“Either I will come back after hoisting the tricolor,  
Or I will come back wrapped in it,  
but I will be back for sure.”  
- Capt. Vikram Batra, Param Vir Chakra

The discussion is the last leg of the research report where key findings are interpreted and explained in the perspective of reviewed literature and introduction. It is the concluding part containing the significance of central theme of the study, problem assessment, data summary for general understanding, limitations of the study, and suggestions for potential studies with broad and ingenuous efforts of the researcher. Discussion refreshes the work by interlinking each aspect of the study in simple and succinct style. It contains the concise theoretical explanation of statistical results and the course of line undertaken by the researcher to reach up to this level.

The purpose of this study was to understand the selected components of post retired behaviour of the Ex-servicemen (Non-commissioned officers) of Indian Army. The behavioural components such as, adjustment, wellbeing (psychological distress), achievements in civil life and quality of life were explored in the context of Time and last held Military Rank. In army ‘Rank’ is a professional identifier having profound significance on the holder’s behavioural outcomes. Traditionally, in defence parlance it is understood that Rank never retires; only individual retires. In this backdrop ESM continue to decorate their names with last held rank. The ESM is a semi-soldier. Post retirement, rank is reminiscent of dignity, power and prestige enjoyed by them during the active service. In addition to professional significance ‘Rank’ is also endowed with psycho-social stature. The difficulties related to adjustment and (wellbeing) psychological distress creeps-up owing to modulation of new role with hangover of previous beliefs, systems, attitudes, working styles and verbal stream. The 20 years or
more of army life have both positive and negative effects on the soldiers (McDermott, 2007).

The variables were analyzed in twin format i.e. with and without Resdmd_Quo as a covariate. Resources and demands of ESM are important life style deciding measures analyzed on the basis of self-perception techniques, which might contain self-presentation biases (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The GAS test manual says that higher the means score on adjustment components the poorer the adjustment. Similarly, the GHQ-12 manual also indicates that higher the score, severe the psychological distress and subsequently poorer the wellbeing.

With passage of time the adjustment and wellbeing improved for both ranks. McDermott (2007) also found out that most ESMs gradually modified their approach to work and adapted their military skills. It might be attributed to that ESM spends longer & considerable quality time within civilian environs. They tend to interact more frequently with their family, society, administration, local bazaars, vendors, relatives and all hosts of people. The interpersonal interaction tends to increase in due course from minimal to full time. They play the role of active participants observing the society-compatible behaviours, language usage, working style, living style, dressing style, cultural conventions, interpersonal relations, process of exchange of pleasantries, neighbour adaptation, psycho-social code, and food timings etc. for self usage in future. These observations help them in adjusting with new settings on the erstwhile behavioural platform of army. It helps them in transforming their psycho-social identity (McDermott, 2007) to new settings. Along with this the recognition of self-worth away from unyielding orders & commands, reduction in professional strain in context to performance, emotional realization, psychological relaxation and regular social association tend to improve.

The findings indicates that the Other_ranks are better placed on Family, Health and Sexual adjustment than the JCOs, while JCOs are better placed on
Emotional, Occupational and Social adjustment. Studies by McDermott (2007), Arkin (1978), Tucker (1970), Yanos (2004), Feist & Barron (1996) and Orthner (1990) suggest that achievements (professional success and prestige) is a function of several social and emotional abilities. It might be due to the fact that the emotional adjustment is a function of maturity, and maturity comes with age (mean age of JCOs 49.6 years). There exist a difference of a decade between the mean age of sampled JCOs and Other_ranks (mean age 39 years), resulting in difference between rank on ‘Emotional’ adjustment measure. The sexual adjustment is connected with physical needs and expectations from the partner which decline with advancing age, leading to relative contentment and subsequently less interference by the measure in the process of adjustment. On the other hand the difference in age and health which are decisive factors of sexual adjustment made the difference on the ‘Sexual’ measure between the ranks. Gruder (1995) observed that younger the ESMs, more difficult for them to adjust. Yanos (2004) says that retirement is a role transition and age plays decisive role in successful reintegration of ESM. Younger retirees plan less for their future requirements (DeRanzo, 1990). Braithwaite (1986) observed that 33% of ESM (Officers) perceives retirement as a difficult phase of life while Maharajan et al. (2014) found out that 53% ESM faced adjustment related problems. McNeil (1983) found that 30 % ESM face adjustment problems and anxiety.

