



Shedding Colonial Practices in Armed Forces

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Defence minister released a publication on '**Colonial Practices and the Armed Forces-A Review**' which proposes **shedding colonial practices** and advocated indigenisation in the **doctrines, procedures and customs** practised in the Armed Forces.

- Earlier, [Project Udbhav](#) was launched to synthesise **ancient wisdom with contemporary military practices**.

What are the Key Changes Proposed to Shed Colonial Vestiges?

- **Focus on Indigenous Strategies:** Efforts are underway to foster **India-centric strategic** thinking among young military leaders by incorporating texts from **ancient Indian strategists** into their courses.
 - Eg. Land campaign studies of Indian Generals such as [Marathas](#) or [Sikhs](#) and naval exploits of [Raja Raja Chola I and his son Rajendra Chola](#).
 - It could also include the **governance model of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya**.
- **Incorporating Indigenous Texts:** The **Army Training Command** has drafted reading material on ancient Indian concepts and doctrines for Army personnel.
 - It includes the '**Pearls of Ancient Indian Wisdom**' with extracts from the [Gita](#), [Panchatantra](#), [Arthashastra](#), [Chanakya Niti](#) and [Thirukkural](#).
- **Pan-India Character of Infantry Regiments:** The military is exploring ways to give a more **pan-India character** to the Army's infantry regiments, enhancing **diversity and representation** across units.
- **Enhanced Use of Indian Cultural Elements:** More Indian **poetry, prayers, songs** will be used in military training institutions replacing colonial era literature, such as "**IF by Rudyard Kipling**" and the current prayer in English at NDA.
- **Drafting a Tri-Service Act:** A major structural change being discussed is the replacement of the **three individual service Acts** with a **consolidated tri-service Act** to streamline governance across the **Army, Navy, and Air Force**.

What is Project Udbhav?

- **About:** It aims to integrate India's rich **historical military knowledge with modern military practices**.
 - It is a joint initiative between the [Indian Army](#) and the **United Services Institution of India (a think tank)**.
- **Incorporating Ancient Texts and Philosophies:**
 - **Chanakya's Arthashastra:** It emphasises the importance of **strategic partnerships, alliances, and diplomacy**, aligning with modern military practices like international cooperation and soft power.
 - **Thirukkural by Thiruvalluvar:** It promotes **ethical conduct** in all situations, including warfare, aligning with modern military ethics like [just war principles](#) and the [Geneva Convention](#).

- **Military Campaigns of Ancient Leaders:** Indian leaders such as **Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, and the Cholas** offer valuable insights into governance and military success.
- **Prominent Military Campaigns:**
 - **Naval Battle of Saraighat (1671):** [Lachit Borphukan's](#) Naval Battle of Saraighat is a prime example of using diplomacy, **psychological warfare, military intelligence**, and exploiting Mughal weaknesses.
 - **Chhatrapati Shivaji and Maharaja Ranjit Singh:** Both leaders employed tactics to defeat numerically superior **Mughal and Afghan forces** which are key lessons in [asymmetric warfare](#) and naval defence.
- **Indic Studies at Defence Institutions:** Academic institutions such as the **College of Defence Management (CDM)** have conducted studies that link Indian culture with strategic thinking, contributing valuable content to **Project Udbhav**.

What are Previous Initiatives to Shed Colonial Legacy?

- **Flag:** The Indian Navy has renamed 'Jack' to 'National Flag' and 'Jackstaff' to '[National Flag Staff](#)'.
- **Insignia:** The colonial cross of **St. George** was replaced with **Shivaji's octagonal stamp** in September 2022.
- **Rank:** The epaulettes (insignia of rank), traditionally adorned with **Nelson's ring**, now bear the imprint of **Chatrapati Shivaji**.
- **Traditional Dress:** Adoption of **Kurta-Pyjama** in naval messes.
- **Ceremonial Practices:** The Indian Army has started phasing out traditional practices such as **horse-drawn buggies**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q.Consider the following statements in respect of the National Flag of India according to the Flag Code of India, 2002: (2023)

Statement-I: One of the standard sizes of the National Flag of India is 600 mm x 400 mm.

Statement-II: The ratio of the length to the height (width) of the Flag shall be 3 : 2.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement-I and Statement- II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement- I
- (c) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- (d) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement- II is correct

Ans: (d)

