

Disqualification of candidates with visual defects

46. SHRI AVINASH PANDE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that candidates whose vision defects have been medically treated using LASIK (Laser Assisted In situ Keratomileusis) and/or PRK (Photo refractive Keratectomy) eye surgery are disqualified from recruitment into various branches of the armed forces, including engineering, medical and legal services personnel;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government is planning to review this policy and, if so, details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MANOHAR PARRIKAR): (a) and (b) All candidates whose vision defects have been medically treated using Laser Assisted *in situ* Keratomileusis (LASIK) and/or Photo refractive Keratectomy (PRK) eye surgery are not disqualified from recruitment into various branches of the Armed Forces including engineering, medical services. However, owing to requirement of physical fitness for military service such candidates are selectively accepted in the Armed Forces, the details of which are as under:

(A) Candidates beyond the age of 20 years with LASIK and/or PRK surgery can seek commission in the Army on fulfilling the following conditions:

- (i) Uncomplicated stable LASIK/PRK done for Myopia or Hypermetropia with stable refraction for a period of six months after the procedure.
- (ii) A healthy retina.
- (iii) Corrected vision should be 6/6 in better eye and 6/9 in worse eye, with maximum residual refraction of + 1.50 in any meridian for myopia or hypermetropia.

(B) The LASIK and/or PRK can be permitted in Armed Force Medical College (AFMC), Pune at entry level for candidates above the age of 20 years.

Candidates with LASIK/PRK at entry level are not permitted in National Defence Academy (NDA), Navy and Air Force as well as at entry level of Other Rank (OR) and Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs).

In Army, the candidates who have undergone LASIK/PRK will not be considered for aircrew duties.

(c) and (d) At present, there is no such proposal as the long term effects of LASIK/PRK surgery can vary.