

CC ;5 Food & Nutrition

Unit 6 Nutritional labeling and Food laws

By

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Nutrition labelling means sale of a product by providing comprehensive information about the product to the consumer besides ensuring safety standards. A useful elaborated information about the label serves as a primary link of communication between the manufacturer and consumer. The consumer can be influenced on their choice of product according to his/her needs. Thus, the correct and required labeling undoubtedly promotes the sale of product.

As per food laws every packaged food article has to be labeled in accordance to the law applicable in the country of the user. Every packaged food article for the domestic use has to be labeled in accordance to the related Indian Food Law i.e. Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011, notified by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

In this episode we will be understanding about nutrition labelling and Food safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) under the following subsections:

- **Nutrition labelling in India**
- **Food safety and standards Authority of India**

Definition of food label: A panel found on a package of food which contains a variety of information about the nutritional value of the food item. There are many pieces of information which are standard on most food labels, including serving size, number of calories, grams of fat, included nutrients, and a list of ingredients.

First law on nutrition labelling; In 1990 Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) was passed. It required all packaged foods to bear nutrition labeling and all health claims for foods to be consistent with terms defined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

First label: As per 1991 Nutrition facts, basic per-serving nutritional information, was made must on foods under the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990. Food labels had to list the most important nutrients in an easy-to-follow format.

Requirements/Pre-requisite of food label

Usually all 15 nutrients are shown: calories, calories from fat, fats-- saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

The manufacturer or the packer has to ensure that the label complies with the general regulations i.e. the label should not become separated from the container, contents on the label shall be correct, clear and readily legible and shall be in English or Hindi language etc. In order to safe guard the interest of the consumer, the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011, provides that every packaged food article should be labeled. The essential components of every label are as follows

1. The name of Food
2. List of Ingredients,
3. Nutritional Information,
4. Declaration regarding Veg or non-veg,
5. Declaration regarding Food Additives,
6. Name and complete address of the manufacturer or packer
7. Net Quantity,
8. Code No./Lot No./Batch No.,
9. Date of manufacture or packing,
10. Best Before and Use By Date,
11. Country of Origin for imported food and
12. Instructions for use

Offences & Penalties If on analysis the sample is found non-complying to the standards then the food product is declared as substandard besides misbranding and prosecution is launched for substandard and also for misbranding i.e labeling defect. Even if the sample is found confirming to standards, the prosecution is launched for misbranding. Misbranded Food may invite fines up to 3 lakh rupee. Misleading advertisement can be fined upto 10lakh rupees. During food inspection in case of any labeling or quality defect invariably the product sample is taken and sent for analysis.

In view of above, the Food Business Operator (FOB) should understand the importance of correct labelling and if the label declaration is incorrect and not in accordance to the regulations then the FBOs have to face the implications of the FSS acts.

Establishment of the Authority

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the Administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI. The Chairperson and chief executive officer of food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is in the rank of Secretary to Government of India. FSSAI has been created for laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

Importance of the Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006 Various central Acts like Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 , Fruit Products Order , 1955, Meat Food Products Order , 1973, Vegetable Oil Products (Control) Order, 1947, Edible Oils Packaging (Regulation) Order 1988, Solvent Extracted Oil, De- Oiled Meal and Edible Flour (Control) Order, 1967, Milk and Milk Products Order, 1992 etc has been repealed after commencement of FSS Act, 2006.

The Act also aims to establish a single reference point for all matters relating to food safety and standards, by moving from multi- level, multi- departmental control to a single line of command. To this effect, the Act establishes an independent statutory Authority – the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has its head office at Delhi. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the State Food Safety Authorities shall enforce various provisions of the Act.

Functions of FSSAI

FSSAI has been mandated by the FSS Act, 2006 for performing the following functions:

- Framing of Regulations to lay down the Standards and guidelines in relation to articles of food and specifying appropriate system of enforcing various standards thus notified.
- Laying down mechanisms and guidelines for accreditation of certification bodies engaged in certification of food safety management system for food businesses.
- Laying down procedure and guidelines for accreditation of laboratories and notification of the accredited laboratories.
- To provide scientific advice and technical support to Central Government and State Governments in the matters of framing the policy and rules in areas which have a direct or indirect bearing of food safety and nutrition.
- Collect and collate data regarding food consumption, incidence and prevalence of biological risk, contaminants in food, residues of various, and contaminants in foods products, identification of emerging risks and introduction of rapid alert system.
- Creating an information network across the country so that the public, consumers, Panchayats etc receive rapid, reliable and objective information about food safety and issues of concern.
- Provide training programmes for persons who are involved or intend to get involved in food businesses.
- Contribute to the development of international technical standards for food, sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards.

