

Law, Ethics and Soldiering: A Jurisprudential Study of Human Values in the Indian Army

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Abstract: The profession of soldiering is unique because it combines the legal authority to use force with the ethical responsibility to protect the nation while respecting human dignity and constitutional values. Beyond military skills and discipline, a professional soldier is expected to demonstrate integrity, courage, honour, accountability, selfless service, and respect for the rule of law. These human values are essential for maintaining public trust and ensuring the legitimate exercise of military power.

This paper examines the relationship between law, ethics, and soldiering in the Indian Army from a jurisprudential perspective. It draws upon major schools of jurisprudence, including natural law, legal positivism, sociological jurisprudence, and interpretivist theory, to explain how ethical values influence military leadership, decision-making, discipline, and professional conduct. The study also analyses the constitutional and legal framework governing the Indian Army, particularly the Constitution of India, the Army Act, 1950, and the concept of constitutional morality.

The paper further discusses contemporary challenges such as counter-insurgency operations, artificial intelligence, cyber warfare, and evolving human rights expectations, which require military personnel to balance operational effectiveness with ethical and legal responsibilities. It concludes that human values form the foundation of military professionalism and act as a bridge between military law and military ethics. Strengthening value-based leadership and constitutional commitment will enhance the effectiveness, credibility, and democratic legitimacy of the Indian Army in an increasingly complex security environment.

Keywords: *Military Ethics, Soldiering, Human Values, Constitutional Morality, Military Law, Indian Army, Jurisprudence.*

1. Introduction

The history of civilization demonstrates that military institutions have always occupied a paradoxical position within society. They are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting peace through the controlled use of force, preserving human life through preparedness for conflict, and safeguarding democratic institutions through the disciplined exercise of authority. This paradox becomes particularly significant in constitutional democracies where military power must operate within a framework of law, morality, and public accountability.

In India, the Army is not merely a fighting force; it is a constitutional institution entrusted with the protection of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security. The legitimacy of this institution derives not only from statutory authority under military law but also from its adherence to ethical standards and human values that have historically defined military professionalism. The values of honour, courage, discipline, integrity, loyalty, selfless service, justice, and accountability are not incidental attributes of military life; they constitute the moral architecture upon which the profession of soldiering rests.

The relationship between law and morality has long occupied a central place in jurisprudential discourse. Classical natural law theorists argued that legal systems derive legitimacy from moral principles, while legal positivists emphasized the distinction between law and morality. Contemporary jurisprudential scholars have attempted to reconcile these perspectives by recognizing that legal institutions cannot function effectively in the absence of ethical commitments. Military institutions represent one of the most important arenas in which this relationship between law and morality becomes visible. A soldier may possess legal authority to act, yet the legitimacy of such action often depends upon ethical considerations and value-based judgment.

The Indian Army provides a particularly important context for examining these issues. Operating within a diverse democratic society, the Army is frequently called upon to perform roles extending beyond conventional warfare. Counter-insurgency operations, disaster relief missions, peacekeeping deployments, humanitarian assistance, border management, and civil support functions require soldiers to navigate complex legal and ethical environments. In such situations, professional competence alone is insufficient. Decisions frequently involve questions concerning human dignity, proportionality, justice, restraint, accountability, and constitutional responsibility.

The contemporary security environment has further intensified these challenges. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons systems, cyber warfare, and information warfare are transforming the character of conflict. While technological innovation offers significant operational advantages, it also raises fundamental questions regarding accountability, moral agency, and ethical decision-making. As warfare becomes increasingly technological, the importance of human values becomes even more pronounced.

Against this background, the present study seeks to examine soldiering through a jurisprudential lens that places human values at the centre of military professionalism. Rather than treating law, ethics, and military effectiveness as separate domains, the paper argues that they are interconnected dimensions of a broader normative framework. Human values provide the foundation that enables military law to function effectively, military ethics to remain meaningful, and military professionalism to retain public legitimacy.

2. Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study are given below:

- 1 To examine the legal underpinnings of human values in the military profession.
- 2 To investigate how human values influence military ethics, discipline, leadership, and professional behaviour in the Indian Army.
- 3 To assess how military law, constitutional values, and moral obligations interact while making decisions.

