

Challenges Military Couples Face in Raising Their Children

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ABSTRACT

Since its inception, Bangladesh Army has undergone major transformations to keep pace with the modern armies of the world. Out of many changes, induction of female officers (FO) is one. FO were introduced in the army in 2001. So far, 23 long courses with female intake have already passed out from Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA). Apart from the professional changes, induction of female officers in the army has brought social changes as well. For social security and better mutual understanding, most of the FO are married to male officers (MO). As a result, number of military couples is increasing in Bangladesh Army. Again, with the induction of female soldiers in the army, marriage between male and female soldiers will also begin.

Keywords: Child Care, Child Development, Impact, Military

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I. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Many of the military couples have children of different ages. From birth to adolescence, various developments take place in a child. Those developments can be physical, intellectual, social, emotional, educational, and moral. Development of a child mostly depends on the parent, especially the mother. It is evident that tender care of a mother prepares a child for its future. Besides, a father also has a role to play in this regard. But in the case of the military couples, for various reasons, it is difficult for the parents to give due attention to the child development. Bangladesh Army is well known for its professional members. A professional officer, either male or female, is committed to the service, to the organization, and to the nation. These commitments demand maximum presence of the officers in units

and other outfits of the organization. This is especially applicable for mid-level officers. Mid-level officers need to take care of their under commands. Besides, officers need to build their career with professional courses and other training curricula. These commitments generally distance the officers from their children. On the other hand, there is no existing facility available in Bangladesh Army to take care of the children of military couples. As a result, most of the children of military couples are raised by maids or near relatives once the parents are away. Thereby, the children of military couples are deprived from tender care of their parents, and they are not being developed the way they are supposed to be. This situation is affecting not only the children but also the parents. Therefore, there is a need to identify what are the challenges military couples are facing while serving in Bangladesh Army with respect to child care and how these challenges are affecting the child development.

INTRODUCTION

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Bangladesh Army is well known for its professional members. A professional officer, either male or female, is committed to the service, to the organization, and to the nation. These commitments demand maximum presence of the officers in units and other outfits of the organization. This is especially applicable for mid-level officers. Mid-level officers need to take care of their under commands. Besides, officers need to build their career with professional courses and other training curricula (Zaman et al., 2016). These commitments generally distance the officers from their children. On the other hand, there is no existing facility available in Bangladesh Army to take care of the children of military couples. As a result, most of the children of military couples are raised by maids or near relatives once the parents are away. Thereby, the children of military couples are deprived from tender care of their parents, and they are not being developed the way they are supposed to be. This situation is affecting not only the children but also the parents. Therefore, there is a need to identify what are the challenges military couples are facing while serving in Bangladesh Army with respect to child care and how these challenges are affecting the child development.

Research Questions

- ✓ Primary Question. Are the challenges which military couples face while serving in Bangladesh Army affecting the development of their children?

Secondary Questions

- ✓ What are the challenges military couples faces while serving in Bangladesh Army with respect to child care?
- ✓ What are the impacts of those existing challenges on the development of the children of military couples?
- ✓ How those impacts on the child development can be reduced?
- ✓ Definitions
- ✓ Few definitions related with the research are given below:
- ✓ Child. Generally the word 'child' refers to the primary stage of human life just after the birth. However, in this research, the word 'child' will refer to any human being of less than 5 years who's both the parents are working in Bangladesh Army.
- ✓ Child Development. Cooper, Dehart and Sroufe (1996, p 06) explained that "development involves age-related, qualitative changes and behavioral reorganizations that are orderly, cumulative, and directional" (taken from Gottlieb, 1991; Walters and Srouf, 1983). The website Wikipedia (n.d.) referred child development as the biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in human beings between birth and the end of adolescence, as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy.
- ✓ Military Couple. For this research the word 'military couple' will mean a male and female officer of Bangladesh Army, married to each other. For limiting the scope, the word will mean only the officers of long courses.

- ✓ Cognitive Development. Cognitive development of the children refers to the intellectual development. It covers the development of child's intelligence, thinking process, power of expression, language, and other psychological skills. Details will be covered in Chapter III.
- ✓ Social and Emotional Development. From the childhood, children learn to interact with other people, exchanging ideas, and expressing feelings. By doing so, they develop relationship with the people of their surroundings. As the children grow older, their relationship arena also increases. This is known as social development. Emotional development deals with the feelings of the children in terms of joy, sorrow, happiness, sadness, anger, jealousy, selfishness, and so on and so forth, Detail will be covered in Chapter III.
- ✓ Physical Development. Physical development of the children refers to the growth of various internal and external parts of the body. It is related with the age of the children and nutrition they take.
- ✓ Motor Skill. Motor skill is the skill of the children by which they can move their body parts. With the age and learning from the surrounding, children develop motor skill and gradually learn to use their arms, legs, fingers and other parts. Walking can be referred as a major motor skill of the children.

Limitations and Assumptions

Any research conducted on the children requires close observation of the said group. But due to time constraint, the researcher could not do the same. Rather, responses of the parents were taken to understand the development process of the children. Most of the interviewees are not military couples in personal life. But their opinions were valuable for the findings of the research. Primary source of data was limited due to the smaller size of target group. Due to

the same reason, only one Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was carried out.

II. Review of the Literature

- ✓ List of Literature Consulted. No research work or publication or books could be found on the relationship between challenges of military service and child development of military couples of Bangladesh Army (Plateau & Bhuiyan, 2017). However, following literature were consulted which were related with child development, influence of parents on child, employment of female officers, and child care program.
- ✓ Cooper, R., Dehart, G., Sroufe, L. (1996). *Child Development-Its Nature and Course*. New York. Mcgraw-Hill Inc.
- ✓ Conger, J., Kagan, J., Mussen, P. (1974). *Child development and Personality*. New York. Harper and Row Publishers.
- ✓ Hassan, A. (2006). A Research conducted on 'Professional Performance of Female Officers in Bangladesh Army and Their Suitable Employment', Mirpur.
- ✓ Ashraf, A. (2009). A Research conducted on 'Efficiency and Employment of Female Officers to Face the Challenging Tasks of Army', Mirpur.
- ✓ Powers, R. (n.d.). *Military Family Care Plan*. Retrieved 02 July 2014 from http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/genfamily/a/family_care.html.
- ✓ Wilson, K. (n.d.). *Child Care Programs for Military Families*. Retrieved 02 July 2014 from <http://militaryfamily.about.com/od/military-child-care/a/Child-Care-Programs-For-Military-Families.html>.
- ✓ Jabbe, A., Mallika, A., Rahman W. (2011). A Research conducted on 'Customer Attitude toward Day Care Center and Relational Effect of Children Age', Bangladesh. Retrieved July 02, 2014 from <http://www.bdresearchpublications.com/admin/journal/upload/09233/09233.pdf>.

- ✓ Findings from the Literature. Findings related to the research topic are appended below:
- ✓ Cooper, Dehart, Sroufe (1996) explained what child development entails. They vividly explained the effects of immediate environment on the child development. They also explained the importance of early care and effect of Day Care Centres (DCC). With the help of United States (US) Bureau Census, 1994, they showed the percentage of alternative caregiver and children at child care centre. But, in case of Bangladesh Army, there is no existing facility of DCC. Therefore, for military couples of Bangladesh Army, care by grandparents or maid servant remains as alternative .
- ✓ Conger, Kagan, Mussen (1974) have given special emphasis on the social factors in infant development. They described the concept and definition of attachment with examples of various researches. One important finding of their research was the children who are raised directly by their mother show more social responsiveness. On the other hand, inadequate and inconsistent care at the early childhood may cause unusual sequence of behavior. In case of Bangladesh Army, as children are mostly raised by grandparents/ non-relative care giver, there may be negative impacts on the children.
- ✓ Hassan (2006) showed marriage and parenting as a limitation for female officers in Bangladesh perspective. The researcher highlighted that due to parental problem FO cannot actively participate in all unit activities. But the researcher did not mention about how FO can maintain work-life balance.
- ✓ Ashraf (2009) mentioned child care as a factor influencing the employment of women in the army. With the survey result he explained that child care is a major issue for women especially military women. Though he mentioned that child care is compromised when a lady is serving in military, but he did not give any solution to that problem. As the number of FO is increasing in the army, there should have been some plan from the organization's side to ensure sound child care. No such recommendation was made in that research.
- ✓ Powers (n.d.) described the Family Care Plan of US Army which is applicable for single parents and dual-couple military members. When US Army ordered its members to deploy during Operation Desert Shield, hundreds of single-parents and dual-military couples with children were not ready to go. As a result, Department of Defense published Family Care Plan which has three basic requirements: short-term care provider, long-term care provider, and care provision details. It is evident that, child care is a challenge for the dual-military couples even in US Army.
- ✓ Wilson (n.d.) described the child care programs of US Army. As per the planning of Department of Defense, most of the military installations have at least one DCC for the children. Those provide support to all types of serving parents. But, Bangladesh Army is yet to have any DCC for the serving parents.
- ✓ Abbe, Mallika, Rahman (2011), in their research, showed the current scenario of day care industry in Bangladesh. During the time of research, the total number of government-run DCC was 32; whereas, in Dhaka city there were 12 DCC run by one single Non-government Organization (NGO).

