

# Career Attractiveness: Uniform Vs Civvies

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## ABSTRACT

When we think about career choice, several things immediately come to mind – job description, training and education required, career outlook, and salary – but there are a number of other factors that may influence your decisions. There are range of alternative choices in science, technology and engineering for those wishing either to avoid involvement with 'defence' or those hoping to work in areas with an explicit aim of contributing to social justice, peace or environmental sustainability. There are various dilemmas and ethical questions that arise when choosing a career. Those contemplating working in defence should also read on as there are many challenging points worth considering. Keeping patriotism aside, students need to go thru a rigorous selection procedure requiring them to be physically and academically good and then they get a job which doesn't pay as much as corporate companies. Also government is now enforcing some new rules on pension. These conditions discourage students from going into defence. When the economy is strong, corporate is among the best practice areas out there. Employers in the corporate sector often offer attractive, well paid job opportunities. The choice can be a difficult one. However, choosing between these two practice areas is an important decision because the practice area you choose can have a major impact on your future. The aim of this research work is to provide some insights into how it comes about and how to recognise it.

**Keyword:-** Defence, Corporate, Career, Hypothesis, Research Methodology, Results and Conclusion.

## 1. Introduction

It's important to understand that career choice is not made based on any one factor. Choices are subject to many influences – individual, cultural, social, and environmental. The combination and interaction of various influences on your decision-making are unique to you and your situation. There may also be multiple options, several "good-fits", instead of a single, right choice. Keep in mind that as you change, learning and experiencing new things, and external factors change, such as the economy, you will continue to revise and fine-tune your career choices.

### 1.1 Armed Forces a Lucrative Career!

Let us first talk about the Armed Forces. Is it a lucrative career! The Generation next are now thinking of the Forces as a career option.

There are two reasons why the Armed Forces seem a good option today: one, it is a job that comes with a lot of honour attached to it. Secondly, it now offers some very good perks. It offers steady jobs and no amount of recession will impact their importance. The fall of twin towers on 26th September, 2001 in New York, by terrorists brought a surge of patriotic sentiments among the young of Indians. Many wanted to emulate the heroism of the commandos. But this is not like any other government job. The nature of work is different and you have to be prepared for any eventuality, that maybe a hitch for their recruitment drive.

Jobs are driven by passion not ambition. In these times, government jobs look very lucrative. They are steady, are not affected by economic trends and offer the stability that the private sector does not. Don't think that the armed forces offer a great career because it is not an easy job to do. You have to be fit enough to fight at all times. One should join the Armed Forces only if one is passionate about defending ones country. In a lot of families it is a tradition. This is not a job one does for the money or the perks.

For the middle class people it is a good option. For the middle class, salary and job security are the most important factors. The job also brings respect and the money is good.

Armed Forces were always a valued field but the private sector with its money and perks managed to lure the youth away. This will change as there is no security in high paying jobs now.

#### ❖ **An Officer and a Gentleman**

An officer in the Indian Armed Forces inherits glorious heritage and timeless traditions, blended perfectly with the latest technology in the fields of management, engineering and medical sciences. It offers a golden opportunity to be a part of the world's finest Armed Forces and get trained not only to be an Officer but also a Gentleman for life.

#### ❖ **Where Growth is a way of Life!**

The Indian Army promises both professional and personal growth at every stage of the career. Opportunities to upgrade through various courses are abundant. The adventure and extra-curricular activities in the Armed Forces ensure an all round development essential in today's world. An opportunity is even provided to upgrade your civil qualification by availing two years paid study leave. Armed Forces teaches you all ie the art of War-Engineering-Medicine-Administration-Human Resource Development-Management, moulding the officers into leaders capable of leading from the front in any field. Joining the Armed Forces is possible both after school as well as after graduation. Various types of entries are enumerated below.

#### ❖ **A Great Life - a Great Life Style**

Apart from attractive pay and perks, Armed Forces offers the best in Life Style, even better than all other professions. Be it the social interaction, finest clubs, golf courses, medical facilities and ample opportunities to indulge in adventure and sports, Armed Forces has it all. In fact one is paid to lead a healthy life in a healthy environment.

Facilities like subsidized housing, free medical for self & family, canteen facilities, group insurance cover, soft loans for house and/or vehicle and above all the feeling of belonging to a family (Armed Forces) which cares for you, are the perks of the Armed Forces, which no other organization provides.

Thus, a popular quote often used to attract the youth goes:

***Do you have it in you!*** - To be a part of the elite organization of the Indian Armed Forces?

### **1.2 Corporate Attractiveness**

On the other hand civilian employers are fundamentally different from the military because their animating goals are different. And their goals often do not prioritize their workers' well-being. The result, for many, is economic insecurity, which is about more than stagnant wages or wealth distribution. Precarity is an all-inclusive term that describes a lack of predictability, stability, and sense of security in the workplace.

