

The Hindu

Tamil Nadu is all set to recruit 'trans' for police force

It is a change that lifts a barrier. Tamil Nadu has cleared the decks for transgenders to enter the police force.

In the orders issued for appointment of 13,137 police constables, the government has said transgenders could apply either as male, female or third gender. Those opting for "third gender" would be under the female category for educational qualifications, physical fitness and reservation.

The move comes after the entry of Prithika Yashini, the first trans-woman Sub-Inspector, based on a court order last year.

Officers said Tamil Nadu would be the first State to open the gates for the third gender. "This is the first time that we will be formally inducting them in the police department. The notification is expected in a month and the recruitment completed by December," a senior police officer said on Monday.

Though some of them tried to join the police on earlier occasions, they were turned away as there was no provision to accommodate the third gender. One candidate who actually joined but was found to be a transgender during a routine medical examination in 2013, was dismissed. After clearing the written examination, physical test and personal interview, the woman joined the force as a Grade-II constable in 2013. Months later, she was dismissed since she had qualified based on the standards set for women.

The candidate moved the Madras High Court, and said she was admitted as a girl in school and represented Tamil Nadu as a woman athlete. The court ordered her reinstated.

Santhi Soundararajan, who won a silver medal in the Doha Asian Games, is a similar story. After qualifying, she did not turn up. Santhi had failed a gender test and lost her silver medal.

A senior police official said there was no bar on transgenders applying. But their applications could not be entertained as there was no instruction on whether they should be tested as men or women. A Supreme Court order decided the issue, and gave them right of choice.

Would reservation for women be applied? The official said the reservation rules on appointment of transgenders in other departments would apply.