

Inclusion in Army : A Study of Acceptance of Women Leaders by Men in Uniform

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Abstract

Inclusion is the order of the day. No organization is going to reach its full potential until there is a climate of inclusion in it. Traditionally, though some organizations, like the military, are branded as male organizations, but with the passage of time, even these organizations are expanding their boundaries and the mindset of people in them is evolving. With this underlying idea, this paper sought to understand the level of acceptance of military men for women officers in the Indian Army. The entry of women in the Indian Army is limited to the Officer Cadre in supporting Arms and Services. The paper was based on a systematic literature review and primary data collected from respondents to understand their mindset towards the acceptance and inclusion of women in the Indian Army.

Keywords : acceptance, women, army, leader, inclusion

JEL Classification : C8, M50, M51

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Though the military has been historically a gender-defining institution, but women have always served in the armed forces with enhanced participation in different roles. It is a reflection of changes in gender norms, role of women in civilian society, and evolution in the nature of the military. The changes towards expansion and contraction of participation of women in military are going to be a result of these factors and the political as well as social views of those in power (Segal & Segal, 2004). A positive change has also been observed with the increased number of women directors on the board of select Indian companies since 2015 (Kumar & Sudesh, 2016). In spite of some fields being closed to women and the less vacancies for women in the Indian Army, the incorporation of women into the different branches of the Indian Army has been quite positive. There is a need to have an insight into the mindset of the rank and file of army, that is, soldiers towards the acceptance and inclusion of women in the army.

In the Indian Army, the entry of women was restricted to nurses in military nursing service and medical officers in Army Medical Corps till 1991. The first batch of 25 women officers (non medical officers) was selected for training in Indian Army in 1992 and were commissioned in 1993. They were inducted as Short Service Commissioned Officers initially for a period of 5 years in Army Service Corps (ASC), Army Ordnance Corps (AOC), Army Education Corps (AEC), and Judge Advocate General's Branch (JAG), which was extendable by another 5 years. After that, gradual amendments were done and women officers were commissioned in Corps of Electronic & Mechanical Engineers (EME), Intelligence Corps (Int), Supporting Arms like Corps of Engineers (ENGRS), Corps of Signals (SIGS), and Army Air Defence (AAD). Their service was extended up to 14 years in 2006. Though women officers have been in the Indian Army for more than two decades now, they are not

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considered for permanent commission and are not inducted in combat arms like Infantry, Armoured, and Artillery units like most of the militaries in the world, but are inducted in other supporting arms and services. Permanent commission implies that they can serve for a minimum period of 20 years and have same terms and conditions of service for promotions, field postings, courses, pensionary benefits as the permanent commission male officers.

The case for grant of permanent commission to women officers is subjudice in the Honourable Supreme Court of India; hence, there is a court stay on the release of women officers who want to serve beyond 14 years (SLP© 1752-1754). Those who want to quit on completion of 14 years can go on release as per the existing terms and conditions of service. The women officers of Army Education Corps (AEC) and Judge Advocates Branch (JAG) were granted permanent commission in 2011.

Literature Review

The views of military men regarding the acceptance and inclusion of women in army are varied and differ from nation to nation. The research data shows that women have a limited acceptance in armies (Stiehm, 1998). The research findings also suggest that attitudes toward women in the military vary across content domains (Vogt, Bruce, Street, & Stafford, 2007), and depending on the structure of an organization, there are different cultures within an organization (Dash & Mohaptra, 2016). In India, acceptance of women officers among the male soldiers was low since most of the male soldiers are from rural areas and are not used to taking orders from women (Bhattacharyya, 2012). The attitudes of men towards women in the Swedish military were found to be positive and the sexist beliefs, rank, and interpersonal contact with women in the military seemed to be the best predictors of these attitudes (Ivarsson, Estrada, & Berggren, 2005). Some studies have also suggested that the performance and achievement of women has been viewed as more important than gender status by men (Harrell, 2007 ; Miller, 1997). The men in both Norwegian and U.S. armies agreed that women were an asset to the military organization. But the men in American army believed that equal opportunities should be created for women ; whereas, the Norwegian men felt that equal treatment should be given to both the genders in the army. The U.S. army men also felt that by setting a lower standard for women, there will be no violation of equality ; whereas, Norwegian men felt that the criteria should be the same for both men and women, having equal danger and equal responsibility (Gustavsen, 2013).

Setting different physical standards for training of women and men has been viewed as a measure of special treatment for women (Cohn, 2000). Often, it has been seen that men resort to subtle forms of gender harassment to show their disapprobation of women in powerful positions in military (Miller, 1997). An interview study conducted by Carreiras in 2009 found that the Portuguese soldiers had more 'macho' and 'sexist' sentiments ; whereas, the Dutch soldiers were more 'integrationist' in their outlook. The soldiers of different countries have diverse views for including women in combat roles (combat inclusion). Russian service men felt satisfied that the women in their services were not exposed to the danger of getting wounded or killed at the battle as they felt that combat duty is not meant for women (Mathers, 2015).

Except for about 16 nations, most of the armies of the world restrict entry of women in combat arms ("By the numbers: Women in the U.S. military," 2013). In a majority of the countries, the combat exclusion of women has persisted mainly because of myths that women are physically unfit for the demands of war, that the public cannot tolerate the casualties of women, female soldiers affect the unit cohesion and male bonding of troops in combat, and also the stereotypes linked with the capabilities of women and men and the "band of brothers" culture of military (MacKenzie, 2015).

USA allowed the entry of women in Infantry and Tank roles, which were the last ones only open to men in 2016. For the first time, the U.S. army has appointed a female infantry commander, Captain Kristen Griest, who qualified as a ranger in 2015. She graduated from the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC) in April 2016, her new role allowed her to lead male and female soldiers into battle - one of the last male - only bastions of the

army (Alexander, 2016). On May 22, 2016, the first seven women out of 950 cadets commissioned into combat divisions received their degrees and commissions as Second Lieutenants at the West Point, N.Y ("At West Point, Biden lauds diversity in U.S. Army, women in combat roles," 2016).

In U.K, wef July 2016, the units of The Royal Lancers, The Kings Royal Hussars, the Royal Tank Regiments, All Army Reserve Royal Armoured Corp regiments of Royal Armoured Corps have been opened for women. For the women keen to join regular army, role-based training started wef November 2016, which will be reviewed after every six months before being expanded to other units of Royal Armoured Corps ("Ban on women in ground close combat roles lifted," 2016).

Traditional gender beliefs are also believed to cast a negative impact on how male soldiers evaluate their female colleagues (Boldry, Wood, & Kashy, 2001). Kummel (2002) opined that it is not necessary that military men are coherent in their views towards women in army. Depending on the approach and which part or people of the military are being studied, the analysis of their attitudes may yield different results (Drake, 2006 ; Firestone, 1987). The outlook of men on the participation of women in army is affected by the masculine military culture also (Kurpius & Lucart, 2000; Lahelma, 2005). The opinion of the men on the role of women and their experience with service women also has an influence on their attitude (Herbert, 1994).

Inclusion is defined as the extent to which an organization allows individuals to participate and contribute to the fullest (Miller, 1998). Inclusion is the need of the hour because it has positive consequences for individuals and organizations (Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart, & Singh, 2011). Across the world, gender inclusion is evolving at different levels, hence in armies too. There should be an improvement in the acceptability of women officers among male soldiers. It is essential for the armed forces to gradually impart the change in the mindset of their soldiers who are mostly from the rural background having a patriarchal mindset (Bhattacharyya, 2012).

Men and women army officers have different leadership styles, and this has been shown by research also. Women leaders are more transformational and engage more in contingent reward behavior. It seems that this type of encouraging, inspiring, and positive way of leadership will have advantages for contemporary organizations in general (Dunn, 2007). Canadian research brought out that generally, women leaders are effective and transformational and are mostly given a higher rating than men by the subordinates on all major parts of transformation leadership, and almost same on the balance characteristics. Research has also found a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behaviour (Choudhary, Kumar, & Philip, 2016). With the passage of time, women officers possessing excellent qualities of transformational leadership will stand out themselves. Integration of an increased number of women into the leadership ranks should begin from the base and as military personnel at different ranks progress in career, it will be a usual norm to have men and women leaders (Gray, 2008).

From the study of literature, it can be observed that there are hardly any studies related to the acceptance of women officers by army soldiers in the Indian context. Therefore, this paper attempts to understand the level of acceptance of women officers in military to further enrich research in this area.

Research Methodology

Data for this study was collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire framed with the help of professionals in this field having up to 20 years of experience ; 250 questionnaires were given out, of which 240 questionnaires were received, and 233 were found to be usable . The questionnaire was also translated into Hindi for ease of understanding. The service bracket of the majority of the respondents fell in the group of 10 -23 years. The period of selecting the samples was between July - December 2016. The Table 1 displays the profile of the respondents.

