



Military Training and National Effectiveness - A Link through Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

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Abstract: This study has been undertaken to investigate the effect of military training on national effectiveness, through the framework of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions. It recommends military training for all youth in order to gradually enhance national culture and the country's effectiveness in the world.

Index Terms - Component, formatting, style, styling, insert.

National Effectiveness

National effectiveness encompasses a state's capacity to project influence internationally, with internal characteristics directly shaping external capabilities (Sana & Ludeki, 2022; Kunwar, 2026). It is the capacity to project and protect national interests internationally, exercise soft power, and contribute to global governance frameworks (Sana & Ludeki, 2022; Mammadova & Abdullayev, 2025). There is a direct correlation between national culture and effectiveness. Cultural industries bolster a country's soft power, international influence, and global competitiveness (Mammadova & Abdullayev, 2025). An internally more developed nation-state has greater capacity to realize external interests (Sana & Ludeki, 2022).

Military Training

A lot has been spoken and written about how military training builds character and instils values that ultimately benefit the society as a whole. Much of the reviewed literature focuses on better communication, greater resilience, deeper social cohesion, empathy, etc. For example, military training contributes to social character building through structured socialization processes that reshape identity, foster cohesion, and instil values such as discipline, responsibility, and teamwork (Jackson et al., 2012; Muchsam et al., 2023). Similarly, military training explicitly restructures behaviour through immersive environments where civilian identity is broken down and a new military identity is forged (Jackson et al., 2012). Boot camp deprives recruits of privacy, creates physical exhaustion, and habituates instant obedience, exercising near-complete control over daily routines (Green, 2017). Military schools create developmentally advantageous environments for adolescent boys by pairing educational principles with practices suited to their learning styles, facilitating both identity formation and the development of "soft" social skills (Jordan, 2021). Perceived social support from peers, commanders, and family is a key factor in soldiers' personal growth during the transition to military service (Weiss-Dagan & Taubman-Ben-Ari, 2024). Character education integrated into military training produces substantial gains: one study reported a 70% increase in resilience and 75% improvement in leadership skills among personnel who completed such programs, compared to 40% and 50% in those who did not (Suryaningsih, 2025). Physical training serves as an effective vehicle for cultivating devotion, responsibility, mutual assistance, and team cohesion, with sports games and military-applied sports rated most impactful (Romanchuk et al., 2021). Conscription durably shapes national identity and social integration decades after service (Ronconi & Ramos-Toro, 2025). Military education shapes moral character by teaching integrity, honesty, and respect, while also strengthening mental endurance and problem-solving capacity (Muchsam et al., 2023).

Military training thus contributes to social character building through multiple pathways – cohesion-building, structured character education, and value inculcation. However, all of these are tricky to quantify and even more difficult to link directly to national effectiveness.

Aim

This paper aims to first link a national effectiveness with Hofstede's Framework of Cultural Dimensions – a preexisting, quantified sociocultural scale – and then establish a correlation between that scale and military training.

Hofstede's Framework of Cultural Dimensions

In the late 1960s, Geert Hofstede, assisted by others, came up with six basic attributes that societies need to come to terms with, and called them 'dimensions of culture'. This framework of cultural dimensions was based on multiple surveys at IBM – of employees from 72 countries – conducted from 1967 to 1973, in order to define national culture along the six quantified dimensions, in order to explain variations in values and behavior (Chun et al., 2021; Beugelsdijk et al., 2015; Lee & Ande, 2023). Each dimension has been derived by comparing many, but not all, countries in the world. Each of them has been expressed on a scale that runs roughly from 0 to 100. The framework provides a useful scale to measure cultural differences. After acceptance, it led to a spike in observational studies about the impact of culture on activities and performance of multinational companies (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015). Some competing frameworks did appear in the wake of Hofstede's, but none attained as much influence (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015). Hofstede's framework is frequently used for comparative cross-cultural research in sociology, psychology, management, and marketing (Matharu et al., 2023).

