



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**  
**CENTER FOR GENDER STUDIES**

**EFFECTS OF DEPLOYMENT ON MILITARY SPOUSES: THE  
CASE OF SIGNAL AND GOFA CAMP MILITARY RESIDENCE  
AREAS**

**BY**  
**SABA MEKONEN TAMRIE**

**JUNE, 2023**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
Gender Studies**

**ADVISOR: HANNA TELEGN (PhD)**

**JUNE, 2023**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**APPROVAL**

This is to certify that Saba Mekonen's thesis, entitled " Effects of deployment on military spouses: the case of Signal and Gofa camp military residence areas," is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Gender Studies, complies with university regulations and meets accepted standards in terms of originality and quality.

**APPROVED BY BOARD OF THE EXAMINERS**

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby would like to declare that the thesis entitled ‘effects of deployment on military spouses: the case of Signal and Gofa camp military residence areas’ is my original work and every material used has been duly acknowledged.

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The hard copy and soft copy of this thesis work was submitted to the Center for Gender Studies upon the approval and confirmation of board of the examiners.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>APPROVAL .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Background of the Study.....	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.3. Research Questions.....	7
1.4. Objective of the Study.....	8
1.4.1. General objective .....	8
1.4.2. Specific Objectives .....	8
1.5. Significance of the study.....	8
1.6. Scope of Study .....	8
1.7. Limitations of the Study.....	9
1.8. Operational Definitions of Terms .....	9
1.9. Organization of the Thesis .....	10
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1. Theoretical Framework.....	11
2.1.1. Family stability theory .....	11
2.1.2. Coping Theory .....	12
2.2. Review of Related Studies.....	14
2.2.1. Deployment of Armed Forces.....	14
2.2.2. Military Spouses and Emotional Cycle of Deployment.....	19

2.2.3. Challenges faced by Military families .....	22
2.2.4. Impacts of deployment on the remaining spouse .....	23
2.2.5. Effects of Military Deployment on Spouses .....	24
2.2.6. How Families Cope in the Face of Military Deployment .....	27
2.2.7. Mitigating Strategies for Families on the Effects of Military Deployment .....	27
2.2.8. Support for Military Spouses .....	28
2.3. Summary of Literature Review and Theoretical Framework.....	29
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	31
3.2. Description of Study Area.....	31
3.3. Research Design.....	31
3.4. Sampling and Sampling Technique .....	32
3.5. Sources of Data .....	33
3.6. Data Collection Instruments.....	33
3.6.1. Key Informants’ Interview.....	34
3.6.2. In-Depth Interview .....	35
3.6.3. The research Focus Group Discussion (FGD) .....	37
3.7. Method of Data Analysis .....	37
3.8. Ethical Consideration.....	38
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>39</b>
4.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents.....	39
4.2. Presentations and Discussions of Findings .....	41
4.2.1. Factors that affect military spouses’ well-being during deployment .....	41
4.2.2. Coping Mechanisms to Overcome the Effects of Military Deployment.....	51
4.2.3 Organizational Support and Measures for Military Spouses .....	54
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>58</b>
5.1. Introduction.....	58
5.2. Summary of Findings.....	58
5.3. Conclusion .....	59

5.4. Recommendations.....	60
5.5. Recommendations for further research.....	61
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>62</b>
ANNEX I: INTERVIEW GUIDES .....	1
ANNEX II: FGD GUIDES FOR MILITARY SPOUSES:.....	2
ANNEX III: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE AMHARIC VERSION FOR SELECTIVE MILITARY SPOUSES .....	3
ANNEX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE AMHARIC VERSION FOR SELECTIVE MILITARY SPOUSES .....	4

## LIST OF TABLES

<a href="#"><u>Table3.1: List of Research Participants</u></a> .....	32
<a href="#"><u>Table 3.2: Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants</u></a> .....	35
<a href="#"><u>Table 4.1: Demographic Data of Research Participants</u></a> .....	40

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMISOM – African mission in Somali

AU- African Union

CAR- Central African Republic

DRC- Democratic Republic of Congo

ENDF- Ethiopian National Defense Force

IED- Improvised explosive devices

KII- Key Informant Interview

LRA- Lord's Resistance Army

PTSD- Posttraumatic stress disorder

RTF- Regional Task Force

TBI- Traumatic Brain Injury

UN- United Nations

UNMIS- United Nations Mission in Sudan

UNMISS- United Nations in Souse Sudan

UNAMID- United Nations Mission in South Sudan

UNISFA- United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

## ABSTRACT

*The main objective of this study was to explore the effects of deployment on military spouses in the Ethiopian National Defense Force. A qualitative research approach was used. The target population of this study was thirty-two military spouses and nine military professionals from the Gender, Human Resource Management, Peacekeeping Operations, and Training, Legal, and Medical departments of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces.*

*A purposeful sampling technique was used, and data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from purposively selected military professionals and military spouses using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions based on research questions and study objectives. Data from in-depth interviews, key informants, and focus group discussions were analyzed qualitatively using the thematic analysis method.*

*The research result confirmed that ENDF military spouses faced challenges in relation to their psychological, economic, and social status during combat zone, peacekeeping, and training deployments of the service members. The study identified that the main deployment effects associated with military spouses are loneliness, fear of safety and security, stress, depression, sadness, family dissatisfaction, and financial difficulties. In addition, the study showed that personal, social, and organizational supports were the main coping mechanisms that military spouses adopted during deployment. Addressing the source of deployment effects, factors affecting military spouses' well-being, and coping mechanisms, the study recommended the main measures that have to be taken by the organization in providing programs, services, and systems in order to fill institutional gaps for military spouses.*

**Keywords:** *Military spouse, service member, military deployment, coping*

## CHAPTER ONE: INRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Deployments and other military-related separations are “defining experiences for military service members and their families and they are one of the most widely recognized stressors for military families they also impact the military mission and influence service member retention” (Wiens & Boss, 2006, p. 12). "Deployment" is the term used when military personnel leave their usual daily workstations to train for or perform a mission. Missions vary in length and range from training to humanitarian assistance to combat. Deployment has an effect on the service member, the member’s unit, the units that remain to carry on with existing tasks, and the affiliated support systems in the community as well as the member’s family. With an increased number of married military service members, deployment affects a growing community of spouses and children, both on and off base. Whether service members are single or married, their parents, siblings, and other relatives are frequently part of an extended family network that is affected by deployment and its outcome (Peebles-Kleiger, 1994). Conceptually, military deployment takes place in several different ways; for example, in terms of purpose, a force may be deployed for training, peacekeeping, or combating (Castro, 2006). The three most obvious deployment turning points are notification (i.e., when the service member receives orders for his or her deployment), deployment (i.e., the date of physical separation), and reunion (i.e., when the service member returns home to begin the post deployment phase). These three events signal a number of other turning points in the lives of military families and have been identified as particular sources of stress for them (National Military Family Association, 2005). The deployment phase consists of the service member moving from his or her home installation to the designated place of operation (Military.com, 2017). The deployment changes people's opinions of the marriage, which may have an impact on spousal communication (Parcell, 2014). The service member's return to his or her home installation and preparation for reintegrating, including attending medical and dental evaluations, briefings, and counseling, make up the post-deployment phase (Military.com, 2017). Finally, the service member enters the reintegration phase, which consists of reintegrating with his or her family and community in addition to attending possible additional briefings, medical and dental evaluations, and counseling (military.com, 2017). The deployment phase can be short or long, depending on the mission.

A deployment would last no longer than 12 months, with the service member having 24 months before being deployed again (Rumsfield, 2005).

For example, the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) has taken part in various peacekeeping missions in Africa (UN News, 2020). For combat purposes, ENDF was recently deployed inside the country, leaving their families back at home.

Deployment could also be conceptualized in terms of duration. Families' responses to shorter durations may differ from their responses to longer durations, consequently varying in impact on their psychosocial well-being (Israel, 2010). Conceptualizing deployment in this manner may be vital to understanding its implications and potential effects on family outcomes at every stage of deployment. Most studies that discuss military deployment have been conducted in developed countries such as America, Britain, France, and others, unlike in developing countries such as Ethiopia.

About the effect of deployment on spouses, Ender (2006) noted several potential risk factors commonly experienced by military families. They included physical separation, the risk of injury, the death of a service member, geographical mobility, and the normative constraints of military life. However, the study is limited to establishing the psychosocial well-being of the spouses. Further, with regard to deployment, Wiens and Boss (2006) indicate that families with no unit affiliation as well as young and inexperienced individuals stand at higher risk of suffering the effects of deployment. The risks may not emanate from the military but probably from the social sphere, such as lower income and inexperience in dealing with life stressors that arise as a consequence of deployment. However, in spite of all the challenges associated with deployment, it has been noted that military families are generally resilient.

Militaries make various demands on their soldiers to fulfill the tasks assigned to them. These demands directly or indirectly put pressure on the soldiers' families because the family is expected to support the military in adapting to military institutions' demands and expectations and fulfilling the responsibilities imposed on the soldier. However, changes in society and the family structure have made this adaptation process problematic for families. Increased work-family conflicts within the family as a result of women becoming more involved in business life and the increase in the number of married soldiers have revealed the need for militaries to take steps regarding military families (Sukuru & Adem, 2022).

Military families exist at the crossroads of the military and the family. The military asks soldiers to fulfill their duties and responsibilities as well as meet what is expected of them in their role as military parents in the family. In particular, the military family expects the soldier to be with the family at special times and to spend energy and time with the family (Segal, 1986).

According to Caddick and Fossey (2021), military families experience moments of stress, primarily when their active-duty member is deployed. In particular, deployment affects military spouses who are majorly responsible for all the household duties previously shared with their now-deployed spouse. Most of the research focuses on military members' psychological and emotional well-being and excludes the military spouse who manages the home front (ibid). This suggests that the exploration of military spouse well-being is a critical area for study due to responsibilities and role changes that occur during the period that the active-duty member of the household is deployed. In their research, Caddick and Fossey (2021) state that the non-deployed spouse bears the burden of intensifying stress over time as they manage family demands alone. Families with additional hardships, such as caring for a disabled child, subject the military spouse to the additional stress of managing doctor visits, school meetings, meal preparations, and normal childcare alone. This often results in psychological problems, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, social isolation, and suicide (Quinones, 2019).

Palmer (2008) noted several military family resiliency factors that include comprehensive health care system, education, consistent employment, legal assistance and host of organizations specifically created to provide support to families contributed to resiliency. Such factors assist families in their resiliency to challenges arising from military deployment. Although findings from previous studies may inform us on the effects of military deployment in general, inferences from past research may not be generalized to the current global conflicts or sufficiently account for the unique characteristics of today's military families (Sheppard, et al, 2010).

Military personnel serving in the military are separated from their families at regular intervals for some time as a result of things such as their duties, courses, or exercises. This separation process is experienced for various reasons during peacetime and may last from a few days to a year; this can be much longer during wartime (Segal, 1986).

Deployments have been associated with a wide range of emotional responses and dynamics for deployed military members from the time of physical departure to the time of return, including pre-deployment and post-deployment (Pincus et al., 2001). Military service members have to find the balance between self-efficacy and family support. While away, military service members need to have some sense of distance from family members since they spend such a long time apart.

However, it can be detrimental for service members and their families to be fully separated and have diminished communication with one another for extended periods, especially since deployments are temporary (Rodriguez & Margolin, 2015). Although prior research findings may provide insight into the effects of military deployment in general, they may not apply to current global conflicts or adequately account for the distinctive characteristics of today's military families (Sheppard, et al, 2010). During deployment, military spouses have managed instability, assumed androgynous roles, served as emotional caregivers, adjusted to changes in their marital relationship, recognized their strengths, managed split loyalties, and experienced feelings of rejection (Aducci et al., 2011). While managing such changes during deployment, military spouses experience increased stress, which harms their mental health (Villagran et al., 2013). Research has found that military spouses suffer from depression, anxiety, stress disorders, marital discord, and higher levels of perceived stress (Asbury & Martin, 2012; Blank et al., 2012; Green et al., 2013; Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016; Verdelli et al., 2011; Villagran et al., 2013). As they face a variety of obstacles, military spouses develop coping mechanisms to assist them.

Ethiopia is a predominantly active participant in UN peacekeeping missions and responds positively to calls for the UN Security Council Resolution as it is described in Article 43 of the UN's charter. The Ethiopian Armed Forces were in action to different peace keeping deployments. First, one infantry battalion (the Kagnew Battalion, altogether 5,000 men) was deployed in Korea under United Nations flag after 1950. During their two-year stay, these troops performed with distinction. Then, over 3,000 troops organized in four fully equipped infantry battalions and half an air transport squadron were sent to the Congo to participate in United Nations military actions. Some Ethiopian generals even took command of the entire peacekeeping force. Finally, skirmishes in the vicinity of the Ethio-Somali border in 1964 impelled vigorous and much-lauded Ethiopian military attacks (Levine, 1968:13).

From the UN mission in Korea in 1951 to the current United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA), the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) has been involved in peacekeeping operations. Currently, Ethiopia is the first troop-contributing country among all the UN member states to join a peacekeeping mission, followed by Bangladesh and India, respectively (Harvey & Langholtz, 2010). There is need therefore for further research on the extent of the effects of military deployment especially on deployed ENDF service personnel families. In view of the above, this research sought to evaluate the effects of deployment on the family members of deployed ENDF service personnel at each stage of deployment with a view to establishing mitigating strategies for use by policy makers and Military Commanders of future missions.

During deployment, military spouses have managed instability, assumed androgynous roles, served as emotional caregivers, adjusted to changes in their marital relationships, recognized their own strengths, managed split loyalties, and experienced feelings of rejection (Aducci et al., 2011). While managing such changes during deployment, military spouses experience increased stress, which has a negative impact on their mental health (Villagran et al., 2013). Research has found that military spouses suffer from depression, anxiety; stress disorders, marital discord, and higher levels of perceived stress (Asbury & Martin, 2012; Blank et al., 2012; Green et al., 2013; Southwell & Wadsworth, 2016; Verdeli et al., 2011; Villagran et al., 2013).

