

## Editorial

### Being "(Re) Armed": Women and the Security Sector

Why a Special volume of Peace Prints that turns the gaze on the induction of soldiery women and the gender system which sustains the military, an institution whose primary mission is war-fighting? Reason enough is the social transformation within the Indian armed forces and the material reality of the expansive participation and advancement of women.

#### The Evolutionary Moment

Following the legally driven 2020 policy directive on gender parity in the armed forces, the pathway is cleared for equal participation and command opportunities for women in all streams, except core combat arms – mechanized infantry and armored corps. From the initial uncertain experiment with batches of a few hundred in the 1990s, swelling to nearly 5000 today (See Table 1), soldiery women officers have struggled against marginalization and of being regarded as “unnecessary encumbrances” in a male bastion, at best patronized and pampered, but with their competencies undervalued. Today, three decades later, soldierly women have pushed past prejudicial stereotypes, broken gender barriers and become squadron leaders of combat units. Now, they are deployed on war ships, command units, serve in the Siachin wasteland and are platoon commanders in UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO). Their performance and persistence have prised open the doors, of elite military training academies. Further, special (for instance-Agniveer) schemes have opened the way for women’s recruitment in other ranks as sailors, air warriors, and military police.

The executive decision in 1992 to overturn the military’s historical tradition of gender exclusion was political and ambivalent. Within the forces, that ambivalence was magnified manifold, with the army in particular, dragging its feet at every evolutionary roll towards gender neutral recruitment and terms of service. As a result, women officers, with an embarrassing regularity appealed to the Courts to intervene. Even the landmark gender parity case (Babita Puniya 2003-2020) took 18 years of stonewalling by the defence establishment, prejudicially unyielding over women’s physiological and domestic hindrances. The Supreme Court swept aside the gender stereotypes, upheld equal opportunity, extended Permanent Commission to eligible soldierly women and equal terms of service. But translating that political-legal directive on the ground and making the armed forces a comfortable fit for female bodies required not only willingness to accommodate women, but systemic reforms in the military’s hierarchical culture of gendered power relations. Can there be scope for changing the masculinist culture of militaries, of displacing binaries of hegemonic ‘militarized masculinity’ and subordinated ‘militarized femininity’? Can the archetypal model of the standard soldier be reconstructed through relations of equality, empathy, care and respect? Can the military system eliminate the most damaging deterrent to women’s participation – the

widespread and rampant pattern of Sexual Exploitation and Assault (SEA)? Then, there is fundamental question of feminists, does co-opting women into military roles promote militarization and the ideology of militarism and thus defeat the very goals of feminism – demilitarization and peace with justice? These challenges to gender inclusion confront the Indian military as a sociological institution, as they do, in case of foreign militaries with longer years of gender integration.

Empirical studies of non-conscripted gender integrated forces of the US (18% women), UK (11.4%), Canada (16.5%) and Norway (15%) have confronted with dismay the reality that while the composition of the “force changes, the culture remains the same” (Nagel, Spears & Maenza 2021), of a hegemonic (militarist) masculinity in which women and femininity do not “fit”, leaving them as permanent outsiders (Mathers 2021). Arguably, rapidity in the induction of women and the disrupting of entrenched gender binaries in the dominant masculinist culture of militaries has produced major social and psychological adjustment pressures on male (and female) soldiers (Muller et al. 2011). A 2021 report of the UK Parliamentary Defence Committee found that women soldiers at every stage of their military careers are challenged by a hostile environment, “from poorly fitting body-armor and the unavailability of menstrual products to bullying, harassment and sexual assault from their male peers and commanders” (Mathers 2021). In the US, the fetishization of physical fitness has been instrumentalized to exclude women. A study of Georgetown Institute of Women Peace and Security (GIWPS) observed, the emphasis on physical fitness standards is all the more anomalous because the “current physical fitness standards are neither a priority nor a necessity” for most operational tasks (Nagel, Spears & Maenza 2021, 18).

The above is an important reminder that the institutional restructuring and social churning in global military affairs is driven by the complexity of more expansive security politics and thereby the changed nature of military missions. Professional militaries, especially in democracies are confronted by a broad spectrum of missions ranging from civil humanitarian tasks all the way up to the execution of domestic and international peacekeeping in so called pre-emptive civil wars, counterinsurgency operations and classic inter-state territorial defence (Muller et al 2011). Militarization of humanitarian value and development has created demand for assembling Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in international missions (Greenberg 2022). Studies on gender inclusion in NATO armies identify as drivers – manpower/labor issues, domestic gender equality dynamics, and international gender commitments (Obradovic 2004).

Global epistemic frameworks of gender-military relations and policy norms, often overlook the under researched experiences of gender integration in the militaries of the global south, which likely have different gendered cultures, that are a product of particular socio-historical trajectories. For instance, many state militaries grew out of anti-colonial armed national struggles, which involved the mass mobilization of women, in combat as well. The global south has a long and busy history of female boots on the ground in national liberation and revolutionary struggles. It can be

reasonably expected that these experiments in mixed gender units provide a learning carry-over in the structuring of contemporary militaries such as that of South Africa. In the Indian context, did (anti) colonial experiments such as the Rani of Jhansi Regiment of Netaji's Azad Hind Fauj (reputed to have been the first all women combat regiment in the world), have any impact on contemporary practices of gender inclusion? Recent works of Bharati S Chowdhury's *The War Diary of Asha-san* (2022) and Vera Hildebrand *Women at War: S.C. Bose and the RJR* (2016) may provide insights especially regarding the contentious debate over women's induction in combat roles. Anita Anand reviews the two books for this volume in the Paper, "*Empowered Warriors: Women, Freedom, and the Indian National Army*".

### **Framing the Context**

This volume is located at the intersection of several fields of inquiry which combine to constitute the multi-disciplinary scaffolding for a conceptual framework relating to the re-purposing of militaries and the opportunity, even invitation, to re-arm women in the male dominated security sector.

Central is the more expansive understanding of and approaches to *Security*, and such offshoots as the multidimensional framing of peacekeeping, peace stabilization and counterinsurgency missions which require not only a military response, but humanitarian and developmental inputs. Such missions have driven gender inclusion, as for example the incorporation of FETs in UNPKO. But has the progress towards gender equality in combat reinforced gender essentialism of women's emotional labor and produced what Greenberg calls a "new military femininity" (Greenberg 2023)?

Contra to the attention on human security repurposing militaries, is the resurgence of an era of wars, especially in mainland Europe. Military alliances are expanding and arms control has become completely passé following western remobilization against territorial aggression in Ukraine, and the relentless military campaign (with US arms) to bomb people into subjugation in the Israel-Hamas war. It is a brutal reminder that the military's primary mission is war-fighting and smart weapons have to be followed by boots on the ground. In India there is the rude reality of fierce hand to hand combat on the Galwan Heights on the China border. It fetishizes further the male body as suited for combat intensive environment of militaries.

Technology has transformed the battle-scape and smart weapons, the thinking on war strategy, displacing physical combat as battle-determinant. Hegemonic notions of what it is to be a soldier, and what is a combat role, are being challenged, especially when those who are presumed to be at low risk such as female support teams can be at equal risk, and drone kills produce PTSD (Nagel, Spears & Maenza 2021; Eager 2014).

(Domestic) gender equality struggles for equal participation of women have supported women's claim to equal opportunity in the male bastion of the security sector and women's right of choice to pursue professional careers in the uniformed services, including combat. However, the feminist terrain is deeply divided. Liberal feminists advocate equal opportunity options. Radical and anti-militarist feminists worry over the increasing militarization of society, and decry the participation of women as legitimizing an institution constitutive of state sanctioned violence and war-making, steeped in a culture of gendered hierarchies of macho masculinity and militarized femininity and in opposition to women's values and goals of care, peace and reconciliation (Enloe 2000; Sjoberg 2007; Duncanson and Woodward 2016).

Evidence of the diversity of civilian women's experiences and soldierly women's aspirations in relation to the military is troubling settled anti-militarist feminist assumptions about the unyielding nature of the hyper masculine culture of militaries. A persuasive intervention is that of Cockburn and Hubic's study on Bosnian women and their findings about women's positive valuation of certain military aspects of peacekeeping which the authors decode as "the request was not for soldiers *per se*; rather, the implicit demand was for a 'regendered' notion of the soldier" (quoted by Duncanson and Woodward 2016, 18). It is this notion of displacing gender binaries and regendering militaries that is inspiring new research about understanding the pros and cons not only of female boots on the ground, but of the 'justness' of military interventions *per se* in the degraded human rights environment of war. As Duncanson and Woodward observed, "If we were to know more about the ability of soldiers to be empathetic, responsive and collaborative, this would make a difference to our assessment of the rights and wrongs of military intervention" (2016, 24). In this volume, several Papers (including *The Interview*), engage with redefining military approaches to incorporate humanitarian value and ethic. Others critically analyses the reductionist translation of the complex imperatives of security politics and military response in terms of gender essentialism.

