Campaign drives young girls to join armed forces

Bike expedition by women officers of Indian Army comes to an end

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Six women bikers of the Indian Army were surprised by a barrage of innocent questions posed to them by school students in rural India, as they set out to promote awareness about women joining the Army as well as women empowerment.

The officers of the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) had left on a week-long sojourn from Bhopal, reaching Secunderabad after halting in Mhow (Madhya Pradesh), Vadodara (Gujarat), Mumbai, Pune and Solapur (Maharashtra) as part of the 10th reunion celebrations of the Corps of EME under the banner of ‘EME Naari Shakti Motorcycle Expedition’.


**Spreading awareness**

Their purpose was to make people aware about the idea and possibility of women taking up positions in the Indian Army, something they found was altogether unknown in rural parts of the four States they visited.

Talking to *The Hindu* on their return to Secunderabad, the officers recounted how school children in rural areas had no awareness of women’s recruitment in the Indian Army and were also clueless about women empowerment. One of them said the students asked them if women were allowed to use guns in the Army, go to the battlefield or fly fighter jets, and so on.

“They were so innocent. We have answered all their queries and tried to motivate them to join the forces,” said Major Nirban.

The officers rode for 1,720 km. to mark women empowerment, spread awareness on Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s programme of ‘Beti Bachao’, ‘Beti Padhao’ and motivate young girls to join the armed forces.

Through their seven-day road campaign, the team members also interacted with Veer Naaris, Armed Forces veterans and college students.

Lieutenant General Paramjit Singh flagged in the expedition, which was attended by actor Amala Akkineni and Dutee Chand, a double silver medal winner in women’s 100 metres and 200 metres at Jakarta Asian Games.

The concluding ceremony was also attended by a large number of serving officers, veterans, schoolchildren, including girl students of the Army Public School, Bolarum.

Actor Amala Akkineni with the women officers of EME Naari Shakti Motorcycle expedition, which started from Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh and concluded in Secunderabad on Thursday. •K.V.S. GIRI