

CONCLUSION

A direct and focused correlation between the sporting and military domains by way of cross pollination of the MT construct is being possibly attempted for the first time. Given the very limited literature on the subject and the fact that Armies world over are notoriously averse to change, the validation received by the proposal from the focus group of elite officers is indeed encouraging. As such, the prime purpose of the research, to establish the relevance of the MT construct in the military domain, develop a linkage between two domains and establish a simple, clear and acceptable framework for its application in the Indian Army, has been achieved fair and square.

The need now is to translate the suggested framework from the drawing board onto practical execution. While the methodology and broad techniques for the same have been worked out here, these need to be converted into actual training strategies and programs tailor made for specific operational contexts – a herculean task but which cannot be avoided. The onus for this will fall on the organisation – the Indian Army.

While the construct has been developed for the Indian Army, the author, given his experience, is confident that it should be applicable across all armies – much like the universal applicability across different sporting disciplines.

The field of MT in sports itself has thrown up a number of dichotomies, contradictions and parallel constructs. As the field develops in the Army or military domain and overlaps with the existing psychological constructs, there is bound to be a similar explosion of differing viewpoints

on the subject. Akin to the field of MT at elite sport level, and even more so given its nascent nature, scope for further research is almost limitless.

Future Research

As a first step the definition and framework can be further analysed and refined after they have been put to the test of practice. The effort could be look at the aspects of acceptability, relevance and ease of practical implementation. Additional important research issues are listed below.

- Integration with existing psychological conditioning constructs in the military to develop a holistic training regimen.
- Developing an appropriate '*mental skills bouquet*', relevant for the Army.
- Adapting '*problem solving strategies*' as part of coping, to use by soldiers.
- Suggested interventions for those who have MT problems.

The list above is indicative and not exhaustive. It is only once the concept is put into application will the primary issues and problem areas emerge. Given the established validity and likely acceptability of the MT construct in the Indian Army, implementation, the next logical step, must be pursued. The dividends for the '*winning edge*' will be substantial.