



## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 30-05-2025**

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1. NSO Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys and Poverty

### **GS-2**

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## **NSO Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys and Poverty**

### **Syllabus: GS-1: Poverty**

#### **Context:**

- Poverty fell significantly last year. Much of it was driven by GDP growth.

### **Poverty Reduction in India: Insights from NSO Surveys and World Bank (2022-24)**

#### **Key Trends and Findings:**

Indicator	2011-12	2022-23	2023-24
<b>Poverty Line (Monthly per capita)</b>	₹972 (Rural) / ₹1,407 (Urban)	₹1,837 / ₹2,603	₹1,940 / ₹2,736
<b>Poverty Ratio (All-India)</b>	29.5%	9.5%	4.9%
<b>Extreme Poverty (&lt;\$2.15 PPP/day)</b>	16.2%	—	2.3%
<b>\$3.65/day Poverty Line</b>	61.8%	—	28.1%
<b>Gini Coefficient (Consumption Inequality)</b>	0.310	—	0.253

#### **Major Drivers of Poverty Reduction:**

- **High GDP Growth:** 9.2% in 2023-24.
- **Declining Inflation:** CPI fell to 5.4% improving real purchasing power.
- **Reduced Inequality:** Gini coefficient fell significantly.
- **Improved Targeting:** Over 50% of poor lie just below poverty line, enabling focused interventions.

#### **Structural Improvements in NSO Surveys:**

- Updated poverty thresholds (Rangarajan-adjusted).
- Better sampling design and sectoral insights.
- Improved representation of rural-urban dynamics.

#### **Challenges to Sustained Poverty Eradication:**

- **Vulnerability to Shocks:** Health, climate, or job loss can push near-poor back into poverty.
- **Urban Informality:** Gig workers and migrants remain undercovered by welfare schemes.
- **Food Inflation:** 7.5% in 2023–24, disproportionately affects poor households.
- **Regional Disparities:** Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha continue to lag.
- **Urban PDS Access:** Limited access to subsidized food grains for urban poor.

#### Way Forward:

Focus Area	Recommendations
Social Protection	Expand PM-GKAY, LPG DBT, and urban safety nets.
Employment Resilience	Scale up climate-adaptive NREGA jobs.
Urban Poor Coverage	Create a unified framework for gig economy and migrant workers.
Human Capital	Invest in PM-POSHAN, Saksham Anganwadi to bridge education and nutrition gaps.
Real-time Poverty Audits	Institutionalize annual tracking using multidimensional indices.

#### Conclusion:

India's poverty rate has declined sharply to **below 5%**, for the first time, driven by **economic growth** and **reduced inequality**. However, to eliminate poverty permanently, the focus must shift to **resilience**, **urban coverage**, and **human capital development** through **targeted and inclusive policies**.

## SC Ruling on Maternity Benefits in India

**Syllabus: GS-2: Governance – Social Justice. & Judicial Verdicts.**

#### Context:

- A female teacher employed at a government higher secondary school in Tamil Nadu sought **maternity leave for her third child**.

- Initially, her plea was **allowed by a single judge** of the Madras High Court but later **rejected by a division bench**, citing limits based on the number of children.
- The **Supreme Court overturned** this decision, reinforcing **reproductive rights and women's dignity**.

### Key Legal Provisions and Supreme Court Reasoning

#### Fundamental Rule 101(a)

- This rule governs **maternity leave for Tamil Nadu state government employees**.
- The court clarified that **neither Fundamental Rule 101(a) nor the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017** prohibits granting leave for a third child.

#### Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017

- Provides up to **26 weeks of paid maternity leave**.
- **No clause** restricts benefits based on the number of children.

#### Article 21 – Right to Life and Personal Liberty

- Encompasses the **right to health, reproductive autonomy, and privacy**.
- The Court emphasized that denying maternity leave violates **Article 21** by infringing on a woman's **bodily integrity and dignity**.

#### International Human Rights Perspective

- The ruling aligns with **international conventions**, such as:
  - **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**
  - **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**
- These recognize **maternity protection** as a **fundamental human right**, ensuring **non-discrimination, health, and equality**.

#### Population Control vs Reproductive Rights

- While acknowledging the **importance of population stabilization**, the Court held that:

“Population control measures should not come at the cost of violating reproductive rights.”

- Reproductive autonomy and family planning must be **voluntary and rights-based**, not **coercive or punitive**.

## Implications of the Ruling

### Legal Precedent

- Sets a **progressive precedent** for future cases involving:
  - Maternity leave beyond two children.
  - Interpretation of **fundamental rights** in the context of reproductive health.

### Policy and Administrative Impact

- Encourages government departments to:
  - **Re-evaluate restrictive rules** on maternity benefits.
  - Ensure that **health and family welfare policies** are rights-compliant.

### Advancing Women's Rights

- Reinforces the principle that **maternity is a natural biological function**, not a **barrier to employment or dignity**.
- Affirms the **non-negotiable right to health and gender equality** in the workplace.

### Conclusion

This landmark Supreme Court judgment is a **major victory for reproductive justice and women's rights in India**. By holding that maternity benefits cannot be denied based on the number of children, the Court:

- Affirms **constitutional values**,
- Recognizes **international human rights norms**, and
- Moves towards a more **inclusive and equitable** legal framework for working women.

## Minimum Support Prices

### Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Agriculture –MSP.

#### Context:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved revised Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for 14 Kharif crops for the 2025–26 marketing season.

### What is MSP?

- MSP is the **minimum guaranteed price** offered by the government to farmers for their crops.
- It acts as a **safety net** by protecting farmers from price fluctuations and distress sales during harvest time.
- Ensures **income stability and food security** by incentivizing production.

### Who Determines MSP?

- Recommended by the **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**.
- Final approval given by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**.

### When was MSP Introduced?

- First introduced in **1966–67** during the **Green Revolution**, primarily for **wheat and paddy**.

### Calculation of MSP

#### A2 + FL Formula:

- **A2**: Actual paid-out costs (e.g. seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, hired labour).
- **FL**: Imputed value of **family labour**.
- **MSP Margin**: MSP is fixed to provide at least **50% margin over A2+FL** costs.

**Budget 2018–19 Mandate:** MSP to be **1.5 times** the cost of production (A2 + FL), ensuring fair remuneration.

### Crops Covered Under MSP

#### 1. Kharif Crops (Summer Sowing):

- **Cereals**: Paddy, Jowar, Bajra, Ragi, Maize
- **Pulses**: Tur (Arhar), Moong, Urad
- **Oilseeds**: Groundnut, Soybean, Sunflower, Sesamum, Niger-seed
- **Commercial Crop**: Cotton

#### 2. Rabi Crops (Winter Sowing):

- Wheat, Barley
- Pulses: Gram, Lentil (Masur)

- Oilseeds: Rapeseed & Mustard, Safflower

### 3. Other Commercial Crops:

- Copra, De-husked Coconut, Jute, Toria

#### Key Features of MSP

- **Announced Twice a Year:** Before **Kharif** and **Rabi** sowing seasons to help farmers plan cropping.
- **Prevents Exploitation:** Protects farmers against market volatility and middlemen exploitation.
- **Encourages Crop Diversification:** Higher MSPs for pulses and oilseeds to reduce over-dependence on rice/wheat.
- **Supports Nutritional Security:** Higher MSP for **millets** and **Shree Anna** promotes healthier, climate-resilient crops.
- **Legal Status:** Currently **not legally enforceable**; remains a policy instrument, not a statutory right.

#### Recent Development (2025–26 Season)

- **CCEA approved revised MSPs for 14 Kharif crops for the 2025–26 marketing season**, aligning with the A2+FL formula and national priorities like climate-resilient farming and doubling farmers' income.

