

# The Analysis of the “Student Soldier” Special Program Training in Mongolia

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## Abstract

Since 1990, when Mongolia embarked on a path of democracy, the interest of citizens in military service has decreased. At the same time, the number of young people studying at universities has increased, and the number of conscripts has decreased. Since university students are exempted from military service during their studies according to the law, there is no condition for every citizen to fulfill the obligation of “defending the homeland and serving in military service according to the law” as stipulated in the “Constitution of Mongolia”, and therefore there is a need to implement a new program based on social demand. In line with this, it has been 10 years since the “Student Soldier” program was implemented. Therefore, this article aims to describe the results of the implementation the analysis of the “student soldier” special program training in Mongolia.

## Keywords

Military Education, Youth, Student Soldiers, Military Service

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## 1. Introduction

Special programs have been implemented to prepare Mongolian citizens for physical and psychological readiness to defend their homeland. One of them is the implementation of the “Student-Soldier Program” in the Presidential Agenda of Mongolia, and Decree No. 92 of the President of Mongolia was issued in 2013. Since the “Student-Soldier Program” has been implemented for some time, there is a need to study its implementation and results. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the implementation of the “Student-Soldier Program” in Mongolia.

Mongolia's military education system has been developed and used for the centuries to meet the needs of the society. Only in a global environment, there is a need to develop a content of defense education that meets the needs of Mongolian society. For example: on the need for education and training for military education: In line with the social changes of the new century and the development trends of philosophical theory, there is a need to develop a concept of the philosophy of defense education and its conceptual core formulation. The process of globalization has spread to all spheres of society, and the external and internal environment has been changing rapidly, has always reminded us to anticipate the future and thus increase the defense capabilities of countries (Baasanjav & Khalzan, 2022), Military education plays an important role in educating citizens in the defense of the country's independence and security. It is important to study the process that formed the basis of modern military professional education in our country (Orkhonchimeg & Ochirsuren, 2022). The religious and military relations of the Bogd Khanate of Mongolia in the early XX century are one of the topics that need to be studied in detail. It is important to study the influence of religion, especially Buddhism, on the history of the Mongolian military forces based on archival documents and sources connected with the religious and military relations of the Bogd Khanate of Mongolia (Orkhonchimeg et al., 2021). Within the framework of the goal of providing qualitative education to the citizens of Mongolia, there is a need to create a new comprehensive education system to cultivate a patriotic and national upbringing. In a democracy, the real need is considered that the state must ensure the unity and security of the nation, such as the country's independence, security, national language and culture, sustainable development, and patriotic ideology, and implement policies and goals in educational content aimed at the common interests and goals of the nations (U Baasanjav, 2020). Defense education will play a key role in strengthening the unity of basic national interests and building the mental and physical immunity of the Mongolian people. The main content of defense education is to prepare citizens who have a sense of patriotism, proper mental and physical upbringing, and education. In other words, it is to instill a patriotic spirit in Mongolians. National consciousness plays an important role in the development of patriotism (Baigalmaa et al., 2024). The national security activities of any country depend to a certain extent on the formation of patriotism of citizens and soldiers, but patriotic nationalism is directly related to the formation of moral education. Knowledge and education are necessary for correct moral upbringing, and the foundation of any knowledge is faith and patriotism. Thus, inculcating patriotism and upbringing in citizens and soldiers is an essential issue that supports the development of the country and activities to ensure national security (Myagmarjav & Enkhchimeg, 2024). we have tried to explain that the main basis of the concept of defense is based on the great power of the mind to protect the motherland and the nation, to understand and live in harmony with the laws of nature and society (Orkhonchimeg et al., 2025). Analysis of contemporary threats means adapting formal and informal education. The priority is to include

defense education, terrorist prevention, cyber security and the prevention of disinformation. In addition to traditional education, it is important to introduce elements based on the use of modern technology and tools that make the teaching process more enjoyable and therefore more effective (Grabowska-Lepczak, 2024).

