



Electronic Weighing Machines at Fair Price Shops

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Why in News

The Central Government has **asked the States Governments to buy electronic weighing machines** for ration shops **from electronic Point of Sale devices (ePoS) savings**.

For this, the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs** has **amended the Food Security (Assistance To State Government Rules) 2015** to encourage the states to generate savings through judicious use of e-PoS devices.

Key Points

- **About the Food Security (Assistance to State Government Rules) 2015:**
 - **Additional Margin to Fair Price Shops:** The rules were notified to **give additional margin to fair price shop dealers** for sale through e-PoS as an incentive to ensure transparent recording of transactions at all levels.
 - The margin on food grain sold through ePoS is provided as **“Fair Price Shop dealers margin”**.
 - It is meant to go towards the **cost of purchase, operation and maintenance of the point of sale device**, its running expenses and incentive for its use.
 - **Benefits of Amendment:**
 - The **integration of ePoS devices with electronic weighing scales** will **ensure the right quantity to beneficiaries** in the distribution of subsidised food grains under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** as per their entitlement.
 - It will ensure **greater transparency in the Public distribution system (PDS) regime**. It will **reduce food grain leakages**.
 - The **distribution through ePoS devices** ensures that subsidised food grains are provided to the **rightful beneficiary** through **biometric authentication**.

- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**

- **Notified on:** 10th 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.**
 - **NITI Aayog** has recommended reducing the rural and urban coverage under the NFSA to 60% and 40%, respectively.
- **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 to 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.

- **Public Distribution System (PDS):**

- The PDS is an **Indian food Security System** established under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution**.
 - PDS evolved as a system of management of scarcity through distribution of food grains at affordable prices.
 - In **June, 1997**, the Government of India **launched the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS)** with focus on the poor.
- **Functioning:**
 - The **Central and State Governments share responsibilities** in order to provide food grains to the identified beneficiaries.
 - The centre procures food grains from farmers at a **minimum support price (MSP)** and sells it to states at central issue prices. It is responsible for transporting the grains to godowns in each state.
 - States bear the responsibility of transporting food grains from these godowns to each fair price shop (ration shop), where the beneficiary buys the food grains at the lower **central issue price**.
 - Many states further subsidise the price of food grains before selling it to beneficiaries.

Source: TH