

Transforming India Food Safety & Nutrition System

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The broad brush regulations and the framework are in place. In the coming years, focus is on strengthening the enforcement and surveillance systems that we have. That means adding human resources, both at the Centre and the State; making sure that we are going in a systematic way on high risk products on the surveillance part. So this piece on the enforcement and surveillance will be much more focused, risk-based and targeted to high risk commodities. **Ms. Rita Teotia, Chairperson, FSSAI** P 10



FSSAI is gradually transitioning from enforcer to enabler and reformer. This integrative approach is unique for a developing economy like India, with its challenges in size, complexity, food diversity and the large unorganised sector. Eat Right India will be a good template for collective attention in the UN's 2021 Food System Summit: **Mr Pawan Agarwal, CEO FSSAI** P 17

Editors Note:

It's been almost a decade since we started our journey under the FSS Rules & Regulations 2011. The new year will bring changes and challenges, which we assure will align our efforts towards the single objective of assuring safe & nutritious food to the citizens of our country. P 3

Core Regulatory Functions

Compliance & Enforcement

- Notification regarding rectification process of minor labelling defects in the context of adjudication proceedings against concerned FBOs
[Notification](#) Page 4

- "We can offer self-compliance as an economic rationale for food businesses" Ms Rita Teotia
[Issues in Detail](#) Page 10

Laboratory Services

- 20 rapid food test kits/equipment approved for regulatory and surveillance purposes
[Scheme](#) Page 4

Transforming Food Environment

- Order to standardize Street Food Carts under Clean Street Food Hub initiative to uplift food safety, hygiene of street food vending
[In the news](#) Page 5

- Applications invited for Senior (SFFan) and Junior (JFFaN) fellowships under the FSSAI funded project Network for Scientific Co-operation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (NetSCoFAN)
[Notification](#) Page 16

Eat Right Initiatives

Mass Mobilization

- The online Eat Right Quiz organized at the Mygov portal covering areas around healthy eating, safe food, consumer empowerment, food laws & regulatory ecosystem received entries from about 1 lakh participants.

[Campaign](#) Page 6

- "With the Eat Right India movement, we seek to secure a healthy future" Mr. Pawan Agarwal

[Issues in Detail](#) Page 17

- Rude Food by Vir Sanghvi: The annual street food festival report

[In the news](#) Page 21

- Alexa, tell the kids to 'eat right': FSSAI

[In the news](#) Page 29

Convergence & Partnerships

- FSSAI and National Institute of Open Schooling collaborates with vocational and academic verticals for food safety education and integration

[MOU](#) Page 8

INSIDE

(Table of Contents)

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Core Regulatory Functions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Standards</i>• <i>Laboratory Services</i>• <i>Compliance & Enforcement</i>• <i>Food Imports</i> | Page 04 - 05 |
| Transforming Food Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Third Party Audits & Hygiene Ratings</i>• <i>Training & Capacity Building</i> | Page 05 - 06 |
| Mass Mobilization <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Campaigns</i>• <i>Agreements</i>• <i>Events/ Melas</i> | Page 06 - 07 |
| Convergence & Partnerships Page 13 - 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International Cooperation• MOUs | Page 08 |
| Appendix <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Issues in Details<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interviews• Opinion Pieces• Advertorials• In The News2. Press Releases | Page 10- 30 |

EDITOR NOTE

Dear Readers,

Greetings!

As we begin another year, it's time for all of us to look ahead and create synergies to design our path forward. It's been almost a decade since we started our journey under the FSS Rules & Regulations 2011. The new year will bring changes and challenges, which we assure will align our efforts towards the safe & nutritious food to the citizens of our country.

I am delighted to update that FSSAI has made a quick progress towards the use of advanced technologies to strengthen the food testing ecosystem in the country. Under the 2019 regulations (as per RAFT scheme) for the approval of rapid testing devices, kits and methods, FSSAI has thus far, given approval for 20 such rapid food test kits/equipments. State governments may soon equip their labs and food safety officers with these rapid testing kits and devices for regulatory and surveillance purposes.

The collective effort around amplification of the 'Eat Right India' movement at the ground-level remains another opportunistic area for us. The outcome of one such interesting campaign we started in the beginning of last month on the MyGov Platform (<https://quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/>) was an online Eat Right Quiz covering areas around healthy eating, safe food, consumer empowerment, food laws & regulatory ecosystem. The Quiz was conducted for almost one month with entries from over one lakh participants. A poll was also conducted to get valuable feedback/suggestions from the participants for enhancing user experience of forthcoming activities. I would like to thank many of our stakeholders including food businesses who promoted this quiz through their corporate platforms and made it a huge success.

On behalf of FSSAI, I thank you, our patrons and supporters. Please do go through this issue to know more about our key activities and share your valuable suggestions.

Hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Warmly,
Inoshi Sharma, Director SBCD
Food Safety & Standards Authority of India
directorfssai@gmail.com

I. Core Regulatory Functions

I.1. Laboratory Services

1) Grant to State Food Testing Laboratories

A grant of Rs. 50 lakhs (Rupees fifty lakhs only) has been released to the State of Tamilnadu for 'Setting Up of Microbiological Laboratory' in Food Analysis Laboratory, Guindy under the Central Sector Scheme.

