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Consumer-focused regulatory framework need of the hour, says Indian PM

India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, called for a consumer-focused approach to the regulatory framework. On completion of ten years of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, he said, "The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has taken several new initiatives in respect of its regulatory functions."

"It now needs to focus on empowering the consumers, so the manufacturers and suppliers of food products become responsive to consumer needs, demands and expectations," Modi added. He stated that safe, wholesome and hygienic food would create a Swasth Bharat and had to be the cornerstone of the FSSAI's efforts.

"The completion of a decade is an opportunity for FSSAI to take stock of the past work and strategise the way for the future with greater effort, passion and dedication," the prime minister added, wishing FSSAI success in its efforts and initiatives.

Health and family welfare minister J P Nadda called for two-way communication between the apex regulator and the industry. Speaking at an event organised by FSSAI to commemorate ten years of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, he asked all the stakeholders to develop a system to strengthen the food safety ecosystem.

"We believe in two-way communication. We have to work together in harmony in a shared responsibility and we should work to look into what mechanisms and systems can be developed to further strengthen the food safety ecosystem," Nadda added.

The minister stated that it is still a challenge to realise the aims and objectives of FSSAI and therefore there is a great need to move towards self-regulation. He hailed FSSAI's efforts in bringing transparency in its functions by means of releasing standards for the additives.

Nadda said, "The focus has shifted from adulteration to a more holistic approach to ensuring food safety which necessitated the establishment of a robust food testing ecosystem."

He added that FSSAI was committed to making it easy for the industry to do business. The Use of technology has ensured that a single window is used for all licencing, registration and imports, making it a simpler process.

On the international front too, FSSAI actively participated in Codex Committee meetings, initiating new work proposal in Codex Committees and playing a leadership role in electronic working groups under Codex Alimentarius.

Meanwhile, FSSAI held a programme to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, in New Delhi recently. The meet discussed challenges and opportunities in the unorganised sector and industry-regulator collaborative efforts to ensure safe food.

The programme started with a presentation on the decade of the food safety law. The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and Ten Initiatives at Ten Years which gave a brief about FSSAI's achievements.

The programme had two panel discussions (Food Safety in Unorganised Sector - Challenges and Opportunities and Food Safety - A Shared Responsibility) were held on significant issues in the food industry where key decision-makers from the government were present.

Also a handbook of FSSAI and Food Safety display board were also launched. Present at the function were Pawan Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI, Ashish Bahuguna, chairman, FSSAI and C K Mishra, health secretary.
