

- Now, women officers can be considered for command roles and many other opportunities to distinguish themselves professionally.

Does the question of gender ability matter?

- The nature of warfare is evolving with the support of technology.
- So, the question of gender ability doesn't matter but performance, opportunity, and a fighting chance matters.
- Countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States have been conservative about women in their respective combat arms.
- But others like the Israeli Defense Forces have integrated women.
- India is on the correct path to further integration in future.

What is the other concern with the existing policy?

- The terms of employment of SSC are subject to change and conversions into PC officers are based on force requirements.
- It is possible that based on cadre forecast, an SSC officer may not ever get a chance of converting to PC if there are no vacancies.
- This policy fairly applies to all SSC officers irrespective of gender.
- However, it must be noted that for women, the SSC is the only inroad into the armed forces (except the Medical Corps).
- There is no provision for women to choose defence as a long-term career right at the outset as a PC officer.

What is next?

- The parity of allowing entry of women as permanent cadre needs to be attained soon.
- Only after attaining this, it would truly be a level-playing field in terms of equal opportunity and career advancement.

3.2 OBC Sub-categorisation

Why in news?

A Commission has been examining the sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBC) for almost three years.

What is sub-categorisation of OBCs?

- Sub-categorisation of the OBCs means creation of categories within OBCs for reservation.
- OBCs are granted 27% reservation in jobs and education under the central government.
- The Central List of OBCs consists of over 2,600 communities in it.
- The question of sub-categorisation arises out of the perception that only a few affluent communities among the listed ones have secured a major part of 27% reservation.
- The argument for sub-categorisation is that it would ensure equitable distribution of representation among all OBC communities.

Who is examining sub-categorisation?

- The Commission to examine Sub-categorisation of OBCs took charge on October 11, 2017.
- It is headed by retired Delhi High Court Chief Justice G Rohini.
- Initially constituted with tenure of 12 weeks ending January 3, 2018, it was granted an extension recently.
- The current tenure of the Commission ends on January 31, 2021.
- Its budget is being drawn from the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).

What are its terms of references?

- It was originally set up with three terms of reference: