

META-ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH IN MILITARY SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA

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Abstract

The economy and military are the backbone of every country. The Army is a tough institution to explore in terms of its strict protocols. Because of this reason the present research was conducted to explore this institution from an academic and sociological aspect and also understand the sources of literature available to study the various aspects of the military. This study tried to highlight the issue of paucity of information to explore this institution from a sociological perspective and also the need for exclusive Indian military journals which would help to unravel the unexplored facets of this dynamic institution, especially the military family. Thus, as a meta-analysis a humble attempt had to explain the idea of the need for more research on military families in India, as unlike many other nations, there is a scantiness of studies done on military families.

Keywords: Family, Military, Sociology, Meta-analysis, Defence

Our history is a saga of valor and sacrifice, with heroic figures becoming the role models. In India the existence of the army organisations is since the tenth century BC. On the other hand, the modern Indian Army came into existence during the early sixteenth century. Being the third largest army in the world, the Indian Army is a large conglomeration of values, experiences, regimentation, customs, culture, ethos, traditions and religions and has always been considered honorable and respectable. When combined, a multi-spectral kaleidoscope is shaped, which covers many centuries of illustrious history. Not just a noble profession, the Indian Army is a way of life. The two ways that distinguish military professionals from all other contemporary professionals in the society are - responsibility and skill.

On the academic front, concepts and studies regarding the armed forces, their families, and their literature are all generally studied under the subject of “*Military Sociology*” – a sub-field of sociology which is yet to be explored and expanded in Indian society. Military sociology attempts to bridge the gap of the civil-military relations (Sougajam, 2015). In India, due to certain legitimate degree of non-accessibility, secrecy and disciplined silence the sociological understanding of the military system has been in self-denial.

Originally, the subject of military sociology is an outgrowth of World War II (Coates and Pellegrin, 1965) and the subsequent Cold War. The first defining books of it were: *The American Soldier* (Stouffer et al., 1949-50), *The Soldier and the State* (Huntington, 1957), *The Professional Soldier* (Janowitz, 1960), and *The American Enlisted Man* (Moskos, 1970). The first major textbook focused on the sub-field was a University of Maryland based work titled *Military Sociology: A Study of American Military Institutions and Military Life* (Coates and Pellegrin, 1965) (Siebold, 2001). Unlike in India, many countries around the world have undertaken several studies in the area of Military Sociology.

In India, the sources to understand the sociological aspects of the military are very few and these are mainly in the form of documents which are classified (and not for access of the general public), autobiographies or biographies. Thus, for practical reasons,

military sociology in India has not been able to expand itself and be openly explored by sociologists and thinkers unlike other subfields of sociology. However, military sociology will and should prove to be beneficial with mutual penetration of research with other subfields and general sociology (Siebold, 2001).

As a subject, it provides several interesting areas of study and analysis: military organisation, hierarchy, rules and regulations, division of labor, discipline, rewards, punishment, commitment, interpersonal relationship, civilian-military relationships and military in peace and war are some of the significant dimensions for sociological inquiry. However, it must also be understood that in order to understand the dynamics and the in-depth knowledge about the military and its various aspects, it is important to have knowledge available about all these things from a valid and exclusive source. During the meta-analysis in this paper, it was seen that there was a paucity of Indian journals that focused on the military aspect and among these journals, the topic that was least focused upon was the topic on military family. Family which is an integral institution of society, was that aspect which was least discussed in any military journal.

Thus, the main reason for analysing Indian journals was, to understand the areas in which the papers in these journals mainly focused upon. Also, comprehending upon the areas that required more focus. It was also observed that there is a lack of exclusive military journals. Unlike in India, many other nations such as, United States of America, Australia, Canada, France, etc., have a number of journals, books and have conducted many studies that focus exclusively on military families, also these books, studies and journals are available online as well. However, in India this has not been done yet at a large scale.

Keeping all this into consideration the present research was conducted. The main ideas that led to conducting this meta-analysis were as follows:

- 1) To academically understand the aspects of the military through meta-analysis.
- 2) To analyse which aspect of the military was more focused upon in the military journals.

- 3) To understand the reason behind the paucity of information available regarding the social dimension of the military as an institution.
- 4) To understand the need for having more exclusive Indian military journals.

The Meta-Analysis:

Meta-analysis, when done in a quantitative study, refers to understanding the effect or no-effect of a particular variable through the use of numerous tests and along with this it involves summarizing the findings of numerous quantitative studies. In this way, the results of several quantitative studies focusing on a particular topic can be compared and summarized. Meta-analysis can be done in 2 ways: *firstly*, on the basis of the area of interest of the researcher (this includes doing the literature review of the studies on the researcher's topic of interest); and *secondly*, by doing a secondary analysis of other researchers' data. But one must not forget that all this depends entirely on the availability of appropriate information regarding each study that is to be examined (Bryman, 2012:106).

For the present paper, 4 Indian journals (*Army Institute of Law Journal; Journal of Defence Studies; Defence Life Science Journal and Journal of United Service Institution of India*) of the military subject were selected. The time frame selected for analysing the papers from these journals was 5 years, from 2014-2019. The main idea for selecting this time frame was to understand which aspects these journals were focusing upon the most. Also, as new changes are coming up in the Indian military system, similarly there is a need to understand the impact that these changes are having on the institutions that are related to the military, like the military family. Thus, in total, 409 papers were studied from the online archives of these 4 journals for meta-analysis.

Descriptive Analysis:

Distribution of Time, Papers And Journals:

All the papers available in the online archives of these 4 journals during the years of 2014-2019 were studied. However, those papers which were not available or were

completely irrelevant as per the requirement for present paper were not included. This led to the final number of papers for the meta-analysis i.e. 409.

All these journals are Indian journals and details about these journals are as follows -

- 1) **Army Institute of Law Journal.** Its first issue was published in the year 2013. However, the issues available in the online archives were from 2018 onwards. Its ISSN number is 0975-8208. It is published annually by the Army Institute of Law, Mohali (Punjab) and is a peer-reviewed and refereed journal. From 2018-2019 from the total number of published papers, 45 papers were selected out of which the majority of papers focused on the topic of the Indian government.
- 2) **Journal of Defence Studies.** Its first issue came in 2007. However, the issues available in its online archives were from 2008 onwards. Its ISSN number is 0976-1004. It is published quarterly and is a peer-reviewed and refereed journal which is published by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. From 2014-2019, from the total number of published papers, 113 papers were selected out of which many papers were related to Indian military, international relations and strategy/operations.
- 3) **Journal of the United Service Institution of India.** It is the first defence journal of Asia. Its first issue was published in the year 1871. Its ISSN number is 0041-770X. It is published quarterly by the United Service Institution of India, New Delhi. From 2014-2019, out of the total number of published papers, 244 papers were selected out of which many papers were related to international relations, Indian military and history.
- 4) **Defence Life Science Journal.** Its first issue came in June 2016. Its ISSN number is 2456-0537. It is published quarterly by the Defence Research Development Organization, New Delhi and is a peer-reviewed and refereed journal. From this journal selective papers were taken for study as the major focus of this journal was related to the fields of bio-medicine, bio-electronics, bio-engineering, pharmacology, toxicology, etc. Thus, from 2017-2018, 7 papers were selected out of which 5 papers focused on the Indian military and 2 papers focused on military families.

Table 1

Number of journals having papers available in their online archives

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
No. of Journals	2	2	2	3	4	4
Proportion	50%	50%	50%	75%	100%	100%

Table 1 shows the number of journals which had the papers available in their online archives from 2014-2019. The reason for selecting only the online archive was because this study was done during the period of COVID-19 lockdown, thus, it was not possible to have access to the physical libraries, where these journals were available and also it was not possible to have access to the hard copies of the journals. The selection criteria of the papers from these journals were done on the basis of their relevance to the concept of military/defence such as: international relations; strategy/operations; artillery/weapons; history; Indian government; Indian military and military family. Out of 4 journals, 2 each i.e. 50% of the journals had papers available in their online archives from 2014, 2015 and 2016 onwards, respectively. 3 journals i.e. 75% of the journals had papers available in their online archives from 2017 onwards. 4 each i.e. 100% of the journals had papers available in their online archives from 2018 and 2019 onwards, respectively.

