

LINKING FOOD SAFETY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH IN INDIA: A THOUGHTFUL CONCERN

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ABSTRACT

Consuming safe food has been proven up to par is critical to one's health. Safe and Standard food is paramount for the individual health. Ensuring the same would make community health intact and make society life meaningful. The movements like 'Pure Food' in America and 'Sahi Bhojan, behtar jeevan' in India has laudable objectives to be achieved. However, the close scrutiny of consumer market and community awareness level creates doubts about the achievement of goals the government of India has dreamt for. The target may seem far off, but with everyone pulling their weight, it's well within reach.

Keywords: Food safety, Food safety and Standards, Community Health, Right to Food

INTRODUCTION

Food safety is a pertinent issue that has a significant impact on public health. It is a challenge for every nation across the globe to ensure its citizens are having access to safe food. Food safety is a critical link between good health and nutrition but is often neglected. The FSSAI's role is very vital to ensure maintenance of food quality all throughout the food value chain.

Arun Singhalⁱ

Health stands for ninth point for human survivalⁱⁱ and it is an important indicator of a developed society. Healthy populations are more productive, save more, and live longer, all of which contribute greatly to economic success since they are important to human satisfaction and well-being.ⁱⁱⁱ The human and societal costs of food-borne illnesses are often quite substantial, including but not limited to misery, disability, loss of life, or foregone revenues and salaries. Food poisoning is a major health problem, ranking up there with malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis in terms of its impact on society. There are an estimated 100 million instances of food-borne illnesses (FBD) recorded each year in India, costing the country \$15 billion. In a status quo scenario, the number of individuals affected by food-borne illness is projected to increase from 100 million annually in 2020 to 170 million in 2030, or from 1 in 12 to 1 in 9 on average. Maintaining a consistent food supply and ensuring its safety are two key factors in promoting public health. Apart from the historical evolution of food safety in India, there are few other instances which had given the momentum to the food safety across the globe and which has brought the health on the primary agenda of the public consciousness. There have been a handful of noteworthy events that have shifted the food safety movement worldwide, and they have done so not through law but as a matter of principle.

EFFECT ON PUBLIC HEALTH DUE TO DIETARY PRACTISES

Most notably, there was the Pure Foods movement,^{iv} which began in the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century and eventually went global.^v This movement has quickly got political support on principle basis.^{vi} It was a coalition of many different groups, which is why it became so influential. The following explains the influential groups and individuals involved, as it was not an official coalition, rather a movement created by different individual

interests.^{vii} There has been swift political backing for this campaign on the grounds of principle. Its power arose from the fact that it represented a broad spectrum of organisations working together. Even though there was no formal alliance, but rather a movement sparked by many individual interests, the following details the key groups and individuals involved. As a result, the late 19th century in America is seen as the beginning of the clean food movement, which received swift governmental backing. It's crucial to remember that the public sparked this push for clean and healthy options at public eateries, especially those located outdoors.

However, for the same, to initiate the movement of safe and standards food linked with the health had started in India in 2018. To guarantee that all Indians have access to safe, wholesome, and environmentally friendly food, the government of India and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have launched the Eat Right India movement. The goals of Eat Right India^{viii} and the National Health Policy 2017 are the same: to improve the health of all Indians via improved nutrition and disease prevention. Highlights of the Eat Right movement initiative. This is rather good initiative to achieve healthy life with safe and standards food. Again, in absence of awareness level about the food standards of involved in the food chain is also a big concern in achieving the set goal.

THE ROLE OF CONTRIBUTORS TO COMMUNITY HEALTH

Women's groups in the United States also deserve recognition for their efforts to improve access to safe food by speaking out against the inhumane, unsanitary, and unwelcoming conditions they faced in slaughterhouses and other off-premises food distribution facilities. The most important and glaring one is the Pure Foods movement that had initiated in America in late 19th century, and later on which spread the international consciousness.^{ix} There was a growing movement among local women to speak out against the slaughterhouse and the unclear, hazardous, and filthy food and meat that was being cooked and served to residents in the area. The plan was to maintain a high level of watch over the procedure, alerting the appropriate authorities to the problem at the outset, and then pursuing legal action against the perpetrator and the responsible authorities if necessary. This band of female crusaders rose to prominence and did their part. After the Association's success in cleaning up stockyards and slaughterhouses, 11 similar organisations sprang up in other cities.^x

Two other contributions of crusaders deserve special mention in this field for bringing pure food legislation to America and, as a result, igniting the movement in the rest of the world. The first was Harvey W. Wiley, who became the crusader for pure foods. When Wiley was appointed, he immediately took the Division of Chemistry in a new direction. He broadened the Division's research and led the Foods and Food Adulterants study, demonstrating his concern about chemicals in food. He also devised the "Poison Squad" experiments, in which young, healthy men volunteered to consume food additive chemicals in order to assess their impact on human health. Wiley brought together many different concerned groups, including state inspectors, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, journalists, the reform wing of business, congress members, and physician and pharmacist associations. Wiley's efforts to raise awareness of the pure food's crusades gained momentum and legitimacy. His "poison squad" raised national awareness of the issue, while women's groups raised local awareness.

