Polity & Governance · GS - II

Analyse the role of food safety regulation in protecting public health in India. How can regulatory enforcement and corporate accountability be strengthened to ensure the safety of packaged drinking water?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 23/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Public health, FSSAI, Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, quality testing, regulatory compliance, corporate accountability, consumer awareness, risk-based inspections

Model Answer

Introduction

Safe drinking water is fundamental to public health. Packaged drinking water is widely consumed in India, making effective quality regulation, scientific testing and corporate accountability essential for preventing contamination and protecting consumers.

Role of Food Safety Regulation

1. **Statutory framework:** The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 provides the legal framework for regulating food quality and safety through FSSAI.

2. **Quality standards:** Prescribed standards establish requirements relating to microbiological, chemical and physical characteristics of packaged drinking water.
3. **Inspection and surveillance:** Regulatory authorities can inspect manufacturing facilities, collect samples and initiate action against non-compliant operators.
4. **Consumer protection:** Testing and enforcement help prevent unsafe products from reaching the market and strengthen public confidence.

Major Challenges

1. **Quality inconsistencies:** Inadequate treatment, contamination and poor storage conditions can compromise water safety.
2. **Monitoring limitations:** A large number of manufacturers and distribution networks create challenges for regular inspections.
3. **Information asymmetry:** Consumers often lack access to independent information about product quality and testing results.
4. **Corporate accountability:** Weak internal quality-control mechanisms can undermine compliance and consumer trust.

Measures Required

1. Strengthen independent laboratory testing, random sampling and risk-based inspections.
2. Ensure transparent publication of test results and prompt public communication during safety concerns.
3. Enforce penalties and corrective measures against violations while ensuring due process.
4. Require companies to maintain traceability, documented quality-control systems and effective product recall mechanisms.
5. Promote consumer awareness regarding certification, packaging integrity and complaint-reporting channels.

Conclusion

Food safety requires cooperation between regulators, manufacturers and consumers. Strong scientific monitoring, transparent enforcement and corporate responsibility can ensure safer packaged drinking water and strengthen public health protection.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP