

Hyderabad  
9<sup>th</sup> June, 2015

## PRESS NOTE

To establish Food Safety and Standards authority for laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption, government of India enacted food safety and standards Act 2006. At state level, the Act provides for Commissioner of Food safety. He inturn will appoint Food Safety officers / inspectors and designated officers at District level for adjudication, of the rank of Joint Collectors.

Food Safety officer (food inspector) is responsible for regular inspection of food business, drawing samples and sending them for analysis. After receiving the analysis report, he will send the report to designated officer who shall decide the gravity of the offence such as Unsafe, Mis-branded and Sub-standard. Prosecution will be launched in Unsafe category. Sub-standard & Misbranded cases are filed before the joint collector (Adjudicating officer) who will impose suitable fine and close the matter.

Government from time to time bans certain items from Sale – Gutkha is one such item as it contains Tobacco products. Unfortunately Gutkha packets are freely available in the market. Forum for Good Governance collected district wise information of cases booked on sale of Gutkha. On perusal of information it is clear that the ban is not effective.

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In GHMC there is severe shortage of food inspectors. As against the sanctioned strength of 8 persons, only 3 are working and they are mostly used for Tax collection leaving their original work of collection of samples sending them for analysis etc. The food inspectors in GHMC are technically under the control of Commissioner Food safety but work under GHMC Addl. Commissioner Health and Sanitation. This dual control is hampering the work. The expert committee on rationalization of staff of GHMC has recommended 30 food inspectors for proper control, the report is pending with government since 2011.

The sensational case of Maggie has brought to light many issues of adulterated food. In Hyderabad the press is full of news pertaining to adulterated oils, Ghee etc which is taking place for years unchecked. The road side eateries using burnt cooking oils are causing lot of health problems to unsuspected citizens especially the poor. Chemicals are used openly to ripen the mangos.

Forum for Good Governance is of the opinion that the posts of food inspectors should be increased and regular checking – collecting food samples and analysing should be a continuous process, no eatery or food selling shop should be left unchecked. There should be a system in place where a citizen can report about adulterated food and immediate action is initiated from concerned authorities (flying squad).

There is large number of cases pending disposals with designated officials. The cases should be disposed with heavy fines keeping in view of health hazard they cause. Simultaneously government should take up awareness campaign on Junk food, unhygienically cooked food etc and protect the citizens from health hazards.

Yours Sincerely

**M. Padmanabha Reddy**  
Secretary  
Forum for Good Governance