High-fat foods: FSSAI to examine expert panel’s views

Dated: 16 May, 2017

Portal for consumer grievances launched

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has asked its scientific panel on nutrition and food fortification to examine some of the recommendations made earlier by an expert group to rationalise consumption of food items high on fat, sugar and salt.

The expert group was set up by FSSAI in 2015 and has made a wide range of recommendations which include banning ads of food items with high fat, salt and sugar on kid’s channel and clearer nutritional labelling on packaged food among others.

On whether the recommendations on ad restrictions will be implemented, Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI said, “The report does not define the food products that should not be advertised to children. It falls short on that and hence there are challenges. Unless there is a definition, one cannot move forward. We have set up a separate scientific panel for food fortification and nutrition and it will examine some of these recommendations.”

While the report does not define “junk food”, it has stated that the expression popularly refers to food which has no positive nutritional value and often may lead to health problems.

He added, “The expert group has made eight recommendations and some of these go beyond the jurisdiction of FSSAI. Some of the recommendations such as changes in labelling norms, which come under our jurisdiction, will be incorporated in the new labelling regulations, which we are in the process of finalising.”

Meanwhile, the regulator on Tuesday launched the FoSTaC (Food Safety Training and Certification) programme. Under this initiative, the regulator will be launching 19 short-term courses designed to train food safety supervisors in food
companies in collaboration with universities, NGOs, industry associations and other government departments.

It also launched its Food Smart Consumer Portal, which is an interactive portal for consumers to lodge their grievances and ask information besides focusing on consumer education. FSSAI also launched its Safe and Nutritious Food (SNF) portal which would function as an online resource centre on food safety and nutrition.