Anders (2005) found out that contextual factors make reintegration more difficult. Most of the sampled JCOs (52%) don’t seek second employment; it might be due to the fact that they have reached threshold of contentment with fewer obligations and had fulfilled their responsibilities culminating in relatively better adjustment. In contrast 29.33% of Other_ranks replied ‘No’ to the question of re-employment; therefore differences exist between the ranks on ‘Occupational’ adjustment measure. The social adjustment is the function of acceptance competence and maturity which are found to be higher in JCOs by virtue of experience while both features are relatively lesser in Other_ranks, hence, difference on ‘Social’ adjustment measure.
The statistical results are buttressed by the responses by the respondents to the semi-structured questionnaire for achievements. They cherish their active service life, evident from their response to the question “Was your experiences of Army service enjoying or sour?”, 97.33 % JCOs & 94.67% Other_ranks responded by saying ‘Enjoyed’. While, 54.67% JCOs and 77.33% Other_ranks described their civil life experience as ‘Enjoyed’. The considerable gap (Morgan, 2001) between army experiences and civil experiences explains the predicament of ESM in context of adjustment and psychological distress. Golub et al. (2013) and Singh et al. (2014) observed that low income veterans are likely to experience higher psychological distress than the comparable civilians. Yanos (2004) explained the role of personal economics in integration and adjustment.

Similarly the effect of time on both the Ranks on Health, Sexual, Family, Occupational and Social Adjustment and Psychological Distress measures is statistically significant. Post retirement ‘Time’ is indirectly proportional to maladjustment & psychological distress measures. It means longer the post retirement period lower the maladjustment and psychological distress thereof. Individual resources and demands have little impact on the above discussed measures. Even than Resdmd_Quo is significant, still humans need to achieve and grow which have their origin in evolutionary biology and feature of human character (Maslow, 1971). Since, there was no departure in statistically significance by introducing covariate in the analysis, it can be interpreted that the resources and demands of individuals have little meaning as far as the measured behavioural components are concerned. Despite resources and demands remained invariant during this period, factors like social learning or realignment with the society help ESMs to adjust better and reduce psychological distress.

The available evidences show that the measures of adjustment, wellbeing, and achievements in civil life in context of self perceived resources and demands are a cause of concern across the globe for veterans. Grüder (2002) observed that veterans
being minor vote bank make little impact on the electoral politics, so the issue of their reintegration remains away from the parliamentary affairs. It largely remains in the hands of military commanders having inadequate knowledge of civilian work culture therefore making the transition vulnerable to difficulty. Being in minority enhances the vulnerability to multitude of issues (Guyler, et al., 2014). The time period after the immediate retirement which is role reversal (MacLean et al., 2010) and crucial in transitory phase as 37.6% Canadian veterans experienced a difficult transitory phase where their transition from military life to the civilian life was not successful (Black & Papile, 2010). 28% JCOs and 41.33% Other_ranks responded by saying ‘Yes’ to the question “Did you faced any difficulty in transition”? Cognitive and intellectual maturity in association with relatively better economic resources might be the reason why lesser number of JCOs faced difficulty in transition. By virtue of their experience and age, JCOs have relatively higher acceptance competence which makes their transition moderately easy. The most stunning response to the question “Did you ever face any kind of covert or overt social discrimination in your civil life?” was that 93.33% of JCOs and 97.33% Other_ranks responded in affirmative. This is an astronomical figure and self-explanatory. The ESM faces several types of social discrimination called undeclared social bracketing, which is a reprehensible act (Verma, 2016). It seems that the transition first brings some shocks which gradually transform into cushions in terms of social enforcement and social mastery.  