Research Area Available on the Subject

After reviewing the literature, it is clearly evident that there are ample scopes to carry out a research in Bangladesh Army perspective where following issues can be addressed:

- ✓ Are the challenges of military service affecting the development of the children of the military couples?
- ✓ How the problems of parenting can be reduced to make FO more efficient in the service?

- ✓ How the negative impacts of child care by maid servants can be reduced?

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to recommend certain measures which would reduce the negative impacts on the child development of military couples and increase the efficiency of the officers.

Significance of the Research

Number of children of military couples will increase in the army; thereby, this research has significance related to the overall human resource development of the army. Firstly, implementation of the recommendations of this research would bring work-life balance of military couples. Secondly this research would help to increase the efficiency and capability of the children of military couples (Islam Shawon et al., 2018). And implementation of the recommendations of this research would create conducive environment for the military couples in the army which will be beneficial for achieving the organizational goal of Bangladesh Army.

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis. Challenges military couples face while serving in Bangladesh Army are affecting the development of their children.

III. CHALLENGES MILITARY COUPLES FACE IN RAISING THEIR CHILDREN

General

19. Military service is full of challenges. For the military couples, challenges are further more. But all the challenges of the service are not related with child care. Hassan (2006, p.7) mentioned, in his research, that marriage, pregnancy, child and family care are the basic requirement of woman's life. He also

mentioned that with the age and seniority this would have varying degree of impact on service of the female officers. There are few challenges which are directly affecting the child and family care of the military couples. These challenges are likely to have negative impacts on the children and on the effectiveness of the officers. In this chapter, those service challenges which are affecting the development of the children of the military couples will be identified and analysed.

Military Couples of Other Armies

20. Many countries around the world have military couples. Like Bangladesh Army, they are also facing many challenges raising their children. The challenges are mainly related to long deployment, non-availability of child care facility, different place of posting of husband and wife etcetera. With large number of couples, US Army provides various programs for child care. Family Care Plan and Married Army Couples Program are few of those programs. They also have Child Care Centre almost in all the bases (Minor, 2014). Military couples of Indian Army face the same challenges like other armies. But Indian Army gives priority to the service before the personal life (Parti, 2014). In Nigerian Army, scenario is different where number of military couples is very less. Most of the FO are married to civilian males. But, in all the major garrisons they have facility of DCC for the working parents (Erhabor, 2014).

Challenges Faced by Military Couples in Bangladesh Army

21. Different Place of Posting for Husband and Wife. Hussain (2014) opined that biggest challenge for a military couple is different place of posting for husband and wife. Once husband and wife are posted to different station, the child has to stay with either father or mother. Mostly, mothers are the primary caregiver. Therefore, one parent is always away from the child. As a result, the child is always deprived from the care of that parent. Table 1 shows state of FO and military couples in Bangladesh Army. Most of the respondents (FO-88%; MO-96%) also strongly agreed

that different place of posting for husband and wife is a major challenge for the military couples (Figure 2 and 3).

TABLE 1 : STATE OF FO AND MILITARY COUPLES

Serial	Subject	Number
1.	Number of FO	219
2.	Number of Married FO	139
3.	Number of Military Couples	89
4.	Military Couples Posted in Same Station	55

(Source: Military Secretary’s Branch)

Irregular Leave. Hussain (2014) stated that once husband and wife will be posted in different garrison, they will need more leave of absence to meet their

family. Again, the parent taking care of the child may face lot of difficulties raising the child (M. M. H. Bhuiyan et al., 2021). The child can be sick or the officer may have to go for outdoor exercise. In this type of situation, the spouse staying in other station will need more leave from the place of duty. There can be other special requirements as well. But a responsible officer may not ask for leave at a frequent interval. As a result, the child will not get the regular company of the parent who is posted in different station. Though it will not have direct effect on the child, but irregular leave is a challenge for couples. Figure 3 and 4 illustrate the opinion of the officers where 92% of FO and 91% of MO expressed that irregular leave is a challenge for the couples.

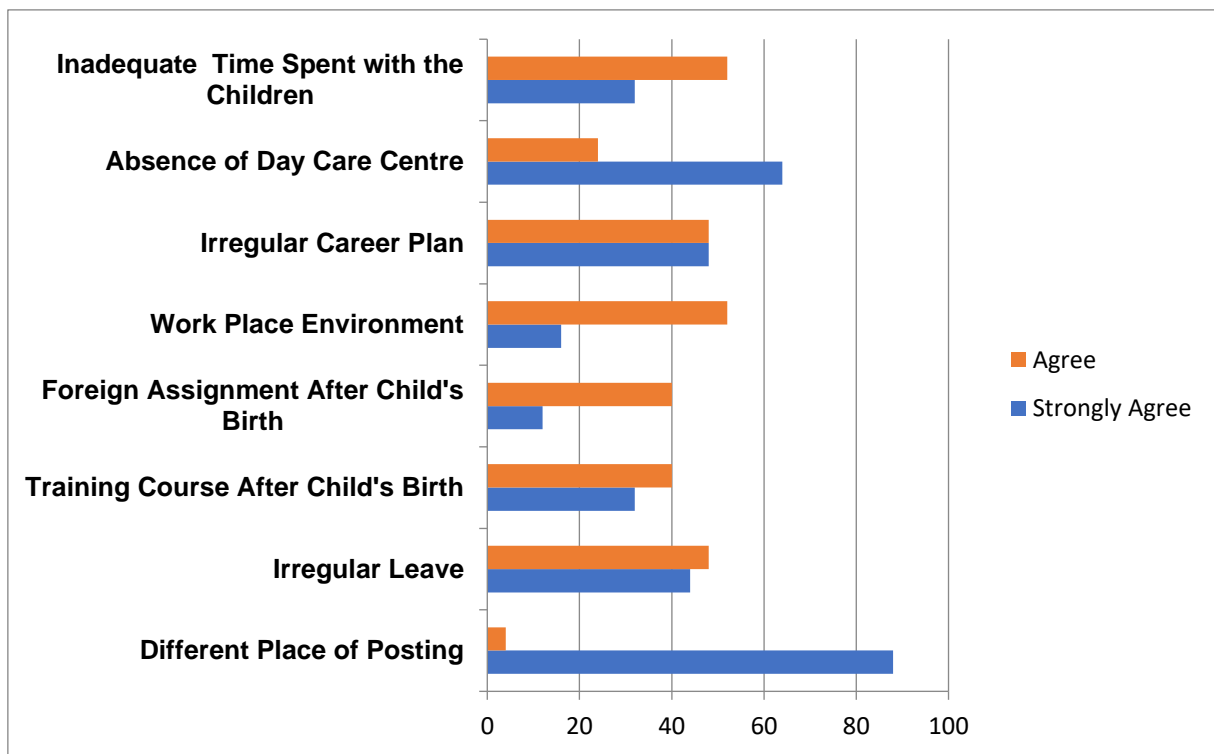
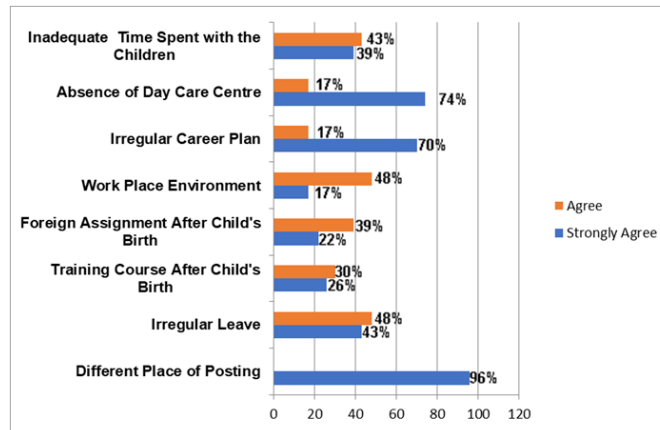


FIGURE 2 : CHALLENGES MILITARY COUPLES FACE- FEMALE RESPONSE

(Source: Survey)

Mother Attending Training Course after Child’s Birth. Figure 4 displays the percentage of FO attended training course after child’s birth. Most of the training courses of Bangladesh Army are of longer duration (more than 3 months). If the mother is away from the child for such a long duration, the child is deprived from motherly care for that period. Again, in most of the courses, leave is not allowed (M. H. Bhuiyan & Faisal, 2021). Though, presently all the training schools of Bangladesh Army provide facilities to FO to attend course with child. But the sore problem remains; who is going to take care of the child once the officer is in class or in exercise. Therefore, to avail that facility, the officer should be accompanied by her mother or maid servant. Hence, many

FO do not avail that facility. Thereby, absence of mother during that period may affect the development of the child.



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FIGURE 3: CHALLENGES MILITARY COUPLES FACE- MALE RESPONSE
(Source: Survey)

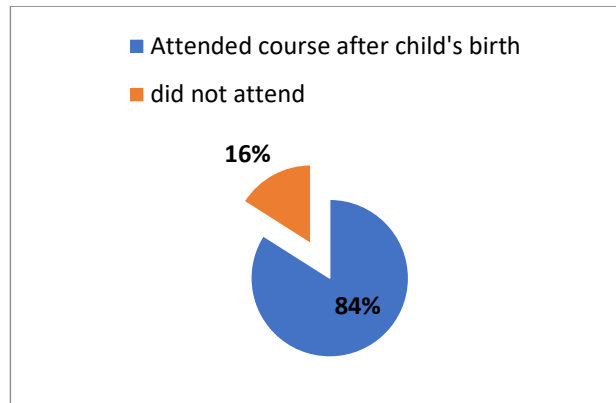


FIGURE 4: STATE OF FO ATTENDED TRAINING COURSES AFTER CHILD'S BIRTH

(Source: Survey)

Foreign Employment of Mother after Child's Birth. Habib (2014) opined that staying in mission is a very challenging task for a mother. During that time, the child is totally deprived from mother's care. An officer of Bangladesh Army has to be deployed in United Nations (UN) Mission around the globe. Again, there are opportunities of foreign courses as well. As per the exiting policy of Bangladesh Army, a FO will not be selected for mission up to two years after the child's birth (M. H. Bhuiyan & Faisal, 2020). Even if she wants, she can extend that period for more two years. But one has to be deployed in mission as it is considered as operational deployment. Childhood is a crucial time of life. Within that crucial period, the child is going to miss the company of the mother which is going to have a serious effect on the child. The problem will be multiplied when both husband and wife are deployed in foreign soil at the same time.

Less Flexible Work Place Environment. Lewis (n.d.) referred workplace flexibility as the ability of employees to deviate from a rigid work schedule in the office, in order to improve their work-life balance and meet the needs of their family and personal life. In the units of Bangladesh Army, there is no facility available by which FO can keep their infants with them. Again, the environment of the office does not provide enough flexibility to FO. On the other hand, there is peer-pressure as well. An officer being the leader of men cannot concentrate on the child during the office time. Though, Siddique, (2014) expressed that Bangladesh Army provides flexible work place environment than other organizations of Bangladesh. But the respondents opined in different way (Figure 2 and 3).

Irregular Career Plan for the FO. “Naturally, in the society of Bangladesh, wives take more responsibility for the family, child care and parenting” (Siddique, 2014). As per Sharafat (2014), “motherhood gives fulfillment to a lady’s life”. FO also plan their family life, marriage and motherhood from very beginning of their career (FGD, Annex P). Sometime irregular career plan like sudden selection for course or posting creates a great challenge for family planning.

Absence of Day Care Centre. Presently Bangladesh Army does not have any DCC for the working parents. Bangladesh Navy has two DCCs: one is in Dhaka and other one is in Chittagong. Jabbe, Mallika, and Rahman (2011, p. 1) expressed that it becomes very harrowing for the working mothers of young children to be departed from their child since they become anxious about child care in absence of them. Due to non-availability of DCC, military couples have to depend on the alternative caregiver, mostly maid servants. Figure 5 displays the state of alternative caregivers as per the response of FO.

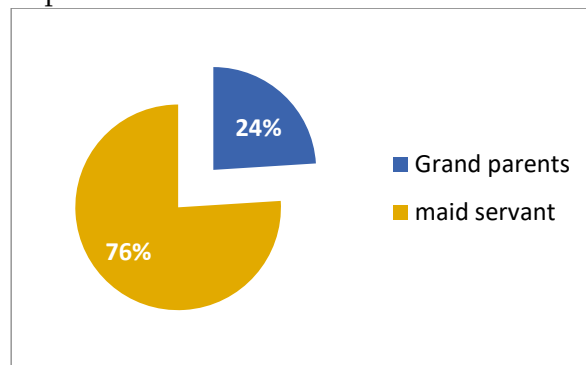


FIGURE 5: STATE OF ALTERNATIVE CAREGIVER

(Source: Survey)

28. Inadequate Time Spent with the Child for Official Commitment. “Military life is a busy and committed life... but the main challenge is the time constraint. Most of the couples cannot spend adequate time with their children (Hossain, 2014)”. Daily schedule of military service is different from other civil services. An officer remains busy almost throughout the day. Hence, an officer cannot spend adequate time with the child. As a result, the child is spending more time with alternative caregiver or television. “When parents cannot spend adequate time with the child, the child will grow sense of deprivation ... child will feel lonely and insecure (Haque, 2014)”. Figure 6 shows average time an officer can spend with his/her child. Most of the couples (FO- 51%; MO-43%) also agreed that busy schedule throughout the day is a great challenge for them to raise their child (Figure 2 and 3).

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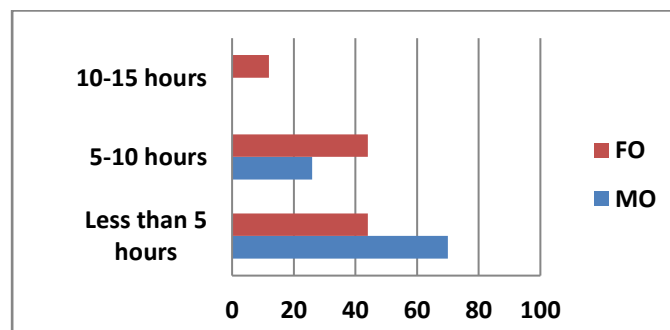


FIGURE 6: AVERAGE TIME SPENT WITH THE CHILDREN

(Source: Survey)

29. Analysis of the Chapter. “Positive and happy childhood develops self-esteem in a child (Haque, 2014)”. Childhood is the most important period of human life. Childhood builds the pillar for the future. Children learn very quickly from the environment and surrounding. Every day is a learning session for the children. During this period, children need tender care and guidance from the parents. But for the military couples, due to the challenges of the service, it becomes difficult to provide continuous guidance to the children. “During the process of development, a child faces many challenges. Every day he learns new lessons and reality of life. During this process if the child does not get the parents beside, he feels insecure and anxious (Hossain, 2014)”. All the challenges discussed in this chapter will not have same effect on the children. From the discussion, it can be said that though there are various dimensions of the challenges, the prime concern remains mainly in three areas. Firstly, posting of husband and wife in different station. This will not only affect the development of the children but also the efficiency of the couples. The next challenge is absence of day care facility in Bangladesh Army. The other challenges discussed are more or less related with the time spent by the military couples with their children (Imam et al., 2021). Therefore, it can be stated that another major challenge is inadequate time spent with the children. All these challenges are likely to have varying degree of impacts on the children.

CHAPTER III: NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

General

30. From the previous chapter, it was found that major challenges military couples face in raising their children are different place of posting of husband and wife, non-availability of DCC, and inadequate time spent with the children. All these challenges will have some immediate effects on the family. These challenges are likely to affect the normal life style and daily routine. As a result, these effects are likely to have many negative impacts on the development process of the children. In this chapter, an effort will be taken by the researcher to identify the immediate effects of those challenges. Then how these challenges are affecting various areas of child development will be analysed to validate the hypothesis.

Immediate Effects

31. Expectation of the Child is Not Met. Every child has some expectation from the parents. Expectations can be in terms of love, affection, company, spending time, sharing feelings and new learning. But all children cannot express those expectations due to their language barrier. Once one parent is away from the child due to service requirement, the child’s expectation is not fully met. As the parent taking care of the child is also serving in the military, he/she cannot fulfill all the expectations of the child. Haque (2014) opined that when both the parents are serving, the expectation of the child is not met. On this issue Hussain (2014) expressed that “once the expectation is not met, children feel insecure. They become anxious and their confidence level goes down. They become cautious and feel inadequate”. 68% of FO and 78% of MO strongly agreed that expectation of their child is not met due to various challenges of the service (Figure 8 and 9).

