

## AGNIPATH SCHEME: A SELF INFLICTED INJURY.

### IT IS NOT ONLY UNETHICAL & IMMORAL; BUT ALSO A SURE RECIPE FOR MILITARY DISASTER IN THE OFFING

by



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*The very thought of denying Pension to Soldiers is a SIN.*

*A Country in which its rulers and people (or their representatives) do not respect or show concern for its Soldiers and Veterans; it has no moral right to exist as a Nation; and such a Country would soon disintegrate.*

*Silence is no doubt a Golden Virtue; but there can be no greater SIN than to remain mute & silent in the face of tyranny & oppression; and especially when it concerns matters of Defence & National Security.*

*“The Army fights to win; and what counts in war is ‘Victory’. No price is too big to pay to ensure eternal vigil and preparedness for War. Wars are won by well trained & motivated Soldiers with high Morale; who go into Battle with the complete confidence that their interests will be taken care of by the Govt. in case they are injured or maimed; and that the interests of their parents, wives & children will be taken care of in the event of their death”.*

*An Officer’s responsibility towards his MEN does NOT end with his retirement; for, it is a lifelong commitment. We Officers owe it to our MEN for having had the honour & privilege of leading them while in Service.*

*Anyone who meddles with the Armed Forces and does anything that would lower or adversely affect its Defence potential, can safely be termed as a DESH DROHI.*

### PART I: NATIONAL CHARACTER

#### Indians, especially the Hindus as a Race

1. Lack of Moral values & Scruples. Hindus, who comprise 80% of Bharat’s population, are cowards, dishonest & corrupt; have no pride in their culture & traditions and are totally devoid of principles, moral values & scruples, patriotism, nationalistic feelings & self-respect. *Sanatana Dharma* is the Religion, nay, ‘way of life’ of this land called Bharat; yet a few amongst us have the *temerity* to openly declare that, *Sanatana Dharma* needs to be exterminated like Dengue, Malaria & CoVid.

2. Lack of Unity. It is the lack of 'Unity' amongst the Hindus and their leaders (Kings in earlier times), that, numerous Muslim invaders, all barbarians, starting with Mohd Bin Quasim invaded & conquered Sind in 712 AD; followed by a host of other Muslim invaders, culminating in Mughal Rule, which ended in 1857. The Mughal Raj was followed by the British Raj which lasted till August 1947. And thus, it will be seen that we Indians, the Hindus, have been slaves initially of the Muslim invaders followed by the British, for a period of 1200 years. And that is the reason why Hindus, display a 'slavish mentality' even today. Just see the way, Hindu masses licking the 'dhool' (ie. dust) of the 'pavithra charanon' (ie. holy feet) of a white woman of foreign origin, who knows nothing about *Sanatana Dharma* or the Customs & Traditions of this great land called Bharat.

3. A Nation of Bikaos. Bharat is a Nation of 'Bikaos', ie. 'purchasable commodities'; where people's souls, and that includes votes, can be purchased at the time of Elections, by offering freebies, viz. hard cash in thousands of Rupees kept in envelopes at one's doorsteps, free water, free electricity, free bus travel, free TV sets, free Refrigerators, free mixer-grinders, etc. the list is long. Today, corruption has become a way of life in our Country; immaterial whichever party or alliance is in power at the Centre or in States.

4. No wonder, **Shri Anand Ranganathan**, an eminent Scientist and a research historian & analyst of international repute, has stated in his book, '**Hindus in Hindu Rashtra**', that, '**Hindus are eighth class citizens and victims of State sanctioned apartheid**'. He has in his book very correctly summarized as to what ails the Hindu society in this Country.

## PART II: DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE & POLITICS

### Democracy

5. It is said, 'Of all forms of Governance, Democracy is the least evil'. According to Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the USA,

***'Democracy is Government of the people; by the people and for the people'***.

And when you say, 'by the people' it means 'by the representatives of the people' who are known as Politicians.

### Democracy in India- a Farce & a sham

6. Reproduced below is extract of a News item which appeared in The Statesman, six years ago, ie. in 2018, regarding Politics and Politicians:

***Dr Samuel Johnson said, "Patriotism is the last refuge for a scoundrel". In George Bernard Shaw's words, "Politics is the last resort for a scoundrel"***

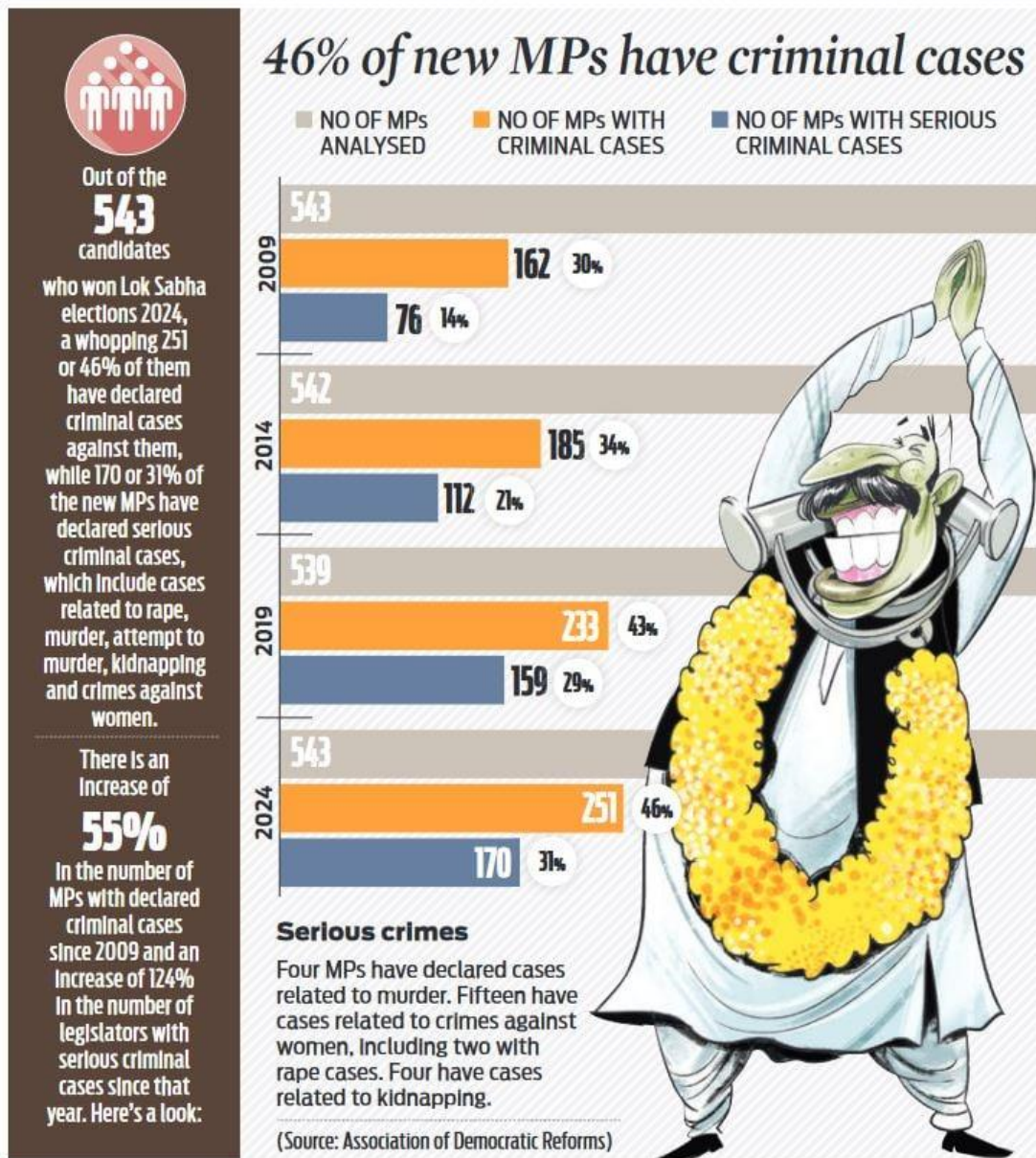
**[https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/democracy-needs-citizens-to-step-up-1502714064.html#google\\_vignette](https://www.thestatesman.com/opinion/democracy-needs-citizens-to-step-up-1502714064.html#google_vignette)**

7. A Bangalore based Techie, Bubby Andrews wise cracked to reflect the present political situation of India, by saying, '**Were these two great critics alive today, sure they would have corrected their quotes by replacing 'last' with 'first'**. And thus, Democracy in India is:

***'Government of the Thughs; by the Thughs and for the Thughs'; for, it is the 'Thughs' (means rogues & rascals) who have been and are ruling the Country.***

## Criminalisation of Lok Sabha , Rajya Sabha and the State Assemblies

8. In India, a large majority of MPs & MLAs elected to serve the poor & downtrodden of our Country, are charged with murder, rape, loot & corruption. The Statesman in its report, six years ago, went on to say, **'1765 (36%) MPs & MLAs as against a total of 4896 lawmakers in the Parliament and State Assemblies are facing criminal trial in 3045 cases'**.