2) Strengthening of food testing ecosystem through rapid food testing devices

- i. Rapid Analytical Food Testing (RAFT) Kit/Equipment/Method: Under the RAFT Scheme of FSSAI, 20 rapid food test kits/equipment were approved for regulatory and surveillance purposes; 11 rapid food test kits/equipment were provisionally approved for surveillance purposes. These kits/equipment ensure "faster, better, cheaper" real-time testing of food. These can be used by field officers/ Analysts to get quick results for tests conducted on different food products. These kits with approval of FSSAI may be used in future by the network of laboratories/ FBOs/ Any interested for conducting variety of tests as recommended.
More details are available at:
https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/RAFT_Status_08_01_2020.pdf
- ii. Notification of Food Testing Laboratories: Food testing laboratories have been approved by FSSAI. This has raised the total number of FSSAI notified food testing laboratories from 183 to 187.
- iii. FSSAI removes ammonium sulphate from milk adulterants under Testing Scheme: "After a careful review of scientific opinion, the scientific group reached to a conclusion that ammonium sulphate may also come into the milk naturally, and may not be considered as a contaminant as earlier thought. It was noted that ammonium sulphate is allowed as an additive in certain foods in several countries
More details are available at:
https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Report_Milk_Survey_NMOS_Final_18_10_2019.pdf

I.2. Compliance & Enforcement:

A letter dated 17th January, 2020 was issued by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to all Central and State Licensing Authority regarding the rectification process for cases of minor labelling defects without any food safety concern and has advised the State and UT

enforcement agencies to take action under Section 32 of the FSS Act in cases of minor labelling defects that do not jeopardise food safety.

More details are available at: https://fssai.gov.in/upload/advisories/2020/01/5e2583b3aeb6dLetter_Rectification_Labeling_Defects_20_01_2020.pdf

II. Transforming Food Environment

II.1. Third part audits and hygiene ratings

1) Order for Standardized Street Food Carts

FSSAI issued an order dated 13th January, 2020 to standardize Street Food Cart under Clean Street Food Hub initiative. All the states in this regard were requested to identify key locations and devise their roadmap for the distribution and subsequent usage of the model carts. This initiative will strengthen the unorganized street food sector and to uplift food safety, hygiene of street food vending.

More details are available at: <https://avantis.co.in/legalupdates/article/7899/fssai-standardize-the-street-food-cart-under-clean-street-food-hub/>

II.2. Training & Capacity Building

1) FoSTaC Trainings

Under FoSTaC (Food Safety Training and Certification) initiative, total of **(965)** training programmes have been conducted in collaboration with training partners during January 2020.

2) Training on Microbiological Techniques for Analysis of high Risk Food-Meat and Poultry"

A Hands on Training on Microbiological Techniques for Analysis of high Risk Food-Meat and Poultry" was organized from 20th - 24th January, 2020 at Centre for Microbiological Analysis Training (CMAT), National Food Laboratory (NFL), Ghaziabad in association with CHIFFS.

The microbial safety of meat products is an important aspect in the context of increasing consumption and production. This laboratory course aimed at building capacities of the industry professionals, academia, microbiologist and laboratory personnel to learn and perform experiments with high risk category specifically focusing on meat and poultry and microorganisms present in the sources and provide training in basic microbiological techniques and rapid techniques. A total of 11 participants from the private sector laboratories participated. More such trainings shall be organised by FSSAI and CHIFFS in the near future.

More details are available at: <https://www.fssai.gov.in/cms/previous-training-programs.php>

3) Training Program on Good Food Laboratory Practice

Training Program on Good Food Laboratory Practice was conducted at International Training Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (ITC-FSAN), Mumbai from 28th - 30th January, 2020 for the food analysts & other scientific/technical personnel working in State Food Testing Laboratories and Notified Laboratories.

4) Inviting Applications for Senior and Junior Fellowships in Food Safety and Nutrition (FFaN)

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) invites applications from bright young men and women from India for Senior (SFFaN) and Junior (JFFaN) fellowships under the FSSAI funded project Network for Scientific Co-operation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (NetSCoFAN) that will be implemented at different lead institutions across India. The selected SFFaN and JFFaN will get an opportunity to work under the expert guidance of lead scientist(s) of these lead institutions. Only bonafide Indian citizens are eligible for this fellowship.

The details regarding the above mentioned positions can be viewed at the FSSAI website (<http://www.fssai.gov.in>)

III. Mass Mobilization

III.1. Campaigns

1) Online Eat Right Quiz

FSSAI organised an interesting campaign in the month of January along with MyGov Platform. The online Eat Right Quiz was organized at the Mygov portal and covered areas around healthy eating, safe food, consumer empowerment, food laws & regulatory ecosystem. The Quiz was conducted for almost one month and received entries from about 1 lakh participants. Top 100 performers are awarded Rs. 1000 cash prize along with certificate of appreciation. Eat right quiz poll was also conducted before the announcement of Quiz results to the participants to share their valuable feedback on the quiz as well as suggestions in enhancing user experiences and development of forthcoming activities in the context of Eat Right India. I also appreciated many of our stakeholders including businesses who promoted this quiz through their corporate platforms.



III. 2. Events and exhibitions:

FSSAI participated in the following exhibitions for public awareness, consumer education, publicity of FSSAI's initiatives and to develop strong engagements with various stakeholders: -

- 1) 107th Indian Science Congress (ISC) - Pride of India Expo held from 3rd - 7th January, 2020 at GVK Campus, University of Agriculture Sciences Bengaluru. The main aim of the participation was to engage the scientific fraternity, academia, R&D institutes for public awareness as well as for developing strong engagements. FSSAI highlighted the Network for Scientific Cooperation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (NetSCoFAN) initiative and the FSSAI stall was awarded as Best Design Stall at the Pride of India Expo.



