



Project Serve Safe Food in Varanasi



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Project Serve Safe Food – Varanasi

Background

Project Serve Safe Food was expanded in other cities of Uttar Pradesh after training street food vendors across different states/ Union Territories. Under the auspices of FoSTaC, a successful training program in Varanasi was completed in partnership with the Food Safety Department and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The project focused on COVID - 19 precautionary measures and social distancing, health, cleanliness, food handling safety measures, garbage disposal, plastic waste management, and entrepreneurship for street food vendors.

After the COVID-19 Pandemic, customers have prioritised hygiene and food safety and the use of digital payments as a safer choice. Vendors gained knowledge of safe hygiene and sanitation practices and the Food Safety Act as a result of this training. The training assisted them in regaining economic stability following the COVID Pandemic and resuming their livelihood.

Mobilization

Since it was a FoSTaC training, more planned mobilization was required which was done by team along with the ground team days before the launch. Ground team was supported by FSOs besides market leaders in identifying street food vendors for training. The NASVI team, in collaboration with Nestlé India, was scheduled to train 500 street food vendors of Varanasi. The NASVI team began mobilization with the local NASVI leaders a few days before the training. For FoSTaC, prior batch registration was required so that it was done very nicely and smoothly.

Prior to the training, NASVI team did the reconnaissance survey of the street food vendors in all the cities. NASVI team also went to the markets to understand the need and mindset of food vendors. Food safety officer and local leaders also helped in mobilizing the food vendors. Efforts were made to provide information about this training program of more and more food vendors. The food vendors were informed about the documents they had to bring. Market wise survey and meetings were conducted. Calls and messages were

sent to the vendors one day before training to ensure batch wise training. Mobilization for the inaugural session was done passionately to ensure good participation. Street Food Vendors were contacted and messages were provided to ensure batch-specific training. We kept in mind that there will only be 30 to 35 food vendors, so we chose a large training hall with chairs separated by two feet. Even during mobilization, street food vendors have educated on COVID best practices.

Strategic Plan

A strategic plan was made to ensure mobilization of leaders, street food vendors.



Training Content

- The duration of each training was 4 hours.
- A banner was used in backdrop of Serve Safe Food Project with logo of NASVI, Nestlé and State Government.
- To make training more convenient, topics were discussed with Power Point Presentation, videos (Tun Tun Foods, Foot – Path ke Saph – Safai etc).
- Process of registration was explained under Food Safety Act.
- Through training, the vendors were made aware on the Food Safety Act, the importance and procedure of food safety license and about Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act.
- The areas where behavioral change was required were highlighted. This included proper storage of foods and drinking water, quality of materials used, cleaning of work sites, serving food with cleanliness, maintaining proper personal hygiene, and proper conduct with the customers was detailed in the training session.
- Street Food Vendors were given awareness about the importance of cleanliness, the diseases and ill health caused by unhygienic food and dirty surroundings.
- The importance, role and responsibilities of street food vendors in the society.
- The vendors were informed about the how the usage of plastics is affecting our environment and preventive measures were shared for the same. Street Vendors were discouraged to use newspaper for serving food as it might cause cancer. The benefits of usage of environment friendly disposals were shared.
- On the day of training, street vendors were registered with their necessary documents. Food Safety officers and local leaders also helped in the registration.





Training of street food vendors

Methodology

Given that, this training took place during a COVID outbreak, all necessary precautions and COVID- specific protocols were followed.

- Unlike prior training sessions, the number of vendors in attendance was limited, and larger halls where street food vendors may sit with a predetermined spacing were set up. All participants' temperatures were tested before entering the training hall.
- To guarantee safety, a packed lunch was given.

- The training began with the vendors' registration and the distribution of a hygiene kit. Aprons, caps, masks, sanitizer, and gloves were included with the hygiene pack.
- The NASVI-assigned trainer trained the street food vendors.
- Food Vendors were fully involved throughout the training and actively participated in the conversation.
- Street Food Vendors committed to following guidelines and maintaining proper hygiene at the end of each session. All enrolled vendors received training certificates after the training session.

Training Scheduled in different cities of Varanasi

	Venue	Date	No participants	Batch
1	Pratap Banquet Hall	17-08-2022	35	I
2	Pratap Banquet Hall	17-08-2022	36	II
3	Pratap Banquet Hall	18-08-2022	35	I
4	Pratap Banquet Hall	18-08-2022	35	II
5	Pratap Banquet Hall	19-08-2022	35	I
6	Pratap Banquet Hall	19-08-2022	35	II
7	Pratap Banquet Hall	20-08-2022	40	I
8	Pratap Banquet Hall	20-08-2022	40	II
9	Pratap Banquet Hall	21-08-2022	35	I
10	Pratap Banquet Hall	21-08-2022	35	II
11	Pratap Banquet Hall	22-08-2022	35	I
12	Pratap Banquet Hall	22-08-2022	35	II
13	Pratap Banquet Hall	23-08-2022	35	I
14	Pratap Banquet Hall	23-08-2022	34	II
	Total		500	



Street Food Vendors taking oath post training to follow the health and hygiene guidelines and serve safe food to their customers



Vendors with their Fostac certificates

Challenges faced

- Vendor turnout issue due to restrictions on business hours.
- Vendors were reluctant as they lost their livelihood in the pandemic and were more focused on business than training. Social distancing
- Adhering to COVID protocols.
- The vendors did not want to go anywhere due to COVID-19. Reluctance to participate in the training program

Project Impact

- After the training program, there was enthusiasm in the trained vendors. They were happy with the hygiene kit and certificates.
- Vendors adopted measures such as personal hygiene while cooking and serving and not serve food in plastic and newspaper.
- A large number of vendors shared that post training, they became aware of various facts such as correct way of hand wash, one time use of cooking oil, knowledge about government Acts.
- Food vendors in clean red apron and cap attracted more consumers

