



Free Foodgrains Scheme

For Prelims: National Food and Security Act, 2013, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana

For Mains: National Food and Security Act, 2013, Government Policies & Interventions

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution **issued a notification to provide free foodgrains (rice, wheat and coarse grains) to all eligible households** under the [National Food Security Act, 2013](#), for one year from January 1, 2023.

- The government, **however, discontinued the [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana](#).**

What are Coarse Cereals?

- Coarse cereals **are traditionally grown in resource-poor agro-climatic regions of the country.**
 - Agro-climatic zone is a **land unit in terms of major climates suitable for a certain range of crops** and cultivars.
- Sorghum, pearl millet, maize, barley, finger millet and several small millets such as kodo millet, little millet, foxtail millet, proso millet and barnyard millet **together called coarse cereals.**
 - Sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, maize and small millet (barnyard millet, proso millet, kodo millet and foxtail millet) **are also called nutri-cereals.**
- **Coarse cereals are known for their nutri-rich content** and having characteristics like drought tolerance, photo-insensitivity and resilient to [climate change](#) etc.

What is NFSA?

- **Notified On:**
 - 10th September, 2013.
- **Objective:**
 - To provide [for food and nutritional security](#) in the human life cycle approach, **by ensuring access to adequate quantities of quality food at affordable prices to people** to live a life with dignity.
- **Coverage:**
 - 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for **receiving subsidised foodgrains under the [Targeted Public Distribution System \(TPDS\)](#).**
 - Overall, **NFSA covers about 81.35 crore citizens.**
- **Eligibility:**
 - Priority Households are to be covered under TPDS, **according to guidelines by the State government.**

- Households are covered under the [Antyodaya Anna Yojana](#).
- **Provisions:**
 - 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.
 - The existing AAY household will continue to **receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month**.
 - **Meal and maternity benefits** of not less than Rs. 6,000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after child birth.
 - **Meals for children** upto 14 years of age.
 - **Food security allowance** to beneficiaries in case of non-supply of entitled foodgrains or meals.
 - **Setting up grievance redressal mechanisms** at the district and state level.

What are Government Initiatives in this Regard?

- [National Food Security Mission](#)
- [Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana \(RKVY\)](#)
- [Integrated Schemes on Oilseeds, Pulses, Palm oil and Maize \(ISOPOM\)](#)
- [eNAM Portal](#)

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)

Mains

Q. Hunger and Poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement. **(2017)**

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

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

effective and transparent? (2022)

[Source: IE](#)

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