



## FEEDING NUTRITIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: A COMMENTARY ON *FOODPHARMER* IN SPREADING CONSUMER AWARENESS IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

In the dynamic landscape of media, discussions surrounding food and nutritional choices are undergoing transformation. This study delves into the impact of social media on nutritional awareness, focusing on the case of *foodpharmer*, a social media influencer, and its role in disseminating nutritional knowledge to consumers in India. As consumer expectations evolve, brands are increasingly compelled to communicate transparently. Recent instances in India have highlighted concerns about health and nutritional claims made by food companies.

Prior research conducted in 2013 among urban consumers in major Indian cities revealed that despite the availability of food labels, the intended promotion of healthy food choices remained incomplete. This inadequacy necessitates a dual-pronged strategy: fostering public awareness regarding fundamental nutrition and elucidating the constituents of food labels to enhance consumer friendliness. Moreover, on April 1, 2023, Revant Himatsingka, a social media influencer known as Food Pharmer, claimed that Bournvita, a malted drink contained excessive sugar. Himatsingka faced legal action from Mondelez India, the producers of Bournvita, leading to the removal of the video from all platforms. This incident escalated into a significant controversy, prompting the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) to request the brand to retract any “misleading” advertisements, packaging, and labels. Along with that, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) emphasized its resolve to counteract false or misleading claims by food businesses, prioritizing consumer welfare.

The study examines the transformative potential of digital media in empowering consumers to make informed dietary decisions. It investigates *foodpharmer* and the efficacy of his efforts in enlightening consumers about diet and health. It addresses the complexity of freedom of expression, underlining that Article 19(1)(a) encompasses the responsibility to provide accurate information about the food that people consume. This research highlights the need to separate the link between media advertisements and the right to health, emphasizing accurate nutritional information dissemination to uphold overall well-being.

**Keywords:** Nutrition communication, *foodpharmer*, social media, influencer, consumer awareness

### Introduction:

The digital revolution is a defining characteristic of the 21st century, with social media playing an essential role in the dissemination of information in our interconnected world. During the pandemic, India saw a nearly 70 percent increase in social media users, predominantly among the younger population. Specifically, Facebook and Instagram boast 97.2 million and 69 million users, respectively, in India within this age group alone.

This paper provides insights into the promotion of nutritional awareness among the Indian population, highlighting the role of social media and social media influencers like *foodpharmer*. This paper is a commentary on how *foodpharmer* has contributed the dissemination of nutritional literacy, fosters consumer awareness by exposing factually misleading food labels and advertising tagline, thereby promoting overall well-being.

The most recent statistics reveal that India has a total of 290 million social media users spanning all age groups and various digital platforms. Nevertheless, the primary purpose of social media use among India's youth continues to be a subject of debate across all sectors (Roy & Kishore, 2023).

Health and well-being are always important at every stage of one's life. In this dynamic landscape of media, discussion surrounding food and nutritional choices are undergoing transformation along with the discourse of politics, society, and sports. The goal of SDG 3 aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages. This goal addresses all major health priorities: reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health; communicable and non-communicable diseases; universal health coverage; and access for all to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines and vaccines.

Eating a nutritious diet across the life stages is crucial for preventing or managing various forms of malnutrition and a range of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and health issues. Nonetheless, the increased production of processed foods, the rapid urbanization, and changing lifestyles have caused a shift in our eating habits. Nowadays, people are consuming more foods that are high in calories, fats, added sugars, and sodium, while neglecting the intake of fruits, vegetables, and dietary fibre such as whole grains (WHO, 2020).

The specific composition of a varied, well-balanced, and healthful diet can vary depending on individual factors such as age, gender, lifestyle, level of physical activity, cultural background, locally available food options, and dietary traditions. Nevertheless, the fundamental principles of what constitutes a wholesome diet remain constant.

### **1.1 India's Growing Food Industry:**

Health is primarily determined by food that we consume in our daily lives. As our lives become more fast-paced, packaged food and beverages are becoming a convenient option for both adults and children. With the rising incidence of diet-related non-communicable diseases and childhood obesity, this trend presents a worrying picture for the future adults of India.

The popularity of pre-packaged and convenience food items is on the rise, especially

among the urban middle class. This trend can be attributed to urbanization, higher income levels, the growing number of working women, and the proliferation of fast-food establishments. (Agarwal, 2022).

