

Report of the Workshop on Food Safety and Food Security

The workshop on *Capacity Building for excellence in Food Safety and Food Security Governance in Kerala* is organized by the Institute of Management in Government on October 17, 2017 from 10am to 3.30pm. The participants of the workshop includes the professors of Agricultural University, Agricultural Scientists, Research Officers in Food Safety labs, Food Safety officers , Quality Control Analysts in Spices Board and also other representatives from Consumerfed, Matsyafed etc.

The session started with the presentation by Dr. Jacob (Managing Director of Synergy Food Quality Lab and Research Centre, Kochi) on Global Food Safety Concerns and Challenges to the India in Food Processing and Export Industry. He mentioned about the importance of Food Defense Plan in his presentation. By having a Food Defense Plan, it will contribute to a safer and more secure food supply. A functional food defense plan may also reduce the risk of unsafe product and economic loss, reduce theft, reduce the need for additional regulation on food defense, and reduce company liability.

The next session on Ensuring Food Security in Kerala: Issues and Options was taken by Mr. Sunil Devassy (Programme Policy Officer; World Food Programme- India). He pointed out the four pillars needed for ensuring food security which are Availability, Access, Utilization and Stability. He also discussed about the various Government Food Security Schemes. He also mentioned about the lack of proper storage facility of food grains.

On the session of Food Security Challenges in India, the major topic to be discussed is the need for Real Time Distribution and Intake Reporting System. It is mentioned that even though we provide the nutritional food for the needy, we don't have any system to ensure whether they consume it or about the quantity they consumed. Here comes the importance of Real time reporting system.

The Session on Pesticide related food safety Issues: An update on current status, remedies and way forward is taken by Dr. Thomas Biju Mathew(Professor, Kerala Agricultural University). The points discussed on how to reduce the intake of pesticide while using vegetables or fruits are very informative. He also showed us the sample study reports on pesticide content in vegetables, fruits, dry fruits, spices etc. The study reveals almost every product purchased from the so called Eco Shop or Organic Vegetables Shop is having the pesticide content and also the spices powder samples from top branded companies is also containing the presence of pesticide. So if the kudumbashree micro enterprise units can sell a pure quality spice powder through our super markets, it will surely bring a high demand in the market.

We had a group work on situational analysis on Food Safety and Food Security in the State-measures to be taken by the state for curbing food insecurity and adulteration in the afternoon session.

These are the recommendations from various groups for the policy level changes

- Consumer Educational Awareness Programmes needed for Food Safety Practices.
- Educate the children on Food Safety and Food Security from school level onwards.
- Food test lab facility needed in each districts for ensuring food safety.
- Record Keeping Procedures should be strictly monitored.
- Proper Storage Education needed for entrepreneurs.
- Grading system should be implemented for food processing outlets.
- Traceability of products needed.
- Strengthen the government policy.
- Proper guidelines needed for organic farming.
- Fully fledged lab facility needed at check posts to ensure the quality of cross border goods.
- Unbiased implementation of standard formulation is strictly recommended.

Things which applicable to Kudumbashree

- Since Spices Board is having accredited lab facility, we can think about the possibility of using those labs to conduct the quality check of nutrimix.
- We should ensure whether our units are following the food and safety regulations. Training on proper packing and labeling is needed for the units to ensure the quality of the product

Conclusion

The workshop helped me to interact with people in various streams and also helped me to find out the opportunity to collaborate with those departments. When I had a talk with the Food Safety Officers, they mentioned about their difficulties in obeying their duties while they came across with an entrepreneur having difficulties to move on with his business by strictly following the food safety regulations. It gave me a chance to explain the Yuvashree programme and various funds provided by the Kudumbashree to its entrepreneurs. So I hope through the Food and Safety officers, we can build a network to attract more entrepreneurs to be a part of Kudumbashree.