

# Implementation of National Food Security Act (NFSA) in Odisha

*Subhranshu Kumar Satpathy*

1. National Food Security Act'2013 came to effect on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013. The dateline for implementation for National Food Security Act'2013 was 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 (as per the latest circular by Government of India).

2. Beneficiary target estimated for the Country comes out to be 8,134 lakh (75 % of Rural & 50 % of Urban Population). Beneficiary coverage indicated by the Central Government for Odisha: 82.17% of 349.512 lakh of rural population, 55.77% of 69.961 lakh of Urban Population (as per 2011 census). Thus, a total of 326.21 lakh beneficiaries will get subsidized food grains in Odisha under the Act from Government of India.

3. As per the Section 10 of the Act, the responsibility of identifying the beneficiaries is with the State Government. The State Government has completed identification of the priority households by approving Nine Exclusion and Six Auto Inclusion Criteria in July'2014.

4. The Odisha Government has approved nine exclusion criteria considered as the important factors for identification of beneficiaries. These nine exclusion criteria covers monthly income of more than Rs.10,000 in Rural areas and excess of Rs.15,000 in Urban areas, income, persons

having four wheelers or two three wheelers, business with TIN (tax payer identification number), electric consumption above 300 units, any state government or central government employee, persons having tractors, power-tillers, fishing boats or other heavy vehicles, persons having entrepreneurship, professional tax payers and households having pucca and fire proof house with more than 3 or more rooms.

5. The identification and digitization process has been done in two phases at Odisha. The Pilot Phase consisted of the capital city of Bhubaneswar and the adjacent Bhubaneswar Block. Here the applications were collected in October'2014 and digitization of 1.94 lakh applications (families) was completed by November'14. The publication of draft priority list, receipt of objections and their disposal was done in December'14. The learning's from the Pilot Phase was handy while designing for the Roll out Phase. However, the processes for identification of eligible beneficiaries have been modified to overcome the issues confronted in the Pilot Phase.

Process of Registration, Digitisation and Identification of Priority Population

6. The eligible families (as per above criteria) were asked to apply in a prescribed forms

designed for being included as a beneficiary under the Act at Grampanchayat level in Rural areas and Ward level in Urban areas. A massive IEC campaign was undertaken for the dissemination of Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria and Process of Application across the State in several phases. Field level functionaries under the supervision of Senior Officials at the district level were engaged for collection, verification and submission of the application forms for digitization.

7. The Roll out phase was initiated on 28<sup>th</sup> January'2015 across the State. All applications (106 lakh families having 402lakh individuals) were collected by 30<sup>th</sup> July and these were digitized. For ensuring an error free Ration card, an abstract of the digitized application form in shape of an Acknowledgement Slip (AS) has been given to each applicant for verification and correction, if any. In case, there are mistakes in the AS, the corrected AS is sent back for updating the applicant database and a fresh AS is printed and given to the applicant. This process of correction has been completed.

8. Digitization was done after searching the applicant families from the National Population Registrar database and linking the NPR ID to them. This process helped to populate the names of the applicant family members in the data entry screen. This not only reduced the data entry process but also has ensured deduplication to a large extent. About 64% of applicant families (64.74 lakh) and 60% of applicants (2.328 crore) have been linked to NPR database in the process of digitization.

9. During the digitisation process, applicants were asked to provide Aadhaar number and/or Voter Card (EPIC) as proof of Identity. About 51% applicant families (52.09 lakh) have given Aadhaar number of at least one member.

However, the number of individual members with Aadhaar number in the Applicant database came to only 21.4 % (82.47 lakh).

10. Similarly, about 76 % applicant families (79.18 lakh) have given EPIC for at least one member of their family. Among individuals, those with EPIC number in the Applicant database was about 31.5% (1.235 crore) after digitization.

