

(a) what is the rank provided to women officers in the Indian Army after having served for 14 years;

(b) whether the male officers of the Indian Army are ranked as Lieutenant Colonel after 13 years of service;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for the different yardsticks in ranking officers according to their gender; and

(d) whether the actions of this nature violate the principles of equality eschewed by the Constitution?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) Women are inducted as Short Service Commissioned Officers (SSCOs) in the Indian Army. All officers, including those in Short Service Commission (SSC), are eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service, irrespective of gender.

The difference in the period of pre-commission training prevailing earlier for erstwhile Women Special Entry Scheme officers (24 weeks) and Men SSCOs (49 weeks), resulted in differences in the rank attained due to different lengths of reckonable service. However, the duration of pre-commission training for both Women and Men SSCOs (Non-Technical) has been made uniform (49 weeks) from April, 2008 onwards. Accordingly, all SSCOs (both Women and Men), will now have more than 13 years reckonable service thereby enabling them to attain the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Shortfall of officers in Indian Army

346. SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of men and women serving officers in the Indian Army;

(b) what is the total shortfall in the number of officers at present in the Indian Army;

(c) whether any steps have been taken by Government to address this shortfall and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Army will consider providing Permanent Commission to women officers, keeping in mind the High Court order passed in this regard; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) A Statement is attached. (See below).

(d) and (e) The matter is presently *sub-judice* before the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Statement

*Shortfall of officers in Indian Army and steps taken by
Government to address this shortfall*

The total number of men and women officers serving in the Indian Army is 35605 and 1020 respectively (excluding Army Medical Corps, Army Dental Corps and Military Nursing Services). At present, the shortfall in the number of officers in Army is 11,137.

A number of steps have been taken to attract the talented youth to join the Armed Forces. All officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) are now eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. The tenure of SSC officers has been increased from 10 years to 14 years. A total number of 750 posts of Lt. Colonel have been upgraded to Colonel towards implementation of AV Singh Committee Report (Phase-I). Further, 1896 additional posts in the ranks of Colonel, Brigadier, Major General and Lieutenant General and their equivalents in the other two Services have been upgraded towards implementation of AV Singh Committee Report (Phase-II). The implementation of recommendations of the VI Central Pay Commission with substantial improvement in the pay structure of officers of Armed Forces has made the Services more attractive.

The Armed Forces have also undertaken sustained image projection and publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth on the advantages of taking up a challenging and satisfying career. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media, motivational lectures in schools, colleges are also some of the other measures in this direction.

Mismanagement of defence land

347. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :