



State Level Consultation on
**Importance of Front of Package Labelling (FoPL) in
Addressing Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs)**

Friday, July 28 2023

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Introduction

The Public Affairs Foundation (PAF) in collaboration with Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) and BMS College of Law (BMSCL) is conducting a State Level Consultation on 'Importance of FoPL in Addressing NCDs'. The primary objective of organising the Consultation was to:

- Educate and sensitise the larger stakeholders about front of pack labelling;
- Gather their support and thereby convince the regulators to for an effective front of pack labelling on all packaged food products;
- Advocate for a more suitable warning label that address the concern of all stakeholders especially the consumers.

The training was conducted on Friday, July 28, 2023 at the B.M.S. College of Law, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560019 (Refer to Annexure 1-Agenda). It was attended by a spectrum of people including representatives from the Government Health Department, Food Safety Commissionerate, Medical and Nutrition experts, Civil Society Organisations, academics, students to name a few. (Refer to Annexure 3 for list of participants)





Background

According to the WHO definition, FoPL refers to nutrition labelling systems that:

- Is present on the front of food packages (in the principal field of vision)
- Can be applied across the packaged retail food supply
- Comprise an underpinning nutrient profile model that considers the overall nutrition quality of a product or nutrients of concern for NCDs
- Provide graphical information on the nutrient content or nutritional quality of products to complement the more detailed nutrient declarations usually given at the back of food packages.



Benefits

FoPL has several benefits, and the key ones include:

- Alerts consumers to unhealthy ingredients
- Allow consumers to correctly, quickly and easily identify products that contain excessive amounts of sugar, fat, and sodium warns consumers about the top risk factors for mortality, i.e., high blood sugar levels, high blood pressure, and overweight/obesity, which harm people's health and development.
- It has become important to address such a health crisis during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and people living with such NCDs are at greater risk of becoming severely ill or dying due to COVID-19

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Purpose of the State Level Consultation

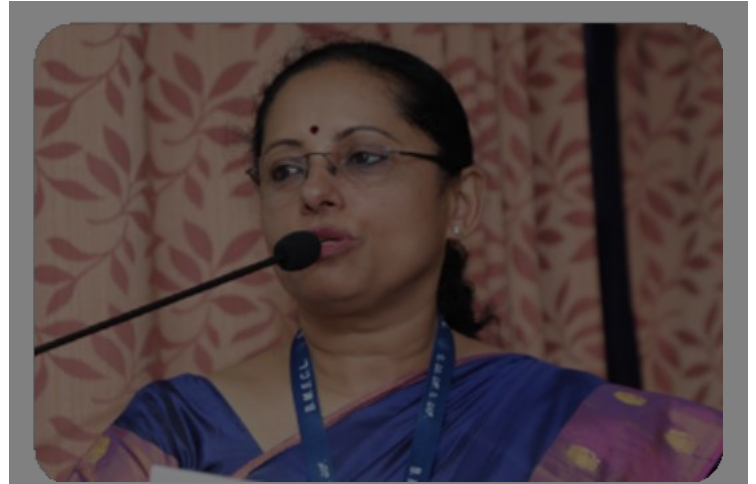
Across the globe, the Food and Beverage Industry strongly and extensively opposes warning labelling regulations. The experience so far in India is quite similar. Till date, only a very limited number of health experts and consumer organisations are involved in the FoPL consultation process. A larger chunk of the stakeholders, including the policymakers, remain unaware or partially aware of the need for and development of FoPL regulation in the country. Therefore, through this State Consultation, CUTS, Jaipur and PAF, Bengaluru, intended to educate and sensitise the larger stakeholders, gather their support and thereby convince the regulators to rethink their decision and come up with a more suitable warning label that address the concerns of all stakeholders, especially the consumers, rather than taking a step in the wrong direction to appease the industries.



Inaugural Session

Welcome Address

Dr. Anitha F. N D'Souza Principal, BMSCL, welcomed the dignitaries and introduced the event to everyone gathered. She emphasised the necessity for FoPL and highlighted the value of awareness sessions in educating customers on the nutritional composition of packaged goods. She invited the dignitaries to water a plant as a symbol of inauguration.



Dr. Anitha F.N. D'Souza, Principal, BMSCL



Dignitaries watering a plant at the Inauguration



■ Setting the Context

Dr. Annaporna Ravichander, Executive Director, Public Affairs Foundation, welcomed everyone and started the discussion by explaining how three institutions—PAC, CUTS, and the BMS College of Law—with diverse backgrounds got together to debate the crucial subject of FOPL and present essential recommendations on how to tackle it. She continued by pointing out that, as consumers, we should be responsible for making an attempt to read food labels, but when we do, we are unaware of what they represent. Therefore, we must first begin to comprehend what the label on a packet/container means to us as consumers. She gave the following illustration: Despite the warning that smoking is harmful for health being printed on cigarette packets, individuals continue to do so. How should I interpret that caution? Does it serve as a warning or a statement that you can but not should? The meaning of this form of labelling is quite ambiguous and difficult to understand, she stated. As a result, she emphasised how crucial it is to have these forums in order to comprehend the causes and consequences of the problem and the importance of consumers recognising their responsibility to read the label.



Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, Executive Director, PAF




Opening Remarks

Deepak Saxena, Associate Director, CUTS International, laid out the facts on NCDs and the significance of FoPL. He mentioned that according to the World Health Organisation, - one in four Indians faces the risk of dying from an NCD before they even reach the age of 70. Now accounting for a staggering 65% of total deaths in India, estimates suggest that the impact of these diseases extends beyond the loss of lives as it also poses a substantial economic burden. Current estimates suggest that by 2030, the economic cost on India due to NCDs is projected to be approximately \$4.58 trillion, a number that demands our urgent intervention to prevent further escalation. Further, analysing the recent data from the Health of Nation Report -2023, he pointed out that the trends are alarming. Between 2019 and 2022, country witnessed a 50% increase in obesity rates, an 18% rise in cholesterol levels, an 8% surge in diabetes cases, and an 11% increase in hypertension among Indians. He also mentioned about the study carried out by Indian council of medical research and India diabetes - Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology journal that highlights the seriousness of the whole issue. A survey across 31 states and union territories - found the prevalence of major metabolic non-communicable diseases - there are 101 million people with diabetes - 136 million people with prediabetes - 315 million people having high blood pressure - 254 million having generalized obesity - 351 million with abdominal obesity. Additionally, 213 million have hypercholesterolemia. The study, which is said to be the largest survey on diabetes and other metabolic non-communicable diseases undertaken in India, was held between Oct 2008 and Dec 2020. Researchers studied a total of one lakh thirteen thousand individuals (113,000).



Deepak Saxena, Associate Director, CUTS International



In Karnataka, the same study points that in terms of diabetes, obesity, abdominal obesity, Low HDL Cholesterol the prevalence rate is high when compared with 31 states and union territories, while it is moderate but not low in the case of hypertension, prediabetes, High LDL cholesterol and Hypercholesterolaemia.

This burden of NCD keeps rising in India largely due to excessive consumption of calorie dense foods and beverages containing high levels of saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, sugars and salts. Market studies proves that while the Sales of food/beverages are shrinking in the west due to stringent regulations, the companies have increasingly shifted its focused onto developing economies, targeting vulnerable populations and children.

It is, therefore, quite clear that India needs policy interventions, to bring down this rising NCDs trend by reducing the consumption of foods high in salt, sugar and fats. Along with educational initiatives, advertisement and marketing restrictions, the implementation of front-of-pack labelling on package food is considered as one of the 'best-buy' measures to help prevent NCDs.


Unfortunately, in February 2022 though FSSAI announced its plans to go ahead with implementation of an FOPL in the country, it recommended introducing the 'India Nutrition Rating' (INR) system on a voluntary basis based on a survey finding by IIM-Ahmedabad. Based on this they issued the Draft Notification Food Safety and Standards (Labelling & Display) Amendment Regulations, 2022.

Now, experts are very much divided on the format of FOPL chosen for the country. While very few of them welcomed the move of the regulator to have a star rating type of label, majority of the consumer organisations, consumer research institutes, scientific community, health experts are vehemently opposing the idea of adopting a health STAR Label. In fact, it is quite a disappointment to note that the regulator preferred relying upon a limited study carried out by a business school by ignoring the global best practices and evidence around it.

CUTS and 26 other consumer organisations across India along with leading health experts and research institutes are strongly advocating for a Warning Label as the 'best suitable' for Indian population.

So, when public comments on the 2022 draft notification on FOPL was called for by FSSAI, the food regulator received almost 10-15 thousand comments from various sets of stakeholders. The huge media attention received on the topic coupled with stiff opposition from various quarters has forced the regulator for the time being to delay the finalisation of the notification.

So now we are continuing with our efforts in advocating for Warning Label as it has already proven useful to all consumers' categories regardless of their age, literacy proficiency or socio-economic strata. And more importantly unlike in star rating system, warning label restricts manufacturers from manipulating the nutritional profile as desired.




Special Addresses

— **Shri. Sanjay Pandey**, National Consultant, Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), provided a brief on food industry and NCDs. He mentioned that India is the only country in the world that has portrayed 85 percent of the true picture of cancer caused by smoking on the packaging, and this has made a significant difference in the overall consumption pattern. The consumption pattern has changed as a result of this image, indicating that the "Warning label" makes a difference in consumer behaviour. Between 2010-2017, tobacco usage decreased by 17%, with a 33% decline in youth aged 15-24 and 8.1 million total users, causing health consequences. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2017 report demonstrated enhanced warning label effectiveness in influencing quitting behaviour compared to GATS 2010. In 6 to 7 seconds, a consumer makes a purchasing decision. As a result, it is critical that the food label includes something catchy that grabs the attention of consumers so that they can determine whether or not the food package in their hands is nutritious. And having such alerts is extremely important in lowering NCDs.

- Food sector contribution in India was around 1 billion dollars 15 years ago and has now climbed to 19 billion dollars, suggesting a significant increase in consumption, both in rural and urban areas, and among rich and poor people.
- Consumption of cakes and pastries, savoury snacks, sweet snacks, and confectionery has also increased from 4.1 to 11.2 ml or g per capita per day from 2006 to 2019, owing to an increase in obesity and diabetes among consumers.
- India has the third largest packaged food market after China and the US.



Shri Sanjay Pandey, National Consultant, Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI)

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- A Lancet study found that processed food accounts for 10% of total calorie intake in India, with urban households consuming 30% daily. And a report by CSE said 53% of children consume salted packaged food, while 56% consume sweet packaged food on average twice a week.
 - The consumption of processed/packaged foods has decreased significantly in several other nations that have implemented the warning label, including Peru, Brazil, Thailand, Mexico, Chile, Finland, and Sri Lanka. To be more precise, after the introduction of the policy package, households' purchases of highly sweetened beverages decreased by 23.7% in Mexico and Chile.
 - FSSAI has introduced the star rating concept in 2022, but a lot of consumer organisations are against it.
 - AIIMS, IIPS, and NIN studies have clearly demonstrated the need for warning labels rather than star ratings to reduce the intake of unhealthy food.


Sanjay Pandey further emphasised that the use of "high in" FOPL can significantly lower the amount of sugar, calories, and sodium in the food and beverages that are purchased.

— **Sarika Agrawal**, Managing Director and Principal Consultant at Food Safety Works, provided a briefing on the level of consumer awareness of food safety.

She began the session by mentioning 13 requirements that should be printed on food packaging: Address of the factory; FSSAI License Number; Batch number; Net quantity; Manufacturing date; green dot/brown triangle on the front side of the packet to indicate veg/non-veg; all the ingredients used; Allergen declaration; Storage instruction; Nutritional information like Energy in kcal, Protein, Fat, Carbohydrates, added Sugar, serving size, and %RDA, if a claim is made, the quantity used must be declared, ingredients must be listed in decreasing order (by ingoing weight); and lastly, phone number and e-mail address where customers could contact in case of issues. She provided an example of many studies, one of which is the ICMR's 2022 study, which shows urban-rural diabetes burden narrowing in India, with 95,600 cases in children under 14 and 15,900 fresh cases annually.

Referencing another study, she stated that among children, the estimated pooled prevalence was 35.4%. The prevalence among non-obese and obese children was 12.4% and 63.4%, respectively. She talked about food processing, which changes the natural state of the food through milling, canning, freezing, adding salt, sugar, fat, etc., which converts it into UPF. She mentioned the following things which are added in the food packages are, emulsifiers, HFCS, invert syrup, stabilisers, colourants, preservative, sweeteners, thickeners and gelling agents, trans fats, acidity regulators, vegetable oils and many more which affects the health of the consumer and leads to many non-communicable diseases.

Energy Star Rating is familiar but complex, not suitable for diet management. It performs best in older populations and is more popular among urban consumers than rural ones, with 52% of respondents being urban. In a survey conducted on educated consumers, only 32% did the ingredient check, 21%



did the allergen check, and 27% did the nutrition and fat check and only 54% did the label check. In metropolitan cities, 63% of consumers do the label check, while in rural areas, only 5% do the same.

Only 28% of consumers check the FSSAI label on food packets. The problem with food labelling is the complexity of the sciences, the overburden of data, and language issues. Energy Star Rating is familiar but complex, not suitable for diet management. It performs best in older populations and is more popular among urban consumers than rural ones, with 52% of respondents being urban.

In a recent draft by FSSAI in 2022, they recommended HSR, which excludes 100 food categories. The food label should be simple and easy, language agnostic, and supportive of diet management.



Sarika Agarwal, Important of Consumer Awareness and Food Safety



Technical Session

— **Dr. Abhijit Kulkarni**, Consultant Cardiologist and Electrophysiologist, Apollo Hospitals, discussed how ultra-processed foods influence our health and contribute to NCDs by raising levels of dangerous chemicals and cholesterol. He pointed out that westernisation in food has been the fastest advancement in the economy. Even the smallest town has the packaged and fast food stalls. Even in our homes, they have entered our cooking culture and added that people are having heart attacks at the age of 25. He added that while people work for long term goals similarly, they it is important for them to work hard for long term health.