A structured data instrument was formulated in the form of a questionnaire to collect the data for the study. It was divided into two sections .The first section attempted to gather the information of the respondent and the

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Determinants	No of Respondents	%
1.	Army Education Corps (AEC)	11	7.4
2.	Infantry (Inf)	14	9.4
3.	Army Service Corps (ASC)	26	17.4
4.	Corps of Engineers (Engrs)	48	32.0
5.	Corps of Signals (Sigs)	17	11.4
6.	Army Air Defence (AAD)	7	4.6
7.	Army Ordnance Corps (AOC)	6	4.0
8.	Corps of Electronic & Mechanical Engineers (EME)	11	7.3
9.	Army Medical Corps (AMC)	3	2.0
10.	Corps of Military police (CMP)	4	3.0
11.	Artillery (Arty)	3	2.0

second section attempted to know the perception of the respondent towards the presence and acceptance of women officers in the Indian Army. The measures constructed range from leadership, acceptance, and inclusion. Likert's 5 - point scale ranging from '*strongly disagree*' (1) to '*strongly agree*' (5) was used to measure all the concepts in the questionnaire.

Analysis and Results

The collected information was analyzed using SPSS software version 21.0. Reliability of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Factor analysis, descriptive, and graphical charts have been used for analyzing the data. It can be observed from the Table 2 that the value of Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.6 (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 1998), therefore, it can be concluded that the research instrument is reliable.

(1) Factor Analysis : Factor analysis was done by using principal component method with varimax rotation from extraction method (Hair et al., 1998). Three variables from the list of variables did not match into the factor model. The excluded variables involve one related to job content and two related to equal treatment. The Kaiser - Meyer - Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy displayed a value of 0.879. The Bartlett's test of sphericity confirms the sampling adequacy for factor analysis (Table 3). Therefore, the factor analysis was considered suitable. The

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of Reliability

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.879	19

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.895
Approx. Chi-Square	1500.884
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity <i>df</i>	190
Sig.	.000

Table 4. Factor Loadings

Level of Acceptance		
Soldiers accept women officers as a leader in a stressful environment.		0.613
Soldiers are comfortable in taking orders from women officers.		0.790
Soldiers are comfortable working with women officers.		0.717
Soldiers would be comfortable while working in physical contact with women officers in activities like maintaining tanks, arty guns, etc.		0.608
Soldiers have accepted women officers as one of the officers in the unit.		0.598
Soldiers are willing to accept women officers as Officer Commanding.		0.631
Women should be recruited in other ranks.		0.588
Impact of Women Officers		
Soldiers readily accept women officers giving punishment for disobedience.		0.733
Having a woman officer as a superior places additional administrative burden/ greater responsibility on you.		0.714
Presence of women officers has had a positive impact on social behaviour of soldiers.		0.800
Women officers can be placed in command of isolated posts in field and high altitude areas with soldiers.		0.730
Soldiers would be comfortable with women officers leading them in counter insurgency operations and hard field areas.		0.586
Women Leaders		
Women officers make good leaders in the Indian Army.		0.639
Women officers are able to motivate soldiers under their command.		0.588
Soldiers express their personal problems to women officers more easily.		0.755
Women officers should be included in combat arms.		0.624
Experience		
Have you served with a woman officer ?		0.828
Women officers are strict when there is a need to discipline.		0.726

Table 5 . Acceptance of Women Leaders in a Stressful Environment

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Level of Acceptance	<i>Disagree</i>	4	1.8	1.8	1.8
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	4	1.8	1.8	3.5
	<i>Neutral</i>	18	7.9	7.9	11.5
	<i>Agree</i>	124	54.4	54.6	66.1
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	77	33.8	33.9	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

factor loadings obtained were as per Table 4.

All the four factors mentioned in the Table 4 have an Eigen value more than 1 suggesting a four factor solution. The rotated component matrix reveals that the 19 variables have been reduced to four factors. As observed from the Table 4, except for four values of factor loading, rest all factor loading values are more than 0.6. Thus, the factors found suitable were extracted.