In a study on *Urbanization, processed foods, and eating out in India*, it was found that urban dwellers of India consume differently than their rural counterparts. In the study, it was demonstrated that the urban dwellers of India spend more on processed foods and consume more food away from home. These items are linked to dietary-related noncommunicable diseases, and understanding the determinants of their consumption are important for tackling malnutrition, which is an increasingly important challenge across India, and, ultimately, for nutrition security. The observed differences in urban versus rural consumption are commonly attributed to higher income levels in urban areas (d'Amour et al., 2020).

The shift towards remote work has led to significant changes in consumer behaviour and dietary choices. This has resulted in a decrease of approximately 25-30% in on-the-go consumption. Meanwhile, there has been a rise in snacking between meals, a growing preference for healthier snack options, and an increase in the popularity of pre-cooked, ready-to-eat meals. Concerns regarding preservatives and health have also had a positive impact on the demand for organic foods.

These evolving trends present new opportunities for the food industry. According to Nielsen data, during the COVID-19 pandemic, over 3,500 new food products were introduced, with roughly half of them aligned with health and hygiene trends. India faces challenges related to obesity and diabetes, as well as a significant portion of its population experiencing malnutrition. Despite this, a comparison of the National Family Health Survey (NFS) reports from 2020 and 2015 indicates that there has not been substantial improvement in these areas (Muralidharan & Vijay, 2021).

Packaged food in India has been ranked lowest in terms of its healthiness in a major global survey of packaged foods and drinks, according to a global study. The George Institute for Global Health conducted an analysis of over 400,000 food and beverage products from 12

countries and regions worldwide. They used Australia's Health Star Rating system to rank these countries based on nutritional criteria such as energy, salt, sugar, saturated fat, protein, calcium, and fiber. The rating system assigns stars ranging from ½ (least healthy) to 5 (most healthy). In a major global survey of packaged food and drinks, India's packaged products were rated as the least healthy, being the most energy-dense with 1515 kJ/100g, while South African products were the least energy-dense at an average of 1044 kJ/100g. The United Kingdom had the highest average Health Star Rating of 2.83, followed by the United States at 2.82 and Australia at 2.81. India received the lowest rating of only 2.27, with China at 2.43 and Chile ranked just above India with a rating of 2.44 (The George Institute for Global Health India, 2019).

On a global scale, the increasing consumption of processed foods is a growing concern, largely driven by the proliferation of supermarkets stocked with products rich in unhealthy fats, sugar, and salt. This trend poses a potential risk to public health by making the population more susceptible to non-communicable diseases. Regrettably, it is the less affluent nations that are the least equipped to tackle the negative health impacts associated with these unwholesome food choices.

## **2. Nutrition Communication and its approaches:**

A 2013 study by Vemula et al., investigated the utilization of food label information by urban consumers in India, particularly those who shop at supermarkets, several noteworthy findings emerged. Among the participants, approximately 45% reported purchasing pre-packaged foods on a weekly basis, while nearly a fifth made such purchases daily. The primary motivations behind buying pre-packaged foods were centered on taste, quality, convenience, and user-friendliness.

The study also observed that a substantial 90% of consumers from various age groups read food labels. However, a majority (81%) primarily sought out manufacturing dates or expiry/best-before dates. Of those who engaged with the labels, only a third delved into the nutrition information and ingredient lists. The study found that nutrient information on labels was frequently overlooked, primarily due to consumers either lacking nutritional knowledge or perceiving the information as overly technical

and challenging to comprehend (Vemula et al., 2022).

Effective communication plays a crucial role in the promotion of health and nutrition (Contento, 2010; Nutbeam, 2000). When it comes to nutrition education, it employs three distinct methods for delivering information to the public: 1) the approach of sharing information, 2) the approach of modifying behaviours that promote health, and 3) the focus on altering the environment. The primary goal of nutrition education is to enhance the knowledge and decision-making abilities of individuals, enabling them to make well-informed dietary choices. Nutrition education was assumed to result in knowledge improvement, which would eventually result in positive outcome such as changes in dietary behaviour. (Gavaravarapu & Seal, 2022, p.221).

The affordability, accessibility, and modern lifestyles have led to an increased preference for packaged foods. It is well-established that factors such as packaging type, brand name, imagery, packaging quality, and advertising significantly influence consumers' choices (Vemula et al., 2014). A key strategy in nutrition communication is to modify the behaviour of packaged food consumers while promoting public health. In contrast to the limited reach of traditional electronic and print media in the 1990s, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are now recognized as potent tools for disseminating knowledge and instigating behavioural change in the Indian context. Furthermore, there is a growing trend of smartphone-based mobile applications providing nutritional education, and the emergence of social media influencers who are shaping food choices in India. Research suggests that social media is altering our relationship with food, prompting us to reconsider our typical dietary preferences (Shah,2023).