11. RGI through Director, Census, Odisha recently provided Aadhaar numbers of 1.75 crore people of Odisha with NPR TIN. By interfacing with the applicant database of 4.02crore (106 lakh families), the percentage of Aadhaar penetration of individuals increased by 20% to reach 41% (1.613 crore). Similarly, the NPR ID for applicant families increased from 64% to about 70% (73.01 lakh). It is expected that as more and more Aadhaar numbers are generated for the State, these percentages are going to increase.

12. Left out families of the Roll out phase were given another opportunity to enrol themselves within the extended period of two months (16<sup>th</sup> June'15 to 14<sup>th</sup> Aug'15) at their Block or ULB headquarters.

13. Three Divisional level Collectors' Conference have been held at Southern Zone (14<sup>th</sup> July 2015), Northern Zone (23<sup>rd</sup> July 2015) and Central Zone (25<sup>th</sup> July 2015) in order to discuss about further activities and timeline with district administration. (Collectors, District Nodal Officers (NFSA), Civil Supplies Officers and implementing Vendors).

14. De-duplication exercise of the applicant database has been conducted. A total number of 12.65 Lakh duplicate enrolment (Individuals) have been detected in the database on the basis of same name string, same Aadhaar numbers, same TIN numbers and same EPIC number. These applicant

individuals have been included in Suspect List-1 which has been hosted in FS & CW Department website [www.foododisha.in](http://www.foododisha.in) under “e-Bitaran Odisha” link for physical verification by field functionaries.

15. FS & CW Department had requested PR Department to provide SECC data relating to the list of families to be excluded from availing Government benefits based on 13 criteria. The SECC Data was superimposed on NFSA applicant data and it has been found that 9.50 Lakh families (37.50 lakh individuals) have applied for new ration cards in spite of coming under the NFSA exclusion criteria. They have been included in Suspect List-2 which has been hosted in Department website for physical verification by district. All these exclusion criteria were on the basis of self-declaration during SECC survey. Similarly Suspect List-2A & 2B have been generated to exclude families having Pucca house and fire proof house with 3 or more living rooms at their disposal.

16. It was also found in the database that some applicant families/family members have not provided vital information like name of father and name of spouse in the prescribed columns. This created doubt about genuineness of such applicants. Around 23.71 Lakh members have not supplied such information. They have been kept in “On Hold” List and the list has been hosted in Department website for review at Block/ULB level. Once they will provide the information along with documentary proof, their case will be considered for inclusion in Draft Priority List (DPL) in a later stage.

17. FS & CW Department has received about 1.10 lakh voluntary withdrawal applications (both Online & Offline) from ineligible applicants who have requested to withdraw their applications.

These applications have been deleted from the applicant database. Similarly, information has been received for 287 cases from public in toll free and through website. The list of such cases has been forwarded to districts for field verification.

18. Similarly, the Draft Priority List (DPL) of 3.214 crore has been hosted in Department website on 17<sup>th</sup> July-2015. Objections for same have been invited at Block/ULB level and Desk Review has been conducted by a Team of government officials. Advertisement in leading Odia dailies have been released informing citizens about different lists such as On-hold list, Suspect-1, 2 & 3 were made available at Block/ULB level for further course of action.

19. IBM’s Master Data Management tool (MDM) was used for integrating the external exclusion criteria databases with NPR to create an integrated database. This integrated database was compared with the applicant database to weed out the rich and ineligible applicants. IBM has been handed over 33 lakh data of six exclusion criteria. So far, the tool has given only 2.0 lakh names linked to NPR ID with HRMIS, 4 wheeler & Pension database. By superimposing this list on DPL, the list of probable ineligible persons in name of Suspect List-3 has been generated and hosted in Department’s website.

20. In the meanwhile, Odisha Govt. has fixed District wise Targets for coverage of Priority Beneficiaries. As all the districts are not equal in terms of development in the state, percentage of SC & ST Population has been taken as weightage for determination of limits, for identification of Priority Population under NFSA in both Rural and Urban area.