(2) Descriptive Statistics : Responses on all concepts of the questionnaire have been measured on a 5- point likert

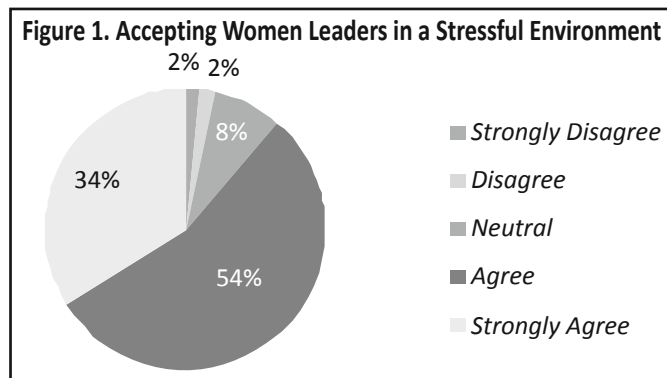


Table 6. Soldiers Comfortable in Taking Orders from Women Officers

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Level of Acceptance	<i>Disagree</i>	4	1.8	1.8	1.8
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	6	2.6	2.7	4.4
	<i>Neutral</i>	44	19.3	19.5	23.9
	<i>Agree</i>	116	50.9	51.3	75.2
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	56	24.6	24.8	100.0
	Total	226	99.1	100.0	
Missing System		2	.9		
Total		228	100.0		

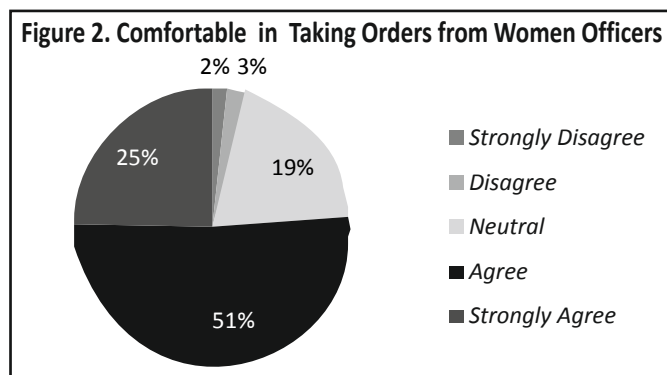


Table 7 . Soldiers Comfortable Working with Women Officers

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Level of Acceptance	<i>Disagree</i>	5	2.2	2.2	2.2
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	17	7.5	7.5	9.7
	<i>Neutral</i>	36	15.8	15.9	25.6
	<i>Agree</i>	121	53.1	53.3	78.9
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	47	20.6	20.7	99.6
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

scale ranging from '*strongly disagree*' (1), '*disagree*' (2), '*neutral*' (3), '*agree*' (4), and '*strongly agree*' (5).

From the frequency distribution Table 5 and the pie chart, Figure 1, it is seen that 54% of the respondents agreed and 34 % strongly agreed that soldiers accept women officers as a leader in stressful environment and high risk situations ; 8% were of a neutral opinion ; 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 2% disagreed that soldiers accept women officers as a leader in stressful environment and high risk situations.

From the Table 6 and Figure 2, it is observed that 51% of the respondents agreed and 25 % strongly agreed that JCOs/ORs are comfortable in taking orders from women officers ; 19 % were of a neutral opinion ; 2% respondents strongly disagreed, and 3% disagreed that JCOs/ORs are comfortable in taking orders from women officers.

It can be inferred from the Table 7 that 53% of the respondents agreed and 21% strongly agreed that they were comfortable working with women officers; 16% had a neutral opinion; 2% disagreed, and 1% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Table 8. Soldiers Comfortable in Duties Having Physical Contact with Women Officers

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Level of Acceptance	<i>Disagree</i>	4	12.7	12.8	1.8
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	29	1.8	1.8	14.5
	<i>Neutral</i>	36	15.8	15.9	30.4
	<i>Agree</i>	115	50.4	50.7	81.1
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	43	18.9	18.9	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

