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## Revising National Food Security Act, 2013: NITI Aayog

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### Why in News

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**NITI Aayog**, through a discussion paper, has recommended reducing the rural and urban coverage under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**, to 60% and 40%, respectively.

It has **also proposed a revision of beneficiaries as per the latest population** which is currently being done through Census- 2011.

### National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013

- **Notified on:** 10<sup>th</sup> 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 subsidized foodgrains under **Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)**.  
Overall, NFSA caters to **67% of the total population**.
- **Eligibility:**
  - **Priority Households** to be covered under TPDS, according to guidelines by the State government.
  - Households covered under existing **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 benefit of not less than Rs. 6,000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers during pregnancy and six months after the 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 of grievance redressal mechanisms at the district and state level.

## Key Points

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- **Number of Beneficiaries at Present:**

- Approximately 2.37 crore households or **9.01 crore persons**, as in February 2021 under **Antyodaya Anna Yojana**.
- While approximately **70.35 crore persons** are under the priority households.

- **Significance of the NITI Aayog's Recommendations:**

- If the **rural-urban coverage ratio remains the same** (67% of all population), then the total number of people covered will increase from the existing 81.35 crore to 89.52 crore - an increase of 8.17 crore (based on the projected 2020 population).

This will **result in an additional subsidy requirement of Rs. 14,800 crore**.

- If the **national coverage ratio is revised downward**, the Centre can save up to Rs. 47,229 crore.
- This amount of **savings can be utilised by the Government in other important areas of concern** such as health and education.

- **Challenges of the Move:**

- In the times of Covid-19 pandemic, it will be a **double burden (Unemployment and Food insecurity issues)** on the poor section of the society.
- The move **may be opposed by some of the states**.

- **Other Recommendations:**

- HLC (High Level Committee) under **Shanta Kumar** had recommended reducing the coverage ratio from 67% of the population to 40%.

According to it, 67% coverage of the population is on the much higher side, and should be brought down to around 40%, which will comfortably cover BPL families and some even above that.

- The **Economic Survey- 2020-21** had recommended a revision of the **Central Issue Prices (CIP)** of foodgrains released from the central pool, which have remained unchanged for the past several years.

## Central Issue Prices

- Foodgrains under NFSA are made available to beneficiaries at subsidized prices.
- The centre procures food grains from farmers at a **Minimum support price (MSP)** and **sells it to states at central issue prices.**
- The prices are fixed by the Central Government from time to time, but not exceeding MSP.

**Source: IE**