



FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS
AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Inspiring Trust, Assuring Safe & Nutritious Food
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

REPORT

Workshop on Implementing Food Safety Management System in Places of Worship

11th January, 2018
FSSAI, FDA Bhawan, New Delhi

Workshop on “Implementing Food Safety Management System in Places of Worship”

1. Introduction

Second workshop on “Implementing Food Safety Management System in Places of Worship” under Project BHOG was organized by FSSAI on 12th January, 2018 at FSSAI, FDA Bhawan, New Delhi. The first workshop held in Sept, 2016.

Places of Worship (PoW) are a very important part of Indian society and food served in these places is regarded as pure and sacred. Project BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God) is an initiative of FSSAI to encourage and engage PoW to adopt and maintain food safety and hygiene practices in areas of *Prasad*/food preparation to ensure that safe *Prasad* is being consumed by the pilgrims.

2. Objectives

- 1) Creating awareness on the need of maintaining food safety and hygiene during *Prasad* preparation in PoW.
- 2) Insight about Project BHOG for PoW & training programme for food handlers and vendors.
- 3) Experience sharing by implementing PoW and states.
- 4) Release of “Guidance document for maintaining food safety and hygiene in PoW”.
- 5) Roll out of Project BHOG in PoW pan India.

3. Participation details and Workshop Programme

The workshop was attended by 65 participants comprising representatives from major PoW pan India, AFSTI, State FDAs & Auditing agencies. List of participants is enclosed at **Annexure 1** & programme of the workshop is enclosed at **Annexure 2**.

4. Inaugural Session

Sh. Pawan Agarwal, CEO FSSAI welcomed the participants to the second National Workshop on Project BHOG. In his inaugural speech, he gave insights on the BHOG initiative highlighting the importance of adopting safe food handling practices in all PoW. He stressed on the need for training of food handlers in PoW to ensure preparation of safe & hygienic *Prasad*. The food safety auditing agencies also assured their support in helping PoW to implement BHOG & agreed to audit the PoW premises free of any charges. PoW where BHOG is not adopted, may also be audited by the auditing agencies. In case, audit is cleared, they may be awarded a certificate & upon major non conformities observed, the PoW may be trained under BHOG.

A Guidance Document on “Maintaining food safety and hygiene in Places of Worship” developed by FSSAI with the help of experts was also released on the occasion. This document would help in guiding the PoW to adopt Project BHOG in their places.



Launch of Guidance Document during the workshop

With the aim of improving the health and nutrition of the people of India, PoW were also informed that staples like wheat, rice, milk, oil and edible salt fortified with essential vitamins and minerals were available in the country and it would be beneficial if these could be used in Prasad preparation. The PoW were also informed that messaging and artwork relating to the importance of Safe and Nutritious food have been developed in FSSAI which could be shared with them and PoW should use their resources & premises to display these messages for educating the devotees.

5. “Temple foods – Preserving Indian heritage”

Prof. Pushpesh Pant, a noted Indian academic, food historian and writer on temple foods of India emphasized on the importance of maintaining sanitation and hygiene in the kitchen where Prasad is prepared. Few important aspects highlighted by him in his address to the participants were as under:

- i) Purity of Prasad or food/langar served in PoW is very closely linked to observing hygiene in the kitchen where it is prepared. Thus, purity and hygiene go hand in hand and this is what essentially the BHOG initiative of FSSAI is all about.
- ii) Large PoW are thronged by thousands of people everyday. The large amount of Prasad or food prepared at such places combined with lack of implementation of safe food handling practices can make the entire process to be categorized as a high-risk operation, especially, as the impact of any food safety incident will be felt by a large population of people.
- iii) Hygiene must be maintained not only in the kitchen (where Prasad is made) but also by the vendors in the vicinity of the PoW which sell the Prasad.
- iv) Environmental friendly means of disposal of *pattal* and flowers must also be ensured like converting into vermicompost, preparation of incense sticks, natural colours/dyes etc.
- v) Modern technology should be adopted while keeping the tradition, purity, quality, cost and consistency of the Prasad together. Examples of Sidhivinayak temple were given where the *prasad* is prepared by using equipments untouched by food handlers or PoW in Tamil Nadu where RO plants have been established to provide safe water.

- vi) BHOG must be implemented in the entire ecosystem of Prasad preparation and should include quality control of the ingredients, standardisation of recipe and labelling of the packaged Prasad as per law.

Prof. Pant summarized his address with the statement “If you are hygienic, what you offer to God is hygienic which ends up with blessings”.

6. Project BHOG Journey & Implementation – AFSTI

AFSTI team of trainers led by Dr. Prabhod Halde presented a brief background of the work done by them under the Project BHOG for implementation of Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) in various temples (Copy of presentation – **Annexure 3**). During their session, the team also released a short film on Project BHOG, depicting the introduction & components of Project BHOG. They initiated the project at Siddhivinayak Temple, Mumbai with the help of ICT Mumbai and FDA Maharashtra supported by FSSAI. The same program was also implemented in Sai Prasadalay of Shirdi Sansthan. AFSTI standardised the raw material & the process to ensure safety of *Prasad* & food prepared at these temples. Other good practices such as introduction of stainless steel equipment & machines, personal hygiene, proper waste disposal were also followed which were shared with other PoW during the workshop and to benefit more PoW from their learnings, AFSTI is developed e – modules on Project BHOG. Other temples where AFTSI team is working for implementation of FSMS includes Swaminarayan temple, Dadar, Mumbai and Ahmedabad as well as Sai Temple at Hyderabad.

