

Women In Indian Armed Forces



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ABSTRACT:

The study women in Indian Armed Forces focus on unconventional profession at times when women may have seldom stepped out of home. It meant a huge step for not just women but society as well, though access may have been simpler then, compared to the present terror-tainted times, Thousands of spirited young women applied against advertisements and choosing new field such as Army, Navy and Air force where they had to painstakingly pave a path for the others to follow. The empowerment process aiming at “women finding time and space of their own” and their active participation in development process once they attain economic independence leading to women empowerment. The study concludes that compared to other sectors gender discrimination is high in armed forces, where as women empowerment in this sector at decision making is stable and strong than men, which could be more accurate leading to global peace.

Key words: Armed forces, unconventional profession, terror-trained, painstaking.

Introduction of the study:

This study attempts to compare women in Armed forces with dragon for the similarity in characteristics like overcomes obstacles until success arrive, energetic, decisive, optimistic, intelligent and ambitious . Patience, passion, principles, women innately possess’ these simple but ever-so-powerful qualities and which are indispensable to strong leader. The notion of “man’s work” is redefined in the Indian Armed Forces. Stereotypes are overridden by determination, by proven capabilities. Here, a woman’s place is definitely in on the action and it’s incredibly empowering.

The right to fight and lead wars has until very recently considered as exclusively male domain. In most societies, the dominant tendency has been that, with the exception of war heroines and mythological figures, women have taken part in combat only in exceptional circumstances. Although they have sporadically participated in military conflicts as combatants, usually at the end of the war they have been expected to give up military roles and return to their traditional domestic sphere.

In the recent decades, the pattern has completely changed. From the beginning of 1970’s most of the

Indian women began to admit in a way that marked a break with a tradition. Contrary to historical precedents, this call has not taken place in the times of war but in the times of peace. Moreover, from their original role as simple auxiliaries, women have progressively gained status in military, navy and air force, have been given similar training as men, and have performed functions in various areas which have not been traditionally feminine.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, most of the countries had admitted and increased the number of women in their armed forces. During the past four decades various restrictions have been lifted. Women have been progressively allowed to enter military, navy and air force academies and give access to a wider variety of positions and functions.

Definitions of Women Empowerment:

‘Women empowerment’ is the ability to the exercise full control over one’s actions. The last decades have witnessed some basic changes in to status and role of women in our society. There has been shift in policy approaches from the concept of ‘welfare’ in seventies to ‘development’ in the eighties and now to ‘empowerment’ in the nineties. This process has been further accelerated with some sections of women becoming increasingly self-conscious of their discrimination in the several areas of family and public life. They are also in the position to mobilize themselves on issues that can affect their overall position.

- Women Empowerment as the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power

-Batliwala

In India, women empowerment is a challenging task as we need to admit the fact that gender based discrimination is a deep rooted social malice practiced in India many forms since thousands of years. One of the major tasks is to change the approach of society towards women.

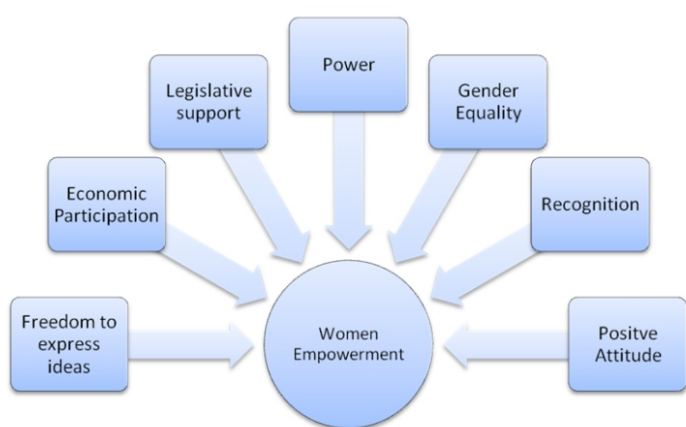
Amartya Sen makes a persuasive case for the notion that societies need to see women less as passive recipients of help, and more as dynamic promoters of social transformation, view powerful evidence suggesting that the education, employment and ownership rights of women have a great influence on their ability to control their environment and contribute to

economic development. Economic participation concerns not only the actual numbers of women participating in the labour force, but also their remuneration on an equal basis.

There should not be any barriers to expression of ideas, thoughts, and opinion of women.

Stringent legislative support plays a vital role to uplift women power to take part in economic participation and to acquire recognition by their distinctive work. We need to augment our efforts, attitude towards women empowering positively to enhance their progress.

