



FOOD SAFETY KERALA
COMMISSIONERATE OF FOOD SAFETY KERALA



**Eat Right
India**
सही भोजन. बेहतर जीवन.



PROGRAMMES & INITIATIVES 2023-24

Commissionerate of Food Safety, Kerala





MESSAGE

I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings as we celebrate the release of the latest book, **“*Serving Safe - Programmes and Initiatives*”** by the Department of Food Safety. This initiative marks yet another significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to promote food safety and ensure the well-being of our communities.

Food safety is not just a matter of regulatory compliance; it is a fundamental aspect of public health and consumer protection. With the release of this book, the Department of Food Safety reaffirms its commitment to upholding the highest standards of food safety across our state.

I commend the dedication and tireless efforts of the department team in ensuring the safety and quality of our food supply. Their commitment to excellence reflects our shared vision of a healthier, happier Kerala.

As we embrace the principles of food safety and embark on this journey together, I urge all citizens to actively engage with the information provided in this book. By working collaboratively, we can create a culture of awareness, responsibility and accountability that safeguards the health and well-being of every individual in our state.

I extend my best wishes for the success of this initiative and encourage all citizens to join us in our mission to promote food safety and build a healthier future for Kerala.

With warm regards,

Veena George

Minister for Health, Women and Child Development
Government of Kerala





MESSAGE

The Department of Food Safety is creating a unique niche by publishing details of its activities for the year 2023-24 in a hand book. Through this work, the activities done by the department in the last one year are presented. This publication captures our relentless efforts to uphold the highest standards of Food Safety within our community. The book provides an insightful view of the various initiatives, inspections and regulations implemented by the Food Safety team. We extend our gratitude to all stakeholders, including government officials, industry partners and the public for their unwavering support in our mission to ensure safe and healthy food practices.

All the best for the sincere and transparent work of the department. More vigorous activities are expected from the department in the coming years as well. Best wishes to all the members of Food Safety Department.

With warm regards,

APM. MOHAMMED HANISH.IAS

Principal Secretary

Health & Family Welfare Ayush Industries & Rev. (WAQF) Departments



PREFACE

Kerala, the land renowned for its stunning natural beauty, rich culture, high literacy rates, and impressive social development indicators, embodies the true spirit of India. It's no wonder why it's such a sought-after destination for travellers from all around the world. Cuisines are indeed the hallmark of any land. They reflect the culture, traditions, and history of a place. Exploring various cuisines is an excellent way to learn about a new place, as it allows you to experience the distinct flavors and aromas indigenous to the region, providing a glimpse into the lifestyles and values of the people.

Talking about Kerala, the land's culinary heritage is a treasure trove of rich and diverse flavors. The use of coconut and aromatic spices creates a unique and unparalleled taste. With rice and tapioca being the staple, the cuisine of Kerala has evolved over the years, assimilating foreign influences and creating a perfect blend of tradition and modernity. Food safety is the bedrock of Kerala's rich culinary legacy. It's a non-negotiable aspect that demands our unwavering attention and priority.

Since the implementation of the Food Safety and Standards Act in the state in 2011, the Food Safety Department has been committed to enforcing the law in its entirety, thereby ensuring the availability of safe and wholesome food for its people. The state has adopted a 'Farm to Fork' approach, emphasizing the need to ensure food safety from the very basic level of farming and cropping. To accomplish this, the Food Safety Department makes use of the Surveillance tool for conducting routine surveillance drives to analyze potential hazards in commonly used staple food items.

These assessments help determine whether the hazards originate from farming practices or during the processing. By gathering and sharing data with both the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and the stakeholders, the State could effectively screen for the potential hazards in food staples.

Kerala, a consumer-oriented state, considered it essential to safeguard public health against manmade hazards in the food industry. Pesticide Screening in Fruits and

Vegetables, Antibiotic Residue in Honey, Milk, and Meat Products, Formalin & Ammonia in Fish, and special drives for Jaggery and Edible Oil are a few among many to name.

Awareness and education are crucial to inducing a change in the mindset of consumers and stakeholders regarding food safety. The Food Safety Department has successfully provided the FoSTaC training program formulated by the FSSAI to food business operators, across the state. To create awareness among consumers, programs like SNF@School, SNF@Workplace, and panchayat programs are initiated that target students, working-class individuals, and the general public respectively.

Millet Melas were organized along with yoga demonstrations to raise awareness about the beneficial aspects of millets, to encourage consumers to make healthy food choices, and the need to choose an exercise coupled with a healthy diet. Through these awareness programs and strict enforcement activities, the Food Safety Department has accomplished its goal of ensuring food safety and emphasizing the need to transform citizens into healthier individuals by minimizing the risk of lifestyle diseases.

Kerala has set a remarkable example in maintaining the highest standards in food safety and making lifestyle improvements. The outstanding efforts of our department have been recognized by the FSSAI, the apex body for Food Safety in the Country, as they have proudly awarded us the First Rank in the esteemed National Food Safety Index 2023. This prestigious achievement is a testament to our consistent dedication and hard work in upholding excellence in the field. This achievement is a breakthrough for the department with its minimal staff strength and imparts a sense of responsibility among the team to strive more in all future endeavors.

This booklet, titled 'Serving Safe – Programmes and Initiatives', highlights the efforts of the department in assuring food safety throughout various stages of regulatory compliance and imparting awareness to the stakeholders and consumers, thereby safeguarding public health and promoting consumer confidence in the food supply chain.

The Department always stays committed to revolutionizing the kitchen routine with cutting-edge, science-based methods that are both innovative and practical so that one can relish the tantalizing flavors of Kerala with confidence, knowing that our culinary masterpieces are not just delicious but also safe to enjoy.

With warm regards,

Jafar Malik IAS

Commissioner of Food Safety, Kerala



PROUD MOMENT

Kerala has unequivocally demonstrated its superiority in ensuring food safety by securing the top spot in the State Food Safety Index 2023 in the large state category, a remarkable feat announced by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. It comes as a deserving recognition of both FSSAI's and Government of Kerala's committed efforts in the sector, including the exemplary implementation of innovative projects...

Adding another jewel to the crown, Kerala has also received special recognition from FSSAI for its exemplary efforts in organizing and conducting the maximum number of Millet Melas.

Food safety department also doubled its revenue in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22 financial year. The revenue of Rs 28.94 crore generated by the department in 2022-23 was 193 per cent more than that of 2021-22....





General Introduction

Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 assures legal entitlements for safety and quality of food from production to consumption by giving equal weightage to enforcement and analytical machinery, at the same time diligently nudging every responsible citizen to uphold the standards.

With the advent of Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 all the other Food Laws were nullified and uniformity was brought in to ensure the quality and safety of food throughout the country. Chapter 4 of FSS Act designated the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India as the apex body to exercise the powers conferred on and to perform the functions assigned to it under the Act. The FSS Act under section 30 also envisages constituting a Commissionerate of Food Safety in all states for efficient implementation of Food Safety and Standards and other requirements laid down under the Act and the rules and regulations made there under. Accordingly a Commissionerate of Food Safety was constituted in the state of Kerala in July 2009. Kerala is the first state to constitute such a commissionerate in the country.

The Food Safety Department of Kerala headed by the Honorable Commissioner Of Food Safety, delegates its power and performs the function through its enforcement and analytical wings. The enforcement wing operates through Deputy Commissioner's office at Regional Level, Assistant Commissioner's office at District Levels and Circle Offices at Legislative Constituency Levels. Similarly the analytical wing co-ordinates the functions of Government Analytical Lab and Regional Analytical Laboratory. The Circle offices and Assistant Commissioners' offices serve as the primary enforcement arms of the Food Safety department.

Kerala a name branded as God's own country has yet again proved its prowess when the Food Safety Department sets a national standard with its effective enforcement and analytical activities. The Food Safety department of Kerala has secured first position in the National Food Safety Index for the year 2022-23. The department has been consistently delivering outstanding performances. This book is a humble effort in documenting various activities of the department, which has been tirelessly executing its call and vision with a strong sense of duty and service. We take this opportunity to present you this book with utmost happiness and gratitude.