32. The Child is Spending More Time with Peers/Servant. Most of the military couples depend on maid servant as an alternative caregiver. Spending more time with servant can be detrimental. Children learn from the environment and by following the caregiver. Due to the socio-economic differences and educational background, most of the servants lack in the standard of language, behaviour, and mannerism. Therefore, when the child is spending more time with servant, he will pick up the language and mannerism of the servant. Few other impacts of care by maid servants are shown in Figure 7.

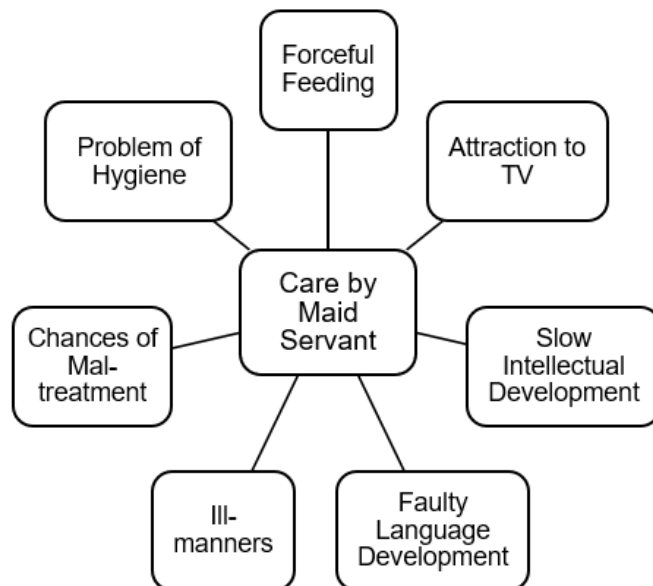


FIGURE 7 : IMPACTS OF CARE BY MAID SERVANTS

(Source: FGD and Expert’s Opinion)

Increased Attraction to Television/Electronic Gadgets. A servant will not understand the negative impacts of television. He/she will try to keep the child engaged with television so that the child remains calm and does not feel the absence of the parents. Even when the child is raised by grandparents/ relatives, the child may develop attraction to television/electronic gadgets. Hussain (2014) opined that once the child will be more attracted to television then his intelligence and emotions will not develop in a sound way. “When children are attracted to electronic gadgets they become self-centred. These children grow very poor sense of socialization. As they are giving concentration to a machine, they don’t grow the sense of sharing and caring. This affects the emotional development as well (Haque, 2014)”. Most of the respondents also agreed that due to their busy schedule, their children are growing more attraction to television/electronic gadgets (Figure 8 and 9).

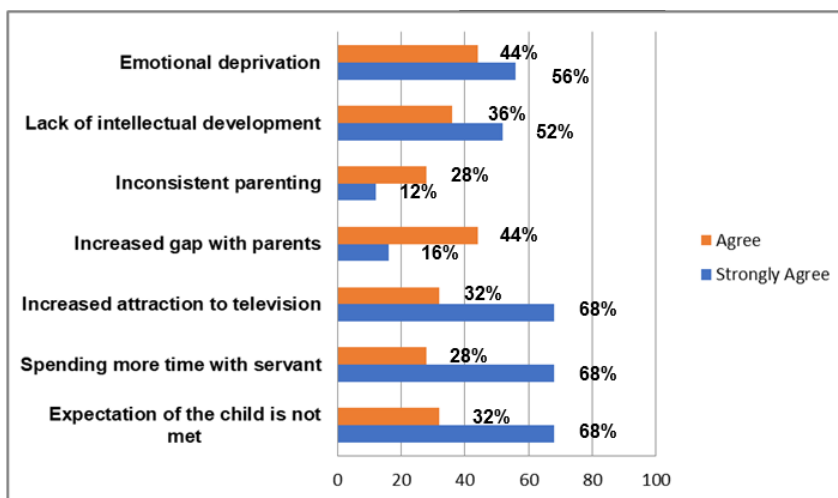
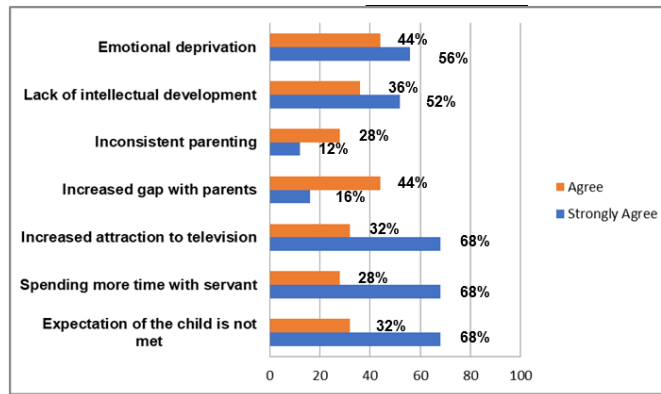
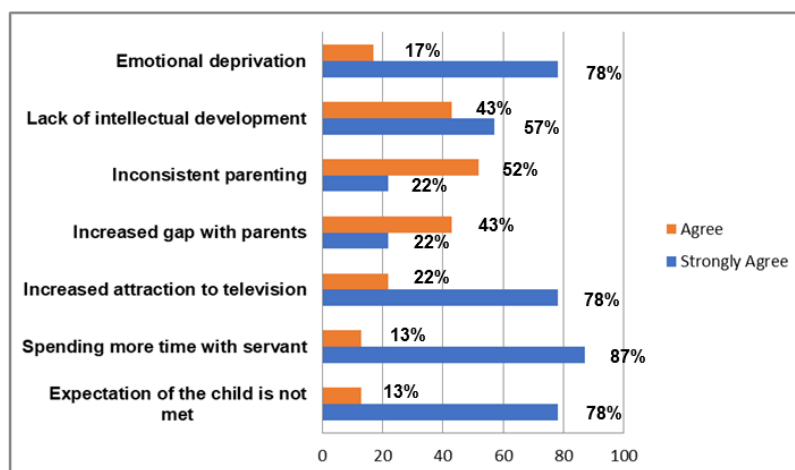


FIGURE 8 : IMMEDIATE EFFECTS-FEMALE RESPONSE



Gap with Parents is Increasing. When a FO is deployed in foreign mission or undergoing any training course, in most of the cases, her child is raised by grandparents (Annex D). Therefore, the child will grow more attachment with the alternative caregiver. Hence, the attachment between the child and the mother will gradually decrease and the gap will increase. Sharafat (2014) stated that there is no alternative of mother’s care for a child. Therefore, this gap with mother can have serious effect on the child. The child will have a sense of deprivation and will grow frustration. 60% of the FO and 65% of the MO opined that the gap with their children is increasing due to the challenges of military service (Figure 8 and 9).

Inconsistent Parenting. Hussain (2014) expressed that inconsistent parenting may occur for not giving adequate time to children. Inconsistent parenting may lead to confusion, fear, anxiety and insecurity within the child. Hatter (n.d.) expressed that “children need to feel trust for parents. This trust provides important security that shapes the child’s behavior and emotions. When a child doesn’t know exactly what will happen in any situation because parents perform inconsistently, the child may feel confusion, anxiety and distrust”. Though 52% of the MO agreed, but, only 28% of FO agreed with the issue.



(Source: Survey)

FIGURE 9: IMMEDIATE EFFECTS- MALE RESPONSE

Lack of Intellectual Development. Haque (2014) expressed that when the child is raised by maid or spend more time with television, the intellectual development of the child will be seriously hampered. The child is likely to be influenced by the intellect of the maid. While spending more time in front of television, the child will lose

the ability to think logically. As the military couple cannot give sufficient time to the child, the child will be deprived from the intelligent interaction with the parents. Majority of the respondents also agreed that intellectual development their children are hampered due to their absence (Figure 8 and 9).

37. Emotional Deprivation of the Child. Absence of parent, especially mother will cause emotional deprivation in the child. A child always needs dedicated care from the caregiver. Once he will see that the mother is staying away or both the parents are leaving for office, the child will grow a sense of insecurity within himself. He will grow frustration and will feel anger inside. It is difficult for a child to express all these feelings. But these feeling will have long term effect in the life. Responses of the respondents are at Figure 8 and 9.

