

FoSTaC implementation efforts underway, FSSAI CEO urges food safety depts

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Efforts are being sought for the implementation of the Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC) programme. This was stated by Pawan Kumar Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI, in a letter written to the state food safety departments.

He added that despite the best of the efforts, many states were facing problems in the implementation of the FoSTaC programme.

Agarwal stated, "Since the launch of the programme, a pool of over 1,600 trainers and 175 training partners have been created across the country and over 1.6 lakh food safety supervisors have been trained."

"While states like Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi are doing well, it has been observed that some states and Union Territories are facing issues regarding the implementation of the FoSTaC for training and certifying FBOs of different kinds of business."

While writing the letter, he referred to a training programme conducted by the Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) Delhi at the Tihar Prison Compound recently, and asked the state food safety department to adopt and replicate at establishments like prisons, government cafeteria and canteens run by schools or colleges, centralised kitchens for the mid-day meal scheme, etc.

The Department of Food Safety, Government of NCT Delhi, conducted a programme called Mission Sehatmand Delhi under the Eat Right Campaign that include awareness programmes.

The first chapter of the mission started with Delhi Prison Complex, known as Tihar Jail, which houses 32 kitchens, three manufacturing units for oil mills, bakery units, namkeen units, spice units, etc.

The food prepared here was not only given to the nearly 40,000 jail inmates, but also sold outside under the brand name of T.J.

The training partners were Indraprastha Academy Foundation.

The programme was divided into three parts, including prelims audit and gap analysis, training and certification of the food safety supervisors and impact assessment.

“A preliminary audit was jointly conducted by the academy and the department of the food safety, Delhi, and the report was submitted to the jail authorities and commissioner food safety for corrective actions and thereafter training was initiated in the month of May, covering 16 jails of the Tihar Prison Complex,” said an official of the Delhi Food Safety Department, who was not authorised to speak to the media.

“Upon successful completion of the training, on July 9, the certificate was distributed to the food safety supervisors,” the official added.

Tihar Prison Authorities, on the recommendation of the Indraprastha Academy Foundation, have decided to take steps including preparation of standard operating procedure and cleaning schedule for machinery and other kitchen equipment, measures to minimise food wastage, setting up food testing facilities inside the prison complex and safe disposal of used cooking oil.

The FSSAI chief asked the state food safety departments to take up early action in this regard, referring to far-reaching consequences comprising the food safety ecosystem of the country.