



Command Posts for Women in Army

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Why in news

The Supreme Court (SC) has asked the Central Government to accommodate women at command post in **non-combat services** like National Cadet Corps and Sainik Schools.

However, the Government highlighted the difficulties in giving 'Command Appointments' for women.

Government on Granting Command Posts

- **Physiological limitations** : The Central Government has asserted that the **"physiological limitations"** of women officers and **changed battlefield scenario** as the primary reasons for not granting the **command posts** for women in the Army.
- **Societal norms**: The troops are not yet mentally schooled to accept women officers in command of units, the composition of rank and file being male predominantly drawn from the rural background with prevailing societal norms.
- **Physical standards**: Officers have to lead from the front. They should be in prime physical condition to undertake combat tasks.
 - Inherent physiological differences between men and women preclude equal physical performance resulting in lower physical standards.
 - Physical capacity of women officers in the Indian Army remains a challenge for command of units.
- **Other challenges**: Apart from **lower physical standards** of women officers compared to men, other challenges include **prolonged absence** due to pregnancy, children's education, husband's career prospects, etc.
- **Permanent commission**: In 2019, the policy was released to grant permanent commission to women officers on SSC, but this was to apply only **prospectively**.
The Women officers contended that the application of permanent commission prospectively is arbitrary and discriminatory. It should be applied retrospectively.

Permanent Commission for Women

The Ministry of Defence has taken steps to ensure implementation of the grant of Permanent Commission to Women officers in the Armed Forces.

- **Indian Air Force:** All Branches, including Fighter Pilots, are now open for female officers.
- **Indian Navy:** All non-sea going Branches/Cadre/Specialisation have been opened for induction of women officers through the Short Service Commission (SSC).
- **Indian Army:** Women officers are granted Permanent Commission in the Indian Army in all the ten branches where women are inducted for Short Service Commission. These are streams of Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Army Air Defence, Judge Advocate General (JAG), etc.

Types of Entry in Armed Forces for Women

- The induction of women into the officer cadre, and their training was undertaken by the **Officers Training Academy in 1992.**
- **Short Service Commission:** This provision provides an option of Joining the Army and serving as a Commissioned Officer for 10/14 years. At the end 10 yrs, an officer has following options:
 - Either opt for a Permanent Commission or
 - Opt out or have the option of a 4 years extension. They can resign at any time during this period of 4 yrs extension.
- **Permanent Commission:** It means a career in the Army till the retirement age. For Permanent Commission, the entry is through National Defence Academy, Pune or Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Officers Training Academy, Gaya.

Source: IE