Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Assess the role of scientific testing, regulatory enforcement and consumer awareness in ensuring the safety of packaged drinking water in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 25/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

FSSAI, Food Safety and Standards Act, contaminant monitoring, laboratory accreditation, corporate accountability, consumer protection, public health

Model Answer

The Public Health Dimension

Packaged drinking water is widely consumed in India, making its chemical and microbiological safety an important public-health concern. Contamination can expose consumers to long-term health risks.

Three Pillars of Food Safety

1. **Scientific testing:** Regular sampling and reliable laboratory analysis help detect contaminants such as bromate, heavy metals and harmful organic compounds. Standardised testing methods improve accuracy and comparability.

2. **Regulatory enforcement:** The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, prescribes standards and oversees compliance. Prosecution, penalties and product-related restrictions can deter violations.

3. **Corporate accountability:** Manufacturers must maintain quality-control systems, traceability, hygienic production facilities and transparent reporting of test results.

4. **Consumer awareness:** Clear labelling, batch information and accessible complaint mechanisms help consumers make informed choices and report suspected violations.

Institutional Gaps

1. Uneven laboratory capacity and inspection frequency.
2. Limited public access to independent testing information.
3. Possibility of inconsistent sampling and testing procedures.
4. Weak awareness of complaint and grievance-redressal mechanisms.

Conclusion

Safe drinking water requires preventive quality management rather than merely punitive action after contamination is detected. Independent testing, consistent enforcement and transparent industry practices must work together to protect consumers.

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