



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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National Food Security Act, 2013

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Why is in news? National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) provides coverage of 75% rural and 50% urban population

Though the issue of 'food security' at the household is continuously being addressed by the Government since long, through the Public Distribution System and the Targeted Public Distribution System, the enactment of the **National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013 on July 5, 2013** marks a paradigm shift in the approach to food security **from welfare to rights based approach.**

The Act **legally entitles upto 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population** to receive **subsidized food grains under Targeted Public Distribution System.**

About two thirds of the population therefore is covered under the Act to receive highly subsidized foodgrains.

As a step towards women empowerment, the eldest woman of the household of age 18 years or above is mandated to be the head of the household for the purpose of issuing of ration cards under the Act.

The Act is being implemented in **all the States/UTs**, and on an all India basis, out of maximum coverage of 81.34 crore persons, around 80 crore persons have been covered under NFSA at present for receiving highly subsidized foodgrains.

The **identification of beneficiaries by States/UTs** is a continuous process, which involves exclusion of ineligible/fake/duplicate ration cards and also exclusion on account of death, migration etc. and inclusion on account of birth as also that of genuine left-out households.

RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER NFSA:

NFSA defines the **joint responsibility of the Centre and State/UT Government.**

While the **Centre is responsible for** allocation of required foodgrains to States/UTs, transportation of foodgrains up to designated depots in each State/UT and providing central assistance to States/UTs for delivery of foodgrains from designated FCI godowns to the doorstep of the FPSs.

The **States/UTs are responsible** for effective implementation of the Act, which inter-alia includes identification of eligible households, issuing ration cards to them, distribution of foodgrain entitlements to eligible households through fair price shops (FPS), issuance of licenses to Fair Price Shop dealers and their monitoring, setting up effective grievance redressal mechanism and necessary strengthening of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

COVERAGE AND ENTITLEMENT UNDER NFSA:

NFSA covers upto 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population under under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and priority households.

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While Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households, which constitute **poorest of the poor** are entitled to **35 kg of food grains per family per month**, priority households are entitled to 5 kg per person per month.

It is the responsibility of the State Governments/UTs, to evolve criteria for identification of priority households and their actual identification.

Section 10 of the Act provides that within the number of persons determined for coverage under TPDS, the State Government shall identify the households under AAY as per guidelines applicable to the said scheme and the remaining households as priority households to be covered under TPDS, in accordance with such guidelines as the State Government may specify.

DIRECT BENEFIT TRANSFER (DBT):

National Food Security Act (2013) provides for reforms in the TPDS including schemes such as Cash transfers for provisioning of food entitlements.

In pursuance of enabling provisions under **section 12 of NFSA for cash transfer**, Govt. notified '**Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy Rule, 2015**' in Aug 2015.

The DBT experiment aims to (i) reduce the need for huge physical movement of foodgrains (ii) provide greater autonomy to beneficiaries to choose their consumption basket (iii) enhance dietary diversity (iv) reduce leakages (v) facilitate better targeting (vi) promote financial inclusion

Phase VII of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) was in operation upto 31.12.2022.

The Central Government to remove the financial burden of the poor beneficiaries and to ensure nationwide uniformity and effective implementation of NFSA, has **decided to provide food grains free of cost to AAY households and PHH beneficiaries under NFSA, 2013, for a period of one year beginning from 1st Jan 2023.**

Under the **PMGKAY (Phase I to VII)**, the **entire expenditure towards food subsidy**, intra-state movement & handling of foodgrains and fair price shop dealers margin were **borne by the Central Government.**

The additional cost of making foodgrains free of cost to the NFSA beneficiaries for one year from 01.01.2023 will be borne by Government of India.