One Nation, One Ration Card System

Why in news?

'One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC)' system will be rolled out in all states and Union Territories by March 2021.

What is the 'ONORC' system?

- Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, about 81 crore persons can buy subsidized food grain from their designated Fair Price Shops (FPS) of the Targeted Public Distribution System.
- About 23 crore ration cards have been issued to nearly 80 crore beneficiaries of NFSA in all states and UTs.
- Currently, if a person migrates from one state to another, she is unable to purchase subsidised food grains from a PDS shop in her new locality.
- But, under the 'ONORC' system, the beneficiary will be able to buy subsidised food grains from any FPS across the country.
- It will identify a beneficiary through biometric authentication on electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices installed at the FPSs.
- It will enable that person to purchase the quantity of food grains to which she is entitled under the NFSA.

How will the system of ration card portability work?

- Ration card portability is aimed at providing intra-state as well as inter-state portability of ration cards.
- Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (**IM-PDS**) portal (www.impds.nic.in) provides the technological platform for the inter-state portability of ration cards.
- This portal enables a migrant worker to buy food grains from any FPS across the country.
- The **Annavitran** portal (annavitran.nic.in) hosts the data of distribution of food grains through E-PoS devices within a state.
- This portal enables a migrant worker or his family to avail the benefits of PDS outside their district but within their state.
- So, a person can buy her share of food grains as per her entitlement under the NFSA, wherever she is based.
- The rest of her family members can purchase subsidised food grains from

their ration dealer back home.

Since when has the ONORC System been in the works?

- Work on this project was started in April 2018 when the government launched IM-PDS scheme to reform the PDS system in the country.
- The PDS system was inefficient leading to leakages in the system.
- To plug the leakages and make the system better, the government started the reform process.
- For this purpose, it used a technological solution involving the use of Aadhaar to identify beneficiaries.
- Under the scheme, the seeding of ration cards with Aadhaar is being done and PoS machines are being installed at all FPSs across India.
- Once 100% of Aadhaar seeding and 100% installation of PoS devices is achieved, the national portability of ration cards will become a reality.
- It will enable migrant workers to buy food grains from any FPS by using their existing/same ration card.

How many states have come on board?

- It was initially proposed to nationally rollout the 'ONORC' scheme by June 1, 2020.
- So far, 17 states and UTs have come on board to roll out the inter-state portability of ration cards under the NFSA.
- Three more states are expected to come on board by June 1, taking the number of States and UTs to 20 under the ONORC System.
- These three states are Odisha, Mizoram, and Nagaland.

How has been the experience of Ration Card Portability so far?

- According to data available on the IMPDS portal, only 275 transactions have been done until May 14.
- However, the number of transactions in intra-state ration card portability is quite high.
- The data available on the Annavitaran portal shows that about one crore transactions took place using the facility last month.
- It means that usages of intra-state ration card portability are way higher than the inter-state portability.

Source: The Indian Express



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