



# Chief of Defence Staff of India: A Critical Analysis

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**Abstract:** Indian defence forces have evolved over the time. India is a country which has both land and maritime borders to protect. India's relations with its neighbouring countries have been black and white throughout the history. In such a situation, India needs a great defence system for which it is moving with its full vigour and strength. India has taken several steps to strengthen its security not only on borders but also in the internal areas. In this process, India has made several changes. One such change has been creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff. This article has been an honest effort to analyse the Chief of the Defence Staff of India.

**Keywords:** Chief of Defence Staff, Importance, Challenges.

## Introduction

Security environment in the world in general and India in particular has been changing at a very fast pace. Nothing in the international politics has been static for long. We have witnessed various challenges in the security scenario in the internal as well as external fields. Being surrounded with the non-trustworthy neighbours and rapidly changing circumstances in the various parts of the world, we need to continuously change our strategy to uphold our integrity and sovereignty. Defence forces have been an integral part of this requirement. In the rapidly changing world, we have to be continuously evolving in the various fields directly or indirectly attached to the security of our country. Creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff has been one such step which Indian government has taken in the recent times to fight the challenges of security.

At present armed forces of India are headed by Chief of Defence Staff<sup>1</sup>. He is the officer of highest rank in the armed forces. Supreme commander of Indian armed forces has been the president of India. Chief of Defence Staff is the Chief executive with strategic & operational authority<sup>2</sup>. He must not have even a single bit of hesitation while speaking the truth about the security to the government. He must be fair and impartial enough while holding interests of nation above everything else. He must be capable enough to take the decisions.

He has been the member of:

- Defence Space Agency
- Defence Cyber Agency
- Nuclear Command Authority
- Defence Planning Committee (chaired by national security advisor)
- Defence Acquisition Council (chaired by Minister of Defence)
- National Security Council
- Chiefs of Staff Committee
- Department of Military Affairs

He is military head as well as permanent chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee<sup>3</sup>. He reports to the Ministry of Defence of India. He has been given residence in New Delhi. He is appointed by Appointments Committee

of the Cabinet. His term of office is three years or until the age of sixty-five years whichever is earlier. He has succeeded the chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee. His salary and other perks are same as those of the Chief of Defence Staff. General Bipin Rawat was the first Chief of Defence Staff of India who took charge of the office on January 1, 2020<sup>4</sup>. After his demise, Lieutenant General Anil Chauhan has been appointed as a Chief of Defence Staff of India<sup>5</sup>.

### Evolution

Since the independence of India, it has been suggested by many defence experts that the post of Chief of Defence Staff should be created<sup>6</sup>. Kargil Review Committee officially recommended the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff. Many other commissions like Naresh Chandra Task Force in the year 2012 as well as Lieutenant General D. B Shekatkar Committee in the year 2016 recommended the creation of Chief of Defence Staff. It was on August 15, 2019 Mr. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India announced about the creation of this post. Cabinet Committee on Security issued its formal statement on December 24, 2019 about the post. Initially four-star rank officer was to be appointed on this post. Later on service rules of Army Air-force & Navy were amended by government of India. These amendments have allowed retired Service Chief as well as three-star officers to be eligible for the post of the Chief of Defence Staff. He is uniformed officer who is on active duty in Indian military. In the structure of tri-service command, he is the head. In his duty, Vice-Chief of Defence Staff assists him as the deputy.

### Importance

Chief of Defence Staff is an important position:

- It helps in maintaining coordination among different forces.
- It combines fighting abilities of different armed forces of India.
- It is helpful in increasing the effectiveness of tri-services.
- It brings the overall integration of various combat capabilities of Indian armed forces.
- In comparison to the Defence Secretary who has been the main defence-advisor to the government, Chief of Defence Staff is single point military-advisor to the Indian Government and the Prime Minister of India. No military command is held by him.
- Department of Military Affairs which is completely newly created is held by him. Ministry of Defence is the top authority under whose jurisdiction this department of military affairs is executed.
- He brings optimal utilisation of resources in the form of men, money & material
- He implements five-years defence capital acquisition plan
- He implements two-years roll on annual acquisition plan
- He follows integrated capability development plan
- He is responsible for prioritization in capital acquisition proposals
- Chief of Defence Staff is permanent chairman of Chiefs of Staff committee. During this, he will have the following functions:
  - He is involved in setting the better standards for the procedures of procurement of weapons for armed forces.
  - He helps in combining operations of Navy, Airforce and Army.
  - According to the requirements, he has the authority to initiate new theatre commands
  - He commands the agencies, commands & organisations of tri-services which are related to space and cyber fields.

Reforms which are expected to be brought out by Chief of Defence Staff:

- Creation of theatre commands according to the requirements. These may include two-five theatre commands which will be needed to deal with various challenges faced by India in its defence scenario. This each command will be constituted by taking units from Army, Airforce and navy. This will work in complete coordination with each-other so that efficiency could be increased and effective results could be got. This command will work independently of each-other. This will increase efficiency but will decrease the time to complete the task.
- Along with these commands Peninsula command may be created which will include Western as well as Eastern command of Indian Navy
- Jammu Kashmir command may be created (completely dedicated to cross-border terrorism affected state)

- Logistics command which will be completely dedicated for logistics may be created according to the requirement of the tri-services
- Air-Defence command will be like Jewel in the Crown to protect Indian integrity as well sovereignty

## Challenges

No doubt that Chief of Defence Staff is a position with power but at the same time it is not free from challenges:

- It is not be easy to build a bridge between the government and the military organisation because the bureaucracy in the government has been resistant to change.
- To balance among Army, Navy & Airforce while creating commands according to the requirement of the country.
- To create a balance while fulfilling the requirement of weapons by the different armed forces.
- The pace with which operational capability needs to be built according to the needs of the time.
- It will be tough to create fresh structure which can support integrated operations, planning & training.
- To articulate of military strategies, structured processes, techniques, tactics & procedures according to the requirements of the country.
- To balance between the government initiatives towards self-reliance in manufacturing of Defence weapons as well as the efficiency of armed forces.
- To shed various kinds of colonial legacies as well as to foster pridal sense in Indian armed forces
- To honour India's Martial traditions which are related to Mahabharat, Chola & various other empires.

## Conclusion

It has never been easy for India to secure its national interests in the rapidly changing International scenario but after independence India has continuously tried its best to cope with the emerging situations and challenges. Time to time India has proved it. No doubt that the position of Chief of Defence Staff is full of challenges in which the biggest challenge is to take a balanced yet timely and efficient step to combat with the situation emerging on the unexpected lines. But India as well as its armed forces have always been ready to take the challenges which are new to them and they have proved their capabilities each and every time. Chief of Defence Staff itself is a continuously evolving chair which is trying to fulfill aspirations of Indian armed forces to secure India by better cooperating, co-ordinating their efforts in the field. It is not doubtful that if efforts are better coordinated, results will be much better.

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