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Parliamentary panel orders FSSAI to tighten up food safety measures

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Parliamentary panel has raised his concerns over the recent food safety standards of the country. In its recent move, the panel has asked the health department to take necessary measures to arrest underutilisation of funds by the country’s food safety regulator FSSAI and ensure strengthening of the food testing system in a time-bound manner.

Pannel further stated that the safety and standardisation of food is a "neglected" area in India and the health department, under which the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) falls, needs to focus more on this field. It also highlighted the need for the mobile food testing lab and elaborated that all food items being tested should be advertised in newspapers and social media to make people aware.

The parliamentary committee on Demands for Grants for 2017-18 for the Department of Health and Family Welfare noted that there has been a "consistent trend" of underutilisation of funds in 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17.

The committee was headed by Ram Gopal Yadav, Rajya Sabha MP, who stated, “Expects the department to take appropriate measures to arrest shortfall in utilisation of budgetary funds and ensure that the strengthening of food testing systems and laboratories is done in a time-bound manner.”

FSSAI covers many domains and its failure in utilization of funds points that regulatory authority lacks in financial planning. The panel commented that underutilisation of budgeted funds indicates ‘negligence’ in this area and ‘poor’ financial planning on the part of the authorities concerned.

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