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**FSSAI initiative to collect, distribute surplus food to needy**

NEW DELHI: In a bid to prevent food wastage, regulator FSSAI today launched an initiative to create a common platform of agencies that collect surplus food and distribute among the needy.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) introduced its new initiative 'Indian Food Recovery Alliance' (IFRA) -- a coalition of food recovery partners.

These partners showcased their existing models of food recovery and showcased an integrated web-based platform that is being developed.

"This web-based platform, released on a pilot level, allows interested donors, individuals and volunteers to register themselves to be a part of this initiative," the FSSAI said in a statement.

After the pilot study, the main platform and mobile applications will be accessible for the registered people to donate food. Food recovery agencies will ensure proper distribution after reasonable due diligence. The donors will be able to track all the data, information and the status of the food they will donate through their personal logins.

"This platform will also provide guidance to citizens, food businesses and various food recovery agencies on prevention of food loss and food waste and safe recovery of surplus food," the statement said.

In India, multiple food recovery agencies are already functional in various cities.

Together, 12 such organisations including No Food Waste, Feeding India, Indian Food Banking Network, Roti Bank, Annakshetra, Giveaway India, Robin Hood Army etc., feed on an average over a lakh people per day in more than 70 cities.
"Alliance of these food recovery models with uniform implementation process will enable smoother pan India coverage," the statement said.

FSSAI CEO Pawan Agarwal stressed on the need of an integrated approach of food recovery networks across India to combat food waste issues.

He said this initiative is an effort to recover surplus food that is lost and wasted at various stages in India every year.

"Through this initiative several food recovery agencies will be able to work uniformly towards one common goal of saving food and distributing it to the needy so that India is able to eradicate hunger problems," Agarwal said.

He mentioned about the draft regulation of surplus food recovery and food distributions that has been already formulated.

FSSAI also reviewed the progress on Food Fortification so far, shared the experiences and key leanings and convened various stakeholders to discuss the way forward.

A comprehensive report on 'Large Scale Food Fortification in India - The Journey So Far and Road Ahead' was released by Ashwini Kumar Choubey, the Minister of State for Health & Family welfare.

Choubey appreciated the efforts of FSSAI and food recovery networks to join hands for this noble cause.