The biggest caution is that Hofstede's scores are national averages, not portraits of all Indians (Hofstede, 2011; Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020; Venaik & Brewer, 2013). Multiple critiques argue these scores should not be used to characterize individuals, organizations, or subgroups within a country, because the underlying items do not form valid scales at those levels (Venaik & Brewer, 2013; Dhingra et al., 2024). The model explains patterns observable when agents are whole nations, not individuals, limiting its applicability to individual-level outcomes (Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the effectiveness of nations

As much as Hofstede's six-dimensional framework cannot be used to characterise individuals, it can quantify national culture as "software of the mind" that shapes how societies make collective decisions and perform on the world stage (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018; Hofstede, 2011; Ghemawat & Reiche, 2017). The framework has dominated cross-cultural management, international business, and political science research for decades, providing country-level scores that predict outcomes ranging from innovation output to pandemic mortality (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018; Chou et al., 2026). Yet its validity remains contested, with critiques of measurement reliability and conceptual coherence that qualify any strong claims about culture determining national effectiveness (Venaik & Brewer, 2016; Gerlach & Eriksson, 2021; Akaliyski et al., 2025). National cultural profiles directly shape how governments and institutions approach policy decisions, risk management, and strategic planning.

High power distance societies concentrate decision-making authority in hierarchical structures, where leaders organize and assign while subordinates defer, as observed in Indonesia and China (Lee & Ande, 2023). In contrast, low power distance societies distribute authority more broadly, and the magnitude of power distance gaps between countries has narrowed over time, though national rankings persist (Yi, 2026; Beugelsdijk et al., 2015). Power is distributed more equally in developed societies (Matharu et al., 2023). Power distance has been linked to lower openness and higher traditionalism in national personality profiles (Rocha, 2024). Countries with high power distance need to implement strategies to minimize hierarchy and encourage firms to embark on digital transformation (Khlif & Chaieb, 2025). Across countries, power distance emerges as a constraint on competitiveness, and hierarchical rigidity as a structural barrier to economic performance (Țimbalari & Herciu, 2026). High power distance societies also struggle to build strong innovation linkages, because tolerance of inequality weakens horizontal networks and stakeholder coordination that innovative development requires (Bashmakov, 2020).

Uncertainty avoidance determines whether nations favour rule-bound, risk-averse decision processes or tolerate ambiguity and entrepreneurial risk-taking. High uncertainty avoidance societies rely on formal procedures, planning, and social norms to reduce unpredictability, whereas low-uncertainty-avoidance societies are more comfortable with unstructured situations (Omrane & Khan, 2024; Drogendijk & Slangen, 2006).

The individualism-collectivism dimension, the most widely researched of Hofstede's constructs, shapes whether policy decisions prioritize individual autonomy or group cohesion (Ariffin, 2020; Drogendijk & Slangen, 2006). During the COVID-19 pandemic, countries with high individualism (loose inter-individual ties) experienced higher mortality rates and testing rates, and strict isolation policies proved less effective in such societies because they insufficiently accounted for impacts on individuals and immediate families (Chou et al., 2026). Collectivist societies, by contrast, achieved more successful organizational outcomes through teamwork-oriented approaches (Lee & Ande, 2023). Individualism is higher in societies with better existential security, higher socioeconomic development and more stable institutions (Akaliyski et al., 2025).

Cross-country evidence links indulgence positively with competitiveness and financial capability, suggesting that societies with more room for well-being, self-expression, and creative freedom often perform better on modern economic metrics (Țîmbalari & Herciu, 2026; Białowolski et al., 2023). In practical terms, low indulgence (restraint on gratification) can support discipline, but it can also make a society appear less open, less consumer-responsive, and less adaptive to global service expectations (Huang & Crotts, 2019; Lee & Ande, 2023).