To achieve effective communication on public health and developmental practices, health communication experts recommend several approaches such as communicating with accuracy and necessary speed and using appropriate channels to reach intended audiences and, in some cases, even using social media and peer-to-peer networks. Currently, nutrition communication is regarded as an umbrella term used for a wide array of education and other programmes that aim to

influence nutritional status of individuals (Smitasiri et.al 1993). Some of the approaches developed, adapted, and implemented over the years include the following (Gavaravarapu,2019):

- a. Social marketing
- b. Advocacy
- c. Information, communication and education
- d. Edutainment
- e. Participatory Communication

Currently apart from these established approaches, through the social media profile of *foodpharmer*, Himatsingka has been trying to increase awareness about reading food labels on packaged foods. The social media influencer firmly believes that those who consume it also know the perils and long-term risks associated with it. From obesity to heart disease and diabetes, junk food is often counted as a more serious threat to life than even smoking according to some studies (Balachandran, 2023). "Food is probably 60-70 percent of what shapes our health," Himatsingka mentioned in his interview with the Forbes. "And what is shaping our food today is packaged food, which is very different from what our grandparents grew up eating. Most packaged food is just selling junk and they are marketing it as healthy. This happens even more in relatively poorer countries."

### **2.1: Consumer Awareness on Food Labelling in India:**

Food labels serve as an introduction to packaged foods, featuring a crucial element called the Nutrition Facts Panel (NFP). This panel provides accurate information about the quantity of macro and micronutrients per 100g or one serving. Although consumers tend to read these labels, it appears that their purchasing behaviour remains largely unchanged despite the information provided. In India, the Food Processing Sector is the fifth-largest industry in terms of production, consumption, exports, and potential growth. During the last five years ending 2019-20, Food Processing Industries (FPI) Sector has been growing at an average annual Growth Rate of around 11.18 percent (Lok Sabha, 2022).

One's comprehension of nutrition and their level of awareness significantly influence how they interpret and utilize information found on food and nutrition labels. Having a better understanding of nutrition is closely tied to

maintaining a healthier diet, underscoring the importance of comprehending the details presented on food labels. However, some individuals, already familiar with certain foods, might be less inclined to depend on these labels, potentially impeding their ability to make well-informed choices. Furthermore, a lack of awareness regarding nutrition is connected to dietary issues affecting one's health. Although many people may read food labels, the challenge arises as they often do not alter their purchasing decisions, influenced by a variety of factors. It may ascribe to their inability to comprehend information or some buyers were found to rely on nutritional information when making their purchase choices. Although many people acknowledged the significance of examining food and nutrition labels, a considerable number tended to steer clear of them due to the perceived difficulty and tediousness of going through the labels. The main factor contributing to this avoidance was the complexity of the labels, which frequently failed to provide accurate information about the product. To tackle this issue, it is essential to create clear and uncomplicated labels that capture everyone's attention.

According to a review article titled "*Food Label and its Influence among Indian Consumers - A Review*" by Shireen S et al., published in June 2022, it was demonstrated that food labels are often overlooked by consumers as a source of information, despite being aware of them. The study revealed that certain terms on food labels were perceived as ambiguous, contributing to the limited utilization of these labels. Key findings from the review highlighted the impact of socio-demographic factors, such as education, gender, income, and area of residence, on individuals' awareness and understanding of the importance of choosing healthier options based on food labels.

The review also emphasized that consumers' preferences and opinions, including their views on label formats and the challenges they faced in interpreting information, were linked to their use of food labels. Specifically, the survey results showed a more focused approach when it came to the utilization of nutritional information on food labels. The study concluded that educating consumers about various aspects of food labelling could empower them to make more informed and healthier purchasing decisions.

### **3: The Consumer's Right to Know of the Food labels:**

The freedom of speech and expression comprises not only the right to express, publish, and propagate information through circulation but also to receive essential information that affects the right to life. Today's market is inundated with an extensive array of goods and services, accompanied by a significant surge in the number of producers and final sellers. The globalized nature of our world and the increasing interdependence of business practices underscore the heightened significance of consumer rights, protection, and promotion. In this scenario, consumers are increasingly advocating for quality products and services commensurate with the value they invest. Despite the evident impact on the quality and safety of goods and services, customers continue to grapple with dishonest, unfair, and exploitative trade practices. These practices manifest in various forms, including exorbitant prices, deceptive advertising, substandard and defective products, deficient services, adulteration, and unethical trade conduct. The era of *Caveat Emptor*, where consumers/buyers were urged to beware, has given way to *Caveat Venditor*. This principle places the responsibility on the seller to be aware, emphasizing that sellers are accountable for providing accurate and comprehensive information about the goods and services they offer.