Impact of global diffusion of transnational norms which are clustered around the women-peace-security agenda ushered in by UNSCR1325 (2000). They have impacted the rhetoric and policy of mainstreaming gender in the security sector and in multi-lateral military mandates in relation to Responsibility to Protect (RtP), UNPKO, NATO, etc. These norms have set benchmarks for gendering the militaries of northern democracies and their allies. India's military has followed selective norm localization especially in UNPKO as manifest in the deployment of all female police team in UN missions in Liberia and FETs in MONUSCO in DRC (Klossek and Johansson-Nogue 2021).

## Structure

The volume is structured around the interplay of three thematic subsets. One cohort of Papers engages with the contestations over the suitability of women to perform organizational tasks

requisite of the military, especially of vaulting the final gendered frontier, and taking on combat roles. The question posed is whether in promoting constitutionally mandated gender equality we are obscuring the military's organizational imperatives and service conditions and putting at risk professional standards and operational tasks and jeopardizing national security? Contra this is the argument of women claiming 'right to choose' to serve equally and the need to shed presumptions that soldiery women want or need to be pampered and shirk equal standards and equal risks.

This subset of Papers at the intersection of military and women's (security) studies is a valuable contribution in a research wasteland in India, in which stands out Capt. Deepanjali Bakshi's monograph, *"In the Line of Fire"* (2006). Other articles of interest are Prem Chowdhry's "Women in the Army" (2010), Riya Singh Rathore's overview "Reviewing Permanent Commission for Women in the Indian Army" (2021), Maj.Gen. Mrinal Suman's "Women in the Indian Armed Forces" (2010), K. Ganesh's "Induction of Women Combatants in BSF" (2019) and Yogesh Mishra and colleagues' article "Changing Contours of Women in Armed Forces: India and Israel" (2021). Lt. Asha Sahay Choudhry's *The War Diary of Asha-san* and Vera Hildebrand's scholarly study of *"Women at War"* are significant contributions in understanding the phenomenon and historical legacy of the first female combat regiment, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

The second set of Papers pivot around the theme of the repurposing of modern militaries and examine the scope not only for gender integration but also the requirement for 'regendering' of the forces in response to tasks such as multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions and counter-insurgency operations involving military intervention but also the militarization of humanitarian and development assistance. Also, new technological frontiers such as the threat of cyber-war predicate an opening for cyber-peacekeeping. The redefinition of 'new wars' within the context of a more complex and expansive security environment, involves defensive and humanitarian mobilization against natural disasters, climate change and related conflict. Will the growing operational requirement and practical necessity for mixed gender units in these situations, challenge India's socially driven tradition of gender segregated military/police units at home and abroad?

The third group of Papers turns a feminist and sociological gaze on navigating the inherent social and psychological complexities and contradictions involved in inducting the 'feminine other' to the masculine military as an 'equal' on a level playing field. Within the context of the Indian military as a sociological institution, the Papers interrogate the gendered hierarchical culture of militaries, that is, hegemonic militarized masculinity and subordinate militarized femininity. The reductionist framework of gender essentialism ricochets through several of the Papers', and reveals the limits of the 'equal' inclusion of the feminine 'other' in an institution steeped in cultural ideology of militarism.

As the influential theoretician of gender and military nexus Cynthia Enloe argued, hierarchical gender binaries, and particularly the subordinated femininity of militarized women support and sustain the institution of the military (2000). Militaries maneuver women and ideas of femininity to fulfil militaristic goals. Taking forward her ideas that it is not only soldiery women who are militarized, two companion Papers in this volume take us past the women in uniform to focus on civilian women who are an integral adjunct of the gendered military system, that is, military wives.

