



Line of Duty Compensation for Agniveer

For Prelims: Compensation to Agniveer, [Agnipath scheme](#), [Seva Nidhi](#), [Three services \(Army, Navy and Airforce\)](#), Armed Forces Battle Casualty Fund.

For Mains: Compensation to Agniveer after Death in Line of Duty, Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, an Agniveer passed away on **duty at the Siachen glacier, which** sparked a controversy regarding the **entitlement of pensions and Compensation for the families of Agniveers.**

- In 2022, the government unveiled the [Agnipath Scheme](#) for recruiting soldiers (Agniveers) across the [Three services \(Army, Navy and Airforce\)](#).

What Compensation is Promised After the Demise of an Agniveer?

- **Seva Nidhi:**
 - An Agniveer's family is entitled to several forms of compensation, including a **non-contributory insurance sum of Rs 48 lakh, Rs 44 lakh** as compensation, and 30% of [Seva Nidhi](#) contributed by the Agniveer, with an equal matching contribution by the government.
 - Additionally, interest accrues on these amounts.
- **Armed Forces Battle Casualty Fund:**
 - The family also receives pay for the remaining tenure from the date of death, amounting to over **Rs 13 lakh, as well as a contribution of Rs 8 lakh** from the **Armed Forces Battle Casualty Fund.**
- **Army Wives Welfare Association:**
 - To provide immediate financial assistance, the Army Wives Welfare Association offers Rs 30,000 to the next of kin.

What is the Agnipath Scheme?

- **About:**
 - It allows patriotic and motivated youth to serve in the **Armed Forces for a period of four years.** Youth will be able to be recruited into the army for a short duration.
 - 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.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - It is only for personnel **below officer ranks** (those who do not join the forces as commissioned officers).
 - Commissioned officers are the army's highest ranked officers.

- Commissioned officers hold an exclusive rank in the Indian armed forces. They often hold a commission under the president's sovereign power and are officially instructed to protect the country.
- Aspirants between the **ages of 17.5 years and 21 years** will be eligible to apply.
- **Objectives:**
 - It aims at providing an **opportunity to the patriotic and motivated youth** with the 'Josh' and 'Jazba' to join the Armed Forces.
 - It is expected to bring down the **average age profile of the Indian Armed Forces** by about 4 to 5 years.
 - The scheme envisions that the average age in the forces is 32 years today, which will go down to 26 in six to seven years.
- **Benefits for Agniveers:**
 - Upon the completion of the 4-years of service, a one-time 'Seva Nidhi' package of Rs 11.71 lakhs will be paid to the Agniveers that will include their accrued interest thereon.
 - They will also get a Rs 48 lakh life insurance cover for the four years.
 - In case of death, the payout will be over Rs 1 crore, including pay for the unserved tenure.
 - The government will help rehabilitate soldiers who leave the services after four years.

What are the Concerns Related to Agniveers?

- **Difficult to Find Another Job:**
 - The 'Agnipath' initiative paves the path for the enlistment of approximately 45,000 personnel into the Army, Navy, and Air Force in its inaugural year.
 - However, these recruits will serve on a **temporary four-year contract**. Upon the fulfillment of their contract, 25% of them will be retained, while the **remaining will exit the armed forces**.
- **No Pension Benefit:**
 - Those hired under the 'Agnipath' scheme will be given a **one-time lump sum of a little more than Rs 11 lakh** when they end their four-year tenure.
 - However, they do not receive any pension benefits. For most, seeking a second job is essential to support themselves and their families.
- **Training May Remain Unutilized:**
 - Forces will lose experienced soldiers.
 - The jawans joining the Army, Navy and Air Force will be given technical training so that they are able to support the ongoing operations.
 - Women are yet to be inducted under this scheme.

Way Forward

- Government should consider **relaxation in mandatory licensing regulations** for Agniveers to attract more of them to invest in starting up a business unit.
- It will act as a double benefit move of providing entrepreneurial opportunity and growth in the economy.
- Attractive interest rates on deposits for Agniveers would stimulate savings and benefit banks.
- For those Agniveers who want to pursue higher education, a relaxation in the **admission criteria (relaxation in cut off etc) will prove** to be a major attraction.
- Highly qualified and disciplined Agniveers will have the ability to take up ample opportunities available to them.