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Agnipath scheme and social development of india.

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Abstract:

The Union Cabinet on 14 June had approved a recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the Armed Forces. The scheme is called AGNEEPATH and the youth selected under this scheme will be known as *Agniveers*. Agniveers will be given an attractive customised monthly package along with Risk and Hardship allowances as applicable in the three services. According to the government, AGNEEPATH scheme has been designed to enable a youthful profile of the Armed Forces. It will provide an opportunity to the youth who may be keen to don the uniform by attracting young talent from the society who are more in tune with contemporary technological trends and plough back skilled, disciplined and motivated manpower into the society.

Introduction:

According to the government, AGNEEPATH scheme has been designed to enable a youthful profile of the Armed Forces. It will provide an opportunity to the youth who may be keen to don the uniform by attracting young talent from the society who are more in tune with contemporary technological trends and plough back skilled, disciplined and motivated manpower into the society. AGNEEPATH allows patriotic and motivated youth to serve in the Armed Forces for a period of four years. The Union Cabinet on 14 June had approved a recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the Armed Forces. The scheme is called AGNEEPATH and the youth selected under this scheme will be known as *Agniveers*. *Agniveers*, on completion of the four-year tenure in the prime of their youth, will be mature and self-disciplined with the realisation to become better version of himself/herself both professionally as also personally.

What Is Agneepath?

According to the government, AGNEEPATH scheme has been designed to enable a youthful profile of the Armed Forces. It will provide an opportunity to the youth who may be keen to don the uniform by attracting young talent from the society who are more in tune with contemporary technological trends and plough back skilled, disciplined and motivated manpower into the society.

As for the Armed Forces, it will enhance the youthful profile of the Armed Forces and provide a fresh lease of “‘Josh’ and ‘Jazba’” whilst at the same time bring about a transformational shift towards a more tech savvy Armed Forces – which is indeed the need of the hour. It is envisaged that average age profile of Indian Armed forces would come down by about 4-5 years by implementation of this scheme.

According to the government, the nation stands to immensely benefit by infusion of highly inspired youth with deeper understanding of self-discipline, diligence and focus that would be adequately skilled and will be able to contribute in other sectors. The dividends of a short military service to the nation, society and the youth of the nation are immense.

What is Scheme?

A **scheme** is a systematic plan for the implementation of a certain idea. **Wikipedia**

In mathematics, specifically in algebraic geometry, a **formal scheme** is a type of space which includes data about its surroundings. Unlike an ordinary scheme, a formal scheme includes infinitesimal data that, in effect, points in a direction off of the scheme. For this reason, formal schemes frequently appear in topics such as deformation theory. But the concept is also used to prove a theorem such as the theorem on formal functions, which is used to deduce theorems of interest for usual schemes. Wikipedia

What is Agneepath Scheme?

Agneepath/ Agnipath Scheme is a recruitment process launched by the central government wherein selected candidates will be enrolled as **Agniveers for four years period** in Indian Armed Forces. **The Armed Forces will be recruiting 46,000 Agniveers this year through Agnipath/Agneepath scheme.** On completion of the four-year period, Agniveers will go to the society as a disciplined, dynamic, motivated, and skilled workforce for employment in other sectors to pursue their career in the job of their choice.

What is Social?

The word "social" derives from the Latin word *socii* ("allies"). It is particularly derived from the Italian *Socii* states, historical allies of the Roman Republic (although they rebelled against Rome in the Social War of 91–87 BC).

Social organisms, including humans, live collectively in interacting populations. This interaction is considered social whether they are aware of it or not, and whether the exchange is voluntary or involuntary.

What is Development?

Development is a **human process, in the sense that human beings, not material factors, drive development**. The energy and aspiration of people who seek development form the motive force that drives development. People's awareness may decide the direction of development.

Child development, between birth and the end of adolescence.

Development (journal), an academic journal in developmental biology.

Developmental biology, the study of the process by which organisms grow and develop. Developmental psychology, the scientific study of how and why human beings change over the course of their life.

Drug development, the entire process of bringing a new drug or device to the market. Embryogenesis, or development, the process by which the embryo is formed.

Human development (biology), the process of growing to maturity.

Neural development, the processes that generate, shape, and reshape the nervous system.

What is Social development?

Social development is about improving the well-being of every individual in society so they can reach their full potential. The success of society is linked to the well-being of each and every citizen. Social development means investing in people.

What is India?

