Food Safety and Standard Act 2006 (FSSA)

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There is a saying “Health is Wealth” and any carelessness which may cause food poisoning or any problem like this may lead to a very fatal consequence. So, it becomes essential to take necessary food safety measure. ‘Food safety’ means assurance that food is acceptable for human consumption. Food safety management means the adoption of good manufacturing practice, good hygienic practices, hazard analysis and critical control point and such other practices as may be specified by the regulation of food business. We as human being depend on food for our survival and we are to be aware of the food quality and the standard of food that we consume in our day to day life. Earlier food adulteration was the only concern of food safety and standard, however with the arrival of better technology and with the advancement in the standard of living numerous problems and concerns arose regarding food safety and standard in our country. So the Central government for solving all problems relating to food enacted the ‘Food Safety and Standard Act 2006’. For better management of the Act, the Central government formed an authority by the name Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI).

The W.H.O in its latest data available, revealed that 3,51,000 people die of food poisoning globally every year and at least 582 million cases of different food-borne diseases are experienced worldwide every year. Food is the basic need of all living beings and we eat food to survive and develop our physical wellbeing. So it is our basic right to a healthy, safe and nutritious food. Population explosion is one of the reasons for the use of such excessive insecticides, pesticides and fertilizers in order to boost up the production to meet the needs of the overwhelming demand for food, this use of chemical is adversely affecting our health. Sometime the availability of fast foods, packed foods and other cheap foods is harmful for our health. Some of the mal-practises commonly found are; using harmful chemicals to enhance flavour in sweets, fruits, juices, etc, using chemical to artificially ripen fruits, using wax on apples to make it look fresh, using mono sodium, ajinomootoo in chows, momos, and other Chinese and Burmese noodles affects our bones, etc, mixing brick powder to chilli powder, adulteration of milk with excessive water, use of detergent or bleaching powder to increase quantity, serving of fast foods in open food stalls such as samosas, jeelibeets, pokara, puri, etc in newspapers or magazines which contains black carbon ink, etc. Some of these unhygienic and unsafe practices can lead to serious health issues and problems such as kidney failure, lung cancers, gastric problems, stomach aches and also affect our organs such as the gall bladder, liver, intestines and also cause other ailments related to mental health, abnormal hormonal growth or releases that could change our appetite and may to depression. We came across several cases of serious food poisoning such as; 23 students died in Bihar after eating mid-day meal and dozens more were hospitalized on 16th July 2013, 45 students of Madrasa fell ill due to suspected food poisoning on 16th March 2016, 69 students were hospitalised due to food poisoning at Himachal Pradesh, Shimla on 22nd April 2017.
The Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) was established in order to check the issue of food safety and standard with the aim and objective to lay down science based standards for articles of food, to regulate manufacturing, storage, distribution, sale and import of food to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption and for matters connected therewith. Some of the salient features of Food Safety & Standard Act are; to ensure that all food meets consumers expectations in terms of nature, substance and quality, to provide legal powers and specify offences in relation to public health and consumers interest. Section 16 of the Act laid down the functions of Authority such as; to specify standard guidelines for food articles, to specify food labelling standards including claims on health, nutrition, special dietary uses and food category systems, scientific advice and technical support to central and state government, etc. Every state must have a designated officer and some of its responsibilities are; designated officer has the power to issue or cancel license of food business operators, prohibit sale in contravention of this Act, receive report and samples of articles of food from food safety officer and get them analyzed, taking samples of the food intended for sale, he can seize any articles of food which appears to be in contravention of this Act, he can enter and inspect any place where food is manufactured or stored for sale. Some of the offences are; causing food to be injurious, abstracting any constituent, deliberate adulteration, non-conformance in label information, etc. Some of the penalties are; sub-standards food will be fined up to Rs.2 lakhs, misbranded food will be fined up to Rs.3 lakhs, unhygienic preparations of food will be fined up to Rs.1 lakh. Under Section 63 of FSSA 2006, if any person or food business operator carrying out a business without license is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months and also with a fine which may extend to five Lakh rupees. A person is also punishable with a fine of 10 lakhs rupees for misleading advertisement, falsely describing quality of food or give false guarantee to the consumers. Slaughterhouse should have proper hygiene and maintenance instruments and to be regularly checked by the medical concern doctor and thereafter it should be given to the slaughter house for human consumption. Under the Consumer Protection Act 1986, the consumers have the right to safety, they are protected against marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life, and therefore, the goods which are hazardous to health is illegal and punishable.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare governs the FS&SAI. FS&SAI governs all food business operators in the country and has entrusted the powers at various levels to other designated authorities. In Nagaland, the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, rules and regulations 2011 is being implemented in the State from 2012. The Food Safety Officer must be appointed as an independent charge as per the Act and should checked all the Food Business Operators which includes Hotels, restaurants, canteens, tea stall, bakeries, street food vendors etc in all the respective district. With the enforcement of this Act in Nagaland, any person in practice of selling of food products are required to have a license to sell such goods and the license is to be given by the Chief medical Officer. There are times where the FS&SAI has asked the Food Commissioner in the state to inspect and evaluate in the market and had suggested that the state food safety commissioners should prepare their line for action and collect samples of all the packaged products, even those which are not registered with FS&SAI and also told to take action if required. The Chief Medical Officer and designated officers Kohima have informed all hotels, restaurants, provisions, groceries, home based canteens of schools, colleges, office, etc to obtain food safety license/registration from the Chief Medical Officer office, Kohima and in order to avoid penalisation as per the food safety and standards act rules and regulations and newly established food business operators have