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E-Paper

## **Taste of blessings: Temple food to get better as HR&CE dept trains cooks** TNN |

Temple food may get tastier and healthier as the HR&CE department has started providing training to cooks in temple kitchens on preparation of prasadam and keeping the kitchens hygienic.

The training is being given by food safety and standards authority of India ([FSSAI](#)) officials. Nearly 142 cooks from 82 temples in and around Chennai were imparted training at the Vadapalani temple. Similar training will be given to other temple cooks region-wise.

“The cooks (called *suyampagis*) were from some of the big and famous temples and the training was at Vadapalani temple. The training is on how to use kitchens and how to keep vessels clean etc,” said a senior HR&CE official. A workshop was also held for the temple officials in New Delhi regarding hygienic offerings. “The FSSAI officials also visited several temple kitchens in the city as well as in other districts,” said the official.

The FSSAI officials told temple cooks to wear a chef’s cap (to prevent hair from falling into the prasa food) and also check the taps. “The officials came into the kitchen where prasadam is cooked, as well as in the kitchen where food is cooked for annadanam (free food). The officials told the cooks not to allow water stagnation in kitchens,” said the official.

“The FSSAI officials wanted the temple cooks and contractors to use butter papers in place of plastics while packing prasadam. The officials also advised temple officials to have mosquito nets in kitchens,” he said.

Temples in [Tamil Nadu](#) are famous for various types of prasadam and ingredients used. “The FSSAI officials also spoke about the quality. They told temple officials to use quality ingredients so that prasadam are of good quality,” said the official.

The department has also trained sculptors, craftsmen, architects, weavers, goldsmiths, village temple priests, musicians, dancers, [nadaswaram](#) exponents and vendors of puja

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articles. “While training nadaswaram exponents the department gave ₹5,000 to each of them as an incentive,” said the official.