

“Tour of Duty (ToD)” scheme

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In news—Recently, the Department of Military Affairs has finalized a radical proposal for future recruitment to the armed forces. With this the Army will implement the ‘Tour of Duty’ (ToD) concept, first unveiled in 2020.

About the ToD scheme-

- **The ToD aims to recruit soldiers for a fixed time period to lessen the burden of pay rises and pensions**, thereby reducing the growing revenue expenditure on the nearly 13-lakh strong force.
- **The Army will be the first to try out the concept.**
- **Under ToD, youngsters will be recruited as soldiers only for three to five years** in the backdrop of the urgent need to curb the ballooning salary and pension bills that are adversely impacting military modernisation.
- **The ToD scheme, which is likely to be called the “Agnipath” recruitment**, is launched on an experimental basis first. But eventually, all soldiers could be recruited under this model.
- While 25% of them would serve for three years and 25% for five years, the remaining 50% would serve for the full term till they reach the retirement age.
- The original proposal in 2020 would have extended the ToD to officers as well, but it is now being restricted to jawans, as officers already have the Short Service Commission (SSC) route.
- The original ToD proposal stated that the total amount spent on each officer recruited through the scheme would be Rs 80-85 lakh, including pre-commission training, pay, allowances, gratuity, proposed severance packages, leave encashment, and other costs.