

7. Reservation for Agniveers- Polity

Govt. to increase reservation for Agniveers in CAPFs to 50%. The Union Home Ministry has made a significant policy decision to enhance the career prospects of ex-Agniveers. The reservation for ex-Agniveers in Group C posts of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) has been increased from the existing 10% to 50%.

Context of the Decision

Policy Shift- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has decided to amend the recruitment rules to significantly increase the quota for ex-Agniveers.

Targeted Posts- This reservation specifically applies to Group C posts within the paramilitary forces.

Magnitude of Change- The reservation quota has seen a five-fold increase, jumping from 10% to 50%, ensuring a substantial absorption of trained personnel into internal security forces.

Overview of the Agnipath Scheme

Launch and Objective- The Government of India launched the Agnipath scheme in 2022. It is designed to recruit both male and female aspirants into the 'below the officer's rank' cadre of the three services (Army, Navy, and Air Force).

Tenure- The service period under this scheme is fixed for four years, during which the recruits are titled 'Agniveers'.

Eligibility and Training

Age Limit- Candidates aged between 17.5 to 21 years are eligible to apply.

Training Protocol- Agniveers undergo optimised basic military training. This is followed by specialised trade training and necessary up-skilling courses based on service requirements.

Enrolment into Permanent Cadre

Opportunity- Upon completion of the 4-year engagement, Agniveers can apply for enrolment in the permanent cadre.

Selection Ratio- Based on organizational requirements and promulgated policies, up to 25% of the batch will be selected and enrolled in the Armed Forces as regular cadre.

The Remaining 75%- The remaining personnel are released from service, forming the pool of "ex-Agniveers" now targeted for CAPF recruitment.

Key Features of the Scheme

The scheme includes specific financial and welfare provisions for the 4-year tenure.

Feature	Details
Monthly Package	Agniveers receive a customized monthly package that includes applicable risk and hardship allowances.
Corpus Fund	30% of the monthly salary is contributed to the Agniveer Corpus Fund, which is matched by an equal contribution from the Government.
SevaNidhi Package	Upon completion of four years, Agniveers receive a one-time, tax-free SevaNidhi package. This includes the accumulated corpus plus interest, totaling approximately ₹11.71 lakh.
Insurance Cover	A non-contributory Life Insurance Cover of ₹48 lakh is provided for the duration of the engagement period.
Post-Service Benefits	There is no entitlement to gratuity or pensionary benefits under this scheme.

Significance of the Enhanced Reservation

Employment Assurance- This move directly addresses the primary concern regarding the future of the 75% of Agniveers who are released after four years. It strengthens post-service employment pathways, providing economic stability.

Operational Readiness for CAPFs- CAPFs (such as CRPF, BSF, CISF) benefit from inducting young, disciplined personnel. These recruits already possess prior military exposure and physical fitness, reducing the time and cost required for basic training.

Institutional Integration- The decision fosters better convergence between the Armed Forces (under the Ministry of Defence) and the CAPFs (under the Ministry of Home Affairs) in terms of manpower planning and utilization.

Concerns and Challenges

Impact on Open Competition- A steep increase to 50% reservation effectively halves the seats available for general civilian aspirants. This may lead to dissatisfaction or concerns among unemployed youth preparing for CAPF exams through the traditional route.

Uniformity Across CAPFs- The amendments to recruitment rules are expected to be notified gradually. Ensuring consistency in implementation timelines across diverse forces like the BSF, CRPF, and CISF poses an administrative challenge.

Training and Role Adaptation

Military vs. Policing- The military trains for eliminating external threats, while CAPFs often deal with internal security and crowd control, requiring "maximum restraint." Ex-Agniveers will require careful retraining and induction to adapt their mindset from a "war-fighting" role to an "internal security" role.

Way Ahead

Uniform Implementation- The government must ensure the policy is implemented uniformly across all CAPFs, including the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and Assam Rifles.

Balancing Interests- Policy frameworks must balance employment security for ex-Agniveers with fairness towards civilian recruitment to maintain social equity.

Bridge Training Modules- Robust bridge training modules must be designed to effectively align the military skills of Agniveers with the specific requirements of internal security and policing duties.

Periodic Review- A mechanism should be established to periodically review the policy based on actual recruitment outcomes, the performance of ex-Agniveers in CAPFs, and overall operational effectiveness.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/govt-to-increase-reservation-for-agniveers-in-capfs-to-50/article70416721.ece>