As military spouses face various stressors, they develop coping skills to assist themselves. One area in which military spouses may develop or enhance their coping skills is communication. Communication between service members and family members during deployment has been found to buffer negative effects of deployment (Andres, 2014; Baptist et al., 2011; Houston, Pfefferbarum, Sherman, Melson, & Brand, 2013). If military spouses develop ineffective coping skills, research has shown that they may suffer from mal adaptation, depression and anxiety (Blank et al., 2011; Padden, Connors, & Agazio, 2011).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Military deployment significantly impacts the family, particularly the military spouse. According to De Soir (2017), analyzing the main difficulties and benefits recognized both at the individual and collective level inherent to the deployed active-duty member is crucial. As discussed by Ross et al. (2020), given the nature of their experiences, during the period in

which the active-duty member is deployed, communication with the family via letters, phone calls, and video calls allows a more significant emotional balance to be established both for the military member as well as for the spouse and children and to obtain a more favorable performance in their functions. These are one of the fundamental means used by the military and their spouses during the period of the military member's deployment for the response of physical and emotional distance (Ross et al., 2020). According to Rea et al. (2015), even though social media positively impacts military spouses, more research is needed to explore how couples utilize different ways of communication and social media during deployment to feel and remain connected with their service members. (Rossetto, 2015) asserted that some families could uphold resilience during the stressful event of military deployment, though their well-being remains a national issue. To assist military families in managing stress, it is crucial to understand their behavior before gaining skills, maintaining stability, and avoiding disruptions (Rossetto, 2015).

At the time when military parents fulfill occupational duties during deployment missions, children and wives are usually faced with multiple challenges, which include extended separation, potentially compromised parenting related to traumatic exposure, and subsequent mental health problems (Siegal & Davis, 2013). These challenges happen in a situation of increase challenge amongst family members, including the service member, spouse, and children, of the danger of injury and fear of and the loss of the deployed parent.

Deployment affects the deployed personnel's engagement, effectiveness, and efficiency to accomplish duties assigned by the organization. Besides, the military spouses of the deployed personnel lack a sense of safety and security. According to Sukuru & Adem (2022), the main challenges of the military profession during deployment are the risk of injury or death, separation, relocation, and living abroad. During all three broad stages of deployment (pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment), wives of deployed soldiers often have many fears and doubts regarding the effect deployment has on their marital relationships. They may experience fears regarding whether their spouse will make it home safely, fear of injury, and changes in personality, and suspicion of whether their relationship will remain the same after deployment. A review of the literature suggests that the stress experienced by female military spouses during deployments has a significant negative effect on their psychological health (e.g., Allen et al., 2011). In addition, these affect spouses' physical health, mental health, marital satisfaction, and attitudes toward the military (Sukuru & Adem, 2022). More so,

important aspects of stress for the non-deployed spouse appears to be the level of worry about issues commonly related to deployment during wartime, such as the soldier's safety, emotional adjustment, and opportunities for communication (Wright, et al., 2006).

While there is a considerable amount of research on the effect of military deployment on family relations and the difficulties soldiers face upon homecoming (Adler et al., 2005; Bolton et al., 2001; Danish & Antonides, 2013; Vitzthum et al., 2009), most of the research has focused on Western soldiers returning from peacekeeping missions. Comparatively little research has been done on those returning from missions in Africa, even from major troop contributing countries like Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian military has different deployment experiences in combat zones inside the nation, training, and peacekeeping operations outside the nation, and in this context, the subject of military deployment and its effects on military spouses has received little attention from researchers in the field of gender studies. Consequently, a gap in theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of military deployments and their effects on military female spouses in the army exists. As military deployments continue to occur, this research may explain issues unique to military spouses and become a resource to help families successfully cope during deployment. Therefore, information on the effects of deployment that affect military spouses during deployment was collected and analyzed to fill the research gap, which was further emphasized by recommending the importance of the study.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The study answered the following major research questions:

1. What are the factors affecting military spouses' well-being during deployment?
2. What are the coping mechanisms adopted by military spouses to overcome the challenges of deployment?
3. How does the organization (Ministry of Defense) support and take measures to mitigate the deployment effects of military spouses?

## **1.4. Objective of the Study**

### **1.4.1. General objective**

The general objective of this study was to explore the effects of deployment on military spouses in the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (in the case of Signal and Gofa Camp military residence areas).

### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

1. To explore factors that affect military spouses' well-being during deployment.
2. To identify coping mechanisms to overcome the deployment challenges adopted by military spouses.
3. To investigate ENDF measures and supports for the deployment effects of military spouses.

## **1.5. Significance of the study**

The significance of this study is to make a valuable contribution by indicating the possible actions considered before, during, and after deployment to minimize the effects on military spouses. The study was conducted to gain a better understanding of the effects of military deployment on spouses in the Ethiopian National Defense Force.

Furthermore, results from this study will give an insight into how military spouses cope with deployment challenges by themselves and in what ways institutions cope with deployment effects and factors. It is hoped that the results of this research will help the organization better understand the challenges and effects of deployment, the factors that affect military spouses during deployment, and coping mechanisms. Identifying these factors may be vital in addressing the problems raised by the effects of deployment on military spouses. Finally, it will pave the way for further studies in the same area, and any interested researcher who wants to carry out a detailed study may use it as a base.

## **1.6. Scope of Study**

The scope of the study was focused on the effects of deployment on military spouses in the Ethiopian National Defense Forces. Based on that, there are thousands of military spouses in ENDF who are living in different locations and military camps. Then, the researcher decided

to limit the scope of the study to a manageable size due to budget and time constraints and focused on military spouses who were living in Addis Ababa.

Accordingly, there are about ten military camps in Addis Ababa, and the researcher focused only on Gofa and Signal Camps. Because there are hundreds of military spouses living in these camps, it is not possible to gather important information for the study from all camp because of time and resource constraints.

Conceptually, the dimension of the study was limited to spouses of military personnel in the organization whose partners were deployed to combat zones, training, and peacekeeping operations in and outside of the country. Furthermore, the study has included military spouses and a concerned body of experts, including defense department heads, counselors, and medical professionals.

### 1.7. Limitations of the Study

This study faced challenges with the size and category of data generated in relation to the effects of deployments on military spouses during deployment in the context of the Ethiopian National Defense Force. The main limitation of this study is the lack of literature on military deployment effects on spouses in the Ethiopian army. The scope of the study was limited to two military camps among the ten camps residing in Addis Ababa, which narrowed down the experience and produced more relevant findings. Because of the sensitivity of military matters, they demand utmost confidentiality, and some respondents, especially department heads and spouses, were bound by this rule not to share reports and personal experiences about deployment challenges and problems. Therefore, these have a negative impact on the standard of this study.

### 1.8. Operational Definitions of Terms

**Deployment:** refers to any assignment away from home for military personnel, whether it is overseas or local, during peacetime or wartime.

**Military Family:** Refers to the spouse and children of serving members of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces.

**Military spouse:** a person who is in a marital relationship with a military service member

**Peacekeeping:** Peacekeeping is a technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers.

**Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** refers to an anxiety disorder that emerges following a psychologically distressing, traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a bad accident, war, or rape.

**Physical separation** refers to a situation where family members, such as the wife and husband, reside in different locations due to military deployment.

**Resilience** is the capacity to maintain competent functioning in the face of life's stressors.

**Service member:** Refers to an active member of Ethiopian National Defense Force.

**Well-being:** Refers to good health, stability, welfare, happiness and prosperity in a family

## **1.9. Organization of the Thesis**

The study is organized into five chapters with different topics and sub-topics. The first chapter is the introduction section, which comprises the background of the study, a statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and operational definitions. The second chapter is devoted to a review of related literature. Chapter three presents the research methodology, including a description of the study area, research design, source of data, target population, data type, data collection techniques, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter is a section with data gathering, analysis, and presentation collected from the sources of data. Finally, chapter five provides a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of deployment on military spouses in ENDF families in Addis Ababa with the aim of finding measures to ease the effects of deployment on spousal well-being during deployment. In this chapter, the researcher describes the theoretical framework that helped in conducting the study. Further, the researcher reviewed the literature on the effects of military deployment on military spouses. Finally, the researcher summarizes the literature review and theoretical framework that were used in the study.

### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

#### **2.1.1. Family stability theory**

Family stability theory is a conceptual model for understanding the effects of deployment on military families (Palmer, 2008). It refers to the consistency and predictability of routines within a family environment. Deployment may be one of those interferences that may challenge the stability of a family, especially the remaining parent's ability to maintain normal family activities after the departure of a spouse. Further, according to the theory, family stability is interfered with in different ways at various stages of the deployment process, which encompasses pre-deployment, deployment, sustainment, redeployment, and post deployment stages.

Deployment, as an inevitable activity in a military man's or woman's service life, has the potential to impact either negatively or positively on family stability and may manifest in terms of stress, anxiety, anger, lack of consistency in routine, and poor academic performance of children in schools. To contain such effects, families may get involved in extra social activities that tend to occupy them during their free time. Families may also get involved in other activities such as enrolling in short courses, participating in community services, and maintaining household routines in response to such a major life changer (deployment). All these and others may serve as buffers against stressors associated with military deployment (Sokolowski & Israel, 2008).

Relationship between family stability theory and deployment stages using the stages of deployment theory as described by (Pincus, et al., 2001) each stage of deployment can affect

a family's stability differently. Further, the theory speculates on different ways in which family stability theory and stages of deployment may be related, as described in detail below.

Pre-deployment stage versus family stability theory: at the beginning of this stage, an initial shock, which is a powerful surge of intense emotion, is followed by emotional numbness, which is sometimes experienced by the affected families (Peebles-Kleiger & Klinger, 1994). Communication between the spouses may be seriously affected due to the shock arising from the imagined separation. However, communication should be maintained in the family in spite of the impending deployment. The stage is characterized by psychosocial challenges such as irritability, depression, marital conflicts, withdrawal, sexual tension, despair, and hopelessness in some families as a consequence of the impending deployment (Logan, 1987). Although, such characteristics may not be generalized to all cultures, some sort of disruption in family stability as a result of the impending deployment is usually experienced. Families find the pre-deployment stage particularly disruptive due to increased stress arising from uncertainty inherent in the period and unique challenges such as the likelihood of taking on new family roles.

Wexler and McGrath (1991) found that wives experienced feelings such as loneliness (78%), sadness (65%), anxiety (56%), worry (74%), and commitment (53%). Families experience loneliness during this stage. Boynton and Pearce (1978) in addition stated that stress that loneliness is a normal experience, but it is quite pervasive. At this stage, some families are resilient to the stressors of deployment, while others are affected by the same stressors. Therefore, the main purpose of this theory is to assist the researcher in establishing the effects of deployment on the military spouses of ENDF families at each stage of the deployment. Further, the stages show that families are psychologically and socially affected differently at each stage of the deployment period.

### **2.1.2. Coping Theory**

Coping refers to a process originating from an individual's interaction with his environment. A series of specific stressful situations occur, coming from both the external and internal environments with which this individual must deal (Yambo et al., 2016). According to Lester et al. (2016), coping mechanism consists of a moderator between adverse life events and their impact on the individual's physical and psychological well-being. According to Fivek (2017), to cope with stressful situations experienced by the wives of men who go on a military

mission, resources from the cognitive and behavioral dimensions are mobilized according to the individual's orientation to the problem. Donoho et al. (2018) unfolded these two initial dimensions in four categories: behavioral approach (carrying out a concrete action to deal with the stressful situation or its consequences); cognitive approach (carrying out a logical analysis of the problem, positive reevaluation, or mental rehearsal of alternative actions); behavioral avoidance (involvement in impulsive behaviors, reducing tension); and cognitive avoidance (thoughts or responses that aim to deny or minimize the severity of the crisis or its consequences) (Fivek, 2017).

How difficulties are faced directly influences levels of psychological health and well-being. However, many possible strategies to help individuals cope with psychological issues have not yet been fully developed (Mustillo et al., 2016). Coping strategies effectively reduce the environmental difficulties faced by spouses, such as financial problems; in the same way, they contribute to a better adjustment of the spouse to the problems they encounter (McGuire et al., 2016).

During a deployment, a military spouse's ability to cope is often determined by the terms of the deployment. Burrell et al. (2006) determined that the military spouse's perception of the deployment had a greater effect on that spouse's ability to cope during the deployment than the length of the deployment itself. Davis et al. (2011) found that a wife's fear of her soldier's perceived lack of well-being made coping more difficult for the wife during the deployment. Military spouses whose soldiers(husband) are deployed to war zones are more likely to have difficulties in coping due to their perception of soldier's suffering or lack of well-being than the spouses of soldiers who are deployed during times of peace (Burrell et al., 2006).

Additionally, young military spouses are primarily at a point in life where they are experiencing maturation and transitioning to adulthood (Dar & Kimhi, 2001). Since the social environment influences maturation, military deployment creates opportunities for these individuals to experiment with new roles for identity formation. Both the deployed and left-behind spouses are forced to assume new roles because of the separation brought by deployment (Dar & Kimhi, 2001). However, since these individuals are experimenting with new roles, they easily adapt to them and effectively cope with the circumstances. Consequently, young military spouses with good coping skills may not face much psychological distress as other military spouses (Dar & Kimhi, 2001).

## 2.2. Review of Related Studies

### 2.2.1. Deployment of Armed Forces

A common saying in the military is that when one person joins, the whole family serves (Alfano, et al. 2016 p.18). Common conflicts that have been recorded throughout history have been largely between clans, tribes, religious groups, or nations that are in pursuit of one or another's resources (such as minerals, land, or religion) and in pursuance of power in a religion (Giddens, 2003). The United Nations established a charter that called on members of different states to resolve the conflict peacefully by using negotiation, mediation, and facilitation (United Nations, 2005).

In some cases, this charter has become the basis on which modern militaries are assigned to foreign missions for peacekeeping purposes. Modern-day militaries are faced with tremendous numbers of missions that service members need to participate in (Suttle, 2003). These missions require the service member to either participate in the following: combat, peacekeeping missions, humanitarian relief, disaster responses, or new requirements for domestic defense (Pincus et al., 2007). The process of deployment exposes military families to numerous challenges as they learn to re-adjust too frequently and endure repeated separations (Stafford & Grady, 2003). This demands numerous, lengthy, and unpredictable work schedules for military personnel (Pincus et al., 2007).

In a study by Kane (2006) on the history of American military deployment since 1950 to the year 2000, 535,540 troops were deployed on foreign soil. However, in 2005 alone, America deployed 386,000 troops in Afghanistan. This means that in 2005 alone, approximately 300,000 families of deployed service personnel were separated from their spouses due to deployment, as highlighted in family stability theory.

According to Hansen (2008), of the 12,000 French troops engaged in peacekeeping operations around the world, nearly half are deployed in Africa in both military and advisory capacities. Here they said that these families were separated from their families because of military deployment (Bender, 2015). In a study by Jowell (2014) on Country Profile, Uganda's contributions to UN peacekeeping operations in the last 10 years have been minimal and mainly in the form of Since 2005, staff members, police officers, jail guards, and citizen specialists Uganda, on the other hand, provided the first and largest contingent of

soldiers to the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2007. It has continued to be a major contributor since then, with 6,000 troops serving on AMISOM missions. In addition, around 2,000 Ugandan soldiers, together with troops from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and the Central African Republic (CAR), form part of a The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is being targeted in the country's north by the Regional Task Force (RTF) of the United Nations-African Union (UN-AU). As a result of the deployment, roughly 8,000 families have been separated from their spouses since 2005.

According to the above studies on military deployment by Kane (2006) and Jowell (2014), thousands of military personnel have been deployed on various operations and peacekeeping missions in various parts of the world, including Africa, since 1950. As a result, hundreds of military families have been split from their spouses due to deployment, and others are still apart. The studies (Velile & Rantoa, 2019), which were done in Africa, critically try to look at the challenges of married deployment soldiers in the South African National Defense Force (SANDF). The deployment period was half a year, but in this period it changed to 12 months twice. It indicates that the family members separated for a year. These have a negative impact on soldier marriages, which causes the SANDF to suffer.

In 1994, the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) was requested to participate in peacekeeping missions in Africa under the government of South Africa (Nibishaka, 2011). The SANDF participated in these peacekeeping missions because the government viewed those participants as having non-negotiable mandates and objectives (Pitse, 2009). There were many challenges during the period, and soldiers' families were challenges for the military (Savych, 2008). At this time in pre-deployment, the soldiers were given 48 hours for preparation, and these times were short (Ntshota, 2002). According to Matjeke (2017), the SANDF has previously deployed soldiers outside of South Africa's borders. The deployment period is now one year, but it was previously half a year. This means the families have to separate for nearly a year without contact. As a result, the soldiers made the SANDF aware of the impact of the military operations on the soldiers and their families (Breda, 2002).

The other studies included a review of 42 research papers on the effects of deployment on children and parenting (Creech et al., 2014). This had a wide-reaching and negative impact on military deployment. It results in deployment having negative effects on the mental health of children, which include anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation (Creatch et al., 2014).

According to Haile (2017) research tries to compare men's and women's positions in leadership attempts to identify the challenges that cause these differences. Accordingly results from the study that showed many challenges in the organization's laws that hinder women's leadership, have effects on capacity building, and lack accountability and commitment in all concerned leaders by identifying gaps and taking action on strategy.

Other research done in military areas by Fanuel (2021) includes educational research and a comparative analysis of Ethiopian peacekeeping operations in the IGAD region under the UNISFA and AMISOM. It is also a qualitative data type that employs a KII instrument as a collection of data that is analyzed, discovered, and reached a conclusion and discusses their similarities and differences in operation, strategies, challenges, and effectiveness.

Diis (2015) addresses a comparative analysis of peacekeeping forces in Somalia and Sierra Leone. The study presents the differences that explain why peacekeeping is successful in some places. Moreover, Meaza (2017) discusses the role of Ethiopia in the peace-building process in Somalia since 1991. However, the study does discuss Ethiopian interventions in Somalia unilaterally but not the deployment effect of military spouses through peacekeeping. "Assessment of Women Army Members' Empowerment at Strategic and Operational Leadership Positions: The Case of the Ethiopian Ministry of National Defense," Haile (2017). This research was done to assess the current gap in women's empowerment in strategic and operational leadership. In the case of the Ethiopian Ministry of National Defense, it tries to justify.

Finally, comparing men's and women's positions in leadership attempts to identify the challenges that cause these differences. The researcher got results from the study that showed many challenges in the organization's laws that hinder women's leadership, have effects on capacity building, and lack accountability and commitment in all concerned leaders by identifying gaps and taking action on strategy.

Bowling and Sherman (2008) state that a returning member must be able to combine the frequent new schedules and activities that developed during the absence. Deployment was associated with increased parent stress, child behavior problems, health care utilization, and child maltreatment. Few studies tested interventions or focused on racial or ethnic minorities or veteran families. Several methodological limitations are noted (Konyango, 2017). Military families are often forced to adhere to changes imposed by military demands. These

requirements frequently prevent the soldier from taking care of their "personal and family relationships and responsibilities." Soldiers must frequently be away from their families due to military obligations. One of the key elements that need modification in family functioning is deployment.

Families frequently experience stress as a result of the changes brought on by deployment. Young couples and families with small children are more susceptible to deployment stress; the impact of the stress experienced is frequently determined by the family's readiness for separation and/or the family's life cycle. Military families are severely impacted by extended and forced separations. Contrary to civilian families, they often share the same characteristics and are exposed to the same vulnerabilities.

Military families' lifestyles are distinguished by the soldier's risk of injury or death while on duty, as well as the soldier's periodic separation from the rest of his family. Numerous studies have shown that military obligations put stress on military families. This resulted in a number of programs designed to help military families cope better with the stress. Social work officers in the military units were behind the implementation of these programs.

Deployment resilience seminars are one of these programs designed to help the soldier and his family survives during the deployment period. This study, among other objectives, evaluates the effectiveness of those programs rendered to soldiers and their families. According to the survey, military requirements put military families under a lot of stress. Children, mothers, and fathers are all directly impacted by the effects of separation caused by deployment. Although there were no interviews done with children, the information obtained from the parents showed that children are also the hardest hit in the process.

Rosenfeld et al. (1973), for example, demonstrated that the absence of the father in the child is frequently detrimental to the child's development. There were many similarities between wives' and husbands' experiences of the challenges of separation due to deployments. These include loneliness, boredom, sexual frustration, separation, etc. It was intriguing to learn that the couples also recognized the advantages of being deployed (Ntshota, 2002).

Recent military operations against militants in Mozambique and the Central African Republic were conducted by the Rwanda Defense Force and carried out independently of regional or global initiatives. This makes Rwanda's recent moves unusual in Sub-Saharan Africa's

international relations and signals changes to the continent's approach to managing conflicts. An explanation is found in the application of neoclassical realist theory to the case of Rwanda, a first, as the country's leaders have taken advantage of a permissive strategic environment, high clarity, leaders' beliefs, and a strategic culture to produce the output of extra-regional military deployments (Brendon J. et al., 2022). The troops' separation of their personal and professional lives during deployment may have unfavorable impacts on both. Effects on family functioning and reintegration are taken into consideration.

Parents try to reconcile their differences; reunions may be marked by a perceived bad reception, with potential ramifications for children. There is a chance that the family system will break up or get divorced. Families with members deployed may benefit from social support. (Didi & Nicolette, 2020)

The Horn of Africa is currently home to a wide variety of regional and international security actors, including naval forces that are permanently or frequently deployed as well as land-based military facilities (such as bases, ports, airstrips, training camps, semi-permanent facilities, and logistics hubs). The development of military facilities in the littoral regions around the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa is the most obvious indication of this presence. However; naval troops have also been bolstered, particularly in the area of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, near the Red Sea's entry, and in the Gulf of Aden. This SIPRI Background Paper maps the foreign military presence in the Horn of Africa since 2001, when it started to increase following a period of decline following the end of the Cold War and was initially centered on counterterrorism in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. The paper first examines national missions to the Horn and then briefly examines multilateral missions that are likewise predominantly composed of soldiers from outside the region. The study repeatedly highlights the growing significance of geopolitical, economic, and military competition in the current regional deployments of foreign armed troops (Oxford University Press, 1989).

The Ethiopian army has been deployed to different war zones and peacekeeping missions since the early days of UN peacekeeping and to some of today's most vital operations. The country's involvement dates back to 1951, when it was a member of the UN multinational army fighting in the Korean War and assisting in the restoration of order and quiet in the Republic of Congo (UN News, 2020).

Ethiopia has sent significant forces to UN operations in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Abyei, Darfur, and South Sudan since the 1990s, as well as smaller commitments to other missions such as Haiti and Mali (UN News 2020). Since the 1990s, Ethiopia has significantly contributed to UN operations in Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Abyei, Darfur, and South Sudan, as well as smaller contributions to missions in Haiti and Mali (UN News 2020). Most of Ethiopia's recent UN peacekeeping deployments have been in the Sudan: to the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), the UN-AU Hybrid Mission to Darfur (UNAMID), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) (UN News 2020). Ethiopia set a new UN peacekeeping record by sending almost the entire military component of UNISFA, totaling over 4,400 people, as well as the Force Commander and much of the mission's senior leadership, while its deployment to UNAMID was its greatest sustained troop contribution (UN News 2020). Ethiopia's fast deployment of troops was also notable during this mission, which was completed within one month after the approval of the UN Security Council decision.

Ethiopia has become the biggest contributor to UN peacekeeping operations since 2016, with over 8,400 uniformed personnel serving in UN missions (UN News 2020). Ethiopian assets and capacities have also been contributed. With over 8,400 uniformed personnel serving in UN missions since 2016, Ethiopia has become the top contributor to UN peacekeeping operations (UN News 2020). Ethiopia has additionally provided particular resources and competencies. Outside of the UN, Ethiopia's most significant deployment has been its unilateral deployment to Somalia, where it maintained an unknown number of troops supporting the Somali government and AMISOM forces (UN News 2020). In January 2014, Ethiopia became one of the troop-contributing countries to AMISOM. Ethiopia, the third-largest TCC after Uganda and Burundi, currently has about 4,400 uniformed personnel serving in UNISFA. (UN News 2020)

### **2.2.2. Military Spouses and Emotional Cycle of Deployment**

Deployment is an aspect of military life that can happen at any time during the service member's military career. While the military spouse is aware of and may expect deployments to take place, it does not make the experience any easier when the service member deploys. Being aware of the deployment does not remove the stress or other negative psychological effects that could potentially impact the military spouse left behind. In a marriage, a couple

may have shared responsibilities or specific responsibilities that keep balance in the home (Boss, 2000). In a marriage or relationship, the couple may look to each other for support (emotional and financial), companionship or friendship, security, and more (Gambardella, 2008). These things work together to create a foundation and help maintain the stability of the home. Removing one person may shift the balance of these things. For some military spouses, when the service member is deployed, it may take away support, companionship, and/or security. The military spouse left behind may now have additional responsibilities for maintaining the home both inside and out. Without support, this may include the care and discipline of the child or children. The military spouse left behind may have other responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, mowing the grass, and maintaining the military housing quarter as a result of the deployment. The military spouse left behind may now oversee the finances of the house for the first time.

Deployment for the service member and the military spouse can be stressful, and both may experience a variety of emotions. During each stage of the deployment, the military spouse left behind may face different challenges impacting his or her psychological well-being. Pincus et al. (2001) explained what each stage of deployment is like psychologically for the military spouse left behind. During pre-deployment, the service member and their military spouse get things in order. This may include getting essential legal documentation such as wills and powers of attorney (Military One Source, 2017). The service member and their military spouse organize finances, create a family plan of care, and design contingency plans in case things change (ibid.). The military spouse left behind is anticipating the loss and may begin to put distance between themselves and their service member, mentally and physically (Pincus et al., 2001). There is also the possibility of increased arguments during the pre-deployment stage (Pincus et al., 2001).

The second stage of deployment consists of the service member leaving his or her home. The military spouse left behind is experiencing the actual absence of the service member. With the service member out of the home, the military spouse must find a new routine (Morse, 2006). The actual departure of the service member creates a variety of emotions experienced by the military spouse left behind (Pincus et al., 2001).

Family members who stay at home may experience stress during a deployment. Long-term deployment has been linked to mental health issues in wives, such as mood swings,

depression, insomnia, stress, and worry (Mansfield et al., 2010). Sometimes, however, families and couples who take part in pre-deployment readiness programs and who communicate more frequently and satisfyingly while deployed may fare better upon reintegration (Meadows et al., 2016). While the military spouse attempts to navigate multiple emotions, he or she is still expected to carry out the responsibilities of the home. After several months of the active-duty spouse being away, it is time for him or her to return home. Prior to the active-duty spouse returning home, the preparations begin. Pincus et al. (2001) offer a four-stage model of the emotional cycle military families experience when their service member is deployed. Morse (2006) offers a seven-stage emotional cycle of deployment, which accounts for military families who experienced deployments within a 9–12-month period following a previous deployment.

This may present a different challenge for families as they attempt to stabilize with the military service member out of the house. During the first phase of the cycle, anticipation of departure, the military spouse may already be in anticipation of the deployment due to multiple deployments previously (Morse, 2006). For some military spouses, the anticipation of deployment sets in before the deployment order is issued to their service member.