The most significant determinants of cholesterol levels are diet, weight, physical activity, age, gender, and heredity, and the first three can be controlled for a healthy body and mind. There are two types of cholesterol in the body: LDL (Low Density Lipoproteins) and HDL (High Density Lipoproteins). Where LDL is bad cholesterol, which is positively related to CVD, and HDL is good cholesterol, which is negatively related to CVD.



Dr. Abhijith Kulkarni, Consultant Cardiologist, Apollo Hospital, Bangalore

Triglycerides (TG) are diet responsive blood lipids that, if increased beyond a certain level, may cause harm to the body. Lowering TG and LDL can be achieved by avoiding smoking, limiting alcohol, sugar, saturated, and trans fats, and incorporating soluble fibre, MUFA, and PUFA into the diet.

There should be labelling on fast food joints, bakery products, and beverages, specifically. And people should be made aware that they should walk after consuming any kind of sweet or salty fast food. He recommended some foods for shopping and dining out, such as skim milk instead of whole milk, lean meat, breasts, and drumsticks instead of thighs and wings, vegetables, fruits, and grains. And lastly, ask



for salads, low fat food options available in the restaurants.

He said that one should include Omega 3 fatty acids in the diet, which can be extracted from flaxseeds, walnuts, fatty fish twice a week, and soybean oil. He also stressed that one can increase phytochemicals in the body, which reduce inflammation and blood clotting, by including anthocyanins (found in red and blue fruits such as raspberries and blueberries and vegetables), lutein (green leafy vegetables), lycopene (tomato products), and phenolics (citrus fruits, fruit juices, cereals, legumes, and oilseeds). He said that it would be beneficial for labels to include the amount of harmful cholesterol in the product.

He also suggested that visual depiction of potential warnings will make it easier for consumers to understand nutritional information. The government or private firms can initiate incentives to encourage people to adopt healthy habits. For example, in Singapore, people who have completed 10,000 steps in a day get a free metro ride. The government or private firms can initiate incentives to encourage people to adopt healthy habits.

In order to maintain a healthy lifestyle, Dr. Abhijit emphasised the importance of lifestyle, foods, diet, and exercise. He concluded by saying, *“To eat is a necessity, but to eat intelligently is an art.”*

— **Dr. Ritu Kapoor**, Clinical Dietician, emphasised the need of nutrition labelling and customer awareness.

Dr. Kapoor emphasised that in India, NCDs account for 60% of all deaths. And the four leading causes of NCD deaths are: Diabetes (35%), Cancer (12%), Chronic Respiratory Disease (22%) Chronic Stroke, Coronary Heart Disease and Hypertension (45%).

The main risk factors for NCDs are stress, poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco consumption, excessive alcohol use, and poverty. It is important to note that in both rural and urban India, processed food makes up approximately 10% of the average daily calorie consumption. Nearly 30% of the daily calories consumed by urban households in the highest income category come from processed food.

Indian suburban children and adolescents aged 14-18 have low HDL levels and high BMI, with 23% having total cholesterol above 170 mg/dl, 10% having LDL > 110 mg/dl, and 18% having triglyceride > 130 mg/dl. It is important to note that in both rural and urban India, processed food makes up approximately 10% of the average daily calorie consumption. And nearly 30% of the daily calories consumed by urban households in the highest income category come from processed food.

Food additives are one of the main causes of NCDs. She claimed that NCDs are just tip of the iceberg, autism, cancer, and depression are other serious problems that can occur due to the consumption of UPFs. According to the UNICEF Policy Brief, advertising laws for promotion to children less than 14 years old have to change. NCDs significantly impact the Indian economy, reducing workforce productivity and overall output. Every 10% increase in NCD mortality results in a 0.5% reduction in annual economic growth.

She additionally pointed out that according to data from numerous studies, the burden of NCDs has increased in India from 37.9 to 61.8%, whereas the burden of communicable and infectious diseases has remained at 27.5% for the past three decades.

The most significant point made by Dr. Ritu Kapoor was that when a food is categorized as having a high sugar, fat, or salt content, the issue of how high is "high" arises. As a result, the consumer is further confused when they read the nutrition labels, which list a range of these numbers in accordance with RDA standards. She suggests that if a packaged food contains additives, it should be categorised as ultra-processed food and should bear a label warning.



Dr. Ritu Kapoor, Clinical Dietician

— **Simi T B**, Assistant Policy Analyst, CUTS International, presented about the status of NCDs and role of FoPL.

Simi began by highlighting the dire situation India is in with regard to the dramatic increase in the incidence of overweight and obesity and the ensuing high and rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases. She also made note of the fact that between 2019 and 2022, there had been a 50% increase in obesity, an 18% increase in cholesterol, an 8% increase in diabetes, and an 11% increase in hypertension among Indians, according to the Health of Nation Report, 2023.

She laid out facts about India facing rising obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), with 70% of total deaths due to NCDs. The World Economic Forum predicts an estimated \$4.58 trillion economic burden by 2030.

She stressed that pre-existing cardiovascular diseases (NCDs) and comorbidities increase vulnerability

to Covid-19, with 6 times more chances of infection and hospitalisation and 12 times more risk of death in India in 2021. To combat future pandemics, enhancing immunity through healthy, low-fat, sugar, and salt-containing food is crucial. Unhealthy diets and malnutrition are major drivers of chronic diseases (NCDs). The shift towards calorific foods, eating out, and portion sizes, combined with lower intake of fruits, vegetables, and high-fibre foods, makes healthy diets unaffordable for the poor. Quoting the Euromonitor Report, 2019 she claimed that the sale of ultra-processed food in India increased from 2 kg per capita in 2005 to 6 kg in 2019, and is expected to grow to 8 kg by 2024. Likewise, sale of beverages shoots up from less than 2 litres per capita in 2005 to about 8 litres in 2019, and is expected to grow to 10 litres by 2024.

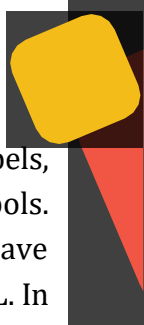
Furthermore, she also highlighted that in India, as much as 68 percent of food and beverage products currently available in the food market have excess amounts of at least one ingredient of concern, namely salt, sugar, and saturated fats. This data was from a study that was conducted by researchers from the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) and University of North Carolina after analyzing 10,500 packaged food products that had provided complete nutrition information in their back of pack. The study found that only 32 percent were within the scientific thresholds recommended by WHO regional standards.



Simi TB, Assistant Policy Analyst, CUTS International

According to her, FoPL is a simple, practical tool to inform consumers about food's public health implications, warning them about unhealthy ingredients. The goal is to reduce overweight and obesity by reducing consumption of high-salt, sugary, and fat foods, following WHO standards, where simplified nutritional information is provided through symbols, colours, or words.

She added that the reason we need FoPL is that India's high back-of-pack nutrition labelling is challenging



for consumers to find, read, and use. With 59% of consumers worldwide struggling to understand labels, only 20% check nutrition information on food labels, and 40% desire easy-to-understand symbols. As of today, almost 45 plus countries across the globe have adopted the FoPL. These countries have implemented FoPL in different formats and there is no global consensus on a particular type of FoPL. In fact, every country has chosen the label based on its needs and situation.

In India, FoPL was first recommended in 2014 by an expert committee constituted by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) after a Delhi High Court order. After that FSSAI had lot of consultations and deliberations with stakeholders and twice even came up with draft regulations that failed to see the light mostly due to food industries reluctance.

FSSAI came up with an Indian Nutrition Rating, similar to Health Star Rating in 2022. The amendment is still in the process.


Indian Nutrition Rating, or HSR, doesn't convey how it is unhealthy or for whom it is unhealthy. Patients with certain problems wouldn't know whether they should consume it or not.

Also in HSR, manipulation is easy as majority of the studies shows that the system is highly flawed as unhealthy food products are still able to get a high score as the rating is based on the overall nutritional value, and any inclusion of healthy ingredients like fibre and protein to an otherwise unhealthy product could easily cancel out its unhealthy ingredients like sugar, saturated fats and salt.. In a 2021 study, George Institute for Global Health has dismissed Australia and New Zealand's health star food rating system as flawed. It found that the loopholes in the system are facilitating food products high in salt, sugar and fats, scoring higher ratings and misleading the consumers.

They developed a more accurate algorithm for already HSR rated foods available in Australia and New Zealand based on their actual nutritional value. It was found breakfast cereals such as Nutri-Grain and Milo would lose 2.5 Health Stars, dropping from 4 stars to a much-lower 1.5 stars. So, when public comments on the 2022 draft notification on FOPL was called for by FSSAI, the food regulator received thousands of comments from various sets of stakeholders. Also, the huge media attention received on the topic coupled with stiff opposition from various quarters has forced the regulator for the time being to delay the finalisation of the notification.

CUTS therefore is continuing with its efforts in advocating for Warning Label as it has already proven useful to all consumers' categories regardless of their age, literacy proficiency or socio-economic strata. More importantly unlike in star rating system, warning label restricts manufacturers from manipulating the nutritional profile as desired. Besides, warning label would act as an efficient tool to guide mainly those who are medically advised to reduce the intake of fat, sugar or salt from their diet, thereby encouraging them towards a healthy eating habit.

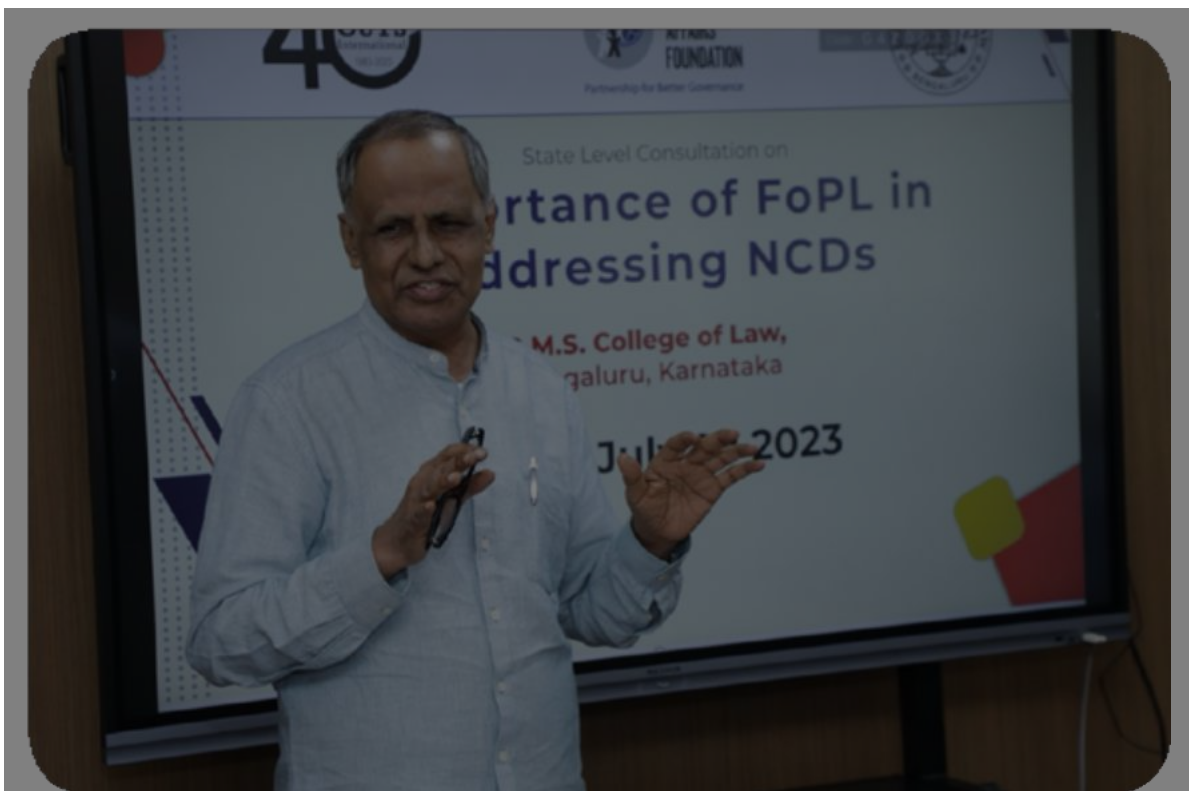
She concluded by recommending that food labels should be simple and easy to interpret, help consumers to identify the difference between healthy and unhealthy food.



— **Y. G. Muralidharan**, Founder, CREAT, spoke about the significance of the FSSAI in food labelling. He pointed out that implementing language agonistic labelling is an almost impossible task for India due to its diversity. FSSAI is a balancing agency that makes food regulations while considering industries and consumers. Continuing his discussions, he said that there are some questions that come forward while labelling:

- Q 1. How should the label be?
- Q 2. Where should the label be placed? At eye level, the label should be placed to attract the consumer's attention at once.
- Q 3. What should be the size of the pack? It should be large enough to contain each part of the label, which consumers can read with ease.
- Q 4. What should be the language of the label? And even if it is in their language, how do you make people read it?
- Q 5. How many people will be able to decipher and understand the label?
- Q 6. How do you create fear psychosis in people through labelling?
- Q 7. What will be the colour, font, and printing of the label?

He concluded by saying that Karnataka is in the 9th position in the Food Safety Index. We should initiate first with a warning label, other things we can take forward from there. But an initiative is necessary.



Y. G. Muralidharan, Founder, CREAT

— **Dr. Nirmala Murthy**, Board of Director, PAF, concluded the event by stating that the label should be simple, free of language barriers, and attractive. She pointed out the problems, such as who will decide whether the salt, sugar, fat, and other content is high or low, and then for whom it is high or low?

The event ended with a Vote of Thanks by Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander who thanked all the resource persons and participants for making all the sessions interactive, meaningful and vibrant. She also thanked the Principal and staff of the BMSCL for their support.



Dr. Nirmala Murthy, Bord of Director, PAF



Recommendations

Recommendations for improving the FoPL labelling:

The workshop elicited several interesting and important recommendations and action points for the diverse stakeholders. Broadly:

- ✓ Introduce warning labels, particularly the use of "High in" warning signals in FOPL, can greatly reduce the number of purchases of products that are high in salt, sugar, saturated fat, or any other substances that are harmful to human health which is directly proportional to lowering NCDs.
- ✓ Make food labelling simple and easy to comprehend, supportive of diet management and also provide information about the amount of harmful cholesterol in the product.
- ✓ Use illustrations on highly processed packaged foods which are children-friendly and devoid of linguistic barriers. For example a smiley
- ✓ Consider consumers of all ages, including youngsters and the elderly. Additionally, the label should specify the quantity of additives that have been used in the meal.
- ✓ Ensure that the label appears at eye level to attract the consumer's attention and that the nutrient content on the packaging needs to be legible enough for customers to read it without difficulty.