7. BHOG Implementation by States

Representatives from states where the Project BHOG has been implemented, shared their learning outcomes with the other participant States to enthuse them for adopting the project for their respective temples.

i. Maharashtra

Assistant Commissioner, FDA Maharashtra, presented the work done by them under Project BHOG, covering 63 places and 236 POWs. This also included training of more than 3500 food handlers. He also shared the positive outcomes of the project with the participating temples (copy of presentation – **Annexure 4**).

ii. Gujarat

Designated Officer, FDA Gujarat shared the current food safety & hygiene practices in the major temples namely *Shri Kashtabhanjan Dev Temple*, *Shri Somnath Temple*, *Shri Swaminarayan Temple* and *Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Vishwavidya Pratishthanam (SGVP)*. It was also brought out that guidance and training is provided by FDA Gujarat to the food handlers and supervisors for bringing improvements in the process and place of *prasad* preparation, personnel hygiene of the kitchen staff as well as the serving staff and the packaging and storage of prepared *prasad* in these PoW (copy of presentation – **Annexure 5**).

iii. Tamil Nadu

150 food handlers from 20 major PoW from Tamil Nadu were trained under the Project BHOG last year by FSSAI and AFSTI. The Addl. Commissioner from Hindu Religion and Charitable Endowments

Department, Govt. of Tamil Nadu presented the existing food safety practices in these PoW and gave an insight into the different types of *prasadam* prepared and distributed in temples like *Madappalli*, *Neyvedya Prasadam*, *Annadhanam* etc. (copy of presentation – **Annexure 6**). The participants were also informed about the improvements made after the training under Project BHOG in these PoW such as equipping the kitchen with modern gadgets such as streamers, gas stoves, vegetable cutting machines, mixers & grinders, educating the cooks and their helpers to maintain personal hygiene, periodic checking of the personal hygiene & health of cooks, their helpers & food serving staffs and monitoring of the quality of food items by officials. Also, the *prasad* is sold by authorized private agencies in temple premises to the devotees and the temple administration is strict in ensuring quality of the food supplied. It was also brought out that all major temples in Tamil Nadu were equipped with RO System for purified drinking water.

8. Training Session – Food Safety & Hygienic Practices in PoW

A short training session on food safety and hygienic practices was conducted by Dr. V. Pasupathy, NLRP (National Level Resource Person) for FOSATC trainings under FSSAI, for the participating PoW. It was an interactive session where the participants were guided on the following aspects of food safety management systems:

- i) Implementing good hygienic practices in PoW must cover eight areas, namely, location/surrounding, layout & design, equipment & containers, facilities, personal hygiene, storage & transport, sanitation & maintenance and training.
- ii) Reasons of food spoilage and ways to prevent spoilage.
- iii) Hygienic requirements for infrastructure pertaining to ventilation, lighting, drainage etc.
- iv) Good manufacturing practices including standardization of raw material, good storage practices, proper cooking temperature of *prasad* & requirements for hygienic packaging.
- v) Effective drainage system – Direction of drainage flow should be opposite to the flow of production.
- vi) Effective pest control systems.
- vii) Provision for personal hygiene facility for food handlers.
- viii) Packing and labelling of *prasad* as per FSS regulations.
- ix) Storage and transportation of *prasad* at proper temperatures
- x) Testing of *prasad* either from in-house lab facility or from an outside accredited lab.

9. Visit to ISKCON temple, EoK, Delhi

Thirteen participants including FSSAI staff visited ISKCON temple's food preparation area to observe the major areas which are important to ensure food safety. The raw material receiving area, storage area, processing area, and the finished product serving area were inspected and participants were guided about good manufacturing & hygiene practices in each section. Personal hygiene & waste disposal were given importance during the visit.



Visit to ISKON Temple

9. Workshop outcomes

i. Adoption of Project BHOG by states & UTs –

In an effort to take this project forward, States & UTs shall be contacted by FSSAI to roll out Project BHOG in PoW. States & UTs are required to nominate a nodal officer for Project BHOG rollout. States authorities should coordinate with the authorities of PoW to implement BHOG in their places. Different chapters of AFSTI to assist PoW in their respective states to implement Project BHOG.

ii. Conducting workshop cum training session in states –

FSSAI will conduct a workshop cum training session in different states & the next training will be conducted in Gujarat to cover PoW in the state. States & UTs will assist in organizing workshops on Project BHOG. AFSTI will be required to develop the E-learning modules for training of food handlers under Project BHOG. Participating PoW will rollout Project BHOG in their premises and nominate their staff (including food handlers, cooks and vendors selling Prasad) for training under BHOG.

iii. Creating awareness about Safe & Nutritious Food among the citizens –

FSSAI will share the messaging and artwork relating to the importance of Safe and Nutritious food with the PoW so that these can be displayed for the benefit of the devotees. States & UTs will encourage PoW to display Safe and nutritious messages at various places for the benefit of the devotees to inculcate healthy eating habits among people. PoW are required to Display “Safe And Nutritious Food” messages at various places in their premises.

iv. Third Party Audit of PoW-

PoW, where BHOG is implemented, will be audited by FSSAI empanelled auditing agencies and plaques will be awarded to those PoW where BHOG has been implemented successfully.

v. Using Fortified Staples in PoW

PoW may replace their raw material with fortified staples like wheat, rice, milk, oil and edible salt for preparation of Prasad.
