
Peer-reviewed

Integration of Women in Combat Operations and Warfare: Possibilities of Integration into Pakistan Armed Forces

Integrace žen do bojových operací a vedení války: možnosti integrace do pákistánských ozbrojených sil

Shamaila Amir, Saman Zaid

Abstract:

The participation of women in the armed forces creates many challenges to their integration in a masculine-dominated mechanism. Traditionally, military service embodies the macho culture where a certain type of physical strength is required, attainable only through the male frame. The traditional military personnel model represents a young male force that is supported by spouses who stay at home but modern warfare and the inclusion of technology have opened many chances for women to be included in the armed forces. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to highlight various fields of armed forces where women in Pakistan may or may not be suitable to be integrated. The paper descriptively analyzes the participation of women in armed forces in general and in the Pakistan Armed Forces in particular. Recommendations highlight the combat operations relevant to the Pakistan Armed Forces context which women can or cannot be integrated into.

Abstrakt:

Účast žen v ozbrojených silách klade mnoho výzev pro jejich integraci do mechanismu, jemuž dominují muži. Vojenská služba tradičně ztělesňuje „macho“ kulturu, která vyžaduje určitý typ fyzické síly dosažitelný pouze prostřednictvím mužské tělesné stavby. Tradiční model vojska představuje mladé muže, kteří jsou podporováni svými manželkami zůstávajícími doma, avšak moderní způsoby válčení a zapojení technologií otevírají mnoho možností pro začlenění žen do ozbrojených sil. Cílem tohoto příspěvku je proto poukázat na různé oblasti ozbrojených sil, které umožňují či neumožňují vhodné začlenění žen v Pákistánu. Příspěvek přináší jak deskriptivní analýzu účasti žen v ozbrojených silách obecně, tak i konkrétně v pákistánských ozbrojených silách. Doporučení upozorňují na bojové operace, které jsou relevantní pro pákistánské ozbrojené síly a do nichž ženy mohou či nemohou být začleněny.

Key words:

Combat Forces; Combat Operations; Warfare; Women in War.

Klíčová slova:

Bojové síly; bojové operace; válka; ženy ve válce.

INTRODUCTION

The participation of women in the armed forces needs to be explored keeping in mind that women can exercise influence but they still face many challenges to their integrity in a masculine-dominated mechanism. They need an adequate system for their protection and rights within the Armed Forces. Their full involvement can only be ensured if they have representation in the decision-making process so that, as in history, they are not seen as weak and submissive due to their distinct biological construction. Conflicts of gender inequality led to the long fight for their rights all over the globe although the first feminist movement is recognized in the 18th century when *Marie Gouze* sacrificed her life struggling for equal rights for women.¹ Thanks to this and many other feminist movements, the requirement of women for equality in almost all aspects of life has been established and proven successful. Their engagement resulted in novelties in various fields and their empowerment influenced the social, political, and economic areas, ultimately raising their requirement in the Armed Forces as well.² Traditionally, military service embodies “macho” culture and is considered a job where a certain type of physical strength is required, attainable only through the male frame. It is further considered that a large part of the military is deployable in the fields where members face difficult conditions.³ The traditional military personnel model represents a male-oriented force supported by their spouses who stay at home.⁴ In this model, woman as a wife is assumed as a primary caregiver but the industrial-age revolutionary model has resulted in both spouses working and thus creating a desire to support women in combat arms billets although they were there in a small number even in the 21st century.⁵

1 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for the paper is descriptive analysis. Through descriptive analysis, the paper indicates all possible fields where ladies may find a place for integration into combat jobs. The main questions answered by the paper are as follows:

- 1 Stamarski, C. and Son, H. L. Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2016, 6, 1-20.
- 2 Medani, V. The Power of Women in the Armed Forces. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2013. 4(10), 580-585.
- 3 Titunik, R. F. The Myth of the Macho Military. *Polity*. 2008, 40(2), 137-163.
- 4 ProfitableVenture. What are the Pros and Cons of Women in Combat? *ProfitableVenture*. 2002. <https://www.profitableventure.com/pros-cons-women-combat/>, [28.6.2022].
- 5 Women in Combat: Five-Year Status Update. *Center for a New American Security (En-US)*. <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/women-in-combat-five-year-status-update>, [22.6.2022].

1. What are the areas where Pakistan's military forces can work to enhance the even greater participation by women in military service and combat arms?
2. What are the fields of armed forces which women may or may not be suitable to be integrated in?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Women in the Military – Past and Present

In the currently burning meteorological and political climate, the alarmingly rising temperatures, the omnipotent rulers, the worst forms of extremism, destructive policies, etc. have created anger and dismay. The world experiences daily changes but a woman, even if she does not pick up a gun to fight, still faces social isolation and often penalties while getting close to violence. Women are either victimized and must escape during brutal regimes, or are autonomous and remote.⁶ They also orchestrate networks, underground or executive. There are very few female combat fighters although feminism is commonly concerned about violence against women and male power. This suggests the reality but across cultures, there is historical evidence that indicates the rare participation of women in combat. It is suggested that they are less than 1% in the entire history of wars while men make up 99% of all warrior history. Even today, the majority are male soldiers. Combats and wars are socially diverse phenomena and the absence of diversity in gender needs to be explained as killing in war is possible for either gender because of the universal potential for wars. Cultures have developed the gender role of manhood to overcome the reluctance to fight of soldiers and give them an idea of toughness in difficult conditions.⁷

⁶ Cambridgescholars.com. <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-4438-4894-7-sample.pdf>, [22.6.2022].

⁷ The Guardian. *Women at war: why do we still struggle with the idea of female soldiers?* <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/aug/03/brave-confrontations-its-time-writers-broke-the-taboo-of-the-female-warrior>, [28.6.2022].

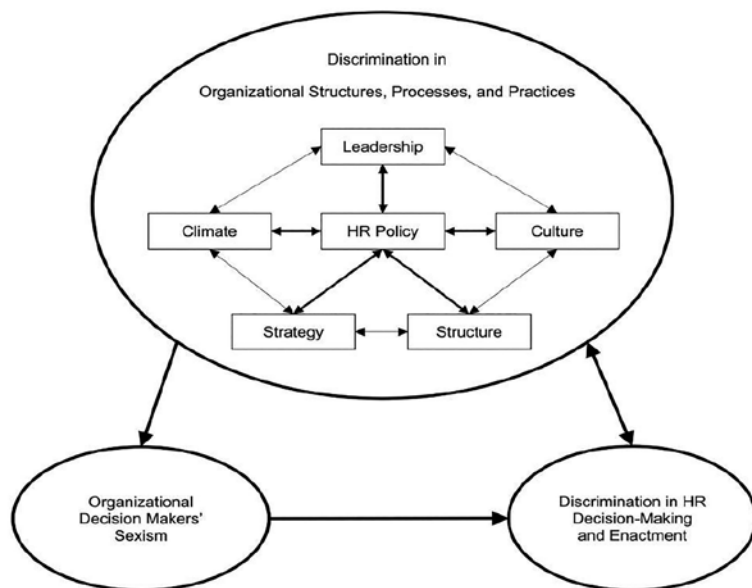


Figure 1: Root causes of gender discrimination in HR⁸

The world has not been reconciled to the idea of female warriors. Women serving in military operations create unease. It is acceptable to the world that women have fought against fascism in the Spanish civil war but it cannot be accepted that a British lady fights with Kurdish forces in Syria.⁹ These facts are only related to the conceptions of masculinity but the structure of feminism, too. It is considered to be against the ethics of feminism to participate in a war. Defensive confrontation by women is still regarded as a conflict against the prejudicial system and the full potential of war has always been available to women, including their deadly killing.¹⁰

War kills generations and affects citizens of both genders. It is common to exclude women from armies and institutions but they are excluded from documentation and representation. Therefore, the stories of women warriors come to light only through

⁸ Stamarski, C. and Son, H. L. Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2016, 6, 1-20.

⁹ Medani, V. The Power of Women in the Armed Forces. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2013. 4(10), 580-85.

¹⁰ The Guardian. *Women at war: why do we still struggle with the idea of female soldiers?* <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/aug/03/brave-confrontations-its-time-writers-broke-the-taboo-of-the-female-warrior>, [28.6.2022].

questionable and unreliable sources and evidence.¹¹ Female fighters have been involved in wars throughout history but they have made up a small percentage. They participated in different roles including combat, technology, and diplomacy, and have also worked for intelligence.¹² Many times, their contribution has not been honored or acknowledged, as they returned home and were relegated. For example, Algerian women who fought against France were given dangerous roles like their male counterparts, but were denied veterans' rights and pensions. Likewise, accounts of Soviet women soldiers fighting in WWII are absent from official Soviet narratives. Female soldiers who may become alternative war heroines are not found in action records despite being alive after conflicts because the culture does not absorb it.¹³ They do not become role models even after the war and understanding of their capabilities is always missing.¹⁴