At the frontline of precarity is the gig economy. In theory, the gig economy gives workers the freedom to remain untethered to a single employer, pursuing work piecemeal as a series of individual short-term tasks. No need to be limited by a set salary when there's a potential to work and earn as much as you want.

But in many ways, the gig economy, and the contemporary economy more generally, provide the more brutal environment: People are isolated, uncared for, fungible or disposable, and without the opportunity to cultivate the higher human need to sacrifice for a noble purpose. In this sense, it's the military—and similar occupations—that provide the more humane option.

Defence Forces jobs are about good disciplined execution following procedures taking precedence over innovation which might upset the apple cart. Everything is provided for, but one cannot expect higher remuneration for having done a better job than others (you get a promotion when you are capable of taking higher responsibility). Facilities provided are much better than the Corporate sector, including subsidized facilities, to ensure a happy and healthy life for the person and his / her family. There is high job security, as long as one is not committing blunders or indulging in treason. The ultimate risk is to life and limb in a time of conflict.

Corporate sector, on the other hand, pays higher but relies on the ability to do a better job or being innovative as the basis for paying higher (distinguishing between good and not-so-good workers). Job security is not taken for

granted, as some conditions require down- or right-sizing to control cost. Facilities for a better life are expected to be taken care of by the employee, as the remuneration is on a total 'cost to company' or CTC basis.

Whether one or the other is a better career option, or not, is completely based on how one thinks about 'career' and beyond. Defence Forces give a well rounded life with good work-life balance. Corporate careers give much more money, but it is almost always at the cost of good work-life balance, unless the person compartmentalizes life efficiently.

## 2. Research Methodology

Selection and adoption of appropriate scientific methodological approach is the most important element of conducting a research investigation. It adds to the precision, reliability and validity of the research findings. The study was carried out on 120 officers of corporate and armed forces sector. The sample was chosen by Stratified Random Sampling. A well-constructed questionnaire was constructed and administered on the sample to elicit their response. The questionnaire contained both open ended as well as close-ended questions. The questionnaire was designed in such a manner so as to elicit maximum information from the respondents. The questions were simple, clear, undisguised, well organised and to the point. Pre-testing of the questionnaire was done and some questions were reframed after it. The data collected was statistically analysed using various tools. Data analysis was done in order to search out meaningfully the trend and establish relationships that exist among various data groups. The primary data collected through survey method with the help of the questionnaire has been analysed by using MS Excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 19.0 version. Various tools and techniques were used to analyse the data gathered.

## 3. Analysis and Findings

The questionnaire was designed to evaluate the reasons for preference of career. The youth these days have more inclination towards the Corporate sector due to high compensatory benefits and perks offered. In order to know and understand whether there is any difference among the opinions of the respondents of Armed forces and Corporate executives, as regard to the attractiveness of both the professions, the hypothesis was framed as:

“The Compensatory benefits and perks are more lucrative in Corporate Sector as compared to the Indian Armed Forces.”

**Table -1 Features Appealing for Career Choice**

APPEALING FEATURES	ARMED FORCES		CORPORATE	
	Mean Score	Rank	Mean Score	Rank
Secure job	4.32	1	3.67	5
Monetary Consideration	3.75	5	4.28	2
Service to nation	4.18	3	3.65	6
Professional Advancement	3.75	5	4.55	1
Life Style	4.27	2	3.85	4
Challenging/Adventurous Job	4.10	4	3.88	3

The weighted average score based on the Likert scale, regarding appealing features of career can be seen in above table. The Armed Forces personnel gave first preference to secure job and second preference to lifestyle

and social status. The mean scores and ranks are depicted in Table-1. The Corporate executives gave preference to professional advancement and consider monetary compensation as attractive features of career. Least preference is given by the Corporate executives to service to nation.

### Hypothesis Testing:

#### Null Hypothesis :

“The Compensatory benefits and perks are similar in Corporate Sector and the Indian Armed Forces.”

#### Alternative Hypothesis :

“The Compensatory benefits and perks are more lucrative in Corporate Sector as compared to the Indian Armed Forces.”

**Table-2 Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	52.218 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000	.000	
Likelihood Ratio	68.561	12	.000	.000	
Fisher's Exact Test	55.163			.000	
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.127 <sup>b</sup>	1	.000	.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	120				

a. 4 cells (15.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.00.

b. The standardized statistic is 6.255.

For both Armed forces and Corporate executives the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was highly significant indicating that both distributions were not normal hence, non-parametric test was chosen. Pearson's chi-square test of independence was conducted, to test the relationship between Armed forces personnel and Corporate executives with regard to compensatory benefits and perks. The results (Table- 2) showed that –

$$X^2 (12) = 52.21, p < 0.05$$

Hence, the result is highly significant. Thus, Null hypothesis is rejected and Alternative hypothesis is accepted.

