Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Examine the role of scientific testing, independent laboratories and regulatory oversight in ensuring food safety in India. How can disputes between food businesses and regulators be resolved while protecting public health?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 23/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Food Safety and Standards Act 2006, FSSAI, laboratory accreditation, scientific evidence, regulatory compliance, consumer protection, transparency, accountability, public health

Model Answer

Introduction

Food safety is essential for public health and consumer confidence. In India, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, regulates food products through standards, testing and enforcement mechanisms.

Role of Scientific Testing and Regulatory Oversight

1. **Risk identification:** Laboratory testing detects contaminants, chemical residues and other potentially harmful substances in food and drinking water.

2. **Independent verification:** Accredited and recognised laboratories provide scientific assessments that can independently verify or challenge regulatory findings.

3. **Standardisation:** FSSAI prescribes permissible limits for contaminants and establishes testing and sampling requirements to ensure consistency.

4. **Regulatory enforcement:** Authorities can inspect facilities, collect samples, initiate corrective measures and take legal action in accordance with statutory provisions.

Resolving Disputes Between Businesses and Regulators

1. **Transparent procedures:** Sampling, sealing, transportation and testing must follow prescribed protocols to maintain the integrity of evidence.

2. **Independent review:** Businesses should have access to legally recognised referral laboratory mechanisms to challenge disputed test results.

3. **Scientific accountability:** Regulatory decisions should be supported by validated testing methods, reliable data and clearly communicated standards.

4. **Consumer protection:** Disputed findings must be resolved without compromising public health or allowing unsafe products to escape regulatory scrutiny.

Challenges

1. Differences in testing methodologies and laboratory results can create uncertainty.
2. Inadequate laboratory infrastructure and delayed testing may weaken enforcement.
3. Poor communication between regulators and companies can undermine public confidence.

Conclusion

A credible food safety framework requires scientific rigour, independent verification and accountable regulation. Dispute-resolution mechanisms must protect the rights of businesses while keeping consumer health as the central priority.

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