

SMART-PDS Scheme

Why in news?

Recently, the Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution emphasized every state to implement SMART-PDS.

What is SMART-PDS?

- **SMART-PDS** refers to Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System.
- **Aim-**
 - To prevent leakage of food grains
 - To increase the efficiency of the distribution chain
 - To ensure the availability of such provisions for migrants
- It is a system where ***smart ration cards*** are issued to beneficiaries of public distribution system, and ration is given through fair price shops to any member of the beneficiary family.
- The ***fingerprint template*** of the beneficiary is recorded in these smart ration cards, which records all transactions.
- It is an initiative of the Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD), ***Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution***.
- It is a technological driven initiative that seeks to reduce human intervention and promote automation in the existing processes.

What schemes support public distribution system?

- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)** -A food security welfare scheme announced during covid-19.
- **Open Market Sale Scheme** -To sell surplus stocks of wheat and rice at pre-determined prices through e-auction in the open market
- The scheme is implemented by Food Corporation of India.
- **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)** - States were required to identify the poor for delivery of food grains and for its distribution in a transparent and accountable manner.
- **Antyodaya anna yojana (AAY)** - Aims at reducing hunger among the poorest segments of the Below Poverty Line population.
- AAY involved identification of 1 crore poorest of the poor families from amongst the number of BPL families covered under TPDS.
- **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)** -A scheme that will nationalize a beneficiary's ration card by a process called Aadhaar Seeding.
- Aadhaar seeding ensures that the beneficiary can pick up her or his entitled food grain from any fair price shop in the country.

- **Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IMPDS)** - The scheme entitles food grains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) of their choice anywhere in the country.
- **The National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA)** - Provides a legal right to persons belonging to eligible households to receive foodgrains at subsidised price.



What are challenges to PDS?

- Lack of credible and dynamic data on consumption and mobility patterns
- Inefficient delivery of critical central welfare schemes to the most vulnerable sections of our society
- Gaps in the implementation of the PDS related schemes
- Inaccurate identification of households and a leaking delivery system
- Error of exclusion and inclusion of beneficiaries
- Leakage of food grains during transportation to the ration shop and from the ration shop itself into the open market

What are the various reforms to be implemented in PDS?

- **Data analytics(DA)/business intelligence (BI) platforms** -Centre now plans to use the DA/BI platforms and other ICT tools and technologies and deepen PDS reforms.
- **Standardization of the PDS** -There will be a standardization of the PDS operation through the use of technology and integrating the same with various distribution agencies.
- **Technology-led reforms** -Are expected to overcome the state-level technological limitations of PDS operations concerning IT hardware, software and technical manpower.
- Technology-led reforms will also institutionalize an integrated central system for all PDS-related operations across all states/UTs.

References

1. [The Indian Express | SMART-PDS](#)
2. [PIB | SMART-PDS](#)