Major Highlights of 2023–2024



- » **Inspection:** We, Food Safety Department of Kerala have conducted 55303 comprehensive inspections during April 2023 to January 2024.
- » **Samples:** To find out the quality of the food products and thus to safeguard the health of our public, we have lifted 8335 enforcement samples and 30366 surveillance samples from April 2023 to January 2024.
- » **License/Registration:** With immense pleasure, we would like to announce that from April 2023 to January 2024, a total of 39140 licenses and 211320 registrations have been issued. It has not only facilitated the generation of revenue amounting to Rs.13,49,31,000/- but has also bolstered consumer confidence in the safety and quality of food products available in Kerala
- » **Prosecution/Adjudication:** Prosecution and Adjudication cases for Food Safety violations in Kerala are essential for upholding the regulatory standards. We have filed 663 prosecution cases and 772 adjudication cases during this financial year.
- » **Awareness, the back bone of Food Safety concept:**
We have co-ordinated 460 extensive awareness programmes throughout Kerala.
- » **Special drives for Special Reasons:** To meet the Food Safety Standards, we have co-ordinated 9 special drives like Operation Matsya, Operation Label, Operation FoSCoS etc.

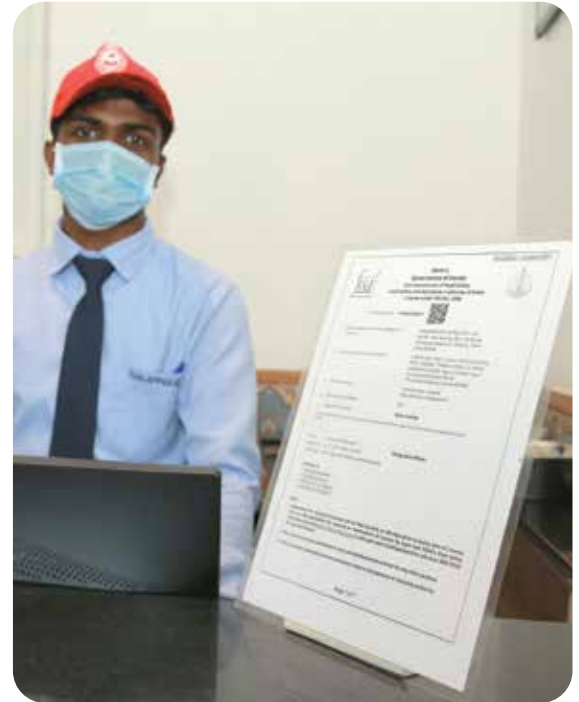


- » **Check post inspection:** As a consumer oriented state, we have done 4551 checkpoint inspections to scrutinize, the quality of food at the point of entry.
- » **Special task force:** The Shadow Police – In response to the alarming rise of food poisoning cases and to prevent the sale of adulterated food, Commissioner of Food Safety, Kerala has taken a strong stance by creating a dedicated Special Task Force and they have investigated 11 cases in the mentioned time span.
- » **Sabarimala** – Guarding divine nourishment. – We have conducted 3321 inspections and lifted 11815 samples.
- » **Eat Right Initiatives in Kerala-A-Glimpse**
 - ▶ Supply side interventions: 537 FoSTaC, 13 Clean Street Food Hub, 19 Clean Fruit & Vegetable markets, 23 Eat Right Stations, 35 Eat Right PoWs, 1701 Hygiene rated FBEs were implemented during 2023-24.
 - ▶ Demand Side interventions: 136 Eat Right Campuses, 27 Eat Right School, 325 Save Food Share Food, Share joy were co-ordinated in Kerala.
- » **State Initiatives:** To cultivate a collective responsibility towards maintaining the integrity of Food Safety eco-system, we have implemented various State initiatives and we have proudly completed 2203 SNF@School Programmes, converted 584 Panchayath to Model Food Safety Panchayath, implemented Safe Kitchen initiative in 32 subcetres, 10 institutions were converted as SNF @ Workplaces and 5 Municipal areas became Food Safety Town.
- » **Mobile Application:** To experience Cleanliness on the go with Kerala's innovative 'Mobile Application – Eat Right Kerala' provides list of hygiene rated hotels, restaurants and other eateries to ensure culinary journey of public delicious and safe.
- » **Grievance Portal:** From reporting violations to seeking guidance, Food Safety Grievance Portal is a go to destination for ensuring highest standards of Food Safety across Kerala.
- » Fortify your Plate – We, Food Safety Department of Kerala have conducted Awareness and Demonstration of fortified food in our all 14 districts.
- » Mini Wonders – Millet treats for a healthy lifestyle. Millet Melas were also organized in all 14 districts.
- » Laboratory Excellence – The new microbiology labs were another milestone in our commitment in ensuring the highest standards in Food Safety.
- » Food Street – A modern twist to tradition – Modernization of 4 Food Street in Kerala is progressing and we are optimistic in completing the project by March 31st.

LICENSING AND REGISTRATION OF FOOD BUSINESSES

Section 31 of the Food Safety & Standards Act 2006 provides that persons involved in food business should obtain food safety license to run the business. Licensing is an essential aspect, where the department grants permit to food businesses that meet regulatory requirements. This involves a thorough review of documentation, facilities, and practices to ensure that the establishment operates in accordance with Food Safety Laws.

The Department of Food Safety in Kerala has been instrumental in ensuring compliance with food safety regulations by issuing food safety Licenses and Registration certificates to food businesses across the state. From April 2023 to January 2024, a total of **39,140** licenses and **2,11,320** registration certificates have been issued reflecting the department's commitment to promoting safe food practices. This initiative has not only facilitated the generation of revenue amounting to Rs. **1,34,93,000/-** but has also bolstered consumer confidence in the safety and quality of food products available in Kerala.



SAMPLING

Sampling is an indispensable tool in the realm of food safety, serving as a proactive measure to identify risks, monitor compliance, detect emergency threats, assure quality and protect consumers. It serves as a cornerstone of Food Safety Management Systems, enabling the authority to monitor and assess compliance with regulatory standards.

Section 38 of the Food Safety & Standard Act 2006 enumerates in detail, the powers of Food Safety Officer which include lifting samples of any article of food. Sampling is a key activity where the department collects samples of food products to analyse for the compliance of various parameters, including microbiological, chemical, and physical aspects.

Sampling is often done randomly or based on risk assessment criteria to ensure compliance with safety standards.



ENFORCEMENT SAMPLES

Food Safety Officers collect samples as per the provisions of Section 47 of FSS Act 2006. In Kerala, a Food Safety Officer periodically lifts 7 enforcement samples each per month and the samples are sent to NABL accredited Government Food Testing Laboratories. The details of samples lifted are duly entered on the FOSCOS portal (www.fosc.os.fssai.gov.in). During the period from April 2023 to January 2024, a total of **8335** enforcement samples have been lifted by respective Food Safety Officers in the state.

Details of category wise samples lifted for the period April 2023 to January 2024

Food product category	Total samples lifted
01- Dairy products and analogues, excluding products of food category 2.0	314
02 - Fats and oils, and fat emulsions	1104
03 - Edible ices, including sherbet and sorbet	8
04 - Fruits and vegetables (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes, and aloe vera), seaweeds, and nuts and seeds	369
05 -Confectionery	147
06- Cereals and cereal products, derived from cereal grains, from roots and tubers, pulses, legumes and pith or soft core of palm tree, excluding bakery wares of food category 7.0	1961
07 - Bakery wares	1076
08 - Meat and meat products including poultry	72
09 - Fish and fish products, including molluscs, crustaceans, and echinoderms	69
100 - Standardised Food Product excluding those covered under category 1-14	49
101- Hemp seeds and Seed Products	1
10 - Eggs and egg products	13
11 - Sweeteners, including honey	580
12 - Salts, spices, soups, sauces, salads and protein products	950
13 - Foodstuffs intended for particular nutritional uses	31
14 - Beverages, excluding dairy products	406
15 - Ready-to-eat savouries	90
16 - Prepared food	391
18 - Indian Sweets and Indian Snacks & Savouries products	592
99 - Substances added to food	112
TOTAL	8335

SURVEILLANCE SAMPLES

Surveillance sampling of food involves systematically collecting and testing food samples to monitor for contaminants, pathogens or other hazards that could pose a risk to public health. It serves as an early warning system for emerging food safety threats. To optimise the utilization of limited enforcement resources in the food safety ecosystem, it is vital to prioritize evidence-based enforcement actions over random or traditional approaches. This shift emphasizes the need for surveillance activities to be meticulously planned and precisely targeted. In order to achieve the goal of targeted and planned surveillance, the National Annual Surveillance Plan (NASP), developed by FSSAI, is being followed in the state, to allow for lifting samples of specific commodities during their peak season availability. As per the fixed target for the state, 25 surveillance samples are lifted per Food Safety Officer each month. A total of **30366** surveillance samples have been lifted by food safety officers for the period April 2023 to 2024 January.

Details of category wise samples lifted for the period April 2023 to January 2024

Food product category	Total samples lifted
01- Dairy products and analogues, excluding products of food category 2.0	637
02- Fats and oils, and fat emulsions	3336
03 - Edible ices, including sherbet and sorbet	100
04 - Fruits and vegetables (including mushrooms and fungi, roots and tubers, pulses and legumes, and aloe vera), seaweeds, and nuts and seeds	3277
05 - Confectionery	1772
06 - 6.0 Cereals and cereal products, derived from cereal grains, from roots and tubers, pulses, legumes and pith or soft core of palm tree, excluding bakery wares of food category 7.0	3537
07 - Bakery wares	2137
08 - Meat and meat products including poultry	374
09 - Fish and fish products, including molluscs, crustaceans, and echinoderms	1632
100- Standardised Food Product excluding those covered under category 1-14	111
101-Hemp seeds and Seed Products	7
10 - Eggs and egg products	26
11 - Sweeteners, including honey	1715
12 - Salts, spices, soups, sauces, salads and protein products	3323
13 - Foodstuffs intended for particular nutritional uses	65
14 - Beverages, excluding dairy products	3377
15 - Ready-to-eat savouries	321
16 - Prepared food	1113
18 - Indian Sweets and Indian Snacks & Savouries products	3332
99 - Substances added to food	138
TOTAL	30366

FOOD SAMPLING FOR MICROBIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Microbiological food sampling plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with Food Safety Regulations, assessing the effectiveness of sanitation practices, investigating food borne outbreaks and implementing corrective actions to mitigate microbiological risks in the food supply chain. Microbiological food sampling is a systematic process employed to assess the microbiological safety and quality of food products. This procedure involves collection of representative samples from various food items and surface sampling using aseptic techniques to prevent contamination.

The Department of Food Safety, Kerala has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the **first state** in India to **successfully conduct microbiological food sampling** in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) released by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. This achievement underscores Kerala's unwavering commitment to ensure the highest standards of food safety and public health.

This pioneering initiative sets a precedent for other states to follow, reinforcing the importance of proactive measures and adherence to regulatory standards guaranteeing the safety and integrity of the food supply chain.





PROSECUTION

Kerala, known for its rich culinary heritage, places significant emphasis on Food Safety Regulations to safeguard public health. The state Food Safety Department actively monitors and enforces compliance with food safety standards. When violations occur, prosecution cases are initiated to uphold regulatory standards and ensure consumer protection. Prosecution cases are guided by the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and associated regulations enforced by the FSSAI. Common violations leading to prosecution cases are assessed based on its severity and potential risk to public health. Prosecution cases for food safety violations in Kerala often involve collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement authorities, food industry associations, and consumer advocacy groups. This collective effort enhances the effectiveness of enforcement actions and strengthens the overall food safety ecosystem. Kerala food safety department has filed **663 prosecution cases** in various court of the state during this financial year.

ADJUDICATION

Adjudication cases for food safety violations are crucial in ensuring public health and adherence to food safety standards. Adjudication processes involve the examination of evidence and legal arguments to determine culpability and assign penalties. Adjudication cases serve as a deterrent, raising awareness among food businesses and consumers regarding the importance of compliance with food safety regulations. Food safety department has filed **782** cases in various Court of Revenue Divisional Officer of the state during this financial year. Efficient adjudication of food safety violations plays a vital role in safeguarding public health and fostering consumer confidence in the food supply chain. In Kerala, a robust adjudication framework ensures accountability and enforcement of food safety standards, thereby promoting the well-being of its populace.

INSPECTIONS

The Food Safety Officers conducts comprehensive inspections of food business establishments to ensure compliance with hygiene and safety standards. This includes checking for proper food handling, storage, cleanliness and adherence to hygiene standards to ensure the safety of consumers. Food Safety Officers also investigate complaints, outbreaks of food borne illness, or potential food contamination incidents to identify the source and prevent further harm to public health.

Over the past year, the Department of Food Safety in Kerala has undertaken a commendable effort to ensure the safety and quality of food products across the state. Conducting a total of **55,303** inspections from April 2023 to January 2024, the department has demonstrated its commitment to upholding stringent food safety standards. These inspections encompassed a wide range of food business establishments including restaurants, street food vendors, food processing units and retail outlets.

This proactive approach underscores Kerala's dedication to fostering a safe and healthy food environment for its residents and visitors alike.



RISK BASED INSPECTION SYSTEM (RBIS)

By investing in Risk Based Inspection programs and leveraging data driven approaches, the major stakeholders of food safety systems can uphold the highest standards and promote public health and well-being. Focusing efforts on areas of highest risk can help authorities and food industry stakeholders to enhance overall food safety outcomes. The benefits of risk based inspection are multifarious which offer advantages of targeted risk management and mitigation, cost-effectiveness, continuous improvement and enhanced collaboration. It is noteworthy to mention that a total of **11261** risk based inspections have been conducted by Food Safety Officers of the department during the period from April 2023 to January 2024.

SPECIAL DRIVES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

OPERATION MATSYA

The state is rich in its wide variety of seafood resources. Operation Matsya drive got kicked off in the state as part of the campaign named 'Nalla Bhakshnam Nadinte Avakasam' (Safe food is the right of its citizens). 'Operation Matsya', spearheaded by the Kerala Food Safety Department, is a commendable initiative to address the issue of the sale of chemical-laden and stale fish in the state. This visionary measure reflects the government's commitment to ensuring the health and well-being of its citizens by safeguarding the quality of the seafood consumed.

By conducting stringent checks, inspections and quality analysis across the seafood supply chain, Operation Matsya aims to identify and eliminate the unscrupulous practices that jeopardize public health. The focus on preventing the sale of fish contaminated with harmful chemicals and those past their freshness is crucial in safeguarding consumers from potential health risks associated with consuming compromised seafood.

This initiative not only addresses immediate health concerns but also helps to build consumer confidence in the safety and quality of the seafood consumed. These efforts are crucial in maintaining the integrity of the food supply chain, which ultimately benefits both consumers and the reputation of the fisheries sector in Kerala.



No of Inspections	5276
Notices Issued	357
Compounding Notices	156
Amount Compounded	Rs. 2,58,000
Statutory Samples	43
Surveillance Samples	5742
Quantity of Stale Fish Destroyed	7212 kg

OPERATION SHAWARMA

Arabic cuisine is renowned for its unique taste and the art of grilling meat over direct fire or coal. It's no wonder that dishes like shawarma, shaway, alfahm, and mandhi have become quite popular among Keralites, given their delicious taste and budget-friendly prices. However, we must not ignore the potential food risks associated with these dishes. As the popularity of Arabic foods increases, so does the number of food poisoning cases reported. It's essential to be aware of these risks and take necessary precautions while enjoying these scrumptious dishes.

The Kerala Food Safety Department has launched an initiative named Operation Shawarma to ensure the highest standards of food safety and quality in the production and sale of shawarma across all the eateries that serve Arabic dishes. The Commissioner of Food Safety, Kerala took a historical measure to further safeguard public health by imposing a Ban on the preparation and sale of mayonnaise prepared using raw eggs in a visionary move, especially considering that it is the main culprit harbouring Salmonella thus contributing to food poisoning as this is an inevitable condiment served along with these Arabic dishes. This action will help to prevent foodborne illnesses and ensure that consumers can enjoy their meals without worrying about potential health hazards.



Inspections	10713
Rectification Notice	2185
Compounding notice	1794
Compounding amount	Rs. 79,30,500
Samples Lifted	385

OPERATION FoSCoS

The Food Safety Department of Kerala launched a special drive named “**OPERATION FoSCoS**”, a license drive which aimed at ensuring that all food business operators in the state possess valid food safety license to operate food business in the state. According to section 31 of Food Safety & Standards Act 2006, all food business operators are required to obtain FSSAI License / Registration to run food business. Under the FSS Act, production, storage, distribution, sale and import of food articles without license is an offence and punishable fine up to Rs 10 Lakhs Rupees.

The special drive is part of the department's efforts to create awareness about the fact that license rather than mere registration will be required of traders and food businesses with annual turn over above 12 lakhs. However, the license checks have been tightened based on the fact that many establishments are working only by obtaining registration instead of getting a license.

So far, the Food Safety Department has inspected as many as **26,576** food business establishments across the state as part of Operation FoSCoS to find establishments without valid FSSAI registration certificates and licenses. The Department has taken steps to stop the operation of 4427 establishments which were running business without license. 2275 big establishments that have only registered and operated have been issued notice to obtain licenses. The significant achievement of Operation FoSCoS is that most of the establishments that were operating without valid FSSAI License/ Registration Certificates have been brought under the ambit of the Food Safety and Standards Act.