21. It has been found that many families who are not eligible as per exclusion criteria had applied for new ration cards. It is seen that numbers of

applicant members have exceeded the population of 2011 Census in 5 Districts (Bhadrak, Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Nuapada) and in about 78 Blocks and 2 ULBs of the state. The analysis of GP-wise population of 2011 Census with applicant numbers has been done and hosted in the website. It has been hosted under “e-Bitaran” Link under “Grampanchayat-wise analysis of NFSA Applicants with 2011 census population”. This Analysis was helpful to focus on GPs with more than 90% applicants for NFSA during desk review of DPL and field verifications of Suspect Lists. In case of about 4,100 out of 6,232 (66 %) GPs, the applicant population has exceeded the 2011 Census population.

#### Elimination of In-Eligible Households and Finalisation of Priority Beneficiaries

22. Steps have been taken for elimination of such ineligible applicant families by generating four types of suspect lists for field verification by a team of Government officials. Field Verification Team (FVT) for a Registration Centres (RC) is headed by either RI or VLW or VAW. The FVT have GRS or Jogan Sahayak and Local Anganwadi Worker as Members. For 5-6 RCs one Supervisory Officer from amongst the Extension Officer/ Revenue Supervisor were engaged for conducting some sample check. This FVT was notified on 25<sup>th</sup> July’2015 as the field verification was done from 26<sup>th</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> August’ 2015.

23. Suspect List-1: This list has been prepared by de-duplication of the applicant data base. The applicant database has been de-duplicated with respect to same Name string, Aadhaar Number, EPIC Number and NPR TIN Number. District-wise list of suspect families/ individuals generated though this exercise has been made available RC-wise in [www.foododisha.in](http://www.foododisha.in)

for download at Block/ULB/District Levels and field verification by Government officials. These duplicates are categorised in to three groups: (a) those within the Registration Centre (RC) area, (b) those within the district but beyond RC area and (c) those beyond RC and beyond the district. About 57 lakh persons (15.76 families) were identified under various categories under Suspect List-1.

24. Within the RC: All the duplicates found within the RC area have been listed one after another as per Form Number serials. The teams of field officials visited the locality and verified regarding the entries. It is likely that only one of the two or more entries will be retained after field verification. The team would mention the same in the Remarks Column. These suspect lists were downloaded at Block/ULB level or district level.

25. Within District but beyond RC: Here, one of the duplicate is in the RC but other duplicate enrolments are beyond the RC but within the district. Such entries have been indicated in the list one after another as per serial number of form of the concerned RC. Here the field team will collect undertakings in the format given below from the applicants for retention or deletion. Their undertakings have been taken to Block/ULB offices (for those within Block or ULB) or District Offices (for those which are across Block/ULB). As the same duplicate entry would be reflected in two or more of the RC-wise list, the field team will check the document of concerned individual in the field and take an undertaking from him/her as to where s/he would like to be retained.

26. Across Districts: Here one of the duplicate is in the RC but other duplicate enrolments are from a RC located in another district and also beyond the district. The RC-wise list shows the duplicates together with the form

number sequence. Similar procedure would be followed by the field team at RC level for taking undertaking from the concerned duplicate individuals for taking appropriate decision and deletion of extra entries from the system.

27. On Hold List: Suspect List-1 is duplicates on basis of Name String, Aadhaar No, EPIC No and NPR TIN No. It has been decided to keep the families of the duplicate individuals 'On Hold'. Once the duplicate issue is settled after field verification, the applicant family would be released from 'On Hold' list and would come to Draft Priority List for scrutiny and approval. In addition, it has also been decided that those families where any member has not mentioned either the name of Father or the Spouse would be kept 'On Hold'. This is to ensure that genuine family members are kept in the final list. One copy of the 'On Hold' list was made available to Gram/Ward Sabha for gap filling i.e. filling up the names of relations and then submitting to Block/ULB Office for updating. The gap filling by Gram Sabha can only be done with support of documents which have to be attached with On Hold list while submitting the same to Block/ULB office. The concerned families can file objections with Block/ULB. The second copy of the 'On Hold' list would be kept with the Nodal Officer of Block/ULB for hearing objections as a reference.

