

Aadhaar based Electronic Ration Card Monitoring System in Himachal Pradesh

The Public Distribution System (PDS) is the distribution of essential commodities to a large number of people through a network of Fair Price Shops (FPS). The system operates under joint responsibility of Central (procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation of food grains to states) and State Governments (distribution to consumers through FPS, identification of BPL families, issuance of ration cards, supervision and monitoring etc.). The Electronic Ration Card Monitoring System (eRCMS), fully integrated with Aadhaar number of all the beneficiaries, is part of the Ministry proposal for implementing the e-PDS throughout the country.



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Over the years, many doubts have been raised about the effectiveness of the PDS scheme all over the country.

Reports of commodity diversion meant for distribution under the PDS, routinely surfaced as the commodities do not reach the intended beneficiaries. Then there is the issue of persons appearing in more than one ration cards for availing benefits under the scheme.

eRCMS seeks to address the challenges and shortcomings of the existing PDS system. Under Phase-I of the project, digitization of ration cards and supply chain application is being carried out for FPS-wise allocation.

In the Phase-II of the project, all Fair Price Shop owners shall be provided with a POS (Point of Sale) terminal, which will serve as a single integrated device to perform sales transactions. The device shall be capable of authenticating the beneficiaries on their Aadhaar/UID details. It will generate the receipt of the transaction once successfully performed.

eRCMS

As a first step, the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs has digitized the Ration Cards of every beneficiary by taking the beneficiary details directly from the UIDAI database. The software solution developed by NIC Himachal Pradesh uses web services to fetch necessary information from UIDAI database, saving time spent on data entry and also on verifying the beneficiary details.