- Promote general awareness about food safety and food standards.

Let's learn few Basic definitions and terms under FSSAI

- **Food:** Food means any substance, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, which is intended for human consumption & includes primary food to the extent defined. genetically modified or engineered food or food containing such ingredients, infant food, packaged drinking water, alcoholic drink, chewing gum & any substance, including water used into the food during its manufacture, preparation/ treatment. But does not include any animal feed, live animals unless they are prepared or processed for placing on the market for human consumption, plants prior to harvesting, drugs and medicinal products, cosmetics, narcotic or psychotropic substances
- **“Primary food”** is an article of food, being a produce of agriculture or horticulture or animal husbandry & dairying or aquaculture in its natural form, resulting from the growing, raising, cultivation, picking, harvesting, collection / catching in the hands of a person other than a farmer or fisherman
- **Food safety:** Means assurance that is acceptable for human consumption according to its intended use.
- **Food Standard:** ‘Standard’ in relation to any article of food, means the standards notified by the Food Authority
- **Food safety system** will protect nation’s food supply even if contamination is intentional or unintentional .Thus refers to all those hazards whether chronic or acute which make food injurious to health
- **Audit :** A systematic examination to determine whether what is actually happening complies with documented procedures.
- **Critical Control Point :** A step at which control is essential to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or reduce it to an acceptable level.
- **Farm-to-table:** Includes all steps involved in the production, storage, handling, distribution & preparation of a food product.
- **Food Hygiene:** All conditions & measures necessary to ensure the safety & suitability of food at all stages of the food chain.
- **Food additive:** means any substance not normally consumed as a food by itself or used as a typical ingredient of the food, whether or not it has nutritive value, the intentional addition of which to food for a technological purpose in the manufacture, processing, preparation, treatment, packing, packaging, transport or holding of such food results, or may be reasonably expected to result, in it or its by products becoming a component of or otherwise affecting the characteristics of such food but does not include

“contaminants” or substances added to food for maintaining or improving nutritional qualities.

- Food Authority: means the Food Safety & Standards Authority of India established under section 4 of food act.
- Food business: means any undertaking, whether for profit / not & whether public or private, carrying out any of the activities related to any stage of manufacture, processing, packing, storage, transportation, distribution of food, import & includes food services, catering services, sale of food or food ingredients.
- Food laboratory: means any food laboratory or institute established by the Central or State Government or any other agency & accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing & Calibration Laboratories or an equivalent accreditation agency & recognised by the Food Authority under section 43.
- Food safety: means assurance that food is acceptable for human consumption according to its intended use.
- Food safety audit: means a systematic & functionally independent examination of food safety measures adopted by manufacturing units to determine whether such measures & related results meet with objectives of food safety & the claims made in that behalf.
- Food Safety Management System: means the adoption of Good Manufacturing Practices, Good Hygienic Practices, Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point & such other practices as may be specified by regulation, for the food business.
- Food Safety Officer: means an officer appointed under section 37 of FSSAI.
- Hazard: means a biological, chemical or physical agent in or condition of food with the potential to cause an adverse health effect.
- Ingredient: means any substance, including a food additive used in the manufacture or preparation of food and present in the final product, possibly in a modified form.
- Label: means any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter, written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed, graphic, perforated, stamped or impressed on or attached to container, cover, lid or crown of any food package & includes a product insert.
- Licence: means a licence granted under section 31.

