



Equal Benefits for Women in Armed Forces

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Defence Minister of India has approved a proposal for extending the **rules for maternity, child care and child adoption leave** for women soldiers, sailors and air warriors in the Armed Forces on a par with their officer counterparts.

- The decision reflects the vision for inclusive participation, ensuring that **all women in the [Armed Forces](#)**, regardless of rank, receive equal benefits.

Note:

- So far, there were no women air warriors or sailors in the Indian Air Force or Navy. Both started inducting women in their ranks after the government brought in the **Agnipath military recruitment scheme** that was introduced in 2022.
- The Army initially inducted women in the **Corps of Military Police (CMP) in 2019**, and now they are included as Agniveers in the CMP.

What are the Benefits of the New Proposal?

- Only women among the **25% of Agniveers**, selected based on merit after a four-year term, qualify for the extended maternity and family-related benefits.
 - The Agnipath scheme mandates that these women cannot marry until completing their four-year tenure.
- The new proposal will extend the rules for maternity, child care and child adoption leave for women in the military, whether one is an officer or any other rank.
- Women officers in the armed Forces currently get **180 days of maternity leave, 360 days of child care leave and 180 days of child adoption leave**.
 - These benefits will now be applicable to women soldiers, sailors and air warriors as well.
- The extension of leave rules will help women in the military to **deal with family and social issues** relevant to the Armed Forces.
 - It will also improve their work conditions and help them balance their professional and family life better.

What is the Agnipath Military Recruitment Scheme?

- **About:**
 - Agnipath, enables **patriotic youth to serve in the Armed Forces**.
 - Participants, termed **Agniveers**, undergo a **4-year term** with around 45,000 to 50,000 recruits annually.
 - After four years, only 25% of the batch is selected for a 15-year service extension in their respective services.

▪ **Eligibility Criteria:**

- The Agnipath scheme exclusively applies to **non-commissioned personnel below officer ranks.**
 - Commissioned officers hold an exclusive rank in the Indian armed forces. They often hold a commission under the president's sovereign power and are officially instructed to protect the country.
- Eligibility for aspirants is between 17.5 and 23 years.

▪ **Benefits for Agniveers:**

- Upon the completion of the 4-years of service, a one-time '**Seva Nidhi**' package of **Rs 11.71 lakhs** will be paid to the Agniveers that will include their accrued interest thereon.
- They will also get a Rs 48 lakh life insurance cover for four years.
- In case of death, the payout will be over Rs 1 crore, including pay for the unserved tenure.
- The government will help rehabilitate soldiers who leave the services after four years. They will be provided with skill certificates and bridge courses.

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