

# Army considers creating special cadre

## Will induct women as Permanent Commission officers

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The Army is planning to have a specialist cadre to induct women as Permanent Commission officers to address the long pending demand on this count. At present, women officers are recruited as Short Service Commission(SSC) officers and retire after 14 years of service.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said here on Monday the government was also working with the three Services to have a “synchronized position” on the recruitment of women as the Army, Navy and IAF have different rules.

The proposed cadre will enable women officers to secure permanent commission after getting inducted through SSC. The specialist cadres will have streams like image interpretation, cyber and information technology, language experts, Corps of Military Police(CMP) and Air Traffic Control(ATC), officials said here on Monday.

While modalities are being worked out to firm up the cadre proposal, they said as of now women officers serve as permanent commission officers in only two branches including Judge and Advocate General(JAG) and Education. More than 1,000 women officers are now serving in the Army.

Women officers are inducted into nearly all combat support and non-combat streams including Intelligence, Ordnance, Engineers, JAG and Education. However, they are not recruited into combat arms like infantry, armoured corps and artillery.

Some women officers had approached the Supreme Court in 2009 seeking permanent commission on a par with

their male counterparts and the apex court in its order stopped any movement in this regard till finalization of the process. It entails finding way to give permanent commission to women, they said.

Addressing this issue in her address at a function organized by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry(FICCI), Sitharaman said the government was open to women recruited under SSC being offered permanent commissioning. Observing there was no parity at present between the armed forces in recruitment rules related to women, she said while women were already engaged as fighter pilots in the IAF, in the Army, women were still missing from important positions. In the gender neutral Navy as well, women cannot go to the sea, she said, highlighting the lack

of parity in the three services.

“Each of these services has taken their own approach towards getting women a limited option of getting into their force and as a result there is no parity within the three services either. There are different approaches which are prevailing. I am spending quite some time with all the three forces to make sure that we take a synchronised position and also approach the court to handle all these cases which are already there about short service (commission) women being offered permanent commission,” she said. Asserting that the government was open-minded about having women come in to the services, Sitharaman noted verdicts were awaited as several of those who were in SSC approached courts asking why they could not be given the permanent commission.