Figure 3. Comfortable in Duties Having Physical Contact with Women Officers

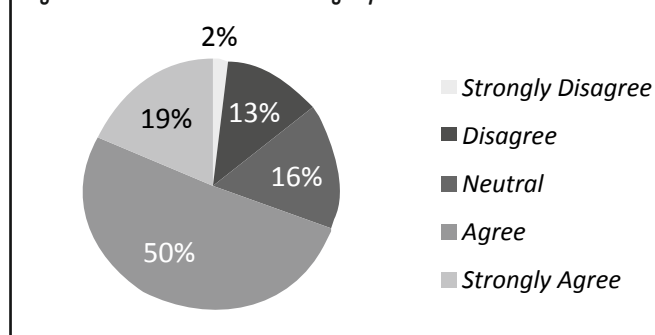


Table 9. Acceptance of Women Officers as One of the Officers

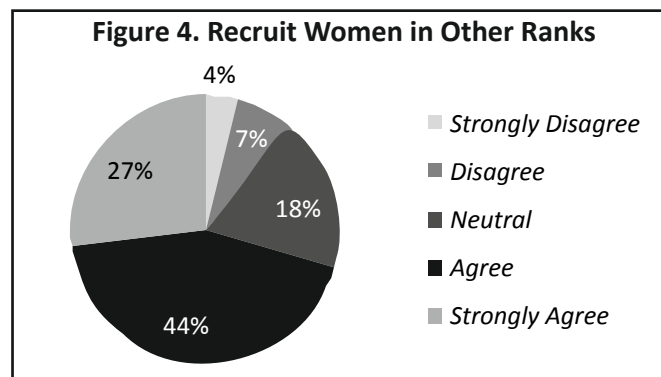
		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Level of Acceptance	<i>Disagree</i>	13	5.7	5.7	5.7
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	43	18.9	18.9	24.7
	<i>Neutral</i>	43	18.9	18.9	43.6
	<i>Agree</i>	89	39.0	39.2	82.8
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	39	17.1	17.2	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4	.4	
Total		228	100.0	100.0	

Table 10. Accept Women Officer as an Officer Commanding

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Level of Acceptance	<i>Disagree</i>	6	2.6	2.6	2.6
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	12	5.3	5.3	7.9
	<i>Neutral</i>	50	21.9	22.0	30.0
	<i>Agree</i>	109	47.8	48.0	78.0
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	50	21.9	22.0	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

Table 11. Recruitment of Women in Other Ranks

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Level of Acceptance	<i>Disagree</i>	9	3.9	4.0	4.0
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	17	7.5	7.5	11.5
	<i>Neutral</i>	41	18.0	18.1	29.5
	<i>Agree</i>	99	43.4	43.6	73.1
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	61	26.8	26.9	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		



From the Table 8 and Figure 3 , it can be seen that 50% of the respondents agreed and 19 % strongly agreed that soldiers would be comfortable while working in physical contact with women officers while performing activities like crossing DCB, maintaining tanks , arty guns, etc. ; 16% had a neutral opinion ; 2% strongly disagreed, and 13% disagreed with this statement.

It can be inferred from the Table 9 that 39% of the respondents agreed and 17% strongly agreed that soldiers accepted women officers as one of the officers of the unit ; 19 % were of a neutral opinion ; 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed, and 19% disagreed with this statement.

The Table 10 depicts that 48% of the respondents agreed and 22% strongly agreed that soldiers were willing to accept women officers as Officer Commanding of the unit ; 22% were of a neutral opinion ; 3% respondents strongly disagreed, and 5% disagreed with this statement.

The Table 11 and Figure 4 depict that 44% of the respondents agreed and 27% strongly agreed that women

Table 12. Women Officers Make Good Leaders in the Indian Army

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Women Leaders	<i>Disagree</i>	3	1.3	1.3	1.3
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	5	2.2	2.2	3.5
	<i>Neutral</i>	38	16.7	16.7	20.3
	<i>Agree</i>	156	68.4	68.7	89.0
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	25	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

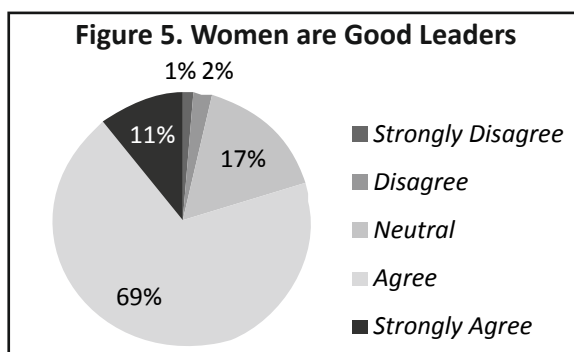
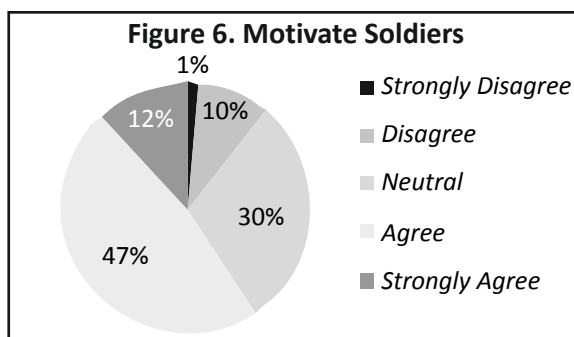


