

**General Studies-2; Topic: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System- objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security;**

## **Third Generation Food Security Law**

### **1) Food Security**

- The right to food is a principle of international human rights law.
- It has evolved to include an obligation for state parties to respect, protect, and fulfil their citizens' right to food security.
- Food security includes the four dimensions of access, availability, utilisation and stability.
- As a state party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, India has the obligation to ensure the right to be free from hunger and the right to adequate food.
- Food security brings together diverse issues such as inequality, food diversity, indigenous rights and environmental justice.

### **2) Assessing the Food Security Act**

- The National Food Security Act does not guarantee a universal right to food.
- It restricts the right to 75% of the Indian population.
- The claim under the Act would not be available in times of “war, flood, drought, fire, cyclone or earthquake”.
- The right to food becomes most valuable in these circumstances.
- NFSA predominantly mentions just rice and wheat, and that too for only some citizen.
- Given that a major reason for micronutrient deficiency in India is because of a cereal-based diet; the NFSA does not address the issue of malnutrition and nutritional deficiency adequately.
- The NFSA is framed in such a way that the courts can't go beyond the provisions of the NFSA in terms of what it could order the government to give citizens.
- NFSA addresses issues of access, availability and utilisation, and is largely silent on the issue of stability of food supplies.
- The Act does not address the impact of climate change on Indian agriculture and measures to overcome it.
- Thus there is a need for 'third generation' approach towards food security due to increased vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

### **3) Need for third generation right to food legislation**

- To address failings in food security.
- To recognise and mainstream issues including increasing natural disasters and climate adaptation.
- To address the challenges facing the country's food security across all four dimensions of access, availability, utilisation and stability.
- Given the current crises in India, it is time we prepare a third generation right to food legislation that recognises that a climate-as-usual scenario no longer exists.
- **Climate-smart agriculture:**
  - a. Agriculture that sustainably increases productivity, resilience, reduces GHGs and enhances achievement of national food security.

- b. The Climate-smart practices include soil and nutrient management, water harvesting, pest and disease control, resilient eco systems etc.
- c. Enabling farmers to adopt climate-smart practices that could lead to rural economic growth and ensure food security.

#### 4) **Concerns / Challenges**

- Inadequate distribution of food through public distribution mechanism and food adulterations in distributed food.
- Lack of inter sectoral coordination.
- Improper implementation of nutritional programmes.
- Agrarian crisis
- Soil degradation, water stress and drought are affecting agricultural produce.

#### 5) **Way Forward**

- Climate-smart agriculture for Sustainable agriculture.
- Emphasis on indirect interventions like access to water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Given a strong correlation between sanitation and malnutrition, a comprehensive approach is required.
- Policies must deliver universal, rights-based nutrition services, which overcome disparities across gender, communities and geographical regions.
- Long-term relief measures in the event of natural disasters.
- Food Fortification, bio fortification of plant/crops to combat micronutrient deficiency.
- Enhance livelihood security.
- Ensure effective hunger eradication through an integrated and coordinated approach in the implementation of the public programmes.