

# National Food Security Act

## [UPSC Notes]

### What is the National Food Security Act (NFSA)?

According to the National Food Security Act- NFSA, up to 75% of the rural and half of the urban populations are entitled to subsidized food grains. This is legally provided through the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The TPDS covers 50% of the urban and 75% of the rural populations, with uniform entitlement of 5 kg per person per month. However, under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), the poorest of the poor households will continue to receive 35 kg of food grains per household per month. Therefore, almost two-thirds of the population is covered through this act.

The National Food Security Act (NFSA) implies a fundamental shift in the approach toward food security. It is moving away from a welfare-based approach to one based on the rights of the citizens of our country. The National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, is being implemented in all the states and UTs throughout the country.

Identifying beneficiaries by states or utilities is an integral part of the process. It includes removal of ineligible/fake/duplicate ration cards, elimination due to death, migration, etc., and cooperation due to birth.

### Responsibilities under National Food Security Act, 2013

The joint account of the Centre and the state/UT government is defined by the NFSA as follows:

- Although the Centre is in charge of providing the necessary agricultural goods to the states and UTs, transporting that food and supplies up to assigned depots in each state and duty, and offering assistance from the Centre to the states and the UTs, for delivery of foodgrains from assigned FCI storage facilities to the doorsteps of the FPSs (fair price shops).
- The following are all the parts of the act's effective implementation that fall under the purview of the states/UTs:
  - The identification of eligible households,
  - the issuance of ration cards to them,
  - the distribution of food supplies to eligible households through fair price shops,
  - providing licenses to fair price shop dealers,
  - the establishment of an effective grievance redressal system, and
  - the necessary strengthening of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

### Entitlement under the NFSA

Up to 75% of the rural and 50% of the urban populations are covered by NFSA through the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) scheme and the priority households. The entitlements under the National Food Security Act include:

- Priority homes are entitled to 5 kilograms of food per person per month.
- While AAY households represent the lowest of the poor or entitled to 35 kilograms per family per month.
- The former Planning Commission (now Niti Aayog) used the NSS household consumption survey data for 2011-2012 to estimate the state-wise coverage under the NSSA. This corresponded to the coverage rates of all of India, of 75% and 50% in rural and urban regions, respectively.
- The task of identifying potential households within the scope under TPDS established for each state is to be completed by states/UTs.
- The development of a basis for selecting priority households and their actual verification falls under the purview of the state government's duties.
- According to section 10 of the act, the state shall designate the households under AAY following the guidelines about the scheme.
- The ones left as priority households would be looked at under TPDS, according to the guidelines as the state government may specify.

## Provisions of the NFSA

The key provisions of the National Food Security Act are:

- Coverage and entitlement under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)
- Identification of eligible households to be done by States/UTs under TDPS determined for each State.
- Subsidised prices under TPDS and their revision thereafter.
- Children in the age group of 6 months to 14 years and pregnant women and lactating mothers will be entitled to meals as per prescribed nutritional norms under Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) schemes.
- Maternity Benefit of Rs. 6000 to be given to pregnant women and lactating mothers
- Eldest woman of the household of age 18 years or above is to be the head of the household, for the issuance of ration cards.
- In order to ensure transparency and accountability, social audits and setting up of Vigilance Committees will be done.
- In case of non-supply of entitled food grains or meals, there is a provision for food security allowance to entitled beneficiaries.

## Relevance of NFSA

NFSA is aimed to boost the agricultural industry. An increase in the agricultural sector would lead to more excellent job opportunities. It would also assist the government in regulating food costs.

- As a result, poverty would decline, and economic growth would be promoted.
- Food security is crucial for the country's global safety and stability and for the population's general health.
- Before the NFSA, Article 21's Right to life was considered to include the right to a dignified existence, which may include the right to food and other essentials of life.

- The Indian constitution did not specifically include the right to food.

## Beneficiaries under the NFSA

Under two main kinds of beneficiaries, the act includes two-thirds of the overall population. These beneficiaries are as follows:

### Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households

- The AAY households are those headed by widows, disabled people or those 60 years of age or more without a guaranteed source of livelihood and support from the extended family or society.
- Typically it also considers the household of people who live in poverty.
- Support for women and children is also included.

### Priority household (PHHs)

- People who live in eligible households, or PHHs, are granted the opportunity to receive food grains at subsidized cost by the NFSA.
- This group includes a sizable portion of priority sector ration card holders.
- This is an initiative to combat poverty.
- The states in the duties are responsible for identifying eligible households with the scope of TPDS coverage specified for each state.

## National Food Security Mission Report

The Indian government started the National Food Security Mission (NFSM), a centrally sponsored program, in 2007 in response to stagnant foodgrain output and rising population-related consumption needs.

The National Development Council's (NDC) agriculture subcommittee recommended launching the program with the following objectives:

- to boost rice, wheat, and pulses production through area expansion, and
- productivity development while restoring the fertility of the soil and hence improves in productivity,
- Increasing the farm-level economy by generating jobs.

### Targets under the NFSM

The NFSM was pursued with the objective that by the end of the 12th five-year plan, the mission would have produced an estimated 25 million tonnes of food grains, made up of

- 10 million tonnes of rice,
- 8 million tonnes of wheat,
- 4 million tonnes of pulses, and
- 3 million tonnes of coarse cereals.

The program was extended through 2019-2020, which coincided with the end of the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) tenure, based on past performance and experience with the 12th-year plan. The goal for the additional foodgrain output was 13 million tonnes, including:

- Rice accounts for 5 million tonnes
- Wheat accounting for 3 million tonnes
- Pulses accounting for 3 million tonnes, and
- Coarse cereals account for 2 million tonnes.

## Important Segments under NFSM

The National Food Security Mission includes the following important components:

- NFSM Rice
- NFSM Wheat
- NFSM Coarse cereals
- NFSM Pulses
- NFSM Commercial crops and
- NFSM Nutri-cereals (millets)

## Food Preservation Commission

The Food Preservation Commission is appointed in accordance with the National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013. The Food Preservation Commission is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the National Food Security Act, 2013 in the state.

## Formation of Rules under the NFSA by the Central Government

According to NFSA, Section 39 (1), the central government can enact rules to implement the act's provisions after coordinating with the state governments and notifying the public.

The central government has announced the following rules in the past:

- Provisioning Funds to State Governments for Short Supply of Foodgrains Rules, 2014.
- Food Security Allowance Rules, 2015.
- Food Security (assistance to State Government Rules), 2015
- Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy Rules, 2015.
- Notification of WCD and HRD.
- According to Section 40 of the National Food Security Act, the state government may issue regulations to implement the act's provisions upon notification. This is done following the act and any rules the state government imposes.