

## **Chapter 3**

### **Results**

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### Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Quantitative results are shared first, followed by the qualitative results and their interpretation. The section begins with the socio-demographic profile of the participants followed by the quantitative results from statistical analyses of the data. The results from thematic analysis of the qualitative data are presented next. The last section discusses the findings of the study.

#### Participant distribution

Table 6

*Participant Distribution*

Independent Variables		Number of Deployments Faced		Total
		1	2	
Type of Commissioning	Officer	24 (06%)	89 (24%)	113 (30%)
	JCO	27 (07%)	62 (17%)	89 (24%)
	NCO	37 (10%)	132 (36%)	169 (46%)
Total		88 (24%)	283 (76%)	371

There were total 371 participants, of which 113 belonged to Officer category, 89 belonged to JCO category, and 169 belonged to NCO category based on the type of commissioning as shown in Table 6.

## Sociodemographic Profile of the Participants.

Table 7

<i>Participant Socio-demographics</i>			
Demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age in Years	20 - 30	54	14.56
	31 - 40	212	57.14
	41 - 50	101	27.22
	51 - 60	4	1.08
	Total	371	
Education	Illiterate	15	4.04
	Up to 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	105	28.3
	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5	1.35
	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	80	21.56
	Graduate	69	18.6
	Post Graduate	94	25.34
	PhD	3	0.81
	Total	371	
Years of Marriage	Less than 5 years	8	2.16
	5 – 10 years	55	14.82
	11 – 15 years	80	21.56
	16 – 20 years	121	32.61
	21 – 25 years	78	21.02
	26 – 30 years	25	6.74
	31 – 35 years	4	1.08
	Total	371	
Number of Children	0	8	2.16
	1	63	16.98
	2	245	66.04
	3	46	12.4
	4	9	2.43
	Total	371	
Participant Occupation	Employed	40	10.78
	Home maker	305	82.21
	Self Employed	25	6.74
	Student	1	0.27
	Total	371	
Defence Background	No	273	73.58
	Yes	98	26.42
	Total	371	

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Number of times deployment faced	1	88	23.7
	2	100	27.0
	3	82	22.1
	4	51	13.7
	5	34	9.2
	6	11	3.0
	7	4	1.1
	8	1	0.3
	Total	371	
Number of times deployment faced	1	88	23.72
	2	283	76.3
	Total	371	
Type of Commissioning	Officer	113	30.46
	JCO	89	23.99
	NCO	169	45.55
	Total	371	

Demographics of the participants are enumerated in Table 7. The age of participants was broadly divided into four ranges and 57 percent of the participants fell between 31 years to 40 years age group. The participant's education level was divided into 7 categories and there were 15 participants who were not educated, but 51 percent of the participants were at least basic education and others had higher education levels. The participants were normally distributed in years of marriage demographics and 7 range categories were created. Sixty-six percent of participants had 2 children and the rest had either more or less than two children. A huge number of participants were home-makers, comprising of 82 percent of participants, the rest were working. The participants who had defence background were 26 percent and rest of the participants did not have defence background out of 371. The number of times participants had faced deployment is shared in Table 7, out of which only 23.7 percent of participants were facing deployment for the first time, rest all had faced deployment earlier. Based on type of commissioning, 45.55 percent of participants belonged to NCO category and the least were from JCO category.

## Results of Quantitative Data Analysis

The results from the statistical analyses are presented according to the study hypotheses.

### Hypothesis 1

Stress in army spouses differs based on type of commissioning.

Table 8

<i>Analysis of Variance - Type of Commissioning and Stress</i>						
Stress		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Current Rating of Stress	Between Groups	1.30	2	0.65	0.73	0.48
	Within Groups	327.84	368	0.89		
	Total	329.13	370			
Awareness of Variation in Level of Stress	Between Groups	36.55	2	18.28	1.27	0.28
	Within Groups	5313.55	368	14.44		
	Total	5350.10	370			
Perception of Stress	Between Groups	121.17	2	60.58	4.97	0.01**
	Within Groups	4485.87	368	12.19		
	Total	4607.04	370			

Note. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$  level.

As shown in Table 8, there was a significant effect of type of commissioning on perception of stress, [ $F(2, 368) = 4.97 (p \leq .01)$ ]. The means indicate that the perception of stress among spouses of NCOs ( $M=13.63$ ;  $\sigma=3.28$ ) is higher than that of JCO ( $M=13.01$ ;  $\sigma=3.01$ ) and Officer ( $M=12.30$ ;  $\sigma=4.05$ ) (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F). There is no effect of type of commissioning on rate of stress and level of stress. Perception of stress varies among the three ranks. There was no significant effect of type of commissioning on rate stress, [ $F(2, 368) = 0.73 (p > .05)$ ] or on level of stress, [ $F(2, 368) = 1.27 (p > .05)$ ].

## Hypothesis 2

Coping strategies used by army spouses differs based on type of commissioning.

Table 9

<i>Analysis of Variance - Type of Commissioning and Coping Strategies</i>						
Coping Strategies		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Denial of the situation	Between Groups	31.38	2	15.69	2.84	0.06
	Within Groups	2032.62	368	5.52		
	Total	2064.00	370			
Problem Solving	Between Groups	78.14	2	39.07	1.85	0.16
	Within Groups	7769.47	368	21.11		
	Total	7847.62	370			
Cognitive Restructuring	Between Groups	203.99	2	102.00	4.13	0.02*
	Within Groups	9092.97	368	24.71		
	Total	9296.96	370			
Expressing Emotions	Between Groups	137.23	2	68.62	5.42	0.00**
	Within Groups	4656.48	368	12.65		
	Total	4793.71	370			
Seeking Social Support	Between Groups	146.00	2	73.00	4.27	0.01*
	Within Groups	6289.54	368	17.09		
	Total	6435.54	370			
Avoiding the problem	Between Groups	556.23	2	278.11	15.72	0.00**
	Within Groups	6510.03	368	17.69		
	Total	7066.26	370			
Wishful Thinking	Between Groups	61.56	2	30.78	1.42	0.24
	Within Groups	7980.44	368	21.69		
	Total	8042.00	370			
Self-Criticism	Between Groups	146.61	2	73.31	7.78	0.00**
	Within Groups	3467.69	368	9.42		
	Total	3614.30	370			
Social Withdrawal	Between Groups	94.09	2	47.04	4.90	0.01*
	Within Groups	3535.90	368	9.61		
	Total	3629.99	370			
Praying	Between Groups	458.24	2	229.12	21.91	0.00**
	Within Groups	3848.43	368	10.46		
	Total	4306.67	370			

Coping Strategies		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Humour	Between Groups	85.42	2	42.71	6.64	0.00**
	Within Groups	2367.09	368	6.43		
	Total	2452.51	370			
Substance use	Between Groups	0.14	2	0.07	0.17	0.84
	Within Groups	150.59	368	0.41		
	Total	150.73	370			
Acceptance	Between Groups	38.49	2	19.25	2.65	0.07
	Within Groups	2677.62	368	7.28		
	Total	2716.11	370			
Suppression of competing activities	Between Groups	85.08	2	42.54	5.94	0.00**
	Within Groups	2636.46	368	7.16		
	Total	2721.54	370			
Behavioural disconnection	Between Groups	41.45	2	20.73	2.67	0.07
	Within Groups	2855.53	368	7.76		
	Total	2896.98	370			
Self-control	Between Groups	15.77	2	7.89	1.78	0.17
	Within Groups	1634.62	368	4.44		
	Total	1650.39	370			

Note. p value significant at \*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01 level.