Table 2

Distribution of papers from the online archives of the journals

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
No. of Papers	60	66	55	55	82	91	409
Proportion (approx.)	14.67%	16.14%	13.44%	13.44%	20.04%	22.25%	100%

Table 2 explains about the distribution of the papers selected from online archives of the 4 journals from 2014-2019, respectively. In the year 2016 and 2017, 55 i.e. 13.44%

(approx.) of the papers were selected. The years (2016-17) had the least number of papers in comparison to other years, due to less availability of papers in the online archives. In the year 2019, 91 i.e. 22.25% (approx.) of the papers were selected from the online archives of the journal thus, having the maximum number of papers selected. It can be understood from Table 1 that, majority of the journals had papers published in the year 2017, however relating it with Table 2 in terms of selection of papers, this year had the least number of papers selected because only those papers which were relevant as per the requirements of this paper were taken, other papers were irrelevant in context to the requirements and objectives of this paper. Also, out of all these papers there were just 3 papers that focused on military families. The requirements included their relevance to the concept of military/defence such as: international relations; strategy/operations; artillery/weapons; history; Indian government; Indian military and military family.

Categorisation Of The Papers In The Journals:

The 409 papers were broadly put into 7 main categories and the criteria for the papers to be considered into their respective types is as follows:

- 1) **International Relations.** It included papers that discussed: India's relations with other nations or relations between other nations apart from India; international treaties, conventions, international wars, etc. Behera (2017) in his paper entitled "*Examining the US Defence Acquisition Apparatus What can India Learn?*" explained about how India lags behind from the United States of America due to its acquisition reforms being mostly centred across process and not structural aspects. Bardalai (2018) in his paper entitled "*Doklam and the Indo-China Boundary*" explained how the Doklam episode will resurface unless a middle path is found to settle the boundary between China and Bhutan without compromising India's security.
- 2) **Strategy / Operations.** It included papers that discussed: Indian battles fought, preparations for battles, tough situations; strategic analysis of India and its states; diplomacies; etc. Kaur (2019) in her paper entitled "*Role of Intelligence Agencies in Government*" discussed the need for urgent and careful reforms; restructuring

- of intelligence apparatus and avoidance of bureaucratic involvement in the intelligence agencies. Kapur (2014) in his paper entitled “*IAF Equipment and Force Structure Requirements to Meet External Threats, 2032*” discussed the need to be proactive by developing a credible indigenous submarine force like the IGMDP (Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme).
- 3) **Artillery / Weapons.** It included papers that discussed: Indian army’s infantry; artillery; machinery; technological up-gradation and degradation; role of weapons; etc. Matheswaran (2017) in his paper entitled “*ALH Dhruv and the Indian Helicopter Industry Unrealised Potential, Promises and Challenges*” explained about the safety-related issues, poor product support and the continuous suffering for the fleets due to maintenance issues. However, ALH (Advanced Light Helicopter) and its derivatives provide the best scope for HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) to be a world-class aerospace major. Dinny (2019) in his paper entitled “*India’s Wars Since Independence: Would We Have Performed Better if We Had A Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)?*” explained about the military history as a strong reminder of armed forces' exploits, sacrifices and mistakes in political and military leadership.
 - 4) **History.** It included papers that discussed: historical battles/wars fought; ancient texts and its relevance in today’s time, etc. Bloeria (2016) in his paper entitled “*Kargil 1999 – A Perspective*” discussed the impact of the Kargil war in detail and also about the urgent need for capacity building for long-term strategic view by using all instruments of state power. Kamal (2018) in her paper entitled “*Kautilya’s Arthashastra Indian Strategic Culture and Grand Strategic Preferences*” explained about the importance of strategic utility and how its utility is proved only through its substantial effect on strategic behaviour.
 - 5) **Indian government.** It included papers that discussed: all the studies and issues related to the Indian government but does not include Indian armed forces in any form. Mishra (2018) entitled “*The Child of the new Millennium: A law that allows children to be used as a source of money*” discussed about the need to socially accept the problem of child labor as curse and that there were no results regarding