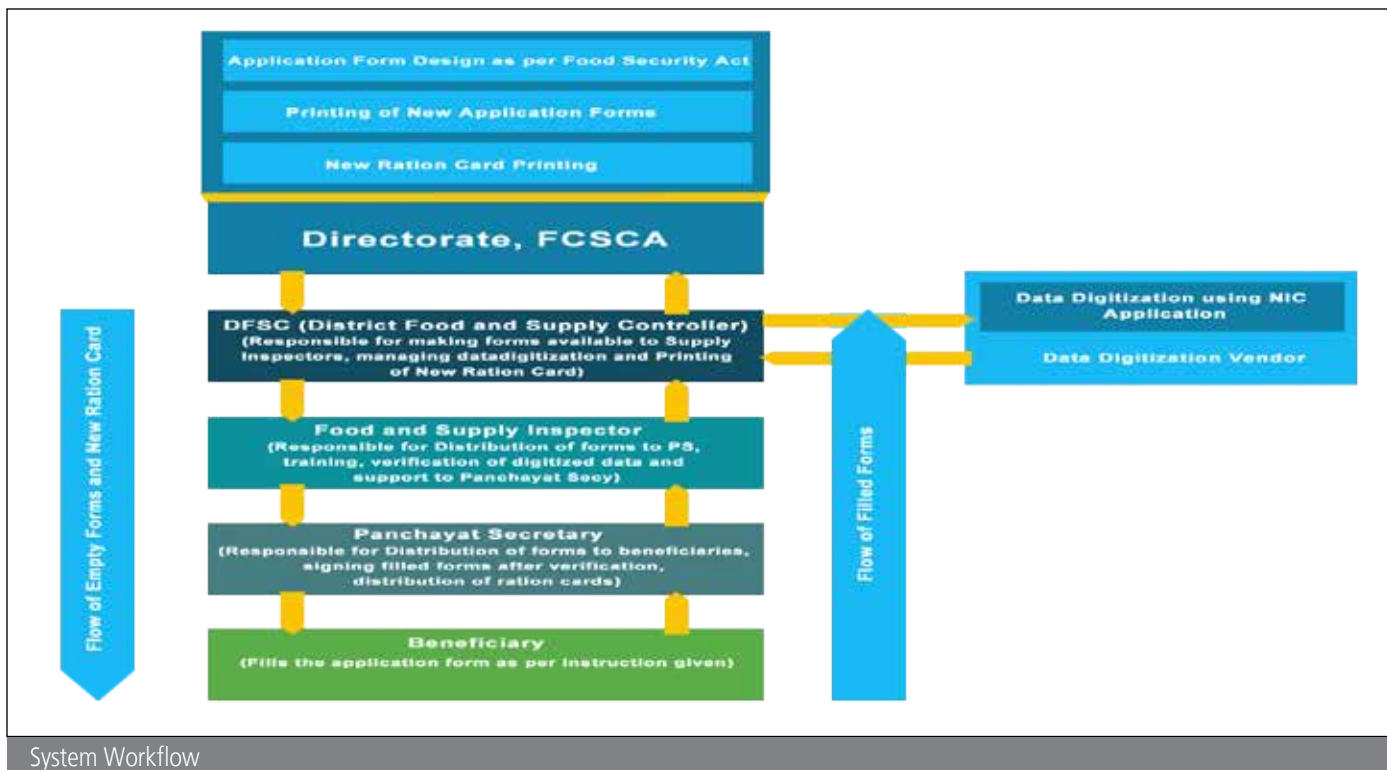


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The Public Distribution System (PDS) has been acting as a buffer to the citizens, lifting the very deprived from starvation, and providing relief to the under privileged. Ours is the largest PDS in the world, with the second largest grain bank (after China). Our country spends about ₹ 75,000 crores per year on it, which is about 1% of its GDP. Despite its inefficiencies, the PDS has been largely a success. It has critics that target the way it is managed; but all agree that it must exist. In the state of Himachal Pradesh we are not only targeting to automate the PDS but also to increase the Gross Happiness Index of the residents.

Newly designed Ration Card forms have been printed at the Directorate level and distributed through the PDS network (FPS/Panchayats) to the beneficiaries to provide Aadhaar number details of every beneficiary in the new forms. These filled forms have been collected back through the same channels and given to the short-listed



System Workflow

vendors for completing the data entry. To minimize data entry effort, the UIDAI linkage is used in the eRCMS software through a web service to populate the beneficiary information, including photos of the members. There is a provision to link this new database with PMIS for tagging in database as per inclusion/exclusion list of FCSCA. The digitized data is verified by the concerned inspectors for accuracy and verified digitized data is used to print the new Ration Cards, which are again sent back to the Panchayats/FPS for distribution among the beneficiaries.

SALIENT FEATURES

- Aadhaar linked online authentication of beneficiaries uses UID data through web service; it allows automatic Aadhaar seeding of beneficiaries for FPS automation and reduces de-duplication efforts.
- Enables individual Ration Card search based on family members' Aadhaar number/mobile number
- Covers the process of Ration Card issuance at the Panchayat level in

villages and MC in urban areas

- Re-designed Ration Card format with additional fields and categories as per the NFSA guidelines
- Guidelines / notifications issued to the beneficiaries for filling of new Application form
- Collection of forms at Panchayat level and compilation at the Block level
- Data entry of Ration Card data into the eRCMS at district level through out-sourcing
- Verification of data by the FCS department and locking of the records
- Printing of new Ration Card on A-4 Size paper, Panchayat wise at districts
- Distribution of new Ration Cards to beneficiaries through Panchayats/FPS
- Automatic Aadhaar seeding of family members based on their UID/EID details. Aadhaar seeding has been completed for 76 % of the total Ration Cards holder family members' covered, which is quite high. The rest of the members are being requested to

provide their Aadhaar number when they are visiting the FPS for ration, to ensure 100% coverage.

- Application has been customized as per the state specific requirements.
- MIS dashboards have been created to analyze and monitor the Ration Card digitization status online through the portal.
- The software is implemented in the entire state.
- Technology used is MS SQL 2012, ASP.Net with graphic tools

As a result of the Aadhaar based Ration Card initiative, the usage of new electronic Ration Card Number has gone down by about 15% in Himachal Pradesh. The reasons could be other but the initiative has proved its worthiness in a very short span of time.

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