## Thematic Interplay in the Text

### *1.1 Writings from the Field*

Veteran servicemen reflect their liberal affirmation of gender equality demands but equally powerfully assert their skepticism about the operational (un)suitability of women, especially in combat roles. For instance, Major General Jagatbir Singh's Paper, "*Can We Afford to Do Away with Masculinity in The Combat Arms*" indicates willingness to entertain the liberal logic of women's equal participation, but then kicks in his assertion that "[the] armed services are being pushed, willingly or unwillingly, to accommodate executive decisions irrespective of whether they are appropriate and whether the institution is prepared for them". The frank caveat that opening combat roles "cannot be an emotional decision for satisfying the equal opportunity aspirations of women", is a sharp reminder that the military remains a discomfiting fit for female bodies? At issue then is not "competence", but "suitability" for the task' and the female body comes in the way. The more seasoned Lt. Gen Panag in the volume's 'The Interview', endorses that "girls who can measure up must not be denied" but no compromising of equal standards. As for Vice Air Marshal Anil Khosla, hailing from a force that began inducting women pilots in the fighter stream back in 2015, the right of women to choose was a done deal. (For data on women in the services, See Figures 1, 2 and 3)

This is a rare subset of contributions by military men, who draw upon their own experience and that of colleagues to analyze the social, psychological and above all professional challenges regarding gender integration, especially integration in combat. Steadfast is their concern about not compromising the institution's professional excellence, while recognizing the imperative for change. But clearly audible is a discordant note about the whimsicality of the rationale driving gender inclusion. "Aspects related to women in the defense services should not be politicized as a vote bank tactic", writes Air Marshal Khosla in the Paper *Women in Indian Armed Forces: Personal and Organisational Prospects and Challenges*. In the interview General Panag hints at the irony of both the political class and the forces not being serious about the induction of women and undervaluing their competence. "We regarded them as an appendage, and thought it does not matter, let them walk rather than the requirement [of equal standards] to run". Brought in as officers on Short Service Commission (SSC) they were seen as "unnecessary encumbrances" who would soon go away, observed Gen. Panag in *Soldiering Women: A Level Playing Field Requires "Massive Reforms", Is the Army Ready?*



All that has changed as a consequence of women's increased weight in democratic politics and soldierly women's determination for professional careers and their demonstration of performance levels equal of men. The traditional fetishization of male physical prowess, which biologically disadvantaged women, according to General Panag needs to be recognized as a relic of the romantic notion of warfare. Similarly outdated too are notions of gender protection in relation to patriarchal paranoia over military women becoming POWs. Inescapable though is the persisting challenge of sexual abuse and assault within the military system. It is recognized as an integral offshoot of the 'warrior' culture of the military constituted of sexually aggressive and dominant masculine male and the subordinate feminine woman. In the Indian forces the problem of sexual harassment is cursorily acknowledged but claimed to be manageable because recruitment has been limited to women officers. It is expected to become more challenging when female recruitment in other ranks multiply. Curiously, it is a statement of then Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Ayesha Ray's Paper that draws attention to this obscured reality-

*"A decision has been taken to introduce women in all ranks starting from Corps of Military Police. With the increasing need for investigation against 'gender specific allegations and crime', a necessity was felt to introduce women in Corps of Military Police".*

Ayesha Ray, a civilian, an academic and a woman, is the outlier in this set of authors. Ray a known strategic analyst in her Paper *Women in the Indian Military: Debates and Lessons on Gender Integration*, tracks the decision-making process prompting the expanding participation of women in the forces. (See She draws attention to debates around issues of contention, especially combat, and turns to the positive perception of soldierly women as reflected in their growing comfort levels encapsulated in the assertion "*Why Not Women, Not Why Women!*") Ray joins the other authors in seeking support from comparative experiences of gender integration of foreign militaries.

### ***1.2 Repurposing Military Missions***

Three Papers address the complex security environments of peacekeeping from a feminist lens and span inter-generational discourses. Shilpi Nanglu Bharati's Paper embodies first generation challenges relating to gender integration. Her Paper on *Challenges of Integration of Women in Peacekeeping Operations* has as its backdrop the diffusion of transnational norms emanating from WPS agenda which have proved influential in the gendering of UN peacekeeping, that is, the need to bring in humanitarian value and female blue helmets for outreach to the community. Her study of 13 women from six diverse Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) deployed as peacekeepers was facilitated by a Defence Ministry research body, and is a positive harbinger of policy interest in research on the gender-military nexus. Her research yields insights on why female blue helmets hold back from speaking against colleagues' sexual abuse because of their socialization into the masculine culture of the institution. Similarly, the internalization of gendered roles makes them willingly accept that high value protective tasks are performed by men, thereby accepting marginalization.

