

# A Study to Assess the Compliance of Street Food Regulations of FSSAI by Street Food Vendors

Priyanka Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Geeta Mathur<sup>1</sup>, Nidhi K.<sup>2</sup>, Rakesh Kumar Khandal<sup>3\*</sup>

## Abstract

*There are different standards and regulations of street food in different countries across the globe. Almost every country makes the registration and licensing of the street food vendors mandatory. There are also set of norms and guidelines for street food vendors of different countries. Ideally, these guidelines should be followed but on the ground of reality some of these guidelines are not followed. It is a serious matter as it relates to food safety and food security issues. In this paper, an attempt has been made to check the compliance of street food guidelines by the FSSAI to meet specific obligations related to various aspects of the street food business. During the process, a survey was conducted in different areas of NCR of Delhi, to assess whether street food vendors are adhering to the guidelines notified by FSSAI for this purpose. The study showed that the street food vendors and food cart owners were either not conversant with the norms of FSSAI or they do not comply with them fully. Even many of the vendors were found not aware about having the standard food cart. The cases of non-compliance of norms are high and needs immediate intervention by the regulator, in order to ensure the food safety aspects. As this could lead to health and food safety issues, urgent action in this regard is imminent. This paper presents a path forward for policy makers and regulators to use it as a decision support system for establishing conformance of specified norms.*

**Keywords:** Food Safety, Street Food, Street Food Cart, Street Food Regulations, Street Food Vendors

## Introduction

Street food refers to the food which is ready-to-eat and beverages that are prepared and sold by vendors in public places, typically from stalls, carts, trucks, or portable stands along the streets and sidewalks of urban or crowded areas [1]. Street food is known for its accessibility, affordability, and

### \*Author for Correspondence

Rakesh Kumar Khandal

E-mail: [profrakeshkhandal@gmail.com](mailto:profrakeshkhandal@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Basic Sciences, Dr. K.N. Modi University, Newai, Rajasthan, India

<sup>2</sup>Quality Assurance Manager, CFRA, NIFTEM, Kundli, Sonapat, Haryana, India.

<sup>3</sup>Chancellor, SDGI Global University, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Received Date: May 21, 2024

Accepted Date: June 12, 2024

Published Date: June 30, 2024

**Citation** Priyanka Sharma, Geeta Mathur, Nidhi K., Rakesh Kumar Khandal. A Study to Assess the Compliance of Street Food Regulations of FSSAI by Street Food Vendors. International Journal of Environmental Chemistry 2024; 10(1): 6–12p.

diverse culinary offerings, often reflecting the local culture and flavours of the region where it is found. Key characteristics of street food include: a) Informal Setting: Street food is typically served in an open-air or informal setting, making it easy for people to grab a quick bite while on the move, b) Variety: Street food vendors often offer a wide range of dishes, from snacks and appetizers to main courses and desserts. The variety can include local specialties and international flavours, c) Authenticity: Street food is often associated with authentic, traditional recipes passed down through generations. It can be a great way to experience the authentic tastes of a particular region or culture, d) Affordability: Street food is generally more budget-friendly compared to dining at restaurants, making it accessible to a wide range of people, e) Cultural Experience: Trying Street food can be an

integral

part of experiencing the local culture while traveling. It provides insights into the culinary traditions and food habits of a place [2]. Another important aspect of street food is the convenience it offers as well as its unique flavours. Street food is convenient for both locals and tourists. It allows people to satisfy their hunger quickly and without the need for formal dining arrangements. Street vendors often infuse their own unique twists and flavours into traditional dishes, creating a distinctive culinary experience [3]. Examples of street food from around the world include tacos in Mexico, kebabs in the Middle East, pad Thai in Thailand, falafel in the Middle East and Mediterranean, hot dogs and pretzels in the United States, dim sum in China, and samosas in India, among countless others. Street food culture can vary widely from one place to another, and it often reflects the local ingredients, cooking techniques, and tastes of the community it serves [4]. According to The Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006 explains and defines the term food safety. Food Safety confirms that the food is admissible for human consumption and involves handling, preparation, and storage of food in ways that prevent food borne illness [5].

### Regulations of FSSAI for Street Food in India

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has taken several initiatives to standardize and regulate street food carts in the country. Table 1 lists and describes the initiatives taken by FSSAI to bring some innovative methods to Street Food regulations.