#### **3.1: The Consumer and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019(CPA-2019):**

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019(CPA-2019) has replaced the four decades old Consumer Protection Act, 1986. It protects the rights and interests of the consumers and provides for speedy, effective, and simple redressal mechanisms in addition to convenient and inexpensive procedure for redressal of their grievances. Section 2(7) of (CPA-2019) defines consumer as any person who avails the services and buys any goods for self-use. Thus, a consumer is a user in the chain of distribution of goods & services.

Consumer rights concerning food labels encompass several rights, that includes the entitlement to information, ensuring informed choices, the right to consumer awareness, protection from unfair trade practices (including deceptive labelling), and, notably, the right to safety regarding food products. These rights emphasize the necessity for consumers to be well-informed about the contents of the food

through clear labels. Any information that pertains to consumer safety or a warning should come in a pictorial format or through colour coding that is easily understood by everyone, including those who cannot read or write and must be so strategically located on the label as to draw the immediate attention of the consumer. (Aila & Nallapu, 2020).

In the case of *Donoghue v Stevenson* (1932) the courts have given recognition to a duty of care existing due to some relationship between the parties. For example, the relationship between a doctor and patient, an employer and an employee, a manufacturer, and a consumer, one road-user to another, etc. The wider importance of *Donoghue v Stevenson* case as observed by Lord Atkin is that it established the general principle of the duty of care concept in law.

“You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure your neighbour. Who, then, in law, is my neighbour? The answer seems to be persons who are so closely and directly affected by my act that I ought reasonably to have them.” Not only did this case establish the liability of manufacturers to consumers with whom they did not have a direct contractual relationship, but also the now established principle that forms the basis of negligence.”

In another case of *Carlill v Carbolic Smoke Ball Company* (1892), the Court of Appeal in England ruled that an advertisement, which specified conditions for a reward, created a valid unilateral offer. The case concerned a flu remedy called the 'carbolic smoke ball.' The manufacturer advertised that buyers who found it did not work would be awarded £100, a considerable amount of money at the time. The company was found to have been bound by its advertisement, which was construed as an offer which the buyer, by using the smoke ball, accepted, creating a contract.

The Court of Appeal held the essential elements of a contract were all present, including offer, acceptance consideration and an intention to create legal relations and rejected several defences, including puffery. With this logic, the consumers have a right to be informed of the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of a product or service lest he falls victim

to unfair and restrictive trade practices. Since adequate information is very essential to make a right choice, consumer should insist on getting all the information about the product or service before making a choice or a decision. But consumers consuming unhealthy food is unaware of the unhealthy content because the FMCGs are marketing unhealthy food as healthy food with misleading taglines and advertisement.

In fact, in *Chemisol Adhesive Pvt Ltd and Ors v Shri Dhanaji Shankar Dalvi* (2010) the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission held that failure to warn users about unsafe products through the label constituted negligence. This case pertained to an inflammable chemical, but the same logic would apply to unhealthy foods high in salt, sugar and saturated fat, given the overwhelming evidence of such food causing hypertension, cardio vascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, cancer and even liver problems.

#### **4: About foodpharmer:**

In June 2023, a collaborative study between the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, the Indian Council of Medical Research, and the Union Health Ministry brought to light a concerning health scenario in India. The findings revealed that a significant portion of the population is grappling with health issues related to diabetes and obesity. Specifically, 11.4% of India's population, totalling 10.13 crore individuals, is currently living with diabetes. Additionally, 15.3% of the population, amounting to 13.6 crore people, is in a pre-diabetic state. The study also shed light on the fact that 28.6% of the population falls into the category of obesity based on the Body Mass Index (BMI) measure (Gupta, 2023).

The World Health Organization attributes this alarming health situation to the widespread consumption of unhealthy packaged foods and beverages, aggressively promoted at the expense of traditional dietary practices. Examples of such food items include carbonated drinks, instant cereals, chips, fruit-flavoured drinks, instant noodles, cookies, ice cream, bakery products, energy bars, sweetened yogurts, pizzas, processed meat products, and powdered infant formulas.

