

NUTRITION ADVOCACY IN PUBLIC INTEREST-India (NAPi)

September 28, 2020

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Former Secretary, Health, GOI

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Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma

Hon'ble Health Minister, Government of Assam,

Assam Secretariat, DISPUR

via Email

Sub: Ultra-Processed Foods(UPFs): Policy Actions and Awareness in your State

Dear Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma Ji,

Greetings from NAPi and BPNI !

We, the Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest in India (NAPi), working since 2016, are a national think tank on nutrition –comprising independent experts in epidemiology, human nutrition, community nutrition, pediatrics, medical education, administration and management; having decades of experience in respective fields; along with BPNI, the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India, working for last 30 years to protect promote and support breastfeeding and Optimal feeding includes exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond along with appropriate complementary feeding after six months.

NAPi and BPNI are happy to share with you a “Statement and call to action on consumption of ultra-processed foods”(Annexure-1), endorsed by 125 scientists from 27 States/UTs. It aims at ensuring people eat nutritious food and not consume the ultra-processed food- that is proven to be harmful to health. The Statement resulted from a Webinar “*What you need to know about Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs)? The science, policy responses and politics in global context*” on 20 July, 2020. BPNI and NAPi organised it in collaboration with Deakin University Australia and NUPENS / UPS Brazil. More than 300 persons from 36 countries attended and discussed. All the details/discussions are up on the website. <https://www.bpni.org/ultra-processed-foods/>

We would like to draw your kind attention to the critical point regarding consumption of Ultra-Processed Foods i.e. its negative impact on human health. Available scientific evidence reveals that 10% increase in the consumption of UPFs increases the chances of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and certain types of cancer by approximately 10%. In children, obesity and asthma go up.

Globally, there is a rising trend of consumption of UPFs, and in India too. It should be halted to look forward to a healthy food transition in the globalised world. Please find attached an Op Ed piece by our members Prof. HPS Sachdev and Dr. Arun Gupta.(Annex-2)

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To make people aware of the consumption of ultra processed foods we have developed an advocacy document “The Unseen Dangers of Ultra-Processed Food”,

which is available in several languages on our website. We enclose ‘Assamese’, and English version. (Annex-3). Other languages are on website). [English](#), [Hindi](#), [Gujarati](#), [Punjabi](#), [Assamese](#), [Bangla](#), [Kannada](#), [Marathi](#), [Manipuri \(Meetei mayek\)](#), [Manipuri \(Bengali Script\)](#)

Based on the above, may we request you for following four actions in public health interest of people of Assam, within the prevention of Non Communicable Diseases(NCