

A study of role of paramilitary training in women empowerment & personality development

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Abstract

National Cadet Corps, NCC, in India is the largest uniformed youth organization. It is an organization which imparts paramilitary training to nurture the vital virtues like patriotism, discipline, leadership etc in the youth.

In 1997, I jointly published a research paper, with a professor of psychology, in which we carried out a comparative study of NCC & Non-NCC girl cadets in respect of 16 personality factors through a psychological test.

The results of the research paper induced me to study if NCC training helps in enhancing leadership qualities, development of personality, making women self-sufficient and empower them.

Present paper is a study and discussion in this direction.

Associate NCC Officers - ANOs are backbone of NCC and they have to undergo a rigorous military training. Hence they are also considered for study.

This paper is case study based research paper, through interviews of lady ANOs and ex-girl cadets on leading positions, from varied social and economic and cultural background to find out whether this paramilitary training has helped them to be self-reliant and empowered & to develop personality.

Also, standardized NEO FFI is administered to study the five broad factors of personality among these cases.

Thus this study investigates whether paramilitary training imparted through NCC helps to bring considerable change in personality of Indian girls and acts as foundation for them to become self-sufficient women of tomorrow and empower them with qualities required to lead their life with self-esteem and confidence.

Keywords: paramilitary training, women empowerment, NCC

Introduction & Background

National Cadet Corps (NCC) in India is the largest uniformed youth organization, imparting paramilitary training. The crops run multifaceted training programs to mould young men and women into responsible citizens. The training equips the cadets to excel in every walk of life and profession. NCC is expected to play a vital role in grooming future leaders.

Initially NCC was started as a war measure, designed to meet the military requirements in First World War. It was named as University Crops. With the changes in names, aims & objectives over the years, today the organization is National Cadet Corps, NCC, which aims at,

- i) To develop qualities of Character, Courage, Comradeship, Discipline, Leadership, Secular, Outlook, Spirit of Adventure and Sportsmanship, besides the ideals of selfless service among the youth to make them useful citizens.
- ii) To create human resource of organized trained and motivated youth that provides leadership in all walks of life including the Armed Forces and always be available for the Nation.

The paramilitary training and its syllabus is designed in a fashion that nurtures the vital virtues like leadership, selfless service, discipline, character building etc as required in the aims of NCC.

The NCC is said to be a nursery for grooming of future leaders in all walks of life.

Review Literature

I myself got commissioned as second lieutenant in 1995 after

going through rigorous military training at Officers Training Academy (OTA), Gwalior and I became Associate NCC Officer (ANO).

I could find a lot of change in me due to the training and hence inspired with the training, I decided to study effect of NCC training on girl cadets.

My colleague, a professor of psychology and myself, carried out a comparative study of personalities of Non NCC girl students and NCC girl cadets. We used the renowned 16 PF personality test related to 16 personality factors.

The results of the study were not easy to digest, for me, being ANO.

Analysis of the results made me to realize that the random sample of NCC Cadets contained the cadets, who were as good as Non NCC girls. They had not undergone a proper NCC training due to reasons like forceful enrolment in NCC, irregularity on parades etc.

This analysis induced me to further research, and the present paper is the outcome of this research.

To carry out this study, I slightly changed my approach. I used purposive sampling method instead of random sampling. I selected individuals who have undergone real & rigorous NCC training and I tried to study the effect.

I tried to study how NCC has contributed to make them empowered women and feel them confident.

Mr.V.P.D. Josephin a research student has undertaken "An Economic Study of Empowerment of Women through 3, Tamil Nadu Girls Battalion, NCC in Tirunelveti" topic for his Ph.D. Research.

Mr. Josephin has discussed empowerment through NCC in his

thesis. According to him, empowerment of women in NCC is influenced by

- i) Opportunities available to them in training
- ii) Challenges they face during training

He has given percentage of girl cadets attending different types of camps, which is comparatively very low.

Empowered Women

The dictionary meaning of empower is to give power or authority, which has a micro shade of 'giving'.

Who is giving this power to women? Who is this authority?

Truly speaking there should be nobody but women have to empower herself. Women empowerment and gender equality are two sides of a coin. When a woman feels herself empowered, confident & equal with men, she is empowered. Women in combat is a step towards gender equality. Not allowing them in military is gender discrimination. Slowly all countries are allowing women to enter into military services. The lack of women in leadership positions negatively affects not only women's career but also success of all branches of Armed Services.