In the above studies, the problem of this aspect is reflected a little. We are continuously conducting a variety of research on the traditions of Mongolian military training, the content and methodology of defense education, and the changes in modern military training. As there is no research analyzing the training status of Mongolia's "Student Soldier" program, this article aims to analyze the implementation status of this program.

## 2. Research Methodology

Reports on the implementation and status of the "Student-Soldier Program", which is one of the special programs implemented to prepare Mongolian citizens physically and psychologically to defend their homeland, as included in the Mongolian President's Action Plan, were summarized, explained, and analyzed.

## 3. Results

Mongolia has transitioned to democracy and market relations and has faced significant difficulties in socio-economic development. In recent years, problems have also arisen in the system of preparing for the defense of the Motherland. The shortage of properly trained military personnel in the Armed Forces not only weakens the country's defense capabilities, but also negatively affects the patriotic upbringing, maturity, health, and physical development of young people. It also limits the conditions for working in the civil service in accordance with the Law on Civil Service. The program was implemented in response to the need for the state to pay attention to increasing the opportunities for young people of military age to serve in the military and fulfill their civic duties under the law.

The main goal of this program is to increase the number of healthy, physically, psychologically and militarily prepared young people who can defend their country and serve in the civil service by enrolling undergraduate students from accredited universities in Mongolia in a special program with as a result, they are considered to have completed their military service. This program improves the country's defense capabilities and provides a reserve of mobilized personnel.

In order to increase the country's defense capabilities, create a reserve of personnel for mobilization training, increase the number of citizens with defense training, and meet the conditions for citizens to perform full-time civil service, it is a state policy to provide opportunities for students to serve in the military while studying at universities.

In this context, the legal reform of the defense sector, the Mongolian Law on Military Service (Mongolian Parliament, 2016), and the "Student Soldier" training regulations approved by Government Resolution No. 32 of 2017 have created con-

ditions for young people who participate in the program and complete the training program to be considered as having completed military service (National Defense University, 2013).

The Government of Mongolia's 2012-2016 Action Program, which was reflected in the Decree No. 92 of the President of Mongolia "On Giving Directions to the Government" dated June 28, 2013, and the Council of Ministers of the Mongolian People's Republic on October 3, 2013, established a special program implementation team and gave directions (National Defense University, 2013).

The Government's Resolution No. 40 "On Approval of the Program" dated February 14, 2014, and the joint order of the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Education and Science dated March 5, "On Implementation of the Student Military Program", approved the procedure for enrolling students studying at Mongolian universities in military training and military service during their studies, and the opening ceremony of the "Student Military Program" was held on March 17, 2014 (National Defense University, 2014).

The implementation of the "Student Military Program" began nationwide on April 1, 2014. The draft law on the legal status of civil military service and military personnel of the Republic of Mongolia also includes provisions on this matter, which were discussed by the Government and submitted to the Office of the President. Based on the above legal documents, the training was organized in the following stages: to provide military service to students of Mongolian universities through a special program with intensive military training during their studies, to increase the number of healthy, physically, psychologically and militarily prepared young people, to improve the country's defense capabilities, and to provide a reserve of military personnel for mobilization. A special training program and plan were developed in the following stages, approved by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and the training was organized from April 1, 2014 to August 13, 2014 (National Defense University, 2014).

This includes general military training (classroom) from April 1, 2014 to June 1, 2014, at the National Defense University, the Mongolian State University, the Mongolian University of Science and Technology, and the Mongolian University of Education, with more than 750 students enrolled. Military vocational training was organized from June 29, 2014 to August 13, 2014 (National Defense University, 2014).

More than 750 students participated in the general military training, of which 550 students fully met the internal training regulations and programs, passed the selection process by passing the exams in each of the 4 types of subjects, and underwent a medical examination on June 10, 2014. 85.7 percent of the students passed the examination, and 426 students passed and participated in the basic military training and military professional training courses (National Defense University, 2014).

