

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RESEARCH**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 205
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21ST JULY, 2026**

REGULATING HIGH SUGAR IN ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS

205. SHRI SANA SATHISH BABU:

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of ultra-processed foods identified as high in sugar content and their consumption patterns along with the prevalence of lifestyle diseases linked to high sugar consumption in the country;
- (b) the number of inspections, violations detected and actions taken against manufacturers for non-compliance with sugar-related norms since 2021, year-wise and State-wise;
- (c) the steps taken by Government to generate awareness and educate consumers about the risks of the aforementioned high sugar consumption products; and
- (d) whether Government proposes to strictly regulate production and marketing of high-sugar foods targeting children and adolescents, if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY
WELFARE
(SHRI PRATAPRAO JADHAV)**

(a): The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has informed that the Dietary Guidelines for Indians (DGI), 2024 released by National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN), Hyderabad identify ultra-processed foods (UPFs) as foods that are often high in free sugars, unhealthy fats and salt, such as, sugar-sweetened beverages, confectionery, cakes, pastries, biscuits, chocolates, some ready-to-eat/ready-to-cook products etc. The Guidelines also prescribe nutrient thresholds to identify High Fat, Sugar, Salt (HFSS) foods as provided in **Annexure I**. Based on scientific literature ICMR has further informed that higher consumption of UPFs and free sugars is associated with an increased risk of overweight and obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. However, these conditions are multifactorial. High sugar and UPF intake are important, modifiable contributory risk factors, but not sole causes. Associations from observational data do not establish causation.

(b) to (d): The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has informed that the sugar content of the food products is regulated under its existing rules and regulations. Towards this, regular surveillance drives, monitoring, regulatory inspection and random sampling of various food products are conducted throughout the year by the officials of Food Safety Departments of the respective States/UTs and Regional Offices of FSSAI to check compliance with the quality and safety parameters and other requirements as laid down under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and Regulations made thereunder.

FSSAI has notified Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulation, 2011. The Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020 mandate transparent, clear and accurate nutritional labelling. These regulations require nutritional information to be provided per 100 g or 100 ml or per single-consumption pack, along with per-serve percentage contribution to the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for an average adult, including declaration of key nutritional components like added sugar, total fat, saturated fat, trans-fat, sodium, and food additives, along with additional mandatory declarations wherever applicable. Food Business Operators (FBOs) found in contravention of the provisions of the FSS Act, 2006, and Regulations made thereunder face penal actions. Details of the action taken against the non-compliant Food Business Operators for non-compliance in the last 5 years is provided in **Annexure-II**.

In addition, the Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018 ensure that all claims must be truthful, unambiguous, meaningful, not misleading and help consumers to comprehend the information provided.

FSSAI has notified the Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and Balanced Diets for Children in School) Regulations, 2020 outlining the responsibilities of school authorities to ensure the availability of safe and nutritious food on school premises while also promoting balanced diets in and around school campuses. FSSAI has undertaken a nation-wide campaign 'Eat Right India' movement with a focus on preventive and promotive healthcare through social and behavioural change. This initiative is built on three core pillars - Eat Safe, Eat Healthy and Eat Sustainable. Through the Eat Right Initiatives, FSSAI educates Consumers to eat healthy food as per the individual nutritional requirements and encourages FBOs to offer safe and wholesome food to the consumers. FSSAI, through its Eat Right School programmes, has been actively engaging with educational institutions to promote safe, healthy, and sustainable food practices among students. Apart from it, FSSAI has undertaken

'Aaj se Thoda Kam' campaign to encourage consumers to gradually reduce their intake of fat, salt, and sugar through dietary modifications.

FSSAI has also undertaken an awareness campaign, "#HarLabelKuchKahtaHai" (Every Label Speaks), to empower citizens with label literacy for healthier eating and informed choices. This initiative educates consumers on key elements like nutritional information (calories, fats, sugars, protein), ingredient lists, allergen warnings, and date markings. As a part of its social media campaign, a wide range of creative, videos, and reels have been disseminated to engage audiences and convey critical messages on health in a relatable and impactful manner.

ICMR has also undertaken several initiatives to create awareness on the health risks associated with excessive sugar consumption and ultra-processed foods. The Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024 recommend limiting free sugar intake, avoiding frequent consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, and minimizing intake of ultra-processed foods. The Guidelines also include, for the first time, dedicated guidance on identifying ultra-processed foods and reading food labels to enable informed consumer choices. ICMR's National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) also contributed to the development of model boards for the Sugar Boards initiative taken by Education ministry and Health ministry. To translate these recommendations into action, ICMR-NIN has launched the "Let's Fix Our Food (LFOF)" initiative in collaboration with national and international partners to improve food environments for children and adolescents. The initiative promotes healthier school food environments, develops evidence-informed communication materials, engages with schools, parents, youth, policymakers and civil society, and advocates measures that encourage healthier food choices while discouraging consumption of HFSS foods. In addition, ICMR-NIN conducts nutrition awareness activities through public lectures, workshops, training programmes, observance of National Nutrition Month and other health campaigns, dissemination of information through print, electronic and social media, development of nutrition education materials in regional languages to promote healthy dietary practices across different population groups.

Annexure I

Nutrient thresholds to identify High Fat, Sugar, Salt (HFSS) foods

NUTRIENT	SOLID FOODS (per 100 g)	LIQUID FOODS (per 100 ml)
Total Energy	≥ 250 kcal	≥ 70 kcal
Added Sugar	≥ 3 g	≥ 2 g
Added Fat	≥ 4.2 g	≥ 1.5 g
Added Salt	≥ 625 mg	≥ 175 mg

Note: According to Dietary Guidelines for Indians (DGI), 2024, any cooked or packaged food or beverage that exceeds one or more of the above thresholds for added fat, added sugar, added salt or energy density is classified as an HFSS food. (Source: DGI 2024 by ICMR-NIN Hyderabad)

Annexure-II

Details of Enforcement for last 5 Years (information provided by FSSAI)									
Year	No. of Samples Analysed	No. of Samples found non-conforming	Non-Conforming Samples			Civil Cases			Criminal Cases
			Unsafe	Sub Standard	Labelling defects/ Misleading/ Miscellaneous	Decided with Penalty	Penalties Raised (Cr Rs.)	No. of Convictions	Penalties Raised (Cr Rs.)
* 2025-26	2,23,808	40,023	9086	26,754	4225	31,878	109.11	1918	5.70
2024-25	1,70,535	34,388	7945	22,516	3931	30,142	35.74	1265	3.03
2023-24	1,70,513	33,808	6782	22,603	4423	29,586	74.12	1161	2.67
2022-23	1,77,511	44,626	6579	21,917	16,130	28,464	33.23	1188	2.75
2021-22	1,44,345	32,934	4890	16,582	11,462	19,437	53.39	671	1.38

* The data for FY 2025–26 is provisional and subject to revision based on the outcome of further lab testing and court proceedings.

Note- The cases launched and penalties raised may include the data of the samples analysed in the previous year
