Challenges of Integration of Women in Peacekeeping Operations

By

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For

SAS Symposium on
Integration of Women in Ground Combat Units

Defence Institute of Psychological Research

- Integration of women in peacekeeping operations is imperative for inspiring new solutions and solving conflicts

- *Gendered approach to peacekeeping* to adequately respond to men, women, boys and girls are affected differently by armed conflict adopted by U.N

- U.N Resolution 1325 passed in the year 2000

Gender can be conceptualized as a relatively fluid social category that is socially and culturally constructed (a constructivist approach), as opposed to the view that gender is considered to be the direct result of biological sex (an essentialist approach).

GENDER ISSUES

- Problems which individual face by being a part of a particular gender group/classification, are classified under **gender issues**. E.g.: sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, gender based violence and relational dynamics among gender groups i.e. social status and possible power differences between men and women.

- It also accommodates how females who are expected to adhere to masculine expectations (authoritative, commanding, etc.) which might lead to inner conflict and how they deal with the subsequent stress

INTEGRATION OF WOMEN

- It refers to inclusion of women in extraterritorial missions (EM) that are undertaken by the Indian security forces and subsequent challenges that this inclusion might bring (because of their gender). .

- Since masculinity and femininity are shifting identities defined in relationship with each other therefore when we mention integration of women it also implies inclusion of gender issues as incorporation of one without the other is incomplete and nearly impossible.

- To explore the challenges faced by deployed women peacekeepers

- To propose strategies to deal with them

SAMPLE

- The sample included 13 women military officers

- Women military officers were from different countries (India, Sweden, UK, South Africa, Malawi, Fiji) who were undergoing pre-deployment training female military officer course (FMOC) at CUNPK, Delhi

- Women military officers with deployment experience were included in the sample.

- The age range of the sample varied from 32 years to 46 years and their duration of service in the military or police force ranged between 12-28 years.

- The ranks of the participants ranged from Major to Lieutenant Colonel.

A semi-structured interview schedule aimed at seeking information broadly on following areas:-

- Work-life balance,

- Training for peacekeeping missions,

- Women's access to leadership positions,

- Challenges to greater integration of women in peacekeeping missions.

These four areas can be further categorized into seven areas related to challenges of the women peacekeepers and their effective integration. These are:-

- Motivators to join peacekeeping,

- Maintaining work life balance and family support,

- Gender segregation of the tasks

- Pre-deployment training

- Leadership

- Gender based violence and sexual exploitation

- Experiences in the host country

Since the study is explorative, inductive approach to category formulation is used

Formulation of Research questions

Research Questions

Preliminary reading of the data

Selection of method of coding

Line by line coding of the data

- ❖ What is the importance of gender in peacekeeping?
- ❖ What are the benefits and challenges of engaging women in peacekeeping roles?
- ❖ How do WPKs experience Peacekeeping setting?
- ❖ How to make the peacekeeping mission gender sensitive?

Refining of codes and formulation of code groups

Thematic networks of the salient themes emerging from the data

Table 1: Organizing Themes, Basic themes, frequencies and percentages emerged on motivators to join peacekeeping

Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Frequency (f)		Percentage (in %)		Excerpts (example)
		Basic Themes (f)	Organizing theme (f)	Basic Themes (%)	Organizing theme (%)	
Benefits of Joining peacekeeping	Financial support to carry out family responsibilities	3	4	23.07	30.76	*"UN Mission was for women for the first time. Got this chance so felt like going to the UN Mission and got ready by myself as will get some more money. That money may be of use. There was happiness also that going to UN mission will get money. At that time home's condition was not so good, everything happened.)
	Increased social status	2		15.38		
	Exposure to foreign country	2		15.38		*Excerpt translated from Hindi

Table 2: Organizing Themes, Basic themes, frequencies and percentages emerged on work life balance and family support

Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Frequency (f)		Percentage (in %)		Excerpts (example) *Excerpt translated from Hindi*
		Basic Themes (f)	Organizing theme (f)	Basic Themes (%)	Organizing theme (%)	
Family Support	Role of family / husband's support	9	11	69.23	84.61	I used to remember my country, home and children. Because children were young. My husband looked after the home and children as well as his duty.
	Emotional turmoil, requirements and predicaments	7		53.84		
	Technology: Bridging distances	2		15.38		
Work life balance	Dilemma of multiple roles	8	9	61.53	69.23	During the UN misssion, I had difficulty in adjusting my family and children
	Challenges of being a working woman	6		46.15		
	Culturally determined roles of a woman	6		46.15		
Challenges of a working mother	Expectations from a mother Continued contribution to child's upbringing (even when abroad)	9	9	69.23	69.23	"Some difficulties had to be faced. First they told us for 6 months, then it increased to 1 year. Felt happy also. At that time, I was not married. Was able to talk on the phone. But those who were married. They had to face a big challenge in being away from their children for 1 year…
		7		53.84		
	3. Separation from child a major "sacrifice"	5		38.46		

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Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Frequency (f)		Percentage (in %)		Excerpts (example)
		Basic Themes (f)	Organizing theme (f)	Basic Themes (%)	Organizing theme (%)	
Gendering of peacekeeping roles	Perceived Gender Roles in peacekeeping missions	9	9	69.23	69.23	"Sometimes it is easier for a woman to get information or commit a search at a check-point and so on. Sometimes it is easier to be a man."
Presence of men as essential	Underlying need for male presence Relatively challenging tasks to be performed by men	5 4	6	38.46 30.76	46.15	"To some extend yes. However, when I was deployed I carried similar tasks as men. However, there are some tasks which are more challenging and from another point of view, need to be carried out by men. For instance- combat engineering"

Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Frequency (f)		Percentage (in %)		Excerpts (example)
		Basic Themes (f)	Organizing theme (f)	Basic Themes (%)	Organizing theme (%)	
Gender neutral training	Similar training for both men and women	2	2	15.38	15.38	"I wouldn't want to discriminate against men… so whatever efforts made for women, men also deserves them… so yes both men and women deserve further training than basic training."
Recommendations for training	Language training	1	2	7.69	15.38	Training on "CRSVs & SEAs, sexual violence"
	Dealing with Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)	2		15.38		

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Table -5: Organizing Themes, Basic themes, frequencies and percentages emerged on leadership

Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Frequency (f)		Percentage (in %)		Excerpts (example)
		Basic Themes (f)	Organizing theme (f)	Basic Themes (%)	Organizing theme (%)	
Gender and Leadership	• Boldness as criterion for leadership	1	3	7.69	23.07	"Purush leader mahila leader dono apnay jagah bold hai. Parantu purush leader perfect hai".
	• Prototype of ideal leader as male	2		15.38		
	• Changing scenario	2		15.38		(Male leader, female leader both are bold in their own place. But a male leader is perfect.)
Perception about female leaders	• Same approach as male leaders	2	4	15.38	30.76	"Mahila commander ko hum sub bathe batha sakthe hai. Purush ko hum sabhi baathe nahi bathaa sakthe hai."
	• More understanding	2		15.38		(To a female commander, we can disclose all. To a male, we cannot disclose everything.)

Table 6: Organizing Themes, Basic themes, frequencies and percentages emerged on gender based violence and sexual exploitation

Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Frequency (f)		Percentage (in %)		Excerpts (example)
		Basic Themes (f)	Organizing theme (f)	Basic Themes (%)	Organizing theme (%)	
Gender based violence	Sexual harassment during deployment	2	3	15.38	23.07	(In Liberia, women are falling victims in the mission due to their helplessness. Some public with money and some people are exploiting women by tempting them with food and money. And at some places their population also rapes them, and young girls are also falling prey to sexual exploitation about which we get to see during our duty.)
	Violence against women	2		15.38		
Recommended Action	Need for a strict action against perpetrators	4	4	30.76	30.76	"Repeating – constantly- that SEA is unacceptable. Many contributing nations do not feel that SEA is so bad in my experience. They need commanders to repeatedly tell them it is not and take action on those who carry it out".
	Need for training	2		15.38		

