

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4721  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH, 2018**

**SHORTAGE OF STAFF IN FOOD TESTING LABS**

**4721. SHRI HARINARAYAN RAJBHAR:**

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

- (a) whether Food Testing Labs in the country including Uttar Pradesh are facing problem in quality testing of food items available in the market due to shortage of staff and insufficient infrastructure;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of sanctioned and present staff strength in Food Testing Laboratories in the country including for Uttar Pradesh as well as the steps being taken by the Government to fill the vacant posts; and
- (d) the number of laboratories functioning in the country and the steps taken for upgradation/modernisation of these laboratories?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) & (b): At present there are 213 primary food testing laboratories, both State/Public laboratories and Private laboratories, of which 161 are National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accredited. Besides there are 18 Appellate food testing labs which are also NABL accredited. Thus, while overall there is adequate quality testing infrastructure available in the country, in respect of some State/Public laboratories, in a base line survey conducted by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) during 2013-14, it emerged that there was need to upgrade these laboratories both in terms of testing infrastructure and availability of trained scientific and technical manpower for food testing.

(c): There are 62 State/Public Food Laboratories functioning under the State/UT Governments. As these are funded and maintained by the State/UT Governments, information about the sanctioned and present staff strength and steps being taken by respective State/UT Governments to fill up the vacancies in such State/Public labs is not maintained by FSSAI.

(d): As on date there are 161 NABL accredited food testing laboratories, including 10 state food laboratories in the country which have been notified by FSSAI for primary testing of food products. Besides, there are 18 referral food laboratories in the country for appellate purpose. Food laboratories under the State governments were brought under the FSSAI ambit, from the erstwhile Prevention of Food Adulteration Regime, under the transitory provisions contained in section 98 of FSS Act, 2006. Out of these 62 functional state food laboratories, 10 state food laboratories are NABL accredited and have been notified by the FSSAI as stated above.

A Central Sector Scheme for “Strengthening of Food Testing System in the Country Including Provision of Mobile Food Testing Labs” has been rolled out by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) with an outlay of Rs. 481.95 Crore from 2016-17 to 2018-19. This Scheme inter alia envisages upgradation of 45 state food laboratories, subject to readiness of the State Governments. So far, a total of 23 state food laboratories of 22 States/UTs have been taken up for upgradation and a grant of Rs.70.85 crore has been sanctioned/released.