

Report on the
Roundtable consultation on
‘Front of Pack Labelling – Role of the Industry’
Monday, 25th July 2022
Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India



Submitted to



**Voluntary Organization in the Interest of Consumer Education
(VOICE), New Delhi**

By



**National Centre for Human Settlements & Environment
(NCHSE), Bhopal**

Agenda of Workshop

Venue: Hotel Amar Vilas, AB Rd, Sector B, Chandra Nagar, Indore.

Time	Topic	Speaker
11.00 AM	Welcome address	Shri Avinash Shrivastava, Dy. Director, NCHSE
11.05 AM	Inauguration of the event	Dr. Pradip Nandi, Director General, NCHSE
11.15 AM	Setting the tone of the event	Ms Rinki Sharma, Consumer VOICE, Delhi
11.45 AM	Point of View- Brand Managers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pros and cons of food labels • Warning labels – why or why not • Branding – Issues with Labels • Giving Consumers’ health a priority • Industry awareness on FOPL Product Reformulation as the solution	Industry Managers
12.15 PM	Address by Guest of Honor	Shri Dayaram Jatav, Joint Director, Food & Safety, Indore Division
12.25 PM	Address by the Chief Guest	Shri Hariram Mujalda, Joint Director, Industries, ZIO, Indore,
12.35 PM	Q & A from media and other guests and wrapping up with vote of thanks	Moderated by Consumer VOICE/Partner
12.50 PM	Vote of Thanks	Shri Waseem Iqbal, Director, AAS Indore
01.00 PM	Lunch	

Stakeholders' Consultation on Front of Pack Warning Labels (FOPL) on Unhealthy Packaged Foods for Consumers

1. Introduction:

In India, every year about 58.0 lakh people die from Non communicable diseases (NCDs), like cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, which represent about 65% of total deaths in India, of which 27% could be attributed to cardiovascular diseases. One of the main reasons is the consumption of unhealthy foods, i.e. foods that are high in fat, salt or sugar. Most of these deadly diseases, however, can be prevented by modifying diets and transforming the food industry. As India is experiencing a dietary shift, with people increasingly consuming more processed and ultra-processed foods and a burgeoning market, it is expected that NCD burden will increase in future.

In order to tackle the growing burden of NCDs, the Food Safety Standards Authority India (FSSAI) published draft regulation for Front of Pack Warning Labels (FOPL), which was subsequently withdrawn for further deliberation. In 2020 December, FSSAI restarted the process of developing FOPL and has been in consultations with civil society, industry and nutrition experts for a viable model for India. The FSSAI through draft regulations for FOPL published on 15th February 2022 decided to adopt the “health-star rating system”. The Health Star Rating (HSR) format (1/2 a star to 5 stars) ranks a packaged food item based on salt, sugar, and fat content and the rating will be printed on the front of the package.

FOPL represents a key component of a comprehensive strategy to promote healthier lives, as it enables consumers to identify in a quick, clear and effective way, products high in sugar, sodium, saturated fats, trans fats and total fats, the critical nutrients associated with the NCD burden in India.

In order to facilitate development of a viable FOPL, the stakeholder's consultations are being organized in India to sensitize consumers about their rights to choose their food through an acceptable format. In Madhya Pradesh, National Centre for Human Settlements & Environment (NCHSE) in partnership with Consumer Voice organized the First stakeholders' consultation on 'Front of Pack Warning Labels (FOPL) on Unhealthy Packaged Foods for consumers' in Bhopal in March 2022 to sensitize various stakeholders about the importance of proper FOPL on packaged food. The second consultation on 'Front of Pack Labelling – Role of the Industry' was organized in Indore on 25th July 2022.

2. Consultation:

A Roundtable consultation on 'Front of Pack Labelling – Role of the Industry' was organised by Consumer VOICE in partnership with Indore based AAS and Bhopal Based National Centre for Human Settlements & Environment (NCHSE) at Indore on 25th July 2022.

3. Objectives:

Front of Package Labelling (FOPL) in India was **first recommended in 2014** by an expert committee constituted by FSSAI in 2013. Later in 2019, the FSSAI issued draft notification Food Safety Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations. The draft mandates colour-coded labels on food items. In 2019 December, the FSSAI delinked FOPL from general labelling regulations. On 15th February 2022 the **FSSAI** decided to adopt the **“health-star rating system”** in its draft regulations for **FOPL**. The Health Star Rating (HSR) format (**1/2 a star to 5 stars**) ranks a packaged food item based on salt, sugar, and fat content and the rating will be printed on the front of the package. The rating will be the **first such in India** and is aimed at guiding consumers to opt for healthy food.

4. Programme Details:

4.1 Programme Inauguration:



4.2 Technical Session:

During the Technical Session, technical experts and other speakers expressed their views about FOPL

In order to facilitate development of a viable FOPL, the stakeholder's consultations are being organized by government agencies and civil society organisations all over India. This discussion is one of such activity to sensitize Industry Managers of Madhya Pradesh about consumer friendly FOPL. Shri Hariram Mujalda, Joint Director, Industries, ZIO-Indore was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Mr. Avinash Shrivastava, Dy Director, NCHSE welcomed the guests and the participants and appraised the participants about the programme.



Dr. Pradip Nandi, DG, NCHSE while introducing the subject said that in India Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and



obesity are of growing concern. In 2016 India reported 63% of total deaths due to NCDs, of which 27% were attributed to Cardiovascular disease (CVD). One of the

main reasons of such NCD burden is the *consumption of unhealthy foods that are high in fat, salt or sugar* and are readily available in the market. He also stressed the importance of the threshold level of daily intake of fat, salt and sugar as recommended by WHO and a FOPL on the packaged food indicating warning for any nutrients which are more than the permissible limits.



Ms. Rinki Sharma, Project Head, Consumer VOICE while sensitizing the participants especially the Industry Managers on the issue of NCD burden and its causes in India, said that “Amidst the rising concerns over obesity and other non-communicable diseases (NCD) ailments in our country, it becomes imperative for consumers to be a stake-holder in deciding what to eat and what is to be avoided. Front-of-Pack warning labeling represents a key component of a comprehensive strategy to promote

healthier lives. It enables consumers to identify in a quick, clear and effective way, products



high in salt, sugar and fats. She also highlighted that every year more than 58 lakh Indians die of NCDs and most of these fatal diseases could be prevented by changing dietary habits and transforming the food industry. She produced successful examples of FOPL adopted by other countries. She further elaborated upon ongoing process of development of FOPL in the country and reasoned out why a warning label indicating “High in” sign of particular nutrient is required for the protection of interest of the consumers and how the industry could facilitate it.

The Chief Guest Shri Mujalda in his address said that India is facing a daunting task of minimizing the Non-communicable disease (NCD) burden due to consumption of unhealthy foods, which are high in Fat, Sugar and Salt. He stressed that it is important that packaged foods should clearly indicate levels of these nutrients to provide the consumers an opportunity to choose the healthy food items. He further said that this could be achieved by developing a consumer friendly FOPL, for which



Industries should come forward and expressed their views. He called upon the industry managers to ensure that the levels of ingredients like salt, sugar and fats in their products are within permissible global limits. He expressed hope that industry would abide by the regulations about the FOPL to safe guard consumer interest.

He also said the Industries Department is willing to extend all possible support to the Food industry implement the regulation when it is finalized.

Representatives of popular edible oil, FMCG, confectionary, snacks and sweets like Gokul ke Namkin, Amitabh Business Corporation, Moksha Confectionary Pvt Ltd, Raj Packaging, Agarwal Namkin, Om Namkin, Shree Khrishna Enterprises, Soni Food, Jaiswal Enterprises etc participated in the Roundtable Discussion and expressed their views about FOPL/Warning Label. In general Industry Managers appreciated the need for FOPL to ensure effective measures in curbing the rising incidence of NCDs in the state. As important stakeholders for a healthy nation, they lent their

support for a people friendly FOPL. Shri Amitabh Singhal of Amitabh Business Corporation said that “We are committed in ensuring healthy food to our consumers and will take necessary steps as guided by FSSAI /Government.”

Shri Waseem Iqbal, Director, AAS thanked all the guests and the participants.