Negative Impacts on Child Development

General. The immediate effects described in the preceding paragraph are going to affect the development process of a child. There will be negative impacts on the children and on the child development process. But all the effects will not have impacts in all the areas of child development. There are specific areas of child development. It is not only that the child grows physically but also he learns talking, social behaviour and controlling emotion. The Goodheart-Willcox website (n.d.) divided child development in three main areas: physical, cognitive and social-emotional development. Hildebrand (1985), in his book, discussed few more areas of child development: physical growth, social, emotional, intelligence and moral. Considering the scope of the research, four areas of child development will be studied to understand the impacts: physical, language, cognitive, and social-emotional. Though language development is a part of cognitive development, but, considering the importance of language development, researcher included that area as well.

Physical Development. Hildebrand (1985, p 121) defined physical development as the baby's increased skill in using various body parts. Goodheart-Willcox (n.d.) defined physical development as "physical body change which is occurred in a relatively stable, predictable sequence". To understand the impact on physical development one indicator was set by the researcher – 'slow/delayed physical development'. Almost all the respondents (FO-100%, MO-87%) opined that their children did not suffer from slow/delayed physical development (Annex D and F).

Language Development. Hildebrand (1985, p 143) opined that "babies around the world develop language in similar ways". Children learn to speak by listening to others. They mainly follow their parents to learn talking and speaking. But once the child is spending most of the days' time with maid servant, he will pick the language the servant speaks. Even the language development of the child may be delayed. Yadav S (2013), in her column, gave example of India, where the children who were raised by maid servant were found speaking in local language. From the respondents it was found that very less number of children(FO-28%, MO-26%) had the problem of delayed language development, whereas the percentage of faulty language development is quite high (FO-40%,MO-52%).

Cognitive Development. Cooper, Dehart and Sroufe (1996, p 15) described cognitive development as the "development of child's memory, thinking, use of language, and other mental skills". Hildebrand (1985, p 23) explained it as the "process of knowing, thinking, understanding, organizing ideas, and problem solving". But due to many reasons, a child can suffer from cognitive disorder. Once the child is away from one parent or

when the child is spending more time with servant, the child may develop cognitive disorders. There can be many symptoms of cognitive disorder. Few were selected to know the feedback from the respondents. The first symptom which was surveyed was the ‘fear of unknown’. Only 24% of the FO and 35% of MO opined that their children suffered from fear of unknown (Annex D and F). ‘Lack of confidence’ was another symptom which was analysed. Children develop confidence directly from the parents. Staying away from the parent can cause lack of confidence in the child. Especially absence of father creates this disorder which has a long term effect in the child’s life. Respondents of both the categories agreed that their children have lacking in confidence (Figure 10). ‘Sense of proportion’ is a very important attribute of a child. A child develops this sense from the environment and surrounding. Parental absence may cause lacking in sense of proportion in a child. In the survey, it was found that, 44% of the FO and 52% of the MO think that their children did not develop adequate sense of proportion (Figure 10).

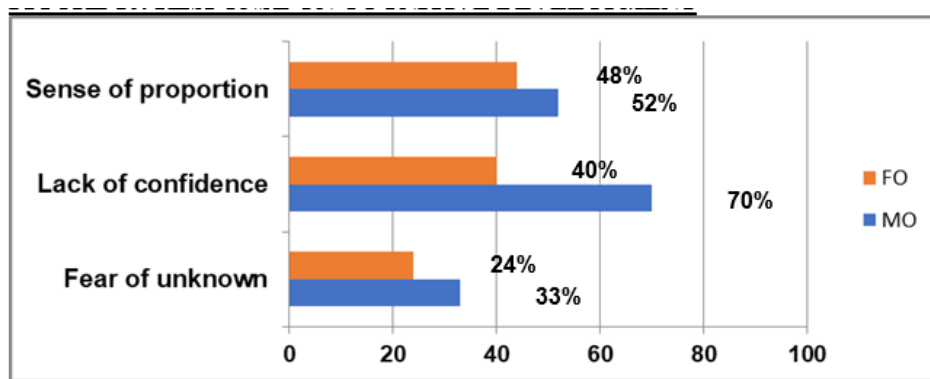


FIGURE 10 : RESPONSE ON COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

(Source: Survey)

Social-Emotional Development. Cooper, Dehart and Sroufe (1996, p 15) defined social-emotional development as the “development of the child’s feelings and relationship with others”. Cooper, Masi, and Vick (2009), in their publication, expressed that “attachment is an important marker for social and emotional development. Poor attachment, especially maternal attachment, can negatively impact children’s social-emotional health and development”. The following table shows some indicators of social-emotional disorder described by Cohen, Clothier, Onunaku, and Poppe (2005, p. 5) in their research and policy report :

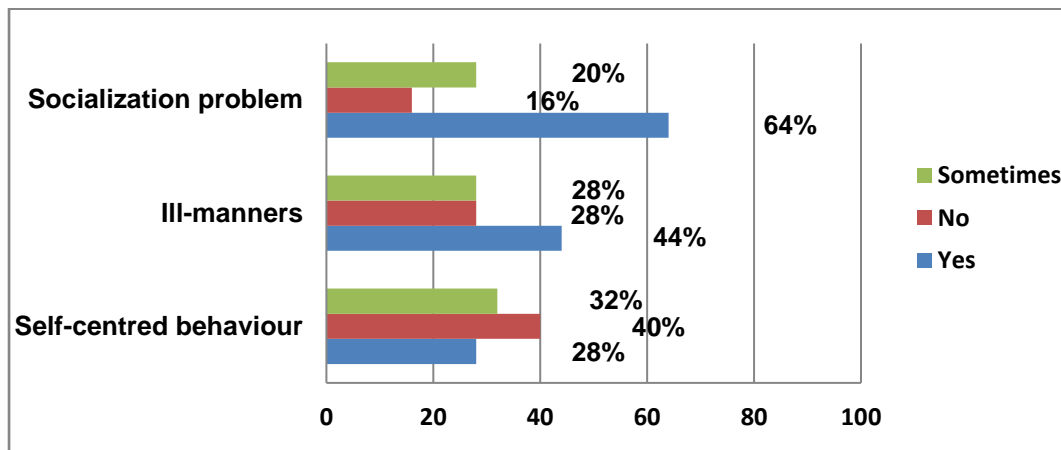
TABLE 2 : INDICATORS OF SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DISORDER

Infants and Toddlers (birth to age 3)	Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5)
1. Chronic feeding or sleeping difficulties.	1. Engages in compulsive activities (e.g., head banging).
2. Inconsolable “fussiness” or irritability.	2. Throws wild, despairing tantrums.
3. Incessant crying with little ability to be consoled.	3. Withdrawn; shows little interest in social interaction.
4. Extreme upset when left with another adult.	4. Displays repeated aggressive or impulsive behavior.
5. Inability to adapt to new situations.	5. Difficulty playing with others.
6. Easily startled or alarmed by routine events.	
7. Inability to establish relationships with other	

children or adults.	6. Little or no communication; lack of language.
8. Excessive hitting, biting and pushing of other children or very withdrawn behavior.	7. Loss of earlier developmental achievements.
9. Flat affect.	

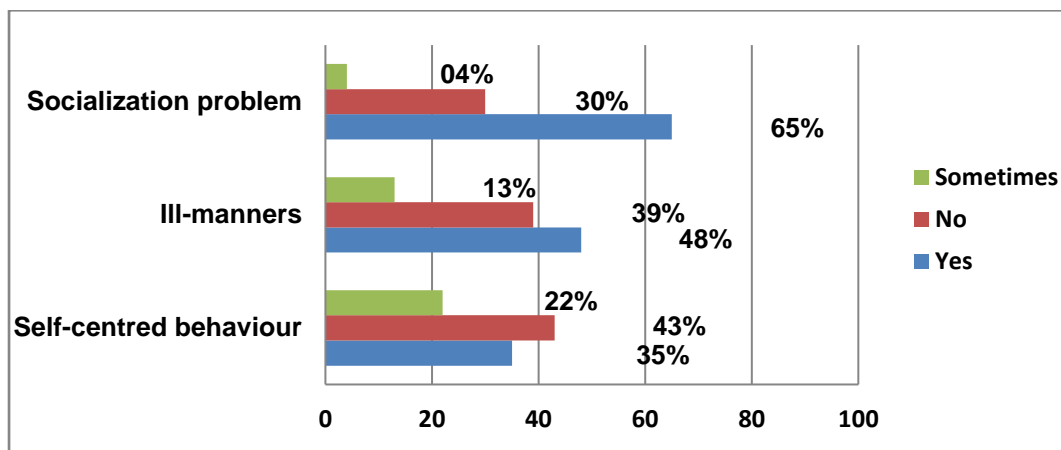
Social Development. A child with a social development disorder will depend more on the parents when he is outside of the home environment, will not be able to make friend easily and will feel shy to communicate with other children. Three indicators were selected by the researcher to know about the state of the children of military couples: self centred behaviour, ill manners, and socialization problem. Most of the parents agreed that their children have limitations in social behavior, and they have developed ill-manners. But majority of the parents opined that their children are not suffering from self-centred behaviour (Figure 11, 12 and Table 3).

