Society & Social Justice · GS - II

The expanding responsibilities of ASHA workers have exposed gaps in their remuneration and institutional recognition. Examine the need for reforms in their working conditions.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 28/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

ASHA workers, National Health Mission, community healthcare, gendered labour, incentive-based payments, workload rationalisation, social security, grievance redressal

Model Answer

Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) are an essential component of India's public healthcare delivery system. Introduced under the National Rural Health Mission, they connect communities with healthcare institutions and facilitate access to essential services.

However, their responsibilities have expanded beyond their original community mobilisation role to include routine public health activities, creating concerns about workload, remuneration and institutional recognition.

Major challenges

1. **Inadequate compensation:** Dependence on task-based incentives can create income uncertainty despite regular public health responsibilities.

2. **Workload expansion:** Participation in immunisation, maternal health, disease surveillance and health campaigns increases their responsibilities.

3. **Gendered undervaluation:** Their contribution reflects the broader undervaluation of women's community-based and care work.

4. **Limited social protection:** Inadequate access to comprehensive social security can make their work economically and personally insecure.

5. **Administrative ambiguity:** Unclear duties and fragmented payment arrangements complicate accountability.

Reform priorities

A uniform national framework should establish transparent remuneration standards, clearly defined responsibilities, workload limits and timely payments. Grievance redressal, training opportunities, occupational safety and appropriate social security should also be strengthened.

Conclusion

ASHA workers are indispensable to grassroots healthcare delivery. Recognising their contribution through fair compensation, institutional support and sustainable working conditions is essential for achieving equitable and resilient public healthcare.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP