

Module-4 (Food legislation)

What is Food Adulteration?

Food adulteration is the addition of contaminants into food items or beverages to increase the quantity and decrease the price of the commodity. It is a major issue in India which lowers the quality of food and leads to serious illnesses in both humans and animals.

Responsibilities of Central Government

The prevention of food adulteration act looks to prevent the adulteration of the food and beverage items to be fit for human consumption, except water and drugs. This act gives the central government a variety of responsibilities which are stated below.

- To set up a Central Committee for Food Standards and central food laboratories for analysing and testing all kinds of articles.
- To review the sections of the PFA act along with the central committee for food standards.
- Organising training programmes for different sections of the act.
- Approving the state PFA rules.
- To check on the implementation of rules in states and union territories by collecting frequent reports and visitation.
- Conducting exams for appointing officials as analysts under the act.
- To approve the infant food labels.
- To check the quality of food being imported to India.
- Creating awareness among the consumers.
- To keep a check on the quantity and quality of food laboratories.

Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 (PFA)

The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 (PFA) broadly lays down the principles of Food Laws regarding prevention of Food Adulteration. According to PFA act an article of food shall be deemed to be adulterated:

- If the article sold by a vendor is not of the nature, substance or quality demanded by purchaser and is to his prejudice, or is not of the nature, substance or quality which it purports or is represented to be.
- If the article contains any other substance which affects, or if the article is so processed as to affect injuriously the nature, substance or quality thereof.

- If any inferior or cheaper substance has been substituted wholly or in part for the article so as to affect injuriously the nature as substance or quality thereof.
- If any constituent of the article has been wholly or in part abstracted so as to affect injuriously the nature, substance or quality thereof.
- If the article had been prepared, packed or kept under unsanitary conditions whereby it has become contaminated or injurious to health.
- If the article consists wholly or in part of any filthy, putrid disgusting, rotten, decomposed, or diseased animal or vegetable substance or is insect-infested or otherwise unfit for human consumption.
- If the article is obtained from a diseased animal.
- If the article contains any poisonous or any ingredient which renders its contents injurious to health
- If the container of the article is composed, whether wholly or in part of any poisonous or deleterious substance which renders its contents injurious to
- If any colouring matter other than that prescribed in respect thereof and in amounts not within the prescribed limits of variability is present in the article.
- If the article contains any prohibited preservative or permitted preservative in excess of the prescribed limits
- If the quality or purity of the article falls below the prescribed standards or its constituents are present in quantities which are in excess of the prescribed limits of variability.

Common Food Adulterants & their identification

Food Products	Adulterant	Harmful Effects
Milk and Curd	Water and starch powder.	Stomach disorders.
Ghee, Cheese and Butter	Mashed potatoes, Vanaspati and starch powder.	Gastro-intestinal disturbances and other stomach disorders.
Grains	Dust, Pebbles, Stones, Straw, weed seeds, damaged grain, etc.	Liver disorders, Toxicity in the body, etc.

Pulses	Dyes, chemical and Lead Chromate.	Stomach disorders.
Coffee powder	Chicory, tamarind seeds powder.	Diarrhoea.
Tea	Artificial colouring agents.	Liver disorders.
Sugar	Chalk powder, Washing soda, Urea, etc.	Stomach disorders and kidney failure.
Pepper	Dried papaya seeds and blackberries.	Severe allergic reactions including stomach and skin irritations.
Mustard seeds	Argemone seeds.	Abdominal contractions, sluggishness and increased excretion.
Edible Oils	Mineral oil, Karanja oil, castor oil and artificial colours.	Gallbladder cancer, allergies, paralysis, cardiac arrest, and increased LDL cholesterol.
Turmeric Powder	Pesticide residues, sawdust, chalk dust, industrial dyes, metanil yellow dye arsenic, lead metal etc.	Cancer and Stomach disorders.
Chilli and Coriander powder	Redbrick powder, Rhodamine B dye, Red lead, dung powder, soluble salts, water-soluble synthetic colours and other common salts.	Metal toxicity, Cancer, lead poisoning, tumour, variations in blood pressure and other stomach related disorders.

