Polity & Governance · GS - II

The regulation of food safety in India requires coordination between central standard-setting institutions and state-level enforcement agencies. Examine the federal dimensions of food safety governance with reference to the role of FSSAI and State Governments.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 20/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, FSSAI, central licensing, state enforcement, cooperative federalism, public health, regulatory coordination, inspection mechanisms, Centre-State relations, accountability, uniform standards.

Model Answer

Introduction

Food safety is an important public health concern requiring uniform standards and effective local enforcement. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, provides the national regulatory framework.

Institutional Framework

- **Central role:** FSSAI frames food safety standards, regulates specified licensing functions and coordinates national-level implementation.

- **State role:** State food safety departments undertake inspections, sampling, surveillance and enforcement through designated officers and food safety officers.
- **Shared responsibility:** Effective regulation requires coordination between central and state authorities to ensure compliance across the food supply chain.

Federal Dimensions and Challenges

1. **Division of responsibilities:** Central licensing and state-level enforcement must operate within clearly defined statutory powers.
2. **Regulatory coordination:** Overlapping functions or unclear administrative instructions can create institutional disputes.
3. **Capacity differences:** States differ in laboratory infrastructure, trained personnel and inspection capacity.
4. **Public health concerns:** Weak coordination can allow unsafe or substandard food products to circulate.
5. **Cooperative federalism:** Uniform national standards must be implemented without unnecessarily weakening state-level administrative capacity.

Way Forward

- Clearly define licensing and enforcement responsibilities.
- Strengthen food testing laboratories and trained inspection teams.
- Establish regular coordination mechanisms between FSSAI and state departments.
- Use digital traceability and risk-based inspections.
- Ensure transparent accountability and timely resolution of regulatory disputes.

Conclusion

Food safety governance requires a balance between national uniformity and decentralised implementation. Cooperative federalism can strengthen regulatory effectiveness while protecting public health and respecting statutory responsibilities.

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