



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 15-07-2024**

### **GS-2**

1. Gram Nyayalayas
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### **GS-3**

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## **Gram Nyayalayas**

**Syllabus: GS-2: Judiciary in India.**

**Context:**

- *SC seeks report on gram nyayalayas from States, HCs.*

### **Gram Nyayalayas (Village Courts)**

- **Establishment:** *Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008*
- **Purpose:** *To provide access to justice at the grassroots level by establishing village courts for speedy and affordable justice.*

### **Objectives**

- **Accessibility:** *Bring justice closer to the rural population.*
- **Affordability:** *Reduce litigation costs by having the court at the village level.*
- **Speedy Justice:** *Dispose of cases quickly to reduce backlog and ensure timely justice.*
- **Localized Dispute Resolution:** *Address local issues effectively with a better understanding of the community context.*

### **Structure and Jurisdiction**

- **Jurisdiction:**
  - *Civil and criminal cases of minor nature.*
  - *Civil disputes related to property, tenancy, village disputes, etc.*
  - *Criminal cases such as theft, assault, criminal trespass, etc.*
- **Presiding Officer:** *Nyayadhikari (judicial magistrate of the first class).*
- **Location:** *Operates in the headquarters of the Gram Panchayat or any other place in the rural area.*

### **Procedures**

- **Simplified Procedures:** *Follows summary procedures for speedy disposal of cases.*
- **Use of Local Language:** *Proceedings conducted in the local language for better understanding.*
- **Mobile Courts:** *Can function as mobile courts to cover different villages.*

### **Powers**

- **Civil Powers:** Powers of a civil court in certain matters like summoning witnesses, examining evidence, etc.
- **Criminal Powers:** Powers of a judicial magistrate of the first class in criminal cases.
- **Settlement of Disputes:** Encouraged to use alternative dispute resolution methods like mediation and conciliation.

### Implementation

- **Establishment:** States are responsible for the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas.
- **Funding:** Both central and state governments provide financial support.
- **Challenges:** Implementation varies across states; many states have been slow in establishing Gram Nyayalayas.

### Challenges and Issues

- **Awareness:** Lack of awareness among rural populations about Gram Nyayalayas.
- **Infrastructure:** Inadequate infrastructure and facilities.
- **Training:** Need for better training and capacity building of Nyayadhikaris.
- **Coordination:** Issues in coordination between Gram Nyayalayas and regular courts.
- **State Cooperation:** Varied levels of cooperation and enthusiasm among different states.

### Conclusion

- **Potential:** Gram Nyayalayas have the potential to revolutionize the rural justice delivery system.
- **Need for Reforms:** To realize their full potential, issues of awareness, infrastructure, and coordination need to be addressed.
- **Future Outlook:** With proper implementation and support, Gram Nyayalayas can significantly enhance access to justice for rural populations.

## **The Problem with Karnataka Gig Workers Bill**

## Syllabus: GS-2: Laws and Policies for the welfare of weaker sections.

### Context:

- Karnataka introduced a new Bill, called the **draft Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024**, seeking to provide social security and welfare measures for platform-based gig workers in the State.

### Welfare Board Model

- Both Karnataka and Rajasthan legislations follow a **welfare board model**.
- The model **does not address employment relations**; more suitable for self-employed informal workers.
- **Key challenge:** Gig work requires addressing employment relations due to its unique structure.

### Rise of Gig Work

- Significant increase in gig and platform workers in the last decade, **especially in the app-cab and retail delivery sectors**.
- NITI Aayog projects the gig workforce to **expand to 23.5 million by 2030**.
- Gig work is a **vital livelihood source** in a context of depressed employment generation.

### Issues in Gig Work

- Gig workers in India have protested against **issues like revenue sharing, working hours, and working conditions**.
- Current legal frameworks are inadequate due to the **complex nature of gig employment relations**.
- Aggregators label themselves as **technology providers**, considering gig workers as independent contractors.
- Gig workers see aggregators as **de facto employers**, setting service conditions and terms of employment.

### International Context: U.K. Ruling

- **UK Supreme Court** ruled that **Uber is an employer**, applying existing labor laws to Uber drivers.
- In India, gig workers are included in the **Code on Social Security, 2020** as informal self-employed workers.