9. Please click on the following link and read the Article, **'46% of new MPs have criminal cases registered against them'** appearing in the New Indian Express on 9 June 2024

10. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2024/Jun/06/record-46-of-newly-elected-lok-sabha-mps-facing-criminal-cases-study#:~:text=251%20of%20the%20543%20newly,the%20Association%20of%20Democratic%20Reform>

11. The above quotes and statistics of Criminals in Politics, speaks volumes of the nature of our Democracy, which I say, is a '*sham & a farce*'; for, no honest ordinary man or woman can ever dream of contesting an Election. Elections in India, are all a question of money power and muscle power; where, '*jis ki laati, uski bhains*' is the order of the day; and 'tickets' for standing for election against a party symbol is sold by all parties in terms of lakhs & crores of Rupees.

12. **The hallmark of today's Politician is: he is dishonest, unethical, immoral & totally devoid any principles, moral values or scruples; and whatever he promises or speaks, he does not mean to fulfill them; and whatever he does or speaks is only for securing his *gaddi* (ie. seat) for the sake of power. And for power, he needs to get votes by hook or by crook, ie. means fair or foul; more foul.**

### **Armed Forces, the Central & Strongest pillar of Democracy in India**

13. One often hears that Democracy in India rests on three pillars, viz. *the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary*. Well, even if one of the three pillars fail, Democracy in India would cave in and the whole edifice of Democracy would come down crashing. The fact that it has not happened, but on the contrary, Democracy in India is thriving, vibrant & pulsating, despite all its ills, is because there is yet one more pillar which is holding Indian Democracy aloft. And that is the central pillar, the strongest pillar of them all, the Armed Forces of this Country, which stands guard 24x7x365, ie. year after year, decade after decade, safeguarding our far flung borders in most inhospitable terrain and extreme weather conditions. If not for the devotion, dedication & valour of the Officers & Jawans of the Indian Army, India would have lost Kashmir, long ago. This is borne out by the fact by the number of Officers & Jawans getting killed in the line of duty, even now in J&K, fighting Pakistan trained terrorists. **Would anyone like to dispute that?**

## **PART III: THE IAS MAFIA**

### **The IAS as a Class.**

14. The British created a privileged class of bureaucrats called the Indian Civil Service (ICS) who dutifully toed the British line in governing undivided India with an iron hand. Their loyalty was not to India but to the British Crown. After Independence, the ICS mutated into a more virulent breed called the IAS. Its loyalty is not to Bharat but to itself. Its credo is: I, Me, Myself. Greed, selfishness, indulging in unethical & corrupt practices and betrayal of the Nation are its hallmarks. **IAS today is a Mafia and a law unto itself.** Bharat today is in the stranglehold of the IAS Mafia. Make no mistake, it is the IAS Mafia which rules the Country from Kashmir in the North to Kanyakumari in the South, from Nagaland & Manipur in the East to Punjab & Rajasthan in the West,.

15. Corruption & Venality. There is unfortunately a mistaken belief that it is the politicians of this country who are corrupt & venal and responsible for all the ills the nation is facing. I am afraid no. It is the IAS Mafia that is responsible. The politicians of this country are mere pawns in the hands of the IAS. If we say, politicians as a breed are corrupt, we must ask: *who taught the politicians to be corrupt or indulge in mal-practices & corruption?* Without doubt, it is the IAS. They are a wily class. IAS Officers have properties viz. number of houses or flats in posh localities & farm houses in different

parts of the Country, worth hundreds of crores of rupees. Has anyone belonging to the IAS ever been caught & punished for being corrupt or for amassing wealth beyond his or her known sources of income? NO; except for a stray case or two. The members of the IAS are highly intelligent & motivated in the art of self-preservation; and, they are experts in covering their tracks (read covering their backs).

**16. Pathological hatred for the Armed Forces.** The IAS suffers from a pathological hatred for the Armed Forces; unable to bear the respect the Soldiers command among our countrymen for their sacrifice, valour & bravery in War & Counter Insurgency Operations. Right from Day 1 of our Independence, ie. 15 August 1947, the ICS then and now the IAS Bureaucrats have left no stone unturned, to malign the Armed Forces in the eyes of the ruling Political dispensation, be it Nehru or his successors including the present dispensation led by Shri Narendra Damodardas Modi, by dinning into their ears, day & night, that the Army is like a German shephard; which needs to be kept under tight leash, for if not, the Army would soon carry out a Coup d'état and overthrow the duly elected Govt of the day; like what has been happening with predictable regularity in our neighborhood, viz. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma.

**17. Starving the Armed Forces of Funds.** The Bureaucracy has always portrayed the Armed Forces as a 'White Elephant'; and, it is the wily & vile IAS which is responsible for keeping the Armed Forces starved of funds, resulting in shortage of Tanks, Guns, Arms & Ammunition, Fighter aircrafts, Destroyers, Frigates & Submarines.

**18. Wielding Authority without Accountability.** It is Nehru, the then PM and Shri Krishna Menon, his despicable Defence Minister, aided & abetted by the wily & vile IAS Bureaucracy which brought upon the Country the humiliating defeat at the hands of the Chinese in October-November 1962; despite Lt Gen SPP Thorat, the then Eastern Army Commander warning them, a good three years in advance in October 1959, by way of a Military Appreciation carried out by him of the Military threat by China.

**19.** It is the head of Gen PN Thapar, the then COAS, which rolled first, making him a scapegoat for the ignominious defeat in the Indo-China War of 1962. Then, Krishna Menon was reluctantly sacked by Nehru on the directions of Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the then HE, the President of India, who bluntly told Nehru, 'it is either your head or Krishna Menon's. **Unfortunately, the then Defence Secretary, who was actually responsible for the Defence & Security of the Country, as per Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, was neither sacked nor held accountable; and the same rule continues even now.**

Extracts of Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 (as Amended up to 31st January, 2017) in respect of Ministry of Defence, **headed by the Defence Secretary**, is reproduced below:

[https://cabsec.gov.in/writereaddata/allocationbusinessrule/completeaobrules/english/1\\_Upload\\_1187.pdf](https://cabsec.gov.in/writereaddata/allocationbusinessrule/completeaobrules/english/1_Upload_1187.pdf)

***It is the Defence Secretary who is responsible for, "Defence of India and every part thereof including preparation for Defence and all such acts as may be conducive in times of war to its prosecution and after its termination to effective demobilization"***

## **PART IV: POLITICISATION OF THE ARMED FORCES AND ITS DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES**

### **Creation of 'Yes Men'.**

20. GOC-in-Cs of Commands, ie. Northern Command, Southern Command, Eastern Command, Western Command, Central Command, South Eastern Command, Army Training Command are also known as Army Commanders. Normally, the seniormost Army Commander, who is likely to take over from the incumbent COAS is posted as the Vice Chief; but the same may not be the case always. The Appointment of Army Commanders / Vice COAS and their equivalents in the Navy & Air Force as Chief of Army Staff (COAS) / Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) / Chief of Air Staff (CAS) by superseding their senior(s) only give rise to 'Yes Men'. The following is an extract of an Article, 'Yes Men' by Purnima Thripathi & Venkitesh Ramakrishnan which appeared in the Magazine 'Frontline' on 18 June 2020.

"Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw, considered one of the greatest military strategists India has produced, was also known for his piquant comments and biting repartees. One of his oft-repeated comments, indirectly referring to Army officers subservient to the political and administrative class, as 'Yes Men', is reproduced below:

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/beware-the-yes-man/article31765890.ece>

*A **Yes Man** is a dangerous man. He is a menace. He will go very far. He can become a minister, a secretary or a Field Marshall, but he can never become a leader, nor ever be respected. He will be used by his superiors, disliked by his colleagues and despised by his subordinates. So, discard the **Yes Man**'.*

21. **Nehru's contribution** It was our beloved Chachha Nehru who was the first to indulge in appointing a GOC-in-C (also known as an Army Commander) as the COAS by superseding his senior. Case in point: Appointment of Lt Gen PN Thapar as the COAS, by superseding Lt Gen SPP Thorat, the then Eastern Army Commander who was senior to him. The result: India suffered an ignominious defeat at the hands of the Chinese in October-November 1962.

**22. Indira Gandhi's Contribution.** Indira Gandhi, who believed in having a Committed Judiciary and Committed Armed Forces Chiefs to do her bidding, whether right or wrong, all for the sake of Politics and remaining in power. ***The means never mattered to achieve her ends.***

**23.** It was during her time, she appointed Lt Gen Arun Sridhar Vaidya, MVC (Bar), a highly decorated Soldier, the then Southern Army Cdr as the COAS, by superseding Lt Gen SK Sinha, the then Vice Chief, who was senior to him. The result: You saw the Army executing *Op BLUE STAR*, in which the Army was deployed to storm the Golden Temple at Amritsar, the holiest of the holy Shrines of the Sikhs, on 06 June 1984, for flushing out Sikh militants led by Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale, who had illegally occupied the holy precincts of the Golden Temple. It was a sad day for the Indian Army; for execution of *Op BLUE STAR* resulted in scores of young officers & soldiers getting killed; and hundreds of them getting injured, a large number of them very grievously.

24. Was carrying out 'Op Blue Star' the duty / responsibility of the Army? No; definitely not. It was purely a law & order subject of the State of Punjab; and it is the State Police along with personnel from CRPF who should have been sent to storm the Golden Temple; as was done subsequently in April 1986, in the execution of OPERATION BLACK THUNDER, by the Punjab Police

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation\\_Black\\_Thunder#:~:text=3%20See%20also-Operation%20Black%20Thunder%20I,was%20the%20DGP%20of%20Punjab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Black_Thunder#:~:text=3%20See%20also-Operation%20Black%20Thunder%20I,was%20the%20DGP%20of%20Punjab)

25. Then why didn't Gen AS Vaidya, the then COAS, say NO to Indira Gandhi, the PM, to carrying out of Op BLUE STAR? The answer is simple: he lacked the moral strength & guts to stand up to her; as he was beholden to her for making him COAS over the head of Lt Gen SK Sinha, his senior.

26. 'Op Blue Star' created mayhem in the Army, with Sikh troops killing Brigadier RS Puri, Commandant of the Sikh Regimental Centre at Ramgarh (Jharkhand) and looting the Regimental Armoury; and Sikh troops deserting their Battalions from as far off places as Agartala (Tripura) and Tiruvananthapuram (Kerala) and marching towards Amritsar. It took carrying out of about tens of Court Martials to restore discipline amongst the Sikh troops and another two decades to regain their trust. **8<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Sikh Regiment had to be disbanded as well.**

**27. Modi's contribution.** This dispensation, with Shri Narendra Damodardas Modi as the PM, has proved to be no different; for, it too has indulged in appointing an Army Commander as COAS by superseding two Army Commanders senior to him. Case in point: Appointment of Lt Gen Bipin Rawat as COAS by superseding two Army Commanders senior to him. And this Govt; and has gone even one step further with the appointment of a retired Lt Gen (GOC-in-C) as the CDS, by tweaking rules to suit its convenience. Such acts of indiscretion, much to the detriment of the Defence & National Security, only give rise to CDS & Chiefs who are 'YES MEN'; **who from Day 1 of their appointment, lose their moral authority to render sane & mature advice to the ruling dispensation, on matters Military impinging on Defence & National Security.**

28. **Gen Anil Chauhan, the present CDS.** *I have known Gen Anil Chauhan, the present CDS, from the time he was a Brigadier (Dy DG, Directorate of Army Veterans) in Army HQ; and I have been in touch with him during his years of climbing up the ladder; and I am in touch with him even today. Though Gen Anil Chauhan requires no certificate from me, I have always known him to be a thoroughbred professional Soldier; and a MAN of transparent honesty and unimpeachable integrity, ever ready to extend a helping hand. However in his present appointment as CDS, one cannot rule out the possibility of his taking decisions / actions based on compulsions of political expediency, on account of his being beholden to his Mentor, Shri Ajit Doval, the NSA; and his Political Masters, the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister. Under such circumstances, a thing like Introduction of the Agnipath Scheme had to happen; though he is not the originator of the Scheme, as that privilege belongs to his predecessor.*

29. Such 'YES MEN' are soon found talking what their political bosses want to hear and start singing their praises; and, find ways & means to please their political bosses by indulging in acts not in consonance with the requirements of Defence & National Security; or else, they keep mum (quiet), when it is their duty to stand up and speak without fear or favour. Such 'YES MEN' soon lose respect, not only in the eyes of the political dispensation & the Bureaucracy; but also among the rank & file of the Armed Forces; and the Nation at large.

30. It is an enigma to see Chiefs & GOC-in-Cs of Commands (Viz. Northern Command, Southern Command, etc) who are otherwise epitomes of military virtues, turning into **YES MEN**, kowtowing to the whims & fancies of the wily Bureaucrats & Political Bosses who have no clue about matters Military; **just for the sake of a few crumbs of office likely to be thrown at them, on their retirement**, in the form of postings as Governors of inconsequential States of the North East; or as Ambassadors to Countries like Guatemala, Honduras & Nicaragua or even to Seychelles & Belize!

#### **PART V: GENESIS OF THE AGNIPATH SCHEME**

31. At the very outset, we must be very clear as to why the Agnipath Scheme has been introduced. **It has got nothing to do with having a leaner & meaner Army with Soldiers having a younger age profile, ie. with Soldiers in the age group of 18-25 years.** Even before introduction of the Agnipath Scheme, the Indian Army had Soldiers with a young age profile in the range of 20-35 years; which by no means can be termed old. It is at the age of 25-35 years that a man attains peak physical fitness. **Point to note:** it is the Soldiers in the age group of 20-35 years who fought in 1965 & 1971 Wars and in the icy heights of 14000-18000 feet and won Battle after Battle during Kargil Operations in May-July 1999.

32. **The sole purpose of Agnipath Scheme is to bring down the Defence Pension Bill by denying Pension to Soldiers. Let there be no mistake about it.** I would request all readers to **first read the attached articles** by former Chiefs of the Indian Navy and Generals of eminence, whose names are appended below, who have expressed their dissonance with introduction of the Agnipath Scheme; and have minced no words in expressing in their views, going so far as to say that, ***'the Agnipath Scheme needs to be dumped'***, **in the interest of Defence & National Security;** and then continue to read this Article, nay, an Essay on the Subject.