It is moral, social and constitutional responsibility to ensure their progress by providing them with equal rights and opportunities without any gender inequality. Empowerment of women not just a goal in itself, but it is a key to all global development goals.



Indian Armed Forces

The Armed Forces symbolize the ideals of service, sacrifice, patriotism and our country's composite culture. The Indian armed forces comprises of Army, Navy and Air Force due to their unique roles as protectors of the nation's land, sea and airspace respectively, the nature of work in each service is different.

Apart from their main roles of defending the country, they may also be required to perform tasks to ease civil administration during at the times of crisis.

The Indian president is the supreme commander of the armed forces. In carrying out the primary role of defending the nation, the armed forces personnel are bound by certain rules that govern their conduct.

But, they also enjoy certain privileges that their civilian counterparts do not have access to. Passion for adventure activities and sports can pay off, as one can represent the defense teams and even the country.

The Indian Armed Forces are



Women in Indian Armed Forces:

The Indian Armed Forces, which for long was considered a male conquered workplace, now has confident, bold women, molding into every role and setting examples for everyone. The Indian Armed Forces strongly had driven by women, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil our past President of India and the supreme commander in the Indian Armed Forces.

Lieutenant General Puneeta Arora, a lady officer from the Army Medical Corps, heads the prestigious defense institution, the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), in Pune. In the land of Razia Sultana and Rani of Jhansi, it comes as no surprise that women make their mark in the Armed Forces

Women have been part of the Armed Forces of most countries for many decades. In our own country, the Military Nursing Service (MNS) has always been composed of women alone. Perhaps the announcement by the army chief has led to raised eye brows because some people have swiftly conjured up visions of gun-trotting women soldiers, or of women fighter pilots, or of women submarine commanders. Presently, the Indian Army counts 2.44 percent women in its ranks, the Indian Navy 3.0 percent and the Indian Air Force 6.7 percent.

Entry of Women

The women were inducted only in the Armed Forces Medical Core till the year 1991. In 1992, an important landmark in the history of Indian Armed Forces was the induction of women as Short Service Commissioned officers into, law, Observer, Logistics, Education, Naval Architecture, engineering and executive cadres.

The government has also given approval for Permanent Commission (PC) in Education, Law and Naval Architect branch on completion of SSC tenure depending upon merit and vacancy.

Thousands of spirited young women applied against advertisements and it was a turning point in the history of time. 50 lady cadets were commissioned every year with the entries presently limited to Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, Army Education Corps, Judge Advocate General's Department, Corps of Engineers, Signals and Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Approximately 100 Lady Officer get commissioned from OTA every year. These women chose a new field where they had to painstakingly pave a path for the others to follow.

Initially women faced a tremendous problem to adjust in their chosen field because; most gentlemen officers could not treat their female counterparts at par with themselves. Their subordinates too, were men who came from conventional families where they saw women in concert with traditional roles. The emergence of these women into totally male dominated bastion did initially create thwarting moments for both. Men hushed their talks and behaved courteously, while women had to do with makeshift arrangements to suit their needs within units. Over the years and having come a long way now, men have realized that these women in uniform are their efficient and able co-workers.

In the modern day of electronic warfare, it's more about overcoming stress in warfare than physical combat. It has been proven scientifically that women handle stress better and are also mentally tougher. Women have done extremely well in physical training as well. Despite the good quality of life, they undergo hardships due to the nature of work and they are succeeding in it. In the first few batches at the armed forces training academies women displayed more resilience and some even outran their male counterparts in cross-country runs and long distance marches. They carry on this tradition and keep setting new records.

“The Dragons” - Dare Devils in the Indian Armed Forces

Eligible women are recruited as officers on Short Service Commission basis in the following Branches of the Armed Forces.

ARMY:

EME, Signals, Engineers, Army Education Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, Army Service Corps, Intelligence and Judge Advocate General's Branch.

NAVY: All Branches of the Indian Navy

AIR FORCE:

IFying, Aeronautical Engineering (Electronics), Aeronautical Engineering (Mechanical) Education, Administration, Logistics, Accounts and Meteorology.

Women have always played a very active, through indirect role in maintaining the high morale of IAF by way of participating in various welfare and social activities of Air force bases. In continuation to its futuristic progressive and modern approach women will now be playing an active, direct role in furthering the glory of Air force by shouldering the duties which were exclusively of the country as: Pilots, navigators, technical officers and ground duty branch officers.

