



FSSAI considering key regulations to reduce usage of plastic in food packaging

Priyanka Sharma | Updated: **Oct 03, 2019 14:14 IST**

By Priyanka Sharma

New Delhi [India], Oct 3 (ANI): The Food Safety Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) is considering four key regulatory measures to reduce the usage of plastic in food packaging.

First, the FSSAI is exploring the possibility of restrictions on small packs of commodities such as water bottles, shampoo, sauce, pickles etc.

Second, they are trying to remove the restrictions on the usage of non-transparent bottles for drinking water thereby enabling businesses to explore the possibilities of the use of alternatives other than the PET bottles, which are currently in use.

Third, the top food regulator is exploring the possibility for the removal of the ban on the use of recycled plastic in food packaging.

Fourth, FSSAI is reviewing the limits of heavy metals in PET bottles and the limits of specific migration limits of Antimony and DEHP (Diethylhexyl- Phthalate). In addition to this, the possibility of setting limits for Cadmium and Chromium is also being explored, said the official.

Hotels can use paper sealed glass bottles for captive use without Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification. Use of bamboo as an alternative to plastic straws, plates, bowls, cutleries etc, said the official.

"Use of liquid nitrogen dosing is now permitted in PET bottles for packaging of drinking water. This would strengthen the bottle and enable bottle with lower wall thickness," said FSSAI official.

The food regulator has now directed all State food safety departments to prepare a blueprint on achieving the target of plastic waste-free food and beverage sector. It has asked all the State food safety administration to organise a meeting of the State Level Advisory Committee (SLAC) with a special agenda by bringing in all stakeholders to achieve the target.

Speaking to ANI, CEO of FSSAI, Pawan Agarwal said, "As FSSAI is committed to achieving the target to make food and beverage sector plastic-free, we have directed all Food business operators in manufacturing and packaging that they should discourage the plastic use in food packaging. Along with food safety, we are making regulatory measure to minimise the plastic usage in packaging."

"We have asked them to explore the alternatives to plastics such as bio-plastic and biodegradable plastic. They have also been directed to reduce the usage of multiple polymers," said the official.

According to FSSAI, India generates about 95 lakhs tonnes of plastic waste per annum. About 38 lakh tonnes is uncollected which ends up in the dump, rivers and even in animals.

According to FSSAI, India generates about 95 lakhs tonnes of plastic waste per annum. About 38 lakh tonnes is uncollected which ends up in the dump, rivers and even in animals.

Experts said that River Ganga and River Brahmaputra are among the 10 most plastic polluted rivers in the world.

"About 6,00,000 tonnes enter into the sea annually in India. Also, micro-plastic particulars are found in bottled water and table salt. Open burning in plastic water causes respiratory ailments," said the official.

On the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the nation took a pledge to reduce the use of single-use plastic in their daily lives. (ANI)