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1. 81 crore people to get free foodgrains for one year under NFSA (Dec. 24, 2022)

81 crore people to get free foodgrains for one year under NFSA

The government on 23 December decided to provide **free foodgrains to 81.35 crore people for one year** under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** at an estimated cost of Rs 2 lakh crore. It will be implemented from **1 January 2023**.

Important facts

- As per the cabinet decision, beneficiaries under NFSA will get free food grains for one year **till December 2023**.
- The decision comes a few days before the [Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana \(PMGKAY\)](#) expires on **December 31, 2022**.
- The beneficiaries will not have to pay a single rupee to get foodgrains.

About PMGKAY

- It is a food security welfare scheme announced by the Central Government in **March 2020**, during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It is a part of the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP)** to help the poor in the fight against COVID-19.
- The program is run by the **Department of Food and Public Distribution** under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- Under the programme more than 80 crore beneficiaries are provided 5 kg free wheat/rice per person per month.
- It is the **largest food security program** in the world.

Objective of the scheme

- To provide food security to all priority households (ration card holders and those identified by the Antyodaya Anna Yojana scheme), to provide food grains to India's poorest citizens through the Public Distribution System.

National Food Security (NFS) Act, 2013

- It aims to provide subsidized food grains to approximately two-thirds of India's 1.2 billion people.
- This includes **Re 3 per kg of rice, Re 2 per kg of wheat and Re 1 per kg of coarse grains** under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).

- It converts the existing food security programs of the Government of India into a legal mandate.
- The existing food security programs include the **mid-day meal scheme**, the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme** and the **Public Distribution System (PDS)**.

2. Union Government extends PMGKAY till December 2022 (Sept. 28, 2022)

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 28 September 2022 has extended the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY-Phase VII) for a further period of 3 months, **October to December 2022**. The phase VI of the scheme was to end on 30 September 2022.

This will cover nearly 80 crore beneficiaries across India.

The government has extended the scheme keeping in mind the coming festival season so that there is no additional burden on the poor.

PMGKY is the world's largest food security programme which was launched in April 2020 to provide relief to the poor and migrant population suffering due to the corona -19 induced lockdown and the consequent hardship faced by them.

Features of the PMGKAY

- PMGKAY is a part of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (**PMGKP**) to help the poor fight the battle against Covid-19.
- Its nodal Ministry is the **Ministry of Finance**.
- Under this scheme, the government provides additional free of cost 5 **kg per person per month food-grains** (rice/wheat) to around 80 crore beneficiaries of National Food Security Act (NFSA) including the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) beneficiaries.
- The PMGKAY has now been linked with One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) plan where migrant workers can get the benefit of the scheme through any ration shops in India.

Financial burden on the central government

- The scheme is fully funded by the government of India
- The government of India has so far spent Rs 3.45 lakh Crore upto Phase-VI of PMGKAY. With the additional expenditure of about Rs. 44,762 Crore for Phase-VII of this scheme, the overall expenditure of PMGKAY will be about Rs. 3.91 lakh crore for all the phases.
- The total outgo in terms of food grains for PMGKAY Phase VII is likely to be about 122 Lakh metric tonnes. The aggregate allocation of food grain for phases I- VII is about 1121 lakh metric tonnes.

Phases of the PMGKAY Scheme

Phase 1 from April to June 2020

Phase II from July to November 2020

Phase III from December 2020 to May 2021 to June 2021

Phase IV from July 2021 to November 2021

Phase V from December 2021 to March 2021

Phase VI from April 2022 to September 2022

Phase VII from October 2022 to December 2022

Important Government Scheme

National Food Security Act (NFSA)

The Public distribution system in India is covered under the National Food Security Act 2013.

It was implemented on 10 September 2013.

- It covers all the State and Union Territories in India.
- The scheme is administered by the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution.
- The Act provides for coverage of upto 75% of the rural population and upto 50% of the urban population for receiving subsidized foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), thus covering about two-thirds of the population.
- Food Grains are provided to beneficiaries in two categories, Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Household (PHH).
- The Antodaya Anna Yojana beneficiaries get 35 kg of foodgrains per month and the Priority Household gets 5kg per person per month.
- The beneficiary gets rice/wheat or coarse cereals at a highly subsidized price.