OPERATION LABEL



The fast paced nature of today's lifestyle has created a huge demand for food parcels/food delivery services to cater to the large scale floating population that depends on hotels, restaurants, cafe's, canteens and bakeries to meet their daily meal requirements.

Without proper labelling of food packets, consumers are left vulnerable to potential health hazards and risks including allergens and contaminants.

There has been a felt need to empower consumers with vital information about the food they consume, almost on a regular basis and this led to the inception of a special enforcement drive - "Operation Label", curated for identifying vendors selling prepared food packets without proper label details in the state.

Through this proactive enforcement drive, the Department of Food Safety Kerala has been able to uphold public trust and foster a healthier and more informed consumer environment.

Under the provisions of Section 30(2)(a) and Section 29(3) of Food Safety & Standards Act 2006, the Commissioner of Food Safety, Kerala prohibited the sale of food packets containing prepared food without a slip/sticker which clearly indicates the date, time and time limit within which the food is to be consumed, within the state of Kerala as per the order no. CFS/74/2023-B1 dtd 20/01/2023. The instruction to stick labels with proper details on the food parcel has been given to Food Business Operators during inspections, awareness campaigns and through social media. A state-wide special drive named "Operation Label", led by the Special Task Force of the department was conducted during January 2024. This drive was conducted to ensure that food parcels were being sold with slip or sticker indicating the date, time and time limit within which the food is to be consumed.

Major features

- 791 Inspections conducted across the state
- 44 Rectification notices issued
- 109 FBEs compounded under Section 69 of FSS Act, 2006
- **122 Adjudication** cases filed

INSPECTIONS OF HOSTEL MESS & CANTEEN OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



Hostel messes and canteens within educational institutions play a pivotal role in nourishing students, providing them with essential sustenance for their academic pursuits. Ensuring the safety and quality of food served in these facilities is paramount to safeguarding the health and well-being of students. Rigorous food safety inspections are therefore indispensable in upholding these standards.

The canteens, hostel mess which operate in conjunction with school, college and other educational institutions must comply with Part V of Schedule IV of Food Safety & Standards (Licensing and registration of food business) Regulation 2011.

The Department received numerous grievances related to food poisoning and unhygienic conditions in the canteens/hostel mess of educational institutions during recent times.

In response to wide spread concerns about food poisoning and food safety issues in educational institutions, the Department of Food Safety conducted special drives to identify potential hazards, improper storage of food articles, inadequate cooking temperature & food handling practices to ensure proper hygiene practices to be followed by the food handlers.

Key Features

- **96** Food Safety Squads deployed
- **995** statewide inspections conducted
- **125** FBEs compounded under Section 69 of FSS Act, 2006
- **267** Rectification notices issued



SPECIAL DRIVE FOR INSPECTING FOOD BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS NEAR SCHOOL PREMISES

Ensuring food safety, especially in establishments near school premises, is paramount for the well-being of students. The proximity of Food Business Establishments to school premises poses unique challenges. Students, often enticed by convenience and affordability, frequently patronize these shops that sell a variety of sweets, chocolates, sip-ups, ice cream, frozen dessert, cool drinks, and other HFSS foods, during breaks or after school hours. Consequently, the quality and safety of food served become critical concerns.

To address these concerns, the Department of Food Safety deployed special inspection drives in food business establishments around school premises to make sure that such food articles may not cause any immediate or long term cognitive health impairments to students.

The objectives of these special squads were multifaceted:

- Ensuring compliance to Food Safety Regulations and standards to prevent food borne contamination and illnesses.
- Hygiene Maintenance to minimise health risks associated with poor sanitation practices.
- Quality Assurance to evaluate the overall quality of ingredients used in food preparation to uphold nutritional standards.
- Educational Outreach to provide guidance and resources to facilitate compliance and continuous improvement
- Community Engagement to involve the school and local community in monitoring and reporting any concerns related to food establishments, fostering accountability and transparency.

Highlights

- **116** inspection squads deployed around school premises
- **2972** Food Business Establishments inspected
- **110** FBEs compounded under Section 69 of FSS Act, 2006
- **124** Rectification notices issued
- **721** samples lifted for laboratory analysis



SPECIAL DRIVE TO CHECK QUALITY OF RICE POWDER

Rice is integral to Kerala cuisine and rice powder serves as a base ingredient for various traditional delicacies like appam, idiyappam, puttu and pathiri in the Malayali diet. Rice powder or 'aripodi', as it is locally called, is a fundamental component that shapes the identity and flavour profile of many beloved dishes in the region.

In order to ensure the quality and safety of rice powder distributed across the food supply chain, the Food Safety Department conducted an inspection drive of rice powder manufacturing units across the state. The inspection was conducted in units that manufactured rice powder, puttu powder, appam and idiyappam powder. State-wide inspections were carried out on the basis of findings by food testing laboratories that some brands of rice flour were found to contain pesticide residues in excess of the prescribed limits specified by the FSS Regulations.

Key Features

- **68** inspection squads deployed across the state
- **199** Rice powder manufacturing units inspected
- **3** FBEs compounded under Section 69 of the FSS Act, 2006
- **9** Rectification Notices issued
- **104** Enforcement samples & **75** surveillance samples lifted



SABARIMALA



Sabarimala is a renowned pilgrimage destination in the Western Ghats of Kerala, India. Dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, the pilgrimage to Sabarimala holds immense significance and is marked by the annual festival known as “Mandala Makaravilakku Mahotsavam.” This festival season spans from November to January, attracting millions of devotees.

The Sabarimala pilgrimage is unique in its inclusivity, that people from all backgrounds, regardless of their caste, creed, or religion, are welcomed with open arms. The number of pilgrims visiting Sabarimala varies annually, with millions converging during peak pilgrimage periods. The sheer scale of participation underscores the cultural and religious importance of Sabarimala in the hearts of devotees, making it one of the largest annual pilgrimages in India.

The Food Safety Department has deployed Food Safety on Wheels at Nilakkal, Pamba and Sannidhanam to conduct preliminary testing of food items. Robust arrangements to ensure safe and wholesome food for the pilgrims and the well-being of the pilgrims during the festival season Nilakkal, Pamba and Sannidhanam. A 24-hour control room for food safety is established every festive season at Sannidhanam, Pamba and Nilackal to assist both Food Business Operators and devotees. Round-the-clock inspections are carried out at various food establishments - temporary food stalls and kitchens- to ensure the quality of raw materials and finished food products and to check the cleanliness of the kitchen and premises.

During the festival season, the Food Safety Department has undertaken comprehensive measures to ensure the quality and safety of food articles, particularly for iconic offerings like Aravana and Appam.

The process involves stringent sampling and testing procedures, which even extend to the analysis of raw materials in Food Safety laboratories. These measures are in place to protect the health and well-being of everyone enjoying these festive delicacies.

Special squads were deputed at Sannidhanam, Pamba, Nilackal and Erumeli to ensure round-the-clock inspection at these prime locations.

Only food business establishments holding a valid FSSAI license or registration, in compliance with

the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, are authorised to operate within the festival area. Thereby ensuring that all food served at the festival meets the necessary food safety standards.

Food Safety on Wheels are deployed at Nilackal and Erumeli to conduct the preliminary testing of food items collected from Pampa, Nilackal, and Erumeli.

The Food Safety Department has taken special care to ensure the quality of the raw materials used to prepare prasadam at Pampa and Sannidhanam during the Mandala Makaravilakku season. Special Food Safety labs are set up at Sannidhanam and Pampa to test the quality of the raw materials used to prepare Aravana and Appam. The labs become fully functional during the season, and complete regulatory measures are in place regarding the procurement of raw materials, manufacture, packaging, and handling of Aravana and Appam. Only the raw materials that meet the standards are transported to Sannidhanam to prepare Aravana. And finally, the finished Aravana and Appam are being analyzed in Analytical Laboratory situated at Sannidhanam.

To ensure that the pilgrims have access to safe drinking water, the Food Safety Authority collects water samples from various water kiosks in the festival area and gets them analysed at the Government Analyst's Laboratory.

In addition to the routine inspections, the department has also formed a system that responds quickly to any such food safety concerns. In case of any issues, the pilgrims can report them to the department, and the authorities will promptly investigate and take necessary action.