India, officially the **Republic of India** (Hindi: Bhārat Gaṇarājya), is a country in South Asia. It is the seventh-largest country by area, the second-most populous country, and the most populous democracy in the world. Bounded by the Indian Ocean on the south, the Arabian Sea on the southwest, and the Bay of Bengal on the southeast, it shares land borders with Pakistan to the west; China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the north; and Bangladesh and Myanmar to the east. In the Indian Ocean, India is in the vicinity of Sri Lanka and the Maldives; its Andaman and Nicobar Islands share a maritime border with Thailand, Myanmar and Indonesia.



State emblem



Flag

Overview:

Prior to the introduction of the scheme, soldiers were recruited into the armed forces on a 15+ year tenure with lifelong pension. From 2019, no recruitment in the armed forces was done for three years. The Indian Government cited COVID-19 pandemic in India for this. Meanwhile 50,000 to 60,000 soldiers continued to retire annually, leading to a manpower shortage that began affecting the operational capabilities of the armed forces.

In 2020 a 'Tour of duty' scheme was proposed for voluntary recruitment into the forces for civilians, to enable them to join for three years of short service. The proposed scheme was on trial basis and was planned to start with a test group of 100 officers and 1000 soldiers.

The Agnipath scheme was approved by the Indian Government in June 2022 to be implemented from September 2022. The announcement was done on June 14, 2022. The scheme is for both male and female aspirants of age group 17.5 to 21 years. In the midst of widespread protests against the scheme, the Central Government raised the upper limit from 21 to 23, but only for recruitment in the year 2022. The recruitment through this scheme is twice a year for the Indian Army, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force. The posts available are below the officer cadre. The Agnipath Scheme is the only route to serve in the military.

The recruits named *Agniveers* serve for a tenure of four years that includes training for six months followed by 3.5 years deployment. After retirement from the service, they will have the opportunity to apply to continue in the armed forces. Not more than 25 percent of the total strength of the retiring batch will be selected for the permanent cadre. Personnel who retire after 4 years of service will not be eligible for pension, but will receive a lump sum amount of approximately ₹11.71 lakh at the end of tenure. The Indian government plans to recruit 45,000 to 50,000 new personnel every year through this scheme. In September 2022, 46,000 youngsters are planned to be recruited through the scheme.

Objectives:**The broad objectives of the Agnipath/Agneepath Scheme are-**

1. To enhance the youthful profile of the Armed Forces so that they are at their fighting best at all times with increased risk-taking ability.
2. To imbibe the Armed Forces ethos, courage, commitment, and teamwork in the youth.
3. To provide abilities and qualities such as discipline, motivation, dynamism, and work skills so that youth remains as an asset.
4. To provide an opportunity to the youth who may be keen to serve the Nation in uniform for a short period of time.
5. To attract youth talent among the society to effectively exploit, adapt, and use emerging modern technologies with enhanced technical thresholds of intake while leveraging Technical institutions of the country.

Who are Agniveers?

The youth joining the armed forces under Agnipath scheme will be known as Agniveers. *Agniveers* will be given an attractive customised monthly package along with Risk and Hardship allowances as applicable in the three services. On completion of the engagement period of four years, *Agniveers* will be paid one time 'SevaNidhi' package which shall comprise their contribution including accrued interest thereon and matching contribution from the Government equal to the accumulated amount of their contribution including interest as indicated below:

| Year | Customised (Monthly) | Package In Hand (70%) | Contribution (30%) | Contribution to Agniveer Corpus Fund | Contribution to corpus fund by GoI |
|--|---|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| All figures in Rs (Monthly Contribution) | | | | | |
| 1 st Year | 30000 | 21000 | 9000 | | 9000 |
| 2 nd Year | 33000 | 23100 | 9900 | | 9900 |
| 3 rd Year | 36500 | 25580 | 10950 | | 10950 |
| 4 th Year | 40000 | 28000 | 12000 | | 12000 |
| Total contribution in <i>Agniveer</i> Corpus Fund after four years | | | Rs 5.02 Lakh | | Rs 5.02 Lakh |
| Exit After 4 Year | Rs 11.71 Lakh as SevaNidhi Package (Including, interest accumulated on the above amount as per the applicable interest rates would also be paid) | | | | |

The “Seva Nidhi” will be exempt from Income Tax. There shall be no entitlement to gratuity and pensionary benefits. *Agniveers* will be provided non-contributory Life Insurance Cover of Rs 48 lakh for the duration of their engagement period in the Indian Armed Forces.

During this period of service to the nation, the *Agniveers* will be imparted with various military skills and experience, discipline, physical fitness, leadership qualities, courage and patriotism.

Agneepath Explained:

Post this stint of four years, the *Agniveers* will be infused into the civil society where they can contribute immensely towards the nation building process. The skills gained by each *Agniveer* will be recognised in a certificate to form part of his unique resume.