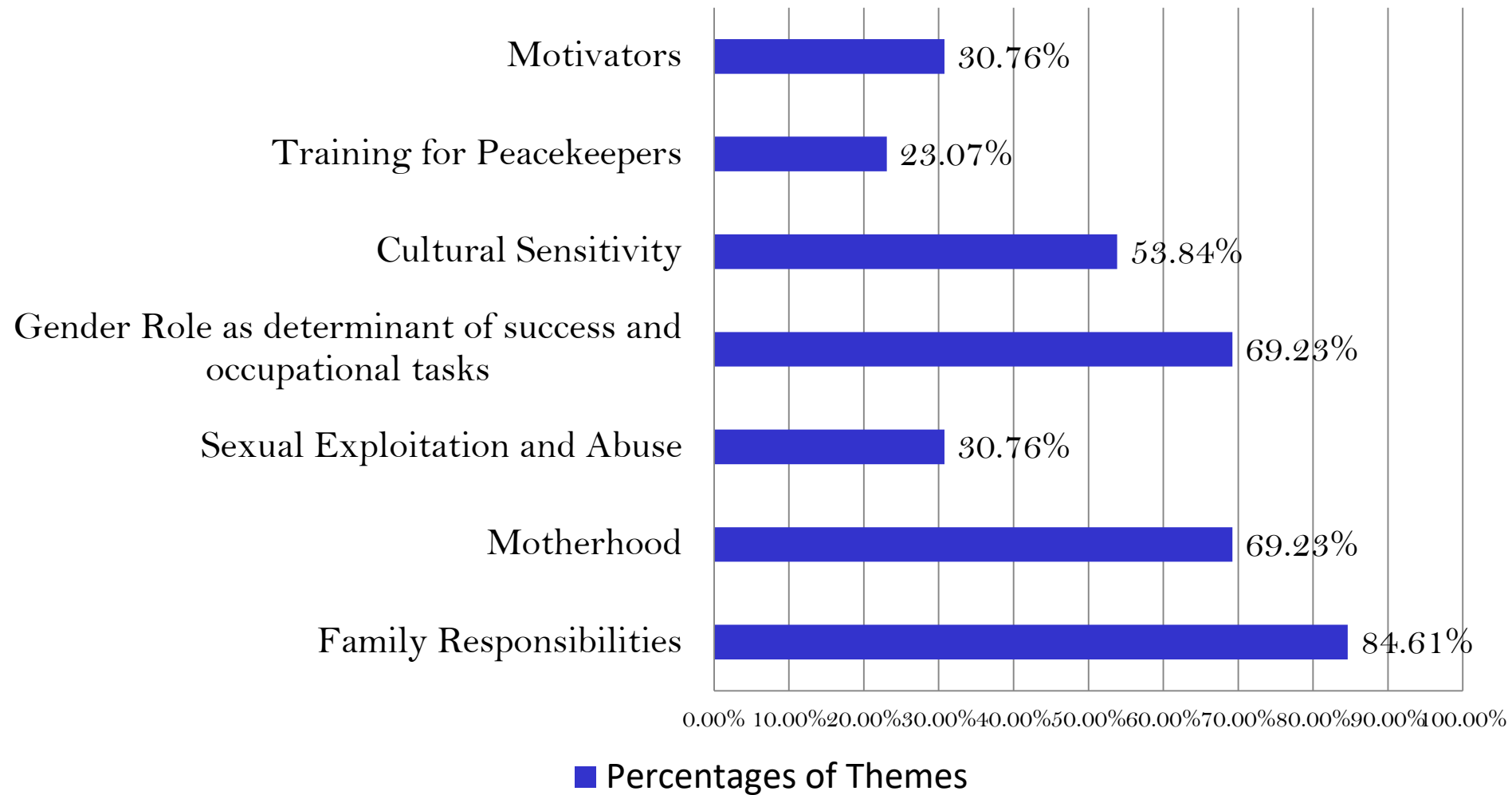| Organizing Themes	Basic Themes	Frequency (f)		Percentage (in %)		Excerpts (example)
		Basic Themes (f)	Organizing theme (f)	Basic Themes (%)	Organizing theme (%)	
Lack of Cultural awareness	Underlying sense of "Othering"	6	6	46.15	46.15	"We saw there that drivers drive cars without a license. Physical relations are established more there. No one has any family there. Having children without marriage is allowed. They have children with someone and marry someone else. Drive cars with a lot of speed. There is no electricity there. Poverty is too much." *Excerpt Translated from Hindi*
	Culturally determined concept of "being civilized"	4		30.76		
Cultural differences	Observed cultural differences	7	7	53.84	53.84	"At first I was surprised that families wanted to dig up graves of their dead family members (when moving back to Serbia). As a Swede it felt wrong and like a violation to the descended. But after a while I realized that it was the right thing to do for the Serbians. Their actions sprung from love, they wanted to keep their descended family member close- and bring them back home to Serbia. Putting my 'Swedish Glasses' aside this made perfect sense!"
	Moral dissonance due to cultural exposure	6		46.15		

