

SERVICE GROOMING

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Introduction

Every time I see a video clip of a western country side or their urban landscape, there is one aspect that immediately draws attention – the impeccable cleanliness. In fact I have been part of a lot of discussions and heated debates on why we have not been able to maintain such standards in our public spaces. More often than not, the dialogue ends with an assertion on Governmental apathy and lack of stringent rules and/ or their implementation. However, there is one facet that comes up and slips through each time this topic is discussed – proper grooming of the new generation to imbibe a sense of pride and responsibility against littering. Nonetheless, it is argued that with more than 50% of the citizens not having access to a toilet, preaching cleanliness may not be worth its time. With this prelude, I will present some food for thought for all the esteemed readers.



Service Grooming. Walking around any Defence establishment in our country, one will be hard pressed to point a finger on the aesthetics. While some may wish to attribute this to the regular inspections and parades, those with a keen eye will note that major contributors to such high standards are the serving personnel who deter involuntarily from spoiling their surroundings. The reason why such behaviour sets in an individual is because of the orientation he receives by virtue of his association with his superiors and the resultant discipline that sets in his daily routine. In other words, that is a quintessential part of Service grooming.

Here, I would like to deviate and consider the other aspects of Service grooming, i.e. developing the core virtues of Patriotism, Honesty, Integrity, Gait, Communication Skills etc. An incorrect salutation, incorrect stance, spoiled uniform, unkempt hair or a slumbering walk, all of us have faced these issues in our daily working atmosphere. With increased workload, zero error syndrome and reduced manpower most of us tend to overlook these under the pretext of changing times.

With the change in socio - economical scenario in our country, the new generation joining our elite Service has a different perception of the 'Job' that they are here to do. This generation needs to be guided so as to ensure that our Service does not loose its sheen in the coming years. There are mannerisms that mark a soldier and make him stand apart in a crowd. These will be lost in time unless preserved and handed over from generation to generation. These do not get instilled through parades and divisions alone. All the gentlemanly characteristics have to be groomed into an individual over a lifetime, which is not possible purely within the walls of any training institute. From the day that an individual passes through the portals of his training base, everything that happens around him gets registered unwittingly in his mind. It is the

impact of all these previous experiences that shapes his responses in all the days to come.

A small comparison will serve the purpose; when it comes to our children, we keep a tight watch on them. There is an unmatched desire to see them walk right and tall in life. Such passion by the guardians has led to an average child faring better than his/ her parent. This, in turn, has translated to our country expanding her skilled work force, improving the economy and reducing the percentage of people below poverty line. So much so, that the sound family system in our society (which has instilled the concept of 'savings' in our lives) has even helped us find our way in the times of international economic crisis. Here, dedicated parenting has set the households in order thereby making the roots of our country stronger.

Way Ahead. A similar approach is required at the departmental level in our Service. We have young and gullible individuals joining the beginning grades of Officers and Sailors. The passion we have in bringing up our wards should also reflect in the dedication that we show in steering the young minds around us at the work place. All those personnel who have reached a stage in personal life where they enjoy the warmth and responsibility of their children would invariably be in charge of subordinates in their professional life. It is for them to realise that the way they want their children to shape up draws parallel with the way our Service needs to groom its personnel. It is absolutely important for the Service and for the nation that at departmental levels, our subordinates are monitored and guided on a day to day basis towards building an exceptional fighting force.

Conclusion. Each one of us must take active interest; dedicate efforts and energy to groom our subordinates. This will not only help us in building an exceptional fighting force which is physically, mentally and morally strong and focussed, but will also bind our Service in a single thread.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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