Overall Recommendations

The workshop elicited several interesting and important recommendations and action points for the diverse stakeholders. Broadly:

What should the Government do?

Governments use FoPL as a strategy to provide consumers information with clarity on the nutritional content and healthiness of packaged food products. Ideally, the purpose is to help consumers make healthier food choices and promote public health. So broadly they can take the following into consideration:

- ✔ Highlight key nutrients such as calories, added sugars, sodium, saturated fats, and trans fats, as these are commonly associated with health concerns
- ✔ Use a simple visual image to indicate if the product has high, moderate, or low amounts of these nutrients.
- ✔ Use common colours to quickly identify the nutrients. For example, green colour could signify that the nutrient is in a healthy range, yellow signifies a moderate level and red could signifies a high level.
- ✔ Provide clear information on daily intake for key nutrients to help consumers understand how much a serving contributes to their overall daily diet
- ✔ Indicate the serving size that the nutritional information is based on to help prevent confusion and allow consumers to compare similar products more accurately
- ✔ Use simple symbols, icons, colors, and text that clearly convey important nutritional information in the labelling system
- ✔ Standardise terminologies, for example what constitutes "low," "moderate" and "high" levels of key nutrients to ensure consistency across different products and brands
- ✔ Ensure that the FoPL is placed prominently on the front of the package, where consumers can easily see it while making purchasing decisions. Keep in mind people with disabilities.
- ✔ Develop IEC campaigns to educate and help consumers understand the FoPL system and make informed choices. This could include online resources, workshops, and public service announcements.

- ✔ Collaborate and consult actively with food industry representatives, health experts, nutritionists and consumer advocacy groups when designing the labeling system to ensure that the system is fair, effective and acceptable to all.
- ✔ Implement a mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of the FoPL system in influencing consumer choices and improving public health outcomes. Evaluate the impact and make required changes

In short, the effectiveness of an FoPL system depends on its ability to effectively communicate nutritional information to consumers in a way that empowers them to make healthier choices. It's crucial to strike a balance between simplicity and providing comprehensive information.

What should the manufactures do?

Manufacturers play a vital role in implementing FoPL effectively. Some recommendations to be considered while designing and implementing FoPL on their product packaging:

- ✔ Be transparent and honest in presenting nutritional information on the front of the package.
- ✔ Use standardised symbols, colors and icons that are endorsed by government agencies or industry associations to ensure that consumers can easily understand and compare different products
- ✔ Design simple and easy to understand aspects to include-using clear fonts, appropriate colors and simple icons that convey key nutritional information
- ✔ Ensure that the FoPL is prominently placed on the front of the package, where it can be easily seen by consumers in-store and online.
- ✔ Highlight key nutrients such as calories, added sugars, sodium, saturated fats, and trans fats that are of concern for public health.
- ✔ Reflect the product's nutritional profile by using graphics which implies health benefits
- ✔ Use simple terms and phrases that consumers can easily understand, avoid jargons
- ✔ Ensure the accuracy of the nutritional information displayed



- ✔ Include brief explanations or a guide on the packaging that helps consumers understand how to interpret the FoPL
- ✔ Be open to feedback from consumers, nutritionists, and regulatory agencies to improve the FoPL design and make necessary adjustments.
- ✔ Collaborate and engage with relevant government agencies and regulatory bodies to ensure that FoPL design aligns with their guidelines and requirements.

What should consumers do?

Ideally FoPL is designed to help consumers make informed and healthier food choices. Here are some recommendations for consumers on how to effectively use and interpret FoPL:

- ✔ Understand symbols, colors and icons used in the FoPL system and the basic meanings to help quickly assess nutritional content
- ✔ Ensure to adjust the values according to your actual consumption by checking the serving sizes.
- ✔ Understand the meaning behind "high," "moderate," and "low" labels.
Read the fine print to get a comprehensive view of the product's content.
- ✔ Learn basic nutritional guidelines, recommended daily intake values and what constitutes a healthy diet.
- ✔ Use FoPL as a Tool to help make healthier choices by combining it with your knowledge, dietary preferences and lifestyle factors to create a well-rounded approach to eating
- ✔ Consult a registered dietitian or nutritionist who can provide personalised guidance on specific dietary goals, health concerns, or questions on FoPL.





Annexures



Annexure 1 - Concept Note

The image shows the cover page of a document titled "Concept Note". At the top left is the logo of the Public Affairs Foundation (PAF), which includes a globe and the text "PUBLIC AFFAIRS FOUNDATION" and "Partnership for Better Governance". At the top right is the logo for "40 Cuts", with "40" in a large font and "Cuts" in a smaller font, and "1980-2020" below it. The title "Concept Note" is centered below the logos. Below the title is a horizontal line, followed by the subtitle "State Level Consultation on 'Importance of Front of Package Labelling (FoPL) in Addressing Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs)". The main body of the page contains sections for "Background", "Benefits", "FoPL Ideal for Indian consumers", and "Policy Interventions in FoPL in India". At the bottom, there is a footer with the website "www.pafglobal.org" on the left and the page number "4" on the right.

Public Affairs Foundation
Partnership for Better Governance

40 Cuts
1980-2020

Concept Note

State Level Consultation on 'Importance of Front of Package Labelling (FoPL) in Addressing Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs)

Background

According to the WHO definition, FoPL refers to nutrition labelling systems that:

- Is present on the front of food packages (in the principal field of vision)
- Can be applied across the packaged retail food supply
- Comprise an underpinning nutrient profile model that considers the overall nutrition quality of a product or nutrients of concern for NCDs
- Provide graphical information on the nutrient content or nutritional quality of products to complement the more detailed nutrient declarations usually given at the back of food packages.

Benefits

FoPL has several benefits and the key ones include:

- Alerts consumers on unhealthy ingredients
- Allow consumers to correctly, quickly and easily identify products that contain excessive amounts of sugar, fats, and sodium
- Cautions consumers from the top risk factors for mortality, i.e., high blood sugar levels, high blood pressure and overweight/obesity, harming people's health and development.

It has become important to address such a health crisis during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and persons living with such NCDs are at greater risk of becoming severely ill or dying due to COVID-19.

FoPL Ideal for Indian consumers

Scientific evidence shows that octagon-shaped front-of-package nutritional warnings labels indicating if a product is "HIGH IN" on or more critical nutrients, is the best performing system to allow consumers to correctly, quickly, and easily identify products with unhealthy nutritional profiles. Countries including Chile, Israel, Peru, Mexico, Brazil and Uruguay have adopted a warning label system and several more countries plan to adopt in the coming months.