The liberation of women is handicapped by a number of causes like their passive role, social ills, domestic compulsions, illiteracy, wrong perception, ignorance and superstition. The women's uplift depend on two pre-requisites self reliance and economic independence. Education and employment go hand in hand. Now more and more women are emerging from their cocoons and entering the male bastions, there are women employed in education, health, banks, industry, social services and even aviation. One of the major openings for women lies in the recruitment of uniformed services. The formation of mahila battalions in CRPF has brought laurels to the force, including their role with IPKF in Srilanka. Army offers wider horizon for women due to size, variety of jobs, opportunities for promotion, organization and discipline.

Initially women are considered ineligible for enrolment in regular army. The prime reason is physical standards. The army is for fighting war where not only physical fitness but physical toughness is required. Every army Jawan and officer, depending of his age group, has to under periodical PPTs (Physical Proficiency Tests) and BPETs (Better Physical Efficiency Tests)

Unfortunately, nature has not bestowed the 'manly' qualities of a soldier on women and it is unfair to push the women in front of the enemy. Requirement of maternity including leave, furlough, AWOL (Absence without Leave) not only upset the smooth functioning of an army unit, but adversely affect morale and discipline. Soldiering and women normally do not go together. One of the primary functions of commanding officers' is to keep women out of bounds for soldiers. Entry of women in units is strictly taboo. The DSR (Defence Services Regulations) specifically prohibits entry of female in barracks or areas under the command of the OC unit with certain expectations like officers families and visitors thereto, private servants, sweeper on conservancy duties.

Women can be gainfully employed in ASC as clerks and drivers as SKTs (Store Keeper Technical), Ammunition Examiners in AOC. The AMC provides maximum opportunities for recruitment. Besides LMO's (Lady Medical Officers) and Nursing officers, they will do well as radiographers, laboratory technicians, blood transfusion orderlies, dispensers, mental nursing orderlies, operation room assistant, sanitary assistant, X-ray orderly while in ADC (Army Dental Corps) suitable jobs are dental hygienists and nursing orderlies. In rear areas, women should be employed in force in base army hospital like Delhi base workshop like Meerut CODs like Shakurbasti.

Women are giving their best in every mission; women officers are present in all the branches of Air Force. As an officer with the Indian Air Force, she will lead and manage, and will be posted either as a Pilot, or a Navigator, or a Technical or a Ground Duty officer in any one of the Air Force bases.

A high-risk adventurous career has always attracted the young women, but it was never thought of as either a hobby or a full-time career for women. From household chores to accounts to taking to the skies for an adventurous dive a women handles all with certain aplomb.

A few names that stand out are:

Mrs Urmila K. Parikh opted for the adventurous career of becoming a pilot. She was the first Indian woman to obtain a pilot's license. After Independence, many more women turned towards aviation.

Sapper Shanti Tigga - The woman joined as a jawan in Indian Army by outperforming her male counterparts in the physical tests, 35-year-old and mother of two children.

Sub Lieutenant Seema Rani Sharma and Sub Lieutenant Ambica Hooda - The Indian Navy's first female aviators,

Prem Mathur - The first commercial pilot to fly domestic airlines in 1947.

Durba Banerjee - The first pilot officer in Indian Airline, 1956.

Sudamini Deshmukh - The first lady captain in the world to fly an all-women crew IATA schedule flight on Nov 27, 1985.

Simran Sondhi and Cheryl Dutta - IAF flight cadets who flew a helicopter with an all-women crew for the first time.

Dr. Kalpana Chawla - The first Indian Astronaut in 1997. She Was an Indian-born American astronaut and space shuttle mission specialist.

Padmavathy Bandopadhyay, was the first woman officer of the IAF to be promoted to the rank of Air Vice Marshal in 2002.

Asha Jhothirmai has so far participated in over 600 skydives

These dare devils playing indispensable role in Indian Armed Forces with their self confidence, strong leadership qualities.

Managerial Implications

- In future, women may be considered for the grant of permanent commission in remaining branches of Armed forces.
- Women can be given effective training programs in the training period.

- Eligible women who are qualified in Physical Proficiency Tests may consider to be placed in the regular army duties.

- Women are stronger in conviction and in perseverance she should be given power to take strong decisions at the toughest time.

Conclusion:

Women entrance in Indian Armed Forces is a benchmark in women empowerment and they have extraordinary achievements through their strong determination. Compared to other sectors gender discrimination is high in armed forces and to prove their efficacy is quite challenging task and they have proved with their self confidence. Where as women in this Armed Forces at decision making is stable, distinctive and stronger than men, which could be more accurate leading to global peace.

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