

# The Indian Army's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: A Critical Analysis

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## Abstract

The Indian military is continuously transforming its doctrines to fill operational gaps, create synergy and integration in its tri-services, and execute realistic conventional limited war-fighting strategies. Its Land Warfare Doctrine-2018 (LWD-18) is a renewed form of previous limited war doctrines. Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and effective conventional counter measures have confined the India's military from any large-scale offensives. This is the reason why it is constantly looking for a gap between the nuclear and conventional capabilities of Pakistan to launch limited but intense quick and swift operations under the nuclear umbrella without invoking Pakistan's nuclear threshold. Through in-depth primary interviews supported by secondary sources, this study finds that the new LWD-18 has put greater emphasis on the restructuring of the Indian Strike formations into small Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) equipped with offensive elements for shallow manoeuvres in protracted, rapid and nimble warfare scenarios. The LWD-18 also focuses on force modernisation; synergy & integration; flexibility; agility and greater manoeuvrability to fill operational gaps; shorten mobilisation time; and execute limited war concepts against Pakistan. It also stresses the significance of hybrid warfare threats in modern times, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities for real-time information about the adversary and enhanced battlefield transparency for precision strikes. All these capabilities are required for any quick and swift specialised operations in the South Asian strategic milieu. Such doctrinal transformation in the Indian Army is taking place rapidly and is going to put extreme strain on Pakistan's military to manage growing conventional asymmetries, counter hybrid nature of threats, and employ credible counter measures along with pragmatic conventional strategies backed by nuclear weapons, to ensure territorial integrity, manage internal security and deter aggression at all levels to maintain deterrence stability in South Asia.

**Keywords:** Land Warfare Doctrine-2018, Force Modernisation, Conventional Asymmetries, Surgical Strikes, Hybrid Warfare, Limited War.

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