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# SPIRITUALITY AND RESILIENCE AS PREDICTORS OF LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG SPOUSES OF DEPLOYED AND UNDEPLOYED CENTRAL ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL

Ann Thomas<sup>1</sup>, Bhavya Gahlaut<sup>2\*</sup> and Ankita Verma<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Sree Mookambika Institute of Medical Sciences, Kulashekaram, Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India, 629161 0009-0009-1794-4861 Email: [anntomas1898@gmail.com](mailto:anntomas1898@gmail.com)

<sup>2\*</sup>Assistant Professor, Jindal School of Psychology and Counselling, O P Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana, India 131001 0000-0002-6875-6168 Email: [bhavya.gahlaut@gmail.com](mailto:bhavya.gahlaut@gmail.com)

<sup>3\*</sup>Assistant Professor, Jindal School of Psychology and Counselling, O P Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana, India 131001 0000-0002-1352-3690 Email: [ankitaverma.iitr@gmail.com](mailto:ankitaverma.iitr@gmail.com)

## ABSTRACT

Spouses of deployed Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) face several unique challenges due to the military's demands, such as frequent transfers and multiple family separations due to training and field postings. The aim of this study is to determine whether spirituality and resilience play a role in predicting life satisfaction among spouses of deployed and undeployed CAPF personnel. Participants included 60 spouses of CAPF personnel, aged between 25 to 55, and divided into two groups of 29 & 31. Participants provided demographic information and completed the Spirituality Perspective Scale and Resilience Scale as predictors and Satisfaction with Life Scale as a criterion. Data were analysed using Multiple Regression. The results of multiple regression indicated that spirituality and resilience were significant predictors in both groups and predicted life satisfaction in spouses of deployed personnel 11 percent more than spouses of undeployed personnel. Therefore, resilience and spirituality explained higher variation in life satisfaction among the spouses of deployed CAPF personnel.

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**Keywords:** Central Armed Police Forces, spouses of CAPFs Personnel, Spirituality, Resilience, Life Satisfaction, Deployments, Psychological Health & Wellbeing, Mental Health

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of Central Armed Forces Personnel (CAPF) is to protect the territorial integrity and support internal stability in the country. Over the past 10 years, the stress in the CAPF has received much attention from the general public, civil society, and political circles, frequently raising serious concerns for the wellbeing of CAPF personnel and their family.

According to previous research, the need for security is the first and foremost psychological need, emerging after basic physiological needs and preceding all humanistic needs such as the need for self-actualization, belongingness, and self-esteem. Put another way, the need for security is the drive to reach one's full potential and make the greatest possible contributions to society<sup>1</sup>. Deployment of CAPF personnel is one such crisis that affects the security needs of the personnel as well as the family members. The effect of deployment on psychological health and wellbeing of personnel and their families has not been adequately researched. On the other hand, the study concerning the impact of military deployment indicates that going through a period of separation ranks third on the list of stressful occurrences, with partner death or divorce coming in first<sup>2</sup>. Deployment here means relocation of forces to desired area of operations and away from family. Similarly, undeployed means when the personnel is serving the force and residing with the family. Long-term separations from family members as a result of serving in combat zones or harsh terrains can be traumatic for both personnel and their families. Spouses who are left at home are the ones who face financial challenges, loneliness and additional parenting responsibilities. Spouses of such personnel are forced to act as single parents during deployment of their spouses, leaving them with complete responsibility of the household and children, changing family dynamics, and financial strain<sup>3</sup>. Innumerable researches have explored the role of spirituality as a protective factor (quote research) against challenging situations. In a study conducted by Hourani, Williams, Forman-Hoffman, Lane, Weimer, and Bray examined with increased concern about the mental health difficulties of military members returning from conflict, the role of spirituality as a potential coping technique for military personnel is crucial<sup>4</sup>. Currently, there is no one universally accepted definition of spirituality<sup>5</sup>. Studies show that there is a strong beneficial link, mediated by health-related behaviours, between spirituality and health-related behaviours<sup>6</sup>. A person's sense of inner wholeness and harmony with their surroundings and community is embodied in

spirituality<sup>7</sup>. It captures an individual's inherent need to search for meaning and significance in life<sup>8</sup>. It has been discovered that spirituality helps people cope with difficult circumstances<sup>9-10</sup>.

