



## Woman in Combat Roles

Recently, the Indian army has invited applications from eligible women candidates for recruitment of Soldier in Women Military Police.

- Army has an **eventual aim to constitute 20% of the military police cadre from their ranks.**
- The armed forces have till now **inducted women only as officers** and have not allowed them to join the “fighting arms” like the infantry, armored corps, and artillery or serve on operational warships.

## Women in Defense Forces

- The government had announced that **women would be inducted as soldiers or Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR)** in the military police from 2019 onwards.
- Currently, only Indian Air Force inducts women in a combat role as fighter pilots.
- The **Air Force has 13.09% of women officers**, the highest among all three forces.
- The **Army has 3.80% of women officers**, while the **Navy has 6% of women officers.**

## Cons of Women in Combat Role

- **Physical Ability:** While the majority of jobs in the armed forces are open equally to men and women, there are some to which women are just not physically suited.
  - The standards of physical fitness have been set to suit men, and women attempting to reach them will over-stretch themselves.
- **Morale & Cohesion:** Having women serving in direct combat will hamper mission effectiveness by hurting unit morale and cohesion.
- **Military readiness:** Pregnancy can affect the deployability of a unit when the unit has a disproportionate number of women or is understaffed.
- **Tradition:** Men, especially those likely to enlist, maintain traditional gender roles. Harassment and resentment of the presence of women in a hyper-masculine military subculture would likely become a problem.
- **Abuse by Enemy:** Both male and female prisoners are at risk of torture and rape, but misogynistic societies may be more willing to abuse women prisoners.

## Pros of Women in Combat Role

- **Gender is not a hindrance:** As long as an applicant is qualified for a position, one’s gender is arbitrary. It is easy to recruit and deploy women who are in better shape than many men sent into combat.
- **Military Readiness:** Allowing a mixed gender force keeps the military strong. The armed forces are severely troubled by falling retention and recruitment rates. This can be addressed by allowing women in the combat role.
- **Effectiveness:** The blanket restriction for women limits the ability of commanders in theater to pick the most capable person for the job.
- **Tradition:** Training will be required to facilitate the integration of women into combat units. Cultures change over time and the masculine subculture can evolve too.
- **Cultural Differences & Demographics:** Women are more effective in some circumstances than men. Allowing women to serve doubles the talent pool for delicate and sensitive jobs that require

interpersonal skills, not every soldier has.

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