- (a) ***'Agnipath, between the lines'*** by Admiral Arun Prakash, former Chief of Naval Staff.
- (b) ***'Agnipath will degrade Army's combat effectiveness'*** by Admiral Karam Bir Singh, former Chief of Naval Staff.
- (c) ***'Will Agnipath corrode the finest institution of india?'*** by Lt Gen Vijay Oberoi, former Army Commander Western Command and later Vice Chief of Army Staff.
- (d) ***'The rationale behind the Agniveer System is unclear: change for change's sake, can result in failure'*** by Lt Gen Harwant Singh, former GOC 16 Corps and later Deputy Chief of Army Staff.
- (e) ***'Agnipath scheme must be dumped'*** by Lt Gen Harwant Singh, former GOC 16 Corps and later Deputy Chief of Army Staff.
- (f) ***'Agnipath: a path towards self-immolation?'*** by Lt Gen PG Kamath, former Chief of Staff, HQ Central Command and later Commandant, Army War College, Mhow.
- (g) ***'Bound to burst- the Agnipath bubble'*** by Lt Gen Prakash Katoch, an Officer of the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces) and former and DG Information Systems.



## **PART VI: SALIENT FEATURES OF AGNIPATH SCHEME (YOJANA)**

[https://164.100.158.23/writereaddata/Portal/Images/AGNIPATH\\_BROCHURE.PDF](https://164.100.158.23/writereaddata/Portal/Images/AGNIPATH_BROCHURE.PDF)

[https://loksabhadocs.nic.in/Refinput/New\\_Reference\\_Notes/English/15072022\\_141146\\_102120411.pdf](https://loksabhadocs.nic.in/Refinput/New_Reference_Notes/English/15072022_141146_102120411.pdf)

### 33. Terms & Conditions of Service.

- (a) Agnipath is a new HR Management scheme for Defence Forces. Candidates inducted through this scheme will be called Agniveers. These Agniveers once enrolled into the Armed Forces, will serve for a period of four years. Endeavour will be made to enroll candidates as Agniveers from all parts of the country. Agniveers would form a distinct rank in the Armed Forces, different from any other existing rank.
- (b) As part of the enrolment process, each 'Agniveer' will be required to formally accept all terms and conditions of the AGNIPATH Scheme. For personnel below the age of 18 years, the enrolment form will need to be signed by the parents/ guardians, in accordance with extant provisions.
- (c) Post the period of four years, all Agniveers will go back to the society. However, based on organizational requirements and policies promulgated by the Armed Forces, Agniveers who have exited will be offered an opportunity to apply for enrolment in the Defence Forces in the regular cadre. The skills gained by each Agniveer will be captured in a certificate to form part of his resume. These applications will be considered by a centralized board in a transparent manner and not more than 25 % of the strength of the specific batch of original Agniveers will be enrolled in the Indian Defence forces based on performance during their four year engagement period as Agniveers.
- (d) Agniveers will not have any right to be selected for further enrolment into the Armed Forces. Selection will be the exclusive jurisdiction of the Government.

### 34. Seva-Nidhi Package.

- (a) On completion of the engagement period of four years, Agniveers will be eligible to receive 'Seva Nidhi' package.
- (b) Seva Nidhi shall comprise their contribution (30 %) (Into the Agniveer Corpus Fund) and matching contribution from the Government and interest on the accumulated amount.
- (c) In case of individuals who are subsequently selected for enrolment into the Defence Forces as regular cadre, the 'Seva Nidhi' package to be paid to them will comprise only of their contribution including accrued interest thereon.
- (d) The 'Seva Nidhi' will be exempt from Income Tax.
- (e) In case of Agniveers exiting before the end of their engagement period in their own request, the 'Seva Nidhi' package to be paid to them will comprise only their contribution including accrued interest there on.

- (f) Two options to receive the Seva Nidhi package will be provided to each Agniveer, with an aim to provide financial loans for self-employment / entrepreneurship through a bank guarantee as also to meet immediate/incidental expenses, on exit. Details will be issued separately by Gol.

35. Pay & Allowances. Please find below, a comparative Table showing the lumpsum amount that an Agniveer is entitled to per month during his four years' service vis-à-vis Pay & Allowances applicable to a Sepoy enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme.

<b>P&amp;A granted to a Soldier, enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme (in Rs.)</b>						Lumpsum entitled to an Agniveer per month during his four years' service		Remarks				
<b>S N</b>	<b>P&amp;A</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Yr Rs</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Yr Rs</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Yr Rs</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Yr Rs</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Rs.</b>	In hand per month (70%) (Rs.)	Contribution by Agniveer to Seva Nidhi (30%)	<b>Matching Contribution to the Seva Nidhi by the Govt</b>		
						<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>30000</b>	21000	9000	9000		
1	Basic	21700	22400	23100	23800	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>33000</b>	23100	9900	9900		
2	MSP	5200	5200	5200	5200	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>36500</b>	25580	10950	10950		
3	TPTL'Z'	900	900	900	900	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>40000</b>	28000	12000	12000		
4	DA@ 50%	13900	14250	14600	14950	<b>Point to note:</b> An Agniveer is entitled to only a lumpsum amount as indicated above and does not get any Allowances, as mentioned in the Table on the left.		Total	41850x12	41850x12		
5	HRA'Z'	1953	1953	1953	1953				<b>Rs. 5.022 lakhs</b>	<b>Rs. 5.022 lakhs</b>		
6	PMHA	90	90	90	90							
7	LRA	958	958	958	958							
8	RUMCIG	68	68	68	68							
<b>9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>44749</b>	<b>45799</b>	<b>46849</b>	<b>47899</b>							
<b>On exit after 4 years, Rs 11.71 Lakhs as Seva Nidhi Package (Including, interest accumulated on the above amount as per the applicable interest rates). Point to note: 50% of the amount, ie. Rs. 5.855 lakhs is on account of Agniveer's contribution from his hard earned money.</b>												

**Note 1:** Agniveers will **not** be required to contribute to any Provident Fund of the Government.

**Note 2:** There shall be **no entitlement to gratuity and any kind of pensionary benefits** in the case of Agniveers.

36. The amount of **Rs. 11.71 lakhs** being paid as 'Seva Nidhi' to Agniveers at the end of their service of four years, is no 'bounty'; as half that amount, ie. Rs. 5.87 lakhs is their matching contribution to the 'Seva Nidhi', out of their hard earned money. While Soldiers who were enrolled prior to the introduction of the Agnipath Scheme, drew a starting salary of approximately **Rs. 44,749/-** per month, the Agniveers are entitled to a monthly lumpsum payment **of only Rs. 30,000/-** of which a sum of **Rs. 9000/- per month** is automatically deducted as his contribution towards the 'bounty' of Rs. 11.50/- lakhs that would be made available to him at the end of four years. **How magnanimous of the Govt; and the people who evolved the Agnipath Scheme.**

37. Life Insurance Cover. Agniveers will be provided life insurance cover of Rs. 48 lakhs for the duration of their engagement period as Agniveers in the defence forces.

38. Compensation for Death. In case of death, the following will be admissible to next of Kin (NOK) from the Agniveer Corpus Fund: -

- (a) Insurance cover as applicable.
- (b) All other compensation.

39. Compensation for Disability. In case an individual is placed in Permanent Low Medical Category (LMC), the authorities will assess the percentage of disability and attributability. Such personnel will be discharged from the Defence Forces on medical grounds post payment of lump-sum compensation.

40. 'Agniveer' Skill Certificate. At the end of the engagement period, a detailed Skill-set certificate will be provided to the Agniveers, highlighting the skills and level of competency acquired by them during their engagement period.