Women have also proved better in combat missions and deployments. There have been major difficulties in deploying a mixed-gender force in such conditions for a longer period of time. It took a long time for military services to be accessible to women.¹⁵ Various armed forces have integrated women in the last couple of decades but there is a lot to do to address the issues of gender inequity. The integration percentage is continuously rising and ladies are being included in combat arms jobs, too, including the marines, air wings, combat vessels, etc.¹⁶ It is established now that if warfare is essentially human, it is to be shared both by males and females. Biologically, the male shoulder is best suited to carry a missile, but neuroscience rejects the concept of a tranquilized female brain.¹⁷ Ladies cannot be generalized and stigmatized as peacemakers, victims, or morale boosters wearing red lipstick. Violence is not a solution to violence but not always the idea of gender segregation has resulted in peace.¹⁸

US infantry, after more than 50 years and thousands of casualties, abandoned trench warfare. They took 25 years to accept that against a machine gun, armored tanks in the US cavalry were better than horses. The US Supreme Court took almost 60 years to

11 Medani, V. The Power of Women in the Armed Forces. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2013. 4(10), 580-85.

12 Starnski, C. and Son, H. L. Gender inequalities in the workplace: the effects of organizational structures, processes, practices, and decision makers' sexism. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 2016, 6, 1-20.

13 Medani, V. The Power of Women in the Armed Forces. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2013. 4(10), 580-85.

14 The Guardian. *Women at war: why do we still struggle with the idea of female soldiers?* <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/aug/03/brave-confrontations-its-time-writers-broke-the-taboo-of-the-female-warrior>, [28.6.2022].

15 Toktas, S. Women Officers in the Turkish Armed Forces. *Oriente Moderno*. 2020, 23(5):247-267.

16 Women in Combat: Five-Year Status Update. *Center for a New American Security (En-US)*. <https://www.cnas.org/publications/commentary/women-in-combat-five-year-status-update>, [28.6.2022].

17 Hanlon, L. *Women Warriors: The ongoing story of integrating and diversifying the American armed forces*. Brookings. 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/women-warriors-the-ongoing-story-of-integrating-and-diversifying-the-armed-forces/>, [28.6.2022].

18 Medani, V. The Power of Women in the Armed Forces. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2013. 4(10), 580-85.

decide that black Americans should attend schools with white Americans.¹⁹ After more than 130 years, the US declared that women should have the right to vote like men. Just because policies and their adjustments take time, it does mean that there should be no effort to take initiative.²⁰ The same goes for women serving in combat forces. Today, the militaries in several countries integrate gender on equal lines with women pilots, drivers, mechanics, and infantry persons in combat missions. In the US military, for example, women make 16 percent of the armed forces. They represent one of every six in-uniform Americans, ranging from about 8% in the Marine Corps to 19% in the US Air Force.²¹

In Western armed forces, women have already played an important role for the last few decades. However, their absolute number is still smaller and under-represented compared to their ratio in the population of these countries. Moreover, from country to country, their number in the military differs and they are under-represented, especially in the higher ranks of the military. "Women who are already promoted to general or admiral demonstrate that females, too, can have a successful career in the military."²² Males and females are considered equal in many countries, but still, males enjoy a much better status than their female counterparts in the armed forces, principally because of cultural and structural inequality. The male culture is dominant and creates resistance to females' integration into the military which, in essence, is considered a masculine organization. There are discrimination practices in the military such as "the absence of separate rooms for females, the lack of laws... [for] maternity leaves and denial from combat and operational functions."²³ Even the career opportunities are different for both males and females explaining the reasons for a disproportionate representation of females in various ranks. In certain places, female members of the military, to gain respect, have to work harder than men.

In various countries, women now perform functional duties in education and training throughout their military career but they often lack experience in command of operational units.²⁴ A major reason for this is that the countries have ambiguous policies for their training and assignments in the operational units. Moreover, women also experience a lack of support and have limited ambitions for promotions, ranks, and duties. Their lack of presence in the higher ranks of strategic leadership has also weakened their

¹⁹ Toktas, S. Women Officers in the Turkish Armed Forces. *Oriente Moderno*. 2020, 23(5), 247-267.

²⁰ The Economist. (2022). *Female soldiers are changing how the armed forces work*. Retrieved June 28, 2022 from <https://www.economist.com/international/2021/04/24/female-soldiers-are-changing-how-armed-forces-work>

²¹ Matondang, E. Women in military strategy: a review of women emancipation and protection. *Jurnal Pertahanan & Bela Negara*. 2020, 10(2), 215-228.

²² Medani, V. The Power of Women in the Armed Forces. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2013. 4(10), 580-585.

²³ The Economist. *Female soldiers are changing how the armed forces work*. 2022. <https://www.economist.com/international/2021/04/24/female-soldiers-are-changing-how-armed-forces-work>, [28.6.2022].

²⁴ Matondang, E. Women in military strategy: a review of women emancipation and protection. *Jurnal Pertahanan & Bela Negara*. 2020, 10(2), 215-228.

role and image, especially in decision-making.²⁵ “The first resolution on women, peace, and security, UN Security Council Resolution 1325,²⁶ stressed [...] participation as active agents [...] in peacekeeping and peace-building operations, and their protection from the disproportionate [...] impact of armed conflict.”²⁷

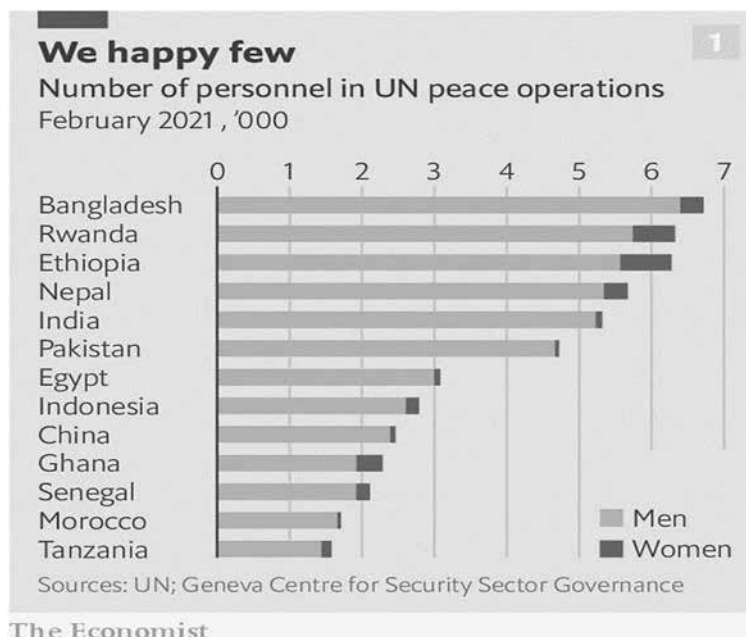


Figure 2: Women in peacekeeping missions²⁸

NATO assigns many duties to female personnel. They are doctors, nurses, helicopter/ aircraft pilots flying in combat areas, drivers, convoy escorts, military police, etc. While performing these duties in peacekeeping operations, they face the risk of injury and life every day. The 1994 regulation states that women may serve in peacekeeping missions, in any role except in combat battalions on the frontline, i.e., land troops, tanks, artillery, Special Forces, etc.²⁹ They can be wounded and killed in all militaries around the

²⁵ Kusmiyati, N. and Efendy, H. The leadership of women in the military organization. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*. 2017, 7(4), 165-174.

²⁶ unanimously adopted by UN Security Council in 2000.

²⁷ Medani, V. The Power of Women in the Armed Forces. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2013. 4(10), 580-585.

²⁸ The Economist. *Female soldiers are changing how the armed forces work*. <https://www.economist.com/international/2021/04/24/female-soldiers-are-changing-how-armed-forces-work>, [28.6.2022].

²⁹ Matondang, E. Women in military strategy: a review of women emancipation and protection. *Jurnal Pertahanan & Bela Negara*. 2020, 10(2), 215-228.

world even though they are not being considered to be in the frontline because combat missions have no frontlines and the risks are imminent everywhere. What impedes women the most from achieving the deployment in combat missions is a lack of trust in their abilities. They are viewed as stressed, demoralized, nervous, and terrorized when exposed to danger. This is a biased opinion and it is wrong to think that female soldiers are not able to complete a mission as among the countries that provide females for peacekeeping operations there are the US, Canada, United Kingdom, Ukraine, and Australia. Even Albania has deployed 7 female doctors and nurses in Afghanistan.

