



## Public Distribution System



## Public Distribution System

### Introduction

- ❑ PDS: Indian **Food Security System**.
- ❑ Established **under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution**.
- ❑ Operated under the joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments.

### Evolution of PDS in India

- ❑ Introduced around World War II.
- ❑ Expanded in the 1960s as a response to the food shortages.
- ❑ Agricultural Prices Commission and the FCI were set up to improve domestic procurement and storage of food grains for PDS.
- ❑ Till 1992, PDS was a general entitlement scheme for all consumers without any specific target.
- ❑ **Revamped Public Distribution System:** launched in June, 1992.
- ❑ **Targeted Public Distribution System** launched in June, 1997 with a focus on the poor.
- ❑ **Antyodaya Anna Yojana:** launched in **December, 2000** to make TPDS aim at reducing hunger among the poorest segments of the BPL population.
- ❑ In September 2013, Parliament enacted the **National Food Security Act, 2013**. It makes the right to food a justiciable right.

### Importance of PDS

- ❑ Ensuring Food and Nutritional Security.
- ❑ Stabilising food prices.
- ❑ Maintains the buffer stock of food grains.
- ❑ Redistribution of grain.
- ❑ Increase in food grain production due to MSP scheme.

### Issues

- ❑ Large inclusion and exclusion errors.
- ❑ Leakage of food grains.
- ❑ Issue with procurement- lack of storage, transportation facilities.
- ❑ Shortfall in the government's storage capacity.
- ❑ MSP discourages crop diversification.
- ❑ Rapid decline in groundwater level due to water-intensive crops.

### Reforms

- ❑ Beneficiary identification by Aadhar.
- ❑ Direct Benefit Transfer.
- ❑ Technology-based reforms of TPDS implemented by states.
  - digitisation of ration cards, the use of GPS tracking of delivery, the use of SMS based monitoring by citizens, etc.

### Way Forward

- ❑ Enhance its effectiveness using technological tools.
- ❑ DBT requires caution as suggested by RBI and Economic Survey 2016-17.
- ❑ Strengthening of the existing TPDS system by capacity building and training of the implementing authorities.
- ❑ Efforts should be made to plug leakages.
- ❑ Increased public participation through **social audits**.
- ❑ Participation of SHGs, Cooperatives and NGOs to ensure the transparency of PDS system at ground level.

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