41. Entitlement of Ex-Agniveers enrolled for Four Years.

Ser No.	Category	Entitlement of Agniveer
(a)	Death during engagement period on Bonafide duty (Category 'Y'/'Z')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Insurance Cover of Rs.48 lakhs.</li><li>➤ One-time ex-gratia Rs. 44 lakhs.</li><li>➤ Full pay for unserved period up to four years (with effect from date of death) including Seva Nidhi component.</li><li>➤ Balance accumulated (as on date) in the individual's Seva Nidhi' fund and Govt contribution i</li></ul>
(b)	Death during engagement period not on duty (Category 'X')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Insurance Cover of Rs 48 lakhs.</li><li>➤ Balance accumulated (as on date) in the individual's Seva Nidhi fund and Govt. contribution including interest from the Agniveer Corpus Fund.</li></ul>
(c)	Disability (attributed /aggravated due to conditions of engagement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ One-time ex-gratia Rs 44/25/15Lakhs based on % of disability (100/75/50) from Public Fund.</li><li>➤ Full pay for unserved period upto four years (with effect from date of disability) including Seva Nidhi component (from Public Fund).</li><li>➤ Balance accumulated (as on date) in the individual's Seva Nidhi fund including interest and Govt contribution from the Agniveer Corpus Fund.</li></ul>

### **Are Agniveers children of lesser Gods?**

42. Disparities in Pay Package of an Agniveer when compared to a Soldier enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme.

- (a) On perusal of the Comparative Table placed at **Para 35** it will be clear that an Agniveer is paid only a lump sum amount of Rs.30,000/- per month in the 1<sup>st</sup> year; Rs. 33,000/- per month in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year; Rs.36,500/- per month in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year; & Rs.40,000/- per month in the 4<sup>th</sup> year; with a take home salary of Rs.21000/- per month in the 1<sup>st</sup> year; Rs.23100/- per month in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year; Rs.25580 per month in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year; & Rs.28000/- per month in the 4<sup>th</sup> year; **vis-à-vis** Pay & Allowances to the tune of Rs. 44,749/- per month in the 1<sup>st</sup> year; Rs.45,799/- per month in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year; Rs. 46,849/- per month in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year; and, Rs. 47899/- per month in the 4<sup>th</sup> year; that was being paid to Regular Soldiers enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme.

**43. Look at the salary and 'take home salary' being paid to an Agniveer per month during his four years of Service, which is a pittance; for today, even a good tradesman, viz. a Carpenter, a Mason, an Electrician or a Plumber charges a sum of Rs. 1000/- per day as daily wages. What a fall in the izzat & standing of a Soldier. Are Agniveers children of lesser Gods?**

44. Denial of Disability Pension to Agniveers. Agniveers are not authorized for payment of any 'Disability Pension' even if wounded seriously & disabled in Action along the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan; or along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China; or in Counter-Insurgency Operations (CI Ops) in J&K and in the States of the North-East. All that he is entitled to is, a onetime '**Disability Compensation**' depending on the percentage (%) Disability. **Are Agniveers children of lesser Gods?**

45. Denial of Pension & Pensionary Benefits to Next of Kin (NoK), ie. Parents of Agniveers. In the event of death of an Agniveer in Peace or in Operational Area, ie. in skirmishes along the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan; or along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China; or in Counter-Insurgency Operations (CI Ops) in J&K and in the States of the North-East, the NoK of an Agniveer, ie. his parents (ie. Father / Mother), **is not entitled to any Family Pension or Pensionary benefits** and facilities of Medical Treatment (ECHS) and CSD Canteen facilities, which otherwise the NoK of a regular Soldier enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme were entitled to. **Are Agniveers children of lesser Gods?**

46. **Unfairness of the Agnipath Scheme**

- (a) Look at the stark disparity in pay & emoluments per month of the Agniveer vis-à-vis a regular Soldier enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme; and ask yourselves, 'whether it is fair or unfair', given that both of them do the same job.

**(b) I say denying the same Pay & Allowances to Agniveers as applicable to Soldiers enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme is highly unfair, unethical & immoral.**

47. Look at the pittance being paid by way of Pay & Allowances to Agniveers; and, denial of Disability Pension to Agniveers and denial of Family Pension & other pensionary benefits to their parents, ie. Father/Mother in the event of death of an Agniveer; and ask yourselves whether denial of Disability Pension to Agniveers and Family Pension & other Pensionary benefits to the NoK of an Agniveer vis-à-vis Soldiers enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme is fair or unfair, given that both of them died doing the same job. **I say, denial of Disability Pension to Agniveers & Family Pension & other Pensionary benefits to the Parents (ie. Mother/Father) of Agniveers as applicable to Soldiers enrolled prior to introduction of the Agnipath Scheme is highly unfair, unethical & immoral.** I must compliment the Govt and the CDS & the three Armed Forces Chiefs for their magnanimity in working out such a Scheme and putting it into practice, much to the detriment of Morale of Soldiers.

**Is denial of Pension to Soldiers acceptable on the grounds of saving money?**

48. Denial of Pension to Soldiers on any ground is unacceptable; and I for one say, ***'The very thought of denying Pension to Soldiers is a SIN.'***

**How did the Agnipath Scheme come about?**

49. **Requirement of Modernisation of the Armed Forces.** In the aftermath of Chinese attack and killing of 20 Indian Soldiers at Galwan in June 2020, a requirement had been acutely felt for boosting both offensive & defensive capabilities of the Indian Army & Air Force in Northern and Eastern Ladhak and in Arunachal Pradesh. **And anything to do with boosting the 'Operational Preparedness' and 'Modernisation' of the Armed Forces cost huge sums of Money.**

50. **Misguiding & Brain washing the Finance Minister, the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri and the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India by the IAS Mafia.** Not willing to let go of any opportunity to malign the Armed Forces and to show them in poor light, **the IAS Mafia, ably supported by the NSA, has been dinning into the ears of the Hon'ble Defence Minister, the Finance Minister and the Hon'ble Prime Minister, day in & day out,** that the main reason as to why the Country has not been able to move forward in its '*Modernisation Programme*' of the Armed Forces by way of procuring much needed advanced weaponry, in the wake of aggressive posturing by the Chinese all along the LAC, **is that,** a very large portion the meager Defence Budget that the Country can afford in the face of other competing requirements of infrastructural development & raising the Quality of Life of the Common Man, **goes towards payment of the humongous Pension Bill of Ex-Servicemen; and hence there is a dire need to reduce the Defence Pension Bill to cater for much needed 'Modernisation Programme' of the Armed Forces.**

51. The Agnipath Scheme is not the brain-child of the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, the Hon'ble Finance Minister or the Hon'ble Prime Minister. **But who then? And how?**

52. This is what I believe must have happened (I leave it for the readers to decide). The Hon'ble PM, having been dinned into his ears, day in & day out, by the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri & the Hon'ble Finance Minister & NSA and the IAS Mafia, that, the Country can ill afford the humongous Pension Bill of Ex-Servicemen, which is a huge drain on the Exchequer, and the urgent need to find ways & means to reduce the same; and that the best would be to ask the Military Hierarchy themselves to find an answer to the serious situation; the Hon'ble Prime Minister, in one of his informal meetings

with the Military Hierarchy, ie. the CDS & the three Chiefs, **must have shared his concern regarding the Defence Budget and the huge Defence Pension Bill; and would have asked, whether the Military Hierarchy can think of doing something about reducing the burgeoning Pension Bill.**

53. **And by Jove**, the Military Hierarchy soon gets cracking to fulfill the PM's wishes; and working on war footing, presents the Agnipath Scheme to the Govt. **For what?** Just to save a few pennies being paid as Pension to retired Soldiers **at the cost of ruination of Defence and National Security.** I am reminded of the famous Quote by Shri LK Advani, asking Journalists during the Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi: *"You were asked only to bend, but you crawled"*.

### **III effects of introduction of the Agnipath Scheme on Defence & National Security of the Nation**

54. **Battle Winning Factors.** Amongst the many 'Battle Winning Factors', Training, Quality of Armaments and a high level of Motivation & Morale are a few important ones. In today's technologically advanced battlefield environment, it is imperative that, Soldiers are equipped with the best of Armaments, a Country can afford; and troops are well trained in the use & employment of high tech weapons & equipment; and above all, are highly motivated & exude high Morale in taking on and defeating the enemy, come what may; for, in the ultimate analysis, it is the MAN behind the weapon who counts in War. It is well trained & motivated Soldiers with a high Morale who win Battles. Let us discuss these Battle Winning factors, one by one.