Policy Interventions in FoPL in India

In 2013, in India, an Expert Committee constituted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recommended the establishment on FoPL in 2014. After years of consultations, the FSSAI published a draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display)

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Annexure 2 - Agenda



State Level Consultation on 'Importance of FoPL in Addressing NCDs'

B.M.S. College of Law, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Friday, July 28, 2023

Programme Schedule

9:30-10:00 hrs	Registration & Welcome Tea
Inaugural Session 10:00-11:30 hrs	<p>Welcome Address-Dr. Anitha F.N. D'Souza, Principal, BMSCL</p> <p>Setting the Context-Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, Executive Director, Public Affair Foundation-Introduction and CUTS-PAF Partnership</p> <p>Opening Remarks: Deepak Saxena, Associate Director, CUTS International- <i>(A Background Information on FOPL, Importance and Need, CUTS Past Work on FOPL)</i></p> <p>Special Address: Shri. Sanjay Pandey, National Consultant, Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA)-<i>(A Presentation on Global Best Practices on FOPL)</i></p> <p>Keynote Speech: Shri Kumaresan Chandrasekar Assistant Director (Technical), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)</p> <p>Special Address: Sarika Agarwal, Managing Director and Principal Consultant at Food Safety Works <i>(Importance of Consumer Awareness and Food Safety)</i></p>
11.30 to 11.45 am	Tea Break
Technical Session 11:45 - 13:15 hrs	<p>Status of NCDs and Role of Front of Package Labelling (FoPL)</p> <p>Presentation- Simi T B, Assistant Policy Analyst, CUTS International</p> <p>Chair: Senior Representative from PAF</p> <p>Discussants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Role of FSSAI in FOPL: Y.G. Muralidharan, Founder, CREAT, Bengaluru ▪ Nutrition Labelling: Consumer be Aware: Dr. Reetu Kapoor Clinical Dietician, Bengaluru ▪ Regulations on Labelling in India and the Role of Food Safety Officers to Control Misbranding: Sri. K.V. Srinidhi, Food Safety Officer, Department of Food and Civil Supplies, Government of Karnataka ▪ FOPL and Non-Communicable Diseases: Dr. Abhijith Kulkarni, Consultant Cardiologist & Electrophysiologist, Apollo Hospitals, Bengaluru ▪ Dr. Govinaiah Yatheesh, Hon. President, Karnataka State Private Hospitals (Topic to be decided) ▪ Role of Food Industries in FOPL: <i>to be confirmed</i>
Closing Session 13:15 - 13:30 p.m.	<p>Open Discussion: Participants</p> <p>Summing up & Vote of Thanks (CUTS/PAF)</p> <p>Followed by Lunch</p>


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Annexure 3 - List of Participants

State Level Consultation on 'Importance of FoPL in Addressing NCDs'
B.M.S. College of Law, Bengaluru, Karnataka fridads@cuts.org, July 28,
2023

Registration

S.No.	Name	Name and Address of the Organisation	Contact No.	Email	Signature
1	Dr. Ritu Kapoor.	Clinical Dietitian and Nutritionist Co-Founder Wellnution360		ritu_kaps@yahoo.com	Confirmed ✓
2	Ms Simi T B, Assistant Policy Analyst,	CONSUMER UNITY & TRUST SOCIETY (CUTS) D-217, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302016, Rajasthan, India	9946055506	stb@cuts.org	Confirmed <i>Simi T B</i>
3	Mr. Deepak Saxena, Associate Director	CONSUMER UNITY & TRUST SOCIETY (CUTS) D-217, Bhaskar Marg, Bani Park, Jaipur 302016, Rajasthan, India	9799996095	ds@cuts.org	Confirmed <i>Deepak</i>
4	Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, Director	Public Affairs Foundation	9880844862	director@pafglobal.org	Confirmed <i>Annapoorna</i>
5	Dr. Anitha F.N, D'Souza, Principal,	BMS College of Law, Bangalore			Confirmed <i>Anitha</i>
6	Sarika Agarwal, Managing Director	Principal Consultant at Food Safety Works	9916454434	sarika@foodsafetyworks.com	Confirmed ✓
7	Shri. Sanjay Pandey, National Consultant,	Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI)			Confirmed ✓
8	M Sheeba Das, Support Officer	Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore	8123335383	sheeba@pacindia.org	Confirmed <i>Sheeba</i>
9	Aishwarya Mallavaram Senior Programme Officer	Public Affairs Centre, Bangalore	9535445104	aishwarya@pacindia.org	Confirmed <i>Aishwarya</i>
10	Srujana Harshitha, (Intern)	Dr.B R Ambedkar School of Economics University, Bengaluru.	9916270478	srujanaharshitha@hotmail.com	Confirmed <i>Srujana</i>
11	Nency Agrawal (Intern)	Dr.B R Ambedkar School of Economics University, Bengaluru	9602990212	nencyagrawal26@gmail.com	Confirmed <i>Nency</i>
12	Sneha J.S	BMS College of Law, Bangalore	9845824362	snehajs2011@gmail.com	Confirmed <i>Sneha</i>
13	Harshitha C N	BMS College of Law	9036800198	haharshita@gmail.com	Confirmed <i>Harshitha</i>
14	Rhea Bopanna	BMS College of Law	7619513777	bopannarhea73@gmail.com	Confirmed <i>Rhea</i>
15	S Ananya	BMS College of Law	9731109298	sananyabc1945@bmscl.ac.in	Confirmed <i>Ananya</i>
16	Hema	BMS College of Law	9341225495	nhema3004@gmail.com	Confirmed <i>Hema</i>
17	Paurav G	BMS College of Law	9448157340	gpaurav@yahoo.com	Confirmed <i>Paurav</i>
18	Nithya Sampath	BMS College of Law	9535662921	nithyasampath2201@gmail.com	Confirmed <i>Nithya</i>

19	Dr. Gayathri Bai S	BMS College of Law	9535155616	gayathri@bmscl.ac.in	Confirmed
20	Nabanita Saha, Chief Dietician	Manipal Hospital, Old Airport Road	9606035646	nabanita.saha@manipalhospitals.com	Confirmed 
21	Dr. Ranjan Shetty, HOD & Consultant, Interventional Cardiology	Manipal Hospital, Old Airport Road		ranjan.shetty@manipalhospitals.com	Confirmed Lopin
22	Y.G. Muralidharan, Founder,	CREAT, Bengaluru			Confirmed ✓
23	Shri Kumaresan Chandrasekar, Assistant Director (Technical),	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)		kumaresan.ch@fssai.gov.in	dropped
24	Sri. K.V. Srinidhi, Food Safety Officer,	Department of Food and Civil Supplies, Government of Karnataka			dropped
25	Dr. Abhijith Kulkarni, Consultant Cardiologist & Electrophysiologist,	Apollo Hospitals, Bengaluru			Confirmed ✓
26	Dr. Govinaiah Yatheesh, Hon. President,	Karnataka State Private Hospitals			
27	Dr. Usha Manjunath Director	Institute of Health Management Research, South Campus, Bangalore	9591910999	usha.m@ihmrbangalore.edu.in	Confirmed ✓