The back-to-back deployments of their service member may initiate an emotional shutdown for the wife before the deployment takes place. The third phase in Morse's emotional cycle is emotional disorganization (2006). This phase is like the deployment phase of Pincus et al. (2001), when the service member deploys. Spouses experiencing multiple deployments may not get the time needed to recover from the previous deployment and experience feelings of burnout and fatigue (Morse, 2006). As stated earlier, during the time the service member is deployed, the spouse left behind starts to form new routines.

When the military spouse left behind can be resilient to the multiple emotions experienced because of the multiple deployments, he or she is in the recovery and stabilization stage (Morse, 2006). The last stage of Morse's seven-stage model is the anticipation and preparation of the service member returning home. Unlike Pincus et al. (2001), Morse breaks the last stage down into two stages. When the service member returns from deployment, both the military spouse and the service member experience a mixture of emotions. During the sixth stage return adjustment and renegotiation the military service member could be experiencing combat stress, which could potentially create significant stress for the spouse to

manage (Morse, 2006). During the last stage of Morse's (2006) emotional cycle, the family is attempting to renew their relationships and attachment to one another (Morse, 2006).

This stage is called reintegration and stabilization and can last up to six months (Morse, 2006). While the family is attempting to stabilize and reintegrate, the service member could receive orders for another deployment, causing further distress in the family as Stage 1 begins all over again (Morse, 2006).

### **2.2.3. Challenges faced by Military families**

Although military families and children navigate well throughout the routine of deployment, multiple stressors and prolonged deployment, particularly during wartime, may begin to take a toll on the family (Lincoln et al., 2007; Palmer, 2008; Waldrep et al., 2004). A military family's lives have unique concerns that range from mobile lifestyles, isolation from a civilian community and extended families, readjusting to the rules and regulations of military life, and frequent separations. These are some of the concerns that deployed service member's account for daily (Lincoln et al., 2007). They are compounded with daily stressors such as taking care of children, employment, and household duties (Galvoski & Lyons, 2004).

The many responsibilities that military spouses play, many of which might be impacted by the military service and reintegration process and it is crucial to take into account spouses' accomplishments in managing the family, working, studying, raising children, and caring for injured military personnel (Bommarito, et al, 2017).

The stay-at-home parent (including the working parent) plays a vital role in rebuilding the family environment and helping interactional processes in the family run smoothly during deployment. While there would be regular and ongoing communication with the deployed spouse, the family would try to cooperate cohesively when the deployed spouse is away. The stay-at-home spouse would assume and maintain clear-cut authority for every decision taken in the absence of the deployed spouse regarding household chores, rules, discipline, and external support (Palmer, 2008).

The maintenance of household routines assists in upholding positive reinforcement, adaptation, and coping in response to the stressful transition taking place in the family (Walsh, 2006). This could allow for the enrollment of extended family members to join the

family in assisting in the expansion of the attachment network, which is available for emotional support and to bring protection to the family as well. This network was disused in the previous paragraph, highlighting how attachment is a crucial element during deployment and how it hinders the collective family system (Palmer, 2008).

The extended family may offer social, emotional, and financial support to the families that are undergoing deployment. This support also reaches the children, and it is very important for the stay-at-home spouse to not overdo their authority roles when it comes to children. This is because both the remaining spouse and children are harboring mixed emotions due to the new transition the family is going through; hence, it is very important for the remaining spouse to have a noticeable authority figure in the family in the absence of the deployed military member (Sherwood, 2009). The remaining spouse should ensure that authority is unbroken or shaken during this period.

#### **2.2.4. Impacts of deployment on the remaining spouse**

During the reintegration phase, some parents' express worries about their children emotional stability, behavior, and academic progress (Werber et al., 2013). The associated stressors experienced by spouses emanate from the fact that the remaining spouse needs to maintain the household until the deployed spouse returns and raises children (Hosek et al., 2006).

The remaining spouse also found it challenging to arrange times to communicate with the deployed spouse, especially if the children are still young because they are in the stage where they need enormous parental supervision and attention (Segal, 1989). Service members' spouses and partners, children, parents, and extended family are also impacted by deployments (Bommarito, et al, 2017).

The RAND operations (year) conducted a study on married army personnel who were deployed overseas on a peacekeeping mission. The study found that there was a decline in marital satisfaction during the pre-deployment stage and the deployment stage, as well as relative to the time of joining the peacekeeping force and returning from deployment (post-deployment). Schumm et al. (2000) noted that "marital instability was positively associated with discord prior to deployment.

### **2.2.5. Effects of Military Deployment on Spouses**

Deployment affects all family members, not just the soldiers being deployed. The effects are sometimes physical or emotional. Physical effects include moving to different homes, towns, and even schools. Emotional effects include the temporary absence of a parent and misbehaving children missing the deployed parent. The next section presents the potential changes a military family may face during deployment. The family was affected by the deployment due to the extended absence of the deployed partner.

Although the now-deployed parent may be able to run the household on his or her own in the absence of the deployed spouse, this is a stressful situation for that person, who essentially becomes a single parent in charge of everything related to child-rearing (Aducci et al., 2011). For example, forty percent of women in the Afghan military have children, and when they are deployed, their children are cared for by spouses or family members back home (Goodman et al., 2013). Military mothers reported that the available supports are frequently centered on the deployed father being gone and the mother remaining at home during deployment (ibid). Deployed, married mothers reported being less stressed regarding their children who stayed home with their fathers than those whose children were staying with relatives who were not their fathers (Kelley et al., 2002).

#### **2.2.5.1. Effects of Military Deployment on Psychological Stability of Families**

In a study by Sheppard and colleagues (2010) on the effect of military deployment on US military families, several issues were investigated, including the effect of military deployment on the psychological, social, and academic performance of children, especially at each stage of deployment. The findings revealed that military deployment adversely affected the psychological stability of left-behind families and the education of their children.

In another study by Rush & Akos (2007) on the effect of deployment on psychological stability, it was found that social stressors such as mobility (families moved from one region to another due to deployment), trans-cultural experiences (continental movement of families), frequent parental absence, and changing family roles also cause psychological problems such as anxiety, stress, depression, sleep disturbances, and restlessness, which in turn heighten problems in marital relationships and children's education.

Further, the study revealed that military deployment did not only affect spouses and children left behind, as has been shown at deployment stages, but also affected deployed service members as well. This is because, on screening returning service members, many were found to have psychological symptoms of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This study is limited to how American military families react to deployments and does not cover how ENDF military families would react to similar deployments.

#### **2.2.5.2. Effects of Military Deployment on Social Stability of Families**

Family stability refers to the consistency and predictability of workable routines and overall wellbeing within a family system (Sokolowski & Israel, 2008). Family stability is a prerequisite for a family that will survive the challenges of the deployment period. A stable family is one in which there is happiness, trust, security, and love, such that roles and authority change with ease. According to Van Breda (1995), wives in such families establish independence and 'self-sufficiency' and that alone enhances coping strategies that counter the negative challenges of the deployment period.

In a study by Rush and Akos (2007) on the effects of deployment on family social stability, it was found that social stressors such as mobility, trans-cultural experiences, frequent parental absence, changing family roles, and a lack of structures and routine all become a part of their daily lives. Looking at mobility as a stressor, military families move from place to place or from region to region. Such mobility does not occur once but frequently at different times, thereby disrupting family lifestyles and children's education.

Trans-cultural experiences also cause stress as families move from continent to continent or within the country from one region to another, where they encounter cultural variations. Such a lifestyle predisposes families to social problems such as poor family management due to changed roles, unpredictability in routines, cultural variations, sleep disturbances, and restlessness, which in turn heighten problems in marital relationships and children's education. The study, however, did not cover how African military families, in particular ENDF families, would react to such deployments.

### **2.2.5.3. Effects of Military Deployment on Children's academic performance**

In research by Huebner, Mancini, Wilcox, and Grass (2007) on the effect of deployment on the social aspects of children of deployed American service members, children were often found to be aware of the possibility of losing a parent due to injury or death. The thought of losing parents in combat, coupled with other social stressors (mobility, trans-cultural experiences, frequent parental absence, changing family roles, and a lack of structures and routine), leads to a heightened state of uncertainty and a lack of predictability in the daily routine needed by families.

Due to this, spouses and children develop psychological problems that include anxiety, stress, depression, sleeplessness, and bad dreams. Gibbs et al. (2007), on the impact of deployment on the education of children of US service members who were deployed in both Afghanistan and Iraq, revealed that there was a direct correlation between deployment and substantiated incidents of child mistreatment, neglect, poor academic performance, poor health, and behavior changes. During deployment, child mistreatment, neglect, poor academic performance, and health and behavior changes against children increase significantly because the "left behind parents" are overwhelmed by the absence of a spouse and by new, unfamiliar roles. Consequently, parenting roles, especially following up on a child's education progress, are overlooked.

Both spouses and children suffer psychological and social challenges that manifest in terms of disorganization, confusion, fear, anxiety, loneliness, and uncertainty of the future, which culminate in neglect of parenting roles and poor performance in education (Huebner et al., 2007). This research is as far as American children are concerned in reaction to absent parents. However, there is scarce information on the effects of military deployment on the educational performance of Ethiopian children. This is another knowledge gap that this study aims to fill by finding out the effects of deployment on the education performance of the children of deployed Ethiopian soldiers.

According to Gibbs, Martin, Kupper, and Johnson, (2007), as parents neglect their parenting roles, some children exploit the opportunities presented by the absent parent by joining the wrong groups and learning new ways of behaving that may lead to drug abuse. While some children do not quite understand why their parents are away from home, others who are mature enough follow operation events in deployment areas through the media and fear that

their parents will never come back (Gibbs et al., 2007). Coupled with the absence of a parent from home and information gathered from peers at school (which could be rumors), children develop new behavior patterns, anxiety, stress, depression, sleeplessness, restlessness, and feelings of uncertainty, which in turn adversely affect their academic performance (Gibbs et al., 2007). Engel, Gallagher, and Lyle (2010) noted that poor performance was associated with longer periods of deployment due to extended periods of freedom for children. They also noted deployment was associated with lower test scores, with the largest effects seen for children who were young and were from single-parent homes or who had mothers deployed as service members. Once again, the findings concern American children. What is not known is whether Ethiopian children could react in a similar manner to the deployment of their parents.

#### **2.2.6. How Families Cope in the Face of Military Deployment**

According to Black (1993), it was found that, the attitude and behavior of the left-behind parent had a direct influence on how far the child would be affected by deployment. Children tend to handle the situation better when the remaining parent shows a positive attitude during the deployment period. Further, some military leadership provided different types of social support systems for families during deployment periods. These included timely information about deployment, relocations to suitable areas, the formation of support groups, involvement in church activities, and counseling sessions. Social stressors can be reduced through such activities (Orthner & Bowen, 1990).

The foregoing strategies may not necessarily be the way Ethiopian families left behind cope with life in the face of military deployment. It is for this reason that this study seeks to evaluate the coping mechanisms adopted by the left-behind families of deployed Ethiopian soldiers. There was also an increase in camp-based support services by including "left behind families" in various activities such as businesses and education, especially for those found to be most vulnerable (Orthner & Bowen, 1990).

#### **2.2.7. Mitigating Strategies for Families on the Effects of Military Deployment**

For those who have had repeated deployments, in the year after their return from battle, there is an increased chance of developing mental health issues related to combat. Parents who undergo recurrent or protracted deployments, especially younger parents with small children,

are more likely to experience an increase in marital conflict, domestic violence, and/or child abuse or neglect (Lester, et al (2011). According to a literature review and search, to mitigate the effects of military deployment, some military management have begun providing various social supports for families during deployment periods, including timely information about deployment, relocations to suitable areas, establishing support groups, involvement in church activities, and counseling sessions (Orthner & Bowen, 1990). This helps family members become closer and potentially lean on each other for support while spouses are away.

The military started programs to help teach families coping skills, effective relationship practices, and resource development. Most importantly, the military provided greater opportunities for family self-development activities such as businesses and education, especially for those found to be most vulnerable.

The above mitigating strategies are as far as American left-behind families are concerned in addressing the psychosocial challenges facing them. However, it is not yet established whether the same measures could be effective in addressing challenges facing African families like those of ENDF. This is considered a knowledge gap, which this study aims at filling by finding out whether such measures apply to ENDF-left behind families and, if not, establishing own mitigating measures to address psychosocial challenges facing the families during

### **2.2.8. Support for Military Spouses**

During the many challenges of a military deployment, military spouses noted that one thing that helps them feel encouraged and connected to their deployed spouse is constant and consistent contact (Lapp et al., 2010). Spouses want to feel that they too are supported and to feel a sense of belonging within the military community. McLeland and Sutton (2005) noted that the level of support spouses receive has an impact on the way in which they can navigate traumatic events and marital happiness.

Due to the interconnectedness of military service members and their dependents, Karney, Loughran, and Pollard (2012) noted that family support programs and resource centers were established throughout all branches of the armed forces by the mid-1080s. As the mission and needs of families have changed, these support programs continue to be expanded and refined to meet the growing needs of the military. With over half of service members married, young

married men and women fresh out of high school are provided resources that most other young high school graduates do not have access to (Karney & Crown, 2007).

During a deployment, mental health professionals and other military personnel typically connect military spouses to helpful community resources (Cole, 2012). These services are provided by the military free of charge to help families' successfully cope during all phases of a deployment (McFarlane, 2009). Spouses have access to a wide range of resources, ranging from individual counseling to group sessions and even resources that can be accessed online, such as Military One Source and Operation Home Front (Lapp et al., 2010).

During a deployment, a family readiness group is in place to keep spouses up to date on certain events and dates, as well as to provide activities to foster bonding and friendships amongst military spouses who share the commonality of their husbands being deployed (Di Nola, 2008). Types of services that spouses are often connected with include academic tutors, businesses, churches, social services agencies, and mentorship programs that can be helpful and relevant resources for the families of deployed service members (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2007). Additional resources that may contribute to a spouse's marital and mental stability include programs offering daycare and job placement for spouses (Rosen & Durand, 2000).

