

Project Kasauti

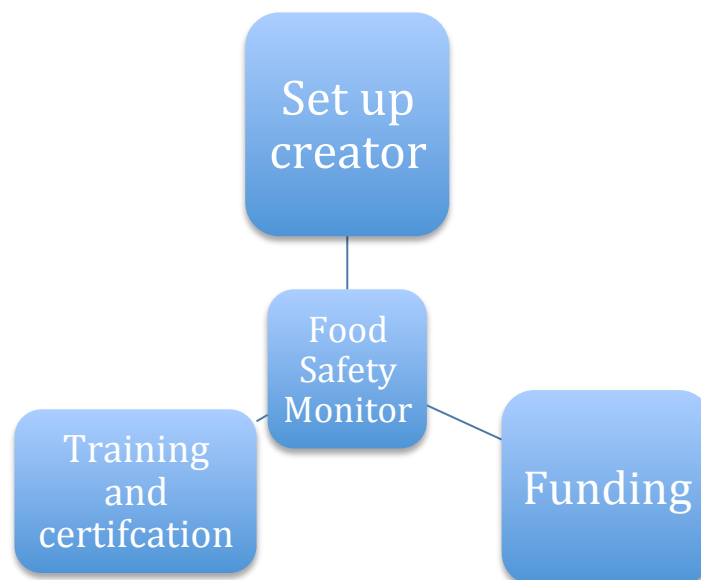
India has transformed itself into an economic superpower with changing socio economic structure. Almost half of the money earned is spent on food and the growth in processed food sector is phenomenally growing in double digit. With change in leadership at top it seems that this growth is facing all green lights in the foreseeable future.

Even after relishing all sorts of demographic dividend, economic development, global leadership in production of milk, cereals, spices, horticulture products etc, and being second largest consumer base in the world the consumers at large still carry a perceptual image of India being a country of poor quality and unsafe food products.

Project Kasauti is an initiative to develop a positive attitude of consumers towards all sorts of food in the country by empowering them through food product testing at their doorstep at a very nominal cost.

Kasauti as the term suggest is a black stone being used to test the purity of gold and has nothing to do with the scientific evaluation of gold to assess its carats. On similar grounds in our project also the testing is not designed to facilitate consumers to check the products from regulatory framework . Rather it would just tell them whether the product is safe or not in terms of adulterants, neutralizers, coloring and sweetening material, etc

We propose to develop this project in an entrepreneurship model wherein multi-stakeholders join hands together to make it a success. A building block model could be created as follows to illustrate the arrangements and linkages.



The major player to act at customer interface will be Food safety monitor (FSM). His designation will provide him some connectivity with the regulator and thus a self esteem upheaval. He may be working in 3 formats depending upon his location as follows :

- a. FSM on bicycle or motor bike to cater to house to house sampling and testing on call with limited services for a few products like milk or coloring material only.
- b. FSM in a mobile van for setting up camps at residential locations, Melas, villages, schools, colleges, Institutions etc
- c. Small center in some established whole sales market place, mandis etc with wider varieties of testing facility.

You may consider this FSM to be something similar to the blood sample collector from home who could also do services like giving injections, checking BP etc. There are thousands of path lab and with more and more of people becoming sick (mainly due to their food and food habits) Delhi government has declared opening of 1000 low cost path labs. If they can develop and perform and sustain their low cost labs for human pathological testing then why can't we develop perform and sustain with our low cost food testing laboratories.

There are three major contributor for this project namely Set up developer, funding agency and Training & certification agency. The promotion of this program will be an overarching activity to be provided by the regulator through its own means or through sponsorship possibilities with large FBOs in the country as part of their responsible business drive. Let us look at role of these three players.

1. Set up developer : The role of developer is to create testing systems and methodologies for base line tests which could be performed to test the purity levels of food against common, adulterants, coloring and sweetening material, starch etc. These tests need to be very simple and could be done without any complex testing methodology or costly laboratory apparatus. NDDDB adulteration kits, NDRI strip testing kits, could be a few of the examples of such systems. These kits then will be kept in a box to be carried by the FSM at the back of his bicycle or bike. Some similar quick tests at low cost may also be developed for pesticidal and insecticidal residues, antibiotics and hormone also if possible.

The major player in this space could be :

CFTRI

NDRI

NDDDB

CIFTEM

DRDO

Existing testing labs and Applied research centers

Universities and Research Institutes

IISc, NCL,NPL etc

ICAR
CSIR
DST

We can inventories available technologies in such space and then get them collected for final listing.

Another level of testing systems and methodologies could be for slightly higher level of testing fat/snf/protein/ etc which could kept in mobile centers and Stationary lab centers which may be called as Parakh centers or Parakh vans. Parakh may also be looked at the recording centers of types and kinds of impurity issues happening at various locations in India.

We may also have to look for funding agencies which could support such programs to these institutions for developing low cost testing solutions for food testing against safety parameters.

2. The Funding agency : We are proposing an entrepreneurship model. We have done some basic calculation to evaluate the size of the opportunity as follows :

Assuming one such FSM on every 10000 population. A city like Delhi with around 20 million population would require around 2000 such FSM. It would depend upon density of a city also. So if we consider density of Delhi to be around 10000 /sq km so every sq km will have one FSM and may be in Mumbai we may have two.

The fund requirements for Delhi alone would be close to Rs 20 crores if we expect the kit to be ready at Rs 1 lac inclusive of a bicycle and Rs 2.0 lacs with a motor bike. In case of motorbike we may also reduce this number to 1 SFM per 50000 population.

Now the funding arrangement should have 3 components

- a. Stake of the entrepreneur (say 25 %)
- b. Soft loan from some agency like NSIC, MSME, Min of Agriculture, Ministry of rural development
- c. Subsidy element for generation of employment under entrepreneurial development (may be start up scheme could be utilized here to register tribal or people from special categories, even woman entrepreneurs)

We can also look for funds from various foundations in India and abroad. We can make it as a part of approved activities for funds to be spent under CSR through ministry of MCA and let the large food companies may spend their CSR fund for this noble cause.

3. Training and certification : This is one of the most important area to be developed. A training protocol for the entrepreneurs needs to be developed with a certification program of these entrepreneurs for

themselves and for training consumers to perform some tests at his home also using some simple chemicals. The SFM may generate revenues by selling these chemicals also which could again make the development of such tests and kits sustainable for developer also as they will be getting some royalty out of it.

The training institution will certify these SFM and put their details on their website also. I propose FSSAI to take this responsibility of certifying them and let the training and development may be conducted with some able institutions and laboratory within this group on regional basis. The size is huge and if we go by India's population and size then we are looking at not less than 100000 SFM and Parakh centers in next 5 years.

The agencies for training and development could be FSSAI, Notified test labs, NSDC driven agencies, etc.

We may be requiring more stakeholders as the project further dwell into a full bloom structure but now comments of members are required to take it to the next level.