As shown in Table 9, a significant effect was found of type of commissioning on the coping strategy of cognitive restructuring [ $F(2, 368) = 4.13$  ( $p < .05$ )], expressing emotions [ $F(2, 368) = 5.42$  ( $p < .01$ )], seeking societal support [ $F(2, 368) = 4.27$  ( $p < .01$ )], avoiding the problem [ $F(2, 368) = 15.72$  ( $p < .01$ )], self-criticism [ $F(2, 368) = 7.78$  ( $p < .01$ )], social withdrawal [ $F(2, 368) = 4.90$  ( $p < .01$ )], praying [ $F(2, 368) = 21.91$  ( $p < .01$ )], humour [ $F(2, 368) = 6.64$  ( $p < .01$ )], and suppression of competing activities, [ $F(2, 368) = 5.94$  ( $p < .01$ )]. However, there was no significant effect of type of commissioning on the coping strategies of denial of situation [ $F(2, 368) = 2.84$  ( $p > .05$ )], problem solving [ $F(2, 368) = 1.85$  ( $p > .05$ )], wishful thinking [ $F(2, 368) = 1.42$  ( $p > .05$ )], substance use [ $F(2, 368) = 0.17$  ( $p > .05$ )], self-control [ $F(2, 368) = 1.78$  ( $p > .05$ )], acceptance [ $F(2, 368) = 2.65$  ( $p > .05$ )], behavioural disconnection [ $F(2, 368) = 2.67$  ( $p > .05$ )], and self-control [ $F(2, 368) = 1.78$  ( $p > .05$ )].

The means indicate that officer spouses most often use cognitive restructuring ( $M=25.63$ ;  $\sigma =4.51$ ), expressing emotions ( $M=15.15$ ;  $\sigma =3.56$ ), and humour ( $M=7.23$ ;  $\sigma =2.88$ ) coping strategies as compared to JCO spouses or NCO spouses. JCO spouses however have been found to use seeking societal support ( $M=18.62$ ;  $\sigma =3.87$ ), avoiding the problem ( $M=20.48$ ;  $\sigma =4.12$ ), self-criticism ( $M=9.47$ ;  $\sigma =2.85$ ), social withdrawal ( $M=9.80$ ;  $\sigma =3.14$ ), praying ( $M=11.33$ ;  $\sigma =2.71$ ), and suppression of competing activities ( $M=9.44$ ;  $\sigma =2.37$ ) more often than officer spouses or NCO spouses. However, there was no coping strategy which was found to be significantly used more often by NCO spouses as compared to officer spouses or JCO spouses (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

### Hypothesis 3

Perceived health of army spouses differs with the type of commissioning.

Table 10

<i>Chi-Square Test - Type of Commissioning and Perceived Health</i>			
Health	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.63 <sup>a</sup>	4	0.33
Likelihood Ratio	4.72	4	0.32
Fisher's Exact Test	4.49		
Linear-by-Linear Association	.00 <sup>b</sup>	1	1.00
N of Valid Cases	371.00		

*Note.* a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.36; b. The standardized statistic is -.003.

As shown in Table 10, there was no significant association between the type of commissioning and perceived health  $\chi^2(4) = 4.63$ ,  $p(0.33) > .05$ . This means that the rank of army spouses had no association with being healthy or not healthy; they are independent of each other (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).



## Hypothesis 4

Stress in army spouses differs based on number of deployments faced.

Table 11

*Analysis of Variance - Number of Deployments faced and Stress*

Stress		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Current Rating of Stress Experienced	Between Groups	1.43	1	1.43	1.61	0.20
	Within Groups	327.70	369	0.89		
	Total	329.13	370			
Awareness of Variation in Level of Stress	Between Groups	38.37	1	38.37	2.67	0.10
	Within Groups	5311.73	369	14.39		
	Total	5350.10	370			
Perception of Stress	Between Groups	13.05	1	13.05	1.05	0.31
	Within Groups	4593.99	369	12.45		
	Total	4607.04	370			

*Note.* p value significant at \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$  level.

As shown in Table 11, there was no significant effect of number of deployments faced on rate stress, [ $F(1, 369) = 1.61 (p > .05)$ ], awareness of variation in the level of stress, [ $F(1, 369) = 2.67 (p > .05)$ ] or perception of stress, [ $F(1, 369) = 1.05 (p > .05)$ ] (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

## Hypothesis 5

Coping strategies used by army spouses differs based on number of deployments faced.

Table 12

### *Analysis of Variance - Number of Deployments faced and Coping Strategies*

Coping Strategies		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Denial of the situation	Between Groups	2.92	1	2.92	0.52	0.47
	Within Groups	2061.08	369	5.59		
	Total	2064.00	370			
Problem Solving	Between Groups	4.30	1	4.30	0.20	0.65
	Within Groups	7843.31	369	21.26		
	Total	7847.62	370			
Cognitive Restructuring	Between Groups	64.69	1	64.69	2.59	0.11
	Within Groups	9232.27	369	25.02		
	Total	9296.96	370			
Expressing Emotions	Between Groups	59.40	1	59.40	4.63	0.03*
	Within Groups	4734.32	369	12.83		
	Total	4793.71	370			
Seeking Societal Support	Between Groups	0.01	1	0.01	0.00	0.98
	Within Groups	6435.53	369	17.44		
	Total	6435.54	370			
Avoiding the problem	Between Groups	4.48	1	4.48	0.23	0.63
	Within Groups	7061.78	369	19.14		
	Total	7066.26	370			
Wishful Thinking	Between Groups	40.28	1	40.28	1.86	0.17
	Within Groups	8001.72	369	21.68		
	Total	8042.00	370			
Self- Criticism	Between Groups	9.89	1	9.89	1.01	0.31
	Within Groups	3604.40	369	9.77		
	Total	3614.30	370			
Social Withdrawal	Between Groups	4.35	1	4.35	0.44	0.51
	Within Groups	3625.63	369	9.83		
	Total	3629.99	370			
Praying	Between Groups	1.05	1	1.05	0.09	0.76
	Within Groups	4305.63	369	11.67		

