

For immediate release

FSSAI publishes rebuttal to the article published in Dainik Bhaskar on 26th October 2020 regarding FoSCoS

New Delhi, November 01, 2020: This is with reference to the article “Niyamon mein phanse food vyapari” published in Dainik Bhaskar on 26th October 2020. The article is factually inaccurate. The fact of the matter is that there has been no change in the provisions regarding licensing and registration. Licensing and registration has been an online service since 2011. Whether he application has to be addressed by the State authorities or FSSAI, the experience for the food business is the same. An improved IT platform with more facilities and ease of operation is being implemented now.

The first point raised is that all food business operators will now have to approach FSSAI for a licence. This is not true. Only very limited licenses are to be obtained from FSSAI and the rest are delegated to state government officials. **Only businesses with turnover of more than Rs. 20 crores per annum have to take a license from FSSAI. Another condition is that manufacturers of proprietary foods have to take licences from FSSAI.** As on date, less than 1% of the total food businesses in the country are licensed by FSSAI.

Traditional Indian sweets and namkeen were always treated as proprietary items because no standards exist for them. The respective associations of manufacturers have been approached to help FSSAI in framing standards, but they are still working on these proposals. **It is clarified that these items have been proprietary foods ever since the inception of FSSAI and there has been no recent change.**

The condition of employing a technical in-charge has been in force ever since 2011 for manufacturers of food commodities and is also not a fresh condition. **This condition applies only to licensed food businesses and not those who are registered. It is clarified that food service establishments such as a halwai making kachoris would not be treated as a manufacturer and this clause would not be attracted in his case.** It will only apply to factory type establishments where kachoris are being manufactured and packaged and sold as a packaged product.

Another reform that has been proposed by FSSAI is to have perpetual licenses instead of the present practice of limited time period licenses. Food business operators would only have to submit their annual returns online and pay nominal annual charges in order to retain active status of the license.

The fees of Rs. 100/- applies to registration of businesses with turnover upto Rs. 12 lakhs. In case of a license, the fees are higher and vary from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 7,500. It may be clarified here that Rs. 7,500 is the highest license fees which is charged from businesses with very high turnover.

The apprehension that packaging material will be rendered useless because of change in license number is not factually correct. As per rules, FSSAI provides a time period of at least six months to utilize the existing packaging material and this time period can be extended on a case to case basis.

Good manufacturing practices have been a part of Regulations ever since 2004. Every small or big manufacturer of food items has to annually get the water quality certified and this is a necessary condition in order to ensure food safety for customers. Any dilution of this may lead to food borne illnesses which would be detrimental to the health of the general public. Similarly, the requirement of glazed tiles; caps, aprons and gloves for workers and other hygienic requirements apply to the kitchen area of any food business. These conditions are also essential to maintain proper hygiene and to ensure good quality of food preparations. Any dilution of these also would not be desirable in the public interest.

It has been mentioned in the news article that manufacturers producing less than 2000 kg per year could earlier obtain a licence from the district authorities and they will now have to approach FSSAI. This is not correct factually. There has been no change in the turnover or quantity of production requirements for FSSAI licensing. **As clarified earlier, only registration with district authorities is required up to a turnover of Rs.12 lakhs per annum. From Rs. 12 lakhs to Rs. 20 crores per annum, state government authorities issue licences and FSSAI comes into the picture only for a turnover of more than Rs. 20 crores or more than 2 MT per day.**

However, in the case of proprietary foods, FSSAI license has to be obtained. This has been the rule position ever since 2011 and there is no recent change in this position. FSSAI has been interacting with mithai and namkeen manufacturers to design standards at the earliest. It can be reasonably expected that within the next six months we would be able to have vertical standards for mithai and namkeen, in which case they would be no requirement of obtaining license from the central authority for them.

Looking at the difficulties being faced by mithai and namkeen manufacturers in migrating to the new IT platform, a one-year relaxation has been provided to them by FSSAI. According to this relaxation, renewal by State authorities has been permitted upto June 2021 and they would not need to approach FSSAI for license. It is expected that vertical standards for these products would come in force before this relaxation period ends, and then they would be able to obtain licenses based on turnover, so that there would be no disruption.

For media queries, contact:

Ruchika Sharma
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
E: sharmaruchika.21@gmail.com