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Experts demand simplified FoPL regulation at the earliest

CUTS International organised a State Level Consultation on "Status of NCDs and Role of Front of Package Labelling" at Jaipur

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Public health and consumer experts in Rajasthan unanimously demanded for mandatory simplified front of the pack labelling (FoPL) regulation to be notified by the Food Regulator at the earliest to address the rising Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the country.

This was unanimously proposed by experts in a state level consultation on ‘Status of NCDs and Role of Front of the Pack Labelling’ organised in Jaipur by CUTS International to generate awareness on FoPL and the role it could play in curbing NCDs among wider stakeholders.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International and a member of Central Advisory Committee (CAC) of FSSAI, in his opening address stressed that the food regulator in India need to move forward at a more rapid phase for choosing an ideal label for packaged food products for consumers in India. Almost 42 countries have started to reap the benefits from positive consumer behaviour since the implementation of the FoPL in their respective countries. It has helped those governments to save money from direct and indirect healthcare costs.

In addition, Cheriyan said, before the food regulator moving ahead with a decision to implement FoPL, health being a state subject, States should be taken into confidence and elaborate discussions should take place.

Sunil Sharma, IAS, Food Safety Commissioner, Directorate of Food Safety and Drug Control, Government of Rajasthan in his inaugural cum keynote address stated that the government officials and many health department employees are still unaware of this critical issue of NCDs and Front of Pack Label. Sharma emphasised the need to spread more awareness among all consumers as well as healthcare providers. He highlighted that consumers have a right to get accurate information about the products they are consuming and it should not be hampered.

Dr Ashok Gupta, Professor and Head, J.K. Lone Hospital, Jaipur, during his special address, highlighted that Rajasthan is in the red zone in NCD cases.

The consultation saw participation of more than 50 participants including representatives of various government departments, organisations working on NCDs, health and consumer protection organisations and health experts from different parts of Rajasthan.

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