

Summary

Food Laws and Regulations are of paramount importance since food is the basic need and are taken regularly from the day of birth to the day of leaving this world. Secondly, the agricultural practices, processing of foods play a major role in quality aspects and at times may be harmful from infants to geriatrics. In order to have quality evaluation of the food products and to safeguard the interests of the consumers, Food Laws and Regulations has come into force. Food Laws and Regulations cover all the related acts with reference to food manufacture, packaging, labeling, marketing, food additives used, dietary supplements, the mode of food evaluation, the enforcement of management practices such as Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), Federal Laws and Regulations, Factory Inspections, Import-Export Inspections, Licensing, Certification and not the least the Penalty and Punishment Clause. Each country has their own regulations based on their agricultural practices, products manufacture and distribution.

In our country, to begin with, statewise regulations were in force. Subsequently, to make it more uniform, practical, Central legislation was advised by the Central Advisory Board of Health. Thus, National Food Laws and Regulatory system was framed under which various orders and acts cum rules came into force. National Laws & Regulatory

Systems fall into two categories. Compulsory legislations which are formulated by various ministries while voluntary standards are framed by the organizations with the main criteria of serving the country. Under the Compulsory legislations, **Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 (PFA)** is the major law which protects common consumers against impure, unsafe and fraudulently labeled foods. PFA Act and rules apply equally to domestic and imported products and cover various aspects of food processing and distribution and it came into force on 1st June 1955. Subsequently, four amendments of PFA Act during 1964, 1971, 1976 and 1986 were made maintaining the basic norms. The provisions of this act are mandatory and satisfy minimum quality, ensuring safety for consumption of foods. Over the last 50 years, because of advancement in food applications and new products, nearly 300 amendments in terms of additions have been made with the inclusion of standards of various foods, additives usage, product safety in terms of microbial standards, food packing and labeling upgradation and procedures for working of food inspectors and other regulatory authorities. The other compulsory legislations are Essentials Commodity Act,1954; Standards of weights and Measures Act,1976; Fruits Products Order 1955; Milk Products Order,1992; Vegetable Products Order,1998; Sugar Order, 1966; Export Act, 1963; Consumer Protection Act,1986; and Atomic Energy Rules,1991.

The Voluntary Organisations such as Bureau of Indian Standards 1956; AGMARK Act, 1937; Agriculture Processed products and Exports Act, 1985; and Certification Marks Scheme BIS Act, 1986 have come into force to regulate the quality of various fresh and Processed foods in terms of objective and subjective quality standards. Food additive specifications with reference to limits of addition, products concerned have been widely covered.

Bureau of Indian Standards (**BIS**) has brought out the specifications on various aspects of foods and are as follows:

- i. Product specifications - raw materials and final products
- ii. Glossary of terms of certain materials for industrial use
- iii. Hygienic codes applicable to most of the food industries
- iv. Microbiological methods specifications
- v. Sensory evaluation method
- vi. Grading standards for cereals and vegetable oils
- vii. Methodologies booklets
- viii. Packaging materials specifications
- ix. Specifications for food additives
- x. Labeling and advertising specifications

BIS under Food and Agriculture Division (FAD) has covered almost all the commodities. Food additive specifications have been widely covered under Food Grade Category. BIS is the certifying authority for the products. Over the years, the mandatory regulations

have also encompassed the compliance of the procedures to meet the standards which is a preventive action for the successful achievement. In 1990's, BIS has introduced the Quality Management Systems (QMS). In the beginning, the guidelines for Accreditation of Laboratories, Inspection Bodies, Certification Bodies and Systems of Certification were released. Further, guidelines for statistical techniques and handling of data, quality control procedures, quality assurance in production, providing service, inspection, auditing were added. The harmonisation process with the **International Standards Organisation (ISO)** was one of major steps of activity by adopting ISO Quality Management Systems (ISO 9000 series) which clearly states the hygiene requirements, performance improvements, quality plans, management of projects, documentation, training, utilization of services of consultants, auditing and certification. The compliance of ISO 9000 series with BIS 14000 series has brought out better clarity in understanding and adopting the procedures. The BIS-14000 series standards refer to the industry management in terms of hygiene, safety, quality control with documentation as the emphasized feature. Many of the industries, research laboratories are streamlining, systematizing in their work action profile through the system of ISO 9000:2001 a generic certification and the recent upgradation to ISO 9000:2008 certification has further improved the procedures and documentation.

to **Agricultural Produce Grading and Marking Act (AGMARK)**

(1937) which is the oldest act comprises the rules for grading and marking of all the agricultural products covering cereals, pulses and their products, fruits and vegetables, spices, oils and fats and a few miscellaneous items. The modality of specifications drawn by this organization is based on:

- i. Commodity and their grades on quality
- ii. Special as well as general characteristics of the commodity
- iii. Based on size and weight of the commodity
- iv. Based on the features of the commodity
- v. Based on the soundness of the commodity

In addition, the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act (1985)** for the promotion of food exports and **The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Cess Act (1985)** for levying cess and custom duty collection for exports are in force.

The quality control of foods is managed in the Defence under the act of Army Service Corps (ASC) Specifications. It pertains mainly to the products procured by the Army personnel operating through Directorate General of Supplies and Transport (DGST).

Labeling is an integral part of packaged food system. The license for food manufacture, declaration of label has to be followed as per the

regulations. Packing and labeling are the limbs of food presentation to the consumers. Over the years, labeling has become mandatory and what constitutes labeling has improved in recent years. The history of labeling records the batch number, date of manufacture followed by the list of ingredients used in the product in descending order of their composition, flavours declaration and animal/plant origin ingredients. Further compulsory on animal/plant food mark, followed by shelf life, nutritional labeling giving composition of nutrients as well as the strength of the product in terms of minor nutrients such as vitamins, calcium etc. health supporting components such as dietary fibre, HDL, LDL cholesterol, polyunsaturated fatty acids etc. and awareness regarding the nutrient requirements by providing percent daily value. The above information regarding the product have become mandatory along with the declaration of the license number.

Over the years, the changed trade practices with in as well as across the multiplicity of food laws with varied Ministers has led to the harmonization process with the formation of Food Safety and standards Act, 2006 converging the various Food laws. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is the statutory body in being successful in bringing out the comprehensive food laws, its implementation along with the documented procedures for food analysis. The main objective of FSSAI is to bring a single legislation relating to food and to provide

for a systematic and scientific development of food processing industries. The Food Safety and Standards Bill 2005 passed by the parliament and assent of the president on 23rd August 2006 came as a statute book as **Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA) (2006)**. The main features of this act is the incorporation of salient provisions of **PFA Act (1954)** along with international legislations, instrumentalities and Codex Alimentaries Commission (CAC) related to food safety norms so that it meets the requirements of both domestic and export trade as well as ensures the consumer safety. The salient features of the FSSA are:

- i. Convergence to integrated law from multi-control system.
- ii. Licensing for manufacture of food products through commissioner of food safety and designated officer
- iii. Single reference point for all matters relating to food safety and standards regulations and enforcement
- iv. Shift from mere regulatory regime to self compliance through Food Safety Management Systems
- v. Responsibility on food industrialists to see that food handled for business is in compliance with the domestic food laws.
- vi. Based on gravity of offence, civil penalties for minor offences and punishment for serious violations have been fixed.