Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Examine the role of biometric verification in improving the delivery of social welfare benefits. What safeguards are necessary to prevent the exclusion of eligible beneficiaries, particularly senior citizens?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 28/10/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Targeted welfare delivery; duplicate beneficiary records; Article 41; biometric authentication; digital exclusion; data privacy; grievance redressal; inclusive social protection

Model Answer

Introduction

Social pensions provide essential financial support to elderly and vulnerable citizens. Biometric verification can improve the accuracy of beneficiary databases, but its implementation must protect access to legitimate entitlements.

Potential benefits

1. Better targeting: Authentication can help identify duplicate, deceased or ineligible beneficiary records, enabling public funds to reach intended recipients.

2. Administrative efficiency: Updated databases can improve planning, reduce certain forms of leakage and support the identification of eligible applicants awaiting assistance.

3. Accountability: Periodic verification can strengthen monitoring and improve the reliability of welfare records.

Challenges

Fingerprint deterioration, technical failures, disability, limited digital literacy and inadequate connectivity may prevent genuine beneficiaries from completing authentication. Excessive dependence on biometrics can lead to wrongful exclusion. Collecting photographs and biometric data also raises privacy and data-security concerns.

Way Forward

Governments should provide alternative verification methods, including manual authentication and assisted services. Pension payments should not be arbitrarily withheld solely because of a failed biometric scan. Clear notices, accessible grievance redressal, data minimisation, secure storage and independent audits are essential.

Conclusion

Biometric verification should strengthen welfare delivery rather than become a barrier to social protection. Accuracy, privacy and accessibility must guide its implementation.

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