

## Research Article

# Women in Military: Breaking Barriers & Shaping the Future

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This Article sheds light on the evolving role of women in the Military operations, emphasizing their importance and equal need in shaping the future and breaking all the barriers of inequality and standing steadfast for their country. The significance of women in military operations traces back in the 1960s and 1970 where earlier during World War 1 & 2 women mainly served in non-combat roles like nurses, clerical work etc. Providing vital support to male militants. In recent years there has been considerable interest and recognition regarding the various roles of women to serve in combat roles breaking traditional norms while shaping future requirements by advancing the cause of gender equality. As a result, women too are playing major roles in the, military operations, acknowledging and embracing their capabilities and invaluable contributions towards the country.

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## Introduction

For years the military forces around the world just included men, but as the world evolved this trend has changed. Women's have changed the stereotypes and broken the barriers to form a new future for them as well as for the country, telling their importance to the world with their work. Recent Russia- Ukraine wars demonstrated the equal participation of both male and female militants. Notably, in Ukraine, where individuals from various diverse backgrounds including the president as well as female actress from the country temporarily joined the military to provide support to the country during crisis.

It demonstrated to the whole world that women are not only born to be in the kitchen or do the household chores in fact they are like the clays who can mold themselves according to situations, while excel in every field they go.

Thus, the integration of women in military has not only brought new opportunities for them but it also brought positive changes in shaping the future of military operations. Because women have a different problem-solving approach as compared to men and they always make strategic decisions, while multi-tasking is what women are known for which makes them even more excellent in whichever field they go, because in military being sharp and alert is always a need.

Consequently, military compensation is primarily determined by rank, ensuring that individuals of equal rank, regardless of gender, receive equitable pay. Thus today in many countries it is compulsory to include certain percentage of women in the armed forces be it Navy, Army or Air force. Today gender equality is of great importance. Women's now play the same equal role as men in every field possible. Thus, today women's participation in regular professional military operations is increasing. In fact, military authorities in the western state seek to deploy more women in the forces to provide them equal access to combat and near-combat positions and embrace their rights equally. This trend can be seen in many countries such as Canada, Australia, Belgium, France, USA and many more. In fact, USA, UK and Canada are the 3 countries having the most women in the military. In the early 1960s females made up just over one percent of the entire listed ranks, by 1980 the proportion had jumped to almost 13 percent

India too has a long history of women participation in military while 2023 marking the 30 years of commissioned of female officers in the Indian army. While the British army earlier limited the roles of women in combat roles Azad Hind Fauj, founded by freedom fighter Subhash Chandra Bose, had a women's regiment named the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, which saw active combat when it fought along the Imperial Japanese Army in Burma, showcasing the historical significance of women's contribution to military operations.

## Literature Review

Devilbiss, M. C. (1990). *Women and military service: A history, analysis, and overview of key issues*. DIANE Publishing.. - This paper dwells into the significant role of women in military in general specifically in the USA, highlighting their diverse contribution and emphasizing their crucial importance in military operations. It emphasizes on the evolution and history of women's in the US Military. In the 18 & 19th centuries women's have participated in various military operations like nursing, combat support, combat roles through without official military status. During the civil wars women's who made significant contributions have also been recognized through awards and medals like Dr. Mary Walker, the first Woman awarded the Medal of Honor.

As time progressed, there was a growing acknowledgment of the necessity of women in both combat and non-combat roles, leading to the incorporation of women into auxiliary roles with official military status, particularly evident in the Navy during the 20th century. However, challenges persisted, especially during World War I, where despite women assuming greater responsibilities, achieving full recognition and status remained elusive. Eventually, a compromise was reached with the establishment of relative ranks for nurses in 1920. This era marked a gradual but notable shift towards greater recognition and integration of women in the military, amidst ongoing challenges and debates.

The policy regarding marriage, dependents, and women in the military has evolved significantly since World War II, with changes influenced by factors such as recruiting shortfalls and legal challenges. The Supreme Court's ruling in *Frontiero v. Richardson* in 1973 led to equal treatment for servicewomen in terms of dependency entitlements. Concerns about the impact of increased female participation on military effectiveness led to policy reviews, such as the "Woman pause" in 1981. Training opportunities for women expanded, including admission to military service academies, and job roles diversified, particularly in noncombat positions. Internal factors, including military necessity and changes in organizational structure, played a significant role in shaping policy decisions regarding women in the military.

Shields, P. M. (1985). *Women as military leaders: promises and pitfalls*: This research paper talks about how the President Nixon's decision to end the draft in 1973 had significant implications for the U.S. military, inadvertently leading to a major policy experiment. As a result, there has been a notable increase in the number of women serving in various occupational specialties within the military, surpassing any previous time in history. Even compared to nations like Israel, which drafts women, the U.S. has been at the forefront of employing women in military service. Factors such as the women's movement, economic climate, and equal pay opportunities have contributed to making the military an attractive career option for women.

The proportion of women in the military has steadily increased since the 1960s, with predictions suggesting continued growth. This rise is partly due to a shrinking male recruitment pool, which is projected to decline until 1994. Consequently, women are expected to fill the resulting shortfalls in military personnel, with estimates suggesting they could make up as much as 26% of new accessions by 1994.

Various factors make the military an appealing career choice for women, including career opportunities, training in marketable skills, and equal pay based on rank. However, as women assume more prominent

roles in the military, they face challenges in leadership positions. Gender stereotyping is a significant issue, with both superiors and subordinates questioning the suitability of women in leadership roles and potentially undermining their authority. Additionally, women may struggle to navigate the traditionally male-dominated organizational structures and lack female role models in leadership positions.

Despite these challenges, the increasing presence of women in the military offers promising opportunities for leadership development. The military provides challenging experiences that develop leadership capabilities and foster self-confidence among women. However, gender stereotyping remains a major obstacle, affecting leadership effectiveness and requiring ongoing efforts to address. Thus, while the military offers promising opportunities for women in leadership, challenges such as gender stereotyping persist and require attention to ensure the full realization of women's leadership potential in the armed forces.

## **Research Methodology**

Research methodology refers to the systematic process or approach used by researchers to conduct a study, gather data, analyze findings, and draw conclusions. It encompasses the overall framework and techniques employed to address research questions or objectives in a structured and rigorous manner.

Research methodology is crucial for several reasons. It provides a systematic framework for conducting a study, guiding researchers through the entire research process from conceptualization to data analysis and interpretation. This structured approach ensures that the research is conducted in a rigorous and organized manner, minimizing the risk of bias and error.

## **Research Design**

This research design will be based on secondary data taken from existing literature

## **Tools**

In this research secondary data is used to establish a link between women's role and the military operations data will be collected from books, journals, websites and articles written around the same subject.

## Data Analysis and Findings

Analysis of data is descriptive in nature. The data shows the effectiveness and importance of women deployment in military. Thus gender diversity within military organizations improves performance and effectiveness, highlighting the importance of leveraging the unique strengths that women bring to the table. The integration of women into the military has profound implications across multiple dimensions. From a national security perspective, the inclusion of women diversifies talent pools and enhances the adaptability of military forces, ultimately strengthening defense capabilities.

Economically, women's participation in the military expands the skilled labor pool and contributes to workforce development, leading to greater economic empowerment and stability for female service members and their families. Moreover, the military serves as a catalyst for social progress by breaking down gender barriers and promoting inclusivity and equality. In essence, the integration of women into the military not only advances gender equality but also fosters stronger national security, economic prosperity, and social cohesion.

### ***Impact on military effectiveness***

*Q: Do you think allowing women to serve in combat roles will make military effectiveness...*

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Not much difference</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
	%	%	%	%
Total	29	15	49	6
Men	29	18	46	7
Women	29	13	52	6
Democrats	38	7	52	3
Republicans	20	29	41	10
Independents	28	16	51	5
Veteran households	26	22	44	7
Military veterans	30	19	46	5
Non-veteran households	31	12	52	6

The data presents a diverse range of perspectives on the potential impact of allowing women in military combat roles on military effectiveness. Across various demographic groups, there is a notable split in opinions, with some anticipating positive outcomes, others foreseeing negative consequences, and a significant portion expecting no substantial difference.

Interestingly, among Democrats, there is a higher proportion (38%) who believe that allowing women in combat roles will enhance military effectiveness compared to Republicans (20%). This discrepancy

suggests potential differences in ideological viewpoints or attitudes towards gender integration within the military. Conversely, Republicans are more inclined (29%) to anticipate a decline in effectiveness, indicating possible concerns or reservations about changing traditional military structures.

Overall, the data underscores the complexity of the issue and highlights the need for careful consideration of various factors when evaluating the impact of gender integration in the military. While some anticipate positive outcomes, others express reservations or uncertainty. Moving forward, it is crucial to prioritize evidence-based decision-making and thorough assessments of the potential implications, including rigorous training, support systems, and ongoing evaluation to ensure successful integration and maintain military effectiveness.



The chart demonstrates that the representation of women in Allied armed forces has increased to 10.9%, reaching the highest representation since 1999. Women representation in NATO operations has increased to 6.8% from 6.4% in 2015.

There is a noticeable development in the integration of gender perspectives in military operations and work-life balance. In 2016, more than 96% of NATO member nations included gender in pre-deployment training and exercises compared to 92% in 2015, and 78% of Allies included gender in operational planning compared to 73% in 2015.

In 2016, 96.3% of NATO member nations had all positions open to women in the armed forces which is an 11.7% increase from the previous year and a 26% increase compared to 2014. There was also an increase

in support for single parents, with regard to service duties, to almost 67% from 65% in 2015.

In rural settings where men struggle to communicate effectively with locals, women excel. Their ability to engage with the community, particularly women and children, enables them to gather crucial information essential for operations. Furthermore, women can serve as discreet intelligence officers, adept at extracting valuable information while blending in seamlessly with the local population.

Additionally women unique role in providing medical support, especially to female casualties in war zones, cannot be overstated. Their presence ensures that injured women receive appropriate care and attention, addressing their specific needs with empathy and understanding. This aspect is crucial for ensuring the well-being of all individuals affected by conflict, regardless of gender.

The integration of women in military allow the country to acquire maximum number of talent by including women at the same time they serve as a role model for future generation inspiring youngsters to actively participate in the military operations and serve their country.

Moreover, countries that welcome gender diversity within their military ranks can proudly exhibit their progressive principles and robustness to the world, thus enhancing their image as inclusive and influential players on the global platform.

Women's role not only help in physical activities in the military operations but also gets a diverse perspective for every decision. Afterall seeing a woman excelling in the uniform with the country's flag on it is indeed one of the best things to watch, serving as a role model for every woman out there to be bold and brave in any situation that comes forward.

Their multifaceted contributions enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of armed forces, ultimately strengthening national defense capabilities. Therefore, "Embracing gender diversity in the military is not only the Right decision but also a Smart one".

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the integration of women into the military marks a significant stride forward in achieving comprehensive advancement. Recognizing the value of gender diversity not only enhances military capabilities to address evolving security challenges but also fosters a more inclusive and fair society. The economic advantages arising from women's participation underscore the interconnectedness between national security and economic well-being, emphasizing the importance of utilizing diverse talent for sustainable development. The inclusion of women in the military has implications that go beyond just

military matters. It acts as a driving force towards greater gender equality and the empowerment of women in society as a whole.

When a nation's military embraces and integrates women into its ranks, it not only reinforces its defence capabilities but also advances broader societal goals of prosperity, security, and social equity. Ultimately, recognizing and enabling women's participation in the armed forces serves to strengthen national defence while simultaneously contributing to the overarching pursuit of a more equitable and just society.

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