S. No.	Name of Program	Initiatives taken under the program
1	Clean Street Food Hub (CSFH) program.	FSSAI launched the CSFH program to promote safe and hygienic street food practices. Under this initiative street vendors are to be trained on food safety and hygiene practices and their carts are to be provided with basic infrastructure like clean water supply hand washing facilities and waste disposal systems
2	Food Safety Mitra (FSM) scheme	FSSAI introduced the FSM scheme under which certified FSMs were designated for training of Street Food Vendors and certifying their food quality. FSMs were to not only guide street food vendors but also to assist them in implementing food safety practices. Hence, FSMs were to act as a bridge between FSSAI and street food vendors ensuring adherence to food safety norms.
3	Food Safety Display Boards	FSSAI mandated the display of food safety boards at street food carts providing information about the food vendor's license, food safety practices and contact details of designated food safety officer. These boards were meant to create awareness among consumers and to instil confidence in street food they consume.
4	Licensing and Registration	FSSAI has made it mandatory for street food vendors to obtain a license or registration depending on their scale of operations. This ensures that the vendors adhere to the prescribed food safety standards and undergo periodic inspections to maintain compliance.
5	Capacity building and Training	FSSAI conducts training programs and workshops for street food vendors to raise awareness about food safety practices, personal hygiene, waste management and safe food handling techniques. These initiatives help vendors upgrade their skills and comply with food safety

		regulations.
6	Food safety Audits	FSSAI conducts regular food safety audits of street food carts to ensure compliance with hygiene and sanitation practices. This helps in identifying and rectifying any gaps in food safety standards.

**Table 1: Initiatives by FSSAI to Ensure Food Safety of Street Foods served by Street Food Vendors**

The above initiatives by FSSAI were aimed at making Street Food safe for consumers. Emphasis was on promoting better hygiene practices and providing necessary infrastructure so that compliance with food safety regulations could be ensured.

### **FSSAI Guidelines for Street Food Carts**

The FSSAI has not specifically defined a set of standard food carts for street food vendors. However, they have provided guidelines and norms as listed and elaborated in the **Table 2** given below. It lists the requirements and guidelines that street food vendors should follow to ensure food safety and hygiene [6].

**Table 2: The guidelines and norms for street food vendors**

S. No.	Requirements	FSSAI guidelines for street food vendors
1	Structural requirements	Street food carts should be made of materials that are non-toxic and easy to clean. The carts should have a smooth and impervious surface to prevent contamination.
2	Hand washing facilities	The carts should be equipped with a hand-washing facility preferably with a hand sanitizer dispenser, clean water and soap.
3	Food storage and display	Street food vendors should have proper storage facilities to maintain the freshness and quality of the ingredients. The food display area should be covered to protect the food from dust, insects and other contaminants.
4	Waste management	Proper waste disposal facilities should be present such as bins for collecting waste and arrangements for regular waste collection.
5	Personal hygiene practices	Street food vendors should maintain personal hygiene by wearing clean and appropriate clothing, covering their hair and washing their hands frequently.
6	Licensing and Registration	Street food vendors are required to obtain a license or registration from the FSSAI to operate their food carts legally.

The above guidelines are important for taking care of food safety aspects of street foods provided by the Street Food vendors. Compliance with these guidelines is a must by the street food vendors. The FSSAI regularly conducts inspections and audits to ensure compliance with these norms.

It must be noted that all the above-mentioned key initiatives taken by FSSAI were as per requirements of food safety standards. The priority of FSSAI was to lay down science-based standards

to regulate manufacturing, storage, distribution, serving and disposal of street food articles in order to ensure safe Street food for consumers. As per FSSAI, the roles of Food Mitra and Supervisor for street food are distinct and they serve specific purposes in ensuring food safety. It is important here to elaborate roles and responsibilities of Street Food Supervisors as well as Food Mitra.

### Street Food Supervisor

A Street Food Supervisor is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the food operations in street food establishments, playing roles as listed below in Table 3.

