



## 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 5<sup>th</sup> July 5, 2013 marked a shift in the approach to food security from welfare to rights-based approach.

**Source: TH**