



WOMEN IN DEFENCE FORCE - GS III MAINS

Q. The women of the Armed Forces are undoubtedly viewed as role models for all women and the Supreme Court along with the Indian Government have played a stimulating character in achieving this end. Elucidate (10 marks, 150 words)

News: *Changing role of women in the Indian armed forces*

What's in the news?

- The position of women in the armed forces, which is described as a male-dominated establishment generally, offers a limited window for any kind of change in the role of women in occupational and bureaucratic structures.

Key takeaways:

- However, breaking the glass ceiling, two women officers have been selected to train as helicopter pilots at Combat Army Training School, Nashik.
- Till now, women officers were only limited to performing ground duties in the Army Aviation Corps.

Women in Indian Forces:

- Over 7,000 women are serving in the Indian Army at present followed by 1,636 in the Indian Air Force and 748 in the Navy.
- The three services have women as dogfaces, mariners and air soldiers in their species piecemeal from women serving at officer-position species.
- The Supreme Court last year ruled that women could serve as army commanders further granting permanent commission and promotions equal to their male counterparts.

Significance of inducting women in defence forces in India:

- Women officers will be given equal opportunity to contribute to the nation.
- The armed forces play an important role and need to promote gender equality in the forces.
- Providing women with a more challenging and fulfilling career.
- It would change the “regressive mindset” for not allowing women in the armed forces.
- It will challenge a strong stereotype that assumes that domestic obligations rest solely on women.

Challenges:



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- Military's universal perception is that it would lead to "operational, practical and cultural problems".
- Officers in combat branches have to fight together & there is no privacy which could be an issue for a female.
- It's tough to maintain proper living conditions for women in combat situations, especially given social norms in India.
- It is often seen as a challenge by society for women to meet the requirements of service owing to their prolonged absence during pregnancy, motherhood and domestic responsibilities.

WAY FORWARD:

- The women of the Armed Forces are undoubtedly viewed as role models for all women and the Supreme Court along with the Indian Government have played a stimulating character in achieving this end.
- The Armed Forces must take a proactive approach themselves in ensuring gender equality rather than waiting for courts to intervene.

