

National Food Security Act-2013

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Source: Press Information Bureau

The basic concept of food security globally is to **ensure that all people, at all times, should get access to the basic food for their active and healthy life and is characterized by availability, access, utilization and stability of food.**

Though the Indian Constitution does not have any explicit provision regarding right to food, the fundamental right to life enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution may be interpreted to include right to live with human dignity, which may include the right to food and other basic necessities. Though the issue of food security at the household level was being addressed by the Government from long through the Public Distribution System and the Targeted Public Distribution System, the enactment of the National Food Security Act, **(NFSA) in 2013 marks a paradigm shift in the approach to food security from welfare to a rights based approach.**

Government of India enacted National Food Security Act (NFSA) in July, 2013 which gives legal entitlement to 67% of the population (75% in rural areas and 50% in urban areas) to receive highly subsidized foodgrains

Key features of the act

▪ Entitlements under NFSA

1. Highly subsidized food grains under PDS
2. Nutritious meal, free of charge to pregnant women & lactating mothers and children up to 6 years of age under ICDS.
3. Nutritious meal, free of charge to children in the 6-14

years of age group under MDM.

4. Maternity benefits of Rs. 6000 to Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers

- PDS now governed by provisions of NFSA
- **Coverage under PDS:** 75% Rural and 50% Urban population; State-wise coverage determined by the Planning Commission (now NITI Ayog) on the basis of 2011-12 Household Consumption Expenditure survey of NSSO.
- **Coverage** of two-thirds of the total population at the all India level, under two categories of beneficiaries – Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and Priority Households (PHH).
- **Foodgrains Entitlement:** 5 kg per person for PHH category and 35 kg per household for AAY households.
- **Prices:** Rs. 3/2/1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse grain.
- No reduction in foodgrains allocation to any State/UT under NFSA – Tide Over allocation.
- **Identification of Households:** to be done by States/UTs, which are required to frame their own criteria
- **Women Empowerment:** Eldest woman (18 years or above) to be the head of the household for the purpose of issuing of ration cards.
- **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** To be set up at the District and State levels.
- **Transparency:** Provisions for disclosure of records relating to PDS, placing beneficiaries list in public domain
- **Assistance to States/UTs** for meeting expenditure on intra-State transportation & handling of foodgrains and FPS Dealers' margin

Sustainable Development Goals





- The Act is now being implemented in all States/UTs and covers about 81.35 crore persons.
- The annual allocation of foodgrain under National Food Security Act and Other Welfare Schemes is about 610 Lakh Metric Tons.
- There is no identified category of BPL under the NFSA. However, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) beneficiaries are clearly identified .
- **The State food Commission to monitor the act:** The NFSA provides for the creation of State Food Commissions. Each Commission shall consist of a chairperson, five other members and a member-secretary (including at least two women and one member each from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes).
- **State Commission's main function is to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the act,** give advice to the state governments and their agencies, and inquire into violations of entitlements. State Commissions also have to hear appeals against the orders of the District Grievance Redressal Officer
- **Open Market Sale Scheme: In order to liquidate the excess stock of foodgrain in the Central Pool, Government of India avails the available options of disposal of the excess stock of foodgrain through Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) and Export on Government-to-Government basis, as export from public stockholding is not compliant to WTO norms**

Challenges in PDS

- Implementation/ distribution lies with the States/UTs
- Governance ethos differs from State to State
- Dynamic target population
 1. Migration
 2. Birth/Death

3. Status mobility

- Lack of Transparency
 1. Bogus/Ghost ration cards
 2. Manual records
 3. Inclusion/ exclusion errors
- Leakages & diversion
- No possibility of Portability