Gujarat Tops India's FSSAI Food Safety Index 2019-2020

Pritam Kashyap 8 June, 2020

On the Occasion of World Food Safety Day, a webinar was organized by FSSAI, in which the information on the food safety index was shared. According to FSSAI, Gujarat has topped the big states in the Food Safety Index, while Chandigarh has topped the Union Territories and Goa tops the small states. The major states in this list are Gujarat followed by Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "Food safety is the responsibility of we must make sure it is safe, grow it safely, keep it with safety, eat with safety and unite to protect it." FSSAI also released an e-handbook for citizens with the title Eat Right during COVID-19. The emphasis is on keeping safe eating practices in mind.

The theme for World Food Safety Day 2020 is 'Food Safety, Everyone's Business' seeks to bring together the government, food producers and consumers, alike to share the responsibility of keeping food safe and of raising awareness about the many ways in which lax practices can cause serious health issues.

FSSAI Chairperson Rita Teaotia and new CEO Arun Singha along with Health and Family Welfare Minister (MoHFW) Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of State for MoHFW Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Secretary of the MoHFW, Preeti Sudan were present at the webinar.

Why Food Safety Matters:

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in 10 people become ill every year from contaminated food or food containing bacteria. According to the population of the world, this figure crosses 60 crores. An estimated 3 million people die from food and waterborne illness every year in developed and developing countries worldwide.

Every person should get food; no one should be hungry with this commitment to ensure this objective and to ensure that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has it was decided to celebrate World Food Safety Day on 7 June. The relevance of this special day started in the last year i.e. 2019 has increased these days. The reason is that a large population of the world is affected by the COVID-19 crisis and in this time of crisis many people are struggling for two-time bread.

In India, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has developed the State Food Safety Index (SFSI) in the context of the efforts made by states to provide safe food. FSSAI launched the 'Eat Right Award' to recognize the contribution of food companies and individuals, thereby empowering citizens to make safe and healthy food choices.

United Nations Guidelines on Food Security:

- Governments should ensure safe and nutritious food for all.
- Good practices and practices should be adopted in agriculture and food production.
- Traders ensure that food items are safe and quality.
- People have the right to get safe, healthy and nutritious food.
- Proper information should also be given to the general consumers about this.

Even the UN's 'Zero Hunger Initiative', talks about how food safety is key to achieving several 'Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' as safe food practices can lead to economic prosperity, boosts in agriculture, market access, tourism, and sustainable development. SDGs goals which follow are:

- **Goal 2**: There is no food security without food safety. Ending hunger is about all people having access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round.
- **Goal 3**: Food safety has a direct impact on people's health and nutritional intake. Foodborne diseases are preventable.
- **Goal 12**: When countries strengthen their regulatory, scientific, and technological capacities to ensure that food is safe and of the expected quality throughout the food chain, they move towards more sustainable patterns of food production and consumption.

Impact on Social Media

Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu tweeted "On this World Food Safety Day, I call upon all stakeholders such as producers, vendors, consumers & governments to ensure that the food we consume is safe, healthy and nutritious. There is also a need to create greater awareness of food-borne diseases."

Many people have also tweeted about healthy and safe food is essential for a stronger immune system and this can be achieved by following certain practices such as:

- Rinse fruits & vegetables with water before consumption
- Cook food thoroughly
- Do not overcook fruits & vegetables
- Avoid eating out
- Wash hands while before & after cooking
- Sanitize work surfaces

Foodborne illnesses are a preventable and underreported public health problem. These illnesses are a burden on public health and contribute significantly to the cost of health care. They also present a major challenge to certain groups of people. According to WHO report, 420 000 people die each year as a result of eating contaminated food. Children under 5 years of age are at particularly high risk, with some 125 000 young children dying from foodborne diseases every year. Proper food preparation can prevent most foodborne diseases. So, consumers should be vigilant about handling and cooking food properly as rightly themed food safety is everybody's business.