

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Society has traditionally viewed men as sole participants in organizations responsible for the implementation of military force and in applying lethal force as individuals. The use of lethal force is so strongly associated with the ideas of masculinity that the ability to use it is one of the defining traits of mankind. War is traditionally viewed as a masculine enterprise in this man dominated society. Military service has long been a masculine rite of passage. Men have traditionally sought to idealistically fight for peace, home and family. They want to protect women and not to compete with them. The soldier's world has traditionally been a masculine haven. Their accession into a predominantly gender segregated institution like military has been protected by both law and cultural tradition in most of the countries.

Notwithstanding the above, the history of women in the military extends over 4000 years into the past, throughout a vast number of cultures and nations. Women have played many roles in the military, from ancient warrior women, to the women currently serving in conflicts like the Gulf War. Despite various roles in the armies of past societies, the role of women in the military, particularly in combat, is controversial and it is only recently that women have begun to be given a more prominent role in contemporary armed forces. Many countries have historically portrayed the woman as a nurturer and symbol of the home in need of protection from the outside world. It is from this standpoint that the role of woman as soldier and national protector is debated. As increasing number of countries begin to expand the role of women in their militaries, the debate continues. (Women in the military)¹

Yet as a matter of record, women have played a significant role in military history through their numerous battlefield contributions. Images of women soldiers are now commonplace in

¹ Article from the Internet. Wikipedia.

popular culture. The sex discrimination that has occurred in the past on the basis of female inferiority has proven itself null in the actions of notable women who have taken their part to serve with honor during many world conflicts throughout the course of human history. Natural justice demands that women have the right to bear arms alongside men, as they have also entered other male bastions.

In recorded human history women soldiers have been part of each and every campaign, performing variety of tasks such as ammunition carriers, picking up a weapon of a fallen soldier, washing, mending and cooking. World war II, Vietnam war and technological revolutions affected intake of male recruits in Europe, Asian armies and USA that led to induction of women soldiers to fill the vacancies.

1.2 Historical Perspective

"As the ladies marched past to the sound of the bugle and the beatings of the drum, there could be traced not a touch of all the frailties that are so commonly attributed to them. No faltering, no hesitancy, no softness associated in popular minds with the womanhood but chivalry written on every face and manifest in every movement." Colonel Latika Ghosh of Indian National Army.

Mythology is replete with instances of warrior women who were revered, worshipped like the 'Shakti', consort of Shiva the Destroyer, mother of all warriors, and who manifested herself as Durga the warrior goddess, to fight and destroy evil. The Greek Goddess Athena, the Roman Diana, the Nordic Valkyries and the Amazons are cases in point. The ancient Greeks, for example, told of Amazons so dedicated to warfare that each cut off one breast to improve her ability to shoot and throw spears.

The Americans can point to colonist Margaret Corbin who, during the British attack on Fort Washington in the Revolutionary War, operated cannon until she was seriously wounded. The history of women in battle is a combination of myth and exaggeration, mixed with a few true accounts of unique women. Instances of warrior women are scattered all over history.

The Celtic Queen Boadicea, Joan of Arc of France and nearer home Razia Sultan, Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, Kittur Chinnamma Rani Durgawati of Gondwana, Chand Bibi of Ahmednagar are good examples of women fighters. The Indian freedom movement is replete with examples of courageous women leaving the boundaries of their household to secure freedom from the British – Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kriplani, revolutionaries like Durga Bhabhi, Bina Das, Shanti Gosh and Suniti Chaudhary and in the Indian National Army, ‘Colonel’ Latika Ghosh and ‘Captain’ Lakshmi Sahgal Kshatriya are just a few of the prominent names. (Women in the Military)²

But despite all the above, the number of women warriors has not been in dominance. This highlights the fact that due to whatever physiological or sociological reasons, society at large evolved a role for the women in professions of nurture and culture rather than soldiering. We hear of women, as great mothers, wives and sisters who have nurtured famous warriors more than as famous generals or leaders of men in battle. This becomes obvious when one notices that no force of soldiery ever travelled far without its detachment of wives, concubines and hangers on, who cheerfully shouldered the burdens of washing, mending, cooking and generally pandering to the creature comforts, which have been the indispensable requirement of contended troops.