Table 13. Motivate Soldiers Under Command

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Women Leaders	<i>Disagree</i>	3	1.3	1.3	1.3
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	22	9.6	9.7	11.0
	<i>Neutral</i>	68	29.8	30.0	41.0
	<i>Agree</i>	107	46.9	47.1	88.1
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	27	11.8	11.9	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		



should be recruited in other ranks ;18 % were of a neutral opinion ; 4% respondents strongly disagreed, and 7% respondents disagreed with this statement.

The Table 12 and Figure 5 reveal that 69% of the respondents agreed and 11% strongly agreed that women officers make good leaders ;17% had a neutral opinion ; 1% respondents disagreed, and 2% strongly disagreed with the statement that women officers make good leaders.

The Table 13 and Figure 6 depict that 47% of the respondents agreed and 12% strongly agreed that women officers are able to motivate soldiers under their command ; 30% respondents were of a neutral opinion ; 1% respondents strongly disagreed, and 10% disagreed with this statement.

From the Table 14 and Figure 7, it can be seen that 30% of the respondents agreed and 13% strongly agreed with the statement that soldiers expressed their personal problems to women officers more easily ; 27% respondents had a neutral opinion ; 24% disagreed, and 6% respondents strongly disagreed with this statement.

From the Table 15 and Figure 8, it can be seen that 39.6% of the respondents agreed and 11.5% strongly agreed with the statement that women should be inducted in combat arms ; 20.7% respondents had a neutral opinion ; 7 % disagreed, and 21.1% strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 14. Express Personal Problems

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Women Leaders	<i>Disagree</i>	14	6.1	6.2	6.2
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	54	23.7	23.8	30.0
	<i>Neutral</i>	62	27.2	27.3	57.3
	<i>Agree</i>	67	29.4	29.5	86.8
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	30	13.2	13.2	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

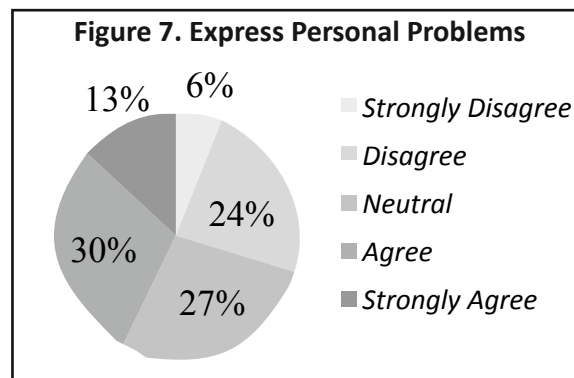
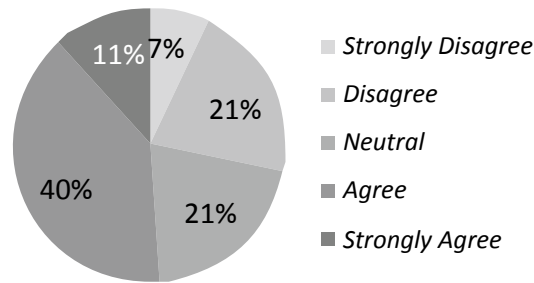
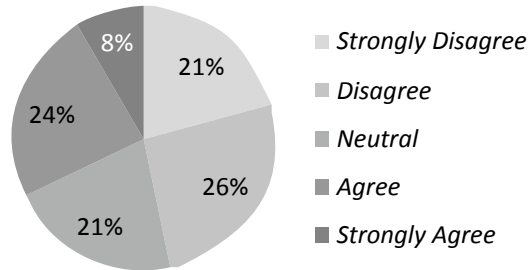


Table 15. Women Officers in Combat Arms

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Women Leaders	<i>Disagree</i>	16	7.0	7.0	7.0
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	48	21.1	21.1	28.2
	<i>Neutral</i>	47	20.6	20.7	48.9
	<i>Agree</i>	90	39.5	39.6	88.5
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	26	11.4	11.5	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

