Polity & Governance · GS - II

The safety of packaged drinking water depends not merely on regulatory standards but also on effective scientific testing, enforcement and accountability across the supply chain. Examine the role of FSSAI in ensuring food safety in India, with particular reference to laboratory verification and enforcement mechanisms.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, FSSAI, scientific risk assessment, quality standards, laboratory testing, referral laboratories, prosecution, consumer protection, regulatory accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

Safe drinking water is essential for public health. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, regulates food safety through scientific standards, testing and enforcement.

Role of FSSAI

1. **Standard-setting:** Prescribes science-based limits for contaminants and other food-safety parameters to protect consumers.

2. **Scientific verification:** Food samples can undergo laboratory examination, including referral laboratory testing where prescribed procedures permit further scrutiny.

3. **Enforcement:** Food Safety Officers and designated authorities can initiate statutory action against violations, including prosecution in appropriate cases.

4. **Consumer protection:** Licensing, inspection and compliance requirements promote accountability among food businesses.

Challenges and Reforms

- **Laboratory capacity:** Strengthen accredited laboratories, technical expertise and testing infrastructure.
- **Transparency:** Publish reliable testing outcomes and communicate health risks clearly.
- **Due process:** Ensure proper sampling, chain of custody, confirmatory testing and fair opportunities for appeal.
- **Supply-chain accountability:** Improve traceability and periodic monitoring of packaged drinking water.
- **Deterrence:** Apply proportionate penalties and prosecution where serious violations are established.

Conclusion

Effective food safety regulation requires a combination of scientific evidence, transparent procedures and credible enforcement. Strengthening FSSAI's institutional capacity is essential for protecting public health and maintaining consumer confidence.

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