Table 1: Summary of the impact of Military Training on National Effectiveness

Dimension	Effect on National Effectiveness	Key Evidence
Individualism–Collectivism	Can predict transparency, innovation output, ICT adoption, gender equality, educational achievement	(Minkov & Kaasa, 2022)
Power Distance (facet of IDV-COLL)	Associated with political/economic freedom, corruption levels	(Minkov, 2017; Minkov & Kaasa, 2022)
Flexibility–Monumentalism (revised LTO)	Best predictor of national differences in educational achievement	(Minkov, 2017)
Masculinity–Femininity	Lacks coherence; does not predict presumed correlates like achievement orientation or gender egalitarianism	(Minkov, 2017)
Indulgence–Restraint	Linked to pandemic mortality rates alongside PDI and IDV	(Chou et al., 2026)

India on Hofstede's scales

India's Hofstede profile is usually summarized as high power distance (77), mid-range individualism (48), moderate masculinity (56), low uncertainty avoidance (40), slightly high long-term orientation (51), and low indulgence (26) (Matharu et al., 2023; Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020; Białowolski et al., 2023). On that 0–100 scale, India's highest score is power distance and its lowest score is indulgence, with individualism and uncertainty avoidance both below the 50 midpoint and masculinity and long-term orientation just above it (Matharu et al., 2023; Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020).

Table 2: India's scores on Hofstede's six cultural dimensions

Dimension	India's Score	Comparative Scores	Implication for India
Power Distance	77 (Highest)	USA - 40 UK - 35	Greater acceptance of hierarchy (Matharu et al., 2023; Khelif & Chaieb, 2025)
Individualism	48 (Average)	USA - 91 UK - 89 South Korea – 18 China – 20	Moderate group orientation over individual autonomy (Matharu et al., 2023)
Masculinity	56 (Mid-high)	South Korea 39 UK 66	Moderately competitive, achievement-oriented society (Matharu et al., 2023)
Uncertainty Avoidance	40 (Low)	China – 30 UK – 35 Japan - 92	Comfort with ambiguity (Matharu et al., 2023)
Long-Term Orientation	51 (Above average)	Japan – 88 South Korea - 100	Pragmatic, moderately future-oriented (Matharu et al., 2023)
Indulgence	26 (Low)	USA – 68 UK - 69	High restraint, controlled gratification (Matharu et al., 2023)

India's power distance 77 indicates broad acceptance that power is distributed unequally, and Indian organizational life is often described as strongly top-down (Sharma et al., 2019). India's individualism (48) places it near the midpoint but still below 50, which implies stronger group integration than in the US or UK, and a continuing role for family and in-group obligations (Matharu et al., 2023; Dhingra et al., 2024; Thampi et al., 2015). India's classification as individualist or collectivist is ambiguous, oscillating between horizontal and vertical collectivism and individualism (Minkov, 2017). India's masculinity score (56) suggests a moderately achievement-oriented culture, but not one as sharply competitive as Western higher-scoring societies (Matharu et al., 2023; Dissanayake et al., 2015). Uncertainty avoidance (40) implies a relatively relaxed relationship to ambiguity and planning compared with countries that prefer highly structured rules (Matharu et al., 2023; Dissanayake et al., 2015; Lee & Ande, 2023). Long-term orientation (51) places India only slightly above the threshold for a longer-term outlook, so that the trait is present but not dominant (Matharu et al., 2023; Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020; Białowolski et al., 2023). India's indulgence (26) is its clearest low score, marking a restrained culture in which gratification is more tightly regulated by norms (Matharu et al., 2023; Lee & Ande, 2023).

