



Study: Food-borne diseases cost India \$15 billion a year

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E-Paper

NEW DELHI: Unsafe food still costs India as high as \$15 billion annually, even though it has almost halved from \$28 billion estimated last year, a recent World Bank report says underlining the "unnecessarily high" economic burden caused by food borne diseases.

India along with China accounts for 49% of the total economic burden due to food borne diseases (FBDs) in low and middle income countries and for 71% of the total burden in Asia. However, China alone accounts for over \$30 billion of the total burden, double as compared to India, the report shows. Animal source foods estimated to account for 21% of India's food borne diseases burden, whereas it accounts for 59% in China. The report, title 'The Safe Food Imperative', was discussed recently during the first international food safety conference organised by the World Health Organisation.

Acknowledging India's efforts in last few years to streamline food safety regulations, the report said India, along with few other countries, has demonstrated that better health and commercial outcomes are possible with the joint involvement of public agencies, businesses, and consumers in food safety.

Of late, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has taken a series of measures including stringent packaging and labelling norms, regulation of restaurant and street food as well as inspections and sampling of food products to ensure quality of food in India.

Globally, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have the highest incidence of FBDs, along with the highest rate of deaths due to FBDs and the greatest loss of disability adjusted life years (DALYs). LMICs in south Asia, south-east Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa are estimated to account for 53% of all illnesses due to FBD, 75% of deaths, and 72 % of DALYs related to FBDs.