**Table 3: Key roles and responsibilities of Street Food Supervisors**

S. No.	Roles of Supervisors	Responsibilities
1.	Inspection and Monitoring	Conduct regular inspections of street food vendors to ensure compliance with food Safety Standards and Regulations.
2.	Supervising Hygiene Practices	Ensure proper hygiene practices such as maintaining cleanliness, proper hand washing, use of gloves and protection against food contamination are followed.
3.	Training and Awareness	Educate street food vendors about food safety regulations and provide necessary training to improve their understanding of hygiene practices.
4.	Licensing and Certification	Ensure that street food vendors possess the required licenses and certifications and help them in obtaining necessary documentation.
5.	Enforcing Regulations	Enforce food safety regulations take necessary actions for non-compliance and even suspend or revoke licenses if necessary.

### Food Mitra

While Food Supervisors have direct roles and responsibilities for ensuring compliance of Food Safety Standards of Street Foods, Food Mitra should act as a facilitator for street food vendors helping them with compliance-related procedures having roles and responsibilities as listed in Table 4.

**Table 4: Key roles and responsibilities of Street Food Mitra**

S. No.	Roles of Food Mitra	Responsibility
1.	Handholding Street Food Vendors	Assist street food vendors by guiding them for obtaining licenses, registrations and documentation for compliance.
2.	Training and Capacity Building	Train street food vendors on food safety practices, hygiene and handling of ingredients to ensure quality and safety of food served.
3.	Providing Knowledge and Information	Provide updated knowledge and information on food safety regulations and best practices to street food vendors
4.	Facilitating Access to Services	Help street food vendors to access details of relevant government schemes including those related to financial assistance and other services to improve their operations and compliance.
5.	Conflict Resolution	Mediate between street food vendors and regulatory authorities helping them in resolution of any conflict or issue that may arise.

Street Food Supervisors, thus, focus on regulatory compliance monitoring and enforcement while Food Mitras play a supportive role by assisting street food vendors in meeting required standards and

guiding them in compliance process. Both these roles are essential in ensuring safety and quality of street food [7-11].

#### Methods:

Different tools such as Survey, Questionnaires, Google forms, R.T.Is were used to collect the necessary information related to the existing conditions of food safety while eating street food. A survey was conducted in various localities of district Faridabad in Haryana and the below mentioned questions were asked to Street food vendors.

#### Questionnaire

The answers of the questionnaire were analysed

S. No.	Questions
1.	Is the Street food vendor's business registered under FSSAI?
	Yes   No
2.	Is there awareness among street food vendors about registration being a mandatory process to start a street food business?
	Yes   No
3.	For how many years have they been running this street food business?
	>1 year   > 5 years   > 10 years   > 25 years
4.	Do the FSSAI supervisors visit their cart?
	Yes   No
5.	If Yes, What is the frequency of their visit?
	1 visit a month   1 visit in 6 months   1 visit in a year   Twice a year
6.	Do the FSSAI supervisors provide the basic training of food handling practices?
	Yes   No
7.	Are they aware about the presence of Food Safety Mitra to help the vendors in the registration process.
	Yes   No

R.T.I was requested to obtain information from Public Information Officer- Food Inspector to ask food safety related questions.

S.No.	Locality	Total	Registration	Training	Frequency of Supervisor visits
1.	Sector 2	20	2	0	0
2.	Sector 3	20	5	0	0
3.	Sector 7	30	5	0	0
4.	Sector 8	25	5	0	0
5.	Sector 9	15	1	0	0
6.	Sector 10	15	7	0	0
7.	Sector 11	20	2	0	0
8.	Sector 12	30	9	1	0
9.	Sector 14	20	2	0	0
10.	Sector 15	30	3	0	0
11.	Sector 16	20	3	0	0
12.	Sector 17	20	1	0	0
13.	Sector 18	70	3	0	0
14.	Sector 19	20	4	2	0
15.	Sector 21	20	2	0	0

16.	Sector 28	30	4	1	0
17.	Sector 29	50	3	0	0
18.	Sector 31	25	4	0	0
19.	Sector 46	30	2	0	0
20.	Sector 37	30	2	0	0
21.	NIT 1	60	9	0	0
22.	NIT 2	30	3	0	0
23.	NIT 4	25	2	0	0
24.	NIT 5	30	3	0	0
Total	24	685	86	4	0

**Table 5: Findings of Survey of street food vendors in certain parts of Faridabad, Haryana**

### Findings

The findings of the survey were analysed to find a path forward which is listed in the **Table 5** as given below

### Discussion

From the results of the findings of the Survey, presented in Table 5, it is evident that there are a lot of gaps as far as compliance with guidelines by FSSAI for Street food vendors are concerned. This reality check on practices followed by Street Food Vendors should serve as an alarm for immediate remedial measures for ensuring food safety of street foods. It is quite clear that there exists a lack of awareness amongst most of the street food vendors in areas of district Faridabad, Haryana, India. The basic mandatory condition to start a food cart by any food vendor that is the registration and obtaining permits and licence was not in compliance. This shows that the Street Food Vendors have been operating without following the procedure of approvals for licensing. Further, there were no audits conducted by supervisors and the training for safe food handling practises were also not done. In nutshell, it can be said that both Food Supervisors and Food Mitra need to take note of these findings [12-15].