The further findings reveal that Resources and Demands of an ESM plays significant role in lowering the psychological distress. The justification for use of resources and demands quotient as covariate have also been highlighted by other researchers which point out that economic/financial resources will deplete post retirement due to difference between regular salary and pension. The present practice is that pension itself is about 50 percent of last salary drawn and shall further be commuted under pressures of demands. The results construe that wellbeing of both the ranks significantly depends upon the Resdmd_Quo. Post retirement effects of intense demands of military operations wean away resulting in easing of psycho-
physiological pressure. The negative impact on the mental health tends to ease leading to enhanced wellbeing. 4% JCOs and 1.33% of Other_ranks responded ‘Yes’ to the question “Did you have any mental stigma of your army service”? Though figures are not higher yet it exists! The figures might be higher because people are reluctant to render candid acceptance of mental stigma due to prevailing strong negative public stigma of psychological illness. The measure of psychological distress is crucial in deciding the present position and future outcomes. Thomson et al. (2014) observed that ESM faces 28% higher activity constraints than civilians which lead to difficulty in achievements. Evidences suggest successful ESM integrate back with ease (Lamb, 2006) and likely to have easier and better adjustment with substantial achievements in civil life. The findings of the present study also attest to the fact that resources are significantly associated with the last held rank. JCOs were found to have poorer resources than Other_ranks. It could be owing to higher mean age (49.6 yrs.) of JCOs than Other_ranks (39 yrs.) which would automatically enhance certain obligations earlier than Other_ranks who are younger in age, i.e., they will be facing similar obligation after 10 years. By virtue of their upper hierarchical status than Other_ranks which further necessitates higher maintenance and living standards. Although the findings at present reveal that in case of demands after retirement the frequencies in various categories do not deviate much from the expected between JCOs & Other_ranks. Hence, resources and demands quotient, derived joint parameters of both was thoroughly considered as covariate/moderator.

The present study reveals that the rank has significant effect on the post retirement achievements in civil life measure. The hypothesis that there is significant difference between the ranks on this measure stands vindicated. The retired soldiers are known to differ on rank on several factors such as educational qualifications, aspirations, psycho-physical health, cognitive & economic resources (Table 5-1), demands, family obligations etc. The retirement criteria for JCOs and Other_ranks are also different in terms of rendering of number of years of service. 100% JCOs and Other_ranks retired compulsorily on the reasons that either they have exhausted their
time limit of holding a rank or they were not qualified for next higher rank. Most JCOs retire at relatively ripe age with average 29.28 years of service while Other_ranks retire with average 20.07 years of service at relatively younger age. JCOs finished their social responsibilities while in service. So, when JCOs retire the money they received remains more or less invested in various forms. While the Other_ranks likely to spend the retirement amount for fulfilling various typical social responsibilities. The major problem with ESM is poor planning for retirement. According to McNeil and Giffen (1967) prior planning before separation from service is instrumental in transitional process. The data from available subjects point out that 94% ESM have single income source. Their spouses are homemakers. When they retire they have grown up children with added several social undeclared responsibilities.

The 49.33% (37 out of 75) JCOs were seeking employment after retirement while figure of Other_ranks on this count is 69.33 % (52 out of 75). Educational qualifications are known to have decisive role in achievements in civil life. At the time of retirement 100% JCOs surveyed and 78.67% Other_ranks holds 10th & below, 16% Other_ranks were 12th and just 5.33% were graduate in terms of personal educational qualifications apart from qualifications issued by the army in recognition of colour service. Maheshwari et al. (2015) & Morin (2011) observed that educational qualifications and professional qualifications plays significant role in transition. This figure paints a somewhat clear picture of differential relationship of rank with this measure.
Table 5-1: Response to Semi-structured Interview Question “Your family background please” (Financial Status).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JCOs</td>
<td>37.33</td>
<td>53.33</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ranks</td>
<td>57.33</td>
<td>42.67</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.33</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further, the findings reveal that difference between the military ranks is the function of Present Quality of Life measure. It was found that QoL rests on the platform of individual’s resources & demands. In context of this variable the resources and demands play positive role with significant effect on the present quality of life measure. The positive resources and demand balance tends to have categorical effect on the self-perceived present quality of life as evident in the findings.

Furthermore, the measure of Quality of Life Expected While Joining the Indian Army presents a significant relationship with rank. The moderators has minimal effect on the Ranks it might be due to that individual’s expectations of forthcoming life as a soldier is a function of contemporary conditions of society and the goodwill enjoyed by the Indian Army at that times. The 90.67 % (68 out of 75) sampled JCOs responded by saying that they joined Indian Army “शौक से” and the figure for Other_ranks is 62.67% (47 out of 75). In a decade the joining objective of “शौक से” is down by almost 28%, which speaks volume. In a way the response is depicting their satisfaction during the course of service in the Indian army due to handling stress, role stress etc. during the service. The expectations at the joining the service were differing but institutional facilities were similar for both ranks.

Additionally, the ‘Rank’ does not have significant relationship with Overall Satisfaction Level measure. Neither ‘overall satisfaction level’ is the function of
‘Rank’ nor is it affected by individual’s resources and demands. The satisfaction is a
dynamic complex individual behaviour related to the internal fulfillment and function
of sensory events, individual’s inherent traits, psycho-social environment and
perceptual style. The satisfaction an abstract aspect composed of few positive critical
components such as, active engagement, positive appreciation, meaning and quality
of everyday experience. One of the JCOs said, “We derive our satisfaction from our
rich treasure of experiences we had during the service, the fatigues, the gun and the
original fun in the lap of nature with moments of sharing hot tea in a large steel mug
with friends in minus 25 degree temperature”.

Factor Analysis

To reveal the theoretical structure among the variables factor analysis was
done. To meet the objectives Principal Component Factor Analysis was done to
explore the possible groupings among the measured variables.

Overall two conclusions can be drawn for the consistency of grouping of
variables over the year in ESMs. Achievements in civil life bring social, occupational
and emotional adjustment and more resources than demands ensure satisfaction and
that satisfactory and good combination of resources leads to pleasant transition. The
clustering indicates that reasonable the achievements, better the psychosocial
adjustment. Whereas, resources vis-à-vis achievements more likely to ensure
satisfaction and quality of life. Taking together to lines of findings, it can be deduced
that adjustment and satisfaction/quality of life do not converge theoretically. Strange
finding of factor analysis further emerged as wellbeing/psychological distress
changed its position at different trimesters sometimes loading along with dimension
of adjustment while other times with present quality of life or expected etc. Thus the
factor analysis gives a caution in selecting the dependent variables particularly
adjustment, wellbeing, quality of life and life satisfaction etc. There appear a lot of
overlapping among these constructs in laymen terms as well as theoretical terms, i.e., sometimes appear conjunctive and disjunctive.

**In a Nutshell**

The findings from the study indicate that within a year the process of transition will be likely to be completed on a better note. It is a sort of re-introduction in the civil environment in almost all areas of life. Material possessions and secular demands are immaterial for psychological scope of living. Worldly achievements are indispensable and important; hence sustenance of self-motivation is the key for gainful achievements. Due to achievements, QoL seems to improve while psychological distress tends to lessen.

**Limitations**

1. The sample was purposive and limited to Indian Army veterans (non-commissioned officers) which limit its general applicability at wider scale.

2. Standard tools were not available to measure the self-perceived resources and demands. A calculator based on MS Excel was used.

3. Empirical literature was almost non-existent, especially, on non-commissioned ranks of Indian Army.

4. The data on ‘achievements in civil life’ were collected from those ESM who were retired within six months or less, however, six months’ time period is too small to achieve something worthwhile in civil society except gaining some employment in public or private sector. Hence, the measure ‘achievements in civil life’ would have been assessed after elapsing the considerable post retirement time.
Discussion

Delimitations

1. The focus of research was to study the behavioural aspect of ESM, the spouse/family might influence the measured variable significantly, and the families members especially spouse of the ESM were not included in the study because of time constraints.