Coping Strategies		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Total	4306.67	370			
Humour	Between Groups	67.38	1	67.38	10.42	0.00**
	Within Groups	2385.13	369	6.46		
	Total	2452.51	370			
Substance use	Between Groups	1.24	1	1.24	3.06	0.08
	Within Groups	149.49	369	0.41		
	Total	150.73	370			
Acceptance	Between Groups	5.24	1	5.24	0.71	0.40
	Within Groups	2710.87	369	7.35		
	Total	2716.11	370			
Suppression of competing activities	Between Groups	5.85	1	5.85	0.79	0.37
	Within Groups	2715.69	369	7.36		
	Total	2721.54	370			
Behavioural disconnection	Between Groups	0.55	1	0.55	0.07	0.79
	Within Groups	2896.43	369	7.85		
	Total	2896.98	370			
Self-control	Between Groups	0.01	1	0.01	0.00	0.97
	Within Groups	1650.39	369	4.47		
	Total	1650.39	370			

Note. p value significant at \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$  level.

As shown in Table 12, the only significant effect of number of deployments faced was found on the coping strategies of expressing emotions [ $F(1, 369) = 4.63, (p < .05)$ ] and humour [ $F(1, 369) = 10.42, (p < .01)$ ]. The means indicate that expressing emotions and humour coping strategy was used more often by those army spouses who had faced deployment more than once ( $M = 14.51; \sigma = 3.56$ ) and ( $M = 6.76; \sigma = 2.58$ ) respectively as compared to those who had faced deployment only once ( $M = 13.57; \sigma = 3.66$ ) and ( $M = 5.76; \sigma = 2.43$ ) respectively, which was also the case with humour coping strategy. These findings indicate that once the individual becomes seasoned in experiencing deployments or used to facing deployments army spouses tend to use these coping strategies as compared to others who are facing deployment for the first time (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

## Hypothesis 6

Perceived health of army spouses differs with number of deployments faced.

Table 13

<i>Chi-Square Tests between Number of Deployments faced and Perceived Health</i>			
Health	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.77 <sup>a</sup>	2	0.03
Likelihood Ratio	6.71	2	0.03
Fisher's Exact Test	6.53		
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.66 <sup>b</sup>	1	0.02
N of Valid Cases	371.00		

*Note.* a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.25; b. The standardized statistic is 2.380.

As shown in Table 13, there was significant association between the number of deployments army spouses have faced and their perceived health [ $\chi^2(2) = 6.77$ , ( $p(0.03) < .05$ )]. (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

### Summary of the findings based on the hypotheses.

- Hypothesis/Objectives 1 and 4: The results indicate that rating of stress and awareness of variation in level of stress do not have a significant relationship with type of commissioning or number of deployments faced. However, perception of stress varies among the three ranks. NCOs ( $M=13.63$ ) is higher than that of JCO ( $M=13.01$ ) and Officer ( $M=12.29$ ).
- Hypothesis/Objectives 2: Findings indicate a significant effect of type of commissioning on few coping strategies, cognitive restructuring (Officer), expressing emotions (Officer), seeking societal support (JCO), avoiding the

problem (JCO), self-criticism (JCO), social withdrawal (JCO), praying, humour (Officer) and suppression of competing activities (JCO).

- Hypothesis/Objectives 3: Type of commissioning does not have a significant relationship with health.
- Hypothesis/Objectives 5: Significant effect of number of deployments faced on a couple of coping strategies like expressing emotions and humour both of which are used more by army spouses who have faced deployment more than once.
- Hypothesis/Objectives 6: There is significant relationship between number of deployments faced and health  $\chi^2 (2) = 6.77, p = 0.03$ . Army spouses who have faced deployment more than once tend to be healthier, more 'mildly sick' and more 'not healthy' as compared to army spouses who are facing the deployment for the first time.

### **Intervening Variables**

The intervening variables age, education, years of marriage, number of children and previous exposure to defence background were correlated with the dependent variables stress, coping strategies and health.

#### **Age.**

There was no significant relation found between age and current rating of stress experienced, awareness of variation in level of stress, perception of stress and health.

However, age was found to have a significant positive correlation with problem solving ( $r=.11$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), cognitive restructuring ( $r=.14$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), expressing emotions ( $r=.18$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), humour ( $r=.16$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), acceptance ( $r=.10$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), and suppression of competing activities ( $r=.11$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ) coping strategies. This indicates that as the age of the army spouse increases so does the use of above-mentioned coping strategies (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

### **Education.**

There was significant positive correlation between awareness of variation in level of stress ( $r=.12$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), coping strategies - problem solving ( $r=.17$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), cognitive restructuring ( $r=.17$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), expressing emotions ( $r=.14$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), acceptance ( $r=.13$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ). This indicates that army spouses having higher education use the above-mentioned coping strategies more often (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

No significant correlation was found between health and current rating of stress experienced as well as few coping strategies - denial of situation, seeking societal support, wishful thinking, humour, substance use, suppression of competing activities, self-control.

Education was found to have significant negative correlation with coping strategies - perception of stress ( $r=.11$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), avoiding the problem ( $r=.21$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), self-criticism ( $r=.17$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), social withdrawal ( $r=.12$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), praying ( $r=.28$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ) and behavioural disconnection ( $r=.13$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ) coping strategies. The results indicate that higher the education of army spouses lesser is the use of the above-mentioned coping strategies.

### **Years of marriage.**

Years of marriage has significant positive correlation with denial of the situation ( $r=.13$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), cognitive restructuring ( $r=.12$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), expressing emotions ( $r=.15$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), avoiding the problem ( $r=.10$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), self-criticism ( $r=.11$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), social withdrawal ( $r=.12$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), praying ( $r=.24$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), humour ( $r=.18$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.01$ ), suppression of competing activities ( $r=.12$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ) and behavioural disconnection coping strategies ( $r=.11$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ). This indicates that as army spouses become experienced in marriage, they tend to use above-mentioned coping strategies more often (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

There was no significant correlation found between years of marriage and current rating of stress, awareness of variation in level of stress and perception of stress. No significant correlation was found between years of marriage and coping strategies – problem solving, seeking societal support, wishful thinking, substance use, acceptance, and self-control. Also, there was no significant correlation between years of marriage and health.

### **Number of children.**

Number of children however have a significant negative correlation with cognitive restructuring ( $r=.12$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ) coping strategy. There was significant positive correlation found between number of children and coping strategies – denial of the situation ( $r=.10$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), social withdrawal ( $r=.13$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ), praying ( $r=.12$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $<.05$ ) (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

There was no significant correlation found between number of children that army spouses have and current rating of stress, awareness of variation in level of stress and perception of stress, Number of children did not have significant correlation with problem solving, expressing emotions, seeking societal support, avoiding the problem, wishful thinking, self-criticism, humour, substance use, acceptance, suppression of competing activities, behavioural disconnection, and self-control coping strategies. Also, no significant correlation was found between number of children and health of army spouses.

### **Previous exposure to defence background.**

Previous background of defence did not have significant correlation with stress, coping strategies or health of army spouses. However, social withdrawal coping strategy ( $r = -.10$ ,  $p$  (two-tailed)  $< .05$ ) was found to have a significant negative correlation. This indicates that if there is previous exposure to defence background army spouses will not use social withdrawal as coping strategy (for descriptive analysis refer Appendix F).

## **Results of Qualitative Data Analysis**

This section enumerates the findings of thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews as well as the open-ended questions from the survey. Relevant verbatim comments related to each theme are shared below. This section also describes the results of CHIPS and the data on how to remain healthy shared by the participants.



Thematic analysis of the qualitative data can be categorised under four areas, namely, major stressors, sexual needs, identity and resilience as shown in Table 14. The themes that emerged via thematic analysis under the above mentioned areas are deployment, fear of loss, burden of responsibilities, children, absence of communication with husband, military life, health, sacrificing career, finances, relocation, sexual needs are not a priority, own identity, “one day at a time, elephant in small bites,” trauma, god/religion and courage.

Table 14

<i>Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data</i>			
Area	Theme	Sub-Themes	Percentage
Major Stressors	Deployment	Preparation	95%
		During deployment	98%
		Disruption of normalcy	25%
		Obscurity about posting	85%
	Fear of loss	Uncertainty of life	99%
		Household	95%
		Children	98%
		Social	75%
		Unit	50%
	Burden of responsibilities	Parenting	83%
		Absence of father	65%
	Children	Indecisiveness	65%
		Constant worry	98%
		Limitations of content	85%
	Communication	Cultural acclimatization	70%
		Forced protocol	45%
		Loneliness	86%
		Trust issues	36%
	Military life	Own health	80%
		Husband	85%
		Parents	60%
		Children	88%
	Health	No conflict	60%
		Working	40%
		Sacrificed	70%

	Finances	Crisis	44%
		Limited resources	45%
	Relocation	Uprooting alone	85%
		Prolonged temporary dwelling	35%
		Chaos rebridging child's education	65%
		Deprioritizing of marital relationship	33%
Sexual needs	Not a priority	Replacement	45%
		Repression	85%
		Positive Thinking	35%
Identity	Own Identity	No conflict	45%
		Intact	30%
Resilience	Trauma	Fear	65%
		Insomnia/Nightmares	74%
	God/Religion	Unbudging faith	40%
		Belief in miracles	70%
	Courage	Solution oriented	40%
		In combat mode	50%

*Note.* The data is based on the semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions from the questionnaire.

## Major Stressors

Based on qualitative data life of a spouse in a military set up brings with it lots of stressors and loneliness and empowers you to be resilient and attend to the responsibilities that come along.

### Deployment.

Major stressors in the life of army spouses were around deployment and all the stages related to it. Ninety-eight percent of the participants mentioned the deployment phase to be stressful; the reasons shared ranged from taking care of children alone to managing a household. Preparing for deployment, when they are preparing to bid adieu to the husband

with a feeling of insecurity regarding his return creates a lot of stress for the army spouse. Uncertainty related to the next posting is also one of the major stressors leading to 85 percent of participants sharing that they are not able to take decisions related to education of children due to this, for example, school admissions. Few verbatim comments related to this theme are shared below.

*“It’s difficult when he is not around, it’s difficult to sleep at night. I go and check many times if the door is locked or not. Sleep is disturbed. And when he is around, I sleep peacefully as he is there to protect.”*

*“I get stressed when husband goes on field posting but then I leave it to God.”*

*“Field posting leads to apprehensions and the fear of loss is always at play. Peace posting leads to a better social life and less stress.”*

*“The feeling of getting separated is most stressful and managing house, shifting from one accommodation to another is a painful task.”*

*“During field posting I am stressed because there are such places of field posting where they do not get even good food to eat. They are troubled by winters. And during peace posting such problems are less.”*

*“In peace posting I keep waiting for him. We have no family time. Only I manage all things but in field posting they have proper leave program so I know when he will come, he will help me in managing things. So, field posting is better.”*

## **Fear of loss.**

Uncertainty of life is a given for defence personnel and that is a huge stressor hovering on the mind of the spouses on a daily basis. Another related fear of loss is losing someone from the unit (a unit consists of approximately 1000 families of soldiers). This is perceived as loss as a unit is a family that looks after each other at all times. Some of the participants' expressions related to this theme are shared below.

*“Uncertainty. Feelings, fear, insecurity of what will happen, you attach so much with your husband that you can't imagine that you have to be without husband.”*

*“He was in field that time. My parents were not able to come to support. It was one night. The news was coming and we did not have any information about him. A sensitive area. It was coming in news that one officer has gained martyrdom and we knew it is from his unit and we were not able to get in touch with him. So that was the most stressful night. It was like 90-10 situation, got it, and I knew he was there and I did not have a support system and my son was very small, he was with me. How other ladies helped me, she was a very close friend, she said...nothing doing you come and stay with me for the night. Although we couldn't sleep, we kept talking the whole night, but she kept my mind occupied. And she was a tarot card reader also, so she took out the card and told me that nothing will happen to him. How did I handle that night? I was very young, 29 or 30. I kept fluctuating, rona bhi aaya, fikar to tha hi, now what...kind of feeling. Ab mein kya karungi, aage kya hoga, mere paas koi security nai hai, where will I go, how will I live my life. you know you start thinking na, one chain leads to the other ki agar ho gaya to ab mein kidhar. You have to have...you can't go back to your parents, you don't want to, in-laws also. You want to be independent with small child, you have to live for him. ki life khatam ho jayegi. there will be no life, that kind of feeling. you*

*know...kind of you are finished, aisi feeling aa rahi thi. Next day morning we came to know that it's not him, it's somebody else. That's also very sad, he is also somebody's son or husband or whatever. That hurt is there but then relief was also there, it's not me. Wo is wakhat ek relief sa aaya aur dukh bhi hua, (that time I felt relief and sadness at the same time), it's a mixed feeling at the same time, sad.....he was not married, he was unmarried. That's also sad for the parents. So that was it."*

### **Burden of responsibilities.**

Responsibilities of children and household are the top most areas of stress for army spouses (95 percent respondents). Further, they reported that these, decrease tremendously when it is a peace posting or when the husband is back on holidays. Some of the experiences in participants' own words are shared below.

