Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Evaluate the role of mandatory nutritional labelling in protecting consumers and addressing the growing burden of non-communicable diseases in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 26/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Right to information, consumer protection, food safety regulation, FSSAI, nutritional transparency, non-communicable diseases, informed choices, regulatory enforcement

Model Answer

Nutritional labelling enables consumers to understand the composition of packaged foods and make informed dietary decisions. In India, rising consumption of highly processed foods has increased the importance of transparent food labelling as a public health instrument.

Public health significance

1. **Informed consumption:** Disclosure of total sugar, added sugar, saturated fat, trans fat and sodium helps consumers assess nutritional risks before purchasing food products.

2. **Prevention of non-communicable diseases:** Clear information can encourage healthier dietary choices and support efforts to address obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and hypertension.

3. **Consumer empowerment:** Transparent labels reduce information asymmetry between manufacturers and consumers, strengthening the right to make informed choices.

4. **Product reformulation:** Mandatory disclosure can encourage food manufacturers to reduce excessive sugar, salt and unhealthy fats to remain competitive in health-conscious markets.

Regulatory and implementation challenges

1. **Comprehensibility:** Technical nutritional information may be difficult for consumers with limited health literacy to interpret.

2. **Misleading claims:** Selective presentation of nutritional benefits can create a misleading impression about the overall health value of a product.

3. **Compliance:** Effective enforcement requires regular inspections, accurate testing and penalties for false or incomplete declarations.

4. **Affordability:** Healthier alternatives must remain accessible to economically vulnerable households.

Strengthening the framework

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India should promote standardised front-of-pack labelling, public awareness campaigns and stronger compliance monitoring. Nutritional education in schools can further improve consumer understanding.

Conclusion: Nutritional labelling cannot independently eliminate diet-related diseases, but transparent disclosure combined with education, regulation and affordable healthy alternatives can make it an important preventive public health measure.

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