Figure 8. Women Officers in Combat Arms**Table 16. Accept Punishment Given by Women Officers for Disobedience**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Impact of Women Officers	<i>Disagree</i>	47	20.6	20.7	20.7
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	59	25.9	26.0	46.7
	<i>Neutral</i>	48	21.1	21.1	67.8
	<i>Agree</i>	54	23.7	23.8	91.6
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	19	8.3	8.4	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

Figure 9. Accept Punishment by Women Officers

The Table 16 and Figure 9 depict that 24% of the respondents agreed and 8% strongly agreed with the statement that soldiers readily accept women officers giving punishment for disobedience ; 21% respondents had a neutral opinion ; 21% strongly disagreed, and 26% respondents disagreed with this statement.

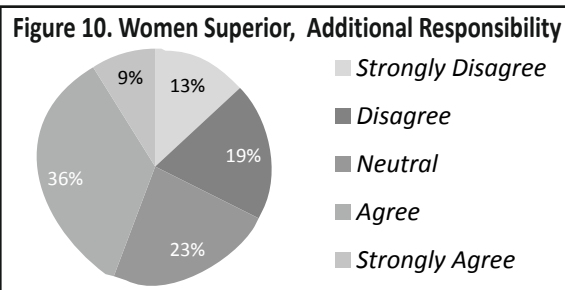
The Table 17 and Figure 10 depict that 36% of the respondents agreed and 9% strongly agreed with the statement that having a woman officer as superior places additional administrative burden /greater responsibility on you ; 23 % respondents were of a neutral opinion ; 13% respondents strongly disagreed, and 19% disagreed with this statement.

It can be inferred from the Table 18 that 16% of the respondents agreed and 8% strongly agreed with the statement that presence of women officers has had a positive impact on social behaviour of soldiers ; 25% respondents had a neutral opinion ; 26% strongly disagreed, and 25% disagreed with this statement.

It can be inferred from the Table 19 and Figure 11 that 25% of the respondents agreed and 11% strongly agreed with the statement that woman officers can be placed in command of isolated posts in field and high altitude areas

Table 17. Women Officer as Superior, Additional Responsibility

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Impact of Women Officers	<i>Disagree</i>	30	13.2	13.2	13.2
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	43	18.9	18.9	32.2
	<i>Neutral</i>	53	23.2	23.3	55.5
	<i>Agree</i>	81	35.5	35.7	91.2
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	20	8.8	8.8	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

**Table 18. Presence of Women Officers has a Positive Impact**

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Impact of Women Officers	<i>Disagree</i>	59	25.9	26.0	26.0
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	56	24.6	24.7	50.7
	<i>Neutral</i>	56	24.6	24.7	75.3
	<i>Agree</i>	37	16.2	16.3	91.6
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	19	8.3	8.4	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

Table 19. Command of Isolated Posts

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Impact of Women Officers	<i>Disagree</i>	64	28.1	28.2	28.2
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	51	22.4	22.5	50.7
	<i>Neutral</i>	31	13.6	13.7	64.3
	<i>Agree</i>	57	25.0	25.1	89.4
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	24	10.5	10.6	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

with soldiers ; 14 % respondents were of a neutral opinion ; 28% respondents strongly disagreed, and 22% respondents disagreed with this statement.

From the Table 20 and Figure 12, it is seen that 31% of the respondents agreed and 14% strongly agreed with

Figure 11 . Command of Isolated Posts by Women Officers

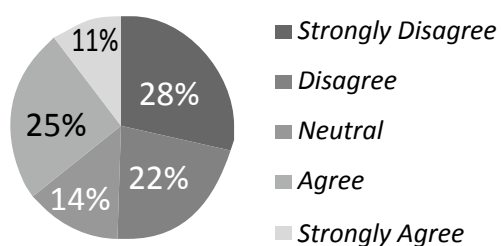


Table 20. Women Commanding in Operational Areas

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Impact of Women Officers	<i>Disagree</i>	52	22.8	22.9	22.9
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	50	21.9	22.0	44.9
	<i>Neutral</i>	24	10.5	10.6	55.5
	<i>Agree</i>	70	30.7	30.8	86.3
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	31	13.6	13.7	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

