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# HELICOPTERS

## INDIA'S IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS



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We endeavour to sound **ALERTS** and create **AWARENESS** about the myriad dimensions and manifestations of **DEFENCE** and **SECURITY** in India and around the world.



**The power of a King lies in his mighty arms...**

Security of the citizens at peace time is very important because State is the only saviour of the men and women who get affected only because of the negligence of the State.

- Chanakya

# DSA IS AS MUCH YOURS, AS IT IS OURS!



**M**ankind's curiosity with flight took centuries of effort before it became a reality, little more than a century ago. Since then the ability to fly, to control flight, and to send manmade objects into space has proceeded at a pace that is truly astonishing. It is astounding how rapidly human beings have overcome the barriers of flight, and demonstrated mastery over various modes of flying machines. In all of human evolution, no other field has been won over so rapidly and to the extent that it has. In terms of research and development as well, more energies are invested in all types of flight than possibly in any other field.

The human ability to fly covers all aspects, from the original piston engined multi-cylinder engines to the latest rockets that take astronauts to the space station. Humans have studied and built all types of flying machines, but there is one category that came to be invented even after rockets, and which even defies

nature's principles of flight. Which is of course the multi-utility and versatile helicopter! A unique machine in every sense of the term and a great human invention; as the helicopter has served mankind far in excess of its recognition.

A slow, relatively, lumbering helicopter is the best friend that a soldier has. Ask anyone who has been isolated, in need of help, and the first whirring sounds of the rotating blades send the sinking adrenalin into a rush. Such is its versatility that it can land in any open space without needing even ground, and take off from the same rough patch. The helicopter works in steamy humid jungles, hot dry deserts and the chilled Siachen Glacier as well. In fact, one of India's helicopters was recently recovered from Siachen after lying almost belly up from about a year! Tribute to army aviators who trekked to the location and got it started up again.

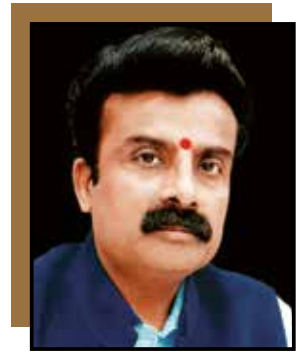
India has, in fact, taken helicopters where they'd never been before, or where not even thought capable of. Since Operation Meghdoot

began in 1984 to dominate the Salto Range, and secure Siachen Glacier, the mainstay supplies and rescue had been the helicopter. Initially, it was the diminutive Cheetah, and now, the Indian made Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter. In that sense, India hasn't done that bad in terms of developing an indigenous helicopter. But it can do a lot more, and with a wider scope of activities.

The helicopter has more civilian applications than simply military ones. Before the advent of drones, it was essential to crowd control in most countries of the world. In fact, it is still in use by police forces for various uses. As a search and rescue transport, there is nothing to beat the helicopter. And, then there is always the role as an air ambulance. For all of this to be developed in India, it must open up its helicopter making industry to the private sector too. They will be able to bring in some skills that are not always available with the state sector. For the applications are also not limited to government but across the spectrum.

**Manvendra Singh**

# MAXIMISING SECURITY HELICOPTER COMMAND



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 Editor: Manvendra Singh**

**T**he dynamics of transportation, both military and civilian, have undergone a sea-change since rotary-wing vehicles, known as helicopters, made their debut at around the middle of World War II. More and more helicopters are being used both for direct aerial combat as well as for transportation of men and material propelled by an increasing density of road traffic; congestion at existing airfields, and, as in the case with India, where road transportation is stymied by the difficulties of road and bridge construction in the high Himalayan battlefields. At rapid pace, the feasibility (and necessity) of using unmanned drone rotary winged vehicles from the very heavy lift to miniscule eyes-in-the-sky surveillance platforms is being demonstrated.

This edition of DSA is dedicated to this very important machine which is to play a very vital role in the Indian military arsenal in the years to come given that it is about to be inducted in the hundreds. India is at the tipping point of ending the use of superannuated platforms like the Cheetah and Chetak workhorses and is preparing to induct the modern versions.

Primarily, helicopters are more widely used by the defence forces in India than in the civil arena. The role of helicopters is multi-dimensional and though it is under the total control of the military services, it is the Services that operate the helicopters in the many humanitarian and disaster relief operations given the seasonal depredeations that visit the nation cyclically.

There is a growing demand for helicopters, both manned and drones, from not just the armed forces but also the large number of paramilitary / Central Armed Police Forces. The time is appropriate to resurrect a concept that was intended to optimise the use of military assets even while creating a commonality quotient that will improve national security in a holistic manner.

It is acknowledged that each Service has a peculiar requirement dictated by the element in which it operates (the naval versions in particular). Yet, there is scope for creating a common pool of facilities for planning acquisitions in a manner in which the multiplicity of types of helicopters does not become a logistical nightmare. Similarly, a commonality in training and logistics facilities could improve the cost-effectiveness of the entire fleet. One thing is amply clear that the business of building helicopters (we have the indigenously designed and developed Dhruv helicopter and its armed version, the Rudra) will soon have enough orders at hand to make investments in plant and machinery an attractive long-term prospect.

A Helicopter Command mandated to produce a list of contenders for acquisition within a short time-frame should have representatives of all end users so that all requirements are assessed and collated on the basis of common features. On the basis of this list, common training and maintenance and repair facilities can be envisaged and created. This Helicopter Command will also be mandated to strengthen the indigenous research and development infrastructure as well as expanding the involvement of the private sector medium and small scale manufacturers for spare parts and ancillaries.

The core feature of the suggested Helicopter Command is the creation of an ecosystem that will reduce costly multiplicity and at the same time, set up the infrastructure for a self-sustaining helicopter industry that will cater to both the military and the civilian sectors.

I am sure if the Helicopter Command is created, it will be a great value addition to the defence and security forces. This edition, dear reader, is one of its own kind to know and understand the importance of helicopters in national security which has been visualised by our esteemed contributors.

Jai Hind!

**Pawan Agrawal**  
 CEO - DSA



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