- the drop or elimination of child labor despite the presence of various laws and initiatives. Arya (2014) in his paper entitled “*Search for Solutions in Manipur*” explained about the creation of economic opportunities along with the bridging of its ethnic fault lines and rehabilitation of surrendered insurgents.
- 6) **Indian military.** It included papers that discussed: relevance of Indian armed forces (army, navy, air force, para-military, National Disaster Rescue Forces (NDRF), etc., their relations with each other); views of the Indian government towards the Indian armed forces, etc.; inner security agendas and issues in India, etc. Vashishta (2014) in his paper entitled “*Adjudication in Defence Forces in the Light of Constitutional Guarantees – An Overview*” explained about justice as per the rule of law; the principles of natural justice; due process and fair play as integral part of judicial administration in defence forces. Bose (2014) in his paper entitled “*Directed Energy Weapons for the Indian Armed Forces*” explained about the importance of Directed Energy Weapons in the Indian context and found out the presence of slow progress of Indian research and development and procurement programs of Indian Armed Forces.
- 7) **Military family.** It included papers that discussed: all the studies that focused on military families in any form- impact, relevance, condition, employment, education, etc. Kaur (2017) in her paper titled- “*Mental Illness in India*” studied about the issue of mental illness in India and its impact on the soldiers. She further explained about the need to have new laws that help tackle the issues related to mental illness in a proper manner. Sharma and Nagle (2018) in their paper titled- “*Personality and Resilience as Determinants of Psychological Well-being among Military children*” explained the role of personality and resilience as the determinants of psychological well-being among the military children of Army Public school. They emphasised on the need to have more research on the programs that help military children and family in psychological well-being. There is a need to do more research on military families in India, as unlike many other nations, there is a paucity of studies done on Indian military families.

Table 3

Categorisation of the papers journal-wise

CATEGORIES / JOURNALS	ARMY INSTITUTE OF LAW JOURNAL	JOURNAL OF DEFENCE STUDIES	JOURNAL OF THE UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION OF INDIA	DEFENCE LIFE SCIENCE JOURNAL	TOTAL (% approx.)
International Relations	1	38	129	0	168 (41%)
Strategy Operations	1	12	22	0	35 (9%)
Artillery Weapons	0	7	7	0	14 (3%)
History	0	10	23	0	33 (8%)
Indian Government	43	3	7	0	53 (13%)
Indian Military	0	43	55	5	103 (25%)
Military Family	0	0	1	2	3 (1%)
Total	45	113	244	7	409

Table 3 explains the categorisation of the papers. The above-mentioned categories were used to segregate the papers under the 4 journals, respectively. Amongst these 4 journals, the *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* had the maximum number of papers i.e. 244. On the other hand, the *Defence Life Science Journal* had the least number of papers i.e. 7. In terms of categories, 168 (41%) papers focused on international relations and just 3 (1%) papers focused on military families. It is also interesting to note that, out of 168 papers focusing on the international relation 129 papers were from the *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* which overall had the maximum number of papers. Therefore, the main focus amongst the papers was seen in the area of international relations and the area which was focused upon least was military family, during the year 2014-2019.

The reason behind the *Defence Life Science Journal* having just 7 papers out of 409 is that, the papers in this journal mainly focused upon the aspect of medical science in the Indian military and this aspect was not a requirement for the current paper. Also, both the journals – the *Journal of Defence Studies* and the *Defence Life Science Journal* are published by the D.R.D.O - Defence Research and Development Organization.

Nature of The Journals And Papers - Qualitative Or Quantitative:

Qualitative research includes the study of human and social phenomena through various ways like biography, historical analysis, case study, ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory, thus, basically it uses the secondary sources or personal experiences (Jupp, 2015) as a means for data analyses and/or collection. To study social phenomena, it does not use statistical procedures. Its methodologies involve collection and analysis of narratives and/or open-ended observations through methodologies such as interviews, focus groups or ethnographies. On the other hand, quantitative research uses primary and numeric data, statistical procedures and various strategies and techniques to study psychological, social and economic processes through the exploration of numeric patterns. Its methodologies include structured observation or experiments, interviews, questionnaires (Ahmad, Irfan, Gogoi & Wasim, 2019: 2828). For this paper, the meaning of qualitative and quantitative has been operationalised as per the requirements of this paper.