South African peace and feminist activist, Vanessa Farr's critical analysis in *UN Peacekeeping Operations as Sites of Caregiving? Notes for a Feminist Approach to the 'Summit of the Future'*, is part of a second-generation body of discourses which arise out of the ineffectiveness of PKOs to protect the post conflict affected vulnerable. Drawing upon her long-term involvement in UNPKO policy debates, Farr questions the prioritization of militarist approaches, the differential valuation of gendered roles in PKOs and urges valuing practices of care. She builds upon an emerging body of literature which emphasizes the relevance of the background of peacekeepers socialized in democratic process in promoting non-violent civil action in Aftermath societies (Belgioioso et.al 2021). The conceptual framework is inspired by the normative imaginary of transforming PKO responses to sites of insecurity from one of militancy and machismo to "non-military approaches to advance peace" (UNP4F 2024, 11). Farr articulates this as approximating to a feminist praxis of care and caregiving. In a conversational outreach to feminists in India, a major TCC country, she urges them to advance new models of non-military peace operations that incorporate practices of care. Can it be argued that aspects of that 'new' model are visible in the award given to Major Radhika Sen as UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year 2024? Maj. Sen, the commander of MONUSCO's engagement platoon for the Indian Rapid Deployment Battalion in the DRC, ensured that her troops actively engaged with conflict-affected communities, including women and girls. Her work involved incorporating care and compassion which enabled her to create safe spaces for women to unite and discuss issues amidst escalating conflict. Such developments need to be critically analyzed by both peace feminists in India (and global south), and military-peacekeeping researchers.

Natallia Khaniejo's paper *Cyber Peacekeeping and Gender: Promise and Perils of Non-Traditional Security* engages with third generation concerns which are technologically driven by cyberwar threats and open up possibilities of cyber peacekeeping. Natallia Khaniejo locates her paper in the domain of Non-Traditional Security (NTS). Also, within the domain of NTS is Priyanka Bhide and Ambika Vishwanath's paper on *Uniformed Women in the New Wars*. It examines the complex multi-faceted security response required for responding to climate and related disasters that devastate human settlements. In engaging with 'why' and 'how' soldierly women are required to serve in gender balance response teams and what makes for the crisis of their low numbers, Bhide and Vishwanath's paper analyses the socio-cultural inhibitors that limit women's career choices and advancement in masculinist armed and paramilitary forces.

### **1.3 Hierarchies of Gender Binaries Supporting Militarist Goals**

In this clutch of Papers young post-graduate scholars essay the ambitious task of localizing within the Indian context global feminist theorizing about the military system's dichotomous value constructs of hegemonic militarized masculinity and subordinated militarized femininity which are deployed for the system's maintenance and support (Enloe 2000, Cockburn 2004, Sjoberg 2007, Duncanson and Woodward 2016). Accordingly, Kiran Chauhan in *Gendering the Indian*



*Military: Unpacking the Constructs of Militarized Masculinity and Femininity* unpacks the Indian military system's resistance to the disruption of gender hierarchies resulting from efforts at gender parity of the 'feminine other'. She takes us to three sites –soldiers' representation in popular film, 'forces' websites and court hearings. She reveals a discourse of gendered stereotypes with soldiers' women regarded as unfit for the army's primary war fighting role but to be 'utilized' for specialized tasks such as 'language interpreters,' and 'cyber and information technology'. Drawing upon Duncan and Woodward's influential thesis about the scope for re-gendering militaries by displacing hierarchical gender binaries, Chauhan argues for a transformation of the whole idea of a standard soldier so that the categories of masculine and feminine become irrelevant.

