

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3102  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 5<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2018**

**TESTING OF FOOD ITEMS**

**3102. DR. RAMESH POKHRIYAL “NISHANK”:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has formulated any policy or issued guidelines for production and testing of food products and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has noticed the shortage of testing facilities and trained personnels in naxal affected, border, remote, rural, hilly areas of the country; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a): For the purposes of food safety, production and testing of food products is regulated under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and Rules and Regulations made thereunder.

(b) & (c): Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had undertaken a baseline survey of 72 State/Public Food Laboratories in 2013-14. During the survey, it was found that 62 state food testing laboratories were functional and that there was shortage of testing facilities in the majority of state food testing labs across the country. Further, the gap study indicated that in the state food testing laboratories, there is an urgent need to upgrade these laboratories both in terms of testing infrastructure, availability of trained scientific and technical manpower for food testing and putting in place a more reliable laboratory management and operating procedure. Accordingly, FSSAI has rolled out a Central Sector Scheme for ‘Strengthening of Food Testing System in the Country including Provision of Mobile Food Testing Labs’ (SOFTeL) with a total outlay of Rs. 481.95 Crore to be implemented during 2016-17 to 2018-19. The Scheme comprises, *inter alia*, of the following components:

- (i) Strengthening of about 45 state food testing laboratories;
- (ii) Strengthening of about 12 referral food testing laboratories;
- (iii) Establishment of about 62 mobile food testing labs;
- (iv) Capacity Building of food testing laboratories personnel.

Under the said Scheme, grant is being provided to the State/Union Territory Governments and referral laboratories towards procurement of high-end equipments. So far, 23 state food testing laboratories from 22 States/UTs and 5 referral laboratories have been assisted. Similarly, 19 mobile food testing laboratories (now called Food Safety on Wheels) have been provided to 17 States/UTs for training, testing and surveillance. FSSAI has also conducted 25 training programmes in association with Government institutions, International bodies and Private Laboratories for lab personnel. Further, FSSAI has notified 142 mostly Private NABL accredited laboratories across India for purposes of primary testing to strengthen the food testing infrastructure.