

Prologue

As a young adult I aspired to become an army officer. Very patriotic from the time I started understanding the world around me, I wanted to do something for the nation. My wish to become an army officer did not materialize due to various reasons but I did not stop dreaming. This led me to join National Cadet Corps (NCC), my horizon of experiencing defence enhanced by having friends who were from defence background and getting to know them deeply. Later on, by treating an army wife who suffered terminal illness because she was not able to deal with the stress of army life. In so many ways I was able to get acquainted to this military life.

However, there were contradictory experiences all around me. While I was treating a client with terminal illness there was another army wife who was extremely happy with her life and loved the challenges and growth army life brings.

Women experience stress in all circumstances and situations. The army context however, induces greater stress, especially in situations of deployment. Two major areas where women contribute in the Indian Army is by being an officer herself and as a spouse of an armed personnel. There are around 2.4 % women officers in the Indian army, which is a fraction of the total strength (Suman, 2010). The total army strength is 1,362,500 active-duty personnel (Globalfirepower, 2018). Let's assume that, about 60% of the officers and jawans would be married. This is another sector where women are involved in our defence services. Women in the army have a very important role to play in terms of taking care of home and children, apart from performing the social duties so that the officer is able to concentrate well on his job.

Lt. Col. Jyoti Prakash is the only psychiatrist in the Indian army who has conducted research on these brave hearts. In his own words, "It is not easy to get permissions to do a

study on families of officers, and thus difficult to research on this population, (Bavdekar & Joshi, 2011). Hardly any research has been conducted with the spouses of army officers which further motivated me to undertake this study.