Beyond the conventional understanding that only soldiers' women are militarized, two Papers engage with the special ideological construct and role of the army/military wife. She is conscripted into the army and its code of conduct by virtue of her marriage to the male soldier. Anamika Das and Ayatree Saha's Paper '*Care*' in *Armed Forces in India: Recognising it as 'Service to the Nation* focuses on the everyday care-work performed by army wives (and some junior uniformed men; *sahayak*). Drawing upon their personal experience as daughters of military men, they contend that Army Wives' prescriptive labor is naturalized and taken for granted and devalued as feminine (emotional) labor, while the care-work of the masculine soldier: *sahayak* is camouflaged and framed as within service to the nation. Das and Saha argue that care work should be incorporated within the currently highly gendered state building narrative of "serving the nation".

Continuing to gaze on the special category of Military Wives, Nisha Kumari's thought-provoking Paper on *Decoding the Hypersexual: Interpreting Discourses around the Indian Army Wife Amidst Scandal* reveals the military's need to maneuver the construction of the 'fallen' promiscuous army wife so as to maintain intact the idealized portrayal of the wife as self-sacrificing and asexual, when sexual scandal occurs. Scandal brings to the fore patriarchal anxieties regarding the unleashed sexuality of the married but unguarded woman living in a hyper masculine ethos of the military culture. Kumari draws upon the discipline of cultural studies to read the complex and contradictory discourses surrounding the 'scandal(s)' of the military wife as reflected in the public discourse articulated in media, cinematic representation and the judiciary.

Can the army wives' "service of care" connect these unofficial members of the military to the female blue helmets assembled in FET purposed for the emotional labor of "calming" women and children as in Afghanistan and presently standardized for UNPKO? Is it exemplified in the presence of India's FETs in MONUSCO in DRC? Anuradha Chenoy's review article, *The Imperial Feminist: Beautiful Face of the American War Machine* discusses the changing role of military women and their significance in counterinsurgency operations in US' imperial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both Eager's "*Waging Gendered War*" (2016) and Greenberg's "*At War with Women*" (2023), reviewed by Chenoy, draw upon diverse feminist frameworks for analytical

leverage to capture the complexities and contradictions of gender inclusion and the scope for agency.

Greenberg is blistering in her unravelling of how the military industrial-state complex is co-opting soldierly women as their liberal face to serve an imperialist project. This “new imperial feminism” involves the militarization of humanitarian value and development and the FET women within the military system see themselves as “civilizing” and “civilianizing” the military’s death wielding capacity. “These FET women imagine themselves as service women, as models of Western liberation who can “enlighten” the imagined Afghan woman into supporting the counter insurgency and liberating herself to be similar to a western woman” (Chenoy 2024). In a shift of the feminist paradigm, Eager’s scholarly chronicles of the lives and tragedies of 150 female service personnel who died in America’s Iraq and Afghanistan wars suggest that many of the women “found lives of fulfilment in the military”. But Eager cannot hold herself back from observing that the many who “succeeded” did so because they adapted to the hyper-masculine ethos and behavioral attributes of the military organization (Eager 2014, 171).

Taken as a whole this volume ushers in an intersectional field of inquiry of Women’s Studies and Military Studies. It brings to the fore the importance and promise of a more expansive, multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary research agenda to address the various challenges and opportunities in relation to Gender and Security Sector. Questions still hang. How is gender parity to be negotiated when equal opportunity must be balanced with equal suitability? Is the ambivalence over gender inclusion driven by operational demands or by prejudicial gender stereotypes? What is driving women’s choices and aspirations for a military career? Is the way ahead gender essentialism within the militaries or is there scope for a re-gendering of hierarchical gender binaries? The problematic issue of sexual harassment as an integral aspect of the sociological and psychological culture of the military organization has been only glanced at in this volume. Eager’s chronicles of the tragic deaths of US service women because of non-hostile fire, led her to conclude that ‘the sociological and psychological aspects of an’ organization that ‘supports the application of state-sanctioned violence and killing will inevitably mean that all too frequently sexual and deadly violence is perpetrated against fellow female soldiers’ (Eager 2014, 170).

In this volume, Indian authors and a South African feminist (in conversation with Indian feminists) have attempted to localize the diffusion of these questions and transnational norms and raise new issues arising from the global south context. It is an invitation for continuing an important conversation among scholars, policy makers, feminists and particularly within the military as a sociological institution.

