

Are the Indian armed forces facing a human capital crisis?

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Press reports in early 2008 indicate that admissions to the National Defence Academy (NDA) and the Indian Military Academy (IMA) have dropped sharply. While standards for recruitment have remained the same for 30 years, at the NDA only 172 of the available 300 seats were filled. NDA cadets go through a three-year degree course for all three armed forces after which they go into the IMA, Air Force Academy or the Naval Academy for a year before being commissioned into the services. At the IMA, only 90 cadets enrolled for the 250 available seats.

(Continued on Page 2)

Fratricide in the army, navy and air force

	2004	2005	2006	2007 (Up to 5.8.2007)
Army	05	06	13	06
Air Force	01	01	0	0
Navy**	0	0	0	0

In principle the shortage could be alleviated by recruiting more women, but that appears unlikely. The percentage of women officers in the Indian defence forces:

Army	2.6
Navy	2.9
Air Force	5.4
Army Medical Corps	13.6
Nursing	100
Dental Corps	18.9

Even in branches where women are well represented there are growing shortages:

SERVICE	SHORTAGE
Medical Officers	138
Dental Officers	58
Military Nursing Officers	230

Shortage of officers in the armed forces (as of August 2007)

	ARMY	NAVY	AIR FORCE
Authorised strength	46615	8797	12128
Positioned strength	35377	7336	10563
Shortage	11238	1461	1565

Casualties suffered by army personnel/officers:

YEAR	FATAL				NON-FATAL			
	OFFICERS	JCO	OTHER	TOTAL	OFFICERS	JCO	OTHER	TOTAL
2003	17	23	188	228	42	40	483	565
2004	12	9	146	167	27	22	320	369
2005	8	8	90	106	15	12	205	232
Total	37	40	424	501	84	74	1008	1166

Officers seeking discharge and whose applications were accepted:

YEAR	ARMY		NAVY		AIR FORCE	
	SEEKING	APPROVED	SEEKING	APPROVED	SEEKING	APPROVED
2004	435	290	119	115	249	247
2005	536	365	176	168	308	177
2006	811	464	259	178	230	88
2007	882	377	253	176	239	53

Suicides in the army, navy and air force

	2004	2005	2006	2007 (Up to 5.8.2007)
Army	100	92*	120	70
Air Force	13	23	24	11
Navy**	05	05	02	01

*Includes 15 attempted suicide cases; **This figure includes case of Coast Guard also.