

## States need to ensure wearing of masks, social distancing for food safety

30 May, 2020

Ranjana Sharma, Mumbai

The outbreak of Corona virus has had a significant impact not only on public health, but also on all stages of the supply chain and value chain of various industries across the states.

Maharashtra being worst affected by the pandemic and Assam being affected by natural calamities, the challenges to ensure food safety remain high priority for food safety authorities in these and other states across India.

Speaking with FnB News, Suresh Annapure, Joint Commissioner, Amravati, Maharashtra, said, "We have spoken to FBOs on how to take care of the customers coming inside and labour working, they should be sanitised, they should use gloves, mask, these instructions are available on website also."

Regarding coordination between state machinery and food safety department, he said, "What we have done is our commission officers have created a WhatsApp group. In fact, we have added all the manufacturers and stakeholders, if they have any issue of transportation related to any farms and all that, we have appointed nodal officer for each district, assistant commissioner in each district has been appointed as nodal officer for the take-off of these kinds of complaint and this kind of issue. With concerned FBOs and stakeholders, we contact with them and Assistant Commissioner will help them in coordination with collector office as well as police department."

While ensuring food safety, he said, "We can say that we are instructing our FBOs to take care as per the Schedule 4 of the Act and sensitisation is required and hygiene required as per Covid-19. Frequently use the sanitiser, use the gloves, maintain social distancing as well as other customer also social distancing likewise we have done."

He explained, "Whenever we visit for any complaint or any regular inspection we try to make them aware about what kind of care should be taken for the purpose of Covid-19 like maintain social distancing, we should use the mask, group sanitiser whenever the labour comes, we should wash the hands, wear the mask then they should take that and frequently should sanitise their hands.

Meanwhile, L R Nampui, Commissionerate of Food Safety, Bamunimaidan, Guwahati, Assam said, "The Commissioner of Food Safety has issued circulars from time to time on how to maintain hygiene/ sanitation by FBOs. FSSAI has also issued Food Hygiene and Safety

guidelines to all the states during Covid-19 pandemic. These guidelines are forwarded to all Food Safety Enforcement Officers in the districts for implementation. Nampui further reveals that FSSAI has also conducted video conferencing training on Covid-19 to FSOs of the state.

Accordingly food establishments are being monitored. “Factories are partially working. Hotels, dhabas, bar etc. totally closed. Sweetmeat shops reopened for spot delivery and District Administration and Food Safety Enforcement Officers are coordinating and working together,” he said.