



FSSAI's Project BHOG implemented at prominent gurudwaras in New Delhi

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Prominent gurudwaras across New Delhi have implemented FSSAI's Project Blissful Hygienic Offering to God (BHOG), following its implementation in temples, including Mumbai's Siddhivinayak Temple and Shirdi's Sai Prasadalya.

Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC), an autonomous organisation which manages gurudwaras in the national capital, have implemented the initiative at ten of its historic gurudwaras.

Throwing light on the details, a DSGMC spokesperson informed, "Ideally speaking, the food served in the langar is always prepared maintaining the hygiene level. It already contains the requisite nutrients as per the standards set by FSSAI."

He added, "As of now, the BHOG initiative is being implemented in around 13 gurudwaras in the state. Over 50,000 people eat in the langar daily at different gurudwaras, and thousands take prasad. This comes to a total of one lakh devotees a day."

"The managing team themselves go and buy the materials required to prepare the prasad and food for langar. For instance, ingredients like oil, ghee, milk are purchased by the team and send to two different labs for testing the purity. Payments to the vendors are made only after the result are obtained," the spokesperson added.

The fruits, vegetables and spices used by the gurudwaras are purchased from Azadpur Mandi which is Asia's biggest wholesale market for fruits and vegetables, and Khari Baoli, which is Asia's biggest spice market in Delhi. While purchasing, issues like quality, hygiene, cost and nutritional value are taken into consideration. Fortified items like rice, flour and milk are used for making the prasad.

Only the people who make the prasad and food in the langar are allowed to enter the kitchen, with the proper kit, including hand gloves, apparel, head covers, etc. DSGMC also has a classroom, where training is provided to the food handlers to sensitise them about the need for food safety regulations and health hygiene.

Background

Earlier this year, FSSAI had issued an order to roll out project BHOG at the pan-

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India level in order to adopt and maintain food safety and hygiene, and ensure that devotees at places of worship (PoWs) are served safe prasad.

As per the order, the training of food handlers and vendors, both in and around the premises of PoWs, is an integral part of project BHOG and it also aimed to create awareness among PoWs to curb malpractices in food served and ensure proper regulatory compliance.

It is binding on the vendors to obtain licenses and register their establishments with FSSAI and adhere to the hygiene practices laid down by the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011.

As per statistics, over 30 crore people visit places of pilgrimage every day. FSSAI had also issued a guidance document to roll out project BHOG providing useful tips, dos and don'ts, methods and practices that should be followed to ensure safe and hygienic prasad. It had emphasised on the use of fortified staples such as rice, flour and milk while preparing prasad and langar and make it more wholesome.