Limitations in India's national character

The clearest limitation in this profile is high power distance, which normalizes dependence on power holders, comfort with unequal rights, and limited challenge to superiors, which can reduce initiative, blunt criticism, and slow institutional adaptation (Sharma et al., 2019; McSweeney, 2002; Kambur, 2025). High power distance is also associated with weaker outcomes on measures tied to decentralized capability, because it discourages flatter coordination and participatory decision-making (Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020; Minkov & Kaasa, 2022; Bissessar, 2018). Importantly, high power distance can inhibit innovation, suggesting that India's hierarchical culture may hamper technological transformation efforts (Khelif & Chaieb, 2025). High power distance implies that lower-ranking members in Indian organisations are less likely to question superiors, which can suppress voice, criticism, and bottom-up correction inside institutions (Hofstede, 2011; Matharu et al., 2023; Dissanayake et al., 2015).

A second limitation is ambiguous individualism. The score of 48 looks simple, but evidence suggests that India cannot be cleanly labelled either individualist or collectivist. More nuanced work finds horizontal and vertical forms coexisting, with substantial intracultural heterogeneity (Fatehi et al., 2020). That ambiguity matters because national behaviour may oscillate between loyalty to group and personal advancement, thus

complicating trust, consistency, and coalition-building in the global arena (Fatehi et al., 2020; Poulová et al., 2024). Individualism has been positively related to innovation, suggesting India's collectivist shades may slow technology adoption (Khelif & Chaieb, 2025). India's mixed but still collectivist-leaning position adds a second internal limit. Several papers describe Indians as more collectivistic than individualistic, with stronger group ties and a preference for working as participants in a group (Matharu et al., 2023). That can help coordination and loyalty, but when combined with high power distance it can undermine meritocracy and innovation by favouring harmony, loyalty, and relationship-based authority over competence and creative dissent (Sharma, 2025). The Indian evidence on corporate leadership makes that cost concrete. Collectivist mentoring can reduce discrimination and support team development, but high power distance is associated with stalled promotions, in-group bias, and persistent pay gaps in Indian multinationals (Sharma, 2025). More broadly, subcultural norms shape decisions and incentives, so nationally aggregated scores can hide internal inequalities linked to caste, region, and language (Poulová et al., 2024; Sharma, 2025).

A third quieter but still important limitation is restraint rather than openness to gratification. Cross-country evidence links higher indulgence, in some settings, to better financial capability (Huang & Crotts, 2019; Białowolski et al., 2023). Indulgence is the dimension that captures how strongly societies regulate basic desires and enjoyment, and India's score of 26 places it firmly on the restraint side (Białowolski et al., 2023; Poulová et al., 2024; Matharu et al., 2023). India's very low indulgence score implies tighter social control over enjoyment and impulses, which can limit openness to experimentation, service orientation, and quality-of-life priorities (Țîmbalari & Herciu, 2026; Lee & Ande, 2023). That matters internally because modern development increasingly depends not only on compliance and effort, but also on creativity, user-focused services, and social trust. In the global order, the same cultural profile can reduce India's usable power. Rising powers do not automatically convert economic weight into bargaining capacity, because domestic political constraints can make capabilities difficult to mobilize internationally (Kahler, 2013). A high-power-distance system can worsen this problem by centralizing decisions and slowing the flexible, networked, transparent coordination that complex global bargaining rewards (Hofstede, 2011; Kahler, 2013).

India's global economic integration may also be constrained by the dimensions that shape negotiation and trade behavior. National culture significantly influences the efficiency of international negotiations through communication, decision-making, and trust-building (Hurtado et al., 2024). Trade evidence suggests that of Hofstede's dimensions, masculinity is the clearest positive predictor of international trade, which means India's only moderately masculine score of 56 does not offer a strong trade-cultural advantage, which more sharply competitive cultures might have (Kristjánsdóttir et al., 2017; Matharu et al., 2023).

India's slight long-term orientation offers only partial compensation. Long-term orientation is positively associated with financial capability up to around a score of 50, and India sits almost exactly at that threshold with 51 (Białowolski et al., 2023; Matharu et al., 2023). That suggests some pragmatic capacity, but not a strong enough edge to neutralize the larger costs of hierarchy and restraint.

Table 3: Limitations in India's national character

Dimension (Score)	India's Tendency	Likely Cost
Power Distance (77)	High hierarchy. High PD stable across Indian youth (Venaik & Brewer, 2013)	Weaker competitiveness and bargaining flexibility. (Țîmbalari & Herciu, 2026; Kahler, 2013) Hinders innovation. (Matharu et al., 2023; DasGupta & Roy, 2023)
Individualism (48)	Mid-low, group-oriented. Ambiguous classification confuses partners (Fatehi et al., 2020)	Lower innovation in some cross-country evidence. (Kapoor et al., 2021). Collectivism suppresses innovation (Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020)
Indulgence (26)	Strong restraint	Lower competitiveness and weaker external appeal (Țîmbalari & Herciu, 2026; Hurtado et al., 2024). Worsens energy poverty conditions (Singh, 1990) Low indulgence weakens financial outcomes (Monrouxe et al., 2022)
Masculinity (56)	Moderate	Only limited trade advantage relative to stronger trading cultures (Kristjánsdóttir et al., 2017; Matharu et al., 2023). Lacks competitive edge (Matharu et al., 2023)
Long-Term Orientation (51)	Mildly pragmatic	Not strong enough alone to offset other constraints (Białowolski et al., 2023; Minkov, 2017)
Uncertainty Avoidance (40)	Low UA does not predict innovation (Sharma et al., 2019)	Relaxed attitude hinders structured planning (Singh, 1990)

Military training and national character

India's national character can benefit from military training because it directly addresses the constraints identified in Hofstede's framework. For example, while high power distance (77) normalizes hierarchy and discourages dissent, military training emphasises teamwork, initiative, and merit-based advancement (Sharma et al., 2019; McSweeney, 2002; Kambur, 2025). Recruits are trained to operate under standardized rules and merit-based systems, which directly counterbalance India's high power distance score of 77 (Matharu et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2019; Hofstede, 2011). This reduces hierarchical rigidity and promotes egalitarian participation.

India's uncertainty avoidance score (40) is low, reflecting comfort with ambiguity. In practice this can hinder structured planning and dilute precision in implementation. Military training strengthens resilience against uncertainty, allowing hierarchies to function with agility. Training in unpredictable and high-stress environments develops confidence in decision-making and reduces reliance on rigid structures (Dissanayake et al., 2015; Lee & Ande, 2023). This can effectively unbind the shackles imposed by high power distance, generating adaptability crucial for innovation ecosystems and global competitiveness (Kapoor et al., 2021).

Exposure to military environments fosters cross-cultural integration. India's collectivist tendencies (individualism score 48) often manifest in strong in-group loyalties, but military training mixes recruits from diverse regions, languages, and castes. Service programs encourage collaboration across diverse backgrounds, fostering national integration and reducing intracultural divisions tied to caste, region, and language (Sharma, 2025). This integration helps reduce intracultural divisions and strengthens national unity (Fatehi et al., 2020; Poulková et al., 2024). The emphasis on meritocracy in military training mitigates the negative effects of collectivism combined with high power distance. Promotions and recognition are based on performance and discipline rather than social ties, encouraging fairness and reducing in-group bias (Sharma, 2025; Bashmakov, 2020). Military service enhances collectivist strengths such as teamwork, loyalty, and group cohesion, while simultaneously mitigating innovation barriers through structured skill

development. Hence, military training can amplify the merits of collectivism without necessarily diminishing individualism.

Military training instils civic responsibility and patriotism, which can balance India's low indulgence score (26). By encouraging service above self, training helps individuals move beyond externally-imposed restraint into constructive self-discipline that does not hinder innovation, service orientation, and national development (Huang & Crotts, 2019; Białowolski et al., 2023; Lee & Ande, 2023).