- 2) Indus Food 2020 organized by Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India and Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) on 8th and 9th January, 2020 at India Exposition Mart, Greater Noida NCR, India. Visitors including FBOs, importers, and exporters from national as well as international visited the FSSAI stall. The exhibition provided an excellent platform to FSSAI to engage with these diverse stakeholders. The platform was successfully utilized for developing strong engagements with stakeholders. FSSAI's effort to make FBOs understand about FLRS, FICS, Hygiene ratings and FOSTAC Trainings, RUCO and Eat Right initiatives were highly appreciated. The design, concept and information available and provided in the stall were appreciated by the visitors.



IV. Convergence & partnerships

IV.1. MoUs

1) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between FSSAI and National Institute of Open Schooling

On 22nd January, 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between FSSAI and National Institute of Open Schooling on collaboration with vocational and academic verticals for food safety education and integration. NIOS and FSSAI by coming together in a collaboration will not only create awareness about the need and requirement of food safety and hygiene but would also provide knowledge, skill and abilities to the learner to undertake employment (self/wage) in this key sector. The content developed by FSSAI on food safety and hygiene will also be incorporated in NIOS learning materials for home science and relevant academic and vocational programmes.



Issues in Details



“WE CAN OFFER SELF-COMPLIANCE AS AN ECONOMIC RATIONALE FOR FOOD BUSINESSES”

By CATR, (Centre for Advance Trade Research) | January 29, 2020

Rita Teaotia, Chairperson, FSSAI, talks to TPCI about the body's major priority areas and how it is handling the complex challenge of ensuring food safety in India, especially due to the large organised sector and non-uniformity of regulation across states.



TPCI: FSSAI is now in existence over the past 10 years. How has the organisation evolved, what has it accomplished so far, and what are the key agenda points going forward?

Rita Teaotia: It's been almost a decade since we started our journey under the FSSAI Act. The broad brush regulations and the framework are in place. What I think the focus will be on in the coming years is on strengthening the enforcement

and surveillance systems that we have. That means adding human resources, both at the Centre and the State; making sure that we are going in a systematic way on high risk products on the surveillance part. So this piece on the enforcement and surveillance will be much more focused, risk-based and targeted to high risk commodities. The second aspect is testing of food products. Although we now have a network of around 266 accredited laboratories, the capacities of these must be expanded to test the full gamut of food products. We have certain labs with the state governments, which have not yet achieved NABL accreditation. This year, it is mandatory for everyone to do it. We have given financial support through basic and high-end equipment, bio-testing, etc. All that is also being provided to the states. At the same time, they must have the human resources and be operational.

For testing on the spot and some bit of confidence building among consumers and industries, we have provided 'Food safety on Wheels'. As of now, 42 are already in the field, but we will ramp these numbers up as the utilization grows. Food safety on Wheels is equipped for rapid testing of food products as well as for outreach efforts, education levels, awareness and some level of training. So on the testing front, this is largely what we would support.

The third bit perhaps could be the capacity building. We have created a FOSTAC programme, which provides training courses to food businesses so they can move towards more improved self-compliance. But while the partners are now in excess of 200, the universe is so large that this is a continuous process. In some states it's taken on well, but we expect FOSTAC to be a big driver towards self-compliance by the players.

We have also taken up a lot of initiatives that were industry and consumer facing, but more consumer facing, like Eat Right Campuses and various awareness initiatives. The frameworks are in place. Deepening them and taking them across the country is the way forward.

TPCI: Of late, a lot of fast food chains and processed food items have become popular across the length and breadth of the country. Given their magnanimous presence, how is FSSAI taking the Eat Right Campaign forward?

Rita Teatota: The Eat Right India movement is being helmed by FSSAI as a crucial preventive healthcare measure to trigger social and behavioural change through a judicious mix of regulatory measures, combined with soft interventions for ensuring awareness and capacity building of food businesses and citizens alike. It

focuses heavily on consumer awareness through different mediums to promote safe, healthy and sustainable food. This movement covers three broad themes including:

1. Eat Safe: Ensuring food safety through personal and surrounding hygiene, safe food practices and combating adulteration.
2. Eat Healthy: Ensuring healthy diets by promoting balanced diets, fortified foods and limiting intake of salt, sugar and fat
3. Eat Sustainable: Ensuring sustainable food production by promoting local, seasonal food, water conservation, minimizing food waste and plastic use.

Taking the Eat Right message across the country has to be a multi-pronged approach, because there are different groups of stakeholders. Eating safe is actually about personal habits - how you are keeping yourself and your surroundings hygienic. How is the food preparation, both at home and in the food businesses? How do you tackle the problems of adulteration?

How do you eat healthy? We are talking about wholesome diets. Most regulators don't talk about them, but we are doing a lot of that. There is a focus on eating wholesome and eating fortified products (because micro-nutrient deficiencies afflict more than 70% of our population. You will see in the campaign with Rajkummar Rao that will talk about eating less of sugar, less of salt, less of oil.

The third aspect on sustainability talks about consuming local foods, eating in season, reducing wastage, ensuring there is distribution where there is waste, etc. So these are the three big planks. We are undertaking a lot of measures to take this forward.

One piece is the outreach kind of programmes. We are leveraging big influencers in our promotional films. We are pushing Eat Right campaign in campuses, jails, cantonments, railway stations, etc. - any confined area.

In addition, we also have large scale movements like the Swasth Bharat Yatra that we did around a year and a half ago. You can't do that all the time but in focused and hard form, Eat Right melas are happening across the country carry that message forward and the scale of that forward. Then we have created resources. These are training resources both within FSSAI and easily accessible to people and also IC resources through our website and media library that are easily downloadable. We have also created books like the dart book for detection of adulteration, the pink book on eating right at home, the yellow book on eating

right at schools, etc. These are not just feel good resources, but they are designed and written by experts in simple layman language so that they become more accessible. We have a series of these, for hospitals, homes, campuses, etc. So creating these resources and training tools are all the elements that go towards the Eat Right.

