



Organic Food Regulatory System in India

Why in News

The Union Minister for Commerce and Industry informed about the **existent organic food regulatory system in the country** during the winter parliamentary session (2019).

- **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** is the **food regulator** in the country and is also responsible for **regulating organic food in the domestic market and imports**.
- FSSAI had notified the existing certification system through **Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations in 2017**.

Organic Food

- **Organic farm produce** means the produce obtained from **organic agriculture**, while **organic food** means food products that have been produced in accordance with **specified standards for organic production**.
 - According to FSSAI, '**organic agriculture**' is a system of farm design and management to create an ecosystem of agriculture production without the use of synthetic external inputs such as chemical fertilisers, pesticides and synthetic hormones or genetically modified organisms.

Existing Certification Systems

- **National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)**
 - NPOP grants **organic farming certification** through a process of **third party certification**.
 - It involves the **accreditation programme** for Certification Bodies, standards for organic production, promotion of organic farming etc.
 - It is implemented by **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)**, **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
 - The **NPOP standards** for production and accreditation system have been **recognized** by the **European Commission, Switzerland** and **USA** as equivalent to their respective accreditation systems.
- **Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS)**
 - PGS is another process of **certifying organic products**.
 - The certification is in the form of a **documented logo or a statement**.
 - It is implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**.
 - The organic **farmers have full control over the certification process**.
 - PGS certification is **only for farmers or communities** that can organise and perform as a **group**. **Individual farmers** or groups of farmers smaller than five

members are **not covered** under PGS.

- PGS is applicable on **on-farm activities** comprising of crop production, processing and livestock rearing, etc.
 - **Off-farm processing activities** such as storage, transport and value addition activities by persons/agencies other than PGS farmers away from the group are **not covered under PGS**.
- Organic foods are also required to comply with the requirements of **labelling of FSSAI** in addition to that of NPOP or PGS-India.

Source:PIB

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