- 4 To evaluate the importance of human values in military justice, operations, and leadership accountability.
- 5 To examine current moral dilemmas facing soldiers and suggest a human-centered strategy for enhancing military professionalism in the Indian Army.

3. Review of Literature

The relationship between law, ethics, morality, and military professionalism has long attracted scholarly attention across jurisprudence, political theory, constitutional studies, military sociology, and defence studies. The existing body of literature demonstrates that military institutions derive legitimacy not merely from legal authority or operational capability but also from their adherence to ethical principles and human values. While scholars have extensively examined military professionalism, civil-military relations, constitutional governance, and military ethics, relatively limited attention has been devoted to understanding human values as the jurisprudential foundation of soldiering, particularly within the context of the Indian Army. The present review analyses major contributions from international and Indian scholarship to establish the intellectual foundations of the study.

3.1 International Perspectives on Law, Ethics, and Military Professionalism

The philosophical foundations of military ethics can be traced to the writings of **Thomas Aquinas (1265–1274)**, whose natural law theory argued that human law derives legitimacy from moral principles grounded in reason and justice. Aquinas maintained that legal authority cannot be separated from ethical responsibility and that the exercise of force must be guided by moral considerations. His ideas later influenced the development of just war theory, which continues to shape contemporary discussions concerning military conduct, proportionality, necessity, and protection of non-combatants. The significance of Aquinas lies in his recognition that obedience to authority is morally meaningful only when authority itself remains aligned with justice and the common good.

A modern understanding of military professionalism was developed by **Samuel Phillips Huntington (1957)** in his seminal work *The Soldier and the State*. Huntington conceptualized the military as a professional institution characterized by expertise, responsibility, and corporateness. He argued that military professionalism is sustained through discipline, honour, and ethical commitment rather than mere coercive authority. His theory of objective civilian control emphasized that professional military institutions derive legitimacy through adherence to constitutional authority and professional norms. Huntington's work remains one of the most influential analyses of the moral and institutional foundations of military service.

Building upon Huntington's contributions, **Morris Janowitz (1960)** in *The Professional Soldier* examined the evolving role of military institutions in democratic societies. Janowitz argued that modern military organizations increasingly perform social and political functions requiring sensitivity to public values and democratic accountability. According to him, effective military leadership depends not only upon technical competence but also upon moral judgment, social responsibility, and ethical restraint. His scholarship expanded the understanding of soldiering beyond battlefield effectiveness to include broader obligations toward society and constitutional governance.

The jurisprudential relationship between law and morality was profoundly influenced by **H.L.A. Hart (1961)** in *The Concept of Law*. Hart distinguished legal validity from moral legitimacy and

argued that law derives authority from socially recognized rules rather than moral content. Although Hart maintained a conceptual separation between law and morality, his work indirectly highlighted the importance of ethical values within institutions exercising coercive power. In military contexts, Hart's scholarship underscores the necessity of legal discipline and procedural authority while simultaneously raising questions concerning the moral limits of obedience.

Responding to legal positivism, **Lon L. Fuller (1964)** in *The Morality of Law* argued that legal systems possess an internal morality rooted in principles such as consistency, transparency, fairness, and accountability. Fuller's scholarship is particularly relevant to military institutions because it demonstrates that law cannot effectively regulate conduct unless it reflects broader ethical commitments. His emphasis upon procedural justice reinforces the importance of fairness and legitimacy within military justice systems.

The humanitarian dimensions of military conduct received significant attention from **Jean Pictet (1966)**, one of the leading architects of modern international humanitarian law. Pictet emphasized that even during armed conflict, military operations must remain subject to principles of humanity, proportionality, and respect for human dignity. His work profoundly influenced the development of the Geneva Conventions and established ethical constraints upon the use of force. Pictet's scholarship demonstrates that military effectiveness and humanitarian responsibility are complementary rather than contradictory objectives.

A rights-based perspective emerged through the work of **Ronald Dworkin (1977)** in *Taking Rights Seriously*. Dworkin argued that legal systems must be interpreted in light of moral principles that protect individual dignity and justice. His interpretivist approach is particularly valuable in understanding military decision-making because it emphasizes that legal compliance alone is insufficient; decisions must also reflect underlying values of fairness, responsibility, and respect for persons.

The ethical dimensions of warfare were comprehensively examined by **Michael Walzer (1977)** in *Just and Unjust Wars*. Walzer developed a moral framework for evaluating the conduct of war and argued that soldiers remain ethical agents even during armed conflict. His analysis of responsibility, proportionality, civilian protection, and moral accountability remains central to contemporary military ethics. Walzer's work demonstrates that military operations cannot be divorced from moral judgment, regardless of operational necessity.

During the same period, **Charles Moskos (1977)** examined military organizations from a sociological perspective and emphasized the importance of institutional values, cohesion, and professional identity. Moskos argued that military effectiveness depends upon shared ethical commitments that strengthen trust and organizational integrity. His work reinforced the view that values are not peripheral to military institutions but constitute a central element of professional culture.

The leadership dimension of military ethics was enriched by **James MacGregor Burns (1978)** through his theory of transformational leadership. Burns argued that effective leaders inspire followers through moral purpose and shared values rather than authority alone. Expanding this perspective, **Bernard M. Bass (1985)** demonstrated that ethical leadership promotes organizational commitment, trust, and professional excellence. Their contributions remain highly relevant to military institutions where leadership often involves profound ethical responsibilities.

Contemporary scholarship has increasingly focused on the ethical implications of emerging technologies. **Robert Sparrow (2007)** questioned whether autonomous weapons systems can satisfy traditional principles of accountability and moral responsibility. Similarly, **Peter Asaro (2008)** argued that decisions involving the use of lethal force require human judgment and cannot be delegated entirely to machines. Building upon these concerns, **Shannon Vallor (2015)** emphasized the importance of virtue ethics in technologically advanced societies and warned that technological progress must remain guided by human values such as wisdom, responsibility, and moral judgment.

Collectively, international scholarship establishes that military professionalism is not merely a legal or operational concept but a moral enterprise grounded in values such as justice, honour, accountability, responsibility, and human dignity.

3.2 Indian Perspectives on Human Values, Constitutional Morality, and Soldiering

While international scholarship provides important theoretical foundations, the Indian context introduces unique constitutional, cultural, and institutional dimensions that enrich the study of military ethics and human values.

The normative foundations of constitutional governance in India are deeply influenced by the ideas of **Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1948–1950)**. During the Constituent Assembly Debates, Ambedkar emphasized the concept of constitutional morality, arguing that institutions must internalize values such as justice, equality, accountability, and democratic responsibility. Although Ambedkar did not write specifically about military ethics, his conception of constitutional morality provides a powerful framework for understanding the ethical obligations of military institutions operating within a democratic state.

The constitutional dimension of institutional responsibility was further elaborated by **Granville Austin (1966)** in *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*. Austin described the Constitution as a transformative social document aimed at securing justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. His scholarship demonstrates that all state institutions, including the armed forces, derive legitimacy from their commitment to these constitutional ideals. The Indian Army's professional ethos may therefore be understood as an extension of constitutional values into the sphere of national security.

The relationship between law, justice, and institutional accountability has been extensively examined by **Upendra Baxi (1982)**. Baxi argued that legal institutions must serve human welfare and dignity rather than merely enforce formal rules. His human-centred understanding of law provides an important foundation for analysing military institutions as guardians of both national security and constitutional values.

Similarly, **M.P. Jain** emphasized the centrality of the rule of law, constitutional governance, and institutional accountability within the Indian legal system. His scholarship highlights the principle that no institution, including the military, exists outside the framework of constitutional responsibility. This perspective reinforces the importance of balancing military discipline with democratic legitimacy.

Within strategic studies, **K. Subrahmanyam (1998)** made significant contributions to the understanding of military professionalism and civil-military relations in India. He consistently argued that military effectiveness must be accompanied by institutional integrity, constitutional

commitment, and democratic accountability. Subrahmanyam viewed professionalism not merely as operational competence but as an ethical commitment to national service.

The ethical foundations of military leadership were examined by **Lieutenant General S.K. Sinha (1998)**, who emphasized discipline, honour, loyalty, and constitutional fidelity as essential characteristics of the Indian Army. Sinha argued that the Army's apolitical character constitutes one of its greatest strengths and serves as a safeguard for democratic governance.

