

**EVA STALIN IAS ACADEMY – BEST IAS COACHING IN CHENNAI**

12/24, Muthurangan Muthali St, West Tambaram, Chennai - 600045

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## **EDITORIAL ANALYSIS → 06 JULY 2022 → THE INDIAN EXPRESS:**

### **NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT:**

- **About The 2013 National Food Security Act (NFSA):**
- The goal is to ensure availability to enough good food in sufficient quantities at costs that allow people to live respectably while also assuring food and nutritional security throughout the human life cycle.
- **Important characteristics:**
- Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) coverage and entitlement: The TPDS covers 50% of the urban population and 75% of the rural population, with a consistent entitlement of 5 kg per person per month. However, as part of the Antyodaya Anna Yojana, the poorest of the poor households would continue to get 35 kg of food grains per home each month (AAY).
- For a period of three years following the effective date of the Act, rice, wheat, and coarse grains will be offered under the TPDS programme at discounted pricing of Rs. 3/2/1 per kg.
- Identification of Households: In accordance with the TDPS established for each State, States/UTs are responsible for identifying eligible households.
- Nutritional Support for Women and Children: Under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) programmes, children between the ages of 6 months and 14 years, pregnant women, and nursing mothers are entitled to meals that adhere to the nutritional standards specified. Higher nutritional standards have been recommended for malnourished children up to the age of six.
- Maternity Benefit: Women who are pregnant or nursing babies will also receive a maternity benefit of Rs. 6,000.

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- **Women's Empowerment:** The oldest woman in the household who is at least 18 years old must be the household's head in order for ration cards to be issued.
- **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** District and state levels offer grievance redressal mechanisms.
- **Cost of transportation, handling, and Fair Price Shop (FPS) Dealers' Margin:** The cost incurred by the state for transportation of food within the State, its handling, and the FPS Dealers' Margin in accordance with standards to be developed for this purpose. The Central Government will provide assistance to states to cover the above expense.
- **Openness and Accountability:** Provisions have been made for the disclosure of PDS records, social audits, and the formation of Vigilance Committees in order to ensure transparency and accountability.
- **Food Security Stipend:** If eligible beneficiaries are not provided with food grains or meals, a food security allowance is provided.
- **Penalty:** In accordance with the provision, the State Food Commission will levy a fine if a public official or authority disregards the relief suggested by the district grievance redress officer.
- **Objectives of the National Food Security Act:**
  - This Act offers provisions for the security of food and nutrition in the context of the human life cycle.
  - It guarantees that people have access to a sufficient supply of wholesome food at affordable costs so they can lead respectable lives, as well as items associated with or incidental to that.
- **Relevance of the National Food Security Act:**
  - It is advantageous for the agricultural industry.
  - Additionally, it aids in keeping food prices under control.
  - A growth in the agricultural sector would provide additional jobs because agriculture is a labor-intensive industry.
  - This would increase economic growth and decrease poverty.
  - The general health of the populace would increase if nutritious food was available.
  - For the stability and security of the country on a global scale, food security is equally crucial.
  - The Indian Constitution does not specifically address the right to eat.
  - Before the NFSA, Article 21's fundamental right to life was read to also encompass the right to a dignified existence, which might include the right to food and other essentials of life.

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### • **Impact of the National Food Security Act:**

- According to Census 2011, which totaled 81.35 crore people, the NFSA, approved in 2013, allows for the delivery of subsidised foodgrains through ration shops to up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population.
- The National Family Security Act (NFSA) is currently in effect in all states and union territories, with a target coverage of 81.35 crore persons nationwide.
- Nearly 79 crore recipients received 25,26 LMT (Lakh Metric Tonnes) of food grains under the NFSA in January 2022.

### • **Criticism of the National Food Security Act:**

- The Act primarily discusses hunger and how to end it, but it neglects to address the negative effects of undernutrition and how to end it.
- India's biggest issue, malnutrition, cannot be resolved by simply establishing a public distribution system. Along with ensuring the availability of food, the distribution also includes key components for cleanliness, healthcare, and water.
- Therefore, it is important that the Act include both the right to food and the right to nutrition.
- Many localities have not yet benefited from anganwadis, and their coverage is sometimes inadequate. It is difficult to imagine how the Act's advantages would be realised in the absence of adequate resources.
- The Farmer's Union also opposed the Act, arguing that it would nationalise agriculture by forcing the Government to acquire, sell, and hoard the majority of agricultural output.
- Additionally, it would lessen the support provided to marginal and small farmers and lessen the farmers' ability to bargain.
- The Act also permits private entities to participate in the supply chain, allowing for profit-making and dishonest business activities. The Public Distribution System's leaks and corrupt practises in the supply chain are another barrier to the Act's effective operation.
- According to the Act, access to the right to food is prohibited during natural disasters and war. When it is most needed, the right to food will not be provided to states that are extremely susceptible to natural calamities.
- As a result of this Act's phased implementation, it will take longer to accomplish the targeted goals.

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- **Amendments to the National Food Security Act:**
- In order to increase transparency and decrease leakages at ration shops during the weighing of foodgrains for beneficiaries, as well as to promote ePoS connectivity with electronic weighing equipment, an amendment to the Food Security (Assistance to State Government) Rules, 2015, has been notified.
- The Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution Ministry has announced an amendment that intends to guarantee that beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, receive the right amount of subsidised foodgrains in line with their entitlement.
- Additionally, it promotes states to increase ePoS operational efficiency and provide savings while rewarding states that have been implementing ePoS successfully.
- According to the amendment, states can now utilise their savings to buy, operate, and maintain electronic weighing scales and integrate them with point-of-sale devices if they operate their ePoS devices wisely and are able to produce savings from the additional margin of Rs 17 per quintal.
- **Conclusion:**
- The National Food Security Act of 2013 is a significant step in the right direction, but it shouldn't be the only one taken to solve the nation's food poverty and hunger. In order to accomplish its objective, it needs to be restructured and new improvements must be incorporated in a number of areas. To help achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030, the Center will work in tandem with the states to implement the Act as effectively as possible.
- **Mains Question:**
- **What are some of the issues present in the National Food Security Act? Suggest some remedial steps for the same?**