

TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF THE WIVES OF THE INDIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL

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ABSTRACT

The research paper makes an endeavour to examine the impact of the different factors pertinent to the military lifestyle which tend to cast their effect on the pursuit of employability of the wives of the Indian Military Personnel. These inherent factors which affect the employment pursuits of the wives of the military personnel could altogether vary from those affecting the employment of women from the civil, domestic background. The sample size comprising of 400 military wives as the participants and respondents of the study, is optimum enough to produce creditable results. The paper makes a quantitative assessment of the factors which determine the willingness of the wives to become employable. The findings and results of the study using the structural modelling approach, exhibits that the factors like children related issues, frequent moves, remote locations and support of military, exert an influence on the employment pursuits of the wives. The support from military is found to have highest impact on the employability status of the army wives followed by the frequent moves. The study makes a foray in the realm of the research community, as it has brought about the presence of significant, distinct factors, which seem to affect the employment of the wives of the Indian military personnel in many ways.

KEYWORDS: Challenges, Employment, Impact, Military lifestyle, Wives

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The wives of the Indian Military Personnel are resilient, adaptable and accomplished, seeking progressive participation in numerous realms of life. The wives strive to attain higher education in order to spruce up and upgrade their employability from a well-paid job or through self-employed ventures. Their marriage to the olive-green personnel at a much younger age does not completely subvert or rather put an end to their employment aspirations, but the innate challenges prevailing in the military lifestyle may impact their eagerness to be employed. The lifestyle in the military is wholly different from that of the civil life. The traditions, ethics, culture and practices in the military is distinctive and one of its kind. The constant interaction of the spouses with in the environment of the organisation, highly influences their perception, thinking and lays an impact on their outlook. The life of the military spouses is marked by

constant changes, frequent transfers, prolonged separation periods from the service personnel at most of the times, while the latter is posted to distant field locations away from his family. Irrespective of the constant initiatives, innumerable endeavours made by the government through its initiatives and policies on employment for women, there exists this section of population, that awaits to be part of labour force. The present study focuses on the factors which impact the willingness of the wives of the Indian Military Personnel in their pursuit of employment.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

There has been an apparent surge in women participation in productive economic activity in the present Indian context due to liberalisation, globalisation of the economy over a period of years. India has witnessed innumerable changes

and transitions in the work culture and environment, as more and more women are getting educated and are joining the Indian workforce in numerous sectors and in different capacities thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of the nation as a whole. Most of the married women from the urban as well as the rural areas are undertaking income generating activities, running small business of their own and becoming self-employed. Despite the increased participation of women in Indian labour force, they enter jobs, exit, re-enter and most of them quit for a lifetime. The past researches regarding scanty labour force participation of women in India brings demographic characteristics and education attainment which seem to possibly affect the rate of participation besides the labour market issues (Women workers in India, IMF Working Papers). While some researches are of the view that family variables do not actually affect women participation in work, there are those that indicate, women status in the family, her educational level and training, does exert an influence on her ability to work. Institutional factors like family customs, caste and tradition apart from level of education, income, availability of jobs, physical health, safety issues, social religious constraints are known to affect women participation in work (Sushma Singhal, 1995). According to Patel and Dholakia (1978) social, economic and cultural factors like caste, income, do exert an influence on female participation in the work force, however, the rate of participation is higher amongst married women with children than those without children. The participation of women in Indian labour force is preferably higher in the rural areas, as many of them possess little or no education at all. Furthermore, the rate of participation declines with the rise in income (Kamla Nath, 1968). Higher educational achievements and rise in family income seem to affect the economic participation of women. The socioeconomic and cultural factors are the play behind the decline in participation with an increase in husband's income, nevertheless staying at home becomes far more attractive and lucrative than poor pay market conditions (Piritta Sorsa, 2015). Wahan and Venatadassapa

(1978) bring about that age, marital status, place of residence, number of children, husband's income does seem to affect women participation in economic activity.