IEC materials in five vernacular languages are distributed to pilgrims and Food Business Operators and FoSTaC training were also arranged to Food Business Operators in the festive area.

The measures implemented by the Food Safety Authority at Sabarimala ensure that the devotees can enjoy the festivities with confidence in the safety and quality of the food served during the festival season.

Total Inspections	3321
Notice Issued	269
Compounding Notice	63
Amount Compounded	Rs. 2,49,200
Statutory Sample	5
Surveillance Samples	11810
Awareness Class	2



ONAM, CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR SQUADS

Onam is a traditional harvest festival celebrated in Kerala. The festival spans ten days and is known for vibrant cultural events, including the grand Thiruvonam day. With the arrival of festive seasons such as Onam, the Food Safety Department operates special squads to ensure heightened food safety measures. These squads have a clear objective - to monitor food business establishments, markets, and vendors to prevent adulteration, maintain hygiene standards, and safeguard public health. By increasing surveillance, the risks associated with the surge in food consumption in these festive seasons are mitigated, ensuring that citizens can indulge in the festivities without compromising food safety. With this crucial step, the Food Safety Department is committed to taking all necessary measures to make this happen.

As the state celebrates Onam, the Food Safety Department deploys special squads to monitor the preparation and sale of traditional dishes, particularly focusing on items like 'payasam', a popular dessert and banana chips. They ensure that the ingredients used meet the required quality standards, the cooking procedures are proper, and the hygiene standards in the kitchens are maintained. Special attention is given to prevent the adulteration of food items such as coconut oil, dals & pulses, milk and jaggery which is the most commonly used ingredients during the festival. Additionally, special squads are deployed exclusively at the major check posts across the state to check the milk quality that crosses the border.

During Christmas and New Year cakes take centre stage, and many bakeries and cake shops come under scrutiny which ensures the quality of raw materials like flour, eggs, and dairy products. The Food Safety Department deploys special squads to verify that bakeries follow proper hygiene practices while producing baked goods in bulk. The department also checks the storage conditions, cleanliness of utensils and overall sanitation of the baking facilities to ensure that the cakes are safe for consumption during the festive season.

The Department is fully committed to implementing product-specific measures during festival seasons. These measures go a long way in safeguarding the general public and making their celebrations more enjoyable.

Onam Squad Details

Inspection	3126
Rectification Notice	298
Compounding Notice	211
Statutory Sample	281
Surveillance Sample	955
Closure	32

Christmas Squad Details

Inspection	3129
Rectification Notice	259
Compounding Notice	197
Statutory Sample	354
Surveillance Sample	1312



SPECIAL SQUADS FOR CHECK POST INSPECTION



As a consumer-oriented state, ensuring the safety of food articles from external sources is crucial for Kerala's Food Safety Department. The state primarily depends on neighboring states for various food commodities like vegetables, fruits, milk, meat, and meat products. We must scrutinize the quality of food at the point of entry to reduce the risk of adulterated food reaching the market. To this end, the department is executing surprise inspections at the six major check posts.

Consolidated report for the year 2023-2024 is enlisted below

- Total Number of Inspections Conducted = **4551**
- Total Number of Surveillance Samples Taken = **711**



SPECIAL TASK FORCE



In response to the alarming rise of food poisoning cases and the sale of adulterated food in the market, the Commissioner of Food Safety in Kerala has taken a strong stance by creating a dedicated five members Special Task Force. The team's primary objective is to handle emergencies and investigate cases of food poisoning while maintaining complete confidentiality. With their steadfast efforts, the team has investigated 11 cases so far and is determined to continue their tireless work to ensure that safe food is served to the people of Kerala. To prevent the dissemination of harmful food products and to safeguard public health, they have coordinated several activities and are enlisted here.

Kasaragod – Investigation on Tea samples: A confidential report revealed that adulterated tea was extensively sold in the border areas of Kasaragod. On May 10, 2023, the special task force conducted lightning raids at Sitangoli, Hosankadi, and Manjeswar, which resulted in the seizure of **600 Kg of adulterated tea**. The primary tests indicated the presence of artificial colour, which was conclusive evidence of the wrongdoing. With the invaluable help of our lab reports, three criminal cases were launched against the culprits. This is a breakthrough in the fight against the sale of adulterated products, and it sends a strong message to anyone who thinks they can get away with such unethical practices. The team will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that justice is served and that consumers can trust the products they buy.

Statewide Inspections - Operation label: A special task force was constituted to reduce food poisoning incidents and enforce the prohibition order issued by the Commissioner of Food Safety, Kerala. The order requires hotels to label their food parcels with the date and time of preparation and the use-by time. To implement the mission, the task force enlisted the help of 50 squads who conducted a statewide inspection of 791 Food Business Establishments. As a result, **120 adjudications** were initiated against establishments that were non-compliant with the order during the inspection.

Check post inspections across the state: To ensure the quality of vegetables entering our state, check post inspections were conducted across the state on 22/02/2023. A total of 27 surveillance samples were collected.

Kottayam – License / Registration Inspections: On 24th and 25th January 2023, a License / Registration inspection was conducted in Kottayam district and 4 establishments that were conducting business without a valid FSSAI License were made to shut down.

Ernakulam Parcel Squad: In a mission to ensure compliance with proper labeling requirements for parcels containing prepared food, another Special Parcel Squad was formed to conduct an inspection exclusively at Ernakulam district on April 19, 2023. A total of 26 Food Business Establishments were inspected, and 7 FBE's compounded for violations.

Statewide Inspections - Shawarma Squad: Following a complaint about the excessive use of artificial color in chicken dishes, the task force took a significant initiative on December 29, 2023. They formed 35 special squads across Kerala to inspect 448 establishments. During the inspection, 75 statutory samples and 19 surveillance samples were collected. As a result of serious non-compliance, 15 shops were closed down. Additionally, 74 Food Business Establishments were compounded, and rectification notices were issued to 49 Food Business Operators.

Kottayam - Tsunami meat inspections: To trace out the source, sale, and availability of Tsunami meat in Kottayam District, the Special Task Force conducted surprise inspections at Kottayam and Changanassery Railway Station and also at various meat trading establishments and hotels.



Pathanamthitta Onam Special Squad: To intensify the enforcement activities, the Onam Special Squad headed by the Special Task Force carried out an exclusive Drive in the Pathanamthitta district on the 23rd and 24th of August 2023. The inspection focused on identifying adulterants in Jaggery. During this operation a total of 62 establishments were inspected, 7 surveillance samples were collected, 11 Food Business Establishments were compounded and notices were issued to 16 Food Business Operators



Idukki - Cardamom Surveillance Sampling: After receiving confidential information indicating the widespread presence of synthetic colors in cardamom, a surveillance sample drive was conducted in the Idukki district, where **50 samples** were collected.



Idukki - Marayoor Jaggery - Inspections: The Special Task Force of Kerala's Food Safety Department inspected the Marayoor and Kanthallur areas of the Idukki district on the 12th and 13th of October 2023. Based on secret information, the Jaggery produced in the area was suspected to contain added preservatives. During this operation, Jaggery samples were collected from the manufacturing units to verify this suspicion. The ultimate goal was to address concerns about the quality of Marayoor Jaggery in the market.



IMPLEMENTATION OF EAT RIGHT INITIATIVES IN KERALA



Welcome to Kerala, the land where spices reign supreme and every meal is a symphony of flavours dancing on your palette, where amidst the lush greenery, a silent revolution is brewing to ensure that food safety is not just a duty, but a sacred pledge!

In Kerala, the truest measure of wealth lies not in the abundance of riches but in the richness of health and in the prosperity of knowledge. Knowledge is power and in the realm of Food Safety, ignorance is not bliss, but a perilous gamble with health.

In our mission to support the large scale transformation of our country towards ensuring safe, wholesome and sustainable food for every citizen, the Department of Food Safety, Kerala has aligned its awareness & capacity building initiatives with the “whole of society” approach of the Eat Right India Movement.

Echoing the message of “Eat Right”, “Eat Safe” & “Eat Sustainable” loud and clear through a network of educational campaigns and community outreach programmes, the Department of Food Safety Kerala has become a beacon of Knowledge, infused with the spirit of Eat Right India movement.

As part of the Eat Right India movement in the state, both demand and supply side initiatives have been given equal thrust to ensure safe food business practices along with healthy food consumption.