In addition, recent research has highlighted the role of resilience as important resource for coping with challenging situations. Resilient responses to adversity are very common across the life span. Resilience is defined as "A class of phenomenon that is characterized by favorable outcomes in spite of substantial risks to adaptation or development. "There are primarily two factors that are involved, a person must first confront a "significant" danger or risk that has the potential to result in unfavorable outcomes before a resilience assessment can be made<sup>11</sup>. Resilient responses to adversity are very common across the life span. Psychological resilience was also discovered to be beneficial as it was positively associated with happiness and life satisfaction<sup>12</sup>.

The overall wellbeing of an individual can be assessed by level of life satisfaction an individual acknowledges. Abolghasemi and Varaniyab found stated that life satisfaction, is primarily determined by personality factors, but is also posited to be affected by a genetic, social cognitive mechanisms, in particular, goal-directed activity, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports and resources. They also suggested that the life satisfaction, is seen as partly determined by personality factors, but is also posited to be affected by a genetic, social cognitive mechanisms, in particular, goal-directed activity, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports and resources<sup>13</sup>. According to Diener, E., Suh, E. M., Lucas, R. L., & Smith, H. it is considered to be a key indicator of an individual's successful adaptation to changes in life circumstances<sup>14</sup>. Life-satisfaction can be defined as, "a positive evaluation of the conditions of your life, a judgment that, at least on balance, it measures up favorably against your standards or expectations" <sup>15</sup>. "Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as a whole. In other words, how much the person likes the life he/she leads"<sup>16-17</sup>.

Despite extensive research on resilience and spirituality, the critical question concerning with direction of influence on life satisfaction remains largely unanswered especially in the Indian context and even more so in lives of CAPF personnel and their family members. Thus, this study attempts to answer this question and investigate further the role of spirituality and resilience in spouses of deployed and undeployed CAPF personnel. The study anticipates that

spirituality and resilience will predict life satisfaction more strongly in spouses of deployed personnel than in spouses of undeployed personnel. Based on existing literature following alternate hypotheses were formulated:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Spirituality will have significant relation with life satisfaction among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Spirituality will have significant relation with life satisfaction among spouses of deployed CAPF personnel.
- H<sub>3</sub>: Resilience will have significant relation with life satisfaction among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel.
- H<sub>4</sub>: Resilience will have significant relation with life satisfaction among spouses of deployed CAPF personnel.

**1. METHODOLOGY & TOOLS**

Sample: The sample consisted of total 60 females, spouses of 31 deployed and 29 undeployed CAPFs personnel with an age range of 25-55 years hailing from different states in India. The research design employed was ex-post facto coupled with correlational design and snowball sampling was employed to collect data.

**1.1 Tools**

**1.1.1 The Spirituality Perspective Scale (SPS)<sup>18</sup>**

The SPS is a 10-item questionnaire designed to assess how strongly people hold certain spiritual beliefs and engage in spiritually related behaviours. This scale has been used on Indian samples extensively. Reed classified the items according to spiritual behaviors and belief. The scale has four items reflecting the frequency of spiritual behaviors, six items to assess spiritual beliefs. No item refers to a specific god or religion. Item responses are averaged into a single score that ranges from 1 to 6, with higher scores

indicating a higher level of spirituality. The SPS has reported a high internal consistency, with an alpha of 0.91.