Orthner and Rose (2003) noted that the armed forces established family readiness to help family members develop and sustain resilience skills to cope with the pressures of life. This may include skills to strengthen relationships and practical skills necessary for various aspects of life. The resources are plentiful, and many are willing to provide support to military families during a deployment. However, although classes and counseling are offered within the military community to support spouses and family members, it is up to the individuals to seek out or utilize these resources as they are needed (Carroll, et al, 2013).

### **2.3. Summary of Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The chapter explored literature on the effects of military deployment on spousal well-being. Most of the available studies are based on western service members' experiences. Literature on the effects of military deployment on African families, particularly ENDF, is scant, if not

entirely absent. This leaves a gap in the body of knowledge that needs to be researched. The current study thus seeks to fill this void by researching ENDF spouses as regards their effects on their stability during deployment with a view to establishing empirical evidence on whether they are affected by the deployment or not and, if so, establishing coping mechanisms that can be adopted by families during periods of deployment. On the theoretical framework, the literature on family stability has provided theoretical knowledge for understanding the effects of deployment (psychological and social) on military families left behind at various stages of deployment. The literature suggests that deployment may be one of those interferences that may challenge the stability of a family, especially the remaining parent's ability to maintain normal family activities after the departure of a spouse. Further, according to the theory, family stability is interfered with differently at various stages of the deployment process, which encompasses pre-deployment, deployment, sustainment, redeployment, and post-deployment stages.

The theory further indicates that deployment is a process that has the potential to disrupt family stability through stress in family systems. To contain such stressors, families may get involved in extra social activities that tend to occupy them during their free time. Also, families may increase and maintain routine in response to such a major life changer, which may serve to buffer the stressors associated with deployment.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

A research methodology or approach is chosen based on the nature of the research question and the subject being studied, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005). In light of this, the research design chosen for an inquiry needs to be viewed as a tool for addressing the research topic. Hence, this chapter focuses on assessing the deployment challenges faced by military spouses in ENDF and provides a description of the methodology applied to identify the data, the strategies used in data collection, and the justification for each technique. In this section, research design, sampling and sampling techniques, sources of data, data collection instruments, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations were discussed.

### **3.2. Description of Study Area**

The study was conducted by the Ethiopian National Defense Force, which is based in Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa is the capital city of Ethiopia, located at an altitude of 2,300 meters. It is the center of Ethiopia. It contains 11 sub-cities with a division of 120 Woredas. The study mainly focused on the areas named as Gofa Camp and Signal Camp, where military spouses are based. Gofa camp is located in Nifas Silk Lafto Sub-City Woreda 06, while Signal camp is located in Yeka Sub-City Woreda 7. Furthermore, the ENDF headquarters, located in the Lideta sub-city near the Armed Forces Comprehensive Specialized Hospital, was chosen as the location where ENDF department heads, experts, and medical professionals are based.

### **3.3. Research Design**

The researcher employed a qualitative research design. The reason for choosing qualitative research design is mainly because of its advantage in gaining detailed information about the issue, as stated by Creswell (2007). Qualitative research is also concerned with qualitative phenomena, i.e., phenomena relating to quality rather than quantity, and it is also concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions, and behavior (Kothari, 2004:5).

The purpose of this research has been to explore and assess the effects of deployment on military spouses in the Ethiopian National Defense Forces, as well as in the Signal and Gofa Military Residence areas in Addis Ababa. According to Kothari (2004:2), the major purpose

of descriptive research is the description of the state of affairs as they exist at present and fact-finding inquiries of different kinds. The researcher designed semi-structured interview questions to gather information from respondents that are relevant to the study. In addition, both military and civilian military spouses were targeted for the focus group discussion. Hence, the selected research design was appropriate for this study as it assisted in establishing the effects of deployment on military spouses in ENDF.

### **3.4. Sampling and Sampling Technique**

The purposeful sampling method was used to select research participants who were concerned about the study. According to Patton (2002), purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources, as cited by Palinkas *et al.* (2013: 2). In other words, purposive sampling is also known by different names, such as non-probability sampling, deliberate sampling, and judgment sampling. In this kind of sampling, items for the sample are selected deliberately by the researcher (Kothari, 2004:59). This sampling technique was used as a means to select research participants. This was purposefully done in order to understand the reflections, understanding, and knowledge of spouses whose partners have been deployed in combat, peacekeeping, and training deployment processes in depth.

Moreover, the researcher used this purposive sampling technique, as it is a non-probability measure in which the study respondents were selected based on specific characteristics and objectives of the study. This method was used to select research participants who could provide the required information about the research. This technique was used because all members might not have equal knowledge about military deployment.

Therefore, a total of twenty-one participants participated in this face-to-face interview. The participants were selected from different military sectors. Accordingly, military spouses, department heads, and experts, including gender, legal, and counseling experts, as well as medical professionals, were targeted as informants for interview purposes. Based on this, a total of forty-one participants, of whom twenty-one respondents were key interview informants (from four ENDF department heads, three experts, and two medical and counseling professionals, with twelve spouses), and two focus group discussions with a total of 11 and 9 participants in focus group member of Service Member Military Spouses and Civilian Military Spouses respectively were purposefully selected.

**Table3.1: List of Research Participants**

<b>No</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>N<sup>o</sup> Sample Size</b>
<b>Key Informants</b>		
1.	Department Heads	4
2.	Experts	3
3.	Medical professionals	2
<b>Interview</b>		
1.	Spouses	12
<b>Focus Group Discussants</b>		
1.	Service Member Military Spouses	11
2.	Civilian Military Spouses	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>

### **3.5. Sources of Data**

The study applied both primary and secondary sources, and those data were employed to acquire the relevant data and examine the lived experiences and effects of deployment on the spouses and family members of the deployed personnel in ENDF. The primary data was gathered directly from the respondents through interviews and focus group discussions. Secondary data, on the other hand, were collected from printed materials, reports, journals, websites, and books.

### **3.6. Data Collection Instruments**

Relevant data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. According to Kothari (2004:95), primary data are those that are collected afresh and for the first time and thus happen to be original in character. Hence, the method of gathering primary data entails; interviews, observations, questionnaires, content analysis, etc. The primary data was gathered through an in-depth interview. An in-depth interview is appropriate to gather data in detail for the qualitative research, as suggested by Creswell (2007).

Moreover, the researcher extensively used secondary sources such as books, theses, journals, agreement documents, and reports. Secondary data means data that are already available, i.e., they refer to the data that have already been collected and analyzed by someone else (Kothari, 2004:95). Therefore, in order to increase the extent of information to be gained from the respondents in relation to the effects of deployment on military spouses whose partners are deployed to combat zones, training, and peacekeeping operations, the researcher used two types of data collection instruments.

### **3.6.1. Key Informants' Interview**

The researcher selected nine key informants at different levels of their positions as concerned military professionals from different departments of the Ethiopian National Defense Force. Respondents who have participated in the interview are heads of human resource management, gender office, and peacekeeping operations, as well as experts from training, legal, gender, medical, and counseling services of the organization.

These key informants, heads, and experts at different levels of military service were selected based on the study area of deployment effects during deployment in combat zones, peacekeeping operations, and trainings.

**Table 3.2: Demographic Characteristics of Key Informants**

<b>No</b>	<b>Key informant Participant</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Work Experience</b>	<b>Military Rank</b>
1	Head of Gender office in ENDF	December, 2021	H1	F	Master's Degree	27 years	Major
2	Head of Peace keeping deployment center in ENDF	December, 2021	H2	M	Master's Degree	25 years	Civil
3	Head of ENDF human resource Department	December, 2021	H3	M	Master's Degree	26 years	Colonel
4	ENDF Gender expert	December, 2021	E1	F	Master's Degree	10 years	Colonel
5	Training head in ENDF	December, 2021	H4	M	Master's Degree	28 years	Major
6	ENDF Legal expert	December, 2021	E2	M	Master's Degree	17 years	Civil
7	ENDF Training expert	December, 2021	E3	M	Bachelor Degree	29 Years	Captain
8	Medical professionals (Nurse)	December, 2021	P1	F	Bachelor Degree	21 years	Civil
9	Medical professionals (Counselor)	December, 2021	P2	F	Master's Degree	26 Years	Major

*Sources: researcher's own survey, 2021/2022*

### 3.6.2. In-Depth Interview

Scholars like Denzin (1978) and Spradley (1979), as cited by Bruce (2001), define an interview as simply a conversation with the purpose of gaining information. The primary

purpose is to gain relevant information from the point of view of the research objective and to gain constructive views from participants in the research. It is often used as a method of generating data for understanding people's knowledge, experiences, opinions, beliefs, needs, perceptions, and constraints. It can be categorized as structured, semi-structured, or unstructured in its settings (Robson, 1993).

Based on this, the interviewees in the study were conducted at each of the focused areas in the line officers' camp at Gofa Camp and the higher officers' compound in Signal Camp near Adwa Bridge. The interviews were face-to-face and recorded by an audio recorder with the research participants' consent. A semi-structured interview guide was prepared for 12 female military spouses (six from Gofa (Line Officers and Noncommissioned Officers) camp and six from Signal (Higher Officers) camp military residence areas) in an orderly, understandable, precise, and clear manner.

Moreover, spouses were selected based on their spouse's deployment experiences in combat zones and peacekeeping operations, as well as spouses who have children. The criteria for the election of respondents were the military sectors engagement in deployment for combat zones, peacekeeping, and training, as well as human resource management and gender affairs that directly engage in the process of deployment for military service members. A timetable for interviewing those respondents was arranged before the time of the interview, considering their interest in discussing the study matter. The interviewed spouses were women, whereas men were also represented by the head of department, professionals, and experts.

The interview was conducted in areas where the interviewees felt most comfortable. Accordingly, interviews with the experts were conducted in their respective offices, while most of the spouses preferred to be interviewed in their homes. Few preferred to come to the researcher's home to feel comfortable.

During each interview, the researcher requested additional information about the military spouse's personal experiences with deployment challenges by forwarding additional questions. When the arranged interview questions were finished, the researcher asked if any of the informants had any further ideas on the issues.

### **3.6.3. The research Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

The research used this method to explore ideas that could not be explained in the individual interviews and triangulate the findings of the key informants. A focus group discussion was done with two groups of spouses. The first group was composed of nine civilian military spouses, and the second group was composed of 11 service member military spouses. The criteria to select service member spouses and civilian military spouses were based on their experiences in deployment practices as a spouse and a service member because of the military profession. These two groups were addressed because the nature of their problems is different. In the case of the service member's military spouses, the women might also have experience with deployment and better understand the military professional environment.

In this context, the researcher was a moderator (or group facilitator) who introduced topics for discussion and helped the group participate in a lively and natural discussion among them for about two hours in the selected areas. Then, the data were recorded by an audio recorder with the research participants' consent. The researcher tried to create a friendly atmosphere for the participants by preparing a traditional coffee ceremony. The researcher arranged a convenient time to organize the FGD twice by discussing it with the selected participants. One of the FGD was organized after the working hour, and the second one was on Sunday. This is because women were busy with household activities and taking their children to and from school. For these purposes,

The researcher prepared an open-ended guide, and opportunities were given to all participants to accommodate everyone's point of view.

### **3.7. Method of Data Analysis**

In order to achieve the stated research objectives projected by the researcher, data collected from the respondents was analyzed based on the nature of the research objectives. The data from interviews and focus group discussions was collected in Amharic and transcribed and translated into English. Then, the data obtained from the interview and FDGs were analyzed and grouped in to the common thoughts of the responses into different sub-topics and analyzing them using thematic analysis and lived experience of respondents were also included to supplement the findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study, and recommendations were forwarded.

### **3.8. Ethical Consideration**

First of all, the researcher ensured voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity for the respondents by providing an official university letter to the relevant authorities and informing them of the details of the research. Moreover, the researcher briefly explained the objective of the study to respondents from the outset, and their verbal consent was properly obtained. Indeed, respondents clearly understood that they were under no obligation to participate and that there was no negative consequence to accepting or declining to respond. The participants were asked if they wanted to be recorded or not. Information concerning the security of the organization was kept confidential. Finally, proper citations were made in order to avoid plagiarism.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents the data collected in the field and analyzes it in order to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives set. The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the analysis of data from the respondents who responded to the interview and participated in the focus group discussion. The semi-structured interviews were generated using qualitative data and analyzed through thematic analysis. The results of the data analysis provided information that formed the basis for discussion and interpretation, which paved the way for the study's conclusion and recommendations.

### **4.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents**

In this study, some demographic characteristics of respondents played a significant role in expressing and responding to the study. Keeping this in mind, it includes the sex, education level, and work experience of the sample respondents to be examined and presented. Sex was one of the most important characteristics on which the researcher focused to obtain important information.

