COL. (DR.) RAJESH KUMAR SHARMA (RETD)

Army Veteran | Hybrid Warfare & National Security Scholar | Academician | Natural Farming Practitioner | Social Worker

Col. (Dr) Rajesh Kumar Sharma (Retd.) is a distinguished second-generation Army officer hailing from Jawalamukhi (Adhe Di Hatti), Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. He was commissioned into the Indian Army on 09 June 1990 as an Infantry Officer in the 17 JAK RIF, a regiment with a distinguished history of valour, sacrifice and numerous battle honours. After rendering 23 years of dedicated military service, he took premature retirement in July 2013.

During his illustrious military career, he served in a variety of operational, instructional and leadership appointments and gained extensive experience in some of the most challenging operational environments. He served at the Siachen Glacier, one of the world's highest, coldest and most inhospitable battlefields, where extreme climatic and geographical conditions demand exceptional physical endurance, mental resilience and professional commitment.

A significant part of his military career was devoted to Counter-Insurgency Operations in Jammu & Kashmir, where he served for approximately 15 years. During this period, he participated in and led numerous counter-terrorism operations, successfully operating in highly sensitive and volatile environments. His operational experience provided him with first-hand exposure to the complexities of terrorism, insurgency, psychological warfare, intelligence operations, local population dynamics and the challenges of operating in difficult terrain.

His military career reflects a strong commitment to leadership, discipline, courage and service before self. He has been awarded five Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Commendation Cards in recognition of gallantry, distinguished service and devotion to duty. He also holds the distinction of being the first veteran from Himachal Pradesh to receive an Army Commander's Commendation Card after retirement, recognising his continued contribution and commitment to the nation beyond his active military service.

As a professional soldier, he developed a deep understanding of the values of duty, honour, sacrifice, leadership and commitment to the nation. His extensive operational experience has also shaped his continuing interest in national security, strategic affairs and emerging forms of warfare.

He is a trained assessor from the Defence Institute of Psychological Research (DIPR), Delhi, and has been associated with the Services Selection Board (SSB) as a Group Testing Officer. In this capacity, he contributed to the assessment and selection of prospective Army officers, particularly in identifying leadership potential, psychological attributes, decision-making ability, teamwork and suitability for military service.

Throughout his military and professional career, he has undertaken a wide range of specialised military and professional courses, including Physical Training Course, Young Officers' Course, Commando Course, Inventory Management Course, Digital Satellite Imaging Course and Management Courses. These courses have strengthened his professional competence, leadership abilities, technological awareness and capacity to perform effectively in demanding operational environments.

His academic and professional pursuits reflect a continuing commitment to interdisciplinary learning. He holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Human Rights, MBA (Operations), M.A. in Vastu Shastra, M.A. in Vedic Studies, Diploma in Network Administration & Cyber Security, Diploma in Information Technology, along with several certified courses in Human Resource Management.

He was awarded a Ph.D. by the Central University of Himachal Pradesh through the Centre for Kashmir Studies, with his doctoral research focusing on Hybrid Warfare. His research

examines emerging patterns of hybrid warfare, global strategic trends and their implications for India's national security, with particular emphasis on Jammu & Kashmir and the Indian Army. His academic work reflects his effort to combine extensive operational experience with contemporary scholarship in national security and strategic studies.

Beyond his military and academic pursuits, he has developed a strong interest in Natural Farming and is actively engaged in promoting sustainable and low-cost agricultural practices. His objective is to encourage farming communities across different categories of landholdings to adopt natural farming methods that can reduce dependence on costly synthetic inputs while improving soil health, farm sustainability and the quality of agricultural produce.

At his native village, Masrer, he has established a natural farming initiative in which he has planted more than 35 varieties of fruit-bearing plants, numbering approximately 2,500 plants in total. His efforts have received recognition from the Department of Agriculture, Government of Himachal Pradesh, which honoured him as a Progressive Farmer in 2022. His work was subsequently featured in the Department's magazine in 2023.

His interest in natural farming extends beyond personal practice. He regularly visits successful natural farming initiatives, interacts with farmers and practitioners, and collaborates with Master Trainers and practitioners across the country to understand and promote sustainable agricultural practices. His approach is centred on demonstrating that environmentally responsible farming can also be economically viable and accessible to farmers with varying landholdings and resources.

As a social worker and community-oriented individual, he remains committed to contributing to the socio-economic development of society. His journey from a second-generation Army officer and combat veteran to a national security scholar, educator, progressive farmer and social activist reflects a broader philosophy of continued service to the nation and society.

His professional journey is characterised by the values of discipline, leadership, courage, intellectual curiosity, social responsibility and a continuing commitment to public service. Whether in the challenging operational environment of Jammu & Kashmir and Siachen, in the field of national security research or among farming communities in Himachal Pradesh, he continues to apply the principles of service, perseverance and nation-building that have shaped his life and career.