



Eat Right Challenge

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), has initiated the Eat Right India movement. The movement is based on three key themes, 'if it's not safe, it's not food' (safe food), 'food should not only serve the palate but is also meant for body and mind' (healthy diets) and 'food has to be good both for people and the planet' (sustainable diets).

Shri Arun Singhal, CEO, FSSAI

The Eat Right Challenge was envisioned as a competition among districts and cities to recognize their efforts in adopting and scaling up various initiatives under Eat Right India. Further, it was meant to motivate States/UTs to improve performance and encourage others to join.

Salient Features

The Eat Right India Movement is working on three key themes through a graded "Food Systems Approach" (FSA) to address these issues

in a holistic manner by building on the collective action of all stakeholders - consumers, food businesses, community organizations, experts, professionals, and the government. Multiple actions, not only on the supply-side, but also on the demand-side are needed. Therefore, various actionables under the Challenge have been categorized under four sectors:

- ❖ **Robust food regulatory system:** The food authority has taken informed steps to

formulate new and strengthen the existing food standards in the country. This includes setting globally-benchmarked standards, credible food testing, surveillance and various enforcement activities. Through the Challenge, the aim is to broaden the reach of registration/licensing, enforcement, surveillance, among other core regulatory activities of FSSAI.

- ❖ **Self-compliance of food businesses and capacity building:** Food may be contaminated with a variety of microorganisms at various stages across the supply chain – post-harvesting, storing, processing or during handling operations. Through training and certification of both big and small businesses, and unorganized vendors, self-compliance to regulations and standards set by the Authority can be achieved through a graded approach.
- ❖ **Changing food environments:** Preventive healthcare is critical and lowers the burden of disease on the country and hence boosts productivity of its people. As food is a common thread linking citizens everywhere, the food authority's approach is to transform the 'food environment' in the country to provide safe, healthy, nutritious, and sustainable diets to all. While doing so, engagement with both the consumers and the food industry is strengthened.
- ❖ **Mass mobilization:** To make Eat Right India a people's movement, the authority is planning to organise large-scale citizen-centric campaigns to bring about social and behavioural change. This includes awareness generation about reduction in the consumption of High Fat, Trans-fat, Salt and Sugar foods, while promoting consumption of local, seasonal and fortified foods for better health outcomes. This will create an environment of opting for informed healthier choices.

Outcomes and Effects

- **To strengthen food safety through the food regulatory environment:** Under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the food safety administrations in the States / UTs are expected to create food environments where safe and wholesome food is available for all. This will ensure that a database of licensed/registered food businesses is available with FSSAI.



- **To provide for safe and healthier food options by enabling the supply side:** The food environment today is working towards delivering healthy diets. They are still at the risk of malnutrition, and increasing incidence of foodborne illnesses. This can be addressed by adoption of healthier



menus, reducing high fat, trans-fat, sugar and salt foods, and adequately disposing used cooking oil for production of biodiesel at the food industry end. Nudging the food businesses to provide for healthier options in their food menus and products is, therefore, necessary. Food safety can thus be achieved by building capacities of the businesses and ensuring self-compliance to regulations.

- **To engage with citizens for adoption and demanding healthier diets:** Eat Right India is people’s movement with targeted promotion of dietary diversity and balanced diets, eating mindfully and timely, and promoting large-scale fortification of staples to address micronutrient deficiencies are some ways to encourage the consumer demand for healthier diets. This will ensure lower incidence of disease and increased focus on preventive healthcare through social behaviour change.

The Eat Right Challenge for Cities and Districts received participation from 188 cities and districts and 75 have been declared as winners

based on their performance across five broad parameters. Grant of Rs. 5, 00,000/- (Rupees Five Lakh Only) to each district/city was provided for undertaking various Eat Right India initiatives. During the Challenge, participating cities and districts had taken various efforts to improve the food environment in their respective areas.

The top 10 districts in order of their ranks in top 75 are Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Vadodra (Gujarat), Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh), Thiruvallur (Tamil Nadu), Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh), Kancheepuram (Tamil Nadu), Salem (Tamil Nadu) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).



Further, looking at the overwhelming response from participating districts in

Phase I, the Phase II of the Eat Right Challenge for Districts has also been initiated. The Eat Right Challenge for Districts (Phase II) is envisioned as a competition among districts to recognize their efforts in adopting and scaling up various initiatives under Eat Right India. Further, it is meant to motivate States to develop a food strategy that supports a healthy, safe, and sustainable food environment, through participating districts.