Women empowerment is a multidimensional issue & it is a continuous process that helps people to gain control over their own lives.

Generally empowering women is viewed as helping them in various aspects of life, like providing them security, providing work which will generate income, providing environment which will maintain their dignity.

All these actions or provisions are to support women. No doubt these will help them be self-sufficient with respect to income & build their confidence, enhance their self esteem, make women partially independent and may enhance their power of decision making. But in my opinion these are all ancillary products.

These are external supports, which make women to stand straight. Providing supports to women it indicates that women are not empowered. Support providers always have their upper hand.

Instead, if women are developed from their within, and need no external support, the really empowered women can be seen, experienced.

It should not be somebody else but she has to empower herself and she herself has to feel, "Yes, I am self sufficient and I don't need any external support."

If we could learn aims of NCC, we observe that this can very well be achieved through the paramilitary training of NCC.

Indian women are suppressed by cultural and societal norms and taboos. Not only that but she is suppressed by herself to agree with & act according to them.

Hence she has to be trained to come out of the suppression by society, community & by herself.

Methodology

This research is a case study base research. Taking into consideration the problem which aroused due to random sample, I have taken a small sample of 10 individuals. Among the ten, two were Associate NCC Officers (ANOs) who have undergone rigorous military training at Officers Training Academy, Gwalior. Other four individuals are Senior NCC Cadets, working on senior, dignified, leadership positions are married & have children.

The four others are students in the age group of 20-25 all of

them were very active, regular cadets. They had attended Republic Day Camp, Delhi (RDC Delhi)

The case study is twofold study. In the first fold the respondents were interviewed by asking them some questions, to investigate whether paramilitary training of NCC has helped them to be self-reliant, confident & empowered.

Some of them answered the questions & others preferred to write their opinions. The basic questions asked were:

1. What is your perspective of women empowerment?
2. Do you feel that you are empowered woman?
3. Did NCC help in empowering you as a woman?
4. If yes, how?
5. How does NCC help in your day to day life?

[i] At Home

[ii] At Workplace.

In the second fold the standardized five factor personality test / inventory was administered for the ten cases.

Here five personality traits are five broad domains and dimensions of personality that are used to describe human personality. These factors are Neuroticism (N), Extroversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A) & Conscientiousness (C), hence it is also said NEOAC.

Neuroticism is sometimes referred as negative emotionality or degree of emotional stability. The general tendency to experience negative effects such as fear, sadness, embarrassment, anger, guilt, disgust is the core of the N domain. Men & women high in N are also prone to have irrational ideas, to be less able to control their impulses & to cope more poorly than others with stress. Individuals with low score on this factor are emotionally stable, relaxed, and calm.

Extraversion shows energy, positive emotions, sociability, assertiveness, talkativeness. These people are upbeat, active and optimistic. On the contrary introverts are reserved than unfriendly, independent rather than followers, even paced. Although introverts are not as active, assertive, talkative as extraverts, they are not unhappy or pessimistic.

Openness indicates divergent thinking, contribution to creativity, appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas curiosity & variety of experiences. Men & women, who score low on this trait, tend to be conventional in behavior & conservative in outlook. Open individuals are unconventional, prepared to entertain new ethical, social & political ideas. But this doesn't mean that they are unprincipled.

Agreeableness is a tendency to be compassionate & cooperative rather than suspicious & antagonistic towards others. They are cooperative, helpful rather than competitive. They are socially preferable and psychologically healthy & are always popular.

Conscientiousness describes a tendency to show self discipline, act dutifully and aim for achievement. Conscientious people are purposeful, strong willed, determined, act dutifully, they are organized & dependable. Low scores on this trait indicate less exact & more lackadaisical in working towards their goals.

Findings & Discussion

In the 10 cases studied under this research there are 4 cadet students, who have represented 7 Maharashtra Girls Battalion at Republic day Parade, Delhi. To participate in Republic Day (RD) Parade at Delhi, the Cadets have to undergo rigorous training in more than 12 camps. Each camp being of 12 days. They have to stay at Delhi in the month of December, January for more than a month.

