# Agniveer Scheme - Changes

**Mains**: *GSII – Governance*

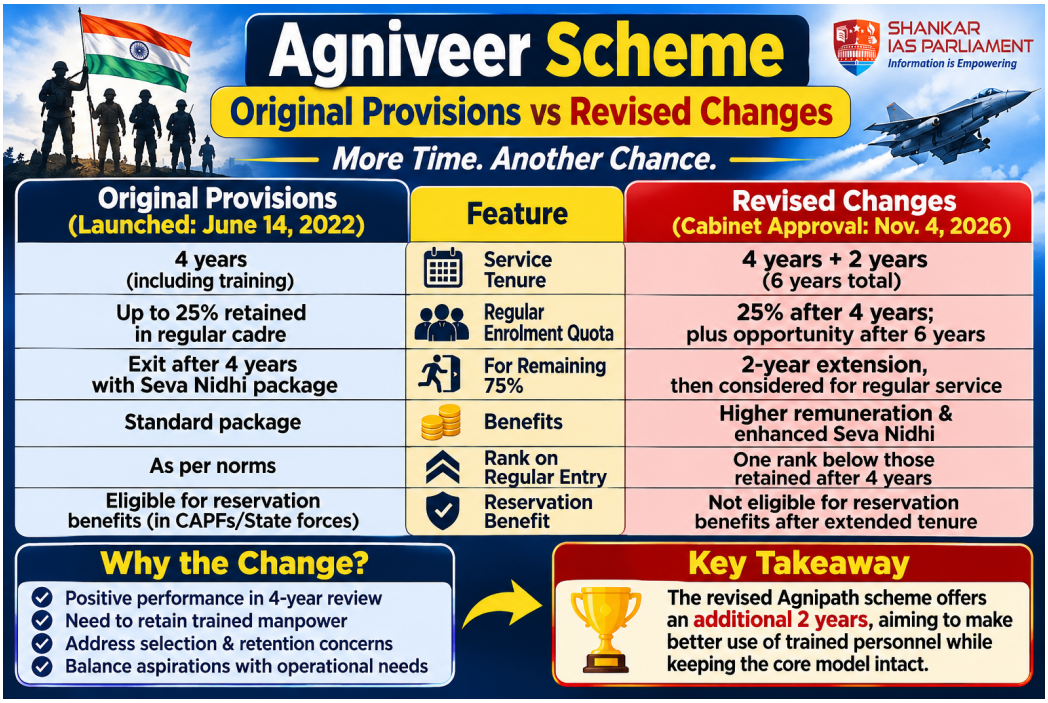
## Why in News?

*The revised Agniveer Scheme 2026 introduces an additional 2-year engagement period for the 75% of Agniveers not selected for regular service after their initial four-year tenure, creating another opportunity for regular enrolment.*

## What is the Agnipath Scheme?

- **Launched in** – June 14, 2022.
- **Objective** – Recruit young personnel into the Armed Forces for a short-term tenure to maintain a younger, technologically adept military workforce.
- **Service tenure** – 4 years, including training.
- **Regular enrolment** – Up to 25% of each batch can be retained in the regular cadre after four years.
- **Exit provision** – The remaining 75% were required to leave military service with a Seva Nidhi financial package and other benefits.

## What are the Major Changes in the Agniveer Scheme?




- **Second Engagement Period** – The remaining 75% of Agniveers, not selected during

the initial four-year tenure, will be offered an additional two-year engagement.
    - This extends their potential service period from 4 to 6 years.
- **Additional Opportunity** – At the end of six years, Agniveers will be considered for regular enrolment based on willingness, merit and prescribed objective selection criteria.
    - The existing provision of retaining 25% after the initial four years remains unchanged.
- **Enhanced Financial Benefits** – Higher remuneration and an enhanced Seva Nidhi package will be provided to personnel opting for the second engagement period.
- **Rank-Related Provision** – Those selected for regular enrolment after the extended six-year period will be placed one rank below personnel directly retained after the initial four-year tenure.
- **Changes in Exit Benefits** – The revised arrangement creates an alternative to immediate civilian transition after 4 years.
- **Agniveers** entering regular service through the extended engagement route will no longer be eligible for the reservation benefits provided to exiting Agniveers in State and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

## Why Did the Government Revise the Scheme?

- **4-Year Performance Assessment** – The Armed Forces conducted a comprehensive assessment of Agniveers' performance, physical fitness, motivation, skills and operational contribution.
    - Centralised databases and annual objective assessments across the three services helped evaluate their suitability for military requirements.
- **Retaining Trained Manpower** – Agniveers have acquired military training, technical skills and operational experience during their initial service.
    - Releasing 75% of trained personnel after 4 years could result in the loss of valuable institutional experience and human resources.
- **Addressing Recruitment and Retention Concerns** – Selection of only 25% for regular service created limited opportunities for permanent absorption.
    - The additional engagement period provides another opportunity for deserving personnel to demonstrate their capabilities.
- **Aligning Aspirations** – The revision seeks to balance the aspirations of Agniveers for longer military careers with the Armed Forces' requirement for experienced personnel.
    - Non-selection in the initial 25% does not necessarily indicate poor performance; it may reflect relative merit and limited vacancies.

## What Did the Four-Year Assessment Reveal?

- **Wider recruitment base** – Recruitment expanded to a larger number of districts across India.
- **Transparent recruitment** – Greater standardisation and transparency in the selection process.
- **Physical fitness** – High levels of fitness, morale, motivation and discipline.
- **Technological adaptability** – Better adaptability to modern military technologies and

skill development.
- **Educational qualifications** – Improved educational and technical capabilities.
- **Women in Armed Forces** – Opened opportunities for women's participation in various branches.

## What is the Significance of the Revised Scheme?

- **Operational efficiency** – Retaining trained personnel can improve military preparedness and reduce repeated training requirements.
- **Experience retention** – Longer engagement enables personnel to acquire deeper operational knowledge and institutional experience.
- **Human resource management** – Provides the Armed Forces with a larger pool of trained personnel for regular enrolment.
- **Career opportunities** – Offers Agniveers an additional pathway towards a longer military career.
- **Military modernisation** – Maintains the objective of a younger, technologically skilled and adaptable military workforce while addressing experience requirements.

## What are the Challenges and Concerns?

- **Uncertainty of permanent absorption** – Regular enrolment remains subject to merit and selection criteria, rather than being guaranteed to all willing Agniveers.
- **Rank disparity** – Personnel retained after six years will enter one rank below those retained after four years.
- **Reservation concerns** – Agniveers opting for extended engagement and subsequent regular enrolment will lose access to post-service reservation benefits available to exiting personnel.
- **Long-term career planning** – Differences in service tenure, rank and benefits may create concerns regarding career progression and parity.

## What is the Way Forward?

- Ensure transparent, objective and **uniform selection criteria** across the three services.
- **Provide clear information** about remuneration, promotions, pensions and other service-related benefits.
- **Strengthen skill certification** and rehabilitation opportunities for Agniveers who eventually exit military service.
- **Conduct periodic evaluations** to ensure that the revised arrangement meets both operational requirements and personnel aspirations.

## What lies ahead?

- The revision of the Agnipath scheme represents an attempt to balance military modernisation with manpower retention.
- Providing a second engagement period can help preserve trained human resources while offering Agniveers an additional opportunity for regular military service.
- Its success will depend on transparent selection, fair service conditions and effective

career transition mechanisms.

## Reference

[The Hindu| Agniveer Scheme Changes]