- **No mention of gig workers in the other three new labor codes:** *Code on Wages, Industrial Relations Code, and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code.*

### Key Issues Unaddressed

- *Both Rajasthan and Karnataka laws avoid defining employment relations in gig work.*
- *Use of the term ‘aggregator’ rather than ‘employer’ prevents application of protective labor laws.*
- **Unresolved issues:** *minimum wage, occupational safety and health, working hours, leave entitlements, and right to collective bargaining.*

### Challenges in Gig Work

- **No guarantee of minimum earnings** *despite availability for long hours.*
- **Lack of regulation** *on working hours leads to overwork and accidents.*
- *Recognition of employment relations is* **essential for proper regulation.**
- **Aggregators are the actual employers,** *responsible for setting employment terms.*

### Core Issues and Welfare Board Model

- *Welfare board models provide some schemes but* **fail to offer institutional social security benefits** *like provident fund, gratuity, or maternity benefits.*
- *Historically* **poor implementation** *of welfare board models (e.g., Construction Workers Welfare Act, 1996, Unorganized Workers Social Security Act).*
- *Karnataka Bill* **lacks provisions for minimum wages or working hours.**
- *Section 16 mentions income security but does not guarantee minimum income or wage entitlements.*
- *The Bill, similar to the* **Code on Social Security, 2020 and Rajasthan Act, 2023,** *fails to address gig economy employment relationships.*

### Conclusion

- *The welfare board model does not replace comprehensive social security benefits.*

- *Proper recognition and regulation of employment relations in the gig economy are necessary to protect workers' rights and ensure fair treatment.*

## **PDS and Household Expenditure**

### **Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Public Distribution System (PDS).**

#### **Context:**

- *The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey Data offers the scope to analyse the impact of social transfers.*

#### **Public Distribution System (PDS)**

- *The Public Distribution System (PDS) is a **critical social security program** in India aimed at **ensuring food security**.*
- *Under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**, up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population are eligible for subsidized food grains.*

#### **Benefits**

- ***Subsidized food grains from the PDS** allow households to allocate resources to other nutrient-rich food items like vegetables, milk, pulses, eggs, fish, and meat.*

#### **Impact on Household Expenditure**

- *Empirical studies seek to understand **whether households diversify** their food consumption due to the PDS.*
- *The **Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES):2022-23** will provide data to analyze the impact of PDS on household expenditure on items other than food grains.*

#### **Findings from the HCES:2022-23**

- *A significant portion of households received free food grains from the PDS.*
- ***At the all-India level**, 94% (rural) and 95% (urban) of the value of imputed items is attributable to food items.*
- *The imputed value for food is **₹82 in rural and ₹59 in urban areas** for all households.*

#### **MPCE Distribution**

- *The average MPCE among those in **the bottom 5% of distribution** is ₹1,373 in rural and ₹2,001 in urban areas.*
- *The imputed value of consumption shows that some households move to higher fractiles classes, **indicating improved consumption.***

### **Patterns Across States**

- ***Different patterns are observed** across major states in terms of upward movement in MPCE with imputation.*

### **Implications for Poverty**

#### **Poverty Line Discussion**

- *The report's release has spurred discussions on **where to draw the poverty line.***
- *Considerations include **whether to estimate the number of poor households** based on expenditure or the **total value of consumption**, including free items.*

#### **In-Kind Social Transfers**

- ***In-kind social transfers**, such as those through the PDS, significantly impact the well-being of households at the bottom of the consumption or income distribution.*
- *The imputation exercise shows that these transfers **help increase the value of consumption for poorer households.***

## **NITI Aayog report on SDGs**

**Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy and Environment – Sustainable Development.**

### **Context:**

- *Kerala, Uttarakhand top NITI Aayog's SDG India Index; Bihar worst performer.*

### **NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2023-24: Key Highlights**

#### **Top Performing States**

- **Kerala and Uttarakhand:** *Both states scored 79 points, topping the SDG India Index 2023-24.*
- **Bihar:** *The lowest performer with 57 points.*
- **Jharkhand:** *Scored 62 points.*

#### **Overall Improvement in India's SDG Score**

- **India's SDG Score:** *Improved from 66 points in 2020-21 to 71 points in 2023-24.*
- **Key Areas of Progress:** *Poverty reduction, economic growth, and climate action.*