The training these cadets receive in camps and at RD parade Delhi is very critical. They are exposed to many situations where they do not have any choice other than to face the situation. Such an atmosphere is very challenging.

In such situations they have to take their decisions confidently, they have to be united, they have to be courageous & have to enhance their endurance maintaining discipline is mandatory. Everything is compulsory in NCC & that comes under training.

Hence when these cadets were interviewed, all of them had a common feeling, that they could learn to face the situation, gained confidence, liked to be disciplined etc because of the training they had undergone. All of them owe to NCC for these qualities.

The next four individuals among the ten were quite grown up, married & doing their jobs successfully.

All of them are 'C' Certificate holders and trained in NCC for 3 years & were sincere most at their times.

When these were interviewed had very good perception of women empowerment.

According to these mature married women, "When a woman herself participates in the educational, economic, cultural, social decision making process, acts confidently and takes responsibility of the decision, she is really empowered." Some of their comments are;

- i) I could learn discipline, problem solving, decision making through NCC training & could become confident about my strengths and learnt to face my weaknesses.

- ii) I am never embarrassed while working with men & I confidently impart training to my male colleagues, I never have a feeling of unequalness and all is due to NCC.
- iii) I am self disciplined at home & at workplace. I always preplan the things to be done and act accordingly. This always helps me to be a respectable person.
- iv) NCC has given me a vision to solve problems, face problems & not to run away from problems.

Rest of the two individuals were Associate NCC Officers. They have undergone training at the age 35 plus. In spite of getting the training at such a later stage, they could find drastic change in their personalities due to NCC training. Aspirations of ANOs are similar as those of matured senior cadets.

But the regret of ANOs is that, all the cadets are not taking NCC training in sincere right perspective. Hence they are not benefitted to the extent that is expected.

In the next phase all the ten cases were exposed to NEO FFI. Their results of the test in terms of stanine scores depicted in table.

The scores of each individual were calculated from the score key. Means and variances were calculated for each factor, for scores of ten individuals.

Further stanine scores and corresponding ranges of High, Medium and Low Scores were obtained for Neuroticism, Extroversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness.

The complete data was presented in the table.

Table 1: Stanine

	High	Medium	Low	Total
Neuroticism	03	06	01	10
Extroversion	09	01	--	10
Openness	--	06	04	10
Agreeableness	02	06	02	10
Conscientiousness	03	07	--	10

Regarding factor Neuroticism, we observe that most of them fall in medium category, showing medium emotional stability, calmness and ability to deal with stress. This may be expected as the cadets have to face stressful conditions while exposed training in NCC, which teaches them to deal with calmly.

Amongst the three individuals in high category of risk for Neuroticism two do not have a stable family background.

For the factor extroversion, nine out of ten fall in high stanine class. This was really expected. These individuals are extraverted, outgoing, active, high spirited.

The scores of openness reveal that, there is nobody in high stanine score. Six of them are practical, willing to consider innovations, balanced between old & new. Whereas 4 individuals are conventional, traditional & pretty much set in thinking. It should be noted that amongst the 4 individuals falling in low stanine region of openness two are around the age of 60 years.

For the fourth factor agreeableness it shows a normal pattern as expected in case of set of individuals. 2-6-2 corresponding to high - medium & low stanine.

The fifth factor is conscientiousness, whose score reveals that three individuals are in high zone of this factor. They are conscientious, focused, well organized. Always trying to achieve high standards. These individuals are working on

dignified Administrative post with Govt. of Maharashtra. They are Senior Cadets whose age is around 40 years. They are C - Certificate holders, sincere, active & regular cadets at that time.

Conclusion

The analysis of the interviews and NEO FFI test may conclude that.

1. The paramilitary training of NCC plays a vital role in women empowerment
2. Those who are inducted to paramilitary training of NCC are extrovert.
3. The training helps the trainees to become more conscientious.
4. All ten are on leadership position.

Epilogue

Paramilitary Training of NCC plays a vital role in women's empowerment & personality development.

But not all the cadets are exposed to rigorous training. Not all the cadets have sincere & serious approach towards training.

Imparting rigorous training has many physical limitations like ANOs, military staff, insufficient properties etc.

Hence either the physical limitations should be removed or the number of cadets in NCC should be reduced.

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