Scientific evidence underscores the risks of NCDs associated with diets high in ultra-processed foods, high in sugar, fat, and salt. Notably, a 10% increase in the daily

consumption of ultra-processed foods is linked to a 15% higher risk of type-2 diabetes among adults. The detrimental effects of ultra-processing of foods include the destruction of its natural structure and the addition of additives, preservatives. Ultra-processed foods are formulations of ingredients, mostly of exclusive industrial use, that result from a series of industrial processes (Monteiro, 2019). Consequently, individuals tend to overeat, leading to weight gain and an elevated risk of diabetes and other chronic diseases. Moreover, it is crucial to recognize that obesity and diabetes serve as key risk factors for heart disease and mortality, emphasizing the urgent need for addressing dietary habits and promoting healthier lifestyles.

Our health is determined by the food that we intake on regular basis. The long-term goal of nutrition education is to enable people to make decisions about food choices that are consistent with both the findings of nutrition research and with their own values, goals, and life-styles. The messages must contribute to an ability on the part of the individual to critically evaluate the plethora of information being communicated about nutrition. This holistic approach requires placing specific recommendations in the context of other nutrient requirements, risk vs. benefit assessments, and gaps in scientific knowledge. Communicating nutrition is a more complex problem than selling a product or promoting a "nutritious" food.

While conventional channels like radio, television, and print media have traditionally influenced health behaviour (Finkelstein et al., 2012), the advent of social media, especially when accessed through mobile technologies, presents a valuable opportunity for interactive communication with a broader audience, including individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (O-Adewuyi, 2016). Within these marginalized communities, social media can play a role in educating and empowering individuals (Whitehead and Seaton, 2016). Specifically, social media platforms can help identify information needs, monitor public responses to health issues, and effectively communicate targeted health messages. However, current research on the use of social media in healthcare tends to focus on platforms like Skype, Twitter, and Facebook (Moorhead et al., 2013; Weng Marc Lim, 2016).

The surge in social media usage and its widespread popularity in developing economies can be attributed to the increased accessibility of affordable mobile technology and lower data charges (O-Adewuyi, 2016). In these areas, social media plays a crucial role in educating and empowering communities by enabling the seamless exchange of information from healthcare providers to the target audience (Whitehead and Seaton, 2016). Additionally, social media is acknowledged for its heightened influence on both the public and decision-makers when compared to traditional media channels (Cote and Darling, 2018).

One of the main advantages of social networks as a source of data on consumer behaviour is that the information generated by users on social platforms already has a network structure; accordingly, users can be investigated rather than in isolation (Saura and Bennett, 2019).

This paper examines the transformative potential of digital media in empowering consumers to make informed dietary decisions. It investigates *foodpharmer* and the efficacy of his efforts in enlightening consumers about diet and health. On April 1, 2023, Revant HimatSingka, a social media influencer in the name of *foodpharmer* posted a video where he criticised the brand Cadbury Bournvita for “miscommunicating” on its package about the products’ “nutritional value”. Bournvita is a brand of malted and chocolate malt drink mix manufactured by Cadbury, a subsidiary of Mondelez International. He also takes on Maggi Atta Noodles for claiming that atta noodles include fibre that is equivalent to three rotis. Roti (in English known as chapati) is a round flatbread native to the Indian subcontinent. It is commonly consumed in many South Asian countries. In a video, *@foodpharmer* is seen talking about nutritional labels. He mentions that a pack of noodles has just 3.5 gram of fibre. The government recommends at least 30 gm of fibre per day, which means that one needs to consume approximately eight packets of atta noodles. (Afaqs,2023).

*Foodpharmer* is the social media persona curated by Revant Himatsingka, an MBA graduate from Wharton. Through his platform, he creatively blends humor and information to guide individuals in making healthier food choices. With a substantial following of 1 million on Instagram and other social media channels such

as YouTube and X, Revant is leveraging his influence to instigate positive changes in India. His innovative approach involves addressing pertinent issues surrounding food labels, choices, and promoting a healthy lifestyle in the country.

Himatsingka reports that four products have revamped their packaging in response to his video. The social media influencer highlights changes in Nest Tea iced tea's packaging, noting the shift from claiming to be “rich in Vitamin C” to now stating it as a “source of Vitamin C.” He explains this as a strategy to mitigate risks and mentions TooYumm’s alteration of its tagline from “Anytime, anywhere, as much” to just “anytime” for risk reduction in promoting excessive chips consumption.