### **States with Notable Improvements**

- **Punjab:** *Increased by 8 points to 76 points.*
- **Manipur:** *Increased by 8 points to 72 points.*
- **West Bengal:** *Increased by 8 points to 70 points.*
- **Assam:** *Increased by 8 points to 65 points.*

### **SDG Goals Analysis**

- **Overall Performance:** *Evaluated across 16 goals on a scale of 1 to 100, using 113 indicators.*
- **High Performance Areas:**
  - **No Poverty**
  - **Decent Work and Economic Growth**
  - **Life on Land**
- **Areas with Smallest Increase:**
  - **Gender Equality**
  - **Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**
- **Reduced Inequalities:** *The only goal with a decrease in points, from 67 in 2020-21 to 65 in 2022-23.*

### **Government Intervention and SDG Improvements**

- **Targeted Intervention:** *Significant improvements across 16 goals due to focused government efforts.*
- **Key Quotes:**
  - *BVR Subrahmanyam, CEO of NITI Aayog, emphasized the contraction in the consumption gap and the increase in the number of taxpayers.*

### **Specific Goal Analysis**

- **Reduced Inequalities:**
  - **Gender Inequality:** *Remains a challenge, impacting overall performance.*



- **Labour Workforce Participation:** *Includes disparities in gender-related workforce participation.*
- **Gender Equality:**
  - **Lowest Score:** *49 points among all goals, with a marginal increase of 1 point since 2020-21.*
  - **Issues Identified:** *Sex ratio at birth, women owning land and assets, women in employment, and labour force participation rate.*
- **Zero Poverty:**
  - **Score Improvement:** *Increased by 8 points to 72.*
  - **Progress:** *Extreme poverty and basic survival issues largely addressed.*
- **Zero Hunger:**
  - **Score Improvement:** *Increased by 5 points to 52.*
  - **Focus:** *Providing nutritious food to tackle malnourishment, stunting, and low BMI scores.*

## Conclusion

*NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2023-24 highlights significant progress in sustainable development across various states in India, with Kerala and Uttarakhand leading the way. While there have been notable improvements in areas like poverty reduction and economic growth, challenges remain in achieving gender equality and reducing inequalities.*

## **Chasing asteroid - Why ISRO wants to venture into planetary defence**

**Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology – Space Science.**

### Context:

- *ISRO Chairman S Somanath announced **potential mission to meet asteroid Apophis** during its 2029 flyby at 32,000 km distance from Earth.*
- *Decision pending on whether ISRO will send its own spacecraft or collaborate with other space agencies.*
- *NASA mission to study Apophis is already confirmed.*

## The Alarming Asteroid Apophis



### Initial Concerns

- *Discovered in 2004, Apophis was initially thought to have a **2.7% chance of colliding with Earth.***
- *Potential collisions were feared in 2029, 2036, or 2068.*
- ***Apophis is about 450 m at its widest**, with potential for large-scale damage similar to the event that wiped out the dinosaurs.*

### Current Understanding

- *Subsequent observations negated initial fears.*
- *No risk of collision in 2029, 2036, or 2068.*
- *Apophis will pass closest to Earth in 2029, visible to the naked eye, at a distance where some communication satellites operate.*

### Potential Threats from Space

- *Thousands of asteroids **enter Earth's atmosphere daily**, mostly burning up due to friction.*
- *Larger asteroids **can appear as fireballs**; some fragments reach the surface but cause minimal damage.*

### Historical Damage

- *In 2013, a 20-metre wide asteroid exploded 30 km above a Russian town, releasing energy **equivalent to 400-500 kilotons of TNT**.*
- *Shock waves damaged buildings and injured 1,491 people.*
- *The asteroid was detected only after entering the atmosphere, **hidden by the Sun's glare**.*

### **Planetary Defence Programme**

- *Scientists track at least **1.3 million known asteroids**.*
- *Planetary defence aims **to track and neutralize potential threats** from unknown asteroids.*

### **Advances in Planetary Defence**

#### **NASA's DART Mission**

- *In 2022, NASA demonstrated technology to alter an asteroid's trajectory by crashing a spacecraft into it.*
- *The mission targeted Dimorphos, 11 million km from Earth, showing the feasibility of planetary defence.*