*"After my first delivery, there was a time when my 1-year old son had not peed for a whole day and his private parts were swollen. I lived in village with my in-laws. I ran with my child to take him to the hospital. Husband was not there, there was no male in the house to come along, there was no vehicle in which to go and the hospital was far. Then somehow, I found a way, I went with my cousin in a tractor who was going towards that side and showed him at the hospital and the treatment was done. It is difficult without husband. My in-laws also never stopped me from doing anything. My in-laws are really good."*

*"I have recently become a mother, so to taking care of baby alone is difficult. To go alone to Military Hospital (MH), all the work of baby, taking care of mother-in-law and*

*as husband is on field posting I am always in tension and I am an employee too, so pressure of work as well.”*

*“I have to take care of in-laws who do not keep well. If children get sick, then too there is difficulty. Many a times I have to take mother-in-law to Chandigarh hospital, husband does not get leave, there is no one at home, so we both have stress.”*

*“Shifting accommodation thrice in SF,  
Condition of house,  
Staying alone and managing alone with 3-year-old daughter,  
So called obligations to be met,  
taking care of a child as a single parent.”*

*“Mental stress which is mounting with each passing day as some or the other thing props up. After all you marry so that you have a companion.”*

*“We have to handle everything on our own including child career, household repairs, savings, bank work - almost everything, bill payment. Things like...telephone people purposely stop the line for her to visit their office again and again. Husband has drinking problem. Concerned regarding daughter’s interest in opposite sex.”*

*“Stress increases when he is around too, as now, I have to be a good hostess and entertain so many people, go to so many parties as they are compulsory AWWA activities.”*

*“Hota hai par hamara kam yahan hai bachon ko sambhal na wo hum acha se karte hai.” (It happens but our work here is to take care of children, that we do properly).*

## **Children.**

The responsibility of children is a major area of concern for army spouses. More than 80 percent army spouses shared that children's education and parenting children alone cause much stress. Some of the examples from the verbatim comments are shared below.

*"He would come home in 3-4-6 months. He came for my delivery, then after 9 months. My son started walking by then, he didn't recognise him when he came home after 9 months."*

*"Stress is basically related regarding the career of growing children as I have to face it alone on day to day basis and husband is not physically present around for assistance."*

*"When husband is not there and children fall sick then there is too much difficulty. I always think that I should not fall sick otherwise who will take care of children."*

*"My son had a rare condition where he was having a bone growth from the knee and it was extremely painful and odd for him. I was told to come to this station and go to the MH and show. I showed they said that they would wait for the operation till he becomes 18 years of age and then do the surgery, till that time they said let it grow, let's see how much it grows. But I don't know what but a miracle happened and the extra bone fell off by its own. Yahan bus sab ho jata hai, humein chinta nai hoti."*

## **Absence of communication with husband.**

Communication is another area which is of concern as 98 percent of army spouses responded being worried about the safety of the husband and if there is no contact with the

spouse, it dwells on the mind and affects their behaviour. Another factor which is important to note is that the spouses are not supposed to share their troubles with the husband as he is alone in a risky field posting. So, they have to hold on to the information until the husband comes home for holidays and by that time the crisis has most likely passed. Some of the verbatim examples are shared below to elaborate on the area of concern.

*“During war, lack of communication affected a lot. He was in high altitude area. I lived with parents or parent-in-law. The distractions of studying and working helped in coping.”*

*“We should not inform husband about the household situation. His career should not be on stake, we should not share sensitive information with them.”*

*“I cannot take decisions about my career or accommodation without talking to him and he is not in an area where network is there”*

*“I get worried if I do not get a call from my husband, and then I become more irritable and can't concentrate on anything.”*

### **Military life.**

Loneliness is one aspect of military life which is most significant and important and most of the time goes unnoticed as the spouse is busy accomplishing tasks and managing things at home. However, there are many more areas of military life which are commonly shared by many army spouses. Some of the verbatim comments are shared below.



*“So, things are happening, but not everybody will have time. See there are avenues...what army has created, like if I am in trouble or I have an issue in my marital life I can reach out to a senior's wife and all but I don't know how...what point will you reach at when you actually will decide to talk to your senior. There is limited information that is shared, that is because of trust, people don't have trust anymore.”*

*“When I got married, we went to the unit and as soon as we reached, he had to leave. That was the first time I had moved out of my mother's house and gone to a different city. And to be left alone was shocking in itself but when I realized I have to manage a household and my husband didn't give me any money, I cried and cried because I did not know what to do in such scenario. Thankfully other wives living there came to my rescue and they helped me understanding what all needs to be done, from where will I get grocery and stuff. They reported to the CO, husband was asked to send money immediately.”*

*“Neighbours, friends help each other. It gets managed. If we are good, we will find someone or the other. If not this, next one, there would be someone that we gel with and help each other. We do not mingle with the new ones; we have others of our own.”*

*“Fauj ki zindagi bahut achi hai aise. Aisa kuch upar niche hota hai tab aisa lagta hai, jana to sabko hi hai, dar lagta hai thoda par hum bhi unki tarah ho jate hai, "jo hoga dekha jayega". When parliament was attacked, that time everyone left, but then also we all were together. Because we were together, we don't feel that stressed. We have good friends, help each other. Those who live in village they are more stressed, we are not.”*

*“Yes of course. Living with husband during peace posting there is no fixed time for food and water, especially in parties and late-night dinner. Whole lifestyle gets disturbed and it has a bad effect on the children as well.”*

*“Well, I am fine. My kids are now grown up, it’s time for them to leave the nest. With the husband on field posting I feel lonely, I cry and get all sorts of weird thoughts in my head. After a lot of pestering from my husband I have now finally joined class to learn singing, go for aerobics class and cycle regularly. These things are now helping.”*

### **Health.**

Health is a major concern for army spouses as they cannot afford to fall sick. If they do, their household gets neglected and there is no one to take care of their children. However, the stressors that they go through impact their health and 80 percent of army spouses feel so. Apart from this, they worry about health of their children (88 percent) and husband (85 percent). Verbatim comments elaborating on this aspect are shared below.

*“I am an asthma patient so when my husband will get a posting at a cold place, he won't take me with him because I need a doctor and medicines. So, he would leave me at in-laws or with brother-in-law, so never felt stressed or affecting me in any manner. I had to think about myself, I am liking it here in Poona, it suits my health.”*

*“Zyaada sochti hu to sar mein dard hota hai, baki sab thik hai. Puja late hoti hai to nashta late hota hai, fir ulti aati hai - bache hospital le jate hai drip chadti hai aur mein thik ho jati hu. How many times this happens? (kids kept laughing). Zyaada nai, kabhi kabhi. I eat one roti at dinner, my hair has started falling. Saara ghar akele shift kiya,*

*wo hote to acha tha. Haan bachon ne madad to ki. Pura ghar shift karna aur baxe bhar ke is chote karmre mein basana mushkil hai. Bataya thodi tha ki itna chota kamra hai. Haan thakan to hoti hai ab itna kaam karenge to. Nai yaad nai aati bas madad karo aur fir jao.” (When I think a lot, I get headaches, everything else is ok. If I do prayers late, then breakfast gets delayed and I vomit. Children take me to hospital and I am put on IV. How many times this happens? (kids kept laughing). Not often, sometimes. I eat one roti at dinner, my hair has started falling. I shifted the whole house alone; it would have been helpful if husband was around. Yes, children helped. Whole house to be packed and shifting to this small house is difficult. Husband didn't even share that this was this small. Yes, I do get tired if there is so much of work. No, I do not miss him, just help me out and then leave.*

*“I had a baby who died or was born dead then second one died after 12 days then I had the daughter then a miscarriage and then one miscarriage and then son. Ab ye beta ka do saal barbad ho gaya padhayi ka.”*

*“During Kargil War, phone used to come after a month or in 20 days but invariably every alternate day calls from friends and relatives will come to inquire. Media had brought the war into everyone's living room. Parents and in-laws were worried all the time. I would make up stories when they would come back from market that the call came and he is fine. This made the parents and in-laws busy responding to the countless phone calls and sharing that their son/son-in-law was safe. I think I was able to do that as I was young, I am more worried now.”*

### **Sacrificing career.**

Army spouses need to give priority to education of children, and rank and responsibilities of the husband. The implication is that if they are able to manage their time doing a job in-between this, they may. Fifty-five percent of army spouses shared that they have been urged to prioritize family. However, sixty percent women shared that they did not want to have a career and are happy taking care of children. Some of their views are shared below.

*“I left my job. I took a call on the name of child, being a mother, wife to leave. I was frustrated and thought of taking up my resettlement course. Worked hard to clear the entrance of IIM Ahmedabad and pleaded my family to come and stay with my daughter for my career sake. Because I was feeling potential is getting wasted, I am wasting my life babysitting. I did the course and got 4 good lucrative offers. But as it has been never easy, I wasn't able to make a choice because I was not able to communicate with my husband and make a mutual decision. This decision was to be taken mutually but I was not getting time to do that. I needed help from my husband. I did not have a support system to how to I relocate alone to a place I just know a name of. I was not able to talk to him because network was the issue. Nobody will understand my sacrifices down the lane. it's not about the money, I have the calibre. I am so sorry for getting emotional.”*

*“I didn't make my career, I regret it.”*

*“There is no need to do a job. Never felt like doing a job. I have studied till 12th. In Orissa. When I was posted in Secunderabad, took Hindi lessons for 6 months to be comfortable.”*

*“I do parlour work from home. I do beauty parlour work since 8 years. There is no fixed time for work. Go to houses of whoever calls me. Have been earning like this since many years.”*

### **Finances.**

Finances are a concern for one and all. However, this area does not come up in primary issues that cause stress in an army spouse. This is because basic necessities of shelter, safety, food, clothing are taken care. One participant shared about a savings scheme run by the army.

*“Earlier had a lot of monetary issues. we would have to manage with 1 packet of refined oil for a month. His salary was low. So, after everything, there was no savings. when I got married, he was getting about 1500-2000 and 1000 is what reached my Mother in law's hand.”*

*“Husband decision lete hai. Wo zabardasti leke dete hai. Washing machine abhi nai kharid ke deke gaye. Ho jata hai, Madam. Thoda thoda sab mein se bachate chalte hai. Padhayi likhayi mein jitna nikalna hai utna nikalna hi hai...50%. 30% khana, ghar kharch aur 20% bacha le lete hai. Kharch karna hai to pura kharch kar sakti hu par aage ka soch ke chalna hai. Bas ho jata hai...washing machine kharab ho gayi thi.... jarurat hi ho gayi na.”* (Husband takes decisions. He buys stuff for me forcefully. He bought me a new machine this time. It happens, Madam. Save a bit in everything. Education cannot be compromised so 50 percent, 30 percent in food, household expenses and I save 20 percent. If we want to spend it can be spent completely but we

*have to think of the future and save. It happens, washing machine was not functional anymore so it became a need-based expense).*

*“When apples are expensive, you don’t need to eat them. Have the other cheaper fruits as per season. Look at people less fortunate than you. We have been given a lot. We have had better childhoods.”*

### **Relocation.**

Shifting residence alone is a major concern area for 85 percent of army spouses. They would rather have their husband with them to help with moving to a new location, but most times this is not possible. Apart from setting up home in a new location, the worry and concern is also about which location the next posting is in. If it is a small place the children will not have good education facility and hence, they might have to decide to stay where they are. These and many such decisions are dependent on knowing where they are going next and the information is not available beforehand to plan. This creates undue stress for both the spouses. Some of the verbatim comments related to this theme are shared below.

*“There is so much stress when you are between postings. Because that's the time you are not certain which location you will be going to and how will you plan ahead and especially now lot of younger generations are working and they are not easy...it's not easy to move and re-establish yourself in some way. So those kinds of decision making...the ideas you have, should you continue with your career or should you join your husband and if you are joining, where, what kind of impact it will have. Those kind of things.... I think we have only had that experience only once and it helped because he*

*was going to a non-family station so we could easily make that decision. But in future I know it will be difficult. You can't....so I think circumstances help you arrive at your decision eventually. Definitely, I mean if you don't know what you are going to be doing next.... I mean its small things also like...you know you have to vacate your house; you have to resettle. So, these things would create...I won't say absolute sleepless nights. Sleepless nights would be when he is deployed somewhere.... which you don't know, you know how it will be. But yeah stress is definitely there.”*

*“Agla kahan posting hoga pata nai, beta 9th mein hai, chote jagah ho gaya posting to kaise jayenge, padhayi barbad ho jayegi. Yahan to angrezi medium mein pad raha hai. School ka admission ke bahut chakkar lagte hai, saal ke bich mein shift karna pade to bahut taklif hoti hai” (Where will the next posting be, we don't know. Son is in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and if we go to a small place, then how will we go, his studies will get impacted. Here he goes to English medium school. If we go in between academic year, it takes many visits to convince the principal to get admission, it is frustrating).*

## **Sexual Needs**

### **Replacement.**

Forty-five percent army spouses replacing sexual needs with responsibilities or prayers. They know that there is no point in getting bothered by it and they are assured that the husband is going to come on holidays, which will be like a period of honeymoon. Some of their expressions are shared below.

