



---

## Agneepath Scheme: The Bold Step into Advanced Warfare

*Pranoy Chakravorty*

B.A. Political Science, Amity University, Kolkata

---

### Agneepath Scheme and its Criticism

Agneepath Scheme is a tour of duty style scheme introduced by the Government of India on 14 June 2022 with the think tanks of Indian Armed Forces. The scheme implies that the recruits will be hired only for a four period year period. Personnel recruited under this system are to be called Agniveers, which will be a new military rank. The introduction of the scheme has been criticised for lack of consultation and public debate, The scheme was finally implemented in September 2022 even with many on going criticisms by the opposition parties and citizens of India and the scheme will overhaul many things which includes long tenures, pension and other benefits which were there in old system. Agneepath offers to provide a diverse amount of opportunities to youth to serve the nation and contribute to Nation building, offer them an attractive financial package for the Agniveers, train them in the best institutions and enhance their skills and qualifications and most importantly offer them adequate re-employment opportunities for those returning to society and who could emerge as role models for the youth and transform them into well – disciplined and skilled soldiers with a mind of an entrepreneur. Of course the scheme will generate a widespread controversy around the country especially opposition parties and the ones who are aspiring to become the part of the armed forces.

Many Veterans have argued that the combat soldiers cannot be trained in four years, and the scheme thus compromises national security. A shortening of basic training for the recruits indirectly reduces skill sets which is needed for air, land, naval combat. There are concerns that Agniveers will be leaving the armed forces at the age of 20s and can run a risk of being unemployed and falling prey to organised crimes, terrorism, joining Mercenary groups or taking private military contracts as they are trained in handling weapons and explosives and have an idea of many types of warfare.

Also the youth of country who are aspiring to be in the armed forces are training for this opportunity since their childhood and the armed forces are known for their impeccable job perks such as Free medical care, access to groceries, items at a subsidiary rates (Canteens), free education for their children etc and many of the recruits come from lower classes so the new scheme raised more questions and anger from the youth.

---

### Changing rules of Warfare

The recent conflict between Russia and Ukraine have taught many military lessons for both countries in terms of battle strategies, firepower, manpower etc. Most importantly it taught Russia that brute force using armored vehicles and aircraft is not enough to successfully invade a country, drones and satellites have heavily changed the rules of warfare as both provide their military intelligence a vast array of information of enemy plans and firepower and the ability to precisely overcome them without risking the lives of their own men which saves them human resources and firepower. Russian military suffered from underestimating the strength of the Ukraine forces, the Russian forces could not penetrate the heart of Ukraine defences as their tanks were running out of gas, their troops lacked training and succumbed to heavy losses, their communication in combat was subpar as they were too easy to intercept revealing their plans to the enemy. On the other hand Ukraine military have been training since the start of the conflict and have seen that the strategies used since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War will lead them to disaster and they must access to newer advanced weapons, the Russian artillery and airpower which they used to shatter cities and defences have been overshadowed by the highly technologically advanced Aerial Reconnaissance unit of the Ukrainian forces which includes the Starlink satellites provided by Elon Musk which is effectively used for drone strikes against the Russian military crippling their air, ground, naval power in seconds. Starlink terminals are used to connect thermal vision devices with the drones to search and destroy the Russian armored vehicles and aircrafts with pinpoint accuracy, the Starlinks terminals have become so potent they are now the face of the counter strike against Russia. The role of drones have shown to the higher authorities of the armed forces around the world that the traditional means of warfare is now outdated and one must upgrade to newer tech to protect their national security.

---

### Agneepath being the step in right direction

The performance of the Russian military has shown the Indian armed forces their severe lack of air, land and sea superiority as they have similar inventory with Russia and they must upgrade their arsenal. Key lessons have been learned that every military must enhance their defence spending and integrate their heavy armored vehicles into technologically advanced mechanised war machines such as highly lethal drones, high end jammer system, Electronic support measures etc. Agneepath Scheme looks forward to reduce the cost of Indian military manpower as much of the budget is spent in Troops salaries

---

and pensions instead they are expanding and spending their defense budget by modernizing their defence forces . Tactical Unmanned Air vehicles , Fifth generation fighter jets , satellites are now the face of warfare and the Indian Defence needs technologically savvy individuals rather than grunts to operate these weapons . This is the step Indian armed Forces must take to safeguard their national security as India has aggressive neighbours and they are already modernizing their military . As stressed by the Advocates of the scheme that Agneepath wants to achieve a leaner military which has equal advance firepower than the superpowers and the days of being the largest military are over as cyber warfare has taken over the battlefield , the Indian armed forces must flexible , highly lethal and think ahead of the enemy which is the key to success for a advanced India .

#### References

---

- 1) <https://eurasianimes.com/> "Agnipath Scheme' 15 June 2022
- 2) <https://financialexpress.com/> "The real Agnipath:key capability enhancement" 31 July 2022
- 3) <https://www.bbc.com/news/> "Ukraine conflict: How are drones being used" 22 august 2021