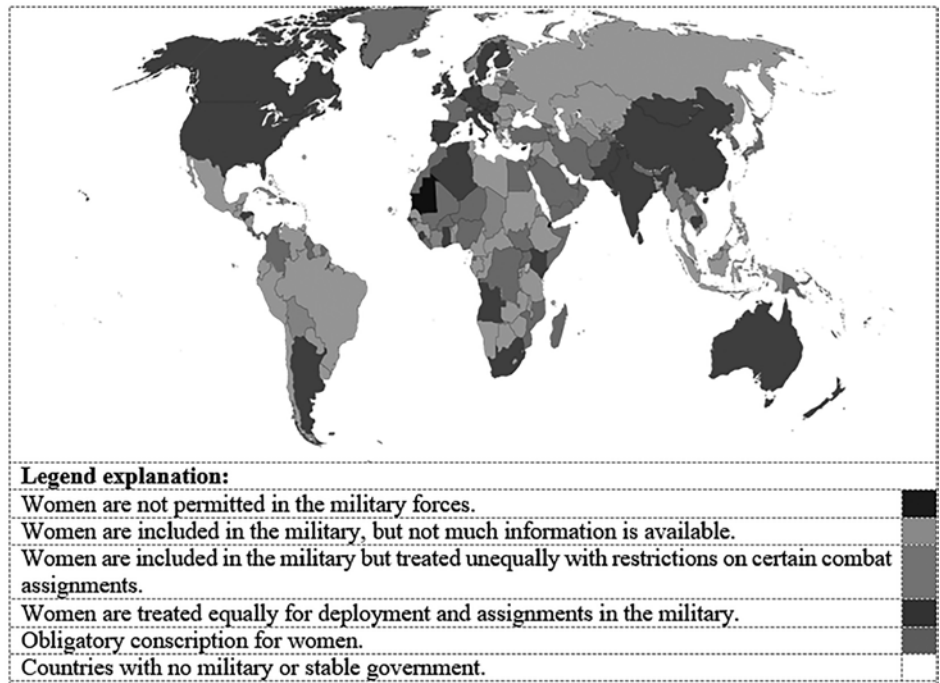


Figure 3: Country-wise representation of women in 2020³⁰

2.2 Oppositions to Deployment of Women

Those who oppose the idea of female deployment in combat operations have the following three arguments in their favor:³¹

³⁰ Obradovic, L. *Gender Integration in NATO Military Forces*. 2021. <https://books.google.de/books?id=ZXQGDAAAQBAJ>, [5.7.2021].

³¹ Medani, V. The Power of Women in the Armed Forces. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 2013, 4(10), 580-85.

1. **Physical limitations:** Female military personnel cannot use force like their male enemy in close combat. Moreover, their thinner skeleton system is more likely to be injured easily.
2. **Psychological limitations:** Other soldiers think that females lack confidence and their presence causes disruption. They may get pregnant and leave the mission. There are probabilities that they might be captured, tortured, and sexually abused by the enemy during a combat operation.
3. **Tactical limitations:** It may happen that Islamic militants do not surrender to a female soldier. Their presence in a combat mission may lead to the loss of control by their teammates also.

3 WOMEN IN PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES – SHARE

Among the Islamic countries, Pakistan is the only one that has promoted ladies to the general rank officers and deployed them in high-ranking assignments. The women in the Pakistan military perform duties in hostile combat as well. They have been serving in the Pakistan Armed Forces since 1947, soon after the birth of the country, and presently they are represented in a considerably stronger number in the Pakistan military as officers and JCOs. For combat missions, the Pakistan Air Force took the lead and in 2006, the first women fighter pilot batch joined PAF resulting in the ever-increasing number of ladies applying for the Air Force. Women in the Pakistan Army also have been trained as snipers and for airborne and infantry warfare to take part in combat missions. The only force where women are not inducted for combat missions is Pakistan Navy but they have been serving in the logistics operations, operational planning, staff, and admin offices, both in units and in regional and central headquarters. Women cannot join the infantry, artillery, and armored branches of the Pakistan Army, still, Nigar Johar, after serving for 35 years in the Medical Corps, became a lieutenant-general in 2020.