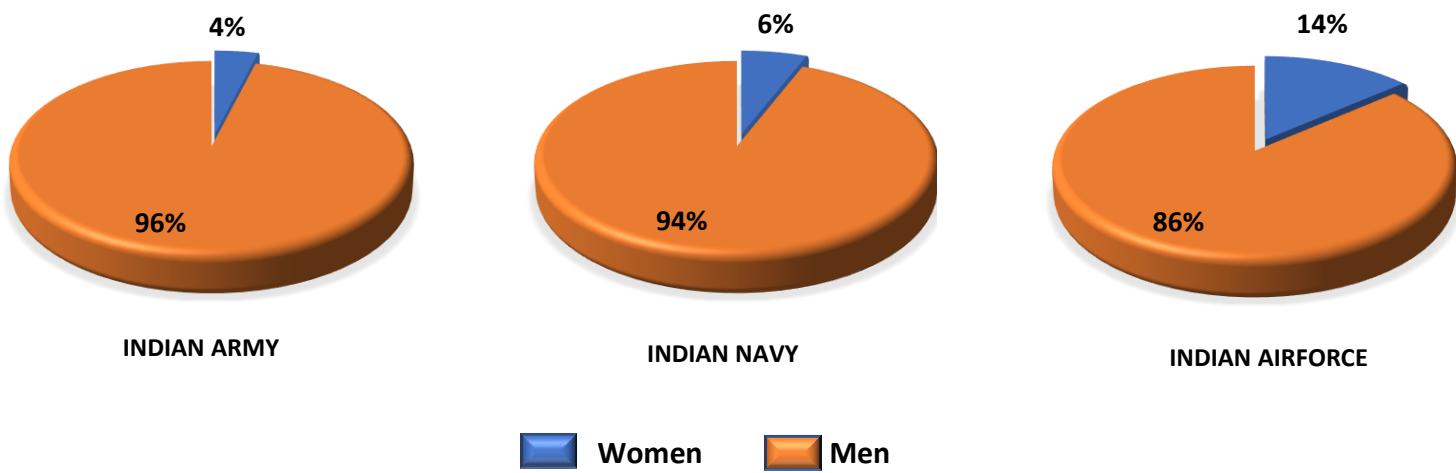
**Rita Manchanda**  
Guest Editor

**Table 1. Women Military Officers** *(Excluding Medical and Nursing Personnel)*

YEAR		INDIAN ARMY	INDIAN AIRFORCE	INDIAN NAVY
<b>2022-23</b>	Women	1733	1654	580
	Men	41919	10428	9087
	Total	43652	12082	9667
	% Women	3.97	13.69	6
<b>2021</b>	Women	6807	1607	704
	Men	1218036	146727	10108
	Total	1224843	148334	10812
	% Women	0.56	1.08	6.5
<b>2020</b>	Women	1561	1594	498
	Men	41,074	10,781	10,652
	Total	42,635	12,375	11,150
	% Women	3.66	12.88	4.47
<b>2015</b>	Women	1436	1,328	3177
	Men	38,800	10,315	56,203
	Total	40,236	11,643	59,380
	% Women	3.57	11.41	5.35
<b>2014</b>	Women	NA	NA	NA
	Men	NA	NA	NA
	Total	NA	NA	NA
	% Women	3	8.5	3
<b>2005</b>	Women	1150	571	250
	Men	75517	15743	16417
	Total	76667	16314	16667
	% Women	1.5	3.5	1.5
<b>1993</b>	Women	50	13	22
	Men	NA	NA	NA
	Total	NA	NA	NA
	% Women	NA	NA	NA