The "Student Soldier" program includes the following organizational and con-

tent-based courses and training. These include: “Initial preparation for military service and military professional training courses, the following objectives were set with the aim of acclimating participants in the “Student Soldier” program to the new conditions of military service, providing them with basic military knowledge and practice, training them for their duties, and preparing them physically and psychologically. These include:

The “Student Soldier” program introduces military personnel who have participated in the program to the nature and importance of military labor, discipline, daily life, and schedule of military service, and teaches participants the military rules and duties of their assigned positions, and teaches them the culture of military communication in accordance with the rules.

- To provide military personnel participating in the “Student Soldier” program with individual firearms, to provide shooting training, to develop the first automatic drill, the first exercise, and to conduct a unit combat shooting at the end of the training, to conduct a day school, and to conduct kilometer march.

- The “Student Soldier” program will provide military personnel who have participated in the program with the physical and psychological ability to cope with the high workload of military service.

According to the “Initial Training and Training Program”, the program is organized in two stages: initial training to accustom them to military service and military professional training, aimed at providing general military knowledge, cultivating military and patriotism, and developing their physical and psychological preparation.

“In terms of moral and psychological preparation, we held six individual meetings with participants who were experiencing emotional distress regarding the difficulties of military service and training, provided psychological counseling, and ensured psychological stability.”

The implementation of the “Student Soldier” program has yielded the following results:

- “Completing military training and fulfilling the civic duty required by the Constitution of Mongolia. By participating in this program, young students were able to master the basic military profession of a rifleman.

With the psychological and physical heritage being equally nurtured, patriotism deeply ingrained in their hearts, over 100 young people have quit smoking in 2 months, and most of our young people have lost up to 10-20 kg of excess weight, which is an indication of the level of training and how it was organized. The students have achieved many results, such as curing their back and cardiovascular diseases.

- The most suitable planning method for short-term military vacuum intensive training, the modular block method, was effective in planning and organizing training.
- The training was more convenient and time-saving in conducting training using the compiled manuals for the participants of the student military pro-

gram.

- During this military training, the students were given the motto of “treating people as human beings and working as soldiers”, and they fully practiced the practice and order of military service, strictly followed the military regulations, and did not commit any violations of discipline and communication.” (National Defense University, 2014)

The “Student Soldier” program has been successfully implemented for 5 years since its inception, according to the report on the implementation of the program. For example, “Student Soldier” training organized by the Government of Mongolia, at the initiative of the President of Mongolia and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and within the framework of the implementation of the Law “On Military Service”, has been successfully organized and implemented since 2014, and National Defense University relying on the material environment. Over the 5 years, more than 4000 students have participated. Of these, 200 students were exempted from 300 courses due to health reasons or at their own request, and 4000 students have fully completed the program and taken the oath and registered as military servicemen of the first degree. As the training years progressed, the characteristics of the training improved, and student military training began to be conducted based on rural military units, which increased the number of students participating in the training. In addition, as the number of student soldiers supported by the material base of the National Defense University increased, the training material base improved, and more than 10 types of military minor specialties were taught and military professional numbers were issued (National Defense University, 2018).

Based on the material base of the National Defense University Field Training Center, the “Military Professional Training” training, which has been conducted since 2016, has involved more than 1,900 students from more than 60 universities and rural students in the training based on the units of the Armed Forces. Since the start of student military training, a total of more than 4000 student soldiers have participated in military professional training and taken the military oath. (National Defense University, 2018) (Table 1).

The “Student Soldier” training program “Cultivating Mongolian Men”

“Treat them humanely, train them militarily” was implemented with the slogan “Student Soldiers”.

This program was organized in stages under the idea of the following results:

- 1st stage, military-patriotic education-accustoming to military affairs;
- 2nd stage, every military profession is good-providing military professions;
- 3rd stage, the homeland-soldier-special training;
- 4th stage, the citizen-homeland-unification of the department.

The military-patriotic training process is to student military personnel by introducing them to the Mongolian military career, the role and activities of the Armed Forces, the specific importance of military labor, and the development of military-patriotic education (National Defense University, 2018) (Table 2).

**Table 1.** Number of participants in the “Student Soldier” training program between 2014 and 2018 (National Defense University, 2018).