Eat Right initiatives in Kerala - A Glimpse

EAT RIGHT INITIATIVE - Supply Side Interventions	NO OF INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED DURING (2023-2024)
Food Safety Training and Certification (FoSTaC)	537
Clean Street Food Hub	13
Clean and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Markets,	19
Eat Right Station	23
Eat Right Places of Worship (PoW)	35
Hygiene Rating	1701

EAT RIGHT INITIATIVE - Demand Side Interventions	NO OF INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED DURING (2023-2024)
Eat Right Campus	136
Eat Right School	27
Save Food, Share Food, Share Joy	325



FOOD FORTIFICATION

Food fortification plays an important role in enriching the nutrient content and quality of food and thus preventing various micronutrient deficiencies in our day to day life. FSSAI through its fortification wing is doing great job, for popularization of fortified products by attractive videos and various awareness sessions. We, Food Safety Department of Kerala have conducted awareness classes and demonstration of fortified foods in all of our fourteen districts and given a brief and relevant knowledge about food fortification and its benefits.

We have shown how the product is fortified, and the way it has to be used. In the awareness session we have supplied fortified products, to make the participants understand that there is no palatable difference comparing with original version of the product.

With the active participation of diverse stake holders like Anganwady teachers, noon meal supervisors, workers, staffs from Public Distribution Department, staff from Women & Child Department & other



FORTIFIED
SAMPOORNA POSHAN
SWASTH JEEVAN

public Ration Dealers, Students, Nutrimix workers etc. and by engaging them in the fortified food demonstration programmes, we, served a pivotal step towards improving public health through fortified foods.

The events impacts are expected to be long-lasting, as it educated and empowered attendees to make informed about dietary choices.

Feedback forms were also supplied at the end of each session. From the feedback forms we understood our session was really helpful to make the public aware that they will be getting benefited from fortified food with added nutrients and there was no hidden danger in consuming fortified products and the product is acceptable to all sectors of the society.



REPURPOSE USED COOKING OIL - RUCO



The adoption of FSSAI's three pronged approach of EDUCATION, ENFORCEMENT, ECOSYSTEM to divert Used Cooking Oil from the food value chain and curb current illegal practices has helped address the menace of re-circulation of Used Cooking Oil in the markets and Food Business Establishments of the State.

In Kerala, many Food Business Operators are disposing the used cooking oil to agencies authorised by FSSAI. About of 7,63,902 litres of UCO have been disposed during the year 2023-24 by 750 Food business Operators to the authorised agencies. The Department has planned a wide range of awareness programmes for promoting RUCO across the state and continues to conduct awareness classes in all districts.

STATE INITIATIVES

SAFE KITCHEN INITIATIVE

The Safe Kitchen Initiative is a novel programme initiated by state government in 2023-2024, which aims to ensure people have access to safe and nutritious food in their homes. Here in Kerala, we have made great strides in promoting this initiative among the general public, thanks to the tireless efforts of our health workers and Asha workers. We have taken this initiative to 32 sub-centers, which serve as the primary point of contact between the healthcare system and the community. Each sub-center covers an average population of 5,000 people. We have organized special awareness camps at each sub-center to educate people about safe food practices at home. We have also provided Asha workers with the Eat Right toolkit, which includes pink book, posters, activity tools and CD containing videos. With one Asha worker responsible for 1,000 people, we have emphasized the importance of their role in spreading the word about this initiative in their community. Our efforts have been successful in creating a safer and healthier environment for families across Kerala.



FOOD SAFETY TOWN



The Kerala Food Safety Department has initiated another pioneering project to guarantee food safety in all municipal areas of the state in 2023-2024. As a first step in this direction, five municipal areas in the state were identified and got them transformed into food safety towns. This process of transforming these areas was a challenging task, which involved conducting four separate license and registration melas in each municipality to ensure that all food businesses operating in the area were duly licensed and registered. Training about safe food practices and a demo on sample testing was given to the public with the help of Food Safety on Wheels. Distribution of IEC materials that focused on creating a safe, healthy, and sustainable food environment was carried out. Maximum promotion about this initiative was propagated through multimedia platforms such as talks, short videos, and audio clips. It is essential to promote a new food safety lifestyle in the food safety town and this was achieved by conducting awareness classes for various sectors of society, such as Anganwadi workers, Asha workers, Kudumbasree workers, and Residence Association members. These classes encourage the adoption of safe food practices and promote the benefits of a healthy and sustainable food environment.

In its versatile move, the Food Safety Department of Kerala is committed to ensuring that the food consumed by the public is safe, and our efforts to transform the municipal areas into food-safety towns represent a significant step towards achieving this goal.

SNF @ WORK PLACE

The rise in obesity and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension due to unhealthy eating habits in workplaces is a growing concern. Since people spend a significant amount of time at their offices, it is crucial to have easy access to healthy food options. To address this challenge, our state government has launched SNF@ Workplace (Safe and Nutritious Food at Workplaces) to recognize and reward companies that provide healthy eating options. In Kerala, we have successfully implemented SNF@Workplace in ten institutions. We distributed orange books as a guide to the recommended practices for ensuring safe, healthy, and sustainable food practices in workplaces. to meet the requirements of schedule IV of Food Safety and Standards(licensing and registration of food business) regulation 2011. Finally, FSSAI's empanelled audit agencies audited these workplaces.



SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD @ SCHOOL



'SNF at School' conceptualized by FSSAI recognizes the power of children to be powerful agents of change when it comes to promoting safe and healthy food practices. The 'SNF at School' initiative aims to alter the mindset of school-going children by instilling a culture of safe and wholesome food from an early age. By delivering messages through children, we can create a ripple effect that promotes behavioural change and leads to a healthier and safer society.

The alarming rise of lifestyle diseases such as obesity, hypertension, and cancer is indeed a matter of concern. Unhealthy dietary practices are the main contributor to these diseases. That's why the Food Safety Department has taken up the pivotal mission of promoting safe food for a healthy life among school students. By promoting healthy eating habits, the department is taking a proactive step towards preventing such diseases and ensuring a healthier future for the younger generation.

The project's prime goal is to promote awareness among students, teachers, and parents about the significance of safe and nutritious food with the coordinated association of education, nutrition, and health departments working together to achieve this goal in line with the SNF at school initiative of FSSAI. This initiative was started in the year 2016 and till date we have completed SNF @SCHOOL programme in 2203 schools.



MODEL FOOD SAFETY GRAMA PANCHAYATH

The implementation of Model Food Safety Grama Panchayath initiative in Kerala marks a significant step towards promoting food safety awareness and compliance at the grassroots level. Under this initiative, panchayaths across the state are empowered to take proactive measures to ensure the safety and quality of food available within their jurisdictions. Through training sessions, capacity building workshops, and community outreach programmes, local authorities are equipped with the knowledge and resources to effectively monitor and regulate food businesses operating within their areas.

By engaging with stakeholders, raising awareness among residents and enforcing Food Safety Regulations, the Model Food Safety Grama Panchayath programme aims to create a culture of accountability and responsibility towards food safety at the grass roots level, ultimately contributing the overall well-being of Kerala's residents.

As part of the initiative, food safety awareness classes were conducted for food business operators, students, anganwadi workers, kudumbasree workers, fish merchants, residence associations, ASHA workers, farmer's group etc. Public water distribution sources of the panchayaths were examined and IEC materials on food safety were distributed to all stakeholders in the panchayaths. License/Registration melas were conducted for food business entrepreneurs in the panchayaths. The program was implemented for the first time in Kerala during 2015. The program has since been implemented in 584 panchayaths in the state till date.

The model food safety grama panchayath programme envisages to achieve the following core objectives:

- Education & Awareness
- Capacity Building
- Regulatory Compliance
- Community Engagement
- Enforcement
- Promotion of good practices
- Sustainability



MODERNISATION OF FOOD STREET

Street food has been an integral part of our society, culture and heritage for hundreds of years and the richness and diversity of street food found in Kerala, as one traverses the length and breadth of the state, is arguably unmatched in the world. We have vibrant street food hubs spread all across the country that attract scores of visitors every day and hold the promise of also becoming tourism hubs as well, attracting both domestic and international tourists. It is in this context that raising the health and safety standards of Indian street food gains paramount importance.

Improving the hygiene conditions of all our street food hubs, including not only the way the food is prepared but also how it is served, would bring these hubs at par with the global best. Street food ensures the availability of healthy and nutritious food at affordable prices to lakhs of keralites and at the same time, provides employment to a large number of people. This initiative will help in transforming our food streets into Healthy and Hygienic Food Streets, which would mean a higher footfall and better employment opportunities to more people.