The perceptions and attitudes of the person can also differ based on their marital status, because marriage might make the person more responsible and mature in understanding and giving responses to the questions asked. Education is one of the most powerful means of empowerment because it makes a person aware of her or his conditions and prepares her or him to take on the challenges of life. Working experience in the organization is another important aspect of understanding and examining their views of institutional cultures and particular problems by using their level of maturity and experience.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Data of Research Participants, 2021**

No	Research Participant	Month of interview	Code	Sex	Educational Level	Work Experience	Military Rank
1	Head of Gender office in ENDF	December, 2021	H1	F	Master's Degree	27 years	Major
2	Head of Peace keeping center in ENDF	December, 2021	H2	M	Master's Degree	25 years	Civil
3	Head of ENDF HRM Department	December, 2021	H3	M	Master's Degree	26 years	Colonel
4	ENDF Gender expert	December, 2021	E1	F	Master's Degree	10 years	Colonel
5	Training head in ENDF	December, 2021	H4	M	Master's Degree	28 years	Major
6	ENDF Legal expert	December, 2021	E2	M	Master's Degree	17 years	Civil
7	ENDF Training expert	December, 2021	E3	M	Bachelor Degree	29 Years	Captain
8	Medical Nurse	December, 2021	P1	F	Bachelor Degree	21 years	Civil
9	Medical Counselor	December, 2021	P2	F	Master's Degree	26 Years	Major
10	Service member Military spouses	December, 2021	S1	F	Bachelor Degree	17 years	Major
11	Service member Military spouses	December, 2021	S2	F	Bachelor Degree	17 years	Captain
12	Service member Military spouses	December, 2021	S3	F	Bachelor Degree	17 years	Captain
13	Service member Military spouses	December, 2021	S4	F	Bachelor Degree	17 years	Captain
14	Service member Military spouses	December, 2021	S5	F	Bachelor Degree	13 years	lieutenant
15	Service member Military spouses	December, 2021	S6	F	Certificate	12 years	lieutenant
16	Civil Military Spouses	December, 2021	C1	F	Bachelor Degree	-	-
17	Civil Military Spouses	December, 2021	C2	F	Bachelor Degree	-	-
18	Civil Military Spouses	December, 2021	C3	F	Certificate	-	-
19	Civil Military Spouses	December, 2021	C4	F	Certificate	-	-
20	Civil Military Spouses	December, 2021	C5	F	Certificate		
21	Civil Military Spouses	Dec,2021	C6	F	Certificate		

*Sources: researcher's own survey, 2021/2022*

According to Table 4.1, 76.2 percent of respondents were female, with the remaining male. This result shows that females outnumber males in the sample population. It shows that more males are recruited into the Ethiopian military than females, and thus, during deployment, more women are likely to stay at home. Additionally, there were more female respondents because most of the left-behind spouses were female.

From the same table, concerning educational level, 33.3% of them were at the master's degree level, 42.8% of them were at the bachelor's degree level, and the rest of the respondents were at the certificate level. This indicates that the more educated someone is, the more reliable their information is.

Experience is the time spent in ENDF. As revealed from the same table above, 33.3% of them have more than 21 years of work experience in ENDF. 38.1 percent of the respondents have 10–20 years of working experience, and the rest of them have not worked in the ENDF. This implies that the majority of the respondents were rich in information and that more experience and working practice brought awareness, knowledge, and the ability to give reliable information to the study.

## **4.2. Presentations and Discussions of Findings**

In this section, the researcher analyzed and interpreted all the data collected from respondents through interviews and focus group discussions. The data related to the effects of deployment on military spouses in the Ethiopian National Defense Force was presented and discussed. The findings of the presentation were formulated based on the research questions set. Accordingly, findings on factors that affect military spouses' well-being during deployment, coping mechanisms that spouses adopt, and personal, social, and organizational supports for spouses were presented and interpreted as follows:

### **4.2.1. Factors that affect military spouses' well-being during deployment**

Stress from changes and occurrences in everyday family life have an impact on military families dealing with parental deployment (Green, etal 2013). The effects of military deployments are different in nature and character. Military spouses and families face challenges in the anticipation, timing, and duration of military deployment, which negatively impacts spouses' well-being. From the interview, informants had different experiences during

military deployments with strong feelings such as stress, fear, anger, and depression that affected family relationships. Military families experience mental health problems, disruptions in parenting, increased separation, and interference with family routines because of a partner's deployment (Paley, etal 2013).

The assignment of deployment is unexpected for some. A military spouse mentioned her reaction to this unexpected assignment as follows:

*The peacekeeping mission order to my husband was unexpected, and the news made the whole family unhappy. I feel stressed thinking about his safety after the departure of my husband. (S3, December, 2021)*

The study's participants revealed that spousal well-being was affected by unexpected mission orders during pre-deployment phases. Unexpected calls to a military service member make spouses and families worry, which is a factor that affects spousal well-being during deployment. Due to the significant demands placed on a soldier (Borah & Fina, 2017), like unexpected calls, which may not necessarily mean deployment, the spouse will experience increased stress because of the insufficient time given to them to prepare for the deployment of their partners (Colburn, 2020). There were instances where both military spouses were deployed at the same time. Reflecting on the effect of this situation, a military spouse explained that:

*My husband is a military person, and I am too. He was once ordered to deploy for contingency operations, while I was ordered to deploy for training. It was very hard for us to decide to leave our children with our parents because we were afraid of them. We were very concerned about their health, schooling, and wellbeing (C4, December, 2021).*

The order of military deployment and orders causes fear, stress, and depression in spouses and their family members during deployment phases, as evidenced by the above-mentioned interview results, while other informants experienced feelings of insecurity upon their partner's deployment. The other respondent, who is also a service member and was ordered to deploy at the same time, experienced very difficult situations in order to decide whether to deploy or not. These findings collaborated with a previous study conducted by Betz and Thorngren (2006), who found out that when families are separated due to military deployment, they naturally wish to be reunited. Still, they also recognize that they might never be the same. The uncertainty of a family member's absence or presence can increase

adults' and children's resilience. In other words, a family member can benefit from thinking dialectically about thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in a practical way: My loved one is no longer with me, yet they are still present; I can learn to cope with the stress of uncertainty (Betz & Thorngren, 2006).

This implies that unexpected mission orders, timing, and duration of deployment have negative impacts and have significant effects on military spouses and family members. Deployment news and orders have different challenges for spouses, especially if the military mission is ordered to combat zones. In combat zones, there is always the possibility of death, injury, trauma, and safety concerns. Military spouses back home felt frustrated and worried about their partner's departure. The departure of military personnel to combat zones caused frustration and stress on spouses, as a mother of three and a military spouse explained:

*I was pregnant when I heard of my husband's deployment and frustrated about the news of his departure. I was just thinking about my future life as his departure date approached. Loneliness and stress made me cry until he deployed (S6, December, 2021).*

This indicates that most military spouses are affected by deployment news in addition to their psychological stress and physical departure. According to the pregnant spouse interviewed above, she was depressed by her partner's departure due to the unexpected military order and timing of his deployment. Communication mechanisms provided as a method for military family members to uphold one another and share daily information. Active communication between deployed service members and spouses could play a big role in psychological support.

Most respondents face challenges in contacting their partner using communication means, either to send or receive information from their deployed spouse. The impact that the difficulties in communication have on the service member and spouse is clearly leading to stress and a threat to the spouse.

One of the most important aspects of stress for the non-deployed spouse appears to be the level of worry about issues commonly related to deployment during wartime, such as the soldier's safety, emotional adjustment, and opportunities for communication (Wright, et al, 2006). This type of emotional stress (particularly concerns about injury and death) emerges as a potent predictor of psychological and health-related symptoms in both cross sectional and

longitudinal work. Difficulties in communication between spouses affected family relationships and raised security concerns. A military spouse stated that:

*My husband was an army college instructor residing in northern Ethiopia and had good contact with me and our children. I have heard that he and his fellow military officers had been kidnapped by local armed groups. We (the family) were shocked and did not know the whereabouts of my husband. I called and searched for his whereabouts several times but never reached out to him. After a month with no news about him, I just felt that he was in trouble and asked friends for help (C5, December, 2021).*

According to another informant, communication breakdowns between partners have different stories, and she stated that:

*I have traveled from Gondar to Armachihoo in a vehicle to search for my husband after his disappearance for longtime without communication even with telephone. It was very scary to travel to that place as there were armed rebels and militia. After I traveled during the night and met my husband in the barracks, I was happy for while... when I returned to my home, it was very difficult to get money for transportation, and there were security issues as well. My husband and his friends came up with an idea for solving the money and security problems; they told the driver that I was a criminal and a prisoner to secure free transportation for me and resolve the security threat that I could face until I reached Gondar (C2, November 2021).*

This demonstrates that, according to the first respondent, communication breakdowns between partners caused trouble for spouses and children. According to the second informant, difficulty communicating with her husband forced her to travel to a remote area, at the risk of her personal safety and security. From this, one can summarize that communication between spouses is necessary, and its difficulty may create personal insecurity. Another effect of military deployment on spouses comes from financial difficulties. When a service member is forced to deploy to training, a combat zone, or peacekeeping operations, they always have to share their income with their spouses, which is not enough to cover household expenses.

The lack of social interaction mentioned in the interviews and during the focus group discussions was almost the same. A shortage of time to manage household activities, care for children, and interact with friends was reported by respondents.

One respondent explained that:

*It was difficult to interact with neighbors, friends, and relatives each day as I had no time. I used to stay at home the whole day because I was looking for my baby, doing household activities, and making food for my family in the absence of my partner. This prevented me from having a social connection to my residence area, society, and friends, and made me lonely and stressful during my husband's absence (S3, December, 2021)*

Many respondents reported that being a military spouse made it hard to communicate with others. They were frequently moved to different locations, and it was hard to adapt to the new environment in which they posted. Most service members move and deploy to different missions, like combat zones inside the country, training, and peacekeeping operations outside the nation, so military spouses are left alone at home to manage personal and familial household responsibilities. Whereas this led a number of respondents to leave social interactions, others found friends with whom they could spend time.

A military spouse shared her experience as follows:

*I was very busy participating and communicating with friends and to engage in social organization like “Idir”, “Ikub”, and other gatherings and my sister on behalf of me. But it was difficult to ask my sister because of her daily schedule, and this prevented me from gaining friendship and helping to accomplish my social responsibility. (S5, December, 2021).*

The above showed that military spouses face challenges in forming and maintaining relationships with neighbors, friends, and relatives in society due to their day-to-day lifestyle at home.

Stress was discussed as major issue throughout the focus group discussions. Frequently, the stress was associated with the need for spouses to handle everything single-handed. Respondents commonly discussed problems regarding balancing work, caring for children, and household activities alone while their partner was deployed. In addition to the financial shortage, the necessities of everything at home added pressure on left-behind spouses during deployment. Another challenge was children's longings for their deployed parent, and they used to ask about the reintegration date frequently. This led the military spouse to experience psychological distress and mental health problems.

In accordance with previous research, military families have a unique lifestyle unmatched by other populations. Stressors faced by military families include, frequent moves, the potential for deployment into hostile territories, family separation, and geographic isolation from extended family. Most families have to deal with a combination of these stressors at one time, and this can put families at a higher risk for a crisis (McCubbin et al., 1980). A major stressor that was often discussed was the uncertainty associated with military life.

A military spouse is expressed as:

*I have three children and my sister living with me. In the absence of my husband, it was very difficult to manage familial responsibilities including physically, psychologically, and financially. The salary of my husband is not enough to cover expenses of household, school, and social commitments. Once the conflict started in northern Ethiopia, I could not receive my husband's salary on time, have been is serious financial constraints and felt depressed for months, and started to borrow money from relatives. This lack of communication, loneliness, and financial problems had really impacted me and my children during his deployment to the combat zone (S4, December, 2021).*

Deployments were indeed a time of high stress, in which respondents expressed psychological distress regarding their spouse's well-being due to a lack of communication, loneliness, and uncertainty of spousal safety and security during deployment.

Financial difficulties were another effect on some spouses; an interview with the Human Resource Management Head in ENDF revealed that:

*"For different technical reasons, military spouses were not paid their partner's salary regularly, and military spouses most of the time brought their concerns to our department.*

Regarding this, a military spouse said that:

*I used to receive money each month from my partner via bank transfer. But once after I lost communication with my husband, I could not sustain life with my own income. I just borrowed money from my friend and asked for my husband's whereabouts at the organization's human resources department. Then the department gave me the new address of my partner to contact him and solve the problem (S2, December, 2021).*

The literature (Martin et al., 1993:25; Segal and Harris, 1993:85; Roberts, 1991:49; Van Breda, 2001:241) suggests and confirms that financial problems are one of the problems that spouses face during deployment. This study confirmed that ENDF members' spouses practiced finance-related problems during combat zone and peacekeeping operations deployments. As indicated in the literature (Roberts, 1991:49; Hornig, 1994:149), and in the researcher's analysis, most of the spouses are not capable of running the money at home. Military spouses experienced financial difficulties as a result of deployment and due to the fact that they found themselves faced with the management of the finances of the home.

Deployment not only has negative impacts on the military spouse and family but also offers opportunities. Pitse (2009) suggested that the financial incentive associated with deployment made it possible for service members to make changes in their households (for example, extending the house, buying a car, and purchasing new furniture), something that they would not necessarily be able to do if they were at home. Financial incentives are associated with deployment and make a significant contribution towards the attainment of organizational objectives regarding participation in peace missions (Pitse, 2009). An interview with a peacekeeping training expert revealed that:

*Military personnel deployed as peacekeepers were rewarded with money during deployment. This opportunity gives the family the opportunity to solve their financial problems and develop a self-reliant attitude despite the deployment challenges faced by military personnel and spouses.*

This demonstrates that the deployment of military personnel to peacekeeping operations can solve financial insecurity as their income depends on the organization's monthly salary. This indicates that military deployment solves the financial shortage for military spouses to sustain their day-to-day lives.

Lack of communication is one of the issues that spouses struggle with in combat zones. Deployment of military personnel as Deployed to a combat zone created fear and stress on spouses, as a military spouse whose husband deployed to a combat zone explained as follows:

*I always thought of my partner when he deployed to a combat zone. As I heard news of the deaths and injuries of soldiers on the war front, I felt so depressed, imagining the fate of my husband being in the war zone, if he passed away, his salary would definitely be suspended, and our family would also leave the military camp after six months. This war news had*

*always made me stressed about my daily activities and managing my family during my partner's deployment (C3, December 2021).*

The above response pointed out that a lack of communication with partners during deployment is a cause for worry for spouses. The literature (Krueger, 2001:15) also confirmed that spouses of deployed members acknowledged communication troubles. From this, the respondent feels fear for her partner's safety as its consequence threatens her wellbeing. This implies that combat zone deployments for military personnel caused distress for military spouses.