1.3 Global Perspective

Nations world over have in recent times taken the momentous decision to admit women into the regular cadres of the armed forces. The increasing presence of women in the Armed Forces can be traced to the beginning of this century in European history, wherein, the World Wars created an acute shortage of manpower, forcing nations to call upon their women to supplement their forces. Women were inducted in large numbers into the softer military specialities like ordinance factory workers, rear area services, logistic support, nurses, doctors, staff car driver, etc relieving the able bodied men to ‘feed the cannons’.

² Article from the internet. Wikipedia.

In Britain women gained recognition in Women's Auxiliary Service as early as 1916 upto the midst of World War I. The erstwhile Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Vietnam have permitted uninhibited participation of women in combat. Amongst the western countries, Canada, Australia, and Denmark are the most liberal in induction of women in their Armed Forces even for combat roles. In Netherlands all posts are optional for women. The Dutch have had to impose demanding physical standards for some "men's only" jobs.

Canada opened its Armed Forces to women at the behest of Royal commission on status of women in 1970. A five-year program called 'SWINTER' (Service Women In Non-Traditional Environment and Roles), launched to assess their suitability in combat roles demolished many myths and inhibitions which led to Canada's Human rights Tribunal to demand full integration for women and abolish 10% quota of vacancies reserved for them.

In Soviet Russia, where all kinds of feminine labour prevailed, out of sheer imbalance in sex ratio, a bulk of women were allowed to join the Army. A welcome side effect of this enforced "equality" was improved physical strength of Russian women and their robust character. In China the anti-female practices abetted by Confucius, Liu Shao Chi and Lin Piao were denounced as 'archaic' and to ensure equality to women the Chinese leadership promoted their wide participation in women's militia, who provided armed support to political leadership against any possible counter revolution from 'old vested interests'.

In more recent times the Israelis pressed by sheer paucity of numbers have enforced a virtual draft on unmarried women to occupy posts from where men could be released to move to front positions. In France, the intake of women is divided into combat and non-combat roles in the three services and the Gendarmerie on long-term contract. Turkey, which is predominantly Islamic, has women in its regular Armed Forces. In Sep 90, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia approved the role of women in the Saudi Armed Forces. This has been followed by United Arab Emirates. In Iraq too, during the Iran-Iraq war, President Saddam Hussain, in an effort to strengthen more loyal Baathist Militias, enlisted some quarter million women into their women's wings. Arming them much against the wishes of religious factions, he proudly hailed this force as the most liberated in the muslim world.

1.4 Domestic Scene

Traditionally, Indian women had a dependency syndrome. They had to depend on male members of the family from birth to death. He could be the father, husband or son at each stage of her life. Women have always been misled by the imposed ideal of womanhood. The patriarchal society and the system forced her to believe that she had no place in the world of work, outside her home. Man was the maker of that world. The woman's duty was to make a home for him. The woman should never think of her own identity, independence or ambitions. In the traditional Indian society, the success of a man is expected to be celebrated by his wife, as her own success. However, very rarely, Indian men can appreciate the success of his wife, especially when her progress is more than his own. However, Indian women have proved that they can be manifestations of will power, grace, dedication, hard work and brilliance. They have raised their bar and broken untouched barriers. Innate intelligence and quickness of judgement have been instrumental not only at critical points in their career paths but in day-to-day business life. Closely involved with this is the capacity for making rapid decisions based on knowledge and experience, ability to communicate, talent for persuasion and the ability to win cooperation, loyalty and trust of colleagues, employees and clients.

Women in India have been successful in all fields. They have contributed in the freedom struggle. During the struggle, both men and women took active part in it. Without the support of the women-folk, India's men would not have been successful in their attempt of freeing the country from the chains of bondage. Women who are mentally robust, physically fit and highly motivated resent preferential treatment being meted out to them. They want to be treated at par with their male colleagues so that they get a fair opportunity to prove their worth. They do not want to be treated as weaklings as it offends their sensitivities and self-respect.

The role of women in our society has changed over time. The women have served in armed forces since ancient times and the chorus for their integration have only grown louder. In Indian history also numerous examples of women soldiers and officers exists. Rani of Jhansi

Brigade of Indian National Army (INA) was formed on 9 Sep 1943 in Singapore under Capt Lakshmi Swaminathan Sehgal who was a doctor by profession. This force operated in the jungles of Malay and was very effective. Also the Nursing Corps of the Indian Army was raised in March 1889 and by 1939-40 their strength grew to 6000 trained nurses. These nurses had served British and Indian troops in India, Aden, Mesopotamia and Egypt during World War I and during World War II they served exceptionally well in different theatres of war in Middle East, Europe, Africa and the Far East.

