

AGNIPATH scheme

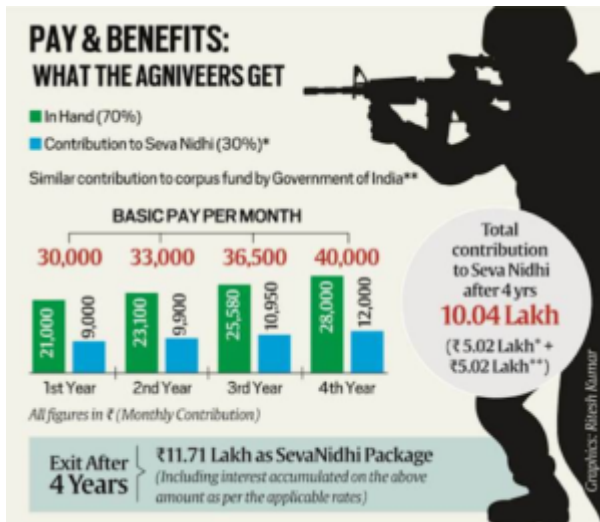
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In news– The Union Cabinet has recently approved AGNIPATH, a recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the Armed Forces.

About the scheme–

- AGNIPATH allows patriotic and motivated youth to serve in the Armed Forces for a period of four years.
- **Under the new scheme, around 45,000 to 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually, and most will leave the service in just four years.**
- **Of the total annual recruits, only 25 per cent will be allowed to continue for another 15 years** under permanent commission.
- **The move will make the permanent force levels much leaner** for the over 13-lakh strong armed forces in the country.
- This will, in turn, considerably **reduce the defence pension bill**, which has been a major concern for governments for many years.
- **The youth selected under this scheme will be known as Agniveers.**
- Once selected, the aspirants will go through training for six months and then will be deployed for three and a half years.
- **The new system is only for personnel below officer ranks** (those who do not join the forces as commissioned officers).
- **It is envisaged that the average age profile of Indian Armed forces would come down by about 4-5 years** by implementation of this scheme.
- The policy, which comes into immediate effect, will hereafter govern the enrolment for the three services.
- The average age in the forces is 32 years today, which will go down to 26 in six to seven years, the scheme

envisions.



Benefits to the 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 of approximately Rs 11.71 lakh** 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.
- **The 'Seva Nidhi' will be exempt from Income Tax.** There shall be **no entitlement to gratuity and pensionary benefits.**
- They will be provided **non-contributory Life Insurance Cover of Rs 48 lakh** for the duration of their engagement period in the Indian Armed Forces.
- **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.
- **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, 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 **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.
- **The selection will be the exclusive jurisdiction of the Armed Forces.**
- **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.**
- They 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

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