



Family Pehchan Patra for J&K Residents

For Prelims: Aadhar, Targeted PDS, NFSA

For Mains: Family Databases for welfare schemes - efficiency, significance and challenges.

Why in News?

The Government of India has recently decided to introduce a **Family Pehchan Patra (FPP)** for residents of the Union Territory of **Jammu & Kashmir**.

What is the Proposed Family Pehchan Patra?

▪ About:

- The FPP will be an **identity card with a unique 8-digit alphanumeric number** (like in a PAN Card) to identify each family and its members **through the head of the family**.
- It will be a **single identifier** for every family and individual in the UT unlike the **Aadhar card** which contains information about an individual only.

▪ Details and Linking:

- The card will contain details of all members of the family, including their names, ages, qualifications, employment status, etc. and will be **linked with the Aadhaar and bank account number of the head** of the family.

▪ Significance:

- **Better Delivery of Welfare Schemes:** The FPP aims to create an authentic, verified, and reliable database of families in J&K to **ensure speedy and transparent doorstep delivery** of welfare schemes to **eligible beneficiaries**.
- **Smoother Direct Benefit Transfers:** Such a system would facilitate direct transfer of benefits to their bank accounts with **minimum human interference**.
- **Eliminating Duplicacy:** The database will also help in identifying and weeding out **duplicate ration cards and Aadhaar** and will help the government **identify families that have a number of educated youth, but without jobs**.
- **Automatic Updation of Data:** The information in the database (births, deaths, and marriages) will be continuously and automatically updated and people will no longer have to visit local officials for such purposes.
 - It will also help the government **plan policy based on authentic, updated population data**.

▪ Non-Consent regarding FPP:

- As per the Government, the database will be **created only with the consent of the family**. However, the **families that do not consent** to having a family card will **likely face practical difficulties in availing benefits** of the welfare schemes.
- Subsidised rations through the **Targeted Public Distribution System (PDS)** under the **National Food Security Act**, free medical treatment, old age/ widow/family pensions, help to victims of militancy, scholarships, etc. will **all be linked with the family ID card**.

▪ Arguments against FPP:

- The opposition parties have criticised the idea of a FPP describing it as a **'surveillance**

tool' to keep a watch on Kashmiris.

- They claim the “unique family IDs” as a symbol of **widening trust deficit** on the people of J&K.
- The proposed unique IDs were criticised as a **waste of time and resources and** were not needed as **a similar system - Aadhar - already exists.**
- There are also concerns regarding the **ability of the government in protecting the personal data of the residents** in the wake of recent cyber and ransomware attacks by Chinese entities.

Which Other States have Similar Family Databases?

- Several other states have proposed or created similar databases; **Haryana was the first** state to introduce the concept of the **family pehchan patra.**
- **Punjab introduced such a system in 2021** for direct transfer of benefits to families who are eligible for various social service schemes of the government.
- More recently, in **November 2022**, the Uttar Pradesh government decided to launch a **UP Parivar Kalyan Card** for similar purposes.
- The state of **Rajasthan has also introduced “Jan Aadhaar Yojana”** which aims to be the **single identifier of a family** (and an individual) and the **sole vehicle in the state** on which delivery of all kinds of cash as well non-cash benefits takes place.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

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)

Mains

Q. What are the reformative steps taken by the Government to make the food grain distribution system more effective? (2019)

Q. Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of policy process. Discuss. (2019)

Q. What are the major challenges of Public Distribution System (PDS) in India? How can it be made effective and transparent? (2022)

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