It is the society that is the feeder to any organization within its realm and the same is seen through its functioning and projection. (Role and employment of women in the Indian Armed forces)³. Changes over the period have merged this distinguished line of specific gender task distribution and has managed to put a wedge into the male dominated culture. The human achievements in the field of science and technology has changed not only the human lifestyle but has also helped to change the world order. Military activities including the organizations, roles, responsibilities and threats have also been changed with the changes that have taken place in various other sectors of life. There are lots of roles that can be played equally or even more efficiently by women in the Army in comparison with the men. This realization supported by the testimonies from the other Armies of the world, prompted our policy makers to induct women only in the Officer cadre of the Indian Army. The first batch of women officers got Commissioned in the Indian Army in 1993. The doors were open for women entry as regular officers in education, logistics, law, engineering and executive cadres. Thousands of spirited young women applied against advertisements and it was a turning point in the history of time. These women chose a new field where they had to painstakingly pave a path for the others to follow. However, 22 years past women still have not been able to break the barrier fully in spite of breaking the crust and making inroads. Yet with time they have started to see the bigger canvas and so also their scope on the same.

³ UK Essays.

Defence readiness is one major aspect which is required to be borne in mind throughout while considering their employability options. Their career aspects and opportunities need to be viewed holistically keeping the final aim in focus. Yet a few discriminatory policies as been professed by the government need review such as their Short Service Commission, combat exclusion, and entry into ranks and so on. Fore- planning and systematic approach should be the correct approach prior to deciding on any such issue. Nevertheless, a small beginning is ensuring a greater role for women. Government of India, after the Supreme Court ruling, has decided to grant Permanent Commission to women officers in the education and law branch.

Different set of policies will only affect the working efficiency and interaction between the two genders in the services. This exclusion from select working places will only harm the organization and upset the normal working routine. Notwithstanding this, the Army has been constituted with the sole purpose of ensuring defence of the country and all policy decisions should be guided by this overriding factor. All matters concerning defence of the country have to be considered in a dispassionate manner. No decision should be taken which even remotely affects the cohesiveness and efficiency of the military. Concern for equality of sexes or political expediency should not influence the foremost aim of safe guarding the security of the nation.

Induction of women into selected fields of the Indian Army has given rise to the issue of their employability in various spheres and how their training is to be affected. The role of women in the armed forces for a long time, was limited to the medical profession i.e. doctors and nurses. The initial adjustment problems weren't as much for the women as it was for the men. Wrapped in their tradition of chivalry and respect to women, most gentlemen officers could not treat their female counterparts at par with themselves. Their subordinates too, were men who came from conservative families where they saw women playing only traditional roles. The emergence of these women into totally male dominated bastions did initially create embarrassing 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. The time is not far when we may use the term 'sisters-in-arms' as equivalent to 'brothers-in-arms'.

1.5 Contemporary debate on employability of women in the Indian Army

Currently, women in the Indian Army serve as Short Service Commissioned (SSC) officers. Under this type of commission, they can serve in the armed forces for a period ranging from 10-14 years. Representations are being made at all levels for grant of the Permanent Commission

and also for the combat role to ensure equality of opportunity. Employment of women in combat has become a hot issue at present. Two different schools of thought exist amongst the scholars. The first claim that women are equally capable of men to perform the job and it's the matter of equality also, whereas the others claim that it is the exploitation of women to employ in combat because they are not physically and psychologically fit to perform the job. This debate needs to be carried out in a holistic manner.

The recent SC ruling and HC judgement to allow Permanent Commission to women has made all the three services to think as to the future role of women in Indian Armed Forces. The induction of women in the Indian Army started with the Grant of Short Service Commission (SSC) for 5 years in the year 1993. Then the tenure for them to serve in the Army has been increased over the years and is presently 14 years (Initially 10 years extendable to 14 years). Presently, women officers are getting Commissioned into the Services i.e. Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Engineers, Army Education Corps, Judge Advocate General Branch, Signals, Intelligence and Army Air Defence. In accordance with the ruling of the apex court the Indian Army has agreed to grant Permanent Commission to women officers in Judge Advocate General Branch and Army Education Corps of the Army. However, a number of litigations have been filed for grant of Permanent Commission into other Branches also.