28	Dr. Akash Prabhune, Assistant Professor		8793131569		Confirmed 
29	Dr. Ravikumar, Former Senior Regional Director	Regional Office for Health and Family Welfare, Govt of India	9620901620	ravi1706@gmail.com	Confirmed
30	Dr. Sushil Kumar, MD Community Medicine,	Consultant to Health Commissioner/DHFW	9035874447	sushil.kumar89@gmail.com	Confirmed
31	Dr. Nirmala Murthy	PAF, BOD	9448116094	murthy.nirmala@gmail.com	Confirmed ✓
32	Dr. Shamla Iqbal, IAS Commissioner of Food Safety	Commissioner of Food Safety, Public Health Institute	8095970254	cfskarnataka@gmail.com dcsquadkar@gmail.com	Confirmed 
33	Nayana Nee S	BMS College of Law	9535099672	nayana.neesoc1934@bmscl.ac.in	Confirmed 
34	Chitraja N	BMS College of Law	8618575015	chitrajabcm11@bmscl.ac.in	Confirmed 
35	Jashua	Media	9980243789		
36	Santhosh	Media	9980243789		



VAISHNAVI . J. ADYA .	B.M.S College of law	991695185110	vaisnavi . Adya@gmail.com	
Raksha . C.R	BMS college of law	9916954504	rakshazbc@gmail.com	
Shamika . M . S	B.M.S. College of law	9019997869	shamika@gmail.com	
Vanshi Chavishur	B.M.S. college of law	829660858	vanshika21106@bmscl.ac.in	
Shreyas . Janardhan	"	9449199711	shreyas2012@gmail.com	
K.V. Nagana	B.M.S college of LAW	984523976	knaganav99@gmail.com	
Kausthika . M. Gowda	BMS College of law	6363766701	kausthika.m.gowda@gmail.com	
Amolrudhu . K	B.M.S College of law	9742076369	amolrudhu@gmail.com	
Manishak Pale.	B.M.S College of Law	8431202200	manishakpale2017@gmail.com	

Name	organisation	Phno.	Email id	Signature.
Kausthika	BMS of College of law	8550237610	kausthika@gmail.com	
Chethan	BMS of College of law	7019020612	chethanbmscl@gmail.com	
Nandan	BMS College of law	8050431866	nandanprada518@gmail.com	
Vinay . J	BMS college of law	8801403202	vinaythorath.564@gmail.com	
Kautilayan . N	BMS college of law	87780689311	kautilayanande62@gmail.com	
Siri . M . R . Soma	BMS college of law	9480163111	sirira021@gmail.com	
Pooja	BMS college of law	8660969599	vajpushtibonu@gmail.com	
Rakshetta	BMS college of law	944544966	poojadesai03@gmail.com	
Mural Anota	BMS college of law	9148091602	nakshonankha@gmail.com	
Ghanu Keerthi	BMS college of law	95131125574	muralcrasta335@gmail.com	
	BMS college of law	9896269696	kanthika@gmail.com	



S.No.	Name	Name and Address of the Organisation	Contact No.	Email	Signature
	Dr. Nazia.	State Programme Co-ordinator NCD NHM Anaprasanthi	9538552121	npdcsken2017 @gmail.com.	
	Tarun KUMAR	BMS COLLEGE OF LAW	9500352916	Tarunrupa123@ gmail.com	
	VISHNU VIJAYAN	BMS COLLEGE OF LAW	7483505458	vishnuvijayan 2901@gmail.com	
	VISHAL.R	BMS college of Law	908895707	vishalramesh500 @gmail.com	
	VINODINI.D	BMS College of Law	6361302670	vinodinisajnas @gmail.com	

S.No.	Name	Name and Address of the Organisation	Contact No.	Email	Signature
1.	Dr. Prabhakar	TIIMR Bangalore Electronics Prose 1	8793131569	prabhakar_p@ gmail.com	
2.	Dr. Uma	Joint Director of Non-communicable diseases	9448294254		
	Nabanita Saha	Manipal Hospital old airport road	9606035646	nabanitasaha	
	DR. Uma. M	Bacteriologist NCD Division HFW. Anaprasanthi	9882945260		
	DR. G. Ashay	DO, FLSAP Blaise Hospital	9880166490		

NAME	NAME OF ORGANISATION	PHONE NO.	SIGNATURE
Priya Poddar	BMS College of Law	8100451705	
S. Vaishali	BMS College of Law	7445772081	
Ghanu Keerthi	BMS college of law.	998626 9696.	
Chaitra .	BMS college of law	7349344075	
Eshanka	BMS College of law	7760327517	
Inchara	BMS College of Law	9986212493	
Vinaya	BMSCL	9810028463	
Neha G	BMS college of Law	72388580807	
Manasa .	BMS college of Law	8431202201	
Tanmayi Prakash	BMSCL	7205873574	
Monish .C	BMSCL	9481342833	
Snidhar .K	BMSCL	90321231093	
Sribharathi.D	BMSCL	9715254423	
Prabhath .U	BMS College of law	968654602	
Shiv Prasad	"	8884177585	
Sushas G.D	"	8696493116	
Vasudhara Chatter.V	BMS college of Law	8217384628	

Online Participants:

Geetha			
Pratiksha Thapa	St. Anthony's College, Shillong	7005066483	pratikshathapa02@gmail.com
Bashisha Lyngdoh	St. Anthony's College, Shillong	8258047301	bashishalyngdoh1881@gmail.com

Annexure 4 - Media Coverage



ಬಿಎಂಎಸ್‌ಸಿಎಲ್‌ನ ಪ್ರಾಂಶುಪಾಲರಾದ ಡಾ.ಅನಿತಾ ಎಫ್.ಎನ್. ಡಿ'ಸೋಜಾ ಅವರು ಎಲ್ಲ ಗಣ್ಯರನ್ನು ಸ್ವಾಗತಿಸಿದರು. ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ವ್ಯವಹಾರಗಳ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಾನದ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕಿ ಡಾ. ಅನ್ನಪೂರ್ಣ ರವಿಚಂದರ್ ಅವರು ಸಂದರ್ಭವನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿಸುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಈ ಸಮಾಲೋಚನಾ ಸಭೆ ಮುಖ್ಯ ಉದ್ದೇಶವೆಂದರೆ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಪಾಲುದಾರರನ್ನು ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಮತ್ತು ಜಾಗೃತಿ ಮೂಡಿಸುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಅವರ ಬೆಂಬಲ ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸುವುದು, ಆ ಮೂಲಕ ನಿಯಂತ್ರಕರಿಗೆ ಅವರ ನಿರ್ಧಾರವನ್ನು ಪುನರ್ವಿಮರ್ಶಿಸಲು, ಬರುವಂತೆ ಮನವರಿಕೆ ಮಾಡುವುದು ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದ ಉದ್ದೇಶವಾಗಿತ್ತು.

Sanje Samya



'ಸಾಂಕ್ರಾಮಿಕವಲ್ಲದ ರೋಗ ಪರಿಹರಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ಯಾಕೇಜ್ ಲೇಬಲಿಂಗ್‌ನ ಪ್ರಾಮುಖ್ಯತೆ ರಾಜ್ಯಮಟ್ಟದ ಸಮಾಲೋಚನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಚರ್ಚೆ'

ಕುಬ್ಜ ವಿಕ್ಟೋರಿಯನ್, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು, ಜುಲೈ 29: ವರ್ಷ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಘೋಷಣೆ (ಬಿಎಂಎ) ಗ್ರಾಹಕ ಯೋಜನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಲ್ಯಾನ್ಡ್ ಸೆಂಟ್ರಲ್ (ಸಿಯುಟಿಎಸ್) ಮತ್ತು ಬಿಎಂಎ ಕಾಲೇಜ್ ಆಫ್ ಡಿ (ಬಿಎಂಎ/ಡಿಎಲ್) ಸಹಯೋಗದೊಂದಿಗೆ 'ಎನ್‌ಎಡಿಎಸ್' ಪರಿಹಾರದಲ್ಲಿ ಎನ್‌ಎಡಿಎಲ್‌ನ ಪ್ರಾಮುಖ್ಯತೆ ಕುರಿತು ರಾಜ್ಯ ಮಟ್ಟದ ಸಮಾಲೋಚನೆಯ ನಡವಲಾಯಿತು.

ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಸಮಾಜದ ಬೇಗದ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯವನ್ನು ಗಮನಿಸಿದರೆ, ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಯಕ್ಕೆ ಅನುಕೂಲವಾಗಿ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿ ಆಧಾರವನ್ನು ಪಡೆಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ಆಹಾರಗಳ ಆರೋಗ್ಯದ ಪ್ರಭಾವ ಮತ್ತು ಇದನ್ನು ಪರಿಹರಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ಫ್ಲೋ ಆಫ್ ವ್ಯಾಕ್ ಲೇಬಲಿಂಗ್ (ಈವಿಇಬಿ) ಮೂಲಕವಾಗಿ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸುವ ಪಾತ್ರದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಜಾಗೃತಿಯನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸುವುದು ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆಗೆ ಇಂತಹ ಯೋಜನೆಗಳ ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಯೋಜನೆಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಕವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಉದಾಹರಣೆಗೆ, ಡಾ. ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸ್ವಾಮಿಣಿ ಪ್ರವೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಂಕ್ರಾಮಿಕವಲ್ಲದ ರೋಗಗಳ (ಡಿಇಇ) ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿಯ ಪರಿಹಾರವನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸಲು ಈ ಅರಬ್ಬಿ ಅಗತ್ಯವು ಗಮನಾರ್ಹವಾಗಿದೆ.



ಆರೋಗ್ಯಕರ ಆಯ್ಕೆಗಳನ್ನು ಉತ್ತೇಜಿಸಲು ಮತ್ತು ಎನ್‌ಎಡಿಎಲ್‌ಗೆ ಕೊಡುಗೆ ನೀಡುವಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲವು ಪದಾರ್ಥಗಳ ಪಾತ್ರವನ್ನು ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸಲು, ಆಹಾರ ಪ್ಯಾಕೇಜ್‌ಗಳ ಮುಂಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಯೋಜಿತ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಕರಣದ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಸೇರಿಸುವುದು ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಅಗತ್ಯವಾಗಿದೆ.

ಉದಾಹರಣೆಗೆ, ಉದಾಹರಣೆಗೆ, ಡಾ. ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸ್ವಾಮಿಣಿ ಪ್ರವೇಶಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಂಕ್ರಾಮಿಕವಲ್ಲದ ರೋಗಗಳ (ಡಿಇಇ) ಹೆಚ್ಚುವರಿಯ ಪರಿಹಾರವನ್ನು ಒದಗಿಸಲು ಈ ಅರಬ್ಬಿ ಅಗತ್ಯವು ಗಮನಾರ್ಹವಾಗಿದೆ.

ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶನ ನೀಡುವುದು ಇದಲ್ಲದೆ, ಅಂತಹ ಸುಲಭವಾಗಿ ಅರ್ಥಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಎಚ್ಚರಿಕೆಯ ಲೇಬಲಿಂಗ್‌ನ್ನು ಕಾರ್ಯಗತಗೊಳಿಸುವುದರಿಂದ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಆರೋಗ್ಯವನ್ನು ಕಾಪಾಡಲು ಕಡಿಮೆ ಬಡ್ಡಿಯನ್ನು ತೋರಿಸಿದ ಆಹಾರ ಉದ್ಯಮಿಗಳ ಪಾಲಿಸಾರ್ ಪದಾರ್ಥಗಳನ್ನು ಕಡಿಮೆ ಮಾಡುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಮತ್ತು ಅವುಗಳ ವೈದ್ಯಕೀಕರಣದ ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸುವ ಮೂಲಕ ಕೆಲವು ಉತ್ಪನ್ನಗಳನ್ನು ಮರುರೂಪಿಸಲು ಒತ್ತಾಯಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಅಂತಹ ಕೆಲವು ಉದಾಹರಣೆ ಆಹಾರದ ಆಯ್ಕೆಗಳ ಆರೋಗ್ಯದ ಒತ್ತಾಸೆ ಪರ್ವತಗಳ ಕಾರಣವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ.

ಎನ್‌ಎಡಿಎಲ್ ಕುರಿತು ಜಾಗೃತಿ ಮೂಡಿಸಲು ಜಾಗೃತ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮತ್ತು ವಕೀಲತ್ ಗುಂಪು ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ವ್ಯವಹಾರ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಾನ (ಬಿಎಂಎ) ಸಹಭಾಗಿತ್ವದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಿಯುಟಿಎಸ್ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಆಯೋಜಿಸಿದ ಮೂರನೇ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಮಟ್ಟದ ಸಮಾಲೋಚನೆಯ ಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಆಧ್ಯಕ್ಷತೆಯಲ್ಲಿತ್ತು.

ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಎನ್‌ಎಡಿಎಲ್ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ಅದು ಮಹತ್ವವಾದದ್ದು ಮತ್ತು ಬಿಎಂಎ/ಡಿಎಲ್ ಪ್ರಾಂಶುಪಾಲರು ಡಾ. ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ಎನ್. ಡಿ.ಸಿ.ಎಸ್. ಅವರು ಎಲ್ಲ ಗಣ್ಯರನ್ನು ಸ್ವಾಗತಿಸಿದರು.

ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ವ್ಯವಹಾರಗಳ ಪ್ರತಿಷ್ಠಾನ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕಿ ಡಾ. ಅಶ್ವಿನಿ ರವಿಶಂಕರ್ ಅವರು ಸಂದರ್ಭವನ್ನು ಪೂರೈಸಿ ಮೂಲಕ ಈ ಸಮಾಲೋಚನಾ ಸಭೆಯು ಎಲ್ಲ ಉದ್ದೇಶಗಳಿಂದ ದೊಡ್ಡ ಸಾಧನವಾಗಿ ಕೆಲವು ಮತ್ತು ಜಾಗೃತಿ ಮೂಡಿಸುವುದು ಆವರಣವನ್ನು ಸಂಗ್ರಹಿಸುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಮೂಲಕ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷಿಸಲು ಅವರ ನಿರ್ವಹಣಾ ವಿಸರ್ವಮರ್ತನಲು ಮತ್ತು ಬಹುಮತ ವ್ಯವಹಾರವು ಈ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮದ ಉದ್ದೇಶವಾಗಿತ್ತು.





Dignitaries on the dais



Group photo



Registration



Audience