Table 8 : Overall Global Themes, Organizing themes, frequencies and its percentages

Global Themes	Organizing Themes	Frequency (f)		Percentage (in %)	
		Organizing theme (f)	Global theme (f)	Sub theme (%)	Global theme (%)
Family Responsibilities	• Family Support • Work life balance	11 9	11	84.61 69.23	84.61
Motherhood	• Challenges of a working mother	9	9	69.23	69.23
Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	• Gender based violence • Recommended Action	3 4	4	23.07 30.76	30.76
Gender Role as determinant of success and occupational tasks	• Gendering of peacekeeping roles • Presence of men as essential • Gender and Leadership	9 6 3	9	69.23 46.15 23.07	69.23
Need for Cultural Sensitivity	• Lack of Cultural awareness • Cultural differences	7 6	7	53.84 46.15	53.84
Training for peacekeepers	• Gender neutral training • Recommendations for training	2 2	3	15.38 15.38	23.07
Motivators	• Benefits of Joining peacekeeping	4	4	30.76	30.76

Percentages of Themes

Percentages of Themes

- Motivators — 30.76%
- Training for Peacekeepers — 23.07%
- Cultural Sensitivity — 53.84%
- Gender Role as determinant of success and occupational tasks — 69.23%
- Sexual Exploitation and Abuse — 30.76%
- Motherhood — 69.23%
- Family Responsibilities — 84.61%