We have identified four potential sites for modernization of food streets at Shanghumugham in Thiruvananthapuram, Malappuram, Kasthurba Nagar in Ernakulam and on the Kozhikode Beach. Administrative sanction has been accorded for an amount of 1 crore each for the renovation of these food streets. The construction and renovation work is progressing according to the schedule. Infrastructure upgrades, such as seating areas, lighting, and landscaping, are contributing to a more inviting and vibrant atmosphere. We are optimistic about completing the modernization project by May 31st.



AWARENESS PROGRAMMES



The Food Safety Department conducts extensive awareness programs that cater to the needs of stakeholders and the general public. The program covers a wide range of topics related to food safety, such as proper handling, storage, preparation, and disposal of food items. It also provides guidance on identifying and preventing food-borne illnesses and emphasizes the importance of maintaining a hygienic environment in the food industry. The main objective of this program is to create awareness and understanding of the best food safety practices. The program is tailor-made for Anganwadi workers, noon meal workers, Kudumbasree members, and various manufacturers and entrepreneurs involved in the food industry. It is essential to equip Anganwadi workers with the latest information about proper food hygiene and nutrition since they play a crucial role in early childhood nutrition and development.

AWARENESS FOR KUDUMBASREE WORKERS

Kudumbasree members are equipped to maintain food safety standards in their micro-enterprises, fostering safe food practices at the grassroots level and thus empowering them to contribute significantly to the well-being of their communities.

AWARENESS FOR ANGANWADI WORKERS

Anganwadi workers, who play a pivotal role in early childhood nutrition, are being equipped with the latest information on proper food hygiene and nutrition to ensure the well-being of the young ones under their care.

AWARENESS PROGRAMME FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Simultaneously, the program extends its reach to manufacturers and entrepreneurs in the food industry, emphasizing compliance with stringent safety regulations. Training modules delve into best practices for quality control, hazard analysis, and adherence to food safety standards, ensuring that products reaching the market meet the highest safety benchmarks.

By fostering collaboration and disseminating essential knowledge, the program empowers individuals to take collective responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the food supply chain. The awareness programs headed by the Food Safety Department enable people to take action towards safe food practices.

SHAWARMA AWARENESS



The Food Safety Department took a tremendous leap in giving special attention to preparing shawarma, a widely enjoyed Arabic delicacy, by conducting comprehensive Shawarma Awareness Classes across all 140 circles across the state to sensitize the shawarma manufacturers with the guidelines issued by the government to uphold stringent food safety standards. These classes have certainly equipped the manufacturers with the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure the production of safe and high-quality shawarmas. The curriculum comprised proper handling of ingredients, hygiene practices, cooking temperatures, storage conditions, and overall sanitation measures.

In addition to the guidelines, a visual aid was created in partnership with the Centre for Development of Imaging Technology (C-DIT) to provide step-by-step demonstrations of recommended practices. This multimedia approach improves the efficacy of the campaign for shawarma manufacturers with different learning preferences.



AWARENESS PROGRAMME ON PACKAGING MATERIAL

All stakeholders in the food industry must be aware of the packaging materials used to safeguard consumers, comply with regulations, and promote sustainability. Coordination between suppliers, manufacturers, and retailers is pivotal in ensuring that only food-grade materials will be used for packaging food. In line with this, the Department conducted a training session for enforcement officers on packaging regulations and organized awareness programs for various stakeholders at the state and district levels. By creating awareness of packaging regulations, the food industry can comply with the safety regulations and follow sustainable practices.



STATE FOOD TESTING LABORATORIES



The inception of the first analytical laboratory at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala in 1957 marked a milestone in the state's commitment to food safety. Subsequently, in 1975, the establishment of two additional laboratories at Ernakulam and Kozhikodu further strengthened the capabilities of the Food Safety Department. Over the years, these laboratories have played a pivotal role in upholding stringent standards, ensuring the continuous monitoring and analysis of food samples to protect public health and maintain the integrity of the food supply chain.

As the food safety in our country confronted new challenges, the country switched to the enactment of Food Safety and Standards Act and since 2013, the laboratory is working in full fledge to realise the analytical capabilities of the act. Compared with PFA act, Food Safety and Standards Act is designed to address the evolving challenges in Food Industry and is generally considered as more advanced and comprehensive taking into account advancements in Food Science and Technology. The Act aligns with International Food Safety Standards and meets the dynamic requirements of Indian Food Trade and Industry and International Trade. It adopts a risk based approach focusing on potential hazards and addressing them systematically ensuring a more proactive and preventive approach to food safety.

For fulfilling this purpose, FSSAI enacted the mandatory implementation of ISO IEC 17025 through NABL accreditation throughout the food testing labs across the nation despite of government or private ownership.

The Ernakulam laboratory achieved a significant milestone in 2016 by obtaining NABL accreditation. This accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories underscores the laboratory commitment to maintaining high standards of precision, reliability, and competence in its analytical processes. It further enhances the credibility of the laboratory's test results, reinforcing its role as a reliable authority in ensuring food safety in the state. In 2017, the laboratories in Thiruvananthapuram (TVM) and Kozhikode also secured NABL accreditation, demonstrating their commitment to excellence in testing and calibration. This accreditation affirms the



laboratories' adherence to rigorous international standards, further establishing them as trustworthy entities in ensuring Food Safety.

When FSSAI mandatorily pressed for NABL FSSAI Integrated assessment, our laboratory achieved the status in 2019 and Ernakulam Regional Analytical Laboratory is the first State Food Testing Laboratory in India to achieve this status and still striving to achieve excellence in building analytical capabilities.

The laboratories are equipped with the high end equipment such as LCMSMS, GCMSMS, ICP OES, Liquid chromatographic and spectroscopic systems of worth 8.0 crores, quality and competitive manpower that blends chemist, food technologist and microbiologist which is on par with best research laboratories and leading private food testing laboratories across the country.

The laboratories started its scope enhancement in a phased manner. Currently scope of parameters in Thiruvananthapuram laboratory is 1468, 819 in Ernakulam and 613 in Kozhikode. Scope and facility of the laboratory covers Pesticides, Heavy metals, Mycotoxins, Fortificants, Antibiotics, Nutritional Evaluation, General Characteristics Parameters.

Microbiology testing has an important role as per FSSAI norms. Under a Central Sector Scheme launched by the Food Safety Standards Authority of India to strengthen food testing laboratory, Rs 4.5 crore has been allocated for upgrading each of the food testing laboratories in the state for 'Setting up Microbiology Section and Installation of Equipment on Turnkey Basis' in Regional Analytical Laboratory, Kozhikode, Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram.