FIGURE 11: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT- FEMALE RESPONSE



(Source: Survey)

FIGURE 12: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT- MALE RESPONSE



(Source: Survey)

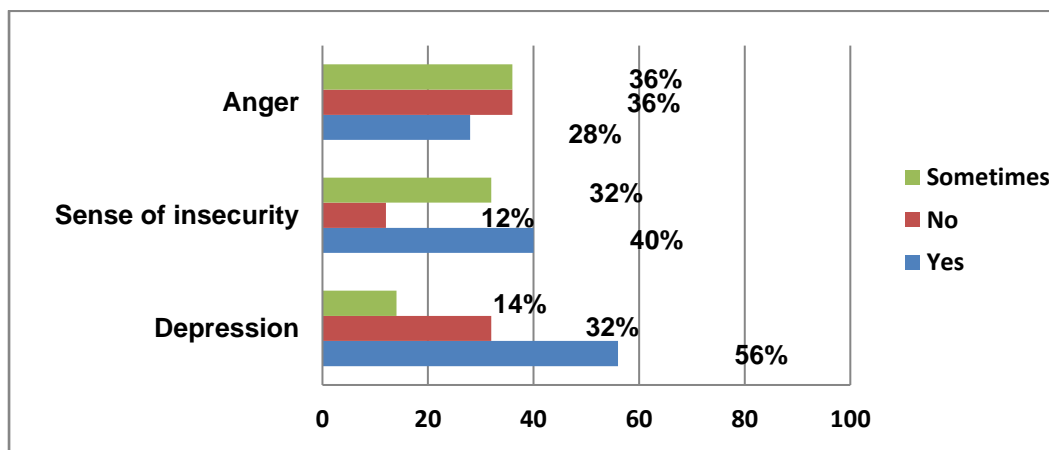
TABLE 3: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Indicator	FO			MO		
	Yes	No	Sometime	Yes	No	Sometime
Self centred behaviour	28%	40%	32%	35%	43%	22%
Ill- manners	44%	28%	28%	48%	39%	13%
Socialization problem	64%	16%	20%	65%	30%	04%

(Source: Survey)

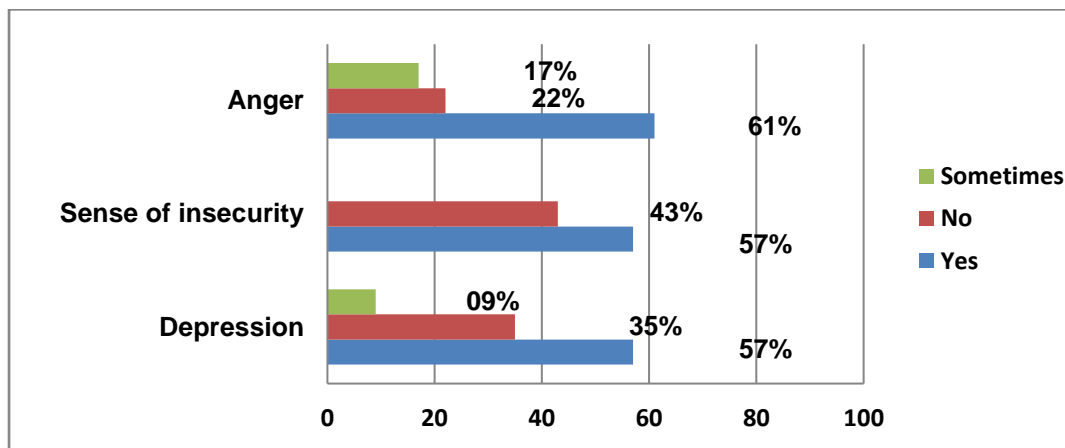
Emotional Development. Parental absence and inadequate care may hamper the emotional development of a child. The child may feel angry, frustrated, deprived and insecure. Again, the child may not develop the power to control emotion. He may cry without any reason as a tool to fulfill his desire. Three indicators were selected by the researcher to get the feedback from the respondent group. Regarding depression and sense of insecurity, both MO and FO agreed that their children suffer from these two disorders. But regarding anger, though 61% of the MO expressed that their children show extreme anger, but, only 28% of FO opined the same (Figure 13, 14 and Table 4).

FIGURE 13: EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT- FEMALE RESPONSE



(Source: Survey)

FIGURE 14: EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT- MALE RESPONSE



(Source: Survey)

TABLE 4: EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Indicator	FO			MO		
	Yes	No	Sometime	Yes	No	Sometime
Depression	56%	32%	14%	57%	35%	09%
Sense of insecurity	40%	12%	32%	57%	43%	00%
Anger	28%	36%	36%	61%	22%	17%

(Source: Survey)

Analysis of the Chapter. From the survey and preceding discussion, it is evident that all the areas of the child development are not affected due to the challenges of military service. Firstly, physical development of the children is not affected due to the challenges of military service. Though care by maid servants sometime entails forceful feeding (FGD, Annex P), but this does not affect the physical development of the children. Secondly, language development is partially affected. Spending more time with servants may cause faulty language development of the children. But delayed language development is very rare. But the cognitive and the social-emotional development of the children are seriously affected due to the challenges military couples face in Bangladesh Army. Military couples cannot give adequate time to the children. Frequently, children are separated from the parents due to different place of posting, training courses, foreign assignment, and busy schedule. Due to all these challenges, children are likely to feel insecure, lonely, deprived, depressed, angry and frustrated. They are likely to have lacking in confidence, sense of proportion, manners and socialization. As a whole, the cognitive and social-emotional developments of the children are affected. The respondents also agreed with the findings of the researcher. 74% of the MO and 40% of the FO strongly agreed that development of their children is affected due to the service challenges (Annex D and F).

IV. SUGGESTIVE MEASURES TO REDUCE THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS

General

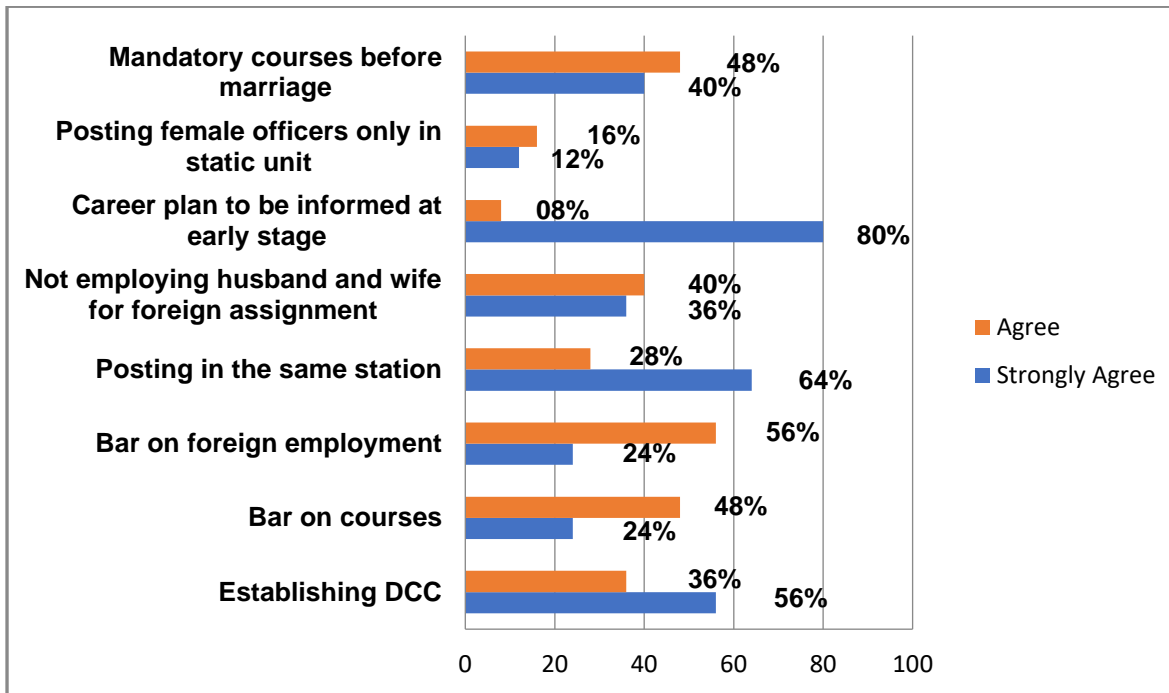
Child development is a complex process. To ensure sound development of the children it requires healthy environment, parental care, happy family, education, proper nutrition etcetera. The negative impacts discussed in the previous chapter may not be displayed by the children at the moment. **“These effects may remain dormant in the child and may be expressed when the child reaches teenage (Haque, 2014)”**. Therefore, these impacts must be controlled and reduced to ensure sound development and healthy future life of the children. But, it may not be possible for the parents alone to reduce the impacts. Bangladesh Army, as an organization, should develop a system to deal with this issue. 74% of MO and 44% of FO opined that Bangladesh Army is not providing enough facility regarding child care (Annex D and F). Again, with all the challenges, the most important role should be played by the parents. Organization can provide some infrastructural facility; whereas, individual officer should play the vital role as a parent and caregiver. Realizing the necessity, the researcher looked for the suggestive measures from both the perspective: organization and parents.

