



Jan Poshan Kendras

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Why in News?

Recently, the Indian government has launched a pilot project to rename and transform 60 [Fair Price Shops \(FPS\)](#) across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh into "**Jan Poshan Kendras.**"

- This move aims to enhance the nutritional offerings available to beneficiaries under the [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana \(PMGKAY\)](#).
- The project also includes the introduction of **several new digital tools** and support systems designed to enhance transparency and operational efficiency.

What is the Jan Poshan Kendra Initiative?

- **Purpose:** Under this initiative, FPSs will begin selling **additional items beyond subsidised grains** to address the **income challenges faced by ration dealers while improving the nutritional offerings** available to beneficiaries under the PMGKAY.
 - Currently, 0.54 million FPSs distribute, on average, **60-70 million tonnes of food grain annually under PMGKAY**, free of cost, to over 800 million beneficiaries.
 - The government sees scope for **generating additional income from FPS** as a large number of people visit these outlets to get their monthly entitlement of grains.
 - Further, the government aims to **convert around 100,000 fair price shops into "nutri-hubs"** in the next three years.
- **Key Features:** **These Kendras will provide a diverse array of nutrition-rich food items, including pulses and dairy products, in addition to subsidised grains.**
 - 50% of the space in these Kendras will be allocated for storing nutritional products, while the remaining space will be used for other household items.
 - FPSs will receive loans and invoice financing from the [Small Industries Development Bank of India \(SIDBI\)](#) to support their transformation and operations.
 - **The initiative includes collaborations with organisations like [AMUL for dairy products](#) and [Business-to-Business eCommerce \(or eB2B\)](#) platforms such as Udaan and Jumbotail for sourcing materials.**
- **Digital Tools:** The initiative includes the launch of several new digital tools:
 - **FPS Sahay:** An application providing paperless, presence-less, and collateral-free financing for ration dealers.
 - **Mera Ration App 2.0:** An app designed to give consumers information about the [public distribution system](#).
 - **Quality Management System (QMS):** It is a digital application for integration of Quality Control labs in the **Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD)** and [Food Corporation of India \(FCI\)](#).
 - QMS captures all key transactions in real time during the stages of procurement, storage and distribution.
 - The introduction of digital tools and new systems is expected to enhance operational efficiency, transparency, and quality control in the public distribution system.

- **Additional Tools:** DFPD has formulated a comprehensive **Handbook of Quality Control** to ensure strict quality standards of central pool foodgrains.
 - Additionally, accreditation of **National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)** is crucial for the Department laboratories to comply with international standards, ensure quality to enhance customer confidence and satisfaction.

What is Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana?

- The PMGKAY a significant initiative by the **Central Government** under the **Atmanirbhar Bharat program** introduced in 2020 to alleviate the economic impact of the **Covid-19 pandemic on low-income households** by providing free food grains, in addition to regular allocations under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**.
- PMGKAY initially provided additional free food grains to around 80 crore NFSA beneficiaries (including **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households and Priority Households (PHH)**).
 - Each AAY household receives 35 kg of food grains per month, while PHH beneficiaries receive 5 kg per person per month.
 - The scheme was executed in seven phases from April 2020 to December 2022, distributing a total of 1,015 LMT (Lakh Metric Tonnes) of food grains.
- Initially set to expire in December 2022, the scheme was extended until December 2023. On 1st January 2024, the Central Government decided to continue providing free food grains to **approximately 81.35 crore beneficiaries under the PMGKAY for the next five years**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. With reference to the provisions made under the National Food Security Act, 2013, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The families coming under the category of 'below poverty line (BPL)' only are eligible to receive subsidised food grains.
2. The eldest woman in a household, of age 18 years or above, shall be the head of the household for the purpose of issuance of a ration card.
3. Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a 'take-home ration' of 1600 calories per day during pregnancy and for six months thereafter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 3 only

Ans: (b)