**Scheme 1: Agnipath Scheme**

Purpose: For recruitment of soldiers below the rank of commissioned officers into the three branches of the armed forces. Agnipath is the exclusive recruitment pathway, with all hires serving a four-year term. Recruits are titled Agniveers, marking a new military rank.

Category: Defense

Overview: The Agnipath Scheme is a military recruitment initiative launched by the Government of India on 14 June 2022 and implemented from September 2022. It seeks to rejuvenate the armed forces by bringing in young talent for a four-year period, representing a significant shift from the traditional long-term service and pension-based system.

Objective: To create a modern, youthful, and tech-savvy defense force by employing short-term service models.

Key Features:

* **Exclusivity**: Agnipath serves as the sole pathway for recruiting soldiers below the rank of commissioned officers.
* **Service Tenure**: Agniveers are enlisted for four years, with the potential for up to 25% of each batch to be retained for continued service.
* **Training**: Recruits undergo six months of intensive training that emphasizes combat readiness and modern military capabilities.
* **Post-Service Benefits**: Agniveers receive a one-time financial package of approximately ₹11.71 lakh at the end of their service term but do not qualify for pensions.

Target Beneficiaries: Young men and women aged 17.5 to 21 aspiring to join the Indian Army, Navy, or Air Force. In response to initial public feedback, the upper age limit was temporarily raised to 23 for the 2022 recruitment.

Implementation: The scheme is overseen by the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, with biannual recruitment cycles and structured training programs.

Challenges: Criticism has been directed at the lack of public consultation or parliamentary debate before the scheme's launch. Concerns include job security after the four-year term, the absence of pensions, and age restrictions that limit eligibility for many aspirants.

Outcomes: The Agnipath Scheme is designed to infuse youthful energy and modern technological expertise into military operations. This approach supports a dynamic defense workforce and cultivates a pool of disciplined, skilled individuals for broader employment opportunities, promoting a culture of national service among the youth.