These factors which affect participation of Indian women from the civil in the productive paid work may be different than those having an impact on wives of the Indian military personnel in their pursuit of work. International researches do highlight on such influences present in the military lifestyle. Most of the military spouses do anticipate that the military lifestyle in its unique environment where frequent locations, deployments, absence of the military member, scanty labour market conditions are a norm, does have a negative impact on the employment of the spouses (Harrel, 2004). The study by Castenda (2008), makes use of qualitative and quantitative methods, examines the experiences and perspectives of thousand military wives with regard to their employment pursuits. The results bring about that most of the wives agree to the fact that military lifestyle affects their career. The work pursuits of the military spouses get affected by their educational level, pay grade of the military member, and their financial situation. Those married to junior enlisted service members, with less education work predominantly for financial and monetary reasons, as compared to those spouses who are married to senior officers with higher education and better pay, wish to be employed for personal fulfilment and to avoid boredom (Harrel, 2004). Geographical mobility, inherent to military life, seems to cast a negative effect on the spousal satisfaction in relation to their work prospects (Richard Cooney, 2011). The tenure of the posting does not exceed more than a couple of years to a plus, as a result of which the wives are not able to pursue work, if they plan to do so, they need to shift with the military member, leaving job every time, as a result no certainty or stability exists to their career. Most of the wives tend to forego their career to take care of the children and to perform household chores, especially in the absence of the military member (Eubanks, 2013). The qualitative, exploratory multiple case study explores the strategies adopted by the military wives who are small entrepreneurs, running their businesses amidst

the military lifestyle, particularly during the relocations (Heredia, 2017). The wives of the military personnel are seen relocating with their husbands much frequently and earn less in their jobs as compared to their civilian counterparts (Hosek and Wadsworth, 2013). The employer's biasness also has an impact on the employment of the military spouses, as they move frequently from one place to another (Hosek and Wadsworth, 2013). The spouses in the military are not able to work for full time hours, most of them being unemployed in spite of having equal qualification and experience of their civilian counterparts (Roger D. Little, John J. Hisnanick, 2007). Spouses in the military, prefer part time employment as it is suitable to the ones with children and strikes a balance between career and family responsibilities (Falzone, 2000). They do need support and assistance in finding highly paid jobs (Sarah O Meadows et al., 2016).

Innumerable researches on a national platform have been undertaken from time to time in relation with the employment prospects of women. The population in the researches conducted, comprise of women from civil background. However, the other constituents of the population, namely the wives of the Indian military personnel, may encounter certain specific, distinct challenges characteristic to the military lifestyle, which impact their employment prospects after their marriage. International researches have demonstrated the presence of certain factors like frequent relocations, deployment, which are intrinsic to military lifestyle and tend to influence the employment status of the spouses in the military. The present study makes an effort to examine the perception of the wives with respect to their willingness to become employed and the impact of different factors which influence the employment prospects of the wives. These factors that may influence the employment pursuits of the wives of the Indian military personnel could be altogether different, as may not be the case of those affecting the employability of women in the civil lifestyle. The present research paper addresses the following research question:

What are the different factors that influence the

employability of the wives of the Indian Military Personnel?

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the employability status of the wives of the Indian Military Personnel and how the different factors prevailing in the military life may exert an influence on the employment pursuance of the wives. The study adopts the *descriptive research design* as it discusses about the different factors which influence the willingness of the army wives to enhance their employment status. The study makes use of the judgemental sampling method, where in the sample frame consists of the wives of the army personnel stationed at Lucknow and Delhi cantonment area in India. The primary data is collected from the 400 wives of the army personnel. The sample respondents are in the age group of 20- 40 years, who have witnessed at least two postings, with one or more children, not more than 18 years of age. The sample size is regarded to be appropriate enough to produce genuine results, wherein the results can be hypothesized to the remaining population of the Indian armed forces. The primary data is collected with the help of survey method using questionnaire as a data collection tool. The questionnaire in the study is developed through different stages. The draft questionnaire is prepared by first conducting semi- structured personal interviews with 15 random respondents residing in the selected cantonment regions. The interview comprised of open- ended questions pertaining to their life in the army, employment status, need to seek employment. A questionnaire has been prepared and is finalised after recommendations from educators and experts from the similar field comprising 63 items pertaining to the demographic profile of the respondents and close-ended questions.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The section outlays the discussion made on the basis of statistical analysis applied on the collected primary data from the respondents of the study. The analysis begins with the descriptive analysis of the different factors

included in the study and is subsequently followed by the results of structural modelling approach using the PLS method. The SMART PLS software is used for the analysis of the data gathered.