Spouses are compounded by daily stressors as a result of such things as taking care of children, employment, and household duties (Galvoski & Lyons, 2004). When the military forces deploy soldiers, the structure of the family system changes and forces the family members to change roles or adopt new roles, renegotiating boundaries within and around the family system in order to develop routines that would keep the family in a stable and functional state (Lincoln et al., 2007). A military spouse explained how deployment affected her family as follows:

*It was very difficult to manage my life and household activities related to my children's wellbeing after my husband left for a long period of time. Especially on holidays, my children missed their father and asked about his whereabouts, especially on their day-of-birth birthdays. My husband was not present at the birthday celebration, and even he could not access the phone to communicate and say happy birth for about two years, and it was a very hard time for me as a mother and a family member (C5, December, 2021).*

Another military spouse who had similar experience added:

*Even though deployment periods in peacekeeping operations missions have a set end period in our case, about a year because of COVID-19 and other technical issues, my partner did not return home at the expected time. This made the whole family depressed, and family programs like children's birthdays were rearranged (C6, December, 2021).*

As indicated by the above result, participants explained that it was very difficult for most spouses to be on military deployment for a long period of time along with other constraints. Lengthy separation creates stress for spouse and family, while the other respondents felt

lonely and depressed because of uncertainty about their partner's well-being. This implies that deployment for a long period of time causes stress and depression in families.

Long-term military deployment increases divorce rates among military spouses. Because of the lengthy deployment, lack of communication, and stress, relationships are affected and have a negative impact on marriage stability. Those impacts have consequences for marital dissatisfaction, which leads to divorce. A military counselor explained that:

*From my experience as a counselor, military spouses have problems communicating with their partner during deployment in order to share their feelings and the psychological pressure they have been facing. Most spouses raised issues like psychological, financial, and behavioral concerns for themselves and their children. They revealed that those issues affected their relationship and consequently forced them to divorce (P2, December, 2021).*

Regarding marital dissatisfaction and divorce, an ENDF legal expert added that:

*The military spouses come to get advice on defense law matters in many ways. They come to us for counseling on social relations, economic conditions, and related issues. Most of the time they complained that "the money that my husband sent was not enough", because the money they receive is always not enough to care for their children and family. In some cases, wives are denied access to money from peacekeeping. One reason mentioned for this was that "military duty has a special nature in that it is vulnerable to physical and mental problems since it operates in disastrous situations" (E2, December, 2021).*

As shown from the above interview results, military spouses consult medical and legal experts for counseling on relationship, psychological, and marriage issues. From the result, it is clear that deployment has an effect on marital and family relationships, which leads to divorce.

Military spouses face role-change difficulties in personal and parental responsibilities in the absence of their partner, which leads to psychological and behavioral changes. On active deployment, there is a role change for spouses and children, and it makes military spouses who stay responsible for all household and child care activities. The stay-at-home spouse would assume and maintain clear-cut authority for every decision taken in the absence of the

deployed spouse regarding household chores, rules, discipline, and external support (Palmer, 2008).

In this regard, a military spouse explained that:

*When my husband was deployed for a long period of time, I was responsible for looking for a family role in caring for, helping, and mentoring our children. Household activities were undertaken only by me. Once, when my kitchen water pipe was broken, I reported it to the plumber at the military camp. The technician wouldn't help me because I am not a service member. I paid for the repair service for another civilian technician, and I felt sad for not being supported by the plumber (S5, December, 2021).*

For some, different roles and household activities at home challenge the well-being of spouses and family members during deployment by taking full responsibility for the home front.

A gender expert shared that:

*There are different challenges that affect military spouses because of marital role changes during deployment. Military spouses have to face and solve several problems and family activities in the household alone. For example, they took full responsibility for caring for the children, managing the household, and following up on school activities, which exerted a lot of pressure on them and affected their job. When military personnel are at home, they have the responsibility to help out around the house, and during the deployment, these responsibilities fully shift to the spouse (E1, December, 2021).*

Different research on this theme also revealed that military couples endure the prolonged periods of separation inherent to military life. Frequent moves, hectic and varying job schedules, and extended separations, all within the context of a seemingly insensitive rule-bound social system (McCubbin, et al 1976), can potentially affect marital and family relationships. It is not unusual for a military husband or wife to be absent from their spouse during the birth of a child, special occasions, a crisis situation, or any combination of the above. A military family may also have recently moved to a new area where social supports may be few or absent, altogether increasing feelings of isolation and loneliness.

The above finding showed that, during deployment, household management and other activities around the house were full responsibilities of the spouse in the absence of the

partner. It implies that the absences of military personnel at home cause high pressure on duty and leave very little time for the spouses. As a result of the military deployment, spouses who were left behind had to take on extra roles by multitasking, employing house help, and seeking support from friends and families.

#### **4.2.2. Coping Mechanisms to Overcome the Effects of Military Deployment**

It is important for not only the deployed member to have strong resilience during deployment, but it spills over to the family as well. This enables both the family and the soldier to cope well during deployment and be able to overcome any challenges that the deployment incurs. Resilience plays an important role in all phases of deployment. Resilience mitigates stress and improves adjustment to deployment for children and families. Families that function most effectively are active, optimistic, self-reliant, and flexible (Jensen & Shaw, 1996; Wiens & Boss, 2006). Families that function well find meaning in military life and identify with the work of their uniformed family members (Hammer, et al, 1987). Family preparedness for deployment as well as community and social support lead to better adjustment according to (Wiens & Boss, 2006).

The findings of the study revealed that family preparedness by spouses played an important role in overcoming the effects of deployment. Most respondents in the study shared their own personal experiences that helped them overcome physical, psychological, mental, and economic problems. A female military service member stated that

*After the deployment order, my husband and I sat down to discuss the expected challenges that we could probably face during his deployment time. We have tried to schedule and reorganize household activities, solve resource problems for our children, and learn about the new roles that he might face during his departure from family, society, and the local community. Irrespective of all these attitudes, it was still difficult to overcome such responsibilities in and outside of the home by myself (S2, November, 2021).*

As military spouses face various stressors, they develop coping skills to help themselves. One area in which military spouses may develop or enhance their coping skills is communication. According to Suttle (2003) and Kipp (1991), communication during separation plays a critical role in maintaining an emotional bond between partners. Open two-way communication lines will encourage soldiers and families to start sharing their expectations, concerns, and fears

about the reunion. By communicating as early as possible, partners can acquire the information and skills needed to cross barriers and minimize problems during reunion. Existing studies also suggest that frequency of communication during deployment can help families feel more connected and is associated with positive mental, emotional, and behavioral health and relationship outcomes among service members, spouses, caregivers, and children (Carter et al., 2011; Cigrang et al., 2014).

During the discussion, a study participant explained:

*It was very difficult to manage household activities and care for children by myself during the lengthy separation from my husband, but we communicated via telephone in order to solve each problem I faced every day. My husband used to call us in the morning and in the evening to communicate with our children, asking about how education, work, and household activities had gone throughout the day. This gave us personal motivation to cope with stress during his deployment period. (FGD-1, December 2021).*

This implies that military spouses who have strong communication with their deployed spouse and face different roles at home in the absence of their partner can cope with difficulties in caring for children and managing household activities by communicating with the deployed service member throughout the deployment cycle.

Literature findings also showed the same case: military personnel, particularly those who are married, expect to be able to communicate frequently with family members at home during a tour of duty, but they end up disappointed if they do not have as much access to communication technology as they expected (Schumm, et al., & Rice, 2004).

Social support may be more effective when offered by specific individuals within the social network (Cohen, 1992). Another factor in coping with deployment effects is social support, in which spouses engage in different types of social interaction and engagement. Social support is defined as information leading to a person believing that they are cared for, loved, respected, and valued within the network of communication and mutual obligation. Social support has been consistently associated with physical, mental, and emotional health (Taylor, 2011). The importance of family support and family preparedness to the overall goal of total readiness as well as ultimately to the outcome of the mission cannot be overemphasized.

Studies showed that soldiers can cope with stress better if they know that their families are being cared for during their absences (Hornig, 1994).

Emotional support may be most effective when offered by individuals in close, relatively intimate relationships with the individual in need, as support and acceptance from individuals in these relationships are likely to provide the most genuine sense of belonging (Cohen & McKay, 1984). Most respondents used families, friends, and local social community practices as resilience factors in stressful environments. A military spouse who participated in a focus group discussion revealed:

*I was not the only spouse whose partner was deployed; so was my neighbor's. And we just discussed each other's progress and challenges to solve in collaboration. Beside my neighbor's support, I had very good interaction and support from my friends, family members, and my husband's friends. And when I engaged in social interaction, people always supported me, knowing that my partner was absent at home (FGD-1, December 2021).*

This shows that better social interaction can solve the effects of deployment. The ability of the family to adapt to the military way of life was related to the degree that the military would provide formal and informal support to the immediate family (as well as to the family adaptive resources such as flexibility and spouse education) (Segal & Harris, 1999).

Social interaction with friends, relatives, and neighbors' support is used as an adaptive resource in order to cope with the different effects of deployment difficulties. Within all the effects of deployment, most spouses execute their responsibilities for the family even though their partner is deployed to combat zones, training, and peacekeeping operations for a long time. The coping mechanisms employed during military deployment minimize the effects on personal, physiological, psychological, and social problems. Through countering the damaging impact or strain felt by the spouse, social support may serve as a significant moderator on the impact of life stressors on family well-being (Verdeli et al., 2011).

A military spouse further stated that:

*My husband had different deployment experiences in combat zone missions, peacekeeping operations, and training. Through these hard times, I have developed resilience practices for managing household and child care*

*activities. So my personal strength helped me and my family copes with the deployment effects on me and my children (C3, December, 2021).*

It is important for not only the deployed member to have strong resilience during deployment, but it spills over to the family as well. This enables both the family and the soldier to cope well during deployment and be able to overcome any challenges that may be brought by deployment. The survival and adjustment of the military family involved in deployment depend on the individual's resilience (Ntshota, 2002). From the above findings, personal adjustment and experiences in reorganizing and managing household activities have their own effect on coping with deployment challenges during deployment periods in the absence of the partner. The findings of Green et al 2013) underscore the importance of improving the efficiency of both formal and informal supports. Numerous points of contact with social services offer chances for specialized evaluation of particular family stress and maternal psychological health concerns.

#### **4.2.3 Organizational Support and Measures for Military Spouses**

Military families, like all families, vary in the degree to which they seek social support, with some feeling more comfortable sharing their internal family difficulties with others outside the immediate family (Riggs & Riggs, 2011). Professional help and resources can play a major role in minimizing the damaging impact of separation. In fact, separation can provide an opportunity to deal with unresolved early libidinal conflicts (Blos, 1967). Riggs and Riggs (2011) further noted the importance of clear boundaries for families that simultaneously maintain cohesion within the family but are also flexible enough to allow the family to avail themselves of support and resources outside the family. This was influenced by the member's ability to utilize internal and external resources. Includes social support (military, family, community, religious, etc.), resistance resources (economic, independence of spouses, flexibility, and family communication), and organization.

The researcher assessed different personal, social, and organizational supports in order to cope with deployment effects on military spouses, and ENDF has taken various organizational measures to fill organizational gaps. Over the course of an interview with the head of human resource management at the institution, there were visible organizational gaps and a need to take measures in order to solve the deployment effects of military spouses.

He stated that:

*During conflict in a combat zone, there is a displacement of people whose military spouses are part of it. For example, in the Tigray region conflict, many military spouses were displaced and couldn't access communication with their partners. Even though the institution attempted to assess and solve the problem using its own system, communication with spouses remains a major problem (H3, December 2021).*

He further added that:

*Human resource management made measures to access homes for displaced spouses and provide information about servicemen's mission area and address so as to create an opportunity to visit or communicate with spouses and children (H3, December 2021).*

Other organizational measure to be taken to solve the deployment gaps for service members and their partners including providing pre-deployment training. The Ethiopian peacekeeping center deployment departments have training on pre- and post-deployment training programs.

An interview with an officer on peacekeeping deployment revealed that:

*The Ministry of Defense has pre-deployment training programs in order to train service members on deployment duties and responsibilities. In this training, different mental, psychological, and economic resilience experiences and systems are being discussed and systematically practiced. After returning from active deployment, there is also post-deployment training for service members in order to reintegrate with spouses and children. But there is a gap in providing training and supporting spouses and children during active deployment phases (H2, December, 2021).*

Another service rendered to military families is the medical care and this service give spouses and their children in acquiring health services. Defense Human Resource Management have always take measures that have to be taken for the services in the ENDF revealed that:

*If a deployed military family member's medical certificate is not updated on time with the human resources management department, the family member is not entitled to the required medical service. In addition, if the commissary service card is not renewed, they will not get the commissary service for food items, which include flour, oil, and sugar for the family, which they cannot afford to buy from the market.*

In addition, he added about the organizational system:

*There is an operational gap manifested in the military welfare system in ENDF. There is no effort to support the spouse and family members where they are, but they can get service only when they come to the office. There is no institutionalization or help for such social problems. There will be a time of hardship for all who serve as military families. When a soldier is deployed for duty, there is also a risk that the money he or she has is not made accessible, which is difficult to manage later. Priority will be given to military families. It is necessary to facilitate communication by telephone and mail in order to solve such problems.*

The result demonstrates that, in ENDF, there are different measures such as programs, policies, systems, and services that are not fully applied to support military spouses. From this, one can understand that military spouses need organizational support measures to be properly applied to solve the negative impacts that they face during deployment.