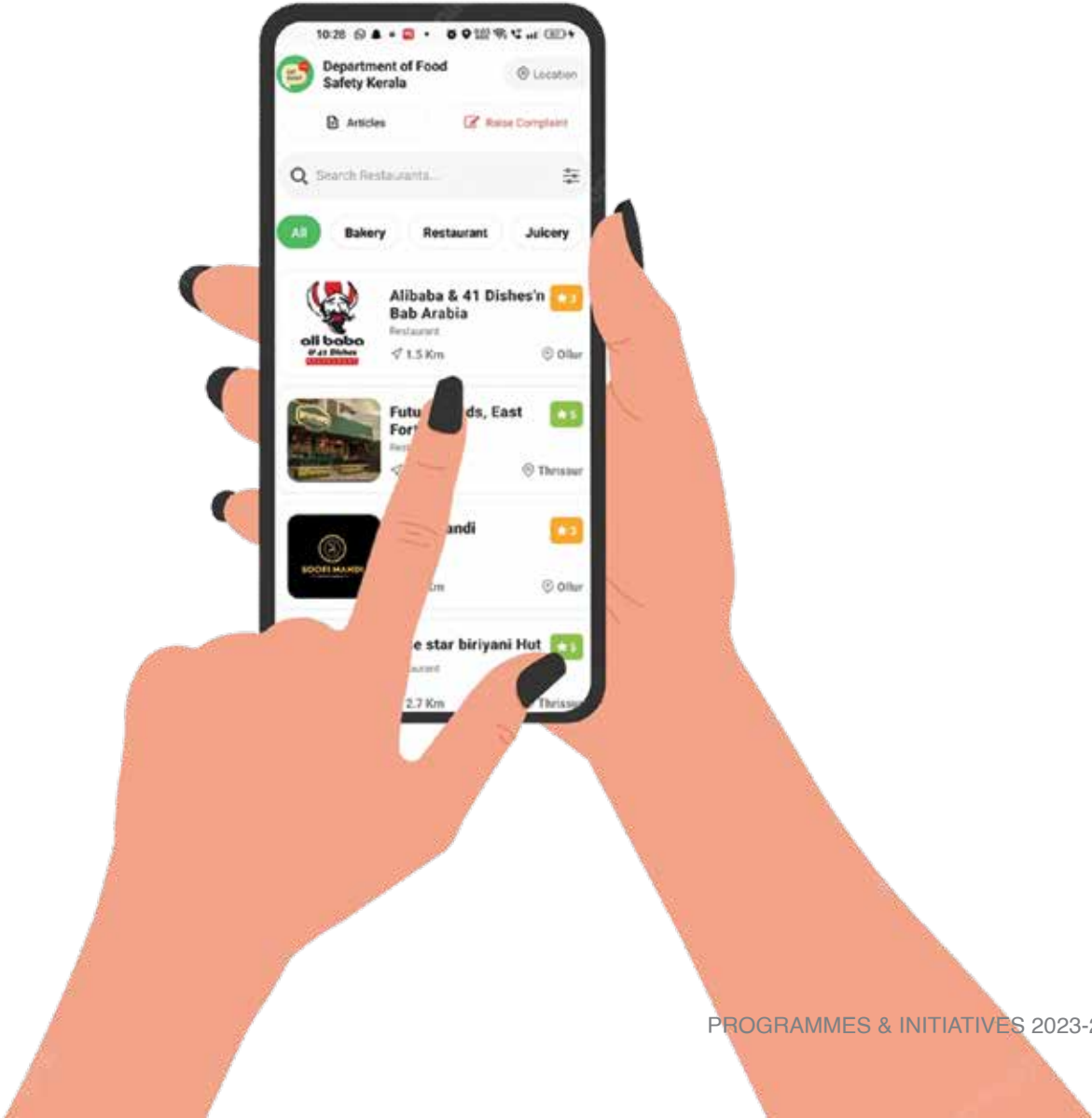
Our microbiology laboratories at Ernakulam and Kozhikode were inaugurated on 26th February 2024 by the Honorable Prime minister of India. The new laboratories will be a step up for the Kerala State Food Safety Department, which currently ranks first in the National Food Safety Index.

THE EAT RIGHT KERALA MOBILE APPLICATION

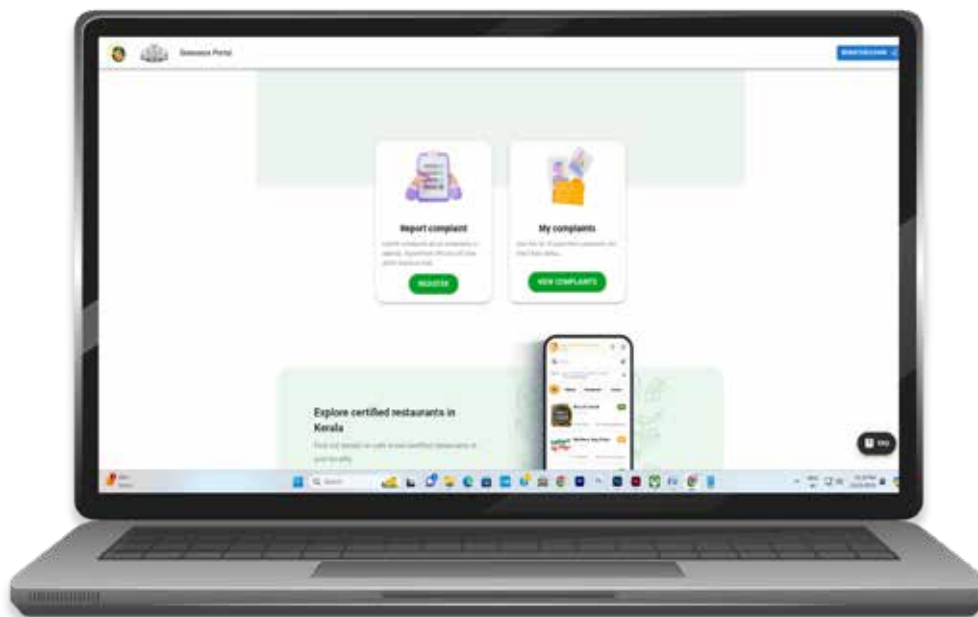
Another proud achievement of Kerala Food Safety Department is the Eat Right App. On 2023 July, we launched the app. This is designed to be a beacon of Food Safety guiding residents and visitors alike to places where they can dine with complete confidence. By installing the app, users gain access to a comprehensive list of bakeries and restaurant, each of which has been meticulously vetted for a adherence to Food Safety Standards. The eat right app features hotels and restaurants that have received FSSAI's hygiene rating. It also have the facility to lodge complaints about hotels and restaurants. The concept of involving the public in ensuring food safety is not uncommon. However it is the first time any Indian State has taken an initiative of this kind.



Eat Right Kerala Mobile App



GRIEVANCE PORTAL



The Food Safety Department's Grievance Portal is a robust platform designed to empower the public in addressing concerns related to food safety. This initiative allows individuals to lodge complaints seamlessly, providing a convenient and accessible channel for reporting issues pertaining to food quality, hygiene, or safety. It was launched in March 2023. 1100 complaints have been registered through the portal.

Key features of the portal include:

- 1. User-Friendly Interface**
- 2. Complaint Tracking:** Once a complaint is submitted, individuals can track the progress of their case in real-time. This transparency fosters confidence among the public, as they are kept informed about the status of their concerns.
- 3. Action Details:** The portal provides comprehensive information on the actions taken by the Food Safety Department in response to each complaint. Users can access details regarding investigations, corrective measures implemented, and any enforcement actions undertaken.

In summary, the Food Safety Department's Grievance Portal stands as a cornerstone in promoting transparency, accountability, and collaboration between authorities and the public. By leveraging technology to streamline the complaint resolution process, this initiative contributes to the overall enhancement of food safety standards and public satisfaction.

FOOD SAFETY ON WHEELS



Food Safety On Wheels is moving vehicles arranged by the FSSAI to supervise the food products in different areas across the country. They are used to educate the public and give awareness about the hygiene of food.

FSWs would be utilized for executing the functions of,

1. Surveillance and creating awareness regarding the food safety in remote areas in the state large public congregations, schools and consumer organizations.
2. Transporting samples picked from remote areas to the nearest food testing laboratory, thus as a cold chain logistics for regulatory/surveillance sample.
3. As an offsite wing of labs
4. Education of the consumers in various aspects of Food Safety laws and common hygiene practices.
5. As a module for communicating IEC materials in vernacular languages.
6. As a handy tool for training street food vendors.
7. Providing information and support for the licensing and registration.
8. Training and awareness programs about Food Safety.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MILLETS



The year 2023 was celebrated as the International Year of Millets (IYoM 2023) as declared by the United Nations General Assembly. To contribute to this vision, FSSAI, under the aegis of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, is also promoting the consumption of millets (Shree Anna) as part of its flagship Eat Right India initiative.

Millets have been an integral part of our diet for centuries. In addition to a plethora of health benefits, millets are also good for the environment with low water & input requirement. With the aim to create awareness and increase the production & consumption of millets, Kerala has conducted various programmes and activities around Millets. Millet melas were conducted in all 14 districts. As part of eat right initiative, millet yoga and bikeathon and cyclathon were conducted to popularize millets.

The Millet Mela is a phenomenal event that provides a unique opportunity to experience a range of millet dishes prepared by talented home chefs. It also offered cooking demonstrations, nutritional workshops, and interactive sessions with experts to help people understand the health benefits of millet. The Millet cooking competition was organized to encourage younger generations to incorporate millet into their daily diets.



WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY

Food standards
save lives



The fifth World Food Safety Day (WFSD) was celebrated on 7 June 2023. The theme for World Food Safety Day 2023 was “Food Standards Save Lives”.

The World Food Safety Day celebrations in Kerala were marked by a comprehensive state-level program that unfolded with a series of impactful events. The focal point was a seminar addressing critical aspects of food safety, featuring experts from the field who shared insights on proper food handling, storage, and hygiene practices and the health benefits of millets.

In tandem with the seminar, various competitions were organized for school and college students across the state. These competitions encompassed a range of activities, from quiz contests testing knowledge about Food Safety regulations to cooking contest of healthy food recipe.

Importantly, this celebration wasn't confined to a single location but extended its reach across all 14 districts of Kerala. This widespread participation ensured that the message of food safety resonated throughout the state, creating a collective consciousness about the importance of maintaining high standards in food handling and consumption.



A Digital Journey Towards Food Safety Excellence





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