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Dated: 11.10.2017 (Wednesday)

FDA launches food safety programme for schools in South Goa

MARGAO: A new initiative launched by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in association with the Directorate of Education will aim at children taking an active role in consuming safe and nutritious food.

The initiative titled Safe and Nutritious Food at Schools is being promoted and supported by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) as part of completing ten years with its ten initiatives. The schools initiative will be the first of its kind to be implemented in the country.

Speaking to The Navhind Times, FSSAI consultant Namrata Khanna said the plan was to involve children in changing eating habits. “Children are powerful change agents. Messages delivered to, and through children, have the potential to usher in behavioral change and a culture of safe and wholesome food. This is the underlying philosophy behind snf@school initiative of FSSAI,” she said. As part of the initiative, schools will now have Sehat Clubs which will include students themselves and will conduct programmes and activities. They will also take it upon themselves to inspect canteens and mid day meals that are supplied to them.

Through the initiative, a total of around 200 teachers, one hundred from North and one hundred from South Goa were trained through a one-day workshop in child nutrition and how to undertake the initiative.

The trained teachers were also taught about child psychology and how to ensure they make healthy choices with their food. The teachers who will be certified health and wellness coordinators will then be tasked with training other school

FSSAI IN NEWS

teachers, students and parents at their schools and some cluster schools around their vicinity.

“They will be tasked with teaching the objectives and concept of SNF@schools and bring about a shift in understanding how to adopt healthy food life styles and deliver the message of safe and nutritious food initiatives through both curricular and co-curricular activities,” said Khanna.

She added that the programme is devised on a three pronged approach by creating health and wellness coordinators and teams in each school, delivering and reinforcing the message of safe and nutritious food through curricular and co-curricular activities and ensuring an enabling legislative and regulatory framework to promote safe and wholesome food in schools.

Math’s and social science school teachers attended the workshop that was attended by FDA director Salim Veljee, deputy director of Education, South Education Zone Margao, Rose D’Souza and resource persons from the FSSAI. The workshop was conducted with the expert faculties from FSSAI as well as EU-India Capacity Building Initiative for Trade Development and such similar workshops have been held in Lucknow, Mumbai, Bangalore and Gurgaon and now in Goa.