4.1 Factors Affecting The Willingness Of The Wives To Pursue Employment

Table 1 represents the descriptive analysis of the responses received from the army wives with reference to the different factors influencing their employability status.

Table:1 Descriptive analysis

Factors	Number of statements	Mean	Standard deviation
Support from Military	2	3.488	0.956
Frequent moves	9	3.755	0.714
Periods of Separation	9	3.079	1.026
Remote locations	2	3.783	0.982
Support from Family	6	3.377	1.03
Child Related Issues	5	3.740	0.939

Support from the Military: This form of support from the organisation refers to the support and assistance provided for facilitating and securing employment opportunities for the wives, as per their qualification and requirements. The life in the military is characterised by the constant moves from one place to another, which might add a possible break in the work prospects and the uncertainty of resuming the same in the next station. Lack of such support can result in the inability of the wives to pursue employment. Table 1 depicts that *the mean score of support from military is 3.488* indicating that most of the respondents (wives of the army personnel) agree that lack of this support does affect their employment.

Frequent Moves: One of the most crucial factors pertaining to the military lifestyle which tends to influence the employment of the wives of the service personnel in an inherent mobile life, remains to be the frequent transfers, where the posting tenure of the service personnel is unlikely to be more than two-three years. Pursuing a job with stability might remain a challenge for most of the wives. Table 1 depicts that *the mean score of Frequent Moves is 3.755* indicating that most of the respondents agree that frequent moves do affect their employment pursuits.

Periods of Separation: Separation from the service personnel due to the latter's posting to remote locations, field areas may also affect the employment pursuance and work status of the

wives. Lack of communication from the husband due to odd circumstances may lead to development of stress, anxiety, loneliness in the wives. The household responsibilities for the wives may increase manifold and can become challenging especially when they are a nuclear family, with infants or small school going children. The wives can hardly find time for themselves or pursue job in the complete absence of the service personnel as it calls for single parenting. Table 1 depicts that *the mean score of Separation is 3.079* indicating that most of the respondents (wives of the army personnel) agree that separation affects their educational pursuits.

Remote locations: The posting of the service personnel to remote locations, characteristic to military life can be yet another significant factor which can influence the employment of the wives. Such remote areas, distant locations away from the thickly inhabited, urban settlements may not have sufficient employment opportunities suited to the need and requirement of the wives. In most of the cases, the wives may altogether give up the idea to pursue a job as work related to her qualification and aptitude may not be available at all, and if available, the time, schedule and distance to commute can pose a problem. Table 1 depicts that *the mean score of Remote locations is 3.783* indicating that most of the respondents (wives of the army personnel) agree that Remote locations affect their employment prospects.

Support from Family: The informal support from family members, like in-laws, parents, siblings, friends, and the husband may also tend to influence the pursuance of employment by the wives of the service personnel. The motivational and positive support from the members can be highly contributing towards the employment pursuits of the wives. In most of the cases the husband and family can be extremely supportive towards the thought of the wives becoming self-reliant and doing job. In some of the cases, the service personnel, and his parents may only prefer the wife to take care of the children, perhaps his parents may also expect the woman of the home to be devoted to home chores and not pursue work outside. Table 1 depicts that *the mean score of Support from Family is 3.377* indicating that majority of the respondents agree that Support from the family, can highly affect their employment pursuits.

Child related issues: Another major factor that might influence the employment pursuits of the wives can be the child related issues. The wives

seem to give first priority to her children before herself, their welfare, care and their education is above her own economic independence. Most of the wives, need to take care of their small children at home all by themselves as the service personnel is on the duty most often, many times is posted at distant locations. At times there is no help from the in – laws, them being a nuclear family most often. Table 1 depicts that *the mean score of Child related issues is 3.740* indicating that most of the respondents (wives of the army personnel) agree to the fact that looking after their children especially as a single parent, during long period of separation from husband, remains a vital reason for not pursuing work.

