



1. One Nation, One Ration Card scheme could be a boon for poor migrants

- What is a ration card? Currently, which type of ration cards are being issued?
- What is the 'One Nation, One Ration card' scheme?
- What are the challenges for 'One Nation, One Ration card' scheme?

GS paper 2 (Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by States and the Centre and the performance of these schemes)

In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.



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What is the context about?



Last week, the government launched the pilot project for the inter-state portability of ration cards between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, and between Maharashtra and Gujarat, as part of its 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme.



'One Nation One Ration Card' scheme seeks to provide portability of food security benefits all across the nation. The scheme will let ration card holders buy food grain anywhere in the country.



By January 2020, 11 states will form a public distribution grid. The central scheme will integrate all state public distribution systems to a central repository of beneficiaries' details.



What is a ration card? Currently, which type of ration cards are being issued?



A ration card is issued to the head of the family, depending on the number of members in a family and the financial status of the applicant. It is used by households to get essential food grains at subsidised prices from designated ration shops (also called fair price shops) under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).



Over the years, different types of ration cards were issued depending on the level of deprivation.



Later, in 2013, when the National Food Security Bill was passed, different ration cards were compressed to just two — priority and Antyodaya (for the most poor). The responsibility of identifying eligible families and issuing ration cards to them rests with the state/UT government.



What is the 'One Nation, One Ration card' scheme?



Since ration cards are issued by state governments, this implied that beneficiaries could procure food grains only from the designated ration shops within the concerned state. If a beneficiary were to shift to another state, he/she would need to apply for a new ration card in the second state. There were other complications.



The ONORC scheme attempts to address this gap in TPDS delivery. Essentially, the scheme has been launched keeping in mind the internal migration of our country, since people keep moving to different states in search of better job opportunities and higher standards of living.



With the ONORC scheme being implemented in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, the beneficiary can buy food grains from ration shops located in either of the states.

What are the challenges for 'One Nation, One Ration card' scheme?



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To update beneficiary data when a person migrates for a shorter span. Electronic point-of-sale machines are there in 77 per cent ration shops. Very few of them are in high-migration states like West Bengal and Bihar.



Bihar has only installed ePoS devices only at 62 of its 41,483 ration shops and WB, only have 366 ration shops out of the total 20806, which installed ePoS machines, said the food ministry in Lok Sabha.



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