Findings of this study should serve as an eye opener for consumers. They must remain aware about the norms and guidelines set by FSSAI and keeping them in mind they must be careful about the conditions of safe and hygiene practices followed by Street Food Vendors. Further, the details presented here must be helpful for FSSAI to take measures necessary to overcome shortcomings that may have serious consequences, if not addressed in time.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the compliance of street food norms and guidelines as per FSSAI is almost non-existent. Street food vendors are operating without approval and license. The impact of initiatives by FSSAI for ensuring food safety of Street foods have not been seen in streets. Schemes of Food Supervisor and Food Mitra have also yet to reach street food vendors. The response received from the authorities to the RTI on this subject also presents not an encouraging situation as far as the compliance of food safety norms by street food vendors is concerned. There is an urgent need to pay attention to the compliance and audits of the street food safety norms so that the consumers are instilled with the confidence in the food they consume.

### References

1. Street foods in developing countries: lessons from Asia, F.G. Winarno and A. Allain, <https://www.fao.org/3/u3550t/u3550t08.htm>
2. A journey through India's street food culture, 2023, The Statesman, <https://www.thestate sman .com/lifestyle/a-journey-through-indias-street-food-culture-1503210535.html>

3. Examining the Elements of Tourist Satisfaction with Street Food An Empirical Study in the context of Gastronomic Tourism, e-ISSN 2320 –7876 [www.ijfans.org](http://www.ijfans.org) Vol.11, S Iss 1, 2022, <https://www.ijfans.org/uploads/paper/fb2f4165b358fb48fa3292fdf2055391.pdf>
4. 7 street foods from around the world that you shouldn't miss, India Today, <https://www.indiatoday.in/food-drink/food/story/street-foods-from-around-the-world-hotdogs-chaat-tacos-shawarma-langos-empanadas-churros-lifefd-350064-2016-11-03>
5. Reference; Food Safety, the FSS Act, Rules and Regulations – FSSAI <https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Chapter1.pdf>
6. Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020. [https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium\\_Labelling\\_Display\\_23\\_09\\_2021.pdf](https://www.fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium_Labelling_Display_23_09_2021.pdf)
7. Food Safety Mitra – FSSAI, <https://www.fssai.gov.in/cms/foodsafetymitra.php>
8. The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (Act No. 34 of 2006), <https://www.fssai.gov.in/>
9. Food Regulations: <https://www.sfa.gov.sg/legislation>
10. Food Safety And Standards (Packaging And Labelling) Regulations, 2011 Chapter 1, [https://www.fssai.gov.in/Upload/Uploadfiles/Files/Packaging\\_Labelling\\_Regulations.Pdf](https://www.fssai.gov.in/Upload/Uploadfiles/Files/Packaging_Labelling_Regulations.Pdf)
11. Food Safety and Standards (Packaging) Regulations, 2018 [https://fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium\\_Packaging\\_01\\_02\\_2022.pdf](https://fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Compendium_Packaging_01_02_2022.pdf)
12. The Success Factors Affecting Street Food Stalls for Gastronomic Tourism Competitiveness: A Case of Petaling Jaya Old Town, June 2021. International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education 13(1):241-256. DOI:10.9756/INT-JECSE/V13I1.211026
13. Ref; Food Safety Laws and the Role of FSSAI in India <https://corpbiz.io/learning/food-safety-laws-in-india/>
14. Food Safety Mitra Scheme 2023: Online Registration & Login, Benefits, 24th July 2023 by Sahib, <https://pmmodiyojana.in/food-safety-mitra-scheme/>
15. Food Safety Mitra Scheme, <https://www.indiafilings.com/learn/food-safety-mitra-scheme/>  
<http://legaldocs.co.in/check-food-safety-mitra-fsm-online>,