Therefore, those papers were categorised under qualitative papers which were: (a) based purely on secondary data; and/or (b) those papers that clearly mentioned that the papers were based on secondary data. On the other hand, those papers were categorised under quantitative papers which: (a) were using quantitative data (i.e., use of numeric data and even statistical tests); and/or (b) those papers that clearly mentioned that the papers were based on quantitative data.

Table 4

Nature of journals- Qualitative or Quantitative

Nature	QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE	TOTAL
No. of Journals	3	1	4
Proportion	75%	25%	100

Table 4 explains the nature of journals as whether they are qualitative or quantitative. Out of 4 journals, 3 i.e. 75% of the journals are qualitative, and these qualitative journals are- *Army Institute of Law Journal*; *Journal of Defence Studies*; *Journal of the United Service Institution of India*. Just 1 journal i.e. the *Defence Life Science Journal* is quantitative. It is the *Defence Life Science Journal* which has the least number of papers overall and also, which includes 2 papers on military families out of 7 selected papers.

Table 5

Nature of papers- Qualitative or Quantitative

Nature	QUALITATIVE	QUANTITATIVE	TOTAL
No. of Papers	405	4	409
Proportion (approx.)	99.05%	0.95%	100%

Table 5 shows the nature of papers in the 4 journals as whether they are qualitative or quantitative. Out of 409 papers, the majority of papers i.e. 405 (99.5% approx.) of the papers were qualitative and just 4 i.e. 0.95% (approx.) of the papers were quantitative. Some of the qualitative papers were as follows: *Rattan (2018)*; *Lele and Sharma (2014)*; *Jacob (2014)*; *Singh (2018)*. The 4 quantitative papers were: *Sharma and Nagle (2018)*; *Misra, Ghanekar and Gupta (2018)*; *Misra, Ghanekar and Gupta (2018a)* and *Rani and Chaturvedula (2018)* which were in the *Defence Life Science Journal*.

Papers on Military Family:

Military families are similar to civilian families in many contexts but the features that set them apart from civilian families are what makes the studies regarding the military families more valuable and intriguing, such as: parental role changing, sudden change of duty stations (permanent or temporary), coping with hazardous work conditions (which may be planned or unplanned), family separation, isolation, etc. (Watkins, 1978) (Hayles and Nobles, 1978).

In India, there are a number of studies done on families in general, however there is a lack of studies done on military families. Also, it was the least discussed topic even in those journals that have published studies on the military. The major reason for this is because the Indian military is very particular about its secrecy and non-accessibility of any information for the general public. Thus, there is no full-fledged official data regarding the Indian military families as well.

Table 6

Number of papers focusing on the military families

OUTCOME	YES	NO	TOTAL
No. of Papers	3	406	409
Proportion (approx.)	0.73%	99.30%	100%

Table 6 focuses upon the number of papers focusing upon military families. Out of 409, majority i.e. 406 (99.30% approx.) papers do not focus on the area of military family. But, 3 i.e. 0.73% (approx.) of the papers focused on the area of military family. Out of these 3 papers, 2 papers are published in *Defence Life Science Journal*. These 2 papers are: *Sharma and Nagle (2018)* and *Kaur (2017)*, and 1 paper is published in the *Journal of United Service Institution of India*, namely- *Suresh (2015)*.

Kind Of Data Published In The Papers:

In the present study those papers were categorised as ‘new’ which showed the use of 75% or more of the data published since the year 2000 and onwards and those papers were categorised as ‘old’ which showed the use of 75% or more of the data published before the year 2000. The word ‘data’ (as per this paper) here refers to the information available in the paper (as it may be primary or secondary or both). The reason to use such a criterion is to see how much of research is done with the use of published data available since the year 2000 and how much is still dependent on age-old published data (i.e., use of studies which were published before the year 2000) for research. The reason why such a categorisation has been done, is to see the use of latest data/studies for research work and not being dependent on old published work. However, this does not mean that the papers that are categorised as ‘old’ are not useful or outdated. But in order to have up-to-date, wholesome and precise knowledge about any aspect, it is important to have the knowledge about the latest studies being conducted on that particular topic.