Before any decision is taken we need to carry out a holistic view of the integration of women into the Army.

The role of women in combat has become a particularly contentious issue in contemporary militaries throughout the world. With the current exclusion of women from many combat roles seen by some as a form of sexual discrimination, an ongoing debate continues to rage. Many on each side of the issue cite the alleged physical and mental differences of the two sexes, the effect of the presence of the opposite sex on the battlefield, and the traditional view of males as soldiers as arguments both for and against women being employed as soldiers under combat situations. The idea of having women in combat has been thrown around by several civilizations since early civilization. Some societies have chosen to not allow women to fight for their countries, while others have used women to fight in their wars as frequently as men, such as 800,000 women who served in the Soviet military during World War II, of which many saw front line action. Women have been serving in the military in numerous support roles in several countries for many years. In modern wars, however, there may be no front line, and women, in such roles as military police providing convoy escort, or staffing checkpoints, have gotten into firefights as part of a mixed unit. Although women are recruited to serve in the military in most countries, only a few countries permit women to fill active combat roles. Countries that allow this include Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway and Switzerland. Other nations allow female soldiers to serve in certain Combat Arms positions, such as Israel and the United Kingdom, which allow women to serve in Artillery roles, while still excluding them from units with a dedicated Infantry role. The United States allows women in most combat flying positions.

Several points of argument have been put forward by those in favor of women serving in combat conditions as well as those against the idea. Many of these arguments are focused on the physical differences between men and women, but also on differing mentalities, and the effects upon one sex by the presence of the other on the battlefield. The debate to integrate women into more “non-traditional” roles in the military has been raging since ages. Both for

and against this topic have iron clad reasons. On one hand some people believe that the increased power of military technology and Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) have led to the realization that actual confrontation between major powers to be avoided, however any future conflicts would be under the umbrella of technology. This would involve a tech savvy force and hence can afford larger employment for women.

To a senior army officer, society is still not ready to face the prospect of our women, as Prisoners Of War or with terrorists. To a woman officer, all women officers do not go for combat roles, but if one opts in she should have the right to join. Technology is increasingly making attributes like physical toughness redundant. Nevertheless, women in technical fields such as meteorology, weapons development, cryptography, software development, ordinance, navigation, and so forth may be equally capable as men. Some will be superior. In an increasingly technological army, the light-switch phenomenon asserts itself: no special gender advantage for flipping a light switch on or off. This phenomenon — a product of modern technology — is the great equalizer of the sexes.

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. This is not to undermine a woman's physical capability. Women have done extremely well in physical training as well. In the first few batches at the armed forces training academies women displayed more endurance 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.

As Commissioned officers at the age of 22-23 years, they may often have subordinates older than their parents. Hence, from day one, it is a challenge and leadership qualities are under test. Their crisp uniforms and the stars they adorn differentiate them from others. Despite the good quality of life, they may sometimes undergo hardships due to the nature of work. An officer may have to work in tough terrains or difficult circumstances. The women officers are trained in military academy to cope up with various difficult situations easily. Being a transferable job, transfers and movements are seen as unique travel opportunities to travel to

remotest locations in the country. Every unit is a mini-India with people and cultures as diverse. Although the path these women have chosen is tough, they have proved that they have the spirit, the courage and the will to carry on. Presently, women neither serve in combat arms nor as soldiers below officer rank, but it won't be long before these forbidden avenues are thrown open to them.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.6.1 Short Service Commission (SSC): This type of Commission is short term tenure of service offered to candidates selected to join the Indian Army as officers (men or women). The tenure of service is for 10 years. At the end of this tenure, they have three options- either to opt for Permanent Commission where eligible, to opt out of service or to opt for an extension of 4 years. The officer can quit service anytime during the extension of tenure. (www.joinindianarmy.gov.in)⁴

1.6.2 Permanent Commission (PC): This type of Commission is a career in the Army for officers till they retire. This Commission is offered at the beginning of the career only to male officers as of now in the Indian Army. Women officers only in the Education and Law branch of the Army are presently offered this Commission at the end of their Short Service tenure. (www.joinindianarmy.gov.in)⁵

1.6.3 Combat: Combat is a purposeful violent conflict meant to weaken, establish dominance over, or kill the opposition, or to drive the opposition away from the location where it is not wanted or needed. It typically refers to armed conflict between opposing military forces in warfare.

⁴ Indian Army website.

