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News: State Food Safety Index

- The **State Food Safety Index (SFSI) 2022- 2023** released by the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** sheds light on the performance of Indian states in ensuring food safety.

State Food Safety Index (SFSI)

- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has recently released its Food Safety report for 2022 - 23.
- The index ranks states on **six parameters of food safety** viz Compliance, Consumer Empowerment, Human Resource and Institutional data, Food testing Infrastructure, Improvement from previous SFSI ranking and Training and Capacity Building.
- The State Food Safety Index was **started in 2018–19**.
- It was **dedicated to those in the supply chain who have ensured the uninterrupted availability of safe food during this COVID-19 pandemic**.
- 19 Mobile Food Testing Vans (Food Safety on Wheels) have been flagged off to supplement the food safety ecosystem across the country.

Highlights of the report

General Decline in State Food Safety Scores

- Over the past five years, 19 out of 20 large Indian states, including Maharashtra, Bihar, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh, have experienced a decline in their 2022 - 2023 SFSI scores compared to 2019.
- Among the larger states, Kerala came first followed by Punjab and Tamil Nadu.
- Among the smaller states, Goa came first followed by Manipur and Sikkim.
- Among UTs, Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Chandigarh secured top ranks.

Decline in 'Food Testing Infrastructure'

- The 'Food Testing Infrastructure' parameter measures the availability of adequate testing infrastructure with trained personnel in each state for testing food samples.
- This parameter experienced the steepest fall, with the average score for all large states dropping from 13 out of 20 in 2019 to 7 out of 17 in 2022 - 2023.
- Gujarat and Kerala were the best performers in this parameter in 2022 - 2023 while Andhra Pradesh performed the worst.

Compliance Scores Decreased

- This parameter measures licensing and registration of food businesses, inspections conducted, special drives and camps organized, and other such compliance-related tasks carried out by each state's food safety authority.

- Scores for the 'Compliance' parameter also declined.
- Punjab and Himachal Pradesh received the highest scores in this parameter and Jharkhand received the lowest score.
- The 2022 - 2023 average compliance score for all large states stood at 11 out of 28 compared to 16 out of 30 in 2019.

Varied Consumer Empowerment

- The 'Consumer Empowerment' parameter measures a state's performance in various consumer empowering initiatives of FSSAI including participation in Food Fortification, Eat Right Campus, BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God), Hygiene Rating of Restaurants, and Clean Street Food Hubs.
- Tamil Nadu emerged as the top performer followed by Kerala and Madhya Pradesh.
- Overall, the average score in 2022 - 2023 being 8 points out of 19 compared to 2019 when it was 7.6 points out of 20.

Decline in Human Resources and Institutional Data Scores

- The 'Human Resources and Institutional Data' parameter measures the availability of human resources including the number of Food Safety Officers, Designated Officers, and facility of adjudications and appellate tribunals in each state.
- The average score for this parameter dropped to 7 points out of 18 in 2022-2023 from 11 points out of 20 in 2019.

- Even top performers in 2019 like Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh received lower scores, in 2022 - 2023.

Improvement in 'Training and Capacity Building'

- The average score increased from 3.5 out of 10 in 2019 to 5 out of 8 in 2022-2023.

Improvement in SFSI Rank

- In the new parameter 'Improvement in SFSI Rank,' only Punjab showed significant improvement.
- Improvement in the SFSI Rank parameter, which carried a weightage of 10% in 2022 - 2023, 14 out of 20 large states received 0 points.
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