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Agnipath Defence Policy Reform

Agnipath Defence Policy Reform is a government scheme launched to recruit young men and women in the Indian Armed forces. The Agnipath scheme was announced by the defence Minister Rajnath Singh on tuesday June 14th 2022.

This article aims to provide detailed information on Agnipath Defence Policy Reforms for IAS exam (<https://byjus.com/ias-exam/>).

This topic is significant for numerous government examinations (<https://byjus.com/govt-exams/>) as part of Current Affairs.

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Agnipath Defence Policy Reform – Background

1. Agnipath is a new defence recruitment model that would allow “patriotic and motivated” youth to serve in the armed forces for a period of four years.
2. The process of recruitment will commence in 90 days.
3. The plan is to recruit about 45,000–50,000 personnel below officer rank in the three services every year through a biannual exercise with a six-month gap.
4. As per the Agnipath scheme, this year there will be a planned intake of about 46,000 young men and women.
5. Soldier recruited through Agnipath scheme will be known as ‘Agniveers’.
6. This scheme will be the only form of recruitment of soldiers into the three defence services Armed Force, Indian Navy and Air Forces, hereon.
7. Enrolment of Agniveers to all three services will be through a centralized online system, with special rallies and campus interviews at recognised technical institutes such as the Industrial Training Institutes, and the National Skills Qualifications Framework. The Model is based on an all-India merit-based selection process.

Need of the Agnipath scheme

According to data shared by the Ministry of Defence with Parliament – more than one lakh positions for junior commissioned officers and other ranks are vacant in the Army. It also noted that while more than 90 recruitment rallies were held each year in 2017, 2018 and 2019, only 10 were held in 2020–2021, and just four in 2021–2022 due to the pandemic.

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Significance of Agnipath Scheme for Agniveers

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soldiers or Agniveers will be recruited for a period of four years.



2. The recruits will undergo training for six months and serve for the remaining period. Currently, a soldier serves for nearly 17-20 years.

3. The starting salary will be Rs 30,000, which will go up to Rs 40,000 by the end of the fourth year.

4. Under the "Seva Nidhi" package, (which is exempt from Income Tax), they will receive about 11 lakh-12 lakh, including contribution and interest, on completion of service.

5. The recruits will have to contribute 30% of their monthly emoluments to Seva Nidhi, with a matching contribution made by the government.

6. 25 percent of these recruits will be inducted back into the services and go on to serve for a full 15 years in non-officer ranks.

7. There will be no gratuity or pension benefits under this scheme. However, they will be provided non-contributory life insurance cover of ₹48 lakh during their service.

8. Provisions have been made for loss of life or disability due to an injury on duty. Which goes like this. In case of death being caused during the service, apart from over ₹1 crore, which will include the "Seva Nidhi" package, full pay for the unserved period will be given. Similarly, in the case of disability attributable to service, ₹44 lakh based on the percentage of disability, apart from full pay for the unserved period, including "Seva Nidhi" with interest as applicable shall be provided.

9. After four years they can apply for regular employment in the armed forces. They may be given priority over others for various jobs in other government departments.

Aspirants can check out various Government schemes (<https://byjus.com/govt-exams/government-schemes/>) on the given link.

Eligibility Criteria for Agniveers or Agnipath Soldiers

1. Candidates between the ages of 17-and-a-half years and 21 years will be eligible to apply.
2. Educational qualification for Agniveers will be Class 10th and 12th, the same as the criteria for regular positions in the force.
3. Recruitment will be carried out on an 'All India All Class' basis with medical and physical fitness standards in accordance with existing norms.

Aim of Agnipath Scheme

1. Main aim of the scheme is to make the Army a future-ready fighting force, capable of meeting multiple challenges across the full spectrum of conflict.
2. The scheme is aimed at strengthening national security and also for providing an opportunity to the youth to serve in the armed forces.
3. To cut the ballooning salary and pension bills.
4. To transform armed forces into youthful, tech-savvy, modern, and to harness the youth potential and make them a future-ready soldier.
5. will help rehabilitate soldiers who leave the services after four years. There will be a "whole of government" approach, and they will be provided with skill certificates and bridge courses. The impetus will be to create entrepreneurs.


On the similar lines is the Innovation for Defence Excellence (IDEx) (<https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/innovation-for-defence-excellence-idex/>) Scheme of government focusing on modernizing the nation's Defense industry.

Criticism of Agnipath Scheme

1. Soldiers in the Agnipath scheme may shy of taking risks because they know they have been called up for service for only a short period of time. They may be averse to risk or bodily harm in line of duty.
2. Retired Army officers are expressing reservation on the 'All India All Class' intake method and the provision of four-year short-term contractual recruitment. They are of the opinion that this new move would not be to the benefit of India-Nepal relations as it would cut down their intake. Read in detail about India-Nepal relation (<https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/india-nepal-relations/>) on the given link.
3. "Too much emphasis on providing skills to youth in the forthcoming armed forces. Real skills would be acquired by those who go on to don the uniform a little longer". The service period of new recruits is 4 years which is way too less and then those who are keen to serve the nation longer should be retained.
4. The annual intake into the Army is approximately 50,000 soldiers per year, give or take 10 percent. It will increase to 1-1.5 lakhs per year as per this model. This will result in a skewed intake and recruitment model.

Way Forward with Agnipath Defence Policy Reforms

1. The move is expected to decrease the average age profile of armed forces personnel from the current 32 years to 24-26 years over a period of time.
2. The scheme will cut the annual revenue and pension bill which accounts for half of the annual defence budget of ₹ 5.2-lakh crore.
3. The infusion of disciplined, motivated and skilled 'Agniveers' back into society after military service, would be a great asset for the nation as it will be a "win-win proposition."
4. Scheme will increase employment opportunities with new skills in different sectors.
5. The scheme will give a better opportunity to the youth who choose to serve the nation.



6. It will have a positive impact on the human resources management of armed forces.
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topic is found under GS Paper I of UPSC Prelims (https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/upsc-prelims/)under the head of Government Schemes.
Candidates should follow the latest developments in current affairs related to other government schemes for their UPSC 2023 (https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/upsc-2023/) preparation.
Aspirants of Civil Services Exam can go through the following links to assist their preparation =
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