The relationship between military professionalism and ethical responsibility was further developed by **Lieutenant General V.R. Raghavan (2009)**. His writings on military ethics, civil-military relations, and leadership emphasized that commanders must balance operational requirements with humanitarian obligations and legal responsibilities. Raghavan's scholarship is particularly valuable because it situates ethical decision-making within the practical realities of military operations.

Beyond academic literature, the leadership philosophies of **Field Marshal K.M. Cariappa** and **Field Marshal S.H.F.J. Manekshaw** continue to influence the ethical culture of the Indian Army. Cariappa consistently emphasized integrity, discipline, secularism, and national service as the foundations of military professionalism. Manekshaw's leadership philosophy highlighted courage, honesty, accountability, and responsibility toward subordinates. Their contributions illustrate how ethical values become institutionalized through leadership traditions and organizational culture.

Contemporary Indian scholarship emerging from institutions such as the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), the United Service Institution of India (USI), and the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) has increasingly examined issues relating to military ethics, human rights, leadership development, artificial intelligence, and professional military education. These studies collectively emphasize that future military effectiveness will depend not only upon technological superiority but also upon the preservation of ethical standards and human values.

3.3 Research Gap

The review of literature reveals that international scholarship has extensively examined military professionalism, military ethics, leadership, constitutional governance, and the moral dimensions of warfare. Similarly, Indian scholars have contributed significantly to discussions concerning constitutional morality, military leadership, civil-military relations, strategic culture, and democratic accountability. However, existing studies largely examine these themes in isolation.

A significant gap remains in the literature regarding the integrated relationship between jurisprudence, human values, and military professionalism within the Indian Army. Most studies focus either upon military effectiveness, constitutional governance, military law, or ethical leadership, without providing a comprehensive analysis of how human values function as the normative bridge connecting these domains. Furthermore, limited research has examined soldiering through the combined perspectives of natural law theory, legal positivism, constitutional morality, military justice, and contemporary technological challenges.

The present study seeks to address this gap by developing a comprehensive jurisprudential framework that places human values at the centre of military professionalism. By integrating legal, ethical, constitutional, and operational perspectives, the study aims to demonstrate that

human values constitute the foundational principles that sustain both the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Indian Army in a democratic society.

4. Material and Methods

4.1 Methodology

This study adopts a doctrinal and analytical research methodology. The research is primarily based upon secondary sources, including constitutional provisions, statutory enactments, military regulations, judicial decisions, international humanitarian law instruments, scholarly books, journal articles, defence studies literature, military manuals, policy documents, and reports relating to military ethics and professional conduct.

The study employs a jurisprudential approach by examining the philosophical foundations of law and morality through the perspectives of natural law theory, legal positivism, sociological jurisprudence, and interpretivist jurisprudence. These theoretical frameworks are used to analyse the normative role of human values within military institutions.

The research further incorporates constitutional analysis to evaluate the relationship between military professionalism and constitutional governance in India. Relevant provisions of the Constitution of India, the Army Act, 1950, and military justice mechanisms are examined to understand the legal foundations of soldiering. Contemporary challenges associated with technological warfare, artificial intelligence, cyber conflict, and human rights obligations are also analysed to develop a comprehensive understanding of ethical decision-making in modern military environments.

4.2 Jurisprudential and Constitutional Foundations of Human Values in Soldiering

The profession of soldiering represents one of the most complex intersections between law, morality, authority, and public responsibility. Unlike ordinary professions, military service requires individuals to exercise state-sanctioned force while simultaneously adhering to ethical principles and constitutional obligations. Consequently, soldiering cannot be understood solely through statutory regulations or organizational discipline. It must be analysed through the broader jurisprudential framework that explains why legal authority ought to be exercised in a morally responsible manner.

Natural law theory provides one of the earliest foundations for understanding military ethics. Thomas Aquinas argued that law derives legitimacy from moral principles rooted in reason and justice. From this perspective, obedience is not an unconditional obligation; rather, lawful authority must remain aligned with the common good. Applied to military institutions, natural law suggests that soldiers are not merely instruments of coercive power but moral agents entrusted with the protection of society. Values such as justice, courage, honour, and integrity therefore become indispensable components of military professionalism.