This means that the compensatory benefits and perks of Corporate executives are significantly different from those of Armed forces executives, or we can say that the compensatory benefits and perks of Corporate sector are more lucrative compared to the Indian Armed Forces.

### 4. Research Implications

- 4.1 It has been found that there is a general inclination towards working in Corporate sector mainly due to the monetary benefits and professional advancement opportunities. Both categories of workers prefer monetary benefits to non-monetary benefits.
- 4.2 As regards the post-retirement benefits, the Corporate sector does not offer them this facility and among those who are offered, quite a few of them don't find it self-sustaining.
- 4.3 Quite a few of the respondents give importance to service to nation, hence conscription as an option could be explored. Although a majority do not want to change their job, security of job is sought by most. Views on conscription are also strong of corporate executives though, most of them find their job satisfying.

- 4.4** It can be implied that there is a vast difference of opinion among respondents and contradictory views regarding choice of career. Today's youngster's have various options ahead of them. They are mature, more aware and smarter than his predecessors of earlier years. Thus, they are not just going to blindly jump into any career that appeals to them. They are going to weigh all the pros and cons carefully. They are going to be ready to give their youth for a profession only if they are sure that it will meet their expectations and give them what they are looking for. They want a job that will pay them well and at the same time be professionally satisfying and challenging. They want a job which will give them security and their family a good and satisfying quality of life.
- 4.5** Organisations don't really achieve anything. Plans don't accomplish anything either. Theories of management don't much matter. Endeavours succeed or fail because of the people involved. Only by attracting the best people great deeds can be accomplished. If the services want to maintain their status as lucrative and satisfying career option, they will need to create an environment where bright and creative youngsters are attracted and retained.
- 4.6** If the Armed Forces today fail to evolve with the times and cater to the increased aspirations of today's youngsters, they might soon find themselves being forced to accept the harsh reality that what they are getting is not the *fresh cream* that they want but scrappy remnants from the bottom of barrel.

## 5. Conclusion

It is difficult to compare between corporate and defence forces career. In my opinion these days career in defence forces is quite challenging and adventurous. Facilities like housing are superb. You cannot dream of such houses in corporate. Engineering qualified persons have lot of technically challenging work opportunities. With sophisticated and high tech technologies in navy or Airforce and considering high govt budgets for forces job is certainly challenging. If your nature is adventurous nothing like forces. What more satisfaction than you serve for country. Yes you need to serve for 20 years. But comforts are assured.

Corporate does pay more but responsibilities are also high. With growing competition survival and rise are not easy. In fact in high tension jobs health get neglected. While in defence forces you gain tough health.

But to join forces you should have liking. You cannot become wealthy but adequate for good life. It is said that an Army officer's life starts and ends with serving his/her country and protecting it. But many a times, in the contemporary scenario, an Army officer chooses to let go of his/her defence career or retires and joins the corporate life as a simple civilian. The ex-army men begin their second innings to conquer the corporate world by working mainly in key position fields like administration, human resource development, IT, marketing, corporate communications, strategic planning and teaching.

What one learns in the army is equally relevant to the corporate world, in the former it is about winning and in latter it is about profit maximising. They make effective use of their experience in the Armed Forces to combat the corporate battlefield. It is a transformation from a soldier to a 'corporate warrior'.

Experts suggests that executives who are equipped with an Armed Forces background play the role much better than a regular professional, since the job in the Armed Forces offers new challenges everyday and one comes across various new situations on a regular basis. The Armed Forces fosters leadership in every individual that focuses not on short term results but also on long term requirements to improve the organisation.

The Armed Forces men are perfectly blended with the latest hi-technology, training techniques and strategic doctrines that help them to excel in various avenues. The army also teaches the importance of teamwork and that is the key learning, as it offers a platform to practice your skills in various fields as an individual and as part of a team.

If one follows the Armed Forces tradition in civil life too, one will get better appreciation and respect. The Corporate sector respects army people for their discipline, honesty and leadership quality. But an Armed Forces man does need some type of grooming before he enters the corporate domain since he needs to keep himself abreast with the latest trend. Re-skilling is certainly required, as in the armed forces career, the skills imparted are mostly specific to the Armed Forces needs.

The experience of three to four years of service in Armed Forces provides young men with the opportunity to encounter a variety of unusual or stressful circumstances and as a result, they may emerge from their service with an enhanced sense of their ability to cope with various problems and master hardships, which they consider to be a central component of their adult personality. Most men profit from this opportunity.

It is indeed a proud moment for Corporate India to have these Armed Forces people on board. With their level of commitment and discipline, they are certainly great asset to any organization.

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