Readiness of the wives of the Indian Army Personnel to pursue employment: The paper examines the impact of the different selected factors on the willingness of the wives to pursue employment, which is measured with the help of eight statements in the questionnaire. Table 2 indicates the mean score, standard deviation and the Cronbach alpha of the estimated score.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Factors	Number of statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach Alpha
Readiness to pursue employment	8	4.06	1.027	.873

4.2 Factors Affecting The Employability Status Of The Wives Of Army Personnel

The employability status of the wives of the military personnel in India is influenced by different factors included in the study pertaining to the military lifestyle, namely support from military, frequent moves, periods of separation, remote locations, support from family and child related issues. The factors are selected on the basis of existing literature review, discussion with the wives of the army personnel and few senior experts from the similar field. The objective of this paper is to examine the impact of these selected factors on the employability status of the wives. The structural model is developed and examined with the help of Smart

PLS software. The SEM approach is used to examine the hypothesis framed in the study. In structural model (shown in figure 1), the employability is assumed as endogenous construct and the different included factors are assumed as exogenous construct. Table 3 reports the results of construct loadings of the items used to measure the different reflective constructs, composite reliability, average variance extracted and Cronbach alpha. The construct loadings of all the included items are found to be greater than 0.6, CR greater than 0.7, AVE greater than 0.5 and Cronbach alpha greater than 0.7 for all the constructs selected in the model. Thus, the convergent validity of the factors is ensured.

Table: 3. Convergent validity results

Construct	Item code	Construct Loadings	CR	AVE	Cronbach Alpha
Child Related Issues	CRI1	0.853	0.902	0.648	0.901
	CRI2	0.842			
	CRI3	0.721			
	CRI4	0.836			
	CRI5	0.763			
Employability	IEMP1	0.834	0.918	0.587	0.916
	IEMP2	0.819			
	IEMP3	0.594			
	IEMP4	0.741			
	IEMP5	0.773			
	IEMP6	0.870			
	IEMP7	0.777			
	IEMP8	0.684			
Support from family	LIS1	0.802	0.903	0.609	0.903
	LIS2	0.800			
	LIS3	0.767			
	LIS4	0.795			
	LIS5	0.718			
	LIS6	0.797			
Frequent Moves	FT1	0.651	0.885	0.462	0.884
	FT2	0.552			
	FT3	0.657			
	FT4	0.805			
	FT5	0.730			
	FT6	0.609			
	FT7	0.675			
	FT8	0.680			
	FT9	0.719			
Remote Locations	RL1	0.736	0.776	0.635	0.772
	RL2	0.854			
Periods of separation	SP1	0.817	0.909	0.527	0.908
	SP2	0.745			
	SP3	0.691			
	SP4	0.655			
	SP5	0.714			
	SP6	0.786			
	SP7	0.659			
	SP8	0.752			
Support from Military	SFM1	0.738	0.730	0.575	0.729
	SFM2	0.778			

The discriminant validity is examined with the help of Fornell Larcker criteria. Table 4 represents the results of the Fornell Larcker

criteria. The results demonstrate that the square root of the AVE (in the main diagonal of the matrix) is found to be greater than the correlation of the construct with the remaining

constructs in the model. Thus, the discriminant validity of the model is also ensured.

Table: 4. Fornell Larcker Criteria results

	Child Related Issues	Employability	Family Support	Frequent Moves	Remote Locations	Separation Period	Support from Military
Child Related Issues	0.805						
Employability	0.836	0.766					
Family Support	0.762	0.711	0.780				
Frequent Moves	0.884	0.854	0.730	0.680			
Remote Locations	0.674	0.713	0.547	0.723	0.797		
Separation Period	0.519	0.537	0.527	0.526	0.418	0.726	
Support from Military	0.834	0.915	0.812	0.762	0.617	0.637	0.758

The convergent validity and divergent validity of the measurement model is ensured. Further the hypothesis is examined with the help of SEM method. The SEM approach is used to examine the hypothesis with the help of Smart PLS software. In the structural model, the employability status of the wives is assumed as endogenous construct and the different factors are assumed as exogenous construct. The

following hypothesis are examined / tested using the SEM approach.

Hypothesis: “The included factors (child related issues, support from the family, frequent moves, remote locations, periods of separation, support from military) significantly influence the employability status of the wives of the Indian military personnel.”

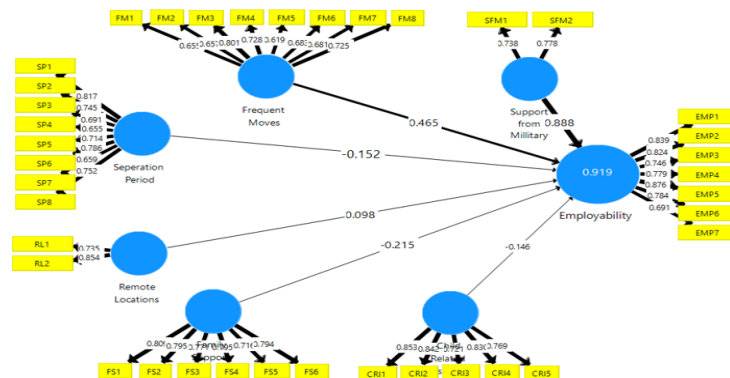


Figure: 1. Model with path coefficients, construct loadings and their p values

Table: 5. The results of PLS analysis using smart PLS software is shown below:

Endogenous construct	Exogeneous construct	Path Coefficients (Beta)	SE	T statistics	P value	Remark
Readiness to seek employment	Children related issues	0.179	0.183	3.418	0.000	Supported
	Family support	0.026	0.024	0.546	0.585	Not Supported
	Frequent moves	0.309	0.310	5.663	0.000	Supported

	Remote locations	0.132	0.131	2.352	0.019	Supported
	Separation Period	-0.007	0.033	0.228	0.820	Not Supported
	Support from Military	0.362	0.055	6.637	0.000	Supported

The results indicate that the probability value of few factors namely children related issues (path coefficient 0.179, t statistics = 3.418 and p value =0.000), frequent moves (path coefficient 0.309, t statistics = 5.663 and p value =0.000), remote locations (path coefficient 0.132, t statistics = 2.352 and p value =0.019) and support of military (path coefficient 0.362, t statistics = 6.637 and p value =0.000) is found to be less than 5% Level of Significance. Thus, the hypothesis is supported for these factors. The support from military is found to have highest influence on the employability status of the army wives followed by the frequent moves. However, the factors like support from family, and periods of separation, do not influence the employability status of the wives of the Army personnel.

5. DISCUSSION

The study aims to examine the willingness of the wives of the Indian Military Personnel, to be employed, with the help of different factors pertaining to the military lifestyle which tend to influence the employment of the wives. The findings of the study demonstrate that some factors like, Child related issues, Frequent moves, Support from military and Remote locations, have a significant impact on the employment pursuits of the wives. International researches have brought out that the challenges in the military lifestyle like frequent relocations, absence of the military member do affect the productive work pursuits of the wives (Harrell, 2004). Constant movement to distinct geographical locations, also impact the willingness of the wives to pursue work (Richard Cooney, 2011). Studies have also depicted that the responsibilities of the wives towards family and children grow manifold during deployment period (Eubanks, 2013). The data of present study supports the results of the above referred past researches and has brought about the presence of similar factors pertaining to the military lifestyle affecting the

employment of the wives of the Indian Military Personnel. The results of the present study also additionally project that the assistance or the support from the military tend to impact the willingness of the wives of the Indian military personnel to become employed.

6. CONCLUSION

The data of the present study undertaken demonstrates that some factors like, Child related issues, Frequent moves, Remote locations, Support from the military, have a significant impact on the wife's willingness to pursue further employment. The study also projects that out of these distinguished factors, some of them like frequent moves, remote locations are more prominent and are shown to have maximum influence on the work pursuits of the wives of the military personnel.

This further corresponds to the need for formal assistance and support from the military in regard to the employment pursuits of the wives of the Indian military personnel. Development of policies and programmes, at government and institutional level which can facilitate employment opportunities for the wives through the formation of support centres can be located at peace as well as remote locations, where the families possibly accompany

7. IMPLICATIONS

- Structural reforms at the grassroot level to create job opportunities for the wives of the Indian Military Personnel.
- Tailor made policies to be initiated and implemented to generate, retain employment for the wives in keeping with the military lifestyle and the challenges present within it.
- The study implicates that working policies should cater for flexible working hours.
- Organisation, and government can initiate the much-needed support to the wives by bringing bias free, supportive, inclusive, accessible work environment.

- It will be in favour and general interest of the society and the government to utilize the human resource from this section of population, and assimilate them into the present workforce of the nation.

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