Cinnamon sticks	Cassia bark.	Liver Damage, Low Blood Sugar, Mouth Sores and increased risk of cancer.
Cumin seeds	Coloured grass seeds, sawdust and charcoal dust	Stomach disorders.
Jam, Juice and Candies	Non-permitted dyes including metanil yellow and other artificial food dyes.	These dyes are highly carcinogenic that have the potential to cause different types of cancer.
Jaggery	Washing soda, chalk powder	Vomiting and other Stomach disorders
Honey	Molasses, dextrose, sugar and corn syrups	Stomach disorders
Fruits and Vegetables	Chemical dyes, Malachite green, calcium carbide, copper sulphate and oxytocin saccharin wax.	Stomach disorders, vomiting, and dyes used are highly carcinogenic.
Tomato sauces	Pumpkin pulp, non-edible artificial colours and flavours.	Gastritis and inflammation of vital organs.
Ice Cream	Pepper oil, ethyl acetate, butyraldehyde, nitrate, washing powder. The kind of gum is added which is prepared by boiling different animal parts including the tail, udder, nose, etc.	Dreadful diseases that affect organs including lungs, kidneys, and heart.

Central Committee for food standards

The Committee shall consist of the following members, namely :—

- The Director-General, Health Services, *ex-officio*, who shall be the Chairman.
- The Director of the Central Food Laboratory or, in a case where more than one Central Food Laboratory is established, the Directors of such Laboratories, *ex-officio*;
- Two experts nominated by the Central Government.
- One representative each of the Departments of Food and Agriculture in the Central Ministry of Food and Agriculture and one representative each of the Central Ministries of Commerce, Defence, Industry and Supply and Railways, nominated by the Central Government.
- One representative each nominated by the Government of each State.
- Two representatives nominated by the Central Government to represent the Union territories.
- One representative each, nominated by the Central Government, to represent the agricultural, commercial and industrial interests.
- Five representatives nominated by the Central Government to represent the consumers, interests, one of whom shall be from the hotel industry.
- One representative of the medical profession nominated by the Indian Council of Medical Research.
- One representative nominated by the Indian Standards Institution referred to in clause (e) of section 2 of the Indian Standards Institution (Certification Marks) Act, 1952 (36 of 1952).

Authorities under Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA)

Food Inspector

1. The State Commissioner of Food Safety, shall, by notification, appoint such persons as it thinks fit, having the prescribed qualifications as Food Inspectors for such areas as it may assign to them for the purpose of performing its functions under this Act.
2. The State Government may authorize any officer of the State Government having the prescribed qualifications to perform the functions of a Food Inspector within the specified jurisdiction.

Powers of Food Inspector:

1. To take sample of any food article from
 - a. Any person selling such article.
 - b. Any person who is in the course of delivering or preparing to deliver such article to a purchaser or consignee. A consignee after delivering of any such article to him.

2. To send such sample for analysis to the public analyst (PA) of local area. When the food inspector wants to lift suspected food the shop keeper must first be told. There should be a witness present when the food inspector lifts the sample.

Public Analyst: The Central or State Government may, by the notification of the official gazette, may appoint such persons as it thinks fit, having the prescribed qualifications to be public analyst for such local areas as may be assigned to them:

- Provided that no person who has any financial interest in the manufacture, import or sale of any article or food shall be appointed to be a public analyst under this section:
- Provided further that different public analysts may be appointed for different articles of food.

Report of Public Analyst:

1. The public analyst shall deliver a report in the prescribed form to Local (Health)
2. On the receipt of report, if analysis report suggests that the food is adulterated, the Local (Health) Authority shall prosecute the concerned persons within ten days from the date of receipt of the copy of the report.
3. The certificate issued by **the Director of Central Food Laboratory** shall supersede the report given by the public analyst in case of any discrepancy.
4. Any document purporting to be report signed by a public analyst can be used as an evidence of facts in the court of law unless superseded by the Director of Central Food Laboratory