Table 7

The use of published data in papers

Published Data	NEW	OLD	TOTAL
No. of Papers	350	59	409
Proportion (approx.)	85.50%	14.50%	100%

Table 7 shows that out of 409 papers, the majority i.e. 350 (85.50%) papers have used data that were published on or after the year 2000 and 59 i.e. 14.50% papers have used data that were published prior to the year 2000. In this, it must also be remembered that all 4 journals have shown the use of data that were published both before and after the year 2000.

DISCUSSION:

The findings of the present paper indicates that on the basis of the availability of paper in the online archives of the journals, it was in the years 2018 and 2019 that all the papers of the archives were available for open access. However, before 2018, not all the journals

had all their papers available in their online archives for open access. Also, from the year 2014-2019, out of all the topics, the 2 topics that have been the main area of focus in most of the studies were: international relations (41% i.e., 168 papers out of 409 papers) and Indian military (25% i.e., 103 papers out of 409 papers), respectively. Most of the papers available were from the year 2019. The *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* had the maximum number of papers selected for meta-analysis, and the *Defence Life Science Journal* had the least number of papers selected for this study. Majority of the papers in the journals were qualitative and along with this, 3 out 4 journals were of qualitative nature. In all 4 journals, the papers that were analysed took help from the data that were published both before and after the year 2000. However, the majority of the papers analysed in this study had the data that were published after the year 2000.

Along with this, it was also seen that 4 out 409 papers were quantitative, thus showing the need to focus more on quantitative research. Above all, just 3 out 409 papers focused on the aspect of military family, which showed the need to focus more on other aspects of the military also and not just on the specific aspects like weapons, international relations, etc. From a sociological perspective also, in comparison to the civilian families, there are a number of changes witnessed in the military families such as: change of duty, change of postings, change of family roles, changes of psychological and social situations, etc. Being a unique class in itself, formal research on military families is very less and the ones which have been conducted have not been able to properly reach those who could put that research into practical application (Watkins, 1978).

There is a popular saying in the Indian army that “*wives are also wedded to the olive greens*” and keeping this in mind, it must not be forgotten that a soldier to a huge extent is able to do his duty with full dedication because he knows that his family is supporting him completely. Thus, the topic of military families in India needs to be explored more.

LIMITATIONS:

Though this study was conducted carefully in order to avoid any bias, yet, there are some limitations of this study, which are as follows:

- i. There were few journals that focused exclusively on military studies. However, some of the military journals have just included articles other than military studies.
- ii. Majority of the papers were qualitative. It means that there is a need for quantitative research papers on military sociology in order to know the current scenario, gaps and upgradations in this field.
- iii. Some journals had incomplete online archives, which created hindrances in getting a proportional number of papers for each year.
- iv. Out of all the 4 journals, just 2 journals- *Defence Life Science Journal* (2 papers on military families) and *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* (1 paper on military families) had papers focusing on military families in one form or the other.

CONCLUSION:

After the analysis of all the papers, it can be stated for conclusion that:

- 1) There is a paucity of proper and focused military journals. Along with qualitative papers there is an urgent need to have quantitative papers in the field of military sociology in India, which helps us understand and analyse the current scenario and the gaps existing in this field.
- 2) It was noticed that in all the 4 journals there was a persistent focus upon the matters like- artillery, weapons, international relations, military (in general), but rarely was there any discussion on any other aspect apart from these. This shows that there is need to include more aspects in the subject of military sociology especially in context of Indian military, such as: military family, military psychology, social impact of military on society, etc., as these aspects will add a new dimension to the study of military as well as the subject of military sociology and help in understanding both from a holistic perspective.
- 3) Family is an integral part of the society and in a similar manner it is an integral aspect in military sociology as well. Therefore, there is a need to promote and conduct more studies in the area of military families in India. However, on the

- other hand, there is a plethora of studies available about the military families in other countries, as over there this field is promoted as a subject for research.
- 4) The most important point is that the Indian military journals in comparison to the foreign military journals are lagging far behind. This is because there is a lack of studying new dimensions or aspects that are present in the Indian military and also due to the idea of secrecy of military information, the quality of new information available in the Indian journals is not very dynamic.

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