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When Food Safety Is Paramount

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By **Manbeena Chawla** | July 31, 2022



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Over the past few years, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has put in considerable effort to encourage food safety research and innovation in the country. Many initiatives are under way to foster the scientific spirit among private and public institutions in food safety research.

One such appreciable initiative is the Eat Right Research Awards that identify and reward innovative, high-quality research in food safety and nutrition. The 2022 awards spotlighted some ground-breaking research which has the potential to be hugely impactful. Here, we take a look.

Since 2006, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been laying down science-based standards for articles of food and for regulating manufacturing, processing, storage, distribution, sale and import of food so as to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption in the country.

The FSSAI has developed a nationwide modern food regulatory system, by scaling up testing infrastructure, strengthening surveillance, and building regulatory and enforcement capacity and resources. It has set in motion many new directives that while in line with modern regulatory systems, also address India's unique food safety challenges.

As part of its initiative to raise the food quality in the industry, the FSSAI instituted the Eat Right India Movement in 2018. The Eat Right India movement is a people's movement and it engages various stakeholders including consumer organisation, associations, industry, research scholars and professionals in food safety and nutrition to come together and align with the common objective of assuring safe, healthy and sustainable diets for people in the country. To promote and facilitate new research and innovation in the space of food safety and nutrition, the authority introduced the Eat Right Research Awards and Grant in 2021 to engage and collaborate with various academic and research institutions.

The overall objective of Eat Right Research Awards is to encourage and recognise high-quality research in the area of food safety and nutrition in India which can be adapted/ adopted by

FSSAI to further strengthen its role in the country in order to update or upgrade food formulations and technologies (as per the standards defined); awareness and availability of more variants of safe and healthy food; and to foster a culture of scientific thinking among students and research community.

The winners of the Eat Right Research Awards in the individual category were felicitated on the occasion of World Food Safety Day on June 7, 2022 by the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Mansukh Mandaviya. The winners were felicitated with a certificate of excellence and a cash prize of Rs 2.5 lakh each and runners-up with a certificate of appreciation under each of the 3 themes – Eat Safe, Eat Healthy and Eat Sustainable

"*Eat Right Research Awards have been constituted to recognise the outstanding work already done in the area of research and development specifically in areas of food safety, healthy diets and sustainable foods. All the winners have received encouragement and financial support to conduct high-quality research in the space of food safety and nutrition in India. This truly defines the new role of FSSAI from being a regulator to an enabler and a facilitator. Technological innovations in the area of food and nutrition are the need of the hour and these kinds of researches should be promoted widely to scale-up the scope of food safety*", highlights **Arun Singhal, Chief Executive Officer, FSSAI**.

A total of three evaluation committees were set up to decide on the winners. Each committee had 5 members that included representatives of FSSAI's scientific panels and committees, reputed scientists working in government and private R&D organisations, and associated institutions as well professionals working in the space of food safety and nutrition.

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