Exposure to military service instils civic responsibility and patriotism, which can balance India's low indulgence score of 26. By encouraging service above self, military institutions help individuals move beyond restraint into constructive discipline that supports innovation, service orientation, and national development (Huang & Crotts, 2019; Białowolski et al., 2023; Lee & Ande, 2023).

Finally, military training provides transferable skills – leadership, teamwork, adaptability – that enhance employability in civilian sectors. These skills directly contribute to reducing developmental constraints posed by India's Hofstede profile, particularly in innovation, competitiveness, and governance (Țîmbalari & Herciu, 2026; Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020). Evidence from other countries shows that military service can strengthen institutional trust and civic participation, outcomes that India could benefit from (Bove et al., 2022).

Table 2: Expected impact of Military Training on India's national character

Mechanism	Hofstede Dimension	Effect on India's National Character
Value inculcation	Collectivism	Shifts loyalty from family/clan to nation (Bove et al., 2022)
Cross-social group interaction	Collectivism	Forges ties across caste and regional lines (Bove et al., 2022)
Standardization and uniformity	Collectivism	Replaces individual identity with group identity (Murat & Erbilin, 2023)
Hierarchical command structure	Power Distance	Reinforces acceptance of inequality as social order (Bove et al., 2022)
Competitive selection and toughness	Masculinity	Promotes assertiveness and achievement orientation (Lowe, 2019; Hallett, 2022)

Mandatory Draft

The benefits of military training to national character cannot be accrued as long as only a small fraction of youth join the military. One way of wider application of military training in the society is through mandatory military service. Mandatory draft could address India's cultural constraints by reducing hierarchy, balancing collectivism with meritocracy, and fostering openness. It would provide a structured path to discipline, innovation, and civic responsibility, directly countering India's high power distance and low indulgence scores (Matharu et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2019; Hofstede, 2011). A compulsory draft system would expose youth to egalitarian structures, weakening the cultural tendency to defer unquestioningly to authority figures. It would also encourage collaboration across diverse backgrounds, fostering national integration and reducing intracultural divisions tied to caste, region, and language (Fatehi et al., 2020; Poulová et al., 2024). Draft service could enhance civic responsibility and patriotism, balancing India's restrained cultural orientation with constructive discipline that supports innovation, service orientation, and national development (Huang & Crotts, 2019; Białowolski et al., 2023; Lee & Ande, 2023). By instilling values of punctuality, accountability, and collective responsibility, draft service would help India adapt to global service expectations and consumer responsiveness.

However, implementation must consider diversity, socioeconomic realities, and institutional capacity to avoid reinforcing existing inequalities. A poorly designed draft system could exacerbate social divisions rather than reduce them (Sharma, 2025; Poulová et al., 2024). Careful planning is required to ensure

inclusivity and fairness. A carefully designed draft system could strengthen India's national character while ensuring inclusivity and fairness. By combining military discipline with civic responsibility, mandatory draft could help India reconcile its ambiguous position between individualism and collectivism, creating a balanced cultural orientation that supports both innovation and cohesion (Minkov, 2017; Fatehi et al., 2020).

The Agnipath scheme

The Agnipath scheme provides short-term military service opportunities, fostering discipline, national integration, and skill development (Menon, 2022; Singh, 2025). By recruiting young individuals for limited service periods, the scheme exposes them to structured environments that emphasize punctuality, accountability, and meritocracy, directly countering India's high power distance score of 77 (Matharu et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2019). Agnipath recruits are drawn from diverse regions, languages, and social backgrounds, which helps reduce intracultural divisions tied to caste, region, and language. This integration strengthens national unity and mitigates the ambiguity of India's collectivist orientation (Fatehi et al., 2020; Poulová et al., 2024).