The five global themes emerged that depict the major challenges faced by women peacekeepers are:-
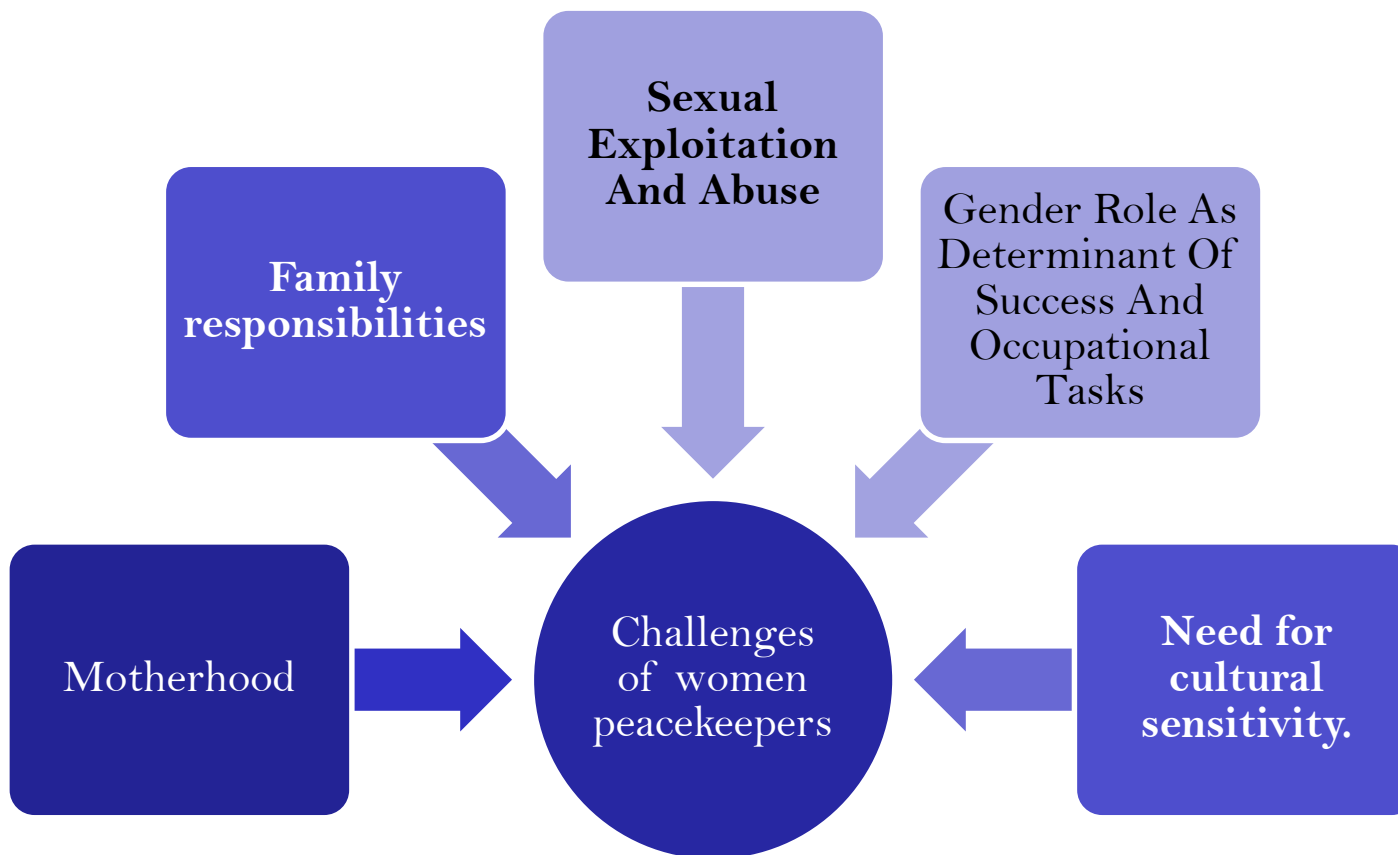
Motherhood

- lack of means to stay in touch with children, connect with family

- It is easier to carry out duties if unmarried.

- Concerns over pregnancy, childcare and family life

Family Responsibilities

- Women across cultures are traditionally considered responsible for domestic chores and care-taking of children.

- Experience dissatisfaction as it runs contrary to the notion of an "ideal woman".

Sexual Exploitation & Abuse

Women officers' experiences of sexual harassment and inappropriate conduct by their male colleagues in the military as well as by the host population

Gender Role as determinant of success and occupational tasks

- Traditional roles associated with gender are seen as a determinant of success and occupational tasks in the military.

- The organizational culture is reflective of such exclusionary beliefs and policies.

- Women officers are posted to limited locations depending on the physical location of the unit, level of hardship faced, availability of accommodation and operational commitments of units.

Need for Cultural Sensitivity

- Lack of cultural sensitivity

- View actions and behavior of the host population from the lens of their own cultural context rather than that of the host population

- To make an impact there needs to be a critical number of women in military which would provide women with a commanding position to meaningfully establish their authority.

- Adopting policies at the organization level wherein support to family, children is provided

- Adopt a culture-sensitive approach while dealing with populations from various cultural backgrounds

THANK YOU