

Business Today

Street food to be audited for cleanliness and hygiene by FSSAI

Ahmedabad's Kankaria Lake area became India's first Clean Street Food Hub in July this year.

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PC: Reuters

Indian street food experience could soon undergo a massive change if Food Safety and Standards Authority of India's (FSSAI) plans follows to fruition. FSSAI is implementing a "clean street food hub programme" so that you can enjoy your chaats and gol guppas without bothering about hygiene. The autonomous body has identified 144 clusters across the country that would be audited by FSSAI along with state authorities for cleanliness and hygiene.

Such clusters would be encouraged to keep up with certain practices and standards and the ones that meet the criteria will be given a clean street food hub certificate.

Ahmedabad's Kankaria Lake area is one such example. In July, the area that has 66 vendors became India's first Clean Street Food Hub, as mentioned in a report in The Economic Times. There is a FSSAI certification on display in the area that is visited by 1.2 crore people every year. Arbind Singh, national coordinator of National Association of Street Vendors of India said that such certified street vending zones provide safe, tasty and affordable eating options for citizens and tourists, along with the local ambience and flavour, as mentioned in the daily.

Not only hygienic environs, this will also provide better employment opportunities. This initiative will improve the prospects of around 20 lakh street food vendors in India as well as give tourism a boost. But all in all, this is only part of FSSAI's larger game plan that seeks to ensure that all food business operators adhere to certain standards and hygiene. FSSAI also wants food served in schools, offices and hospitals to come under its initiatives.

FSSAI will, however, have to make sure that vendors have access to clean water and garbage disposal system. They have also started a massive training programme in Delhi across 40 locations, covering 23,000 vendors.

The organisation is also redefining its role as a mere licensing and testing body to an organisation that addresses the core issues of health and nutrition in the body, the daily mentioned. They also want FMCG and food companies to reformulate their products to address the issue of nutrition and health in the country.

As part of this move, the organisation also ordered online delivery platforms such as Zomato and Swiggy to delist restaurants and food business operators that do not comply with its regulations.