28. Suspect List-2: This list has been created by super imposing the SECC Exclusion criteria relevant to NFSA over the applicant database. The exercise has identified about 9.50 lakh applicant families comprising of 36.50 lakh individuals coming under various exclusion parameters. RC-wise list has been made available in [www.foododisha.in](http://www.foododisha.in) for download and printing. These were handed over to RC level Field Verification Team for verification within the above

time frame of 30<sup>th</sup> July to 14<sup>th</sup> August' 15. About 22.50 lakh applicant population out of 36.50 lakh were confirmed as ineligible after field verification and deleted subsequently.

29. Suspect List-3: This list has been generated by comparing applicant database with integrated database. The Integrated database has been prepared with the help of IBM's Master Data Management (MDM) tool after applying 6 external databases related to exclusion of ineligible applicants to the NPR database. About 1.75 lakh applicant population were identified as suspects, out of which 1.25 lakh were confirmed after field verification and deleted subsequently.

30. Suspect List-4: This list is the final output of the Desk Review of Draft Priority List (DPL) by a team of Desk Review Team at Block/ULB headquarters. The knowledge and information of local members in the team, such as AWWs and teachers has been the basis of the verification. The members reviewed the families included in the DPL case by case and apply their information about each family. The team would record the ineligibility criteria against these families they consider to be excluded in the list. The remarks of the team indicating at the exclusion of any family would be noticed by the Nodal Officer of Block/ULB to show cause as to why they would not be excluded from NFSA. About 62 lakh applicant population were identified under Suspect List-4 for deletion from the database.

31. AAY Verification: NFSA-2013 covers all the existing AAY Beneficiaries of the state. AAY Cardholders are entitled to obtain 35 Kilogram of Rice in a month irrespective of the number of family members. The FPS-wise list of AAY applicant families has been made available in the [www.foododisha.in](http://www.foododisha.in). This list needs to be verified by concerned Inspector of Supplies/Marketing

Inspectors with respect to available records or from the AAY sales register at FPS level. The verification need to be carried out with reference to ration card number, FPS and number of members in the family. Any correction in favour of such family was reflected in hard copy and corrected sheets were handed over to the Civil Supplies Officers (CSO). The CSO would ensure that the corrections recommended by the MI/IS are updated in the system.

32. Out of 76 lakh excess registration, i.e., 4.02 crore applicant population against 3.26 crore allocation, about 106 lakh in-eligible population have been identified under 4 types of suspect lists and they have been deleted from the system through online updation process at district level.

#### Publication of Priority List

33. The Outputs of various exercises such as Desk Review of DPL, Field Verification of Suspect Lists, objection Hearing and Correction of Erroneous Forms meant for identification of

in-eligible has been updated in the central server for finalization of the Priority Beneficiaries to be covered under NFSA-2013.

34. Based on the progress of field level activities, updation of the database and printing of ration cards, Govt. of Odisha had taken a decision to implement NFSA in 2 phases. In the first phase, 14 Districts covering Western & Southern Odisha was taken up in October 2015 and the remaining 16 Districts were covered in the second phase in November, 2015.

35. As a whole, about 82.50 lakh families consisting of 3.09 crore individuals have been brought NFSA as on 22 February 2016. Earlier 60.50 lakh priority households were covered under TPDS, i.e., an increase of 36 % coverage under NFSA. It may be mentioned here that, 3.26 crore beneficiaries of Odisha will be covered under NFSA to avail the subsidised foodgrains under this scheme.

ASPECTS	FIGURES
Existing Households (HH) Covered under TPDS	60,48,182
Households in Priority List (PL) under NFSA	82,49,634
Percentage PL HH to TPDS HH	136 %
Population in Final Priority List under NFSA	3,08,76,245
Target Population to be Covered under NFSA	3,25,78,820
Percentage of PL Population to Target Population	94.70 %
Percentage of PL Population to 2011 Census Population	73.48 %
Percentage of Target Population to 2011 Census Population	78 %

Subhranshu Kumar Satpathy, Sr. Consultant, OMEGFA Programme