⁵ Indian Army website.

1.6.4 Qualitative Research: Qualitative Research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative Research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. Qualitative data collection methods vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/observations.

1.6.5 Quantitative Research: Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into useable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors, and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. Quantitative Research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods are much more structured than Qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of surveys – online surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys and kiosk surveys, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, longitudinal studies, website interceptors, online polls, and systematic observations.

1.7 Statement of Problem

The Indian Army began the experiment of inducting women officers in its various Services (the branches not involving direct combat role) in 1993. To begin with, they were given the option of Short Service Commission only, a contractual tenure of initial 5 years, extendable to 10 years and further to 14 years. This is presently 10+4 years tenure. Women officers in the Indian Army are not permitted to serve beyond the present contractual tenure of 14 years. With this are associated the issues relating to their promotion to higher/ commanding ranks and they are not entitled to earn their pension after this tenure. This leads to financial effect on their career. Since they are not Permanent Commissioned officers, the organization doesn't spend its resources on their training as compared to their male counterparts. The

disparities and discrimination in policies lead to dissatisfaction amongst the serving as well as the retired women officers.

As per the latest policy, the women officers are given Permanent Commission only in AEC and JAG branches after they approached the Supreme Court. It's been 22 years, but women officers are still facing the adhocism in their employability, HR policies, promotion prospects and career opportunities. They feel elated on joining the male dominated profession and try to put in their best efforts to move shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts. But inadequately sensitive policies affect their morale and bring down the satisfaction levels.

Apart from the above, the socio-cultural environment of our country is still in the process of paradigm shift in the mindset of society. The environment is not yet fully sensitized towards acceptance of women as colleagues at place of work, more so, as comrades in the Army. Hence, there are still issues relating to their acceptance as officers, as comrades in direct combat role and as soldiers below officer ranks.

In view of the changing battlefield scenarios and technological warfare, there is a need to critically evaluate the present qualitative requirements for induction of women officers in the Indian Army and requirement for widening the scope for induction and training for the specialist roles. The effectiveness of employability of women in the Indian Army also needs to be evaluated. This includes increased intakes of women, combat inclusion and entry of women in ranks below officer ranks. The on ground concerns of women officers need to be assessed in view of the socio-cultural environment of our society. It may be prudent to work out the Satisfaction Quotient of the serving and retired women officers and suggest some future role prospects for women in the Indian Army.

1.8 Theoretical Basis

There have been teething problems but these are no more than in any other employment sector. The lady officers seem to be quite happy with their chosen profession. An interaction with them clearly illustrates their professionalism and will to stand tall next to their male

colleagues, in the discharge of their duties. A spirit of comradeship has developed between the younger generation of officers of both genders, who have trained and grown together in service. They exhibit a rare comfort level, which has developed with time. Therefore, it can be safely presumed that the experiment has been a resounding success and there is no case to now look back on the issue. Research has shown that women are more perceptive and intuitive and endowed with organizational skills that help them plan right down to minute detail. They have the ability to empathize and understand. This makes them excel in all such fields that deal with interaction with human personnel. These are fields where women in the army can make a good contribution. On hindsight it seems that the entire debate that was ignited, when the idea was in its nascent stage was not unprecedented. Whenever, women have first stepped into essentially male worlds, the opposition has always been there. Such debates have had more to do with ideologies, principles, traditions and safety of the women. However now, almost two decades post the event, one can sit back and take a more rational view of things and feel that the idea of full integration of women in the Indian Army has finally arrived. People often wonder as to why women would like to join the Army in the first case. After all it is a tough life with eternal questions of modesty and propriety coming to the fore. The thrill and pride of serving one's motherland is an additional attraction. All this comes along with a well laid down code of conduct that makes things far more orderly, disciplined and easy to adhere to. Some feel that women feel more safe within the Army than they do in other services of a similar genre' in the civil sector. They also have an attractive pay packet. There is a lot at stake and such decisions should be taken only after careful consideration and gradually.

So far, the induction of women into the Indian Army has been a successful experiment and the credit for this goes, both, to the organization as well as the women. In order to ensure that future experiments are just as successful, one must proceed with a measure of foresight and judicious contemplation. The experience of the countries that have inducted women in their armed forces need to be studied. There have been certain adjustment problems even in societies that are developed and profess gender equality. Army life requires both mental and physical prowess. Many advanced countries have not inducted women in fighting units.

Every nation has to weigh its options against the backdrop of its own that women are neither pitched against enemy in face-to-face direct combat nor exposed to the risk of capture by the adversary. It is imprudent to replicate the model or path social and environmental mores. Every country has its own social/cultural moorings, type of hostilities encountered, level of technology and larger manpower issues.

The existing career opportunities and training for women commissioned under the WSES of the Indian Army need to be viewed holistically keeping the final aim of meeting the future needs of a technological, highly capable and an operationally focused Army. A few discriminatory policies as been professed by the Government need review such as their Short Service Commission, combat exclusion, entry into ranks and so on. Fore planning and systematic approach should be the correct approach prior to taking a decision on any issue. Nevertheless, a small beginning is ensuring a greater role for women. The Government of India, after the Supreme Court ruling, has decided to grant Permanent Commission to women officers in select cadres as the Judge Advocate General (JAG) branch and the Army Education Corps (AEC). "A beginning has been made. Other issues will be addressed down the line," a Defence Ministry official said.

These policy makers, however, surely need to realize that the ceiling of 14 years on the tenure of service of women officers has a serious limiting effect on their career; as they reach a certain dead end in their career while they are in their early or mid-thirties. As long as the women officers are denied the choice of a permanent commission, their service in the Army will remain merely a job and never a dedicated career option. With a limited service span and the restrictions placed on their role employability, women have a double disadvantage of-prejudicial policy, which even if they overcome, they do not have the experience necessary to attain higher ranks. Since, women are not employed in any mainstream roles, they miss out on important rungs on the ladder of experience, which are crucial for a command, and therefore, have no representation at the decision making levels. Also, having no option to continue in the Army after giving the organization the best years of one's life is a highly stressful experience and often leads to periods of grave depression. Women officers, once

they complete their tour of duty, have to cope with sudden loss of status, occupation and remuneration all in one sweep. At the end of their Short Service tenure, women officers are not eligible for any pensioner's benefits either, and so, they lose out on economic gains as well. The graph of their satisfaction swings between highs and lows between the time of Commissioning and the time of their release from service.

The all-volunteer Indian Army of future resting on the foundation of hi-tech capabilities cannot hope to fill all its operational services only through male entrants, who will be more attracted towards growing industrial and technical capabilities of the nation. India is turning out large number of technically trained women, many of whom find opportunities, career and upward social mobility in the military profession. We need to start experimentation- the sooner the better. The need to think of women officers' career and service needs are now, and not few years hence. The Indian Military bureaucracy has to rewrite its future policies about women officers in wake of all relevant perspectives. We need to outline future role prospects of the women officers in the Indian Army keeping in mind the socio-cultural environment of our country. I strongly believe the full integration of women throughout the Army is inevitable and the sooner we start, the easier the transition will be.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The women officers in Army Medical Corps and Military Nursing Services are kept beyond the purview of this study. They have different terms and conditions of service and are governed by different policies. In the Indian Army, as in many other Armies, the role of women in specialist, non-combatant medical roles, which are afforded physical protection on the battlefield by the international laws of war and conventions, is long established and well proven.

This study examines the women officers inducted under the Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES) introduced in 1993 and its further amendments till date. Under this scheme the women officers have been inducted in the Indian Army in the various Services including Army Service Corps (ASC), Army Ordnance Corps (AOC), Army Education Corps (AEC),

Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME), Corps of Engineers (Engrs), Corps of Signals (Sigs), Intelligence (Int), Judge Advocate General Branch (JAG), Army Air Defence (AAD). The women officers in these branches are permitted to serve for a contractual period of 10 years, extendable up to 14 years. As per the latest policy, the Indian Army has offered Permanent Commission to its women officers only in AEC and JAG branches. For the remaining branches, the women officers have to quit service after completion of 14 years.

1.10 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the current study are:

- (a) To examine the adequacy of recruiting policies and QRs to ensure induction of the most suitable women in the Indian Army.
- (b) An assessment of the complex cultural issues surrounding the status and role of Indian women and their employment in the Army.
- (c) To examine whether the existing career opportunities and training for women in the Indian Army best meet the future needs of a technological, highly capable, operationally focused and heavily committed Army.
- (d) To work out the satisfaction quotient of the serving and retired women officers and analyze opinion of their spouses, peers and PBOR.
- (e) To recommend some future role prospects for women in the Indian Army.