- (a) **Training.** An Agniveer is contracted to serve for only a period of four years; at the end of which only 25% of them will be absorbed as 'regular soldiers' and the balance 75% will be sent home, to fend for themselves. **Drawbacks noticed:**
- (i) Of the four years an Agniveer is contracted to serve, he spends six months in Training and another six months on Annual Leave/Casual leave; he being entitled to 30 days Annual leave & the privilege of availing 15 days Casual leave per annum; and, **that leaves an Agniveer to serve for only three years.**
  - (ii) With the complex nature of warfare and the highly technologically advanced weapon systems being wielded, viz. tanks, guns, missiles of different hues, radars, destroyers, frigates, submarines and fighter aircrafts & aircraft carriers, costing millions & billions of dollars, it is imperative that the MAN behind the machine is well trained and achieves a high level of proficiency in handling these armaments; **for which, three years of training is just not good enough.**
  - (iii) An Air Vice Marshal, an Authority on Maintenance of Mirage 2000 fighter aircrafts, **has stated that it takes around six to seven years for the IAF to train an Aircraft Technician, before he is allowed anywhere near a fighter aircraft.**
  - (iv) Both Admiral Arun Prakash and Admiral Karam Bir Singh, former Chiefs of Naval Staff and other eminent Generals mentioned in Para 32 *ibid*, have clearly brought out the aspect of inadequate training of Agniveers as a cause for concern; **and one can ignore their warnings only at the peril of Defence & National Security.**

- (b) **Quality of Armaments.** With the present dispensation having been in power for over ten years, it is heartening to note that the Armed Forces have made good strides in acquiring and improving the Quality of Armaments; but, the strides are not rapid enough to match the growing military strength of our adversaries in the Western, Northern & North Eastern Borders; eg. as against an authorized fighter aircraft strength of 42 squadrons (each with 18 fighter aircrafts), our strength is only around 30 squadrons, with the strength getting depleted fast on account of obsolescence. The IAF is keenly awaiting with bated breath, the signing of the procurement deal of 126 MRFA, which is hanging fire for over twenty five years.
- (c) **Motivation & Morale.** One often hears a few Veterans singing praises of the Agnipath Scheme after their interaction with Commanding Officers of Battalions & Regiments and a few Agniveers, that, it is the best thing that could have happened. In response, I having interacted with Agniveers and serving Soldiers enrolled before introduction of the Agnipath Scheme and Ex-Servicemen, have the following to record:
- (i) The Agniveers say that, given the large scale unemployment prevailing in the Country, there is no option but for young men to join the Armed Forces as Agniveers and accept whatever is offered; for, beggars cannot be choosers.
  - (ii) Agniveers say, 'how can we be happy given the fact that our future is uncertain & bleak; and we now only look forward to our exit from the Forces on completion of four years with the 'Seva Nidhi' of Rs. 11.5 lakhs of which 50% is our contribution'.
  - (iii) One is given to understand that young men today are not very enamoured by the Agnipath Scheme; for they feel that, instead of joining the Armed Forces as Agniveers with an uncertain future, it is better to join the CAPFs, viz. BSF, CRPF, ITBP, CISF, etc. right at the beginning with assured career prospects and where one can serve up to the age of 60 years; with Pension being granted after retirement.
  - (iv) **The Motivation level & Morale amongst the Agniveers is abysmally low, on account of their realization that**
    - (aa) they would get no 'Disability Pension' if wounded seriously & disabled in Action along the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan; or along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China; or in Counter-Insurgency Operations (CI Ops) in J&K and in the States of the North-East.
    - (ab) their Next of Kin, ie their parents (Father / Mother) would get no 'Family Pension' in the event of their Death in Action along the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan; or along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China; or in Counter-Insurgency Operations (CI Ops) in J&K and in the States of the North-East.

## Readers to decide

55. I now leave it to the readers to decide whether an Army of ill-trained Agniveers with a low level of Motivation and Morale is fit to fight the next War.

## Injustice perpetrated on Emergency Commissioned Officers post Indo-China War in 1962; and Short Service Commissioned Officers post Indo-Pak Wars in 1965 & 1971; and now being perpetrated on Agniveers.

56. On India being attacked by China in the North and the North-East, Nehru, the then Prime Minister issued a Clarion Call asking all able bodied youth to join the Armed Forces and save the Nation from annihilation. In response, around 9000 young men in the age group of 21 to 35 years came forward and joined the Army, Navy & Air Force as Emergency Commissioned (EC) Officers; and it is on the shoulders of these EC Officers that the Country fought the 1965 Indo-Pak War; where they gave an excellent account of themselves. Come 1968; on completion of five years' service, 6000 EC Officers were discharged from the Armed Forces on grounds of redundancy, without any financial compensation or any alternative employment. Though a few EC Officers were lucky to get into Central Services, viz. IAS & IPS, etc. after appearing for only two papers in the UPSC Exam; a few joined CAPFs and the rest were left to fend for themselves. Ex-EC Officers were seen running 'Dhabas'; a few selling 'fast food' in 'redies' on the Rajpath in the evenings; and a few serving as Sub-Inspectors in BSF, CRPF, etc. when only a few months earlier, they were Class 1 Gazetted (commissioned) Officers in the Armed Forces.

57. The 1971 War was fought on the Shoulders of Short Service Commissioned (SSC) Officers, who were enrolled in the Armed Forces on termination of EC Courses. The SSC Officers were discharged from Service on completion of 5 years' service; and like EC Officers a few SSC Officers were lucky to get into Central Services, viz. IAS & IPS, etc. after appearing for only two papers in the UPSC Exam; a few joined CAPFs and the rest were left to fend for themselves. Over a period of time, the service liability of SSC Officers was increased from five years to ten years and now they can serve upto fourteen years. On completion of five years' service, upto 30% of SSC Officers are granted Permanent Regular Commission (PRC) and those who do not make it to the grade of PRC Officers are discharged from service at the end of five/ten/fourteen years, as the case may be; without any Pension to fall back upon. Many SSC Officers suffer mental breakdown on their discharge from service at the end of ten/fourteen years' service; for by that time they have a young wife & two small children to support. It is nothing but callousness & crass injustice on the part of the Military Hierarchy and the Govt to draw the best out of SSC Officers, who have sacrificed the best part of their youth in service of the Nation; and chuck them out without granting any Pension. Is it fair? No, it is most unfair. I say, extend the service liability of SSC Officers by one year, ie. from fourteen years to fifteen years; and grant them Pension. Denying Soldiers their Pension is a SIN.



## Stake holders in Defence & Security of the Nation

58. Every Citizen of Bharat is a 'Stake Holder' in the Defence & Security of the Nation. And that being so,

- (a) Does any MP of the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha have his/her son or daughter as a Commissioned Officer or as an Agniveer in the Army, Navy or Air Force? **The answer is a resounding NO.**
- (b) Does any MLA in any of the State Assemblies or any MLC in the State Legislative Councils have his/her son or daughter as a Commissioned Officer or as an Agniveer in the Army, Navy or Air Force? **The answer is a resounding NO.**
- (c) Does any Politician, anywhere in this vast Country, have his/her son or daughter as a Commissioned Officer or as an Agniveer in the Army, Navy or Air Force? **The answer is a resounding NO.**
- (d) Does any Hon'ble Judge of the Supreme Court or any of the High Courts or any of the Sub-ordinate Courts have his/her son or daughter as a Commissioned Officer or as an Agniveer in the Army, Navy or Air Force? **The answer is a resounding NO.**
- (e) Does any Officer of the IAS, IPS or any of the Central Services or CAPFs, ie. BSF, CRPF, ITBP, CISF, etc. anywhere in this vast Country, have his/her son or daughter as a Commissioned Officer or as an Agniveer in the Army, Navy or Air Force? **The answer is a resounding NO.**
- (f) Does any of the Industrialists, viz. Ambanis, Adanis, Tatas, Birlas, Dalmias, etc. anywhere in this vast Country, have his/her son or daughter as a Commissioned Officer or as an Agniveer in the Army, Navy or Air Force? **The answer is a resounding NO.**
- (g) Does any of the Film or TV Stars of the Entertainment Industry, anywhere in this vast Country, have his/her son or daughter as a Commissioned Officer or as an Agniveer in the Army, Navy or Air Force? **The answer is a resounding NO.**
- (h) Does any of the Chairman of the Bar Council or any Member of the Bar Council anywhere in this vast Country, have his/her son or daughter as a Commissioned Officer or as an Agniveer in the Army, Navy or Air Force? **The answer is a resounding NO.**

