
5. Women to get Permanent Commission in Indian Armed Forces

Prelims Syllabus: Governance – Policies

Mains Syllabus: GS-II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court recently declared that Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers are eligible for permanent commission and command posts in the Army irrespective of their years of service.

What is the Issue?

- The verdict came on a nearly 10-year-old appeal filed by the government against a 2010 decision of the Delhi High Court to grant SSC women officers permanent commission.
- The induction of women officers in the Army started in 1992. Recruits under the Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES) had a shorter pre-commission training period than their male counterparts who were commissioned under the Short Service Commission (SSC) scheme.
- In 2006, the WSES scheme was replaced with the SSC scheme, which was extended to women officers. They were commissioned for a period of 10 years, extendable up to 14 years.
- According to government, isolation and hardships would eat into their resolve and they would have to heed to the call of pregnancy, childbirth and family. Women ran the risk of capture by enemy and being taken prisoner of war.

What is the SCs Verdict?

- The Supreme Court dismissed the Union government's submissions that women are physiologically weaker than men as a "**sex stereotype**".
- It also declared that Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers are eligible for permanent commission and command posts in the Army irrespective of their years of service.

Why this Verdict?

- The court found the remarks in the note not only constitutionally invalid but discriminatory, affecting the dignity of women officers.
- Article 15 states that the State shall not **discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth** or any of them.

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- So, the SC ordered not to discriminate women on the basis of gender and ordered to appoint them in command posts in the Army.

Way Forward:

- Moreover, to cast aspersion on women's abilities on the ground of gender is an affront not only to their dignity as women but to the dignity of the members of the Indian Army – men and women – who serve as equal citizens in a common mission.

