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Rise in Food Grain Offtake by States

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Why in News

The **food grain procurement by states has risen** sharply due to **relief measures** being implemented in the wake of the **Covid-19 pandemic**.

The **total amount of rice** utilised by the States and Union Territories (UTs) from the **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** under the Centre's various schemes is **192.34 lakh tonnes in 2020** as compared to **90.71 lakh tonnes in 2019**.

Key Points

- **Reasons:**

- **Increased Entitlements:**

- After the breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was announced that **Priority Household (PHH) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cardholders** in the country would receive **free entitlement of 5 kg per person per month**, initially for three months (April to June) and **now extended up to November 2020**.

This was in addition to their entitlement under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013**.

- The Centre has also announced a scheme for providing wheat and rice to ration cardholders **not covered under the NFSA or Non-Priority Household (NPHH) cardholders** at the rate of Rs. 21 per kg and Rs. 22 per kg respectively.

This has been used by Tamil Nadu to provide additional entitlement of rice to about 85.99 lakh such cardholders.

- **Needs of Migrants Labourers:** Aimed at addressing the requirements of **migrant labourers** who were not covered under the NFSA or any scheme of the States, the central government announced one more scheme i.e. **distribution of free food grains at 5 kg per person per month for May and June**.

- **Related Data:**

- The data by FCI has revealed that the **seven States** i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka **availed over 60%** of the total quantity of rice during the pandemic.
- As for **wheat**, the rate of increase in offtake was not so high (around 30%). Compared to 59.45 lakh tonnes lifted in the three months of 2019, it was 78.16 lakh tonnes in 2020.

Rajasthan had drawn the **highest quantity of 14.84 lakh tonnes** of wheat followed by Uttar Pradesh which has drawn 14.01 lakh tonnes.

National Food Security Act

- The enactment of the **National Food Security Act (NFSA) on 5th July 2013** marks a paradigm shift in the approach to **food security** from welfare to a rights based approach.
- The Act legally entitled **upto 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population** to receive subsidized food grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System.
- Under it, the **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY - launched in 2000) households**, which constitute the poorest of the poor, **continue to receive 35 Kgs** of foodgrains per household per month.
- Households having **Priority Households (PHH) ration cards** are issued **8 kgs i.e. 5 and 3 Kgs of rice** monthly per beneficiaries at the rate of Rs.3 and Rs.15 respectively.
 - 5 kgs is Central Scheme under National Security Act-2013 and 3 kgs is the state scheme.
 - It targets the poor and vulnerable sections of the society such as **landless laborers, marginal farmers and wage earners of the informal sections** of the economy.

Source: TH