*“Bhagwan mein dhyaan lagati hu aur bachon ka khayal rakhte hai. Hum sab milke bhi yahi baat karte hai - jab wah aate hai to thik warna is sab mein hamara dhyaan nai*

*jata.” (I focus my attention on God and taking care of children. We all talk about this too that when husband comes then its ok but otherwise our mind doesn’t wander in the direction of sex).*

*“Nai aisa sab dimag mein nai aata, kam itna hota hai ki is sab ke bare mein sochne ka time hi nai milta. (Children are small.)” (No, nothing like this comes in the mind, work is too much to get time for this).*

*“I concentrate on God and take care of children when he is not around. Sexual needs are not thought of then.”*

### **Repression.**

Eighty-five percent of army spouses put sex on the backburner. They say that if it is not available, they would rather push it aside and concentrate on doing what they are supposed to be doing. They mentioned that taking care of everything alone does not leave them with adequate time and space to think about their own sexual needs. Examples from the verbatim data are shared below.

*A participant when asked about her sexual needs, “Pyaar bhi bahut hai, kabhi bhi apni biwi ko wo aise nai bolte....koi kaam bhi ho to bolte hai hum karenge, chalo ghumne. Hum kar lenge, saath mein aa jate hai karne. Aisa kabhi dhyaan hi nai jata, pehle to saath mein hi nai rahe. Bachon ke piche jyaada dhyaan jata. We ladies talk about this all the time that how we just let him be less priority now and children have taken over as priority.”*



*“Fauji wife ko pata hai jeevan kaisa hai to ye sab kabhi khayal nai aata.” (An army wife knows how the life is, these things never come to mind).*

*“We don’t feel the need for sex. We know it’s not available and we are too busy to even think about all this stuff. When he comes for holidays, it’s like honeymoon again. We have a number of honeymoons.”*

### **Positive Thinking.**

Trying to have an attitude to see positives in a stressful or crisis situation. Having a perspective to move beyond and attend to what needs to be done. Deferring the emotional load until the husband comes home on holidays is what these army spouses appeared to have become used to.

*“No time really for sex. My husband still romances like we are newlyweds, but I have to remind him that there are children around. He jokes that lets leave the children with in-laws and we should go to his posting together. I say I can’t leave my kids like that. Ye bolte the, nai aata chuti pe to thik tha, makan bhi itna chota tha. Less days together, but a lot of love from him.”*

*“Sex was different, awkward earlier, now in fact I enjoy it more, because one is confident of oneself and one’s body.”*

### **Identity**

Army spouses derive their identity largely from their husbands. Forty-five percent

expressed that *“I like to be known by my husband’s name”*. They also focus on the social status that they obtain in the role of an army spouse.

*“Madam bolte hai, acha lagta hai.” (I am referred to as Madam, I like it).*

*“Initially I was Mrs. XYZ but it’s up to you how you want to live. I worked in private schools more, out of the army set up, I had my own identity.”*

*“There is a set trend in army to be identified with husband’s name, I am happy with it.”*

*“Lack of communication affected a lot. He was in high altitude area. One day at a time, elephant in small bites. I cannot have a morose face in front of my parents or daughter.”*

This area focuses on the responses from 75 percent of army spouses mentioning that the husband’s duty is to protect the border and their duty is to take care of the home front. This is so deeply ingrained that mothers experience guilt if they are not able to manage children well. Another aspect is accepting the fact that they have to live alone most of their life. Below are some of the verbatim examples from the data.

*“During Kargil, each day passed with lots of tension and watching news elevated that pain and concern. As the day ended you think, no news is good news.”*

*“Ye fauji hai, hamara kam hai bachon ka khayal rakhna, nai rakha to aa ke puchengein. Hamein apna duty karna hai bas.” (My husband is an army officer, our work is to take care of children, if I do not take care properly my husband will question me. We have to do our duty, that’s it).*

*“I have habit of writing a diary since 10th grade, I think that helps me reflect and get back charged.”*

*“Take things as they come.”*

*“Hum yahaan bachon ka khayal rakhne ke liye hai, hamari duty hai ki wo pad likh lein” (We are here to take care of children, our duty is that they get educated).*

## **Resilience**

### **Trauma.**

Army spouses tend to have a lot of sleep issues during deployment as the stressors at that time are many, starting from husbands’ safety to education of children, to running a household and managing the health of old parents/parents-in-law. Seventy-four percent of army spouses have shared that their sleep gets impacted and they are unable to sleep at night.

*“I get restless. I get worried. I am not able to sleep. Don't feel like eating, I just keep thinking about him.”*

*“It feels as if I want to leave everything and run away. But can't do that I have to handle everything.”*

*“Bada beta kam akal ka hai aur chota beta sunta nai hai, aur pati nai hai mere saath. Kaise sambhalu pata nai chalta.” (Elder son is mentally challenged and the younger one doesn't listen, and my husband is not with me. I don't know how to handle them).*

*“I am scared, not able to sleep. I have headache.”*

*“Pehli baar alag rahe. Hamesha saath rehte the. (First time my husband is living separate from me. We have always lived together). I had uterine cyst which had to be operated. Son suffered from Pinosines. Called husband for that. Son was on bed for 3 months; he was preparing for IIT for 3 years and did not get it. He told me, "Ma ab mein IITian nai ban sakta hu", I was really stressed that time. I met with an accident right before 10th and 12th grade exams of my children. My husband had to go next day. I had brain injury. Doctors were not leaving me, I had to go because next day was exam of children. I forced doctor to leave me on my promise that my house is near I will come back if there is anything wrong happening with me. My husband was also not ready to sign that document, I did it. My husband said I will not go, I told him if you don't go now, how will I attend Jhanoyi next month. My husband said, apni halat nai dekh rahi, gaon jane ki padi hai ise. All this took a month to be okay. These two incidents were very troublesome but otherwise my life has been good. If I become weak what will happen of my children, my husband, courage automatically comes.”*

### **God/Religion.**

Faith in God, the higher power is what helps women pull through the responsibilities and crisis that they manage alone. Seventy percent believe that they have faith in the higher power who takes care of them.

*“When the troubles weigh heavy, I find solace in the fact that the God who is sending troubles our way will also solve it and bless us with ease. That’s my faith.”*

*“You plan and God gets funny.”*

*“Worrying is waste of time, God shows the way out.”*

*“Sab apne aap thik ho jata hai” (Everything gets better on its own).*

### **Courage.**

Courage comes very naturally and army spouses show considerable resilience. Fifty percent said that they might not be ready for the “curve balls of life” when they started an army life, but now they find themselves capable of handling anything and are oriented to finding solutions. Some of the verbatim examples elaborating on the same are shared below.

