



THE WorldBank

IN INDIA

Food regulator launches a food safety and health movement. States follow lead...

If it's not safe, it's not food!

If it's not healthy, it's not food!

If it's not sustainable, it's not food!



Eat Right India

सही भोजन. बेहतर जीवन.



Eat Right India is a national program led by the Food Safety and Security Authority of India (FSSAI), to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for consumers across India.



LIGHTHOUSE

INDIA

A World Bank Knowledge Exchange Initiative

Lighthouse India is a World Bank initiative supporting systematic knowledge exchanges on good practices and innovations in development programmes across Indian states and with the world.

Eat Right India: A 360-degree approach

The Eat Right campaign couldn't have come at a better time. Diabetes and heart-related diseases have reached alarming levels in India. Undernutrition and nutritional deficiencies are still highly prevalent, as are food-borne diseases. Managing diets and lifestyle has now become critical.

Unique in many ways, the campaign is addressing demand by empowering consumers to eat food that is safe, healthy and holistic but also the supply side, by enabling industry to make hard choices to produce and sell healthier food and start-ups to innovate and find solutions in food testing, availability, labelling and recovery of any surplus.

It's catching children young, in schools, to inculcate health eating habits. It's targeting campuses, workplaces, universities, hospitals and institutions to serve safe, healthy and sustainable food. And it's training frontline health workers such as Angandwaadi (AWW) and ASHA workers on safe and healthy diets. These are among the many ways in which Eat Right India is trying to bring about mass behavioural, large-scale and transformative change.

With growing threats to the environment, Eat Right India also has a strong sustainability push. For instance, its RUCO initiative in partnership with oil companies and the Ministry of Petroleum, helps collect and convert used cooking oil to bio-diesel, thus reducing unsafe consumption and creating sustainable fuel.



Eat Right India is helping children inculcate healthy eating habits and ensuring food safety in schools

From food safety regulator to enabler: FSSAI

Perhaps the most novel aspect of the movement is that for the first time a food regulator, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, has become an enabler, by launching the campaign and integrating food safety, nutrition and the environment more consciously and visibly into its work.

"I've not seen a food safety regulator tackling lifestyle and environment before. And nobody is doing it at the scale that India is attempting," said Donald Macrae, Food Safety Consultant, World Bank.

"The conversation around food safety has changed. It used to be narrow and based on policing. But due to new ways of dealing with issues, people's involvement and a sense of positive competition among the states are the drivers," said Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI.

But FSSAI cannot mould the food habits and lifestyles of 1.3 billion people alone. And so, it has taken every possible stakeholder along – citizens, artists, restaurants, media, food producers, corporates and development agencies.



Over 50 mobile food-testing units are functional across the country for consumers.

Passing the baton to states

Going forward, the leadership and active participation of states is crucial to the movement's success.

"Now, it's the state-level leadership and implementation at the state and district levels that has to be stepped up. So, learning from each other will be important and critical," said Ashi Kathuria, Senior Nutrition Specialist, World Bank, which is FSSAI's technical partner.

And so, over 200 stakeholders from more than 25 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and some 20 Indian states met in Goa on September 26, 2019, to learn from each other at a World-Bank supported knowledge exchange.

The Indian delegates included state commissioners of Food Safety (CFS) and senior officials, representatives from the food industry, academia,

consumer interest groups and professional networks (NetProFaN), development partners (WHO) and the media. The international participants, mostly food regulators, brought in vital experience, too.



The BHOG initiative is ensuring safety of "prasad" (devotional offering) and food served at places of worship.

Fortifying food, reducing transfat

The day-long event kicked off with states sharing their experience of implementing Eat Right India initiatives.

Food fortification is a key focus of the campaign to address micro-nutrient deficiencies. Chandigarh shared how it has used government schemes (ICDS and mid-day meal) to "fortify the staples" through concerted efforts by all line departments, training and by streamlining supply. Resident welfare associations and grassroots outreach has proved

crucial to scaling up Eat Right India across schools, hospitals and workplaces.

Reducing transfat, one of the main causes of cardiovascular diseases, is another important issue to tackle. Kerala shared how it is implementing "Trans-Free India" by training food business operators (FBOs), carrying out IEC campaigns and ensuring support through government social and economic policies.

Food vendors: All hands on deck

Street food is a great attraction for city dwellers in many states of India. Small, independent FBOs, whether in the formal and informal sector, have an enormous impact on India's food landscape. Recognizing this, FSSAI has actively engaged with the entire spectrum, from vendors selling street food to those supplying schools, campuses and institutions and places of worship, which millions of people visit each day.

Gujarat, which set up the country's first Clean Street Food Hub, shared how it first conducted a gap-analysis in hygiene and sanitation. Then, they trained and certified street food vendors through FSSAI's FoSTaC initiative, a private sector-partnership effort that has helped train 155,000 food safety supervisors to increase compliance with hygienic food handling and standards. It was critical in setting up street food clusters in Gujarat along with the role of financially strong municipal corporations.

Maharashtra has similarly trained food providers at almost 250 places of worship under the BHOG initiative or Blissful Hygienic Offering to God. To help scale up the initiative in other states, it recommended standardization of hygiene and sanitation standards, licensing and registration of food providers and onboarding of Mandir Samitis.



Clean Food Street Hubs are being set up all across the country as part of Eat Right India

Leveraging professional networks, campuses and the digital realm

So far, the Eat Right India movement appears to be spreading organically across many states. Even so, it needs to grow from states to citizens, professionals, cities and districts. A series of panel discussions generated new ideas on how to take this forward.

One of the most promising channels is through NetProFaN, a large network of six professional bodies comprising doctors, nutritionists, dietitians, food technologists and scientists, chefs and food analysts across India. A robust and ready platform, it has chapters in 11 states across India.

“FSSAI has launched an ambitious, unique and very inclusive campaign. The movement needs to grow to the interiors of the country. Our convergence with administrative authorities is the only way to get things really moving,” said Jagmeet Madan, President, Indian Dietetic Association (IDA). Madan also stressed that the states need a bit more handholding and guidance on structures, how to get stakeholders together, flow of work and protocol.

Building Eat Right India’s leaders and champions

Capacity building, especially at the district level, is the next big need, said Vivian Hoffman, IFPRI, Kenya. In line with this, over 350 probationers have already been trained India at the IAS training academy in Mussoorie, so they are ready to “activate” Eat Right India on Day 1 in the districts they are posted to. Drawing inspiration to create a similar state-level cadre, states suggested linking in the state administrative training institutes, too.

To appeal to citizens at large, Harish Bhat, brand custodian, Tata Sons, applied ten marketing principles to boost the campaign, and the bottom line was it had to be exciting, memorable and become a digital movement.

Even as FSSAI is busy planning for multiple Eat Right events ahead, CEO Pawan Agarwal concluded that the event in Goa “has helped to enhance the commitment of various stakeholders to the movement, reaffirm their faith and belief that they are on the right path and celebrate the success so far.”



Mumbai Central: The first Eat Right India railway station certified in November 2019.



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For more information on Eat Right India:
<https://www.fssai.gov.in/>