Today, women in the Pakistan military are more numerous than ever and their experience in the military is often favorable. However, in Pakistan, work is needed to address issues if Pakistanis are to eventually see a considerable share of women in the armed forces. First, recruitment from a broader pool of Pakistanis is needed as the present recruitment process suggests that their induction is from certain geographic regions and that military service, both in the case of females and males, has mostly volunteers who want to follow their parents' careers. Although nothing is wrong with it, or rather, it is admirable that sons and daughters of military parents are willing to accept to sacrifice for the service, relying on the service from generation to generation leaves out others who could consider joining the service, too.

There should be an increased number of women in senior ranks and to achieve this, it is necessary to find a way to continue the service after women have families. The underrepresentation of women in the military can be addressed well if the barriers that keep them from pursuing their career in the military service are to be analyzed, especially in terms of looking after a family or children, which are the most problematic aspects in the

military service. It is very difficult for women to continue service through their maternity years, therefore, career paths need to offer solutions for them to return to service after the long absence during maternity. Moreover, the voices of those women who have served for long years can be amplified by the military to spread the word about the positive impacts of service on women and their families. This may result in an increased representation of women in the military service. These women can become the most inspiring persons for other ladies and strong mouthpieces for the military.

The military has the “equal-pay-for-equal-work principle” that allows them to learn skills and gain experience regardless of gender. This is something priceless and makes the military a *meritocracy* (italicized). Women start their careers in the same field with the same oath. Diverse voices are good around the table, whether it is at a Commanding Officer’s table or the Chief’s table, induction of women can bring a diversity of thought, background, heritage, and race, adding to the capability of leaders to make better decisions ultimately making the nation stronger and better.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Recommendations for Optimization

To encourage and enhance the participation of women in military services, plenty of work is yet to be done. The military needs to ensure that their experiences and opportunities are equitable to the serving men. Some areas where Pakistan’s military forces can do better are explained in the ensuing paragraphs. These arguments also explain why there are lags in an even greater participation by women in the military service and combat arms:

1. **Leadership:** There are still structural barriers despite years of integration efforts by the military services. To eliminate the cultural barriers, continued efforts are needed from civil and military leadership. Women are needed in leadership roles which, if not enabled, will hurdle integration progress. Presently, there are institutional preferences for combat specialties and lower rates of promotion, which hurdles retention for women resulting in fewer women in senior ranks. A relatively better number of women holding leadership positions will positively signal to juniors and ladies and will lead to more women considering military service.³²
2. **Induction:** Each of the armed forces in Pakistan can and should induct more women. Concerns of young women and men are different from each other, which

³² Kusmiyati, N. and Efendy, H. The leadership of women in the military organization. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*. 2017, 7(4), 165-174.

needs to be addressed, may it be through targeted induction or changes in the structural policies. To attract more women, some efforts have recently been made such as promoting women's achievements through media and focused ads. The military services have also added gender-inclusive languages and environments to expand military career opportunities for women.

3. **Discrimination and Sexual Assault/Harassment:** The chances of implicit or explicit bias in the military cannot be ignored because this phenomenon is very much present in society, even before the birth of a female in a family. Women may feel discouraged by society and their families, or even recruiters for joining certain services, including the military. They feel socially burdened and there are chances that they are detracted from choosing combat services mainly due to pressures and worries of relocation, and isolation from their families. Serving women in dual-military relationships may feel more pressure and have to compromise on their careers due to their spouse's careers.³³
4. **Stress and Injuries:** Inducting and retaining talent is only possible in the military if the induction and serving issues are addressed comprehensively. Each of the military services could do more to attract women as they are already integrating previously closed jobs. In countries where women are not allowed in combat services, four main concerns or reasons to do so are observed. First, that women cannot handle combat assignments as they are physiologically incapable; second, that it is not possible for women to meet the desired physical standards; third, that their inclusion means the introduction of eros into the unit leading to eroding the unit cohesion; and, fourth and finally, the main purpose of military policies is and should only be the improvement in combat effectiveness. On the other hand, it is opined that these objections do not mean that the combat arms of the military forces need to ban women. It means that they should fix the problems in their standards. Women's bodies are different from men's indeed, but, they are only physiologically different to handle the weight and physical hardship. This does not mean that a population needs to be banned. Many men cannot meet the basic military standards and this does not mean that men should be banned from joining the military. As standards are applied individually, anyone meeting these standards, whether a man or a woman, should be inducted. Physical injuries are part of the job and "you got to break a few eggs to make an omelet." Combat operations and training produce injuries but, regardless of gender, people can manage the stress of training. Medical bills for combat-battered bodies are indeed expensive but the nation should be thankful and authorities should happily pay the bills for those who are willing to lay down their lives and injure their bodies in combat to support and defend the motherland against all enemies, whether foreign or domestic.

