

Towards Healthier Diets

The Role of Nutrition Labeling



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Introduction

- Unhealthy diets are linked to four of the ten biggest causes of deaths worldwide
- 11 million deaths globally resulted from NCDs linked to unhealthy diets
- Less food from raw ingredients and buying more processed, pre-packaged food
- Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious
- Labeling, nutrition labeling - widely recognized as a powerful tool to help consumers decide on the diet



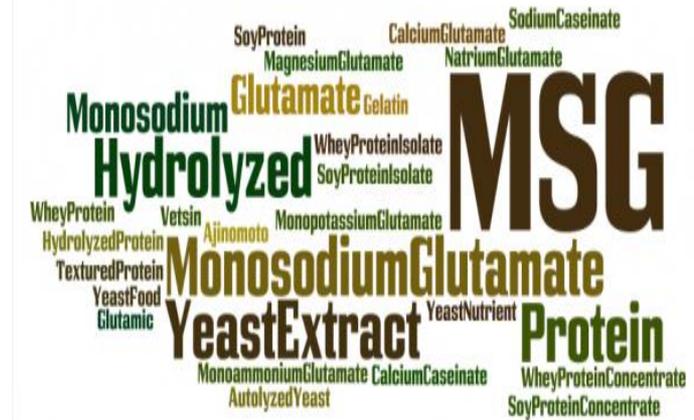
Why Nutrition Labeling

- Consumers are increasingly becoming conscious of what goes into the food they eat
- Carbohydrates, calories, vitamins, minerals, cholesterol, sodium are some nutritional facts at the forefront on the minds of these consumers
- The inclusion of unhealthy ingredients on the labels would encourage or motivate consumers to switch to alternative products
- If the nutrition content of the products is not labeled, the consumer cannot make an informed decision.
- As a result, labeling offers a certain degree of minimal protection for consumers



Ensuring Uniformity of Information

- The consumption of MSG is commonly linked to symptoms such as diarrhea, headaches, and insomnia
- Labeling - there is no mention of MSG. Rather it is substituted by a range of associated terms such as yeast extract, glutamate, glutamic acid
- Firms have the opportunity to pick and choose nutrition - leaving out essential information
- There is a tendency for consumers to be misled by the information provided
- Regulatory authorities must develop a set of guidelines and make it mandatory to include key nutrition facts on the labels
- FDA - Firms must always list the commonly used names of ingredients – Eg. Sugar instead of Sucrose



Improving Nutrition Knowledge

- The effectiveness of labeling – depends how well consumers take notice of these nutrition labels
- consumers must have a basic understanding of nutrition, to aid them in choosing prepackaged foods
- Level of knowledge and use of food labeling information increases with age, level of education and family income
- In India, a number of initiatives have been organized at the grassroots level – to improve consumer knowledge on basic nutrition facts



What Should be Done

- Many governments in the developed world have mandated compulsory nutrition labeling requirements on prepackaged products
- Specific set of labeling guidelines to ensure consumers are not misinformed or misled by the information given in the labels
- Regulatory authorities must work together with the private sector and relevant NGOs to raise nutrition knowledge and awareness to promote healthy diets in the society

THANK YOU