№	School names	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
1	Mongolian State University	In the region of 70	In the region of 100	In the region of 100	In the region of 90	In the region of 90	More than 400
2	University of Science and Technology	In the region of 90	In the region of 100	In the region of 100	In the region of 100	In the region of 100	More than 500
3	Agricultural University	In the region of 50	In the region of 100	In the region of 90	In the region of 70	In the region of 90	More than 400
4	University of Finance and Economics	In the region of 20	In the region of 70	In the region of 90	In the region of 50	In the region of 60	More than 300
5	Mongolian University of Education	In the region of 20	In the region of 70	In the region of 60	In the region of 40	In the region of 30	More than 200
6	National University of Mongolia	In the region of 30	In the region of 60	In the region of 80	In the region of 60	In the region of 30	More than 200
7	University of Trade and Industry	In the region of 10	In the region of 20	In the region of 10	In the region of 20	In the region of 20	More than 90
8	National University of Medical Sciences	In the region of 8	In the region of 20	In the region of 20	In the region of 20	In the region of 10	More than 90
9	National Defense University		In the region of 80	In the region of 80	In the region of 50		More than 200
10	Other	In the region of 100	In the region of 300	In the region of 90	In the region of 90	In the region of 100	More than 700
11	Ulaanbaatar	In the region of 400	In the region of 900	In the region of 700	In the region of 600	In the region of 600	More than 3300
12	Rural areas			In the region of 200	In the region of 200	In the region of 300	More than 800
13	Score	In the region of 400	In the region of 900	In the region of 900	In the region of 900	In the region of 900	More than 4000
<b>Total: more than 4000</b>							

**Table 2.** “Student Military” training program number of participants in 2014-2024.

№	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	2024
The number of participants for “Student Military” training program	More than 400 (National Defense University, 2014)	More than 900 (National Defense University, 2015)	More than 900 (National Defense University, 2016)	More than 900 (National Defense University, 2017)	More than 900 (National Defense University, 2018)	More than 900 (National Defense University, 2019)	More than 400 (National Defense University, 2022)	More than 1100 (National Defense University, 2023)	More than 800 (National Defense University, 2024)
<b>Total: more than 7000</b>									

Currently, 70 percent of the more than 1000 hours of compulsory military training are completed in short months, with more than 16 credits and more than 600 hours of training, and they are acquiring military specialties (National Defense University, 2024).

“The most suitable modules for short-term military vacuum intensive training were prepared thematically and the training was organized in a block method. The newly compiled general military training manual and the military professional theory and practice manual were used for the participants of the “Student Soldier” training, and they were studied through exercises and practice methods, repeated readings, and memorized with meaning.

During this military training, the students were given the motto “Treat the students as human beings and train them as soldiers”, and they were fully accustomed to the practice and discipline of military service, strictly obeyed military regulations, and systematically carried out military patriotic culture education. Economically, the annual cost of one soldier was reduced by times (National Defense University, 2024).

By conducting “Military Induction” and “Military Vocational Training” training as a unified program, soldiers are trained at the same level, standardized, and resilient.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be concluded that the main goal of training undergraduate students at Mongolian universities in military specialties, meeting the requirements for the content, assessment, duration, and environment required for military service, and enrolling them in military training through a special program with intensive military training during their studies is to increase the number of young people who are healthy, physically, psychologically, and militarily prepared to defend the country and serve in the public service, and to improve the country’s defense capabilities and provide a reserve of mobilized personnel.

The “Student Soldier” program is believed to have yielded the following results. These include:

- 1) Students who have participated in the “Student Soldier” program are accustomed to the nature and importance of military labor, discipline, and daily life of military service, and are taught the culture of military communication according to the rules by studying their duties to their homeland.

- 2) Students who have participated in the “Student Soldier” program are given the ability to overcome the high physical and psychological burden of military service in a short time.

- 3) With special attention to the problems of moral and psychological preparation, military service, training, and preparation, we are preparing young people with psychological and moral education who will fully realize their responsibilities to society in the future.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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