The scheme also addresses India's low indulgence score of 26 by encouraging openness, confidence, and adaptability among youth. Military service under Agnipath instills civic responsibility and patriotism, helping individuals move beyond restraint into constructive discipline that supports innovation, service orientation, and national development (Huang & Crotts, 2019; Białowolski et al., 2023; Lee & Ande, 2023). Agnipath's structured training builds resilience against uncertainty, which is particularly relevant given India's relatively low uncertainty avoidance score of 40. By teaching recruits to operate effectively in unpredictable and high-stress environments, the scheme develops confidence in decision-making and reduces reliance on rigid structures (Dissanayake et al., 2015; Lee & Ande, 2023).

Furthermore, Agnipath provides skills in leadership, teamwork, adaptability, which can enhance employability in civilian sectors. These skills directly contribute to reducing developmental constraints posed by India's Hofstede profile, particularly in innovation, competitiveness, and governance (Țîmbalari & Herciu, 2026; Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020). By combining military discipline with vocational training, Agnipath helps balance collectivist values with meritocratic advancement. This balance is essential for India's effectiveness in the global order, where both autonomy and cooperation are critical (Minkov, 2017; Fatehi et al., 2020).

Counter Arguments

The reviewed literature that supports this paper's hypothesis is not without opposing views. Hofstede's model has been criticized as too deterministic, with fundamental flaws in methodology suggesting a single method of data collection is too limited (Sharma et al., 2019). Some cultural dimensions could be more oriented to socio-economic issues than purely cultural, conflating economic development with cultural programming (Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020). Hofstede's original individualism-collectivism scores substantially overestimate individualism in English-speaking countries and collectivism in East Asian societies, which can bias research findings (Akaliyski et al., 2025). Relying on outdated indices may perpetuate cultural stereotypes and underpin flawed theorizing (Akaliyski et al., 2025).

More specifically, the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance lacks internal reliability and is not a predictor of its presumed correlates, such as trust, innovation, or subjective well-being (Minkov, 2017). A large-scale replication found it does not predict economic freedom too (Minkov, 2017). The Masculinity-Femininity dimension lacks coherence, as masculine and feminine job goals correlate positively rather than negatively (Minkov, 2017). Power Distance and Individualism empirically form one factor, collapsing into a single pole rather than operating as conceptually distinct dimensions (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018; Beugelsdijk et al., 2015). The magnitude of power distance differences across countries has narrowed over time (Yi, 2026). In fact, a revised Minkov-Hofstede model reduces the framework to only two robust dimensions: Individualism-Collectivism and Flexibility-Monumentalism (Minkov, 2017; Minkov & Kaasa, 2022). Even then, while collectivist values are seen to slow down innovation, they do foster public service motivation, suggesting complex trade-offs for national development (Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020; Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018).

There is also evidence that cultural rankings change over time. Newer cross-country work on long-term orientation finds that countries, including India, no longer necessarily occupy the same relative positions they held in the original Hofstede era (Chun et al., 2021). For instance, modernization continuously drives cultural change toward higher individualism and indulgence, though roughly half of national cultural variation remains unique to each country (Beugelsdijk & Welzel, 2018). That makes any fixed reading of national character more tentative than the neat six-number profile suggests (Minkov, 2017; McSweeney, 2023).

Some of the above caution matters especially for India because the country shows strong regional and subcultural variation. Research on Indian entrepreneurship argues that cultural behavior is tied to region-specific environments and that an insider, India-specific perspective may reveal dimensions beyond Hofstede's framework (Thampi et al., 2015). More recent Indian individual-level work also finds lower power distance, lower collectivism, and lower masculinity than the classic national scores imply, while uncertainty avoidance appears higher in that workforce sample (Dhingra et al., 2024).

