

PRADHAN MANTRI ANNADATA AAY SANRAKSHAN ABHIYAN (PM-AASHA)

Ensuring Fair Price and Protecting Farmers' Income

WHAT IS PRADHAN MANTRI ANNADATA AAY SANRAKSHAN ABHIYAN (PM-AASHA)?

The Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) is a comprehensive scheme launched by the Government of India in 2018 with the primary aim of ensuring income security for farmers and price protection for their agricultural produce. The scheme has been designed to ensure that farmers receive a fair price for their produce by implementing a combination of price support, price stabilization, and market intervention.

PM-AASHA seeks to protect farmers' incomes from price fluctuations in the market, which often lead to exploitation and low returns for agricultural produce. Under this initiative, farmers are guaranteed a minimum support price (MSP) for certain crops, ensuring that they are not forced to sell their produce at a loss.

OBJECTIVES OF PM-AASHA

The primary objectives of the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) are:

1. Income Protection for Farmers:

- The scheme aims to protect the income of farmers by ensuring they get a fair price for their produce, especially when market prices fall below the minimum support price (MSP).

2. Stabilizing Crop Prices:

- To stabilize market prices for important crops, reducing the volatility caused by fluctuating demand and supply.

3. Ensuring MSP for Farmers:

- PM-AASHA guarantees Minimum Support Price (MSP) to farmers for select crops, ensuring they are not at a disadvantage due to falling market prices.

4. Market Intervention:

- The scheme includes provisions for market intervention through procurement of crops at MSP to protect farmers from distress sales.

5. Reducing Dependence on Middlemen:

- PM-AASHA aims to reduce the influence of middlemen and ensure direct market access for farmers to increase their earnings.

Key Features of PM-AASHA

1. Minimum Support Price (MSP) Assurance:

- Under PM-AASHA, the government ensures that farmers receive MSP for select crops, which acts as a safety net when market prices are lower than the MSP.

2. Price Support Scheme (PSS):

- The Price Support Scheme (PSS) under PM-AASHA allows the government to procure crops from farmers directly at the MSP. This is done to prevent *farmers from being exploited* during times of low prices in the market.

3. Price Stabilization Fund (PSF):

- The scheme also includes a Price Stabilization Fund (PSF) to manage the price volatility of important crops and ensure that the prices of perishable crops do not dip too low.

4. Intervention for Perishable Crops:

- For perishable crops, the government provides market intervention to help maintain stable prices and prevent farmers from suffering losses due to crop gluts.

5. Promotion of Technology and Innovation:

- The scheme encourages the use of technology in the procurement and marketing processes, which helps farmers access better pricing and markets for their produce

BENEFITS OF PM-AASHA

1. Income Security for Farmers:

- PM-AASHA guarantees income security for farmers by ensuring that they receive a fair price for their produce, even when market prices drop.

2. Price Stability:

- The scheme helps stabilize market prices, reducing the uncertainty and volatility that farmers often face due to supply-demand imbalances or market fluctuations.

3. Reduction of Exploitation:

- By ensuring MSP procurement and reducing reliance on middlemen, PM-AASHA aims to reduce exploitation and ensure that farmers get a fair share of the prices for their produce.

4. Increased Farmers' Bargaining Power:

- With price assurance and market intervention, farmers have better bargaining power in the marketplace, helping them negotiate better prices for their crops.

5. Boost to Agricultural Sector:

- By ensuring better income and price security, the scheme aims to revitalize the agricultural sector, contributing to farmers' well-being and ensuring the sustainability of agriculture.

6. Risk Mitigation:

- PM-AASHA helps mitigate the risks faced by farmers due to adverse market conditions, weather variations, and fluctuations in crop prices, providing them with *financial stability.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PM-AASHA

The following entities are eligible to avail benefits under the PM-AASHA scheme:

1. Farmers:

- Individual farmers, farmer cooperatives, and farmer producer organizations (FPOs) growing select crops eligible for MSP can avail the scheme.

2. State Governments:

- State governments are responsible for implementing the procurement operations and ensuring that the scheme's objectives are met within their jurisdiction.

3. Eligible Crops:

- The scheme applies to select crops grown by farmers, including cereals, pulses, oilseeds, and other commercial crops for which the government announces an MSP.

4. Geographical Scope:

- The scheme is available to farmers across the country, but the procurement operations may be specific to states and regions with higher production levels of certain crops.

STEPS TO APPLY FOR PM-AASHA

Farmers and agricultural stakeholders can follow these steps to avail benefits under the PM-AASHA scheme:

1. Identify Eligible Crops

- Farmers should first ensure that the crop they are growing is eligible for MSP procurement under the scheme. This includes checking if the crop is part of the government's MSP list.

2. Register with the Agricultural Department

- Farmers must register with their local agricultural office or State Government authorities for the MSP procurement program. Registration may require submitting documents like Aadhaar card, land ownership proof, and bank account details.

3. Participate in MSP Procurement

- Once registered, farmers can sell their crops to procurement centers established by the state governments or agriculture cooperatives at the MSP. The government will set up these centers at designated mandis or local markets.

4. Verification Process

- The State Government or authorized agencies will verify the crop quality and ensure that the MSP price is paid directly to the farmer's bank account.

5. Market Intervention for Perishable Crops

- For perishable crops, the government will facilitate market intervention to prevent price crashes and minimize losses. Farmers can participate by offering their produce to mandis or government-approved processing centers.

6. Monitoring and Feedback

- Regular monitoring of procurement activities and feedback from farmers is essential to ensure the proper implementation of the scheme. Farmers can raise concerns or suggestions for improvement through agriculture officials.

CONCLUSION

The Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) is an important initiative aimed at ensuring fair prices and income protection for farmers in India. By guaranteeing minimum support prices (MSP), facilitating price support schemes, and reducing market price volatility, PM-AASHA helps farmers achieve greater financial stability and enhances the sustainability of their agricultural practices.

The scheme is especially beneficial for small and marginal farmers, who are most vulnerable to price fluctuations and market exploitation. By providing financial security and price stabilization, PM-AASHA helps farmers continue farming without the fear of unpredictable market conditions.

Through better market access, procurement schemes, and price assurance, PM-AASHA aims to improve the overall economic well-being of farmers and contribute to the growth of the agricultural sector in India.