



Government Order for PC of Women in Army

Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Defence** has issued the **formal Government Sanction Letter** for **grant of [Permanent Commission \(PC\) to Women Officers in the Indian Army.](#)**

Key Points

- The order specifies grant of PC to [Short Service Commissioned](#) (SSC) Women Officers in the **remaining 8 streams of the Indian Army.**
 - These **10 streams include** Army Air Defence (AAD), Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME), Army Service Corps (ASC), Army Ordnance Corps (AOC), Intelligence Corps, Judge and Advocate General (JAG) and Army Educational Corps (AEC).
 - **Before the order, women officers are allowed a PC in the JAG and AEC.**
- In anticipation, the Army Headquarters had set in motion a series of preparatory actions for the conduct of the **Permanent Commission Selection Board** (PCSB) for the eligible women officers.
 - The Selection Board will be scheduled as soon as all eligible SSC Women Officers exercise their option and complete requisite documentation.
- **Issue:**
 - Under the SSC scheme, women were **commissioned into the Army for a period of 10 years, extendable up to 14 years.**
 - Women were, however, **restricted to roles in specified streams** such as Army Education Corps, Corps of Signals, Intelligence Corps and Corps of Engineers. These specified streams **excluded combat arms** such as infantry and armoured corps.
 - While **male SSC officers could opt for permanent commission** at the end of 10 years of service, this option was not available to women officers. **Women officers were kept out of any command appointment and could not qualify for a government pension, which starts only after 20 years of service** as an officer.
- **Background:**
 - The case was first **filed in the Delhi High Court by women officers in 2003** and had **received a favourable order in 2010.**
 - However, the **order was never implemented** and was **challenged in the Supreme Court by the government.**
 - In its appeal, the **government cited “physical” and “physiological limitations”** in granting command positions to women.
 - In the **February 2019 policy statement, the Government endorsed the PC for SSC women officers** in 10 streams of the ‘Combat Support Arms’ and ‘Services’ sections.
 - However, it was said that the women officers **would not be offered any command appointments, and would serve only in staff posts.**
 - In **February 2020**, the SC held that there is a **need for an administrative will and**

'change of mindset' and **directed the government to grant PC and command postings in all services other than combat** to women Army officers.

Permanent Commission for Women

- The Ministry of Defence has taken steps to **ensure implementation of the grant of PC** to women officers and all three services have allowed permanent recruitment of women in select streams including medical, education, legal, signals, logistics and engineering.
 - **Indian Air Force:** Women Officers recruited through the SSC in the IAF have the option of seeking PC in all streams except the flying branch.
 - **Indian Navy:** In [March 2020, the SC cleared the way for PC to women in Indian Navy](#) as well.
 - The Navy has allowed PC of women in a host of departments such as logistics, naval designing, air traffic control, engineering and legal.
 - **Indian Army:** Women officers are granted PC in the Indian Army in **all the ten branches** where women are **inducted for SSC**.

Way Forward

- With the order in force, women officers will now be eligible to occupy all the command appointments, at par with male officers, which would open avenues for further promotions to higher ranks for them.
- Women were being kept out of command posts on the reasoning that the higher rank and file will have problems with women as commanding officers. Thus, changes have to take place in the culture, norms and values of not only the rank and file of the Army but also that of society at large. The responsibility to usher these changes lies with the senior military and political leadership.
- It is the right of every woman to pursue a career of her choice and reach the top. Equality is a constitutional guarantee.

[Source: PIB](#)

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