A medical professional also explained that:

*I was on active duty at the Defense Department's Comprehensive Specialized Hospital as a pediatric nurse. A military spouse came with a small child for treatment. While I was waiting for her turn, she was hesitant to enter the diagnostic room. The reason behind her hesitation was her outdated identification card. After counseling her, I found out that her deployed partner should have registered the identification card before deployment (P1, December, 2021).*

ENDF's gender expert added that:

*The commissary system only allowed military spouses with a service member's identification card or a special identification card to use it, but a girl whose father was deployed and her mother was at work at the time did not bring her commissary card due to stress. The girl felt sad about being prohibited by commissary coordinators (E1, December, 2021).*

From the above results, participants were assured that services are not allowed without cards that were not renewed. This implies that military spouses should renew their service cards during pre-deployment time in order to get commissary services from the organization. Organizational support for military personnel's families is one of the mechanisms to cope with deployment problems.

An interview forwarded to human resource management demonstrated that:

*There are many improvements in the army regulations that provide different benefits for military spouses, such as accommodation, medical services, and commissary services, in order to tackle financial difficulties and health problems.*

This finding is also supported by different pieces of literature that support the notion that, due to the fact that deployment has become part and parcel of the military way of life, it is important that intervention programs be implemented in support of families who are left behind (Roberts, 2005:38–39).

Furthermore, the literature (Segal and Harris, 1993:2) confirms the need for the provision of spousal support services in order to address deployment-related stressors and contribute to the combat readiness of members. In this way, the mission can be successfully accomplished. Therefore, the provision of support services prior to deployment enables the member and the family to deal with external military deployment. Furthermore, the researcher is in support of Segal and Harris, and is of the opinion that deployment and social support are inseparable. One cannot exist without the other. Due to the fact that the research subjects expressed a need for services that would help in making the necessary arrangements prior to deployment, the implication is that the organization could play an active role in ensuring that members and their families are fully prepared for deployment.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study on the effects of deployment on military spouses in the Ethiopian National Defense Forces. The study was conducted to explore deployment effects on military spouses in ENDF residence areas of Signal and Gofa camps in Addis Ababa. The chapter begins with the discussion, followed by the conclusions drawn from the discussions, and finally constructive recommendations are forwarded so that the concerned bodies can play their respective roles. The study addresses the effects of military deployment, factors that affect military spouses' wellbeing, coping mechanisms and resilience factors that are adopted by military spouses to overcome the impacts and effects of deployment, as well as personal, social, and organizational support; furthermore, the study outlines organizational measures to be taken to address the effects of deployment on military spouses in ENDF.

### **5.2. Summary of Findings**

The main findings related to the effects of military deployment on military spouses in ENDF are fear, anger, sadness, loneliness, stress, depression, decreased family relationships, financial insecurity, and fear of safety. The majority of respondents stated that the news and order of deployment upset military spouses and family members and caused feelings of loneliness.

Most respondents face challenges in contacting their partner using communication means so as to send and receive information from their deployed spouse. Communication breakdowns between partners made life difficult for spouses and children. In addition, the difficulty of communicating with their husband forced them to travel to remote areas at the risk of their personal safety and security.

Deployments of military personnel create financial problems as their income depends on their monthly salary. Respondents are concerned about their partner's safety because the consequences threaten their own well-being.

Respondents stated that it was extremely difficult for most spouses to be deployed for an extended period of time, as prolonged separation causes stress on spouse and family, while

the other respondents felt lonely and depressed due to the uncertainty of their partner's well-being. The majority of respondents stated that household management and other activities affect the spouse in the absence of their partner.

Military spouses communicate with medical and legal experts for counseling on factors that affect relationships, psychological issues, and marriage issues and use their own personal practices to overcome physical, psychological, mental, and economic problems. Coping mechanisms adopted by military spouses include personal, social, and organizational support.

Most military spouses tried to reorganize and manage household activities by using their own personal experiences. Better social interaction with friends, relatives, and neighbors can solve deployment challenges, besides different measures such as programs, policies, systems, and services that are not fully applied to support military spouses by ENDF.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

Military spouses reported several deployment effects, factors, and coping mechanisms that they adopted during their partner's combat zone, training, and peacekeeping operation deployments. Lack of communication, uncertainty, frequency of deployment, loneliness, stress, and other factors were discussed, as were different coping mechanisms for physical, psychological, and social difficulties. In addition, personal, social, and organizational support practices were also discussed, and these findings can be used to inform future organizational interventions for military spouses.

Based on the summary of the main findings of the study, the following conclusions drawn:

Most participants stated that military deployment effects were difficult to carry on in the absence of their partner, and unexpected mission orders, timing, and duration of deployment have negative impacts and lead to significant effects on military spouses and family members.

Deployment for an extended period of time causes stress and depression in the family and places a financial burden on military spouses to sustain day-to-day life. Military deployment also has an effect on marital and family relationships, which leads to divorce.

Preservation of communication was vital during deployment between spouses, as was social interaction and engagement with different friends and families, which enabled spouses to cope with different military deployment problems.

The study uncovered social and organizational support that helps military spouses cope with deployment effects during deployment. The ENDF has set different measures for supporting spouses by implementing financial, medical, and psychological supports.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion reached, the following recommendations were forwarded to military spouses, service members, and the organization itself.

- **Military spouses and service members**

Military spouses and their families should rearrange and discuss how they will support one another as they deal with the upcoming deployment separation and its consequences.

A military service member should inform his or her partners and children about deployment issues professionally and prepare them psychologically to mitigate the effects of deployment. In addition, they have to identify the effects of military deployment that are affecting them greatly and continuously invite concerned bodies to solve them.

Although deployment has effects on his or her family, the deployed service member should be patient in communication, and during a communication breakdown, military spouses must prepare and maintain multiple modes of communication, including social media platforms, share valuable resources, and be consistent with personal disciplines.

Military personnel pay attention to updating and making available all necessary documents, including marital, health, and commissary service identification cards, before problems occur.

- **Organization ( ENDF)**

- ❖ Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) should consider pre- and post-deployment training for all deployment duties and missions, as well as raising awareness among military spouses.
- ❖ The Defense Peacekeeping Deployment Center, Defense Training Department, and Defense Operation Department should set up a system to solve communication gaps during deployment.
- ❖ The Defense Health Department should consider training platforms and counseling services for military spouses.
- ❖ The Ethiopian National Defense Forces and public partners should create a welfare and support system to assist military families in assimilating into society after serving particular commitment.
- ❖ The Defense Research and Development Center and Gender Office should consider developing directives and manuals to support military spouses.

## **5.5. Recommendations for further research**

- ❖ Further research should be conducted to uncover the effect of deployment on the psychosocial wellbeing of children in ENDF.
- ❖ Research should be conducted to discover out whether the ENDF policies, directives and regulations are enough to empower and support spouses.
- ❖ A comparative study should be conducted on the effects of deployment on ENDF military service women.

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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX I: INTERVIEW GUIDES

My name is Saba Mekonen Tamrie, a graduate student of the Center for Gender Studies at the College of Development Studies, Addis Ababa University. The purpose of this discussion is to collect data for my master's thesis about effects of deployment on military spouses: the case of Signal and Gofa camp residence areas. The information gathered in this discussion will be used only for academic purposes and is strictly confidential. There will be no way to identify you because your complete name will not be written down anywhere. Your involvement is entirely at your discretion.

#### **Instruction**

You have the right to refuse to answer any question and to end the conversation at any time. You can also ask any questions you want regarding the research at any time.

- Age
- Educational Background
- Sex
- Occupation
- What military effects of deployment did you face when your partner deployed?
- How were spouses affected by the effects of deployment?
- What are spousal role and responsibilities in the absence of deployed personnel?
- What coping mechanisms were you adopted during deployment?

## **ANNEX II: FGD GUIDES FOR MILITARY SPOUSES:**

My name is Saba Mekonen Tamrie, a graduate student of the College of Development Studies in the Department of Gender Studies at Addis Ababa University. The purpose of this discussion is to collect data for my Master's thesis about effects of deployment on military spouses: the case of Signal and Gofa camp residence areas. The information gathered in this discussion will be used only for academic purposes and is strictly confidential. Your full name will not be written down anywhere, and there will be no way to identify you. Your participation is voluntary.

- Age
- Educational Background
- Sex
- Occupation
- Please describe your personal experiences of military deployment that affected your wellbeing when your partner deployed?
- What kinds of activities are harder for you since your partner was deployed?
- How is your job and social life affected?
- What are the physical and emotional effects of deployment that you experienced during deployment?
- How do you cope with deployment effects?
- Did you get any support from relatives, friends and institutions?
- What support you were given from family members, relatives, friends and institution? If any, which one was best for you?
- Does anyone have any final thoughts about deployment effects, coping mechanisms and supports to share?

**ANNEX III: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE AMHARIC VERSION FOR SELECTIVE MILITARY SPOUSES**

**ለመከላከያ ሠራዊት አባላት የትዳር አጋሮች የተዘጋጀ ቃለ-መጠይቅ፤**

**አጭር ማጠቃለያ:-** የዚህ ቃለ-መጠይቅ ዓላማ በኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ መከላከያ ሚኒስቴር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የሠራዊት ትዳር አጋሮች በወታደራዊ ስምሪት ወቅት የሚገጥሟቸውን ተፅዕኖዎች መረዳና መለየት ነው።

**ውድ ተሳታፊ፤** የእርስዎ ምላሽ በጥብቅ ሚስጥር ይያዛል፤ እናም በፍቃደኝነት በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ እንዲሳተፉ በትህትና እጠይቃለሁ። የዚህ ጥናት ትክክለኛነት በእርስዎ ሐቀኛ ምላሽ ብቻ ላይ የተመሰረተ ነው።

**የግል መረጃ፤**

- 1. ዕድሜ \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. ፆታ \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. የትምህርት ደረጃ \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. የስራ መደብ / ዓይነት \_\_\_\_\_

**በቃለ መጠይቆች ወቅት የሚጠየቁ ጥያቄዎች:-**

- 1. የትዳር አጋርዎ ወታደራዊ ስምሪት በሄደበት ወቅት ምን ምን ዓይነት ተግዳሮቶች፣ ችግሮች እና ተፅዕኖዎች አጋጥመዎታል?
- 2. በወታደራዊ ስምሪት ወቅት ያጋጠመዎት ችግሮች እና ተግዳሮቶች በእርስዎ እና በቤተሰብዎ ላይ ያደረሱት ጫና እንዴት ይገለጻል?
- 3. የትዳር አጋርዎ በወታደራዊ ስምሪት ተለይቶ በቆየበት ወቅት የእርስዎ የቤት ውስጥ ሚና እና ሀላፊነት እንዴት ይገለጻል?
- 4. በትዳር አጋርዎ ስምሪት ወቅት ያጋጠመዎትን ተግዳሮቶች እና ችግሮች ለመፍታት የተጠቀሙበት ዘዴ እና ልምድ ምን ይመስላል ?
- 5. የመከላከያ ተቋም በቅድመ ስምሪት እና ስምሪት ወቅት ያደረገልዎት ድጋፍ እና እገዛ ምን ይመስላል? በቂ ነበር ይላሉ?በቀጣይስ ምን መደረግ አለበት ይላሉ?
- 6. በዚህ ጉዳይ ላይ ማንኛውም ተጨማሪ አስተያየት ወይም ሀሳብ ካለዎት ይግለፁ? አመሰግናለሁ!!!

## ANNEX IV: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE AMHARIC VERSION FOR SELECTIVE MILITARY SPOUSES

**ለመከላከያ ሠራዊት አባላት የትዳር አጋሮች የተዘጋጀ የቡድን ውይይት መጠይቅ፤**

**አጭር ማጠቃለያ፡-** የዚህ የቡድን ውይይት መጠይቅ ዓላማ በኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፐብሊክ መከላከያ ሚኒስቴር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የሠራዊት ትዳር አጋሮች በወታደራዊ ስምሪት ወቅት የሚገጥሟቸውን ተፅዕኖዎች መረዳና መለየት ነው።

**ውድ ተሳታፊ፤** የእርስዎ ምላሽ በጥብቅ ሚሰጥር ይያዛል፤ እናም በፍቃደኝነት በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ እንዲሳተፉ በትህትና እጠይቃለሁ። የዚህ ጥናት ትክክለኛነት በእርስዎ ሐቀኛ ምላሽ ብቻ ላይ የተመሰረተ ነው።

### **የግል መረጃ**

1. ዕድሜ \_\_\_\_\_
2. ፆታ \_\_\_\_\_
3. የትምህርት ደረጃ \_\_\_\_\_
4. የስራ መደብ / ዓይነት \_\_\_\_\_

### **በመጠይቆች ወቅት የሚጠየቁ ጥያቄዎች፡-**

1. የትዳር አጋርዎ ወታደራዊ ስምሪት በነበረበት ወቅት ምን ምን ዓይነት ችግሮች እና ተፅዕኖዎች አጋጥሞታል?
2. የትዳር አጋርዎ ስምሪት በነበረበት ወቅት ምን ምን አይነት የቤት፣ የልጆች እና የማህበራዊ ህይወት ክፍተቶች ገጥሞታል? የትኞቹ ተግባራትን የበለጠ አስቸጋሪ ነበሩ?
3. በትዳር አጋርዎ በቦታ ርቀት መለየት ተያይዞ የእርስዎ እና የቤተሰቡ አካላዊ፣ ስሜታዊ እና ኢኮኖሚያዊ ተፅዕኖ እንዴት ይገለጻል?
4. በስምሪት ወቅት ያጋጠመዎትን ተግዳሮቶች እንዴት ተወጡት? የጓደኛ፣ የቤተሰብ እና የጎረቤት ድጋፍ ምን ይመስል ነበር? የትኛውን የበለጠ ጠቃሚ ነበር?
5. ከመከላከያ መስሪያ ቤት በጤና፣ በኢኮኖሚ እና በተለያዩ አገልግሎት ያገኙት ድጋፍ ነበር ወይ? በቀጣይ ምን አይነት እገዛ መደረግ አለበት?
6. በዚህ ጉዳይ ላይ ማንኛውም ተጨማሪ አስተያየት ወይም ሀሳብ ካለዎት ይግለፁ?

**አመሰግናለሁ!!!**