2. Moderate to high quantity of alcohol consumption is rampant among the serving and retired soldiers. Obviously alcohol consumption pattern and its effect on their post retirement behaviour especially on measured variables should have also been included in the study to have indicative of psychological distress and maladjustment.

Suggestions

1. The future studies might be undertaken to include the Ex-servicemen (Non-commissioned officers) from all the three branches of the defence with their spouses.

2. A comparative study between commissioned and non-commissioned ESM on similar measures might be undertaken.

3. Other measures such as, socio economic status, purpose in life, whole health issues including psychological disorders such as PTSD, adjustment disorders, positive relations, spiritual health and impact of army training on individual behaviour might also be included in the future studies for comprehensive outcomes.

4. The interstate sample might be taken to understand the effect of state policies on the measured variables.

5. Although the total dropout rate was 13.33% (20 out of 150) in nine to eleven months, but to arrest its future occurrence a type of incentive may be introduced.
6. The means score for ESM on GHQ-12 is 10.9 which is little higher. The manual of the test describes that an individual scoring from 8 to 15 are ‘probable psychiatric cases’ is a cause of concern. The ESM clinics such as, Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme clinics (ECHS) must be equipped with trained individuals who can address psychological issues found to be relatively higher among this set of sample.

7. The preparation for potential soldiers should started at least one year before their date of retirement for post-retirement life in three important domains such as, psychological life, career and social life.

8. A lesson can be learnt from Czech Republic where potential retirees are retrained well before the actual date of separation from the armed forces. Such soldiers are required to be retrained psychologically also so that they can meet the demands of civilian life with minimum fuss.

9. The initiatives like ‘Give an Hour’ (www.giveanhour.org) and ‘Strategic Outreach to Families of All Reservists’ (SOFAR) (www.sofarusa.org) being run in western part of the globe needs to be replicated in our context so that the transition can be smooth and on positive note. However, such initiatives require selfless service from dedicated volunteers.

**Implications**

1. The study will give fillip to clear the general visualization of masses (discriminatory perception) in respect of ESM that by virtue of their training their adjustment in society is not a cake walk. “There is a strong public perception that the military institutionalizes its personnel, making adjustment to civilian life when they leave very difficult” (Jolly, 1996). The study proved that with passage of time ESM assimilated well into the society and the paradigms of adjustment shift in a systematic pattern from ‘psychosocial’ to ‘health and family’ components and from ‘psycho-
physical health’ measures to ‘psycho adaptation measures’. Additionally, when life becomes stable and in synchronous with immediate environment the focus shifts to adding quality to life and health.

2. Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme clinics can take a cue from this study and address the behavioural issues being faced by ESM and/or likely to face.

3. The agencies responsible for looking after the ESM related issues can now focus on the specific adjustment components need additional attention as suggested by the outcomes of the study.

At last, this discussion is limited to the sample, tools, literature and outcomes of this study. Further the discussion pertaining to ESM is continuing process. In view of outcomes of interaction with ESM and review of literature a typical life cycle model (Fig 5-2) of ESM has been prepared for quick visual understanding.
Fig. 5-1: Tentative Model of Professional Psychosocial Life Cycle of A Typical ESM

Individual is integral part of society with matched self identity

Most common reason for joining is followed by high status enjoyed by army men in society and then employment

Joins Indian Army with varied ambitions while expecting quality life

Serve at different geographical locations across India & abroad (only very few lucky ones) acquainting with different customs & traditions while firmly bonded to the army culture.

Total commitment to army as a result less attention to family & social life

Irregular visits, witness to changing psycho social milieu yet remains aloof, results in poor integration

Severing of well formed institutional interpersonal relations

Reduced institutional support

Psychological distress

Physical fitness declines with advancing age

Search for fresh identity

Search for employment

Loss of security net

Social status shrinks

Adjustment process

Demands surges

Resources depletes

Self efforts

Formal support

Study Area

1. Completion of Initial term of engagement
2. Completion of specified term in a rank & no further promotion
3. Medical reasons

Retirement (Compulsory/volunteer)