# Sexual Tolerance: The Times They Are A’changing

The decision by the United States secretary of defense, Leon Panetta, amongst other leaders to open combat positions to women culminated the long series of changes meant to assimilate more women into the military. Restrictions on women’s involvement as well as strict recruitment specifications in combat had seen a considerably small number of women serving in the military. However, this policy enforcement ended the long-standing issue of gender restrictions and positively transformed the current military stance toward women serving in the defense forces. Some of the factors that spurred the historic decision included the fairness issue in recruitment processes for professional job positions in the public domain. However, women involved in the military were still limited to other underlying policy factors that specified units that can accept women. The combat restrictions mostly affected the Army and Marine Corps units that maintained strict rules for women serving in these forces. Due to the policy changes, women could now fly combat aircraft, operate submarines, and serve in both Army and Marine Corps combat and support units (Armor, 2013). Although the military evolution had various implications such as the opening of combat positions for women and the increase in the number of female recruits in the defense forces, it is apparent that it improved gender integration in forces in various ways.

The changing roles of women in the military have led to the opening of more combat positions for females than ever before. Ever since the Great War, women have served in the military forces as primary providers of support services to men during battles. Women provided medical, clerical, logistics, and other support services required in the army headquarters (Schreibersdorf, 2011). Due to restrictions, they could not engage in direct ground combats that involved intense self-defense mechanisms. However, this attitude has since changed thereby leading to a new set of possible positions that women can occupy and serve while in the military forces. In essence, the recent evolution in the army has overrun the traditional roles of women, and they can now be involved in ongoing battles along with their male counterparts. During the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, women could not serve in the Army and the Marine Corps units due to policy restrictions that excluded them from engaging in highly combative squads that involved intense self-defense (Armor, 2013). In my view, women can be useful in some critical areas such as gathering intelligence and logistics that determine the fate of a military operation. However, due to the policy enforcement, women now have almost equal opportunities in these forces as men to support the forces. Moreover, they also engage in risky military operations alongside men to supplement them with technical assistance and reinforcement. Hence, the recent changes in the military have created more opportunities for women to serve in virtually all positions in the armed forces, thus strengthening all the aspects of defense where some are more efficient with females.

The policy changes that address their service in the military have also led to a significant increase in the number of women recruits in the army units. The number of women serving in defense forces has been relatively lower in the past years due to policy restrictions as well as social doctrines that hamper their willingness to join forces. The military evolution has resulted in the abolishment of these policies and ideologies, thus opening more vacancies for women to serve in various positions that were deemed masculine. Consequently, the overall number of women serving in the military rose to 15 percent in 2002, but later dropped slightly and maintained at 14 percent (Armor, 2013). Similarly, the percentage population of active women officers in Marine Corps also increased from 5 % to 17.5 % in 2011 (Armor, 2013). However, this trend has transformed the entire military department, particularly in the United States by embracing the services of women meant to provide vital support services to the forces. In my opinion, I believe that this move has not only promoted gender fairness in recruitment exercises, but also advanced the military capacity of the defense forces.

The changing roles of women in the security forces of the modern world have also led to increased integration of women in the forces with minimal gender discrimination cases. The policies have changed the attitudes of male soldiers towards females in active military service by acknowledging their capabilities as well as their vital support that is required on the battlefield. For this reason, women can engage in combat missions and operate technical military artillery during wars. Such cases have promoted the mutual cohesion between male and female soldiers serving in various military units. However, cases of sexual assaults have increased ever since the adoption of this policy that allows women to occupy different officer and military leadership positions as well (Schreibersdorf, 2011). The rate of sexual assaults has been consistent with the number of women recruited to serve in the military. For instance, the reported cases of sexual harassment increased from 2,400 in 2005 to approximately 3,000 complaints in 2011 (Armor, 2013). Despite this increase in sexual harassment, efforts to integrate more women in the defense forces have been successful. However, I think the military should formulate policies that safeguard women against sexual assaults while in military service to mitigate the issue.

To sum up, the policy changes that have increased the role of women in the army have adequately addressed sexuality issues that restricted women from serving in some defense units. The implications of this policy implementation include the opening of more positions such as the combat that had been earlier limited for women. Moreover, the military has also recently experienced a significant increase in the number of women serving in some military units that did not previously allow women. Furthermore, they have also been integrated into the defense forces and trusted with technical operations than in the past years. As such, these policy changes have adequately addressed the issue of gender fairness in public service positions with restrictions not based merely on sexual orientations of individuals but the professional job requirements. However, proper leadership is also required to minimize sexual assaults, especially on women serving in the military.

## References

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