Himatsingka further notes adjustments in Storia coconut water, citing the removal of the “Combat Virus” claim from its packaging. In the case of Bournvita, a brand he had previously criticized, the influencer points out the change in tagline from “Tann ki Shakti Mann ki Shakti” to “Tayyari Jeet ki.” In a related message, he expresses optimism about the gradual transformation of packaged food, urging collective action to reshape India's packaged food industry.

Addressing the Bournvita controversy, Himatsingka observes that the comments section on the company's Twitter and Instagram pages remains disabled, interpreting it as a sign of companies fearing criticism. He advises companies to focus on enhancing packaging and ingredients instead of attempting to silence critics, emphasizing the potential for a lasting positive change in India's packaged food landscape if people unite fearlessly.

According to *foodpharmer*, the notion of bread in India is deemed unserious. To assess the healthiness of bread, the emphasis is placed on a specific guideline from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The guideline highlights that ingredient names must be listed in descending order of their composition by weight or volume during the manufacturing process. Himatsingka’s video presentation reveals that many brown-coloured breads in India prominently feature maida (refined wheat flour) as the primary ingredient, suggesting its pivotal role in bread production. This, according to him, challenges the perception of these breads as healthy. He

further contends that most multigrain breads in India also contain maida. This information was reported by Business Standard on July 24, 2023. (Nimje, 2023).

The rise in prepackaged and convenient food items is on the upswing, especially within the urban middle class. This trend can be attributed to urbanization, higher incomes, an uptick in working women, and the proliferation of fast-food establishments. There is a growing demand for specialty and premium processed or packaged foods, including those that are ready-to-eat, ready-to-cook, or can be easily reconstituted. (Agarwal, 2022).

Considering the estimated double growth of Indian packaged food items by 2025, the intervention of influencers such as *foodpharmer* will surely aware the people on what one should consume. It will also give lessons on how to decode a label and encourage to buy products with shorter ingredient list and lesser self-life.

### **5. Conclusion:**

The well-being of individuals is a universal concern, and it is intricately linked to the quality of the food we intake. Presently in India, a significant portion of our diet comprises packaged foods. Unfortunately, there is a concerning discrepancy between the information provided on food labels and the actual contents of these packaged products. This issue is exacerbated by a lack of awareness among consumers. It is crucial for individuals to be informed about the true nutritional value of the foods they consume to safeguard their health effectively.

Consumers are entitled to anticipate the safety and quality of the foods they purchase and consume. They have the right to express their views on the processes, standards, and practices governing food control, which are employed by both governments and the industry to ensure these attributes in the food supply. Although consumers, governments, and other stakeholders play crucial roles in safeguarding food safety and quality, in societies driven by free-market principles, the primary responsibility for dedicating the necessary physical and managerial resources to implement appropriate controls rests with the food industry. This industry consistently oversees the entire manufacturing and processing of foods, from raw ingredients to the final product.

To protect individuals from the manipulative tactics employed by the food industry, the government should establish a legal framework or enact an ordinance (as per Article 123 of the Constitution). The primary goal should be to diminish or cease the consumption of ultra-processed foods. This initiative may involve the definition of 'healthy food,' the implementation of warning labels on unhealthy products, and limitations on the advertising and promotion of unhealthy food and beverages. The public must be made aware of the potential risks associated with consuming such products. It is unnecessary to collaborate with the food industry, which contributes to adverse health outcomes in this process.

While social media and networking platforms have emerged as novel avenues for disseminating health information, the escalating apprehensions surrounding misinformation and disinformation on these platforms cannot be ignored. However, there exists an opportunity for leveraging social media messages innovatively, exemplified by channels like *foodpharmer*, to gather audience feedback. This approach is particularly pertinent as consumer attention spans diminish, necessitating concise and captivating public health messages.

The present commentary highlights that by effectively leveraging digital communication tools and creating compelling content, we can foster nutritional awareness among today's youth, who are active users of diverse social media platforms. In addition to implementing innovative awareness initiatives, it is crucial for legislative agencies to collaborate in promoting an environment that does not suppress or stifle critiques using unjust methods. Instead, there should be a focus on exploring novel approaches for disseminating nutrition-related information in schools. Furthermore, it is advisable to encourage companies to adopt legible labelling in their packaged food products. There is an urgent need to place the labels on the flat surface of the packet rather than in the curved area, eliminating the need for consumers to struggle when reading technical information about food ingredients. This ensures that the labelling is easily visible and accessible, enhancing consumer understanding.

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