

Government of India
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Department of Consumer Affairs

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4300
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.03.2026

FOOD ADULTERATION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION MEASURES

4300. SMT. ROOPKUMARI CHOUDHARY:

Will the Minister of **CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that over 1.70 lakh food samples were analysed in 2023-24 of which 33,808 (about 20%) were found non-conforming and that 44,626 samples were found non-conforming in 2022-23 indicating widespread adulteration and sub-standard food in the consumer market;
- (b) whether complaints relating to adulterated milk, edible oils, spices and packaged foods have increased on the National Consumer Helpline and before Consumer Commissions and if so, the details thereof, year-wise;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government through the Central Consumer Protection Authority, Legal Metrology and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) to strengthen market surveillance, product testing, statutory recalls and consumer awareness; and
- (d) whether the Government proposes to establish a nationwide integrated consumer protection and testing mechanism and if so, the timeline thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI B.L. VERMA)

(a) : Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) working under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) conducts regular surveillance drives, monitoring, regulatory inspection and random sampling of various food products including milk, edible oils, spices, and packaged foods throughout the year by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/UTs and Regional Offices of FSSAI to check compliance with the quality and safety parameters and other requirements as laid down under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and Regulations made thereunder. Any Food Business Operators (FBOs) found in contravention of the provisions of the FSS Act, 2006, and Regulations made thereunder faces penal actions as per the provisions outlined in Chapter IX (Offences and Penalties) of the Act, specifically Section 48-67 of the FSS Act, 2006.

The numbers of enforcement samples analysed during 2022-23 were 1,77,511 out of which 44,626 samples were found non-conforming. In the year 2023-24 total numbers of enforcement samples analysed were 1,70,513 out of which 33,808 samples were found non-conforming.

(b) to (d) : The National Consumer Helpline (NCH) administered by the Department of Consumer Affairs has emerged as a single point of access for consumers across the country for redressal of their grievances at the pre-litigation stage. Consumers can register their grievances in 17 languages including Hindi, English and Malayalam through the toll-free number 1915. These grievances can be registered on Integrated Grievance Redressal Mechanism (INGRAM), an omni-channel IT enabled central portal, through various channels- WhatsApp (8800001915), SMS (8800001915), email (nch-ca@gov.in), the NCH app, the web portal (consumerhelpline.gov.in) and the Umang app, as per their convenience.

The details of grievances related to food adulteration registered on NCH during 2022-23 to 2024-25 are as follows:-

Year	No. of grievances registered
2022-2023	232
2023-2024	308
2024-2025	1017

The details regarding the number of complaints relating to adulterated milk, edible oils, spices and packaged foods, filed before Consumer Commissions during the last 5 years are as follows :

Year	No. of complaints filed
2021	143
2022	256
2023	267
2024	283
2025	409

FSSAI has developed an online grievance redressal mechanism (<https://foscoss.fssai.gov.in/consumergrievance/>) on which consumers can lodge complaint. On successful registration of a complaint, a unique code/ticket number is generated against each lodged complaint which is conveyed via SMS on the mobile number of the consumer provided at the time of registering the concern. As per the online system, the complaint is first forwarded to the Food Business Operator (FBO) which is mentioned in the complaint. The FBO should respond and if the complainant is not satisfied or the FBO doesn't respond, then the complaint is forwarded to the respective States/Central Food Authority for subsequent action.

Further, to strengthen the food regulatory ecosystem in the country, FSSAI has notified 252 food testing laboratories for analysis of food samples and 24 Referral Food Laboratories, under FSS Act for the analysis of appellate samples. For up-gradation of state food testing laboratories, FSSAI provides financial and technical assistance to State Food Testing Laboratories (SFTLs). FSSAI has also provided funds for the Mobile Food Testing Laboratory (MFTL) referred to as "Food Safety on wheels" (FSW) to States/UTs. It is an important means to combat adulteration as FSWs are equipped with basic infrastructure for on spot testing of adulteration in various food commodities. Currently, 305 FSWs are deployed across 35 States/UTs. Further, the Food Safety Magic Boxes, facilitates the detection of adulteration in food. It consists of reliable "quick screening tests" that a common person can perform at the household level, enabling a broad assessment of potential adulteration in their food in cases of doubt. It consists of a total of 107 tests across 06 food categories which includes detection of adulterants like starch, urea, detergent, cellulose, maltodextrin salicylic acid, glucose etc. FSSAI published DART Booklet ie., "Detect Adulteration with Rapid Test which covers more than 50 quick tests for different categories of foods: milk & milk products; oils & fats; sugars & confectionery; food grains and their products; spices & condiments; to detect adulteration at household levels.
