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Health star rating to be affixed on packaged food products: FSSAI

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FSSAI plans to label packaged food products with an official Health star rating (HSR). The HSR rating is bound to help consumers eat healthy food. This is a progressive step for a country that has lifestyle diseases and bad dietary habits. The regulatory authority will give the HSR rating after examining the food items based on salt, sugar and fat content. A manufacturer must print HSR on the front of the package.

After studying the report prepared by IIM Ahmedabad., the government is taking this step. The report focused on the "impact of front of the packaged labelling for packaged and processed food." The study's outcome found that the HSR is the best option for individuals who want to choose a healthier lifestyle under the new policy of front of label packaging (FoPL).

The study is based on a national survey of more than 20,000 people, which is the largest survey in the world regarding HSR. Arun Singhal, CEO, FSSAI, said that this would encourage healthy eating and reduce the risk of Non-communicable Diseases NCDs in the country.

Ministry of health family and welfare (MoHFW) through FSSAI had asked IIM-A to conduct this survey on a large scale to study various FoPL models adopted by different countries to understand which ones are easy to understand and can stimulate a behaviour change amongst Indian consumers. As of now, India has back-of-package (BOP) nutrient information. But FoPL, according to studies, has the ability to create a healthy consumption behaviour in the cases of packaged food.

Few countries like UK, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, and Australia have FoPL. FSSAI has welcomed feedback from industry associations by a scientific panel so that the HSR model can be infused in the draft prepared by the government. FSSAI has exempted dairy products from FoPL and the scientific panel has recommended voluntary implementation of FoPL from 2023 and a mandatory implementation within the following four years after that.

The nutritional information will be analysed based on sample size of 100 mg of the packaged food. An app for the FoSCos portal will generate the HSR certificate where the licensee can feed the details of their product. And after evaluation, the certificate shall be generated. These ratings will be provided by FSSAI based on the factual nutritional value of the product.

Fssai took this step after a petition filed last year before the supreme court seeking direction from the government to frame guidelines on HSR and the impact of packed food and beverage.



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