1.11 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses shall be studied and evaluated during the course of current research:

- (a) The recruiting policies and QRs are adequate for inducting the most suitable women in the Indian Army.
- (b) There is a need for wider employment of women in the Indian Army.

- (c) Existing career opportunities and training for women in the Indian Army best meets the future needs of a technological, highly capable, operationally focused and heavily committed Army.
- (d) The individual aspirations of the women officers of the Indian Army are fully addressed.
- (e) The future role prospects for women in the Indian Army need to be defined.

1.12 Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is of qualitative and quantitative research. The sources of the material used for this study are the books, periodicals and newspapers available in the libraries, internet web pages, previous studies in the similar field and informal interactions with the officers and other members of the Indian Army community. Quantitative research was applied on the data collected by means of questionnaires drafted for various segments of the environment in the Indian Army. These questionnaires were filled and data collected for analysis and for obtaining results. The findings have been deliberated upon and discussed in detail. The conclusions have been drawn and recommendations made on the basis of these findings and results. The research methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

1.13 Contributions of the Study

This study will try to find out the adequacy of the recruiting policies and QRs for induction of women officers, effectiveness of their present employability and suggest whether they should be given wider employability, continuity in Service, combat inclusion and entry in ranks below officers, evaluate existing career opportunities and training avenues and shall endeavor to outline future role prospects for them in the Indian Army.

The contributions of the current study can be summarized as under:

- (a) The study has taken into account the existing literature on the subject and has studied the existing policies pertaining to women officers in the Indian Army.
- (b) The recruiting parameters have been assessed and suggestions have been made for modification of these parameters for widening the employability aspects of women officers and opening more avenues for them.
- (c) The on ground concerns of women officers have been studied keeping in view the socio-cultural environment of our society.
- (d) The suggestions to upgrade the present training curriculum have been made for making our women officers future ready for an operationally focused and technologically highly capable Army.
- (e) A comparison has been made with the employability of women in some of the major Armies of the world.
- (f) Suggestions have been made for widening the employability of women in the Indian Army.
- (g) Major issues like grant of Permanent Commission, combat inclusion, increased intakes, and induction of women in ranks below officers have been deliberately dealt with.
- (h) Important analyses have been made based on the inputs received from the environment by means of questionnaires. These questionnaires were filled by and collected from various segments of the Army community.
- (i) Satisfaction levels of the serving as well as retired women officers were evaluated and Satisfaction Quotient worked out for them.
- (j) Recommendations and opinions have been received from the environment by means of the questionnaires and personal interactions. These inputs have been taken into account while suggesting the future role prospects for women in the Indian Army as part of this study.
- (k) The conclusions have been drawn and recommendations have been made for redressal of grievances of the serving and retired women officers and taking

corrective measures and implementation of gender insulated policies aiming for full acceptance and integration of women in the mainstream of the Indian Army.

1.14 Organization of the Study

The study has been organized in the remaining chapters as under:

- (a) Chapter Two gives the literature review of the existing literature on the subject. Various aspects and viewpoints covered in the existing literature relevant to the current study have been reviewed and gaps been identified. These gaps have been listed for addressing in the current research.
- (b) Chapter Three spells out the research methodology followed for the current study.
- (c) Chapter Four examines the present induction qualitative requirements for women officers in the India Army. The induction QRs have been listed for various entries of women officers. Suggestions have been made for opening more avenues for women in the Army and inducting suitably qualified officers for specialist roles.
- (d) Chapter Five assesses the present employment of women in the Indian Army and its related aspects.
- (e) Chapter Six elucidates the on ground concerns of the women officers. These concerns pertain to the existing policies and procedures, gender discrimination and complex socio-cultural issues surrounding the role and status of women and their employability in the Indian Army.
- (f) Chapter Seven assesses the requirement of upgrading the training curriculum pre-Commissioning and post- Commissioning of women officers for making them future ready for an operationally capable and technologically focused Army.
- (g) Chapter Eight gives the collation and analysis of the data collected from the environment by means of the questionnaires. The data is tabulated, collated and graphically represented for analysis of findings and results are accordingly deliberated upon. The Satisfaction levels of the serving and retired women officers have been calculated and the Satisfaction Quotient worked out for them.

- (h) Chapter Nine outlines and suggests some future role prospects for women in the Indian Army.
- (i) Chapter Ten draws out conclusions from the study and gives recommendations.