Organization's Role

Establishing DCC in All Station. DCC is a need of time in Bangladesh Army. Every DCC follows a systematic approach to teach and educate the children of all ages. As a result, children learn basic teachings which they are supposed to learn from their parents. Children staying in DCC will spend less time with maid servants. As a whole, negative impacts due to the absence of parents will reduce drastically. **Haque (2014)** stated that DCC can reduce the negative impacts on the child as the children will be in a safe environment with trained caregivers. **Sharafat (2014)** expressed that considering the necessity, Bangladesh Army has taken a project of establishing one DCC in Dhaka Cantonment. With increased number of military couples in every station, Bangladesh Army should plan to establish more DCC. Every station should have one DCC with expert caregiver. In this regard **Habib (2014)** opined that if facilities are available for child care, problems of posting for the couples will be reduced. Most of the respondents (FO-56%, MO-87%) also strongly agreed with the proposal (**Figure 15 and 16**)

Bar on Employing FO for Training Courses/Foreign Assignment after Child's Birth. Presently there is no bar on employing FO for training courses after child's birth. On the other hand, a FO is not employed for UN Mission up to two years of the child's birth. If any individual wants, she can increase this period up to four years. Present bar of four years is sufficient to reduce the negative impacts on the children. Regarding training courses, participants of FGD expressed that two years bar can be imposed on the employment of FO for after child's birth (FGD, Annex P). On this issue, **Momen (2014)** argued that a bar on the employment of FO for course will upset their career plan.

Same Place of Posting for Husband and Wife after Child's Birth. According to the respondents, posting in different station is the biggest challenge for the military couples. But, due to the service requirement, it is not always possible to keep the husband and wife posted at the same station. **"There should be an effort from the authority to keep the military couples in the same station. In some cases, due to service requirement, it may not be possible. So there can be one policy that military couples would be posted in the same station in every alternative posting (Hussain, 2014)"**. The researcher felt the same necessity. Apart from that, after the child's birth, the military couples should have the posting in the same station. If the husband and wife are posted to different stations at the early stage of child's life, it will have a serious negative impacts on the child. **"Regarding the posting of military couples, Military Secretary's (MS) Branch takes care so that they can be posted in the same station. But due to the service requirement and officers' career, it is not always possible to post the couples together" (Momen, 2014)**. Therefore, there is a need of a policy to ensure the posting of husband and wife in the same garrison after the child's birth. Participants of FGD expressed that first three years after the child's birth the couples can be posted in the same station (FGD, Annex P). **Hussain (2014)** expressed that when military couples are posted at the same station, the organization will also be benefitted.

FIGURE 15: ORGANIZATION'S ROLE- FEMALE RESPONSE

(Source: Survey)

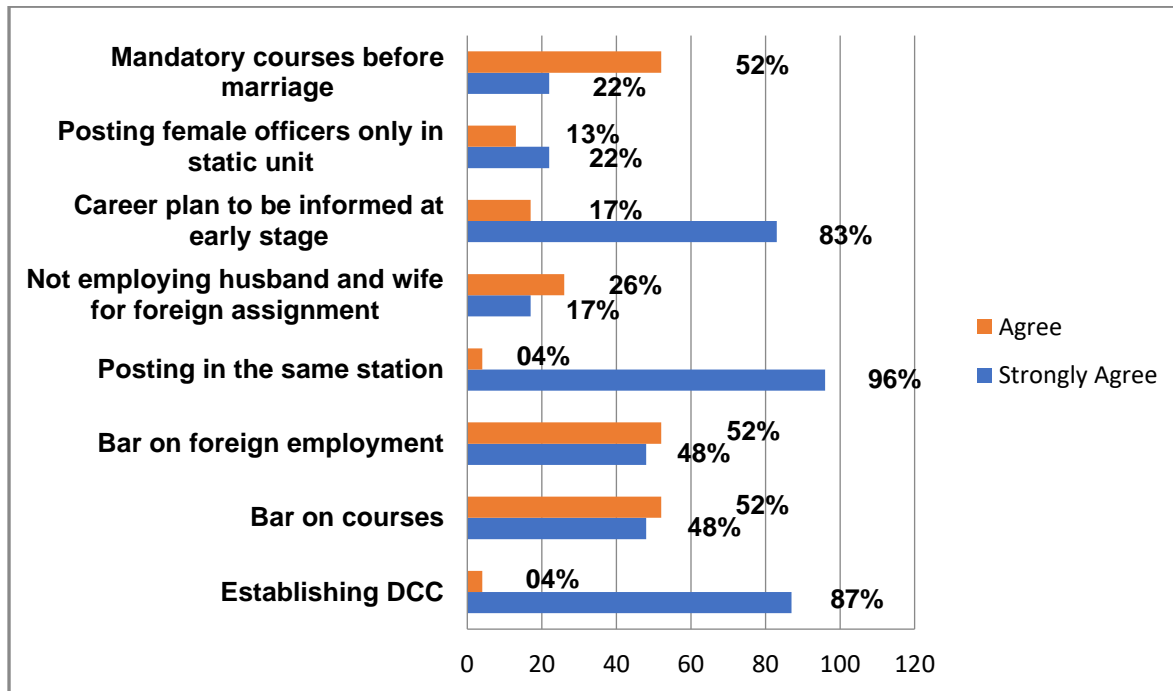
Not employing Husband and Wife for Foreign Assignment at the Same Time. When husband and wife are employed for foreign assignment at the same time, the child is away from both the parents for a long period. It creates a serious impact on the child development. MS Branch should formulate a policy on not employing husband and wife for foreign assignment at the same time. This policy will ensure that at least one parent is always with the child. Due to the pattern of military service, foreign deployment and courses cannot be avoided. But the negative impacts on the children can be controlled by ensuring the presence of at least one parent. On this issue, Momen (2014) stated **“it is difficult for MS Branch to track all the military couples about their family planning. Even after that, MS Branch tries to make a balance in the employment of military couples.”** If the policy is made on not employing the military couples for foreign assignment at the same time, a system will work and military couples will be little relieved regarding child care. But only 17% of the male respondents agreed with the proposal.

Informing Career Plan of FO at the Early Stage of the Career. Once an officer is informed about his/her career plan at the early stage, it helps the officer to plan the family life. It is more applicable for the FO. For FO, marriage and motherhood play a vital role in their professional and personal life. If a FO knows her tentative employment for training courses, foreign assignment etcetera, then she can plan her marriage and motherhood in a way so that her career is not affected. Sharafat (2014) stated that as the career of an officer depends on many factor (Officers' Performance Report, course grading, performance in unit etcetera), therefore it is difficult to visualize the career plan at the early stage. Momen (2014) opined that **“It would be very helpful for the officers, both male and female, if the career plan is known to them. But it is not always possible”**. As an alternative, MS Branch can know the tentative personal life plan from the individual officer and also inform her tentative career plan. It will also assist the FO to plan their personal life: especially motherhood. Most of the participants strongly agreed (FO-80%; MO-83%) with the proposal.

Posting FO in Static Unit. Hassan wrote in his research that “in young age, a female officer can perform better in the field unit, the same way she cannot perform, once she is married and become mother. At that time, static units and ERE will be appropriate for them” (2006, p.17). Iqbal (2012, p.5), in his research, also expressed that after marriage FO can be posted to a suitable ERE or other assignment. However, 56% of female and 65% of male respondents did not agree with this proposal (Annex D and F). To make a balance, one policy can be formulated regarding posting the FO in static unit for certain time period after child’s birth. Once the tenure is over they can again be posted to field units and headquarters.