59. Why is it that the answer to all Questions in Para 58 (a) to (h) is a resounding NO? The reason is that a career in the Armed Forces is meant only for children of lesser mortals, ie. children of serving or retired Armed Forces personnel & farmers; and not for the elite who have been listed in Para 58. It is clearly a case of lack of pride in the Armed Forces. **What a shame!**

60. Do any of these Hon'ble MEN listed in Para 58 know what it means to be in the Armed Forces? I bet, they have no clue; for if they had even an inkling of the life of a Soldier's deployed in the icy heights of the Himalayas in Ladhak or in the North East or when deployed in Counter Insurgency Operations in J&K; or when flying a fighter aircraft; or when deployed in Submarines in the murky depths of our seas, they would not be denying Pension to Soldiers by evolving the Agnipath Scheme, putting the Defence & National Security in jeopardy. **I strongly recommend that they go and spend a minimum of 48 hours with the troops deployed in our far flung borders to get a feel of the life in the Army.**

### **Putting the Clock back**

61. In earlier times, the service liability of a Soldier, ie. a Sepoy was only for seven years active service; at the end of which he was sent home without any Pension; but with a reserve liability of eight years. A Sepoy, Ram Singh, who was enrolled in 1960 and took part in the Goa Operations in 1961; took part in the Indo-China War in October-November 1962 in the icy Himalayan heights; and took part in the Indo-Pak War in 1965 War in J&K, is discharged from service in 1967, without any Pension. And since he is under 'reserve liability' for eight years, he is recalled in 1971 and actively participates in the Indo-Pak War in December 1971; at the end of which he is once again discharged in 1972, again without any Pension. **Is it fair? No, not at all.** It is on account of this unfair deal to Sepoys that the service liability of a Sepoy was increased to fifteen years; at the end of which, he was granted Pension. And the Service Liability of Sepoys was increased further from 15 to 17 years, once the Govt granted Sepoys ACP to the rank of Naik on their completion of 8 years' service; and ACP to the rank of Havaldar on their completion of 16 years' service. 75% of Sepoys retire in the rank of Sepoy only; and only 25% of them climb up the ladder to become NCOs & JCOs. **And now with the introduction of the Agnipath Scheme, the clock has been rewound to ZERO.**

### **Agnipath Scheme: A retrograde step**

62. Introduction of Agnipath Scheme is a retrograde step; the **main objective being to deny Pension to Soldiers**, under the pretext of saving money for the Exchequer and for diverting the same to cater for Modernisation of the Armed Forces.

63. To debunk & expose the wily IAS & IRS Bureaucrats of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Finance, an exercise must be undertaken to collate:

- (a) Amount of Pension being paid per month & per annum to each of the Central Services, viz. the IAS, the IPS & all Central Govt Services, including all Group 'A' Services; and all sub-ordinate Staff, all over the Country.
- (b) Amount of Pension being paid per month & per annum to Officers and Sub-ordinate Staff of CAPFs, ie. BSF, CRPF, ITBP, CISF, all over the Country.
- (c) Amount of Pension being paid per month & per annum to Officers and sub-ordinate staff & personnel of Group 'A' Services, viz. Border Roads Organisation (BRO), Military Engineer Service (MES), DRDO, Defence PSUs & PS Establishments and other Defence Civilian Units & Establishments.
- (d) It is learnt that around 45% of Defence Pension Bill goes towards payment of Pension to Defence Civilians who constitute only 25% of the total strength of Defence Pensioners. In other words, Ex-Servicemen who constitute 75% of the total strength of Defence Pensioners account for only 55% of the Defence Pension Bill.
- (e) Amount of Pension being paid per month & per annum to Sub-ordinate Staff in Central Govt and all State Govts, all over the Country.

- (f) Amount of Pension being paid per month & per annum to all Judges of the Supreme Court, High Courts and Sub-ordinate Courts all over the Country; and all Judicial Staff employed all over the Country.

64. Having collated all Pension Amounts as indicated in Para 62 above, it will be seen that the Defence Pension Bill in respect of only retired Soldiers, ie. excluding Defence Civilians, is only a miniscule amount compared to the overall Pension amount being paid to all other Central Govt employees put together. **One would thus realize that all this hullabaloo or fuss is being made only to save money for the Govt. by denying Pension to Soldiers.**

#### **Have People's representatives no conscience?**

65. Today, all MPs of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha and MLAs & MLCs, on completion of their tenure of five / six years, as the case may be; or for even a truncated tenure of just one day, draws a lifelong Pension; and majority of them draw multiple Pensions for having served multiple times as MP/MLA/MLC; and yet, these very Hon'ble representatives of the people, for whom Politics is a 'Family Business' choose to deny Pension to Soldiers who guard the far flung borders of our Country in the most inhospitable terrain & climatic conditions. **Have they any conscience or morality? I am afraid not.** They are all self-centered Thugs, out to loot this Country, at every given opportunity.

66. **It is indeed a matter of shame** that the present dispensation which keeps boasting that India is fast galloping towards becoming a five trillion Dollar economy and the third largest economy in the world; where, MPs and MLAs & MLCs draw multiple Pensions, has no compunction in denying payment of Pension to its Soldiers, who stand guard in the scorching deserts of Rajasthan and in the icy heights of the Himalayas along our far flung Northern & Eastern borders; and in the jungles of Nagaland & Manipur in the North East **Do you call it Dharma? I call it exploitation, unethical & immoral and perpetration of Adharma.**

#### **SWOT Analysis**

67. To close the argument / discussion, let us carry out a SWOT Analysis of the Agnipath Scheme. **SWOT** stands for **S**trength, **W**eakness, **O**pportunities & **T**hreats that a proposal would pose to an Organisation / Institution on its introduction.

- (a) Strength. Agnipath is a master stroke in drastically reducing the ever burgeoning Defence Pension Bill. One must give due credit to the CDS & the three Service Chiefs who formulated the Scheme and put it into practice.
- (b) Weakness. It will result in incalculable harm to the Armed Forces by producing poorly trained & demotivated Soldiers with abysmally low morale, who unsure of their future only look forward to their discharge from service on completion of their contract period of four years.
- (c) Opportunities. The Agnipath Scheme has no opportunities to offer the System; or to the Agniveers. To say that 10% of the vacancies in CAPFs, ie. BSF, CRPF, ITBP, CISF, etc. are reserved for recruitment of Agniveers on their discharge is just a promise at the

moment. I say, why not 100% Agniveers on their discharge from service at the end of four years be absorbed in the CAPFs? This will be stoutly opposed by the CAPFs; for, if 100% Agniveers are automatically absorbed in CAPFs, there will be no requirement of recruiting civilian candidates;

(d) **Threats.** **A sure recipe for Military Disaster in the offing; on account of the following reasons:**

- (i) Poorly trained Soldiers with just six months of training are not good enough to handle today's armaments, technologically advanced in nature.
- (ii) Soldiers with low levels of Motivation and abysmally low Morale will not have **the will to fight and give off their best in War**; because:
  - (aa) **Agniveers unsure of their future** at the end of their contract period of four years and who would have to start looking for jobs afresh; it is but natural that they would be worried & demotivated; and thus **would definitely not have the will to fight and give off their best in War.**
  - (ab) **Agniveers aware of the fact** that in case they sustain grievous injuries & are maimed in the line of duty **would not get 'Disability Pension'** but a meager compensation; **would definitely not have the will to fight and give off their best in War.**
  - (ac) **Agniveers aware of the fact** that in case they die in the line of duty, **their parents (ie. father / mother) would not get 'Family Pension'** but a meager compensation, **would definitely not have the will to fight and give off their best in War and would be risk averse.**

#### **PART VII: STEPS RECOMMENDED TO UNDO THE DAMAGE DONE BY AGNIPATH SCHEME**

68. In order to set right the wrongs of the Agnipath Scheme, the following steps are recommended to be taken, keeping in mind the cardinal principle that, **'No soldier shall ever be deprived of his Pension'**.