Upton Sinclair's famous book "The Jungle",^{xi} in which he narrates the various concerns, was the second literary contribution that helped bring about a sea change in the approach and attitude toward clean and safe food. Upton Sinclair's landmark work "The Jungle" was first released in 1906. The authority was compelled to look into the situation after reading this book and appointing a commission, which then delivered a report. An uproar arose among the community as a result of the committee's devastating report. Neill-account Reynolds's corroborated Sinclair's depiction of the dire situation. The publication of Sinclair's 'The Jungle' and the equally appalling findings of the Neill-Reynolds Report (released in June 1906) provided the last impetus needed to pass the Pure Food and Drug Act, 1906. It was this event that woke people up everywhere. The filthy, unsanitary, and cruel conditions in public restaurants and slaughterhouses were examined. The condition of food predation in public kitchens and the manner this business is conducted and the influence it would have on the health of the general population is also investigated.

Furthermore, the issue of food safety in the Middle Ages has been examined. The historical society's reaction to the production and consumption of safe and sanitary food has been considered. Particularly, the ease with which one can obtain healthy, ready-to-eat meals away from home has been addressed. On the other hand, it has been noted that contemporary and welfare state are related with the regulation of food safety, food security, control, monitoring, regulation, and execution of food standards.

No doubt that the ensuring safe food would achieve meaningful health and life to both individual and community. To guarantee that Indian food is healthy for both people and the world, Eat Right India uses a well-balanced combination of regulatory, capacity building, collaborative, and empowerment strategies. The government, food corporations, civil society organisations, specialists and professionals, development agencies, and citizens at large are all integral parts of this initiative's foundation. However, execution level of Eat Right India and FSSAI provide ample scope for doubts of achieving the goal.

CONCLUSION

As the state has come to be seen as more than just a military entity with which to dominate society, the creation of this concept has made sense. As a result, the welfare of the populace has become the primary concern of the state, especially in India, which calls itself a "Welfare State." Thankfully, the Constitution's requirements for public hygiene, communal health, and equitable allocation of resources can all be found in Part IV. There is little debate over the fact that economic inequality is a major factor in the deterioration of food safety and quality. When the majority of a society is forced to live below the poverty line, they have no choice but to eat whatever is put in front of them, even if it isn't fit for the animals. In such a case, the government should craft the policy with a firm eye toward achieving its stated goal of promoting the health of the populace, which is of paramount significance in the process of creating a strong nation.

However, apart from shouldering the entire tasks on the State alone, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders, including consumers, to insist on safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable food, and this requires both strong regulatory structures and methods for defining standards. As a result, this will aid in ensuring the public's safety and health.

ENDNOTES

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- i See, Arun Singhal, (Chief Executive Officer, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), New Delhi) Food Safety: A Shared Responsibility, Available at, https://fssai.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Food_Safety_NufFoods_Spectrum_02_06_2021.pdf
- ii Health correlates with productivity, functionality and activities, both physical and mental and important for meaningful health.
- iii A number of negative health and nutritional effects have been linked to contaminated food has been revealed in recent studies. Poor nutrient absorption, especially of vitamins and minerals, is associated with food-borne pathogen infections and has a negative effect on an individual's nutritional condition.
- iv Pure Food movement was the movement started in America. With the passage of the Pure Food and Medication Act in 1906, the federal government of the United States first intervened in the food and drug industries. Since its original form of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1906 failed to accomplish its goals, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration updated the law in 1937. In doing so, this has paved the way for the government to increasingly intervene in the food, drug, and agricultural markets.
- v It has to be noted down that the Pure Foods movement that had initiated in America latter on leads to bring the Pure Food and Drug Act, 1906 into play which had laid down the basic approach of linkage of safe food in public sphere.
- vi Goodwin, Lorine S. *The Pure Food and Drink Crusaders*. Jefferson: McFarland & Co, 1999.
- vii Janssen, Wallace F. "The Story of the Laws Behind the Labels." *The Food and Drug Administration*. Hauppauge: Nova Science, 2003. Pp. 23-35
- viii 'Sahi Bhojan, behtar jeevan' is the movement launched by government of India in 2018. Yjr movement 'Eat safe India', has goal to achive safe and healthy food for everyone by 2022, targeting reduction of 30 % sald, sugar and oil and Making Indian food Trans fat free by 2022.
- ix It has to be noted down that the Pure Foods movement that had initiated in America latter on leads to bring the Pure Food and Drug Act, 1906 into play which had laid down the basic approach of linkage of safe food in public sphere.
- x See, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_history_of_food_regulation_in_the_United_States visited on 14.01.2019
- xi This book had exposed the filthy conditions of Chicago slaughterhouses. Sinclair wrote the book while living in Chicago; he talked to workers and their families and his focus was the plight of the workers. However, the book turned people away from "tubercular beef" instead of turning them socialist like Sinclair wanted. The book was a best seller and the public outcry prompted President Theodore Roosevelt to send officials to investigate under appointing a committee of Neill-Reynolds. See for more details, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_history_of_food_regulation_in_the_United_States visited on 14.01.2019