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FIGURE 16: ORGANIZATION’S ROLE - MALE RESPONSE



(Source: Survey)

Training Courses of FO before Marriage. Iqbal opined that “to get the best output from FO, they should finish all three mandatory courses (Basic Course, Weapon Course, and Junior Command and Staff Course) within first four years of service....on completion of their initial mandatory courses, they can serve the unit for some period and then they may be posted to some suitable assignment (2012, p.5)”. Though majority of the participants (48% FO, 52% MO) agreed but there are opposite opinions as well. On this issue, Momen (2014) argued that if an officer has to finish the mandatory courses before marriage, the time bar for marriage is to be raised.

Parents’ Role

General. In today’s world, employment of women in various fields of service is unavoidable. In modern countries, there are many facilities to take care of the children when the parents are away for work. Bangladesh Army does not have all those facilities. Therefore, to reduce the negative impacts on the child development, the parents must play their role. “To minimize the effect on the children, the parents should play the most important role” (Sayed, 2014). Both wife and husband has separate role to play to ensure sound development of their child.

Sharing Work Load by Husband and Wife. Child care is no more the domain of the women. Fathers can also provide assistance to the mother regarding child care. The commitment of service is equally applicable for both MO and FO. In Chapter II, it was found that military couples cannot give adequate time to their children. To avoid this situation, husband and wife should share the responsibility of the family. Considering the commitment of both, military couples should plan on how to give sufficient attention to the children. **Military One Source** (n.d.) wrote in their website “**with a deployment or change in duty for one spouse, the other spouse may suddenly have different family responsibilities. Picking up children from child care, preparing meals, paying the bills, staying home with a sick child, or maintaining vehicles-these are examples of activities that can shift in response to the demands of military duty**”. When husband and wife will share the responsibilities of the family, the child will not feel insecure and sound development of the child will be ensured.

Magnifying Time. Military couples remain busy throughout the day. Therefore, they need to magnify the time whatever they can manage for the children. Commitment of the service or pressure of work will not be the same every day. Whatever the time available, parents should aim to give maximum to the child. Once staying at home after day’s work, they should remain with the child, talk to them with the day’s activity, assist them in study so on and so forth. “**Parents’ motivation and role is the most important measure. Serving in the military is not the problem; the problem is how much one is committed towards the family and children**” (Siddique, 2014). As the time is less for the military couples, they must focus on the child and spend adequate good quality time with the child. “**They (military parents) must follow the system of good parenting... should talk to the children regularly and pass good quality time... they should try utmost to ensure a happy childhood to the children**” (Haque, 2014).

Husband’s Role. Momen(2014) opined that, the husbands need to play an important role for the child development. When both husband and wife are serving in army, the wife may not do the duties of a typical housewife. Raising child is not the responsibility of the mother only. The husband must share and contribute in the development process of the child. A husband can take care of the child when the mother is undergoing a course or employed for foreign assignment. It only requires a change in the outlook. If the husbands are supportive, negative impacts on the children will reduce and FO can contribute more to the profession.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Number of FO is increasing in Bangladesh Army. Induction of female soldiers is also in the process. With more number of FO, number of military couples is also increasing. As a result, there is a change in the society of Bangladesh Army. Many of the military couples have children of varying ages. While raising children, military couples face numerous challenges. Due to the service commitment and requirement, military officers remain busy throughout the day. Hence, their children are deprived from the company of the parents. Again, there are other requirements of the service for which the parents are sometime apart from the children. On the other hand, Bangladesh Army does not have any organizational facility to support the child care. Due to the challenges military couples face in Bangladesh Army, development of their children is affected.

In Chapter II, the researcher looked for the challenges military couples face in Bangladesh Army which affects their child development. Different place of posting of husband and wife is a challenge for the military couples. When husband and wife are posted in different stations, there is an uncertainty regarding the child care. At present, 34 military couples are serving in separate stations (**Table 1**). Again, an officer posted in an important appointment, cannot avail leave on a regular basis. Separation from one parent creates huge impact on the child. The child is always deprived from the affection of one parent. When FO are employed for training course or foreign employment, it becomes very difficult for them to ensure sound care of their children. Child care during office hour is a festering sore for the military couples. Presently there is no DCC in any of the station of Bangladesh Army. Those who do not have support of their parents, for them child care by maid servant remains the only alternative. As per the psychologist consulted, care by maid servant is not only harmful but also risky. Even in the offices of the army, the work place environment is not that much flexible. A FO may not feel comfortable to keep her infant with herself. Peer-pressure and male dominated environment double the pressure. As a whole, all these challenges will have serious impacts on various areas of child development.

At the beginning of the research, it was hypothesised by the researcher that **Challenges military couples face while serving in Bangladesh Army are affecting the development of their children**. To validate the hypothesis, the immediate effects of the challenges were analysed. First of all, all the children have some expectation from the parents. But due to the challenges of military service, those expectations of the children are not met. In most of the cases, military couples tend to take the assistance of maid servant as alternative caregiver. As a result, the children spent maximum time with the maid servants. Once the children do not get their parents regularly, they become more attracted to electronic gadgets. Smart phone, computer or televisions become the toys for the children. As these gadgets do not require communication from the children, therefore children may lose emotional balance. Again, as the parents cannot spend adequate time with the children, inconsistent parenting develops within the parents. They cannot follow a standard system of reward or punishment. Due to non-availability of the parent, the intellectual and emotional development of the children is also hampered. These effects not only affect the children but also the parents. But the main impacts are on the development of the children.

These immediate effects mentioned above have some serious negative impacts on the child development. Four areas of child development were considered to identify the degree of impacts: physical, language, cognitive and social-emotional. According to the survey result, negative impacts on the physical development were negligible. On the other hand, most of the children raised by maid servants have faulty language development. But the major impacts are on cognitive and social-emotional development. Due to parental absence children suffer from lack of confidence and sense of proportion. Intellectual development of the children may become slow. Children are likely to develop several limitations in terms of socialization and mannerism. Again the emotional development of the children will not be sound. Through the process of the research it was found that the challenges military couples face in Bangladesh Army can seriously affect various areas of child development. Therefore, the hypothesis was validated.

To ensure sound development of the children and to increase the efficiency of the officers, these negative impacts have to be reduced. To reduce those, the organization and the parents have to take steps. At present in Bangladesh Army, establishment of DCC is a prime requirement. Military couples will feel safe during the office hour to keep their children in DCC. Then, FO with children may have a time bar to undergo any training

course. This will ensure good care of their children in first few years. Posting of husband and wife is a matter of concern for the military couples. But as it is not always possible to post them together, they can be in the same station at least for first few years after the child's birth. Again, husband and wife may not be employed for foreign assignment at the same time. Career plan of the FO can be informed to them at the early stage of the career so that they can plan their family life. Besides all these, individual officer has to play a vital role to reduce the negative impacts on the children. First of all, husband and wife should share the work load. Then, military couples should try to spent maximum of their off time with their children. Parents should give scope to the children to share their feeling, joys, sorrows, liking and disliking. And finally, husbands must support the wives in all aspects. In present day's context, there is no difference in the work: be it official or household. Husbands must help the wives in household work and also in child care. Once responsibilities are shared, children will get more attention and FO can concentrate more on their profession. Children of today are the future of Bangladesh. Therefore, sound development of the children of military couples must be ensured so that their children can become efficient citizens of the country.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) After analysing the challenges of military service and negative impacts on child development, following recommendations are made:
- b) Bangladesh Army to establish DCC in all the stations with expert caregiver and modern facilities.
- c) AHQ MS Branch should form a board of officers to study the feasibility of enforcing a bar on the employment of FO for training courses up to 2 years after the child's birth.
- d) AHQ MS Branch to form a board of officers to formulate a policy regarding the posting of military couples. The prime focus should be to keep the military couples together in the same station at least for 3 years after the child's birth.
- e) Endeavour should be taken by MS Branch to inform the FO regarding their career plan at the early stage of their career.
- f) Bangladesh Army to conduct programmes on parenting to increase capacity of the parents in performing their responsibilities.
- g) A training on Work-Life Balance should be conducted for all the serving couples of Bangladesh Army emphasising sharing responsibilities by husband and wife, magnifying time, and support of husband in the family.

Research Area Available on the Subject

After completing the research, it is clearly evident that there are ample scopes to carry out a research in Bangladesh Army perspective where following issues can be addressed:

- a) Will the inclusion of Family Care Plan in Bangladesh Army reduce the child care problem and thereby increase FOs' efficiency?
- b) What will be the response to DCC from the serving parents?
- c) Will the introduction of DCC reduce the effects on the development of the children?

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