



SNS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY



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COIMBATORE-641 035, TAMIL NADU

UNIT III: FOOD LAWS AND REGULATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO FOOD ACTS

Food Acts in India are a series of laws and regulations designed to ensure the safety, quality, and availability of food to the population. These acts are pivotal in shaping India's food policy, addressing issues from food adulteration to food security. Here's an introduction to some of the key Food Acts in India:

1. **The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006**

- **Overview:** The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, is the primary legislation governing food safety in India. It led to the establishment of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which is responsible for setting standards for food products, regulating their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import, and ensuring the availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - Establishment of the FSSAI.
 - Consolidation of various food laws in India.
 - Setting food safety standards and regulations.
 - Licensing and registration of food businesses.
 - Implementation of food safety management systems.
 - Power to recall, ban, and regulate the sale of unsafe food products.
- **Importance:** This Act is the cornerstone of food regulation in India, ensuring that all food products meet safety standards and are free from adulteration.

2. **The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954**

- **Overview:** Before the introduction of the FSSAI, the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act, 1954, was the primary law aimed at preventing the adulteration of food products.

- While it has now been subsumed under the FSSAI, it laid the groundwork for food safety regulations in India.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - Prohibition of the manufacture, sale, and distribution of adulterated food.
 - Standards for food quality and purity.
 - Penalties for violations, including fines and imprisonment.
- **Importance:** Although replaced by the FSSAI, the PFA Act played a significant role in shaping India's food safety landscape by addressing issues of food adulteration and ensuring consumer protection.

3. **The Essential Commodities Act, 1955**

- **Overview:** This Act gives the government the power to regulate the production, supply, and distribution of essential commodities, including food, to ensure their availability at fair prices. The Act is particularly relevant during times of scarcity or crisis.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - Control of production, supply, and distribution of essential food items.
 - Regulation of prices to prevent hoarding and black marketing.
 - Power to requisition and seize commodities in the public interest.
- **Importance:** The Essential Commodities Act plays a critical role in stabilizing food prices and ensuring the availability of essential food items during emergencies or shortages.

4. **The Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, 1937**

- **Overview:** This Act provides for the grading and marking of agricultural and allied commodities under the AGMARK certification scheme. AGMARK is a certification mark that assures consumers of the quality and purity of agricultural products.
- **Key Provisions:**
 - Establishment of standards for agricultural products.
 - Certification of products that meet these standards with the AGMARK seal.
 - Inspection and testing of products to ensure compliance with standards.
- **Importance:** The AGMARK certification under this Act ensures that consumers have access to high-quality agricultural products, thereby protecting them from substandard goods.

· 5. **The Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA), 1968**

· **Overview:** While not specifically focused on food, ESMA empowers the government to maintain the supply of essential services, including food, during strikes or disruptions. This Act ensures that food supply chains remain operational during crises.

• **Key Provisions:**

- Power to prohibit strikes in essential services.
- Maintenance of food supply chains during emergencies.

• **Importance:** ESMA ensures the continuous availability of essential food supplies even during disruptions, safeguarding public interest.

· 6. **The Consumer Protection Act, 2019**

· **Overview:** This Act aims to protect consumers from unfair trade practices, including those related to food products. It provides a framework for addressing grievances related to food safety, quality, and labeling.

• **Key Provisions:**

- Establishment of consumer courts to address grievances.
- Rights to seek redressal for issues related to food safety, adulteration, and mislabeling.
- Penalties for businesses that violate consumer rights.

• **Importance:** This Act empowers consumers to seek justice in cases where food products do not meet safety or quality standards.

· 7. **The Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963**

· **Overview:** This Act ensures that food products exported from India meet international quality standards. It mandates the inspection and certification of food products before export.

• **Key Provisions:**

- Inspection and certification of food products for export.
- Ensuring that exported food meets the quality standards of the destination country.

- **Importance:** This Act is crucial for maintaining India's reputation in the global food market by ensuring that exported products meet stringent quality requirements.

· 8. **The Legal Metrology Act, 2009**

· **Overview:** This Act regulates the packaging, labeling, and weight of food products to ensure fair trade practices. It ensures that consumers get what they pay for in terms of quantity and quality.

- **Key Provisions:**

- Standards for packaging and labeling of food products.
- Accurate measurement and declaration of product weight.
- Penalties for misrepresentation of product weight or quantity.

- **Importance:** This Act protects consumers from fraudulent practices related to the packaging and labeling of food products.