TPCI: How is FSSAI looking to collaborate with food aggregators like Zomato and Swiggy, considering they have a number of restaurants on their platform?

Rita Teatia: In fact, we are looking at the way modern food businesses are. With e-commerce platforms like Zomato and Swiggy, direct selling agents do not have a place. Considering the various other kinds of ways in which food is being produced and sold, we are looking at how we can regulate this. But on the specific question of food-tech platforms, I think that they weren't clear how food safety standards apply to them. But as someone who is ensuring food availability to a consumer, you are part of this value chain. So you definitely do get covered, both for responsibility and for regulation. The good part about it is that they have begun to insist that all the restaurants on their platform are licensed. They were not bothered about this earlier and they did have unlicensed people on their platform. Happily, they are also beginning to ask for the hygiene ratings. And they are saying that they will display them. I think this is all positive, because a very large number of restaurants are on their platforms. So if they work as a persuader and it is an economic persuasion, I think that it is a good measure. We found them very positive and constructive in their approach.

TPCI: According to media reports, a proposal regarding regulation of export assignments and liberalization measures to help cos set up businesses more quickly has been in the pipeline. What progress has been made in this regard?

Rita Teatia: When the FSSAI was set up, the act specifically excluded exports. Now ten years later there is definitely a rationale for integrating the whole thing. After all imports must meet the domestic standards. Exports must at least meet the domestic and then the front facing standards of the country where they are being supplied to. Having said that I would like to add that the level of rejections that India faced in the past has definitely come down in the last decade. And my strong belief is that it has come down because we export around 10% of what we produce. If you comply with the domestic standards and they are harmonized with the global standards as our standards are, then you are already largely compliant.

In that sense, I think we have had a positive influence. But going forward we feel that exports of food products must also come within the purview of FSSAI in the same way as exports are, to ensure that there is consistency. Also, this will ensure that our large network of laboratories, human resources, etc is committed to this task to ensure quality - both for our own consumers and for the products we send out. We have made the proposal to the Ministry, but it will require an amendment to our Act. This is among one of the elements that we have suggested.

TPCI: What is your major challenge going forward as the apex food regulator of the country? Also, what does FSSAI plan to do to include food safety at the farm level within its ambit?

Rita Teatota: The hardest thing to do at this point in time is to ensure uniformity of enforcement throughout the country. Our Act actually specifies that the FSSAI sets the standards, the regulation, testing, recognition of laboratories, audit agencies, etc. But on the ground, who is doing the enforcement, bulk of the licensing - that role is taken by the state governments. So if the state government has put a focus and emphasis on food safety and has the human resources, we have a fairly good case going and we have several states like that. But there are some states where it is put at very low priority. So we need to now get the regulatory part uniform throughout the country. That will only be the tool that will ensure food safety and it has to come by involving all the stakeholders - food businesses, consumers, etc. So that piece we are doing separately. We have recognized that in order for everybody to eat right and safe, it is not just going to be with a food safety officer 'wielding a stick' as he will only do sample checks. There has to be education and awareness among all stakeholders particularly the consumers and the food businesses, because they are the main players. But the hard work over the next couple of years has to be on getting uniformity of enforcement for the country.

In case of farmers, we are limited by our legislation. We do not regulate the farmers and the primary producers. Our point of regulation begins from the first point of sale. While we do look at transport, packaging, storage, we do not cover the primary production. But we have a close collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry as well.

TPCI: India has a huge network of unorganised food businesses down to the street food level. What has been your strategic approach to cover them?

Rita Teotia: Regulating the unorganized sector is a large challenge. Firstly, we insist on registration. Anybody in the food business, even if it is a street food person should have registration. It allows us to know what business, where, and when some episode occurs, we know where to go back to. We also want to talk about the basics of hygiene and safety to these people. Some of our initiatives such as the Clean Street Food Hub is targeted at the street food vendors, who are grouped together. Supported by at least either the state government or municipal body or whoever, through water supply, solid waste management, etc, we add to that. So the elements of this certification that we do for clean street food hubs is training, gap assessment and gap filling, and finally certification. Then that certification is revalidated. It is a third party certification. It involves a small fee, but we largely arrange for CSR funds to pay for that fee. People are happy to do this.

Similarly, we are looking at clean vegetable markets, meat businesses, etc and these are small and medium ones. So it is more of strengthening that piece, which we are doing in a very large way now.

TPCI: Are there some major countries that you look at as benchmarks in the food regulation space? What learnings do their success stories provide?

Rita Teotia: For the ambition and scale that we are trying to do here, I don't see any other developing country looking at it. You look at the basic diet and safety issues; this is something that they don't do. Developed countries have the advantage that they have crossed all the steps, which we are trying to do. They have much more organised food businesses, while 70% food businesses in India are unorganized. Therefore, their solutions and resources are also very different. We have to find a more frugal, low cost and high impact way of working. That is the reason why we have so many partnerships. These are the only way in which we can, with limited resources, do the maximum outreach, get the maximum people involved talking about it. We are working with institutions, networks of professionals, consumer bodies, training institutions, various laboratories, food safety mitras, audit agencies, etc. These are all different groups who are contributing to the same task. In a country of our size and scale and limited resources, is the only way we will be able to actually get everybody in.

