

# Role of Women in Indian Armed Forces

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**Abstract:** In this today's modern world women play a prominent role in each and every field. They sustain their position in all the areas to which they are related equally with men. Each and every action of women proves that they are no way lesser than the men. Traditionally women were engaged only in house hold works, were as men are warriors. For the development of nation, women play a vital role to bring the nation to a developed stage. As far as India is concerned entering of women in armed forces are increasing in numbers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1992, an important landmark in the history of Indian Army because this year happened to be milestone in the women's empowerment as induction of women into office cadre. The Indian armed forces, the name with patriotism and nationalism women's are recruited in support services<sup>1</sup>. Women's are recruited under Women's special entry scheme. So far, more than 1200 Lady Cadets have already been commissioned into the various Arms and Services of the Indian Army.

This paper tries to attempt role of women in Indian Armed Forces, the factors that leads to involve women themselves in to the army, and policies that can be implemented to welcome more women in Indian Armed forces. The paper is based on descriptive analysis, sources of information are books, journals and internet.

## 2. WOMEN IN INDIA

Scholars believe that in ancient India, the women enjoyed equal status with men in all fields of life. However, some others hold contrasting views. Works by ancient Indian grammarians such as Patanjali and Katyayana suggest that women were educated in the early Vedic period Rig Vedic verses suggest that the women married at a mature age and were probably free to select their husband<sup>2</sup>.

Sources have confirmed that women in medieval India also enjoyed many privileges they were not discriminated on the basis of sex. Women in India now participate in all activities such as education, sports, politics, media, art and culture, service sectors, science and technology, etc. The Constitution of India guarantees to all Indian women equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). In addition, it allows special provisions to be made by the State in favors of women and children (Article 15(3)), renounces practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e)), and also allows for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and

for maternity relief<sup>3</sup>.

In this modern society women play a prominent role in each and every aspect, there was a time when women were not allowed to come out of the house, but in Independent India, women bravely engaged themselves in all aspects of the society. They even joined in armed forces and defended our country.

### **3. WOMEN IN ARMED FORCES IN INDIA**

In recent times, women joining in armed forces have become quite natural. The role of women in the armed forces for a long time, was limited to the medical profession—doctors and nurses. In 1992, the doors were thrown open for women's entry as regular officers in aviation, logistics, law, engineering and executive cadres. Thousands of spirited young women applied against advertisements and it was a turning point in the history of time. These women chose a new field where they had to painstakingly pave a path for the others to follow.

The initial adjustment problems weren't as much for the women as it was for the men. Wrapped in their tradition of chivalry and respect to women, most gentlemen officers could not treat their female counterparts at par with themselves<sup>4</sup>. Their subordinates too, were men who came from conservative families where they saw women playing only traditional roles. The emergence of these women into totally male-dominated bastions did initially create embarrassing moments for both<sup>5</sup>. Men hushed their talks and behaved courteously, while women had to do with makeshift arrangements to suit their needs within units. Over the years and having come a long way now, men have realized that these women in uniform are their efficient and able co-workers. The time is not far when we may use the term 'sisters-in-arms' as equivalent to 'brothers-in-arms'.

Currently, women in the non-medical cadre serve as Short Service Commissioned (SSC) officers. Under this type of commission, they can serve in the armed forces for a period ranging from 5-14 years. On release they can pursue a career in the civil sector. SSC officers are released with gratuity and can avail some benefits as ex-service person, but they do not get pension. Women in the medical branch i.e. doctors and nurses can serve as Permanent Commissioned (PC) officers and are eligible for pension after retirement. They also have the option to serve as Short Service Commissioned officers.

Eligible women, who qualify various tests successfully, serve as Short Service Commissioned officers in the following branches of the Armed Forces.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

Although the path these women have chosen is tough, they have proved that they have the spirit, the courage and the will to carry on. Presently, women do not serve in combat arms nor do they fly fighter aircrafts, but it won't be long before these forbidden avenues

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are thrown open to them. Hence these women should be encouraged and nation should welcome their courage to join the armed forces, they should not be discriminated.

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