

Over 15 per cent food samples substandard: FSSAI

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9th Dec 2019

Hyderabad: More than 15 per cent of the food samples collected and analysed across the country by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) were found to be substandard.

As per the FSSAI enforcement data for 2018-19, more than 1.06 lakh food samples were collected and analysed across the country. Of these, 15.8 per cent were found to be substandard, 3.7 per cent unsafe and 9 per cent of the samples had labelling defects.

The data also said that the most frequent causes of foodborne illness were diarrheal disease agents, particularly norovirus and campylobacter jejuni, and non-typhoidal salmonella enterica.

The data from country's food regulator placed Telangana along with Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Uttarakhand, among the States that fared poorly in ensuring food safety.

More rigorous enforcement by States was essential to build public trust in food, said Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI in a press release. "To help the States, we are in the process of increasing capacity of State food laboratories and also enabling them to use private food labs for testing food samples. Enforcement efforts have to be improved and they have to be preceded by surveillance efforts to identify hotspots and problem areas," he said.