

Seventeenth Loksabha

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Title: Regarding necessary Steps to ensure Gender Equality in the Army

DR. D. RAVIKUMAR (VILUPPURAM): Respected Chairperson, Sir, I would like to raise an important issue regarding the practice of gender discrimination in the Indian Armed Forces

The Supreme Court in its judgment in the Secretary, Ministry of Defence *versus* Babita Puniya & Ors. case directed the Union Government to ensure equal opportunity to women in receiving Permanent Commission in the Indian Army, while critiquing the arguments forwarded by the Governments as being rooted in gender stereotypes. As recently as on 21st November 2022, the Supreme Court has issued notice regarding implementation of the Babita Puniya judgment.

In light of the same, I humbly request that steps be taken to substantially implement the Babita Puniya judgment in the functioning of the Indian Armed Forces. In light of the most recent case in the Supreme Court regarding withholding of selection boards for promoting women officers, while allowing junior male officers to supersede them, it is requested that this practice be terminated immediately as it goes against the judgment in the Babita Puniya case.

Further, if there are any segments of the Army, such as combat units, that are unreasonably inaccessible to women aspirants, it is requested that the policy be amended to reflect gender equality in this regard. It is also requested that a gender policy be incorporated in the Indian Armed Forces addressing various concerns such as promotion and also sexual harassment.

Considering the vast disparity of the number of women in the Indian Armed Forces, not only overall, but also at various levels of promotion and different units, it is crucial that steps be taken to ensure gender equality in the Army.

Thank you, Sir.