- (a) Absorb 100% of Agniveers presently service as Regulars in the Army, Navy & Air Force
- (b) The terms & conditions of Service for JCOs & OR shall mandate that all Soldiers shall serve for ten years; with a 'Reserve Liability' of five years; **with the proviso that** at the end of ten years, **they will be granted 'prorata Pension'**.
- (c) **On the same analogy**, the service of Short Service Commissioned Officers be restricted to ten years; as against fourteen years as of now; and at the end of ten years, they be granted 'prorata' Pension. Or else, the service of SS Commissioned Officers be extended by one year, ie. upto fifteen years; and they be granted 'prorata' Pension at the end of fifteen years' service.
- (d) Improve career prospects of JCOs, NCOs & OR;

- (e) **Directorates of Rajya Sainik Welfare & Resettlement are dens of sloth, sleaze & inefficiency.** The present organizational setup for taking care of Welfare & Resettlement of Ex-Servicemen & Families under the aegis of Secretary, Dept of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW) in the MoD; with Directorates of Rajya Sainik Welfare & Resettlement headed by a retired Officer of the rank of Brigadier/Col (or their equivalents in the Navy & Air Force) as Director, in all States, has been found to be woefully inadequate.
- (f) **Establishment of Dept of Veterans' Affairs.** For ensuring meaningful Welfare & Resettlement of Ex-Servicemen & War Widows, there is an urgent & inescapable requirement to establish a Dept. of Veterans' Affairs headed by a serving Lt Gen, who shall function directly under the Defence Minister. Such a Dept. headed by a Lt Gen, can easily be created overnight, without any additional expenditure to the State, by entrusting the responsibility of Ex-Servicemen Welfare & Resettlement to the DG NCC; whose command & control set up is spread all over the Country down to Taluks and small; and, who henceforth will be called DG NCC & DG Dept. of Veterans' Affairs, functioning directly under the Defence Minister and NOT under the MoD, ie. the Defence Secretary; or under the CDS, also known as Secretary Dept. of Military Affairs.. Such a step, would as a matter of fact result in overall savings to the State Exchequer and better User Satisfaction; in all such things, there is a requirement to think out of the box.
- (g) **Resettlement of Short Service (SS) Commissioned Officers and Ex-Servicemen and War Widows.** For ensuring meaningful resettlement of SS Commissioned Officers and War Widows and retired JCOs, NCOs & OR, it must be mandated that with immediate effect, all civilian vacancies in all Defence Units & Establishments, viz. the MoD, AFHQ Cadre, DG NCC, DGQA, DRDO, R&D, Ordnance factory Board (OFB) & Ordnance Factories, and the MES, DGBR & the Survey of India will be repeat will be filled only by Ex-Servicemen; and, in case suitable Ex-Servicemen candidates are not available for recruitment to a particular post; the same may be filled by a civilian after obtaining necessary sanction in writing from the Authority, one step above the Appointing Authority.
- (h) **ECHS.** Since provisioning of ECHS Facilities to Ex-Servicemen & their dependents, viz. parents, unmarried sisters & brothers below the age of 21 years, is causing a huge expenditure to the Exchequer; we may consider going in for an alternative to the ECHS. The ECHS in any case has not been found to be very useful in meeting the requirements of providing medical care & treatment to Ex-Servicemen & their families living in villages in our far flung corners our Country due to various complexities involved. A small example of the inadequacy of the ECHS is: though there is an ECHS Polyclinic at Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) it has no medicines to issue to Ex-Servicemen & their families; and a city like Coimbatore has no empanelled Hospital.

- (j) There is always room for improvement in any system; but, in the case of ECHS, there is a need to think 'out of the box' for provisioning effective medical care & treatment to the stake holders. In life nothing comes 'free'; in other words, there are no free Lunches. A Group Medical Insurance Scheme for Ex-Servicemen & their families must be evolved, where in all Soldiers, irrespective of rank, pay their annual Insurance Premium, to facilitate their medical care & treatment from any hospital in the Country. That will obviate establishing of a number ECHS Polyclinics and running after Empanelled Civ Hospitals after obtaining referral from the Polyclinic concerned. There is plenty of room for improving and modifying the present ECHS system resulting in saving of money and greater User Satisfaction.
- (k) **CSD (I) facilities**. Though purchase of goods & liquor from Unit Run CSD Canteens is definitely beneficial to serving and retired personnel of the Armed Forces & their families; the real beneficiaries of running CDS Canteen in the Army are the Army HQ and HQs Commands, who take away 75% of the Canteen profits from all Defence Units & Establishments, under their jurisdiction. Even NCC Units are not spared; and they are the worst affected.

#### **Setting up of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)**

69. To save the Nation from the Military Disaster in the offing; I, a War Veteran with over 33 years' service in the Indian Army and a concerned Citizen of this Country most earnestly appeal to our Hon'ble Prime Minister, to set up a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), tasked to study:

- (a) the circumstances leading to the evolution of the Agnipath Scheme and its implementation;
- (b) efficacy of the Agnipath Scheme & its ramifications on Defence & National Security;
- (c) examine various steps recommended in Para 68 *ibid*; and finally,
- (d) **recommend comprehensive Terms & Conditions of service of Soldiers**, with a view to ensuring that the Army, Navy & Air Force produce well trained Soldiers who are highly Motivated & exude Morale of the highest order, ever ready to take on the enemy at a moment's notice, keeping in mind the cardinal principle that, 'No soldier shall ever be deprived of his Pension'; with the proviso, where all 'Stake Holders' shall have the privilege of deposing before the Committee.

#### **The Army fights to win; and what counts in war is 'Victory**

70. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble PM and the JPC, as & when it is formed, to the fact, "The Army fights to win; and what counts in war is 'Victory'. No price is too big to pay to ensure eternal vigil and preparedness for War. Wars are won by well trained & motivated Soldiers with high Morale; who go into Battle with the complete confidence that their interests will be taken care of by the Govt. in case they are injured or maimed; and that the interests of their parents, wives & children will be taken care of in the event of their death".

## Epilogue

71. **A Country in which its rulers and people (or their representatives) do not respect or show concern for its Soldiers and Veterans; it has no moral right to exist as a Nation; and such a Country would soon disintegrate.**

72. ***Khuda na kare***, ie. God forbid, in case this Country suffers a reverse like in 1962, I would like to remind our Hon'ble PM that only he will have to take the blame on himself; and in case of such an event, ***“Na Raam rahega; na Raam Mandir rahega”***

**END**

## Acknowledgement and Expression of thanks

Large portions of my Paper are reproduction of points covered by the two former Naval Chiefs and the four eminent Veteran Lt Gen in their Articles, as mentioned in Para 32 *ibid*; and, **I hereby thank & express my gratitude to all of them**; for, it is their Articles on the Agnipath Scheme, which motivated me to come out with this long Paper, **'Agnipath Scheme: a self-inflicted Injury'**.

Place: **Bangalore**

**Veteran Col SS Rajan**

Date: **29 Aug 2024**

**About the Author**

