

Clean Street Food Hub initiative gains steam; Chappan Dukaan gets tag

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FSSAI's project of upgrading street food facilities across India is gaining momentum in the country, with several states coming forward to identify such places to be declared as Clean Street Food Hubs (CSFHs). Recently, Chappan Dukaan in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, was granted the Clean Street Food Hub tag by the country's apex food regulator.

The objectives of the initiative are to raise hygiene standards, and change street food vending in India through an approach of bringing street vendors into an ecosystem where they will be held with high esteem, not only in the country but across the globe as well, along with preserving the rich culinary heritage of the country.

The hubs and cluster will be certified by FSSAI once the vendors have met the prescribed parameters to ensure the foodies that the food served to them has been prepared in clean and hygienic conditions.

Ahmedabad was the first city in the country to be accorded the CSFH tag by FSSAI in 2008. Kankaria Lake cluster and Urban Chowk on SG Highway were approved street food hubs, alongside Gopi Talav in Surat, which also received the CFSH tag from the regulator.

Speaking on the progress of the CSFH initiative in Maharashtra, Milind Deshpande, assistant commissioner (food), FDA (Food and Drug Administration), Nagpur, stated, "Juhu Chowpatty and Girgaum Chowpatty in Mumbai, and Khau Galli in Pune, are in the pipeline, while Phutala Talao in Nagpur has been postponed for now."

Arbind Singh, national coordinator, National Association of Street Vendors in India (NASVI), said, "It would be great for people who like to have street food as they will be able to get cheap food, and the Clean Street Food Hub initiative will help the vendors to add it to their income, as street food attracts more people, which will definitely increase their standard of living and livelihood."

The deputy chief medical officer of Health-II, Hooghly, West Bengal, stated, "CSFH is a great initiative taken up by FSSAI. In West Bengal, the project is in progress and the places are yet

to be announced.”

Meanwhile, FDA officials from Rajasthan, Bihar and Goa stated that the project was being studied in their respective states, and while several places had been identified, the work related to certification was in the pipeline and would take some time.

The parameters considered for CSFH are display of food safety boards, registration of the clutter with FSSAI, a valid license and precautionary measures for food safety.

The main motto of this initiative is to ensure the social and economic upliftment of the street vendor community by helping them in improving the quality of offerings, thereby attracting more customers, and to enhance the popularity of street food by transforming it into a global brand by itself.

Project Clean Street Food was one of the initiatives taken up by FSSAI under a 360-degree approach to Food Safety and Healthy Nutrition. This would involve training and capacity building of the street food vendors and ensure proper regulatory oversight over them under the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011.