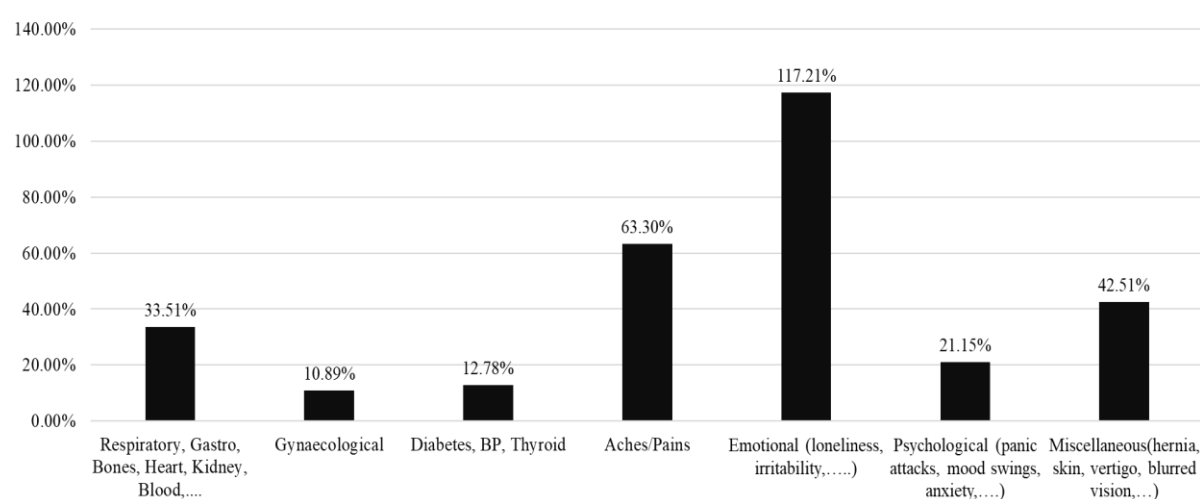
*“I was in my 9<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy and was alone. My mother had come to take care of me and my mother’s bleeding won’t stop. Carried her on shoulder, didn’t realise my water broke and was 4 inch open. All this was shocking. Doctor said mother had to be operated. No one was there; father was in Canada with brother. Whom to call and ask, didn’t know what decision to take, called up Mama in America he said I’m coming and next day everyone came to help. After that I went to my Gynaec and said I feel delivery ho jayegi. Nobody told me about enema to be given during pregnancy, no one talked about such stuff. I delivered a boy and called up my father saying mere ghar bacha hua hai, ladka hua hai, aap log aa jaoge? Aur Husband ko bhi bata dena ladka hua hai.”*

*“I was pregnant during Kargil war and fell down from stairs. I was living in SF quarters. Neighbour took me to MH and my left side was paralysed. I came back home and did not tell anyone about it, if I told my husband it would impact his concentration there and that was riskier. During last days had informed my family and then they took care.”*

*“During Kargil War, phone used to come after a month or in 20 days but invariably every alternate day calls from friends and relatives will come to inquire. Media had brought the war into everyone’s living room. Parents and in-laws were worried all the time. I would make up stories when they would come back from market that the call came and he is fine. This made the parents and in-laws busy responding to the countless phone calls and sharing that their son/son-in-law was safe. I think I was able to do that as I was young, I am more worried now.”*

## Physical and Psychological Health

Apart from the major stressors and concerns in the life of army spouses the questionnaire inquired about the physical and psychological health of the participants using open-ended questions. CHIPS was used during the semi-structured interviews to get information on the physical and psychological health. These results are presented in graphical form in Figure 8.

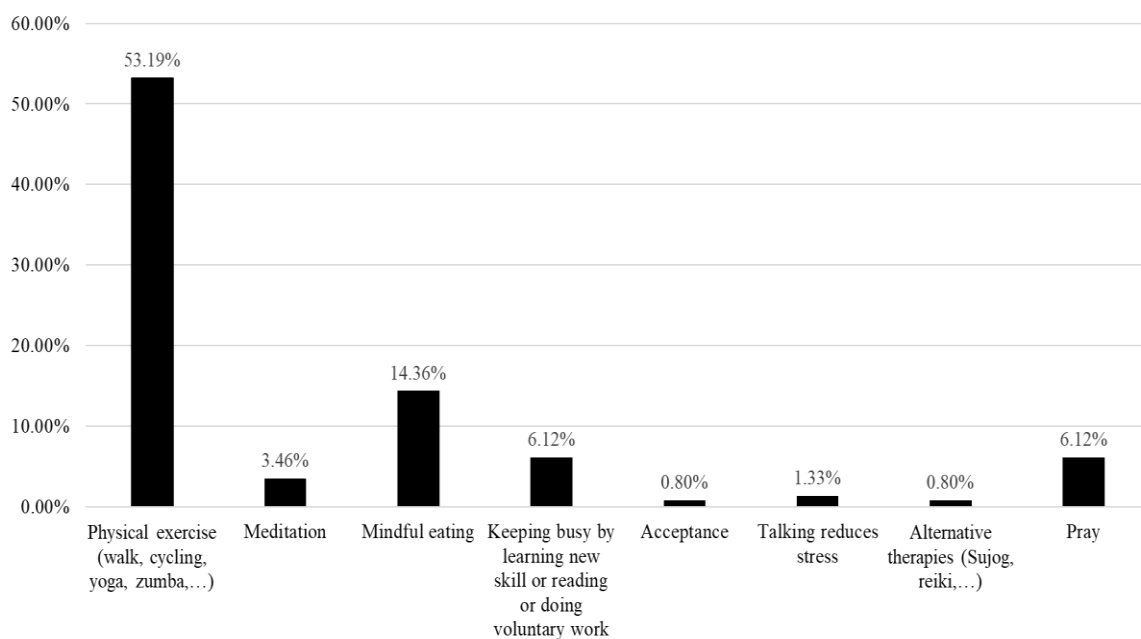


**Figure 8.** Ailments experienced by army spouses

The army spouses reported experiencing certain health problems which was self-reported by them. The following health problems were mentioned: respiratory problems, gastro, bones combined to form 33.51 percent of the participants, gynaecological problems were 10.89 percent, diabetes, BP, thyroid combined amounts to 12.78 percent, aches/pains 63.30 percent, emotional problems take up the highest number of problem faced at 117.21 percent, psychological problems were 21.15 percent, and miscellaneous total to 258.85 percent.

### **Actions to be healthy**

In the questionnaire, one open-ended question asked the spouses what they do to remain healthy. The results of the same are presented in a graphical format in Figure 9.



*Figure 9. Actions taken to be healthy*

The results indicate that 53.19 percent army spouses do some kind of physical activity like walking, aerobics, cycling, Zumba, yoga, etc., 3.46 percent meditate, 14.36 percent army spouses watch what they are eating, 6.12 percent pray, 6.12 percent try and keep themselves busy by joining some classes or reading or doing some work, 1.33 percent talk and share what they are feeling to reduce stress, 0.8 percent army spouses use alternative therapies, and have accepted their situation. This indicates that army spouses are taking actions to take care of themselves using various modalities.