Agniveers, on completion of the four-year tenure in the prime of their youth, will be mature and self-disciplined with the realisation to become better version of himself/herself both professionally as also personally.

The avenues and opportunities that will open up for their progress in the civil world after *Agniveer* tenure would certainly be a big plus towards nation building.

The ‘Seva Nidhi’ of approximately Rs 11.71 lakh would aid the *Agniveer* to pursue his/her future dreams without the financial pressure, which is normally the case for young people from the financially deprived strata of society.

The individuals, selected for enrolment in the Armed Forces as regular cadre, would be required to serve for a further engagement period of minimum 15 years and would be governed by the existing terms and conditions of service of Junior Commissioned Officers/Other Ranks in Indian Army and their equivalent in Indian Navy and Indian Air Force and that of Non-Combatant enrolled in the Indian Air Force, as amended from time-to-time.

Terms & Conditions

Under the AGNIPATH scheme, the *Agniveers* will be enrolled in the Forces under respective Service Acts for a period of four years. They would form a distinct rank in the Armed Forces, different from any other existing ranks.

Upon the completion of four years of service, based on organisational requirement and policies promulgated by the Armed Forces from time-to-time, *Agniveers* will be offered an opportunity to apply for permanent enrolment in the Armed Forces.

These applications will be considered in a centralised manner based on objective criteria including performance during their four-year engagement period and up to 25% of each specific batch of *Agniveers* will be enrolled in regular cadre of the Armed Forces. Detailed guidelines will be issued separately.

The selection will be the exclusive jurisdiction of the Armed Forces. 46,000 *Agniveers* will be recruited this year.

Enrolment will be undertaken through an online centralised system for all three services with specialised rallies and campus interviews from recognised technical institutes such as Industrial Training Institutes and National Skills Qualifications Framework, among others.

Enrolment will be based on ‘All India All Class’ basis and the eligible age will be in range from 17.5 to 21 years. *Agniveers* will meet the medical eligibility conditions laid down for enrolment in the armed forces as applicable to respective categories/trades.

The educational qualification for *Agniveers* will remain as in vogue for enrollment in various categories. {For example: For entry into General Duty (GD) soldier, the educational qualification is Class 10}.

Future of Agneepath:

Agniveers will get **Uniform Allowance, Canteen Facility, Medical Facility, Hardship Allowance**. If an *Agniveer* becomes handicapped while on duty, he will get an ex-gratia amount of Rs 44 lakh. In case of disability in the line of duty, *Agniveer* will be given full salary of retirement and arrears of duty.

Criticism:

However, the scheme is not without criticism. Many veterans such as Lt. Generals KJ Singh and Jaishankar Menon and Major Generals like V K Madhok and Raj Mehta have argued against *Agniveers*.

They are concerned that a combat soldier cannot be trained in four years, and the scheme thus compromises national security.

As Colonel Rathore agrees with these veterans, “the idea of shortened training spell indirectly trivializes the skill-sets for which the armed forces train their cadres so diligently. For instance, the Army alone has over 150 trades, which is peculiar.

The tenure of a soldier or sailor or airman under the Agnipath scheme would be chock-a-block with activities. In his four-year tenure, the recruitment training, authorized leaves, and temporary duties would eat up to 90 weeks.

Is it possible to groom a green soldier as a missile pilot, a tank and artillery gunner, a machine gunner, a vehicle driver, or even a scout who moves ahead of an infantry section in the remaining period and then loses him?”

Thirdly, they argue that retrenching youth from the armed forces after four years will create security problems. Given the experience of retired soldiers at the age of 38, it is complicated to get absorbed into the paramilitary forces. In other civilian sectors, mostly the retired armed forces personnel get jobs as guards in the private security agencies. Mostly, they cannot find respectable employment and are dependent on their pensions and other post-retirement benefits.

However, in the case of Agneevs, so run the arguments, as they will be leaving the armed forces at a tender age of 21 to 25, they can, if unemployed, fall prey to the lure of crime syndicates, radical political outfits, and worse the foreign intelligence agencies.

Trained in handling weapons and explosives and having the basic knowledge of military establishments functioning, such a person can be a real security threat. Some of the more enterprising ones could join the overseas mercenary groups and private military contractors (PMCs). After all, in Ukraine today, many PMCs are fighting for that country.

Conclusion:

Agnipath is a new HR Management scheme for Armed Forces. Candidates inducted through this scheme will be called Agniveers. AGNEEPATH scheme has been designed to enable a youthful profile of the Armed Forces. It will provide an opportunity to the youth who may be keen to don the uniform by attracting young talent from the society who are more in tune with contemporary technological trends and plough back skilled, disciplined and motivated manpower into the society.

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