Legal positivism, represented by H.L.A. Hart, emphasizes the importance of legal certainty, institutional hierarchy, and rule-based governance. Military organizations depend heavily upon obedience, discipline, and procedural authority. However, even within positivist frameworks, effective military institutions require ethical commitments that extend beyond formal rules. Blind obedience without moral judgment can undermine legitimacy, whereas disciplined obedience guided by ethical responsibility strengthens professional conduct.

The Indian constitutional framework further reinforces the normative significance of human values. The Constitution of India is not merely a legal document; it is a moral charter committed to justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. The concept of constitutional morality, articulated by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, requires public institutions to internalize these values in their daily functioning. The Indian Army, as a constitutional institution, derives legitimacy not only from statutory authority but also from its commitment to constitutional principles.

Military law in India, particularly the Army Act, 1950, establishes the legal structure necessary for discipline, accountability, and operational effectiveness. Yet military law alone cannot guarantee ethical conduct. Court-martial proceedings, command responsibility, disciplinary regulations, and leadership practices derive their legitimacy from underlying values of fairness, justice, and accountability. Thus, jurisprudence demonstrates that law and morality are not competing concepts but complementary foundations of military professionalism.

The Indian Army therefore operates within a unique normative framework where legal discipline, constitutional responsibility, and ethical values reinforce one another. Human values function as the bridge that connects military authority with democratic legitimacy and operational effectiveness with moral responsibility. The Jurisprudential and Constitutional Foundations of Human Values in Soldiering is given below in figure 1.

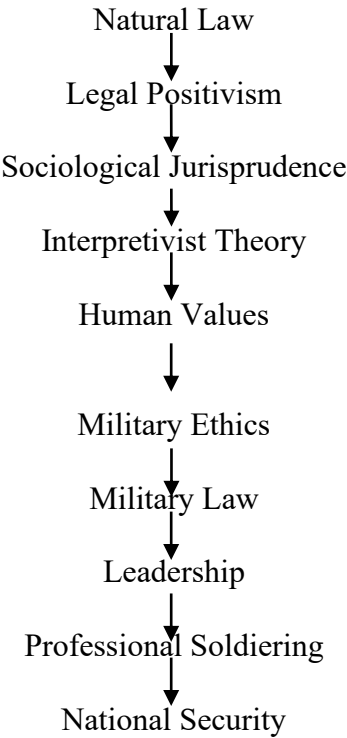


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

4.3 Human Values as the Ethical Foundation of the Indian Army

The Indian Army has historically been regarded as one of the most respected institutions in the country. This reputation has not been achieved solely through military victories or operational capability. Rather, it has been sustained through a deeply embedded culture of human values that shape military identity, leadership, and professional conduct.

Loyalty occupies a central place within military life. However, military loyalty extends beyond loyalty to commanders or units. In a constitutional democracy, the highest form of loyalty is loyalty to the nation and the constitutional order. The Indian soldier serves not an individual ruler or political authority but the Republic of India and its constitutional values.

Integrity constitutes another fundamental pillar of military professionalism. The effectiveness of military institutions depends upon trust. Commanders must trust subordinates, soldiers must trust leadership, and society must trust the armed forces. Integrity strengthens this trust by ensuring honesty, transparency, and consistency in conduct. Without integrity, military authority loses legitimacy and professional credibility.

Courage in military contexts extends beyond physical bravery. Soldiers frequently confront ethical dilemmas requiring moral courage. The willingness to make difficult decisions, accept responsibility, uphold justice, and resist unethical conduct reflects a deeper form of courage essential to professional soldiering.

Discipline represents the institutional expression of responsibility and self-control. Military discipline is not intended to suppress individual judgment but to channel human capabilities toward collective objectives. Properly understood, discipline strengthens professionalism by promoting accountability, reliability, and operational effectiveness.

Honour remains one of the most enduring values within military culture. Honour creates a moral obligation to act with dignity, fairness, and integrity even under conditions of extreme stress. It transforms military service from a mere occupation into a vocation rooted in ethical commitment.

Justice and respect for human dignity further distinguish professional military conduct from arbitrary violence. Whether operating during conventional warfare, counter-insurgency missions, humanitarian assistance operations, or peacekeeping deployments, soldiers remain obligated to respect the inherent dignity of all individuals. Such obligations derive not only from international humanitarian law but also from fundamental human values.

Selfless service represents perhaps the highest expression of military ethics. Soldiers routinely place collective interests above personal gain and accept extraordinary risks in defence of national security. This commitment to service reflects a profound moral orientation that transcends contractual employment relationships and embodies the ethical essence of soldiering.

4.4 Human Values in Military Operations and Professional Practice

The practical significance of human values becomes most visible during military operations. While legal frameworks establish permissible conduct, operational environments frequently require ethical judgment that extends beyond formal regulations. Human values therefore serve as guiding principles in situations characterized by uncertainty, risk, and competing responsibilities.

Counter-insurgency operations provide a particularly important example. Such operations often involve close interaction between military personnel and civilian populations. Success depends not merely upon tactical effectiveness but also upon public trust and legitimacy. Respect for human dignity, restraint in the use of force, accountability, and fairness become critical components of operational success. Excessive force may achieve short-term objectives but can undermine long-term legitimacy and public confidence.

Similarly, border management operations require a balance between national security imperatives and humanitarian responsibilities. Soldiers stationed in challenging environments frequently encounter situations involving civilians, migrants, and vulnerable populations. Human values provide an ethical framework for responding to such situations while maintaining operational effectiveness.

The Indian Army's extensive involvement in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance further demonstrates the practical importance of ethical values. During floods, earthquakes, pandemics, and other emergencies, soldiers often act as first responders. Public confidence in the armed forces during such crises reflects not merely organizational efficiency but also the values of compassion, service, and responsibility displayed by military personnel.

International peacekeeping operations present additional ethical challenges. Indian peacekeepers operating under United Nations mandates frequently work within culturally diverse and politically complex environments. Respect for human rights, impartiality, professionalism, and accountability become essential for maintaining credibility and legitimacy.

Civil-military relations also depend heavily upon human values. In democratic societies, military institutions must maintain public trust while remaining politically neutral. The Indian Army's reputation for professionalism, discipline, and constitutional loyalty has significantly contributed to stable civil-military relations. This trust represents one of the Army's most valuable institutional assets and is sustained through consistent adherence to ethical principles. The human values demonstrated by the Indian during various operations are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Operations and Human Values Demonstrated by the Indian Army.

Operation	Year	Human Values Demonstrated
Operation Meghdoot (Siachen)	1984–Present	Selfless Service, Courage, Endurance
Operation Vijay (Kargil War)	1999	Sacrifice, Honour, Patriotism
Counter-Insurgency Operations (J&K and North-East)	1980s–Present	Restraint, Proportionality, Human Dignity
UN Peacekeeping Missions	1950–Present	Impartiality, Human Rights, Professionalism
Operation Maitri (Nepal Earthquake)	2015	Compassion, Humanitarian Service
Operation Dost (Turkey–Syria Earthquake)	2023	Humanitarian Assistance, Empathy, Global Solidarity

- **Operation Meghdoot (1984–Present)** – The Indian Army's deployment in the Siachen Glacier demonstrates selfless service, courage, endurance, and resilience under some of the world's harshest climatic conditions.

- **Kargil War / Operation Vijay (1999)** – The conflict highlighted the values of sacrifice, honour, patriotism, courage, and unwavering commitment to national sovereignty.
- **Counter-Insurgency Operations in Jammu & Kashmir and the North-East (1980s–Present)** – These operations reflect the Army's emphasis on restraint, proportionality, respect for human dignity, and responsible use of force, despite complex security challenges.
- **United Nations Peacekeeping Missions (1950–Present)** – Indian Army personnel serving in missions across regions such as Congo, Sudan, Lebanon, and South Sudan have demonstrated impartiality, professionalism, humanitarian commitment, and respect for human rights.
- **Operation Maitri (2015)** – Conducted after the devastating Nepal earthquake of April 2015, this mission exemplified compassion, humanitarian service, international cooperation, and selfless dedication to human welfare.
- **Operation Dost (2023)** – Launched following the Turkey–Syria earthquake in February 2023, the operation reflected the Indian Army's commitment to humanitarian assistance, empathy, disaster relief, and global solidarity.

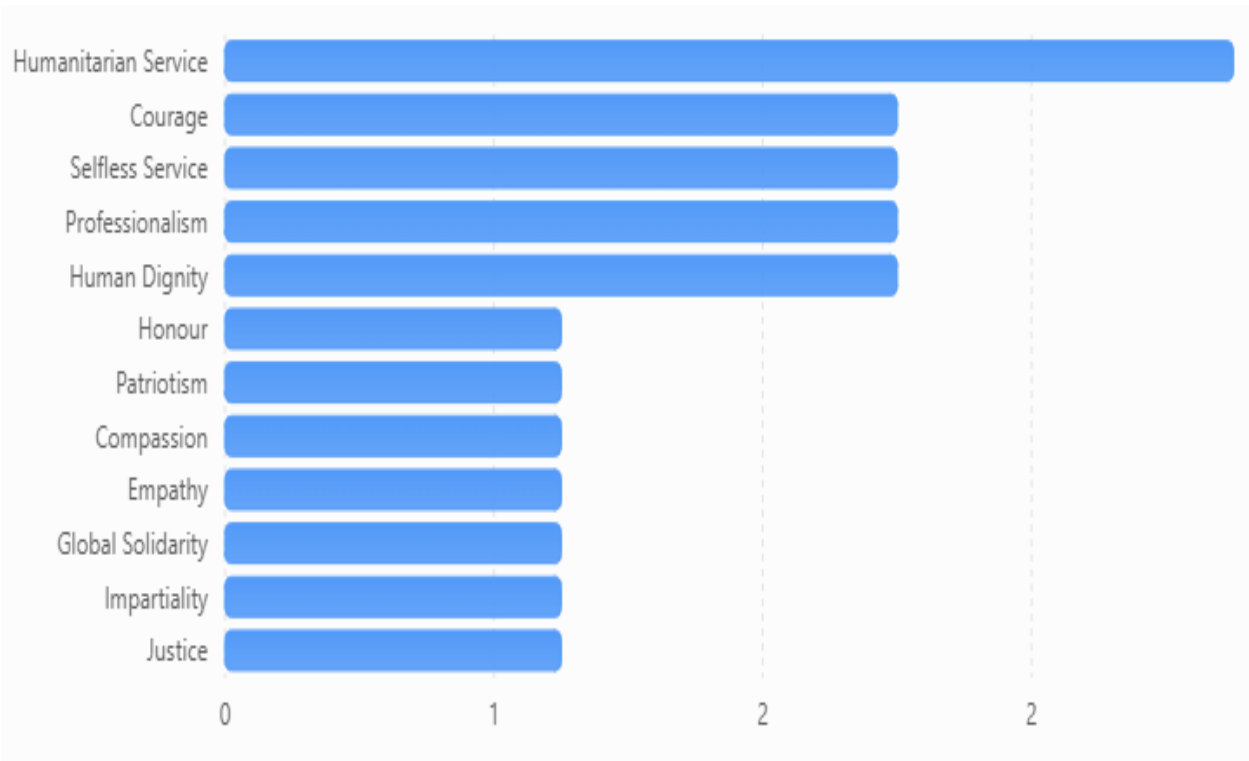


Figure 3: Frequency of Human Values Demonstrated Across Selected Indian Army Operations

5. Contemporary Challenges and the Future of Human-Centered Soldiering

The twenty-first century security environment is characterized by rapid technological transformation, evolving threats, and increasingly complex operational environments. While technological innovation offers unprecedented military capabilities, it also generates new ethical and legal challenges that require careful examination.

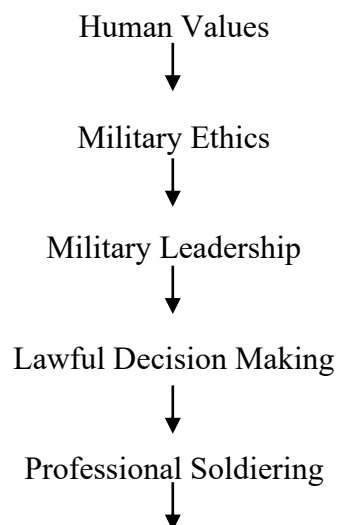
Artificial intelligence has emerged as one of the most significant developments in modern warfare. Autonomous systems can process information rapidly and support military decision-making. However, questions concerning accountability, responsibility, and moral agency remain unresolved. When autonomous systems make decisions involving lethal force, determining responsibility becomes increasingly difficult. Human values therefore remain essential for ensuring that technological capabilities do not undermine ethical accountability.

Cyber warfare presents similar challenges. Unlike conventional conflict, cyber operations often blur the distinction between military and civilian targets. Ethical decision-making requires careful consideration of proportionality, necessity, and potential humanitarian consequences. Human values provide an indispensable framework for evaluating such decisions.

Information warfare and digital manipulation further complicate the ethical landscape. The ability to influence public perception through technology raises concerns regarding truth, transparency, and democratic integrity. Military institutions must therefore balance operational effectiveness with broader commitments to ethical conduct and public accountability.

The growing importance of human rights in contemporary conflict environments also requires continuous adaptation. Military institutions increasingly operate under intense public scrutiny and legal oversight. Compliance with human rights standards is no longer viewed as a secondary consideration but as an integral component of professional military conduct.

The future of soldiering will therefore depend upon a human-centred approach to military modernization. Technological advancement must be accompanied by ethical education, value-based leadership, constitutional awareness, and professional accountability. Human values will remain the defining characteristic that distinguishes responsible military power from mere technological capability. The Human-Centered soldiering framework is given below in figure 2.



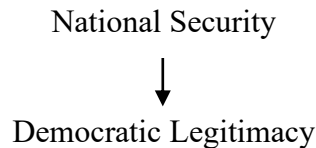


Figure 2: Human-Centred Soldiering Framework

6. Findings

1. Human values constitute the normative foundation of military professionalism and cannot be separated from effective soldiering.
2. Jurisprudential theories demonstrate that legal authority derives legitimacy from ethical principles and social responsibility.
3. Constitutional morality provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of the Indian Army within a democratic society.
4. Military law promotes discipline and accountability but requires ethical values to achieve legitimacy and public trust.
5. Values such as integrity, honour, courage, justice, accountability, and selfless service significantly contribute to operational effectiveness.
6. Human values play a critical role in counter-insurgency operations, humanitarian missions, peacekeeping activities, and civil-military relations.
7. Emerging technologies create new ethical challenges that cannot be addressed solely through technical or legal solutions.
8. The future legitimacy of military institutions will depend upon the continued integration of law, ethics, and human values.

7. Suggestions

1. Human values should be integrated more comprehensively into military education and training programmes.
2. Constitutional morality should form an essential component of professional military education.
3. Ethical leadership development should receive equal importance alongside operational training.
4. Military institutions should strengthen mechanisms promoting accountability, transparency, and responsible decision-making.
5. Ethical guidelines governing artificial intelligence and autonomous systems should be developed proactively.
6. Human rights education should be incorporated into operational training and leadership programmes.
7. Military justice mechanisms should continue emphasizing fairness, procedural integrity, and accountability.

8. Research on military ethics, jurisprudence, and human values should be encouraged within military and academic institutions.

8. Conclusion

The profession of soldiering occupies a unique position within democratic societies because it combines extraordinary authority with extraordinary responsibility. The Indian Army derives its legitimacy not merely from constitutional authorization or military capability but from its enduring commitment to human values that guide professional conduct and institutional behaviour.

This study has demonstrated that human values are not peripheral considerations within military life. They constitute the moral foundation upon which military law, discipline, leadership, and operational effectiveness ultimately depend. Jurisprudential analysis reveals that legal authority becomes meaningful only when exercised in accordance with principles of justice, accountability, dignity, and responsibility. Similarly, constitutional governance requires military institutions to internalize values that sustain democratic legitimacy and public trust.

In an era characterized by technological disruption, artificial intelligence, cyber warfare, and evolving security challenges, the importance of human values has become even more significant. Technology may transform the methods of warfare, but it cannot replace human judgment, moral responsibility, or ethical leadership. The future Indian Army will therefore remain strongest not merely because of advanced weapons or strategic capabilities but because of its continuing commitment to honour, integrity, courage, justice, and selfless service.

Ultimately, human values constitute the bridge between law and ethics, authority and responsibility, military effectiveness and democratic legitimacy. They transform the soldier from a bearer of arms into a guardian of constitutional order, national security, and human dignity.

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