FDA conducts workshops on hygiene and standards of food in temples, hotels

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Pune: THE FOOD and Drug Administration (FDA), as part of its drive to raise awareness about hygiene and standards of food distributed in temples, has conducted several workshops and training sessions across the state. S S Desai, joint commissioner, FDA, Pune, said, “At least 36 temples in Pune will be given a certificate from the FDA.”

According to state officials, more than 200 temple trusts across the state will be trained in technical skills to maintain the quality of food. Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched an initiative — ‘Blissful Hygienic Offering to God (BHOG)’ — in Mumbai, under which several training workshops were conducted in September and October. Topics such as food safety, ingredients, packaging, and hygiene were covered during the workshops and participants were introduced to several scientific approaches, which would help them address concerns regarding rules and regulations pertaining to food safety. More than 3,000 people attended the sessions. Desai said hygiene and standard of food items served in hotels and restaurants were also discussed during the workshops. At least 700 hotels will now be involved in the training programme.

Efforts to raise awareness have been stepped up, as the FSSAI Act has a clear definition of ‘safe and unsafe food’. Selling substandard quality food can lead to a compoundable penalty of upto Rs 5 lakh, while selling unsafe food items can even lead to imprisonment. Till now, at least 700 hotels and restaurants have been trained in these aspects. Desai said, “We have initiated a self-assessment drive where the owners will fill up questionnaires on whether they are abiding by the guidelines laid down by the FSSAI. A checklist of various parameters has been given to the owners, following which we will conduct random verifications.”