

There are a number of food laws being implemented by various Ministries/Departments. These are primarily meant for two purposes namely (1) Regulation of Specifications of food and (2) Regulation of Hygienic condition of Processing/Manufacturing. Some of these food laws are mandatory and some are voluntary. The details of various food laws in operation in India is as under:-

**A FOOD LAWS:**

**1. Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (Ministry of Health)**

The Act lays down specifications for various food products and is mandatory. The Ministry of Health in 1995 had constituted a Task Force under the chairmanship of Shri E.S. Venkataramaiah, Chief Justice of India (retired). The Task Force recommended that there should be emphasis on good manufacturing practices instead of detection of adulteration and prosecution. It also express concern about lack of laboratory equipments and quantified persons. In addition it also suggested that the name of PFA Act be changed to Food Safety Act.

**2. Agriculture Produce (Grading & Marking) Act (Ministry of Rural Development)**

This Act is commonly known as AGMARK and is voluntary. The Act lays down the specifications for various agricultural commodities including some processed foods.

**3. Laws being operated by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**

BIS is the largest body for formulating standards for various food items. These standards are also voluntary.

**4. Essential Commodities Act**

A number of quality control orders have been issued under Essential Commodities Act such as FPO, MMPO, Meat Product Order and Vegetable Oils Control Order. These orders are mandatory and primarily meant for regulating the hygienic conditions. They need to be clubbed under one order which may called Food Products Order.

**B. Harmonization of Food Laws**

The review of multiple laws is necessary to have a uniform and logical approach for regulating the quality of food. The following action is being taken by various Ministries:-

1. The Ministry of Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs has brought out a paper for consideration of Committee of Secretaries (COS). The paper recommends that BIS should formulate standards for all food items in the country. This will be a major step towards harmonization of food laws and is still under consideration of COS for finalization.

2. The Task Force constituted by the Prime Minister under the chairmanship of Shri Nulsi Wadia has submitted its report which is under the consideration of the Government. The Task Force had advocated promotion of food safety and quality. The Task Force has further made following suggestions:-

Food Regulation Authority (FRA) be set up to formulate and update food standards for domestic and export market.

FRA should replace the PFA to conform to international standards. The Task Force has given ten specific

recommendations such as provision of storage simplicitor, simplification of sampling procedure, simplification of procedure for nominee, time limit for prosecution, standard methods of analysis to be prescribed, penalty should be graded according to the gravity of offences and provision of adequate infrastructure and laboratories. Harmonisation of Indian standard with quality norms of Codex and WTO. The Central Committee of food Standard (CCFS) should be replaced by FRA Governing Body for expeditious decisions.

Source :- Ministry of Food Processing Industries