chip on the shoulder' feeling that drives a soldier to sacrifice his life at his superior's command.

- So, just as a uniformed force must acknowledge the expertise of the civil administration, so too should the latter respect and ensure that a soldier does feel a bit special by providing solutions to the everyday pressures that a soldier and his family face not by deification.
- Use of armed force for civil issue should be used only emergency situation such in case of disaster.

**Way Ahead:-**

- Leadership at every level of the government is a **vital cog** in maintaining a **harmonious relationship** with other arms, all the while respecting the other's domain specialisation.
- An unequal civil-military dialogue, wherein a soldier begins to doubt his 'uniqueness' (not deification) in society does not bode well for good civil-military relations.
- Similarly, the important role played by the civilian bureaucracy in governance should be acknowledged.
- Civil-military relations is an art that require delicate nursing through statesmanship. Good leadership from both sides is the key to preventing new Bomdilas.

- cooperation and infrastructure simultaneously. Vietnam's role as country coordinator for India in ASEAN will come to a close in 2018.
- While the ties have progressed under the Look East and Act East Policies, going forward they need to factor in pragmatism, helping relations to move forward.
- India's ability to look beyond the prism of optics will remain a core challenge.

**THANK YOU**

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