TPCI: There are international perceptions of Indian food being unsafe. Is tackling this a mandate that you pursue?

Rita Teatia: We are not looking at it as a mandate, but things like hygiene ratings, the visibility to these ratings, the Eat Right Street Food hubs, etc. are critical steps. Everywhere in my meetings with the states, we keep the tourism people in. We tell them to talk about this in their pitches. Everywhere you go, make people know that if they want to go out and eat Indian food, they can definitely go ahead. These are the safe places to eat because they are the hygiene rated ones. These are the clean street food hubs. We think that itself has an economic impact. The first one we did was in Gujarat. They were so charmed by the idea that in Ahmedabad city alone, the food commissioner said that he was flooded with applications. People see it from the perspective of business, for instance Eat Right food trucks. So there is an economic rationale when you offer it this way - here is a tool for self-compliance. Don't meet my inspector or my officers. Pay the notified third party certification agency their fees and get yourself audited and certified. You get the right to put the stamp for a year or three years as applicable. So I think these kind of solutions will finally get the message across, instead of heavy handed ones.

Rita Teatia assumed the office of chairperson, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India on November 28, 2018. She joined the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in the year 1981 and served in the districts of Panchmahal and Gandhinagar in Gujarat. Subsequently, she worked in the energy sector as managing director, Gujarat Industries Power Company Ltd, and secretary, energy, Government of Gujarat. Over a career spanning 35 years, she has worked extensively in both policy making and practise in varied sectors, including energy, health, rural development, IT (information technology) and telecommunications. Teatia worked as Commerce Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry between July 2015 and July 2018, before joining FSSAI.

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WITH THE EAT RIGHT INDIA MOVEMENT, WE SEEK TO SECURE A HEALTHY FUTURE

TRANSFORMING OUR FOOD SYSTEM POSES ONE OF THE GREATEST LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF OUR TIME

ANALYSIS Updated: Jan 02, 2020 20:07 IST

Pawan Agarwal



Food systems around the world are delivering unhealthy diets, raising the risk of death and disease, malnutrition, and rising obesity. Building a world where safe and nutritious food is available for everyone and everywhere requires transformation of the food systems

We are what we eat, and we eat what we get. But we do not get what we need. We get what our food system provides.

Food systems around the world are delivering unhealthy diets, raising the risk of death and disease, malnutrition, and rising obesity. Building a world where safe and nutritious food is available for everyone and everywhere requires transformation of the food systems.

Food systems lie at the interface of agriculture and rural economy, industry and commerce, public health and environment. Transforming them requires cooperation, partnerships and alliances, with public-private collaborations cutting across traditional silos. This poses one of the greatest leadership challenges and opportunities of our generation.

Food systems are critical to many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognising this, the UN will host a Food Systems Summit in 2021 as part of the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs.

At the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), we are leading a movement called Eat Right India, to provide safe and wholesome food to people everywhere. This requires a mix of regulatory, capacity building, collaborative and empowerment tools. By combining supportive actions to its primary regulatory mandate, we are taking a “food systems approach” to address these issues in a holistic manner. FSSAI was applauded for it by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Mann Ki Baat radio address in December last year.

The Eat Right India movement is a collective effort based on three pillars: Safety (if it’s not safe, it’s not food); Health (food should not only serve the palate but the body and mind); and Sustainability (food has to be good both for people and the planet).

There are five concrete actions under each pillar. Under safety, the focus is on ensuring personal and surrounding hygiene, maintaining hygienic and sanitary practices through the food supply chain, combating adulteration, reducing toxins

and contaminants in food, and controlling food hazards in processing and manufacturing processes.

Under the healthy diet pillar, we promote dietary diversity and balanced diets, eating less and timely, eliminating toxic industrial trans fats from food, reducing consumption of salt, sugar and saturated fats, and promoting large-scale fortification of staples to address micronutrient deficiencies.

The sustainable diet actions promote local and seasonal foods, preventing food loss and food waste, conserving water in food value chains, reducing use of chemicals in food production and preservation, and the use of safer and sustainable packaging.

These actions aim to achieve three things: inspire public trust in food available to people in the market or through government programmes, through improved safety and quality of food; second, to build a strong culture of self-compliance in all food businesses across the supply chain, with better ease of doing business; and finally, to promote safe, healthy and sustainable diets through both demand and supply side interventions, to protect the health of the people and the planet.

There is action on the ground as well. This includes certification of clean street food hubs, fruit and vegetable markets, hygiene rating of halwai shops, meat shops, safety of food served in religious places, and so on. Eat Right India's home, school and campus initiatives are settings-based approaches to providing the right food environments so that people get what they need.

Mass campaigns with celebrity influencers like Virat Kohli, Raj Kumar Rao, Juhi Chawla and Sakshi Tanwar are triggering behavioural changes for informed food choices. A rich repository of content and messaging (print, digital audio and video) has been created and disseminated. A nation-wide scaling up of the Eat Right India movement is now planned.

The Eat Right India targets people across ages, gender, regions, and socioeconomic groups. It brings together food-related mandates of the agriculture, health, industry and environment ministries, with a “whole of government” approach. As a platform for collective action of stakeholders – consumers, food businesses, community organisations, experts and professionals, and the government – it is in fact a “whole of society” approach. It connects with other flagship programs – Ayushman Bharat, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Poshan Abhiyaan, Fit India movement – to institutionalise preventive health care as a way of life.

The Eat Right India movement has forged partnerships with food and nutrition professionals: dieticians, nutritionists, medical doctors, chefs, food scientists, technologists and analysts. They support outreach in collaboration with state food authorities.

FSSAI is gradually transitioning from enforcer to enabler and reformer. This integrative approach is unique for a developing economy like India, with its challenges in size, complexity, food diversity and the large unorganised sector. Eat Right India will be a good template for collective attention in the UN’s 2021 Food System Summit.

Pawan Agarwal is secretary, Government of India and CEO, FSSAI. The views expressed are personal

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RUDE FOOD BY VIR SANGHVI: THE ANNUAL STREET FOOD FESTIVAL REPORT

IT WAS HEARTENING TO SEE HAWKERS FROM ALL OVER INDIA BEING LAUDED ON STAGE AT POSSIBLY THE FIRST AWARDS FOR STREET FOOD GUYS IN DELHI RECENTLY

BRUNCH Updated: Jan 12, 2020 00:07 IST



Vir Sanghvi
Hindustan Times

Every year, the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) organises a street food festival in Delhi. And I end up spending at least a couple of days there. This year, the FSSAI got involved and its energetic CEO Pawan Agarwal made it an Eat Right Mela focussing on how street food

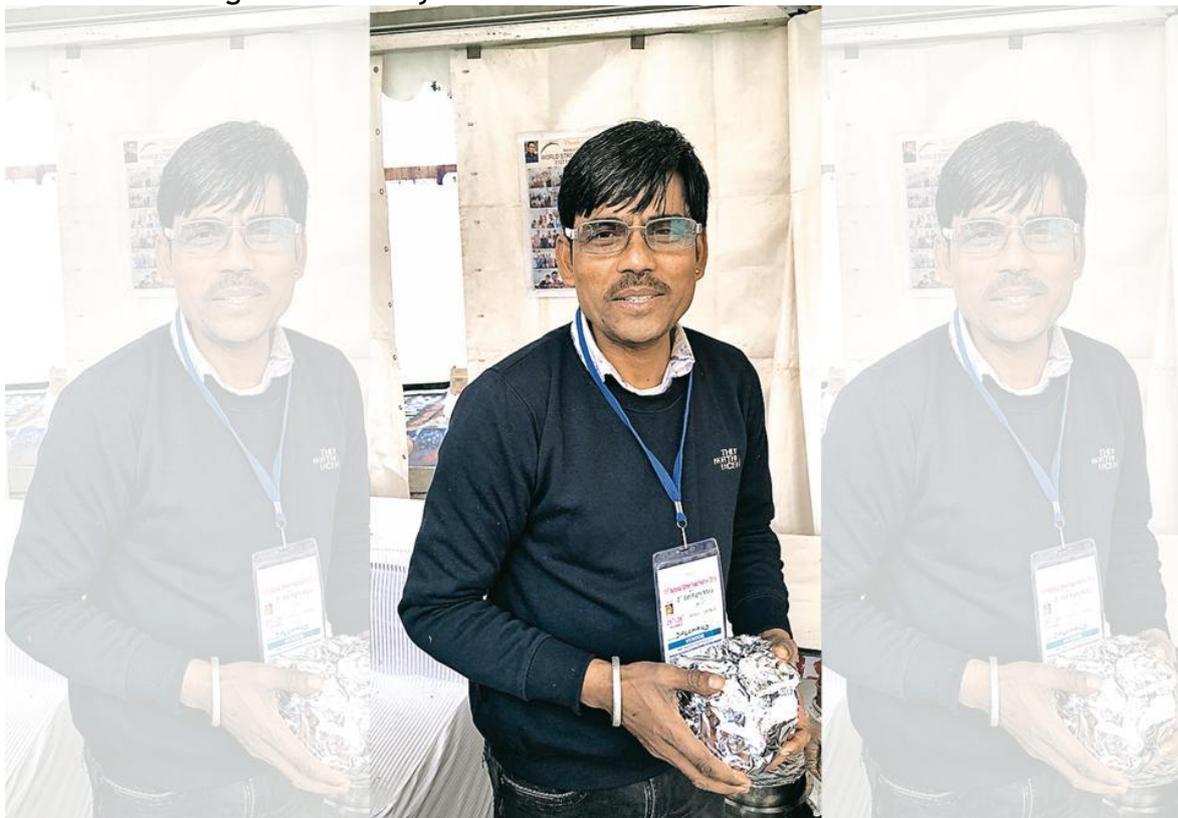


could be clean and hygienic, and how the vendors could be organised into food hubs in each city, given new carts, and access to clean water. All this will help increase their incomes.

As I do every year, this is my annual street food report.

The waves: The first wave of chaat was North Indian and centred around Delhi and UP. The Dilliwallas didn't travel much but the UP guys spread out all over India; so too did chaat wallahs from Bihar.

If you look at the famous chaat of Kolkata, you will be surprised to note that the dishes have little to do with Bengali cuisine. In Mumbai, not only did the chaat wallahs of Chowpatty all come from UP, but they were actually called bhaiyas to denote their regional identity.



Dalchand, the tikki seller who made it to Netflix (Vir Sanghvi)

Of course, the greatness of Indian cuisine lies in the ability of dishes to adapt themselves to local tastes. The puchka of Kolkata is very different from the batasha of say, Lucknow. The pani puri of Mumbai is only a cousin of the golgappa or the puchka. And the greatest Indian chaat invention is bhelpuri, created by the Gujaratis of Mumbai following the lead of the UP chaat wallas.

There was a second channa-based wave, using Delhi/Punjabi dishes like channa bhatura and that wave persists though the flavours vary from region to region. (Amritsar is still the best.) There is no consensus over the rise of aloo-

tikki as a chaat dish. (It is still not that big a deal in say, Mumbai.) One theory is that it wasn't street vendors but halwais who made it so popular.

Since then, the street food scene has branched out in many directions. At the street food festival I saw evidence of all the waves that had gone before. But the one trend that becomes more and more noticeable every year, is the rise of Western, packaged or store-bought ingredients.

Western influence: The first major change in the indigenous street-food tradition was the use of bread (always shop-bought) in such dishes as pav-bhaji and pav-keema. Then, bakery-made hamburger-style buns became essential ingredients of such dishes as the dabeli and the vada-pav.

But, starting with the Bombay sandwich, street food vendors are now relying increasingly on sliced white bread. If it isn't the bread pakora, then it is some other dish made with Britannia or Modern bread.

One trend that becomes more and more noticeable every year, is the rise of Western, packaged or store-bought ingredients

Almost as ubiquitous is Amul butter. Pav-bhaji was the first street dish to rely on Amul and now vendors are forsaking desi ghee for tonnes and tonnes of butter.

Also, part of the current street food boom is processed cheese. I have no idea how this started but innumerable dishes now rely on grated cheese: from roadside omelettes to even masala dosas.

Where did the bread-butter-cheese trio come from? How did this trio inveigle itself into an indigenous street food tradition?

I have no idea.

But it is certainly not to my taste.

The bread is usually disgusting and the processed cheese destroys such dishes as the dosa.

Chinese street food: It is a truth universally acknowledged that ‘Chinese’ food in India is now almost as popular (if not more popular) than Punjabi restaurant food. Butter Chicken is nearly passé. Chicken Manchurian rules all over India.



Everywhere there was something ‘Chinese’ like these so-called ‘spring rolls’ (Vir Sanghvi)

I have written extensively about why umami flavours (which we call “Chinese”) have done so well in India in recent decades so I won’t bore you with all that again.

But so much of what was available at the street food fair was called ‘Chinese’ that I began to wonder why the Chinese needed to attack us in 1962. Noodles and soya sauce have invaded us so successfully that no military action seems to have been required.

The saving grace is that the Chinese are baffled by what we call ‘Chinese’ so may be we have won after all; by colonising and bastardising their cuisine.

At this year's street food festival, Maggi noodles were more important than golgappa puris or *bhaturas*. There were dosas with noodles, omelettes with noodles, and even a truly revolting 'Chinese' *dabeli* with Maggi noodles.



Chinese dabeli on the griddle comes from Gujarat (Vir Sanghvi)

Everywhere I went, there was something 'Chinese'. One guy sold 'spring rolls'. Others used the momo for sport. I have just about gotten used to tandoori momos. But the festival had a vendor who served Afghani momos, Achari Momos, Butter Malai Momos and even Bombay Chilli Momos. His main stall is in Karol Bagh in Delhi so I could understand why he made paneer momos, but my head spun when I heard of all the variations he had come up on the basic theme. (As far as I could tell, they were the same momos but he poured different sauces on them.) Other vendors submitted momos to further indignities.



One could spot an army of packaged sauces at a chaat counter (Vir Sanghvi)

Local foods: The new-style ('Chinese' etc.) street food came generally from big urban centres (though the Chinese dabeli comes from Gujarat) but if you went to stalls run by vendors from smaller towns, the original flavours were preserved.

And even many big city chaat wallahs, made the real thing. Dalchand, the Delhi tikki wallah who was featured on Netflix, ran a large stall where he made wonderful aloo chaat and superlative tikkis stuffed with dry dal. He did not use butter and the aroma of desi ghee permeated his wonderful food.



Jalebis are made from wheat, while the jalebas are made using besan

We don't know much about Orissa street food in Delhi and Mumbai but guided by my friend, the food writer Amit Patnaik, I picked my way through the Oriya section at the festival. All of it was great but I was particularly taken with the Dahi Vada Aloo Dum from Cuttack, which mixed hot and cold, and fiery and soothing to great effect.

I was thrilled to see a guy selling Old Delhi's famous Daulat Ki Chaat, a dish made world famous in its modern avatar by Manish Mehrotra at Indian Accent. It is roughly the same as UP's nimish, malai makkhan and malaiyo (though this is a subject of some debate) and can only be made in the winter. It is hard to get outside of Old Delhi so naturally, I had two portions !

I always get stoned for saying this but when you see chaat from all over India side by side, it is clear that Delhi has the worst chaat and that UP has the best (though individual category winners would be Kolkata for puchkas and Mumbai for bhelpuri). There is competition within UP's towns and cities for the chaat championship but the clear winner at this Festival was Banaras.

The Banaras stalls made an outstanding tomato chaat, excellent batashas (golgappas) and delicate aloo tikkis. Another stall from Banaras made amazing jalebas in front of your eyes. I always thought that a jaleba was no more than a more muscular jalebi, but the man who made it explained the real difference: a jalebi is made from wheat, while a jaleba is made from besan.

Conclusions: Of all of India's food magicians, the street food guys are the ones I feel worst about. They barely eke out a living, get pushed around by the cops and the authorities and still produce outstanding food.

We had organised a competition to find the best street food guys in India. The judges were three great chefs: Vikramjeet Roy, Manish Mehtrotra and Ritu Dalmia. Sangeeta Singh, who organises the street food festival each year in Delhi Banaras won the overall prize as expected but what struck me was how readily the great chefs were willing to learn. Manish fell in love with a litti-chicken dish,

which he said he had never come across before and now plans to add it to the Comorin menu.

Ritu Dalmia knew all the trade secrets. (Dalchand's tikki kept its shape because he used a little arrowroot flour, apparently.) But she took notes and sent her chefs the next day to see how the dishes were made. Manish sent the entire Indian Accent team to the festival too.

For me the most moving part was seeing the hawkers come up on stage to receive their awards. I am so tired of the numerous fancy food awards where the same people come up each year to get bogus awards and then send back advertising to say thank you.

These were possibly the first awards for street food guys from all over India and many were tearful when they picked up their awards. They had never imagined that they would ever hear their names called out and be applauded on stage.

My friend, Sangeeta Singh, organises this festival each year with great effort and though I reckon the event had 36,000 visitors this year over five days, that's not enough.

You should all go.

Next year, I will write about it in advance and give fair warning.

ALEXA, TELL THE KIDS TO 'EAT RIGHT': FSSAI

FOOD REGULATOR FSSAI TIES UP WITH AMAZON'S VIRTUAL ASSISTANT, ALEXA TO PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING HABITS IN CHILDREN. "A KEY CONSTITUENT OF THE 'EAT RIGHT' CAMPAIGN IS TOWARDS CHILDREN AND TO ADDRESS THIS AUDIENCE, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS THAT ARE BASED ON PULLING IN THESE YOUNG MINDS, RATHER THAN PUSHING OUT CONTENT," SAID FSSAI CEO

By [Ratna Bhushan](#), ET Bureau | Last Updated: Jan 03, 2020, 07.02 AM IST

New Delhi: In a first, the national food regulator has tied up with e-commerce giant Amazon's virtual assistant Alexa and is setting up 'eat right' labs in schools, looking to include children in the dialogue on healthy and safe eating.

"A key constituent of the 'eat right' campaign is towards children and to address this audience, there are a number of interventions that are based on pulling in these young minds, rather than pushing out content," Food Safety & Standards Authority of India chief executive officer Pawan Agarwal said.

The programmes are aimed at reaching youth who use Alexa regularly and to work with schools to deliver meal plans based on eating right, he said.

The move comes after the Central government clamped down on junk foods in schools, banning the sale of packaged foods high in fat, salt and sugar in their canteens, messes, hostel kitchens or within 50 metres of their campuses.

"Millennials are more conscious about their diet. A lot of them live in villages but technology is closing the rural-urban divide. Virtually, they are in the same space as urban consumers and it's aspirational for them to also eat right. We are aware of this," Agarwal said.

FSSAI, the nodal agency under the ministry of health and family welfare, will use technology extensively to drive conversations on safe and healthy food.

"We want this to become a mainstream conversation and we're using technologies like virtual and augmented reality to bring in school and college students," he said.

The 'eat right' campaign is linked with concepts such as setting hygiene

parameters for street vendors and hygiene ratings for restaurants, hotels and cafeterias.

In a related development, FSSAI's "clean street food hubs" under which it identified clusters including street vendors, and trained and mobilised them, is being scaled up nationally from 20 such hubs presently. Besides, milk testing and inspection of dairy plants will come into effect starting this month, with penalties for those not adhering to guidelines.

"There is general despair among citizens that food products such as milk, spices and oil are adulterated. We understand there are problems and that's why we are doing largescale surveillance to understand the nature and extent of the problem so we can address those," he said. The regulator is hiring 800-plus employees and taking over central licensing enforcement from state governments.

Press Releases



January 2020

[Press Release dated 09th Jan 2020 related to FSSAI restricts any entity to register its website with the domain name comprising the word 'FSSAI' or to use its name and logo](#)  [0.7 MB] [Uploaded on : 09-01-2020]

Link:

<https://www.fssai.gov.in/press-note.php>

Endorsements for the Eat Right Quiz campaign

<https://quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/>

SANGRAM U SINGH @Sangram_Sanjeet · Jan 16, 2020

Hi friends it's a old proverb Health is Wealth, so now stay fit, you can win prize also. Plz login in below link & win exciting prize in #EatRightQuiz #EatRightIndia by @fssaiindia and the link quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/

🙏❤️
Love you all ❤️



9:31 PM · Jan 16, 2020 from Mumbai, India · Twitter for Android

75 Retweets 288 Likes

Julian Cacchioli @jcacchioli · Jan 17

Great initiative by @fssaiindia to bring the message of the importance of good nutrition to more people. Healthy eating can be fun so test your knowledge with the #eatrightquiz at quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/ and maybe win a prize #EatRightIndia @ceo_fssai

FSSAI @fssaiindia · Dec 23, 2019

Learn about #EatRightIndia in a fun and interactive manner through the #EatRightQuiz. Play it now on quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/

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Want to learn more about healthy eating, #foodsafety and #nutrition? Then take the #EatRightQuiz now to know if you are on the track to Eating Right, and Win exciting cash prizes! Play now quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/ #EatRightIndia @fssaiindia @CIIEvents @FollowCII

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Danone India @DanoneIndia · Jan 18

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Play now at quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/

#EatRightQuiz #EatRightIndia @fssaiindia @ruchikaatweets

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CII Food & Agriculture Centre of Excellence @cii_face · Jan 17

Test your general knowledge when it comes to Eating Right and Staying Fit, by playing the #EatRightQuiz and winning exciting prizes. Play now quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/ #EatRightIndia @fssaiindia @CIIEvents @FollowCII

2 Retweets 2 Likes

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Eating healthy is a way of life! Take the #EatRightQuiz and enhance your knowledge about food safety and nutrition. Top 100 performers will be awarded exciting cash prizes. quiz.mygov.in/quiz/eat-right-quiz/ #FSSAI @fssaiindia



8:51 PM · Jan 14, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

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