

## **One Nation, One Ration Card System**

### **Why in news?**

Finance Minister recently announced the national rollout of a 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system in all states and UTs by March 2021.

### **What is the current practice?**

- Under the National Food Security Act, 2013, about 81 crore persons are entitled to buy subsidized foodgrains -
  - i. rice at Rs 3/kg
  - ii. wheat at Rs 2/kg
  - iii. coarse grains at Re 1/kg
- This is receivable from their designated Fair Price Shops (FPS) of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- Currently, about 23 crore ration cards have been issued to nearly 80 crore beneficiaries of NFSA in all states and UTs.
- In the present system, a ration cardholder can buy foodgrains only from an FPS that has been assigned to her in the locality in which she lives.

### **What is the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system?**

- Under this, a beneficiary will be able to buy subsidised foodgrains from any FPS across the country.
- Based on a technological solution, a beneficiary will be identified through biometric authentication.
- This will be done with the electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices installed at the FPSs.
- The person can purchase the quantity of foodgrains to which she is entitled under the NFSA.

### **How will 'ration card portability' work?**

- Ration card portability is aimed at providing intra-state as well as inter-state portability of ration cards.
- The Integrated Management of PDS (IM-PDS) portal would provide the technological platform for the inter-state portability of ration cards.
- This would enable a migrant worker to buy foodgrains from any FPS across the country.

- The other portal (annavitran.nic.in) hosts the data of distribution of foodgrains through E-PoS devices within a state.
- The Annavitran portal enables a migrant worker or his family to avail the benefits of PDS outside their district but within their state.
- A person can buy her share of foodgrains as per her entitlement under the NFSA, wherever she is based.
- And, the rest of her family members can purchase subsidised foodgrains from their ration dealer back home.

### **How did the system evolve?**

- The PDS system had some inefficiencies leading to leakages in the system.
- To plug the leakages and make the system better, the government started the reform process.
- For this purpose, it used a technological solution involving the use of Aadhaar to identify beneficiaries.
- Under the scheme, the seeding of ration cards with Aadhaar is being done.
- Simultaneously, PoS machines are being installed at all FPSs across the country.
- Once 100% of Aadhaar seeding and 100% installation of PoS devices is achieved, the national portability of ration cards will become a reality.
- It was initially proposed to nationally rollout the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme by June 1, 2020.

### **What is the experience so far?**

- The facility of inter-state ration card portability is available in 20 states as of now.
- But the number of transactions done through using this facility has been low so far.
- However, the number of transactions in intra-state ration card portability is quite high.

**Source: Indian Express**