³³ Robinson, L., & O'Hanlon E. M. Women Warriors: The Ongoing Story of Integrating and Diversifying the American Armed Forces. *Brookings*. 2021. <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/women-warriors-the-ongoing-story-of-integrating-and-diversifying-the-armed-forces/>, [6.6.2022].

5. **Physical Standards:** Physical standards should be the same but this is a standard problem, not a women-in-combat-arms problem. In combat training, the “gender-neutral standards” are the gold standard. The standards that exist presently should not be meant to disqualify women but should not be lowered just to qualify women. In duties like in Rangers, the standards are set according to combat, not age- or gender-specific. This explains that gender-neutral standards can work. Sometimes, male Navy SEAL candidates fail the initial physical fitness test despite their hard training and are not banned from these services because of their low pass rates. So, not female combat inductees should have to “meet the same physical standards as men” but “all combat soldiers should have to meet the same physical standards.” Presently, the physical fitness standards are age- and gender-specific, therefore, a 37-year-old soldier may not run two miles in the given time but an 18-year-old civilian may pass this test. Therefore, age- and gender-neutral standards, appropriate and realistic, are to be set for combat arms that may not exclude an entire demographic group, i.e., women from joining combat operations.
6. **Hormones and Eros:** It is also argued that male soldiers cannot control assaulting their female counterparts. This “hormonally-charged” argument is not realistic as, once again, the problem is not the women; it is the failure of men to meet the standard. Anticipating that male soldiers will assault female soldiers or have inappropriate relations with them does not mean that female soldiers should not be inducted into combat units. It should also be expected that male soldiers do not beat their spouses or break driving rules. If this happens it does not mean that marriage or driving for soldiers in combat units should be banned. Rather, it means that services should enforce better standards and discipline.
7. **Policy Aims:** The promotion potential of women in the military should not lead to adjusting combat policies, rather, the policies should be adapted to fighting and winning the wars for the country. Those women who are suitable for the service in combat arms should continue to serve taking advantage of combat standards that are age- and gender-neutral. Many women can lead and articulate ideas better than their male counterparts, so, some of them may undoubtedly make any operational unit stronger, and more lethal.³⁴ They do not meet the standards but this does not mean that they are average. Therefore, there is a need to change the culture like in that past when it was changed in the case of racial integration, which was not easy, either. Worthy policies are not to be scrapped because of flawed standards or their imperfect implementation, in other words, a minority of women should not be penalized because the majority of them may not be qualified to serve in combat forces.³⁵

³⁴ Kusmiyati, N. and Efendy, H. The leadership of women in the military organization. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies*. 2017, 7(4), 165-174.

³⁵ Ables, M. *Women Aren't the Problem. Standards Are*. Modern War Institute. <https://mwi.usma.edu/women-arent-problem-standards/>, [28.6.2022]

4.2 RECOMMENDED JOBS FOR INITIAL INTEGRATION IN COMBAT FORCES

To conclude, here is an analysis of various fields of armed forces which women may or may not be suitable to be integrated into:

1. **Army:** Worldwide, the number of ladies in the armies has grown in recent years. Jobs previously closed for them are now open, women can be offered places in infantry, armor, cavalry, firefighting, and Special Forces. The basic infantry course may be offered to female officers, who can later be assigned roles of leaders before assigning roles to junior ranks. There may be an objection that ladies cannot succeed without lady mentors. The army may take lead and assess the completion rate of ladies in initial training. The active-duty field combat groups of infantry, armor, and artillery may, later on, include female soldiers.
2. **The Army National Guard:** Gender integration into the army national guards may start with two lady officers or JCOs. This will lead to the removal of constraints on vacancies in a combat unit.
3. **Navy:** In the Navy, women's integration into onboard ships and submarines may open opportunities for women to join and continue presently closed services. Worldwide, navies have observed more interest than expected from female officers in sea service.³⁶ Therefore, the Pakistan Navy may also expand opportunities for female officers, although initially as a model for induction.
4. **Air Force:** The Air Force already has the best female representation in most of its branches. Women have been taking part in aerial combat missions since 2006.
5. **Marine Corps:** The Marine Corps is the only service where training is segregated by gender. If allowed to integrate women, the Corps may experience the lowest female percentage due to obvious reasons. Ladies may be best integrated into artillery and combat engineering, while the arbitrary hurdles essential to qualify for the marine course may affect them. For gender integration, armies need to have active-duty company-grade female officers who are Infantry Officer Course qualified.
6. **Coast Guard:** The Coast Guard may remove all gender-based assignment restrictions and start female representation to close gaps in female induction and retention.
7. **Special Operations:** Integrating women may remain unsuccessful in Special Operations forces because, in Pakistan, many functional barriers may contribute to high failure in assessment and selection. Injury-related eliminations are another factor while many cultural and mental barriers also exist. Women who are the "firsts" to be inducted carry a huge psychological impact on others to follow. Worldwide, women are serving in operational units despite the initial failures but

³⁶ Toktas, S. (2020). Women Officers in the Turkish Armed Forces. *Oriente Moderno*, 23(5):247-267.

even today the perception of policymakers about special operations is something like “male-dominated hyper-masculinity.”³⁷

8. **Army Special Operations:** Women can be a part of many special operations and combat jobs in the army such as those carried out by Rangers or other special groups. While women have been with them for years in support jobs, a new era may be ushered in with a woman formally assigned to the units.
9. **Naval Special Warfare:** Presently, all naval warfare fields are restricted for females, but, initially, a handful of women may be checked whether they can qualify and/or enter the Navy SEAL assessment. They may not qualify or ultimately be selected but there is no harm in checking the possibilities of induction.
10. **Air Force Special Warfare:** Women may be included as special tactics officers, combat rescue officers, combat controllers, para-rescuers, and in special operations, weather, and tactical air control, etc., although initially in a small number through only one special tactics officer course. If changes are introduced in warfare recruiting and training schemes, this will encourage females with this potential and create a single-entry pathway for them to decide on the best possible field to fit in.
11. **Marine Raiders:** Marine Raider duty in the Marine Corps Special Operations Command may also be offered to women after being proven suitable in assessment, selection and qualifying for the training course. Several women may attempt command assessment and selection but ultimately may not be selected due to the nature of standards and duties.

CONCLUSION

The participation of women in the armed forces brings many challenges for women because of the nature of the institution, which is principally a masculine-dominated mechanism. There are very few female combat fighters although, across cultures, historical evidence indicates occasional participation of women in combat.

Modern warfare and the inclusion of technology have opened many chances for women to be included in the armed forces. Among the Islamic countries, Pakistan is the only one that has promoted ladies to the rank of generals or deployed them in high-ranking assignments. The women in the Pakistan military perform duties in hostile combat as well. Today, women in the Pakistan military are more numerous than ever and their experience in the military is often favorable. However, in Pakistan, work is needed to address issues if Pakistanis are to eventually see a considerable share of women in the armed forces. To attract more women, some efforts have recently been made like promoting women's achievements through media and focused ads. The military services have also added gender-inclusive languages and environments to expand military career opportunities for women.

³⁷ Ibid.

To conclude, it may be said that to encourage and enhance the participation of women in military services in Pakistan, plenty of work is yet to be done. The military needs to ensure their experience and opportunities are equitable to the serving men. Each of the armed forces in Pakistan can and should induct more women and concerns of women need to be addressed, may it be through targeted induction or changes in the structural policies.

The information contained in the paper has been taken from open sources and in no way expresses the stance of the Government of Pakistan or Pakistan Armed Forces.

Authors: **Dr. Shamaila Amir**, born 1974. Doctor of Linguistics from Hamdard University Karachi (2021). She has worked as an instructor of English as a Second Language for 22 years at Bahria University Karachi and Islamabad. She is currently working as an associate professor at Bahria University, Karachi. She focuses on language teaching, geopolitics, and military studies. She is an author of several research papers in domestic and foreign journals.

Ms. Saman Zaid, born 1982. Holds a degree of M Phil in Management Sciences from Bahria University Karachi (2018). She has been working as a lecturer for 14 years at Bahria University and the National University of Science and Technology (NUST). She focuses on teaching management and finance. Her areas of interest in R & D are management, geopolitics, and military studies. She also has research papers on her credit in domestic journals and at international conferences.

How to cite: AMIR, Shamaila and Saman ZAID. Integration of Women in Combat Operations and Warfare: Possibilities of Integration into Pakistan Armed Forces. *Vojenské rozhledy*. 2023, 32 (1), 083-097. ISSN 1210-3292 (print), 2336-2995 (online). Available at: www.vojenskerozhledy.cz