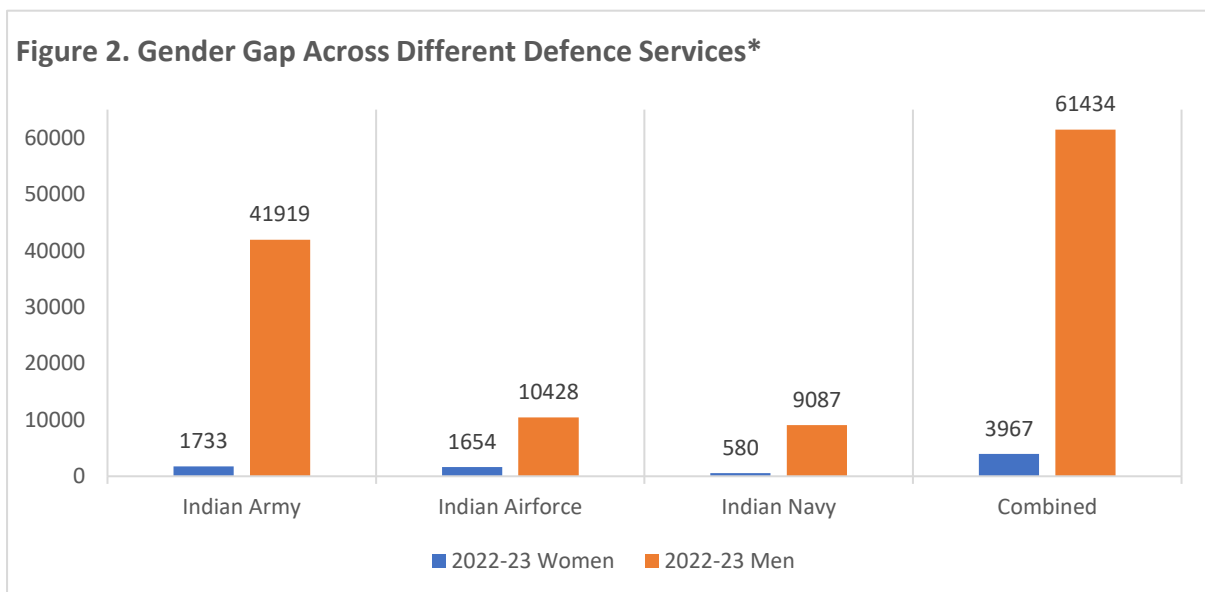
Source: Ministry of Defence Statistics

**Figure 1. Gender Representation in the Services\***



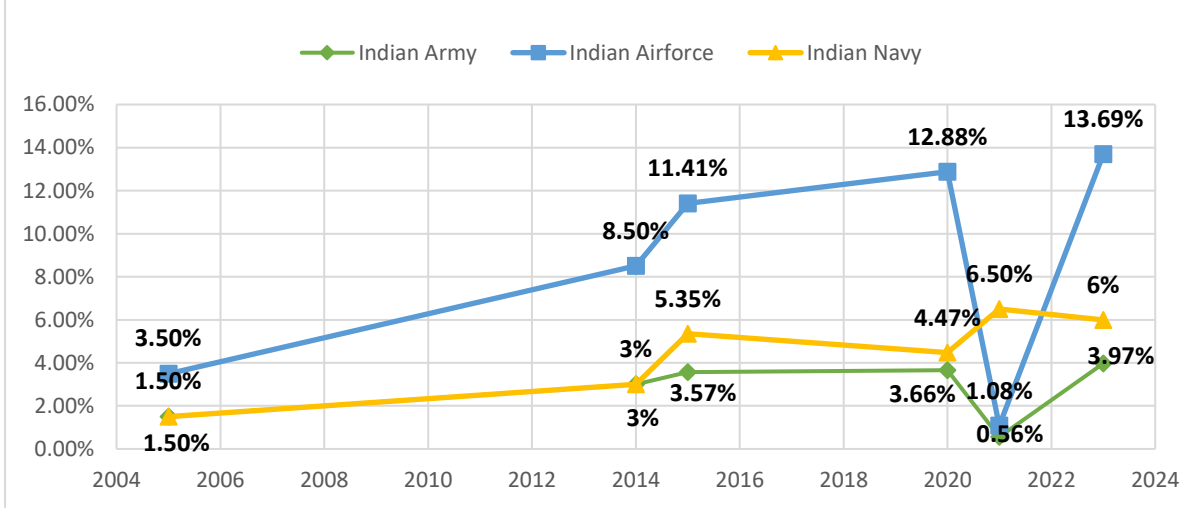
*\*Women Officers only, Excludes personnel in medical, dental and Nursing service*

**Figure 2. Gender Gap Across Different Defence Services\***



*\*Women Officers only, Excludes personnel in medical, dental and Nursing service*

Figure 3. Women in the Indian Armed Services Through the Years



### Acknowledgements

The Editor acknowledges the contribution of Dr. Anukriti Chhabra for the research on women's representation in the Indian Armed Forces. She is a public health professional with data analysis and knowledge management skills.

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