- Local area: means any area, whether urban or rural, notified by the Commissioner of Food Safety, to be a local area for the purpose of this Act.
- Manufacture: means a process or adoption or any treatment for conversion of ingredients into an article of food, which includes any sub process, incidental or ancillary to the manufacture of an article of food.
- Prohibition order: means an order issued under section 33 of this Act.
- Sample: means a sample of any article of food taken under the provisions of any article of food taken under the provisions of this Act or any rules & regulations made there under.
- Substance includes any natural or artificial substance or other matter, whether it is a solid state or in liquid form or in the form of gas or vapour.
- Unsafe food: means an article of food whose nature, substance or quality is so affected as to render it injurious to health: This could be due to defective packaging or decomposed or diseased animal or vegetable substance or due to unhygienic processing or by non approved ingredient/colour/infestation/ by pesticides/spoilage due to contamination.

Advantages of FSSAI compared to existing laws are as follows:

- ✓ Single reference point for all matters relating to FSS, regulation & enforcement.
- ✓ Transparency & accountable regulatory framework. Investor friendly regulatory mechanism.
- ✓ Empowerment of consumers with dissemination of adequate information

Spread of food safety concept to grass root level by involving local panchayat and municipalities.

Duties and functions of Food Authority

1. It shall be the duty of the Food Authority to regulate and monitor the manufacture, processing, distribution, sale and import of food so as to ensure safe and wholesome food.
2. Without prejudice to the provisions of sub-section (1),the Food Authority may by regulations specify –
 1. the standards and guidelines in relation to articles of food and specifying an appropriate system for enforcing various standards notified under this Act;
 2. the limits for use of food additives, crop contaminants, pesticide residues, residues of veterinary drugs, heavy metals, processing aids, myco-toxins, antibiotics and pharmacological active substances and irradiation of food;
 3. the mechanisms and guidelines for accreditation of certification bodies engaged in certification of food safety management systems for food businesses;

4. the procedure and the enforcement of quality control in relation to any article of food imported into India;
5. the procedure and guidelines for accreditation of laboratories and notification of the accredited laboratories;
6. the method of sampling, analysis and exchange of information among enforcement authorities;
7. conduct survey of enforcement and administration of this Act in the country;
8. food labelling standards including claims on health, nutrition, special dietary uses and food category systems for foods; and
9. the manner in which and the procedure subject to which risk analysis, risk assessment, risk communication and risk management shall be undertaken.

3. The Food Authority shall also –

1. provide scientific advice and technical support to the Central Government and the State Governments in matters of framing the policy and rules in areas which have a direct or indirect bearing on food safety and nutrition;
2. search, collect, collate, analyse and summarise relevant scientific and technical data particularly relating to –
 1. food consumption and the exposure of individuals to risks related to the consumption of food;
 2. incidence and prevalence of biological risk;
 3. contaminants in food;
 4. residues of various contaminants;
 5. identification of emerging risks; and
 6. introduction of rapid alert system;
3. promote, co-ordinate and issue guidelines for the development of risk assessment methodologies and monitor and conduct and forward messages on the health and nutritional risks of food to the Central Government, State Governments and Commissioners of Food Safety;
4. provide scientific and technical advice and assistance to the Central Government and the State Governments in implementation of crisis management procedures with regard to food safety and to draw up a general plan for crisis management and work in close co-operation with the crisis unit set up by the Central Government in this regard;
5. establish a system of network of organisations with the aim to facilitate a scientific co-operation framework by the co-ordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects, the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fields within the Food Authority's responsibility;
6. provide scientific and technical assistance to the Central Government and the State Governments for improving co-operation with international organisations;
7. take all such steps to ensure that the public, consumers, interested parties and all levels of panchayats receive rapid, reliable, objective and comprehensive information through appropriate methods and means;
8. provide, whether within or outside their area, training programmes in food safety and standards for persons who are or intend to become involved in food businesses, whether as food business operators or employees. **.Fig 1framework of FSSAI**

Conclusion

As per food laws every packaged food article has to be labeled in accordance to the law applicable in the country of the user. Every packaged food article for the domestic use has to be labeled in accordance to the related Indian Food Law i.e. Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011, notified by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). Nutrition labelling and consumer awareness has significant impact on the choice of food and overall health indices of our nation .FSSAI has been created for laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption from farm to table. Fssai has been planned and implemented to ensure food safety and quality to reach grassroot levels irrespective of economic constraints of every consumer in India.

Fig 1. FRAMEWORK OF FOOD SAFETY REGULATORS