## India's First Gene-Edited Sheep

**Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology – Genetic Engineering.**

#### Context:

- Developed By Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST-Kashmir).
- Supported by the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**

#### What It Is:

- A **genetically edited lamb** with **30% enhanced muscle mass**.
- Achieved by editing the **myostatin gene**, a natural inhibitor of muscle growth.

- Inspired by **European breeds** like **Texel sheep**, known for muscular build.

#### Technology Used:

- **CRISPR-Cas9** gene editing tool (Nobel-winning technology).
- **Non-transgenic method:**
  - No **foreign DNA** inserted → differs from GMOs.
  - Enhances **regulatory acceptance** under India's biotech policy.
- **International biosafety protocols** strictly followed.

#### Key Features:

- **30% more muscle mass** → Higher meat yield.
- **Non-GMO** approach → Greater acceptance and scalability.
- **Multipurpose potential:**
  - Disease resistance
  - Improved reproduction
  - Animal twinning and productivity

#### Significance:

- **Livestock Sector Boost:** Enhances productivity and meat quality of Indian sheep breeds.
- **Global Recognition:** Puts India on the map for advanced animal genome editing.
- **Policy Synergy:** Aligns with India's evolving regulatory stance on gene editing (distinct from GMOs).
- **Sustainability:** Improves per-animal yield, conserving resources and supporting food security.
- **Innovation Foundation:** Builds on SKUAST's earlier breakthrough — Noori, the world's first cloned Pashmina goat (2012).



## **Nurdles**

### **Syllabus: GS-3: Environmental Pollution.**

#### **Context:**

On **May 27, 2025**, significant quantities of nurdles—tiny plastic pellets used as raw materials in plastic manufacturing—were discovered along the coast of **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**.

This alarming find follows the **sinking of the cargo vessel MSC ELSA 3 on May 25, 2025**, which was carrying containers of hazardous materials, including nurdles.

#### **What Are Nurdles?**

- **Definition:** Small plastic pellets (1–5 mm in diameter) used in plastic production.
- **Composition:** Typically made of **polyethylene (LDPE & HDPE), polypropylene, polystyrene, and PVC**.
- **Classification:** Primary microplastics, intentionally produced in small size.

#### **Environmental Impact**

- **Ingestion Hazard:** Marine animals like fish and seabirds often mistake nurdles for food, leading to **intestinal blockages, starvation, and death**.
- **Scale of Pollution:** Estimated **230,000 tonnes** of nurdles enter oceans annually.
- **Impact on Humans:** Disrupts livelihoods of **coastal communities**, especially those dependent on **fishing and tourism**.

#### **Global Nurdle Spills – Precedents**

- **2012 (Hong Kong):** Typhoon Vicente caused a large-scale nurdle release.
- **2017 (Durban, South Africa):** Spill of 49 tonnes of nurdles into the Indian Ocean led to widespread environmental damage.

#### **Recycling Challenges**

- **LDPE (Low-Density Polyethylene):** Difficult to recycle due to its chemical structure and contamination issues.
- **HDPE (High-Density Polyethylene):** Easier to recycle, but still requires proper sorting and cleaning.
- **Kerala Spill Composition:** Primarily **LDPE and HDPE**, complicating cleanup and recycling efforts.

### Cleanup and Prevention Measures

- **Manual Cleanup:** Effective but resource-intensive.
- **Containment Tools:** Floating **booms and nets** to limit spread.
- **Preventive Strategies:**
  - Secure container packaging and transportation protocols.
  - Mandatory **spill reporting and rapid response mechanisms**.
  - **Stricter regulations** and international cooperation on plastic transport.

### Ongoing Risks and Policy Implications

- Highlights **fragility of coastal ecosystems**, particularly **Kerala's biodiverse southern coast**.
- Urges policymakers to integrate **marine plastic spill response** into environmental regulations.
- Stresses the **urgent need** for global commitment to reduce **plastic production and transport hazards**.