Figure 12. Women Commanding in Operational Areas

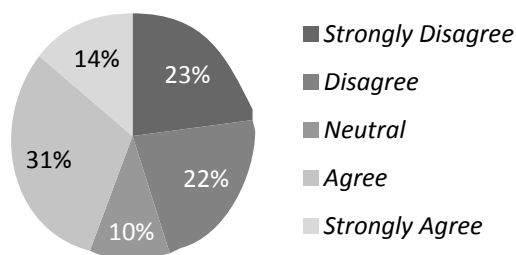


Table 21. Women Officers are Strict Disciplinarians

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Impact of Women Officers	<i>Disagree</i>	2	.9	.9	.9
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	4	1.8	1.8	2.6
	<i>Neutral</i>	13	5.7	5.7	8.4
	<i>Agree</i>	126	55.3	55.5	63.9
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	82	36.0	36.1	100.0
	Total	227	99.6	100.0	
Missing System		1	.4		
Total		228	100.0		

the statement that they will be comfortable with women officers leading them in CI Ops and hard field areas ; 10 % of the respondents possessed a neutral opinion ; 23% respondents strongly disagreed, and 22% respondents disagreed with this statement.

The Table 21 reveals that 55% of the respondents agreed and 36 % strongly agreed with the statement that women officers are strict when there is a need for discipline ; 6% respondents had a neutral opinion ; 0.9% respondents disagreed, and 1.8% respondents strongly disagreed with this statement.

Findings and Discussion

Majority of the soldiers felt that women officers perform the role of good leaders in the Indian Army (Table 12) and accepted them as a leader in a stressful environment (Table 5). Women officers were able to motivate them to do good work (Table 13) and were strict whenever there is a requirement of discipline, which was also the opinion of the maximum number of respondents (Table 21). Majority of the respondents accepted the women officers as one of the officers (Table 9) and expressed their problems more easily to them (Table 14). They also felt comfortable in taking orders from women officers (Table 6) and were willing to accept them as Officer Commanding of the unit (Table 10). Maximum number of respondents felt comfortable while working with women officers (Table 7) and they opined that they would be comfortable in performing different physical contact activities like maintaining tanks, cleaning arty guns, etc. with them (Table 8). Though most of the respondents were of the opinion that women officers should be included in combat arms, but a reasonably good percentage of the respondents were also of the opinion that women officers should not be included in combat arms (Table 15) ; most of the respondents opined that women should be recruited in other ranks (Table 11).

Majority of the respondents felt that women officers cannot be placed in command of the posts that are isolated in field and high altitude areas with soldiers (Table 19) and felt additional responsibility /administrative burden on them if they had a woman officer as a superior (Table 17). The respondents were also of the opinion that the presence of women officers did not have a positive impact on the social behaviour of soldiers (Table 18). Majority of the respondents also felt that they did not readily accept the punishment given by women officers for disobedience (Table 16). The opinion of the respondents was divided on being led by a woman commander - 50% respondents felt they would be comfortable with women officers leading them in counterinsurgency operational areas and hard field areas ; whereas 50% respondents felt that they will not be comfortable in such a scenario (Table 20).

Managerial Implications

The research outcome of this study clearly indicates the level of acceptance among the Indian Army men for the women officers in Indian Army. Our results would be useful for managers, that is, stakeholders involved in policy implementing to focus on the increased level of acceptance for women officers among the other ranks of the Indian Army and invest in inclusive leadership in the changing scenario to make our Army a more inclusive working place.

Policy Implications

This paper contributes to the literature existing in this field and the current dilemma going on in the Armed forces regarding the policies & terms and conditions for inducting women officers. The study has yielded findings that can help in the formulation of policies for recruiting women officers in the Indian Army. It offers insights for the ongoing case for grant of Permanent Commission in respect of women officers, which is subjudice in the Honorable Supreme Court of India since 2011.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the level of acceptance of women army officers among the soldiers in the Indian Army. The paper attempted to ascertain the levels of acceptance on the basis of four factors namely - acceptance, impact of women officers, women leaders, and experience. It is seen that the level of acceptance of women army officers among the soldiers has evolved from the past and is quite high at present, barring few issues like feeling of additional responsibility with a woman officer as a superior, being led by women officers in counterinsurgency operational areas, and including women in combat roles.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The study was limited to the Army men posted in the Southern sector of the country and hence cannot be generalized for the entire Indian Army. A study comprising of army men from other sectors could add different views to the level of acceptance of women officers among them. Not many studies have been conducted in this area regarding acceptance and inclusion of women in the Army in the Indian context. Similar studies can be attempted with male officers in Army to gauge their level of acceptance of women officers.

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