The evidence on innovation is also mixed. One cross-country study finds that power distance, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation are positively associated with corporate innovation policies, while individualism is negative (Gallego-Álvarez & Pucheta-Martínez, 2020). Another finds the reverse on key dimensions: high power distance and collectivism are associated with lower national innovation, while more individualistic and low-power-distance countries perform better (Kapoor et al., 2021). Some research efforts have doubted the positive consequence of military for national character. These are tabulated below:-

ble 5: Possible negative impact of military training on national character

Hofstede Dimension	Military Training Mechanism	Effect on National Character
Power Distance	Hierarchical command structures, deference to rank (Hosen & Islam, 2025)	Normalizes inequality as social order, institutionalizes authority acceptance (Kambur, 2025). Reinforces acceptance of unequal power distribution (Dissanayake et al., 2015)
Individualism-Collectivism	Value inculcation, group socialization, peer reinforcement (Hosen & Islam, 2025). Mandatory cross-social group interaction (Fatehi et al., 2020)	Shifts identity from individual autonomy toward group cohesion and national belonging. Shifts loyalty from family/clan to nation (Fatehi et al., 2020)
Uncertainty Avoidance	Structured routines, formal procedures, risk-averse decision-making (Şerban, 2022). Structured military routines (Fatehi et al., 2020)	Reduces tolerance for ambiguity, increases preference for rules and predictability. Increases preference for formal rules (Dissanayake et al., 2015)

Conclusion

If the limitations of Hofstede's cultural model are set aside, its six-dimension framework provides a strikingly clear lens through which to view India's national character and the potential benefits of military training. Hofstede's scores for India – high power distance, moderate collectivism, restrained indulgence, and average uncertainty avoidance – picture a society that is hierarchical, group-oriented, cautious, and disciplined. Individually, these traits seem stabilizing in some contexts, but can also inhibit innovation, weaken meritocracy, and reduce adaptability in a rapidly changing global order. In combinations and collectively, their effects can be more adverse.

Military training can emerge as a corrective force to these cultural weaknesses. By design, military institutions emphasize discipline, punctuality, and accountability, but they also reward initiative, teamwork, and merit-based advancement. This can directly address India's high power distance: recruits learn to respect authority while simultaneously being empowered to act decisively within their roles. India's collectivist tendencies, reflected in its average individualism score, often manifest in strong in-group loyalties that can fragment national cohesion. Military training counters this by mixing recruits from diverse regions, languages, and castes, creating a unified environment where cooperation transcends local identities. This integration strengthens national unity and mitigates the ambiguity of India's collectivist orientation. It also builds resilience against uncertainty, a crucial skill given India's relatively low uncertainty avoidance. Training in unpredictable and high-stress environments develops confidence in decision-making and reduces reliance on rigid structures, preparing individuals for both military and civilian challenges.

The country's low indulgence score suggests restraint and limited openness to gratification, which can hinder adaptability and service orientation. Military training, however, instils civic responsibility and patriotism, encouraging service above self. This shift transforms restraint into constructive discipline, supporting innovation and responsiveness in sectors where creativity and consumer satisfaction are vital. Transferable skills such as leadership, teamwork, and adaptability further enhance employability, directly contributing to India's competitiveness and governance.

The Agnipath scheme exemplifies how short-term military service can operationalize these benefits. By combining military discipline with vocational training, Agnipath balances collectivist values with meritocratic advancement. It equips youth with practical skills while fostering national integration and resilience. In this way, the scheme not only strengthens India's national character but also prepares its workforce for global challenges.

Mandatory draft, though controversial, could extend these benefits across the population. If carefully designed to ensure inclusivity and fairness, compulsory service would expose youth to egalitarian structures, weaken hierarchical dependence, and instil civic responsibility. It would help reconcile the currently ambiguous position between individualism and collectivism, creating a balanced cultural orientation that supports both innovation and cohesion.

To sum up, while Hofstede's model has methodological and theoretical limitations, overlooking them reveals a compelling narrative: India's cultural profile strongly points to the benefits of military training. By addressing hierarchy, collectivism, restraint, and uncertainty, military service can transform India's national character into one that is disciplined yet innovative, cohesive yet meritocratic, and restrained yet adaptive. This transformation is not merely theoretical – it is a practical pathway to enhancing India's effectiveness internally and in the global order.

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