**1.1.2 The Resilience Scale (RS)<sup>19</sup>**

This scale was constructed by Wagnid and Young and it consists of 25 items. The participants are asked to state the extent to which they agree or disagree with each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). All items are positively scored. The possible total scores thus range from 25 to 175 with higher scores reflecting higher resilience. The RS reports high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .72 to .94. This scale is also widely used in Indian studies<sup>20</sup>.

**1.1.3 Satisfaction with Life Scale**

This scale was constructed by Diener *et. al*<sup>21</sup>. It is a 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of an individual's life. The Satisfaction with Life Scale was developed to assess the extent to which participants feel satisfaction in their life as a whole. Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree. The Satisfaction with Life Scale is reported to have a strong internal consistency, with an alpha of 0.87 and excellent test-retest reliability, with a correlation of 0.82 across a two-month time period. This scale is also widely used in Indian studies<sup>22-23</sup>.

**1.2 Procedure and Data Analysis**

The participants were contacted using snowball sampling. Informed consent was taken before collecting demographic data, The collected data was analysed using SPSS<sup>24</sup> for descriptive statistics, intercorrelations and regression analysis.

**2. RESULT**

**Table 1 Showing descriptive statistics, Inter-correlations of Spirituality, Resilience, and Life satisfaction.**

Variables	Undeployed		Deployed		1	2	3
	M	SD	M	SD			
Spirituality	45.96	8.94	42.24	10.36	-	-	-
Resilience	135.9	15.91	130.2	15.77	.383*	-	-
Life Satisfaction	27.12	3.67	26.44	3.91	.079	.607*	-

N = 60 (31 spouses of deployed personnel & 29 spouses of undeployed personnel)

\*Correlation is significant at p<0.01 level

The descriptive statistics and intercorrelations between Spirituality, Resilience and Life Satisfaction in Table 1 revealed that the mean value correspondents score for Spirituality was 45.96 with a standard deviation 8.94 for spouses of deployed CAPF personnel and mean value of 42.24 with a standard deviation of 10.36 for undeployed population. Statistical results of Resilience scores for deployed and undeployed population showed a mean of 135.9 and 130.2 with standard deviation of 15.91 and 15.77. Life satisfaction scores a

mean of 27.12 and 26.44 for deployed and undeployed population along with standard deviation value of 3.67 and 3.91 respectively. Intercorrelation between Spirituality, Resilience and Life Satisfaction indicates that there is significant positive correlation between Spirituality and Resilience among spouses of deployed and undeployed CAPF personnel ( $r=.383, p \leq 0.01$ ). Resilience and life satisfaction also has a strong significant positive correlation ( $r=.607, p \leq 0.01$ ), implying that when one increases, the other also increases and vice versa.

**Table 2 Showing regression coefficient of spirituality & resilience on life satisfaction among spouses of deployed and undeployed CAPF personnel.**

Variables	$R^2$	F for $\Delta R^2$	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Model I (Deployed & Undeployed)	.396	18.72	-	-	-	-	.000**
Spirituality			-.070	.043	-.180	-1.614	.112
Resilience			.160	.026	.676	6.070	.000**
Model II (Undeployed)	.339	6.68	-	-	-	-	.154
Spirituality			-.004	.069	-.011	-.060	.952
Resilience			.146	.045	.588	3.215	.003*
Model III (Deployed)	.500	14.00	-	-	-	-	.016*
Spirituality			-.140	.056	.340	-2.481	.019*
Resilience			.162	.032	.701	5.111	.000**

\* significant at 0.05 level

\*\* significant at 0.001 level

Table 2 demonstrates that multiple regression coefficient for both Deployed and undeployed population together (Model I), undeployed population (Model II) and deployed population (Model III).

#### Model I

In the first model 39% of variance in Life satisfaction is explained by Spirituality and resilience together. Spirituality was found not to be significant. It indicates Spirituality of both deployed and undeployed population together didn't have any significant role regarding determination of their Life satisfaction. However, result regarding Resilience indicate that multiple correlation coefficient was significant in those aspect. ( $R^2=.396, p<.001$ ) and resilience predicts Life satisfaction.

Obtained t coefficient for Life satisfaction indicate that Resilience has significant regression coefficient ( $t= 6.070, p < .001$ ), positive sign clearly demonstrates that Resilience has positive role in predicting life satisfaction and that Life satisfaction increases with advancing level of Resilience.

#### Model II

In the second model 33% of variance in Life satisfaction is explained by Spirituality and resilience together. Spirituality among spouses undeployed CAPF personnel didn't have any significant role in determining their Life satisfaction However, result regarding Resilience indicate significance in those aspect. ( $R^2=.339, p<.05$ ). The obtained t coefficient for Life satisfaction indicate that Resilience has significant regression coefficient ( $t= 3.215, p < .05$ ), positive

sign clearly demonstrates that Resilience has positive role in predicting life satisfaction and that Life satisfaction increases with advancing level of Resilience.

#### Model III

In the third model 50% of variance in Life satisfaction is explained by Spirituality and resilience together. Spirituality and Resilience show that multiple correlation coefficients were significant for both aspects. ( $R^2=.500, p<.05$  &  $p<.001$ ). This indicates that Spirituality and resilience of Spouses of Deployed CAPFs personnel has a significant role regarding determination of their Life satisfaction.

Obtained t coefficient for Life satisfaction indicate that Spirituality ( $t = - 2.481, p < .05$ ), and Resilience ( $t= 5.111, p <.001$ ), has significant regression coefficient. The negative sign shows that spirituality plays a negative role in predicting life satisfaction and that life satisfaction declines with increasing levels of spirituality, while resilience plays a positive role in predicting life satisfaction and that life satisfaction rises with increasing levels of resilience.

Result regarding role of Spirituality and Resilience in predicting Life satisfaction showed that resilience has significant role in creating variation in Life satisfaction for both the groups. And it was also found that Spirituality and Resilience predicts Life satisfaction among spouses of deployed CAPF

personnel.

### 3. DISCUSSION

The result of the study reveals that “Spirituality and Resilience predicts Life satisfaction among spouses of deployed CAPF personnel” which is line with the proposed hypothesis and Resilience predicts Life satisfaction among spouses of both deployed and undeployed population.

#### **H1: Spirituality will have significant relation with life satisfaction among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel.**

The findings show that Spirituality and Resilience together predicts 33% of the variation among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel. The results suggest that spirituality has little bearing on the life satisfaction of the undeployed population since spirituality does not significantly predict life satisfaction among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel. This can be explained by the fact that when their husbands are with them, the spouses experience less stress and have more time for themselves, or it can be connected to the fact that, in conformance with Indian culture, the wife takes care of her husband and as a result, she does not have enough time to engage in spiritual activities. As there is no evidence in this study to support this, this hypothesis is rejected and also, the results run contradictory to what is already known in the literature.

#### **H2: Spirituality will have significant relation with life satisfaction among spouses of deployed CAPF personnel.**

The results reveal that among spouses of Deployed CAPF personnel 70% of the variance in Life satisfaction is explained by Spirituality and Resilience together. The surprising finding is that spirituality is negatively correlated but has a significant relationship with life satisfaction which means when spirituality increases life satisfaction decreases. This may be because spouses of deployed military personnel may have a lot more responsibility and chores that are typically divided between the couples. As a result, the person might not have enough time to engage in spiritual activities. Walsh reports that spiritual beliefs and religious texts and traditions offered succor and guidance through difficult and desperate times<sup>25</sup>. Researchers have discovered that spirituality and religion positively and negatively correlate to coping with stress<sup>26-28</sup>. According Glory and] Simon, spirituality in this displays a strong relationship with psychological well-being<sup>29</sup>. Findings by T. L. Gall, C. Charbonneau, N. H. Clarke, K. Grant, A. Joseph, and L. Shouldice

proposed that spiritual appraisals are involved in initially making sense of one's stressor based on one's spiritual beliefs, an individual can attempt to explain the situation through an attribution of causal origins (e.g. God's will). Such attempts at making meaning may help the individual to reduce initial levels of distress enough to engage in coping behaviour. Spiritual coping involves the specific behavior that an individual uses to respond to either the stressor or related emotional reactions<sup>30</sup>.

Therefore, the result clearly shows that the study's findings are consistent with the hypothesis.

#### **H3: Resilience will have significant relation with life satisfaction among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel.**

The results reveal that among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel just 33% of the variant is predicted by Spirituality and Resilience together. Resilience is positively correlated with Life satisfaction that an increase in resilience can eventually increase Life satisfaction in spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel. According to a previous study, resilience measured by the RS has a positive correlation with life satisfaction, self-esteem, self-rated health, self-actualization, stress management and social support, and is negatively correlated with depressive symptoms and anxiety<sup>31</sup>. The relationship between resilience and well-being has been proposed to be mediated by positive view of the self, the world and the future<sup>32</sup>. According to Reiss in what he called—Family's Construction of Reality, family paradigms and patterns shape the relationship of the family through the social environment<sup>33</sup>. Therefore, as a result, the community or culture in which the family lives can contribute to stress, which can contribute to increased resilience in the undeployed population even if their husbands are not, posted somewhere far away. There may be other unknown issues that are causing a lot of problems, and bouncing back from those situations always increases the level of resilience. Thus, the results clearly show that Resilience has a significant relation with Life satisfaction among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel, which is in line with the hypothesis.

#### **H4: Resilience will have significant relation with life satisfaction among spouses of deployed CAPF personnel.**

The results reveal that among spouses of deployed CAPF personnel 70% of the variance in Life satisfaction is explained by Spirituality and Resilience together. Moreover, resilience is positively correlated with Life satisfaction. When their husbands are deployed, the spouses of

deployed military personnel experience constant stress. The special challenges that come with having a military family—such as being away from extended family and social supports, deployments, relocations, and issues finding employment might become even more challenging. Over time, a family's ability to cope may be overwhelmed by a "pileup" of stressors, losses, and disruptions<sup>34</sup>. Deployments, family health issues, and deaths disturbed the lives of the study's partners. Other life-changing events for each family coincided with their spouse's deployment, adding to what was already regarded as a difficult period. The sense of being under besieged as a result into family turmoil and distress.

A study demonstrated that resilience predicts a variety of well-being outcomes in spouses of military personnel. Trait resilience also predicted several health outcomes including general psychological distress, relationship functioning, sleep quality, and overall health. Notably, the number of soldier deployments was not associated with resilience<sup>35</sup>. Numerous studies have revealed a relationship between resilience and life satisfaction<sup>36</sup>.

Thus, the results clearly shows that Resilience has a significant relation with Life satisfaction among spouses of undeployed CAPF personnel, which is in line with the proposed hypothesis.

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In addressing the research question regarding the relationship of spirituality, resilience and Life satisfaction among military families, most of the participants indicated spirituality had a strong influence on their ability to bounce back from their crises and which also predicted Life satisfaction. As the results of multiple regression analysis indicates that the Spirituality and resilience predicts life satisfaction among spouses of Deployed CAPF personnel when compared to undeployed counterparts.

#### 4. CONCLUSION:

The study aims to find whether spirituality and resilience predict life satisfaction among spouses of Deployed and Undeployed CAPF personnel. The result obtained confirms that Spirituality and Resilience predict higher life satisfaction among spouses of deployed CAPF personnel which can be attributed to gaining independence and coping skills of spouse in daily chores due to the deployment of husband. The findings suggest a need for awareness programmes for family of CAPF personnel to maintain balance in various aspects of marital and social life when they are not deployed. More studies on a larger sample may reveal in-depth understanding of unknown underlying factors leading to similar results.

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