



Gratuity For Anganwadi Workers

For Prelims: Anganwadi Workers, Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

For Mains: Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Aadhaar, Government Policies & Interventions

Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) held that [anganwadi workers](#) were entitled to gratuity, a basic social security measure.

What was the Supreme Court's Judgement?

- The Court recognized their right to be paid gratuity under the [Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972](#).
- The court **underscored that it was time for the Centre and the States to “collectively consider” bettering the service conditions of anganwadi workers** and helpers.
- It also said that the [Integrated Child Development Scheme \(ICDS\)](#) deserved far greater attention in public policy.
 - The scheme acts as an **“institutional mechanism for realization of child and women rights”**.
 - Yet these services are regarded as **State Charity rather than as enforceable entitlements**.
- Thus, a relook into their **service conditions was necessary to ensure quality** in the delivery of services and community participation.

Who are Anganwadi Workers?

- Anganwadi is a [centrally sponsored scheme](#) implemented by the States / UTs which serves as a rural child and maternal care centre in India.
- It was **started by the Government of India in 1975** as part of the **ICDS** program to combat child hunger and malnutrition.
- Anganwadi centers provide a package of six services: **supplementary nutrition, pre-school non-formal education, immunization, health check-up, nutrition and health education, and referral services**.
- The beneficiaries under the **Anganwadi Services Scheme** are identified based on [Aadhaar](#).

What is the Importance of Anganwadi Workers?

- The court held that anganwadi workers and helpers taking care of the **nutrition needs** of around **158 million children** who were considered the **“future resource of the country”**.
 - They perform a bouquet of vital services at the grassroots level and were often the bridge between the government and beneficiaries under the [National Food Security Act, 2013](#) and the **ICDS**.
- **Anganwadi workers and helpers served in disadvantaged areas** and catered to the needs of underprivileged groups.

- They formed the **backbone of the ICDS**.
- **Socialized childcare** contributes to the liberation of women.
 - It lightens the burden of looking after children, provides a potential source of remunerated employment for women and gives them an opportunity to build women's organizations.

What is Gratuity?

- Gratuity is a benefit that is payable under the **Payment of Gratuity Act 1972**.
- Gratuity is a **financial component** offered by an employer to an employee in recognition of his/her service rendered to an organization.
 - It is a part of the **salary an employee** receives and can be viewed as a benefit plan designed to aid an individual in his/her retirement.
- Gratuity is paid by an employer when an employee leaves the job after serving the same organization for a **minimum period of 5 years**.
 - One can consider it to be a **financial "Thank you"** to an employee for rendering continuous service to an employer.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. With reference to the provisions made under the National Food Security Act, 2013, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The families coming under the category of 'below poverty line (BPL)' only are eligible to receive subsidized food grains.
2. The eldest woman in a household, of age 18 years or above, shall be the head of the household for the purpose of issuance of a ration card.
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a 'take-home ration' of 1600 calories per day during pregnancy and for six months thereafter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Ans: (b)

Explanation:

- The issue of food security has been addressed by the Government through the Public Distribution System and the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- The National Food Security Act (NFSA) enacted on 5th July 5, 2013 marked a shift in the approach to food security from welfare to rights-based approach.

Source: TH