

# One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

## [UPSC Notes]

### What is the One Nation One Ration Card Scheme?

One Nation One Ration Card Scheme or ONORC is a scheme implemented by the Government of India to revolutionize the public distribution ecosystem, especially to benefit the migrating class. This scheme was first implemented in 2019 and aimed to provide hassle-free delivery of food grains to the beneficiaries of ration cards anywhere within the country. For example, labour from Jharkhand, who has a ration card registered in the district of Jharkhand where he resides, can avail of the benefits of subsidized food grains from any of the Fair Price Shops where he has migrated for work.

In the recent times of the Covid pandemic, migrant workers formed one of the most vulnerable sections of society. In situations like this, the One Nation One Ration Card is a scheme that can benefit migrants a lot.

### Latest update on the One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

In current news, Assam has become the 36th State to implement the One Nation One Ration Card scheme (ONORC). The ONORC plan has successfully been implemented in all 36 states and Union Territories, making food security portable throughout the country.

The government has launched a mobile app, namely 'MERA RATION' for acquiring the maximum benefit of the ONORC plan. The mobile app shall provide the user with real-time information. It is available in 13 languages.

### Implementation of the One Nation One Ration Card Policy

Food portability has long been an issue that our country has struggled with owing to its culture of migrant labour and nomadic living. The One Nation One Ration Card policy is a revolutionary step undertaken by the government to enable the nationwide portability of ration cards. This would be done by implementing IT-driven systems like the installation of ePOS (electronic point of sale system) at FPSs, seeding of Aadhar numbers, and biometric authentication of ePOS transactions in states/UTs.

Beneficiaries can easily quote their ration card number to their nearest Fair Price outlet (across the country). Anyone from the family of the beneficiary (who has seeded Aadhar in the card) can undergo the authentication to pick up the ration. There is no need to even carry the Aadhar card on self as the identification can be via fingerprints/iris scanning.

With the admittance of Assam under its wing, all 36 states/UTs have implemented this scheme.

## One Nation One Ration Card Scheme Benefits

The following points mentioned below analyze the advantages of the One Nation One Ration Card scheme.

- **Enabling Right To Food:** Previously, the ration cardholders can avail of their subsidized food grains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) only from the shops within the concerned state. However, if the ration card holder moves to a different state, the beneficiary would have to apply for a new ration card in that state. But, the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) envisages removing the demographical hindrance in enabling the right to food.
- **Support to One-Third Population:** In India, nearly 37 % of the population are migrant labourers. ONORC policy enables the right to food to all the citizens of India irrespective of their geographical territory. Hence, this scheme is important for all the people who move from one place to another frequently.
- **Reduces Social Discrimination:** Social Identities ( caste, gender, and class ) and other contextual factors influence the process of accessing the PDS ( Public Distribution System). However, the One Nation One Ration Card policy is beneficial for disadvantaged groups and particularly women.
- **Reduces Leakages:** The fundamental prerequisite of the ONORC scheme is deduplication. This shall reduce the leakages. This will ensure that a person does not figure out as a beneficiary in two different stages. Moreover, this scheme is linked with biometrics such as Aadhaar which will reduce corruption to some extent as well.

## Challenges of the One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

The following points mentioned below analyze the challenges of the One Nation One Ration Card scheme.

- **Exclusion Error:** The digitization of the PDS (Public Distribution System) has been well covered by Aadhaar-linked ration cards and other smart cards. This reduces leakages. However, we can see the rise of exclusion errors after the Aadhaar seeding. Some sections of society still do not have access to Aadhaar Cards. In this way, these sections of society are deprived of food security.
- **Supplies disrupted at FPS:** The FPS receives a monthly quota of food grains according to the people associated with it. The One Nation One Ration Card scheme will fully disrupt FPS. Some FPS may have to cater to a higher number of ration cards as compared to others. This can further lead to chaos for FPSs.

- **Technical Errors:** The ONORC will be a scheme that will be digitized. However, digitization always has some sort of limitations. This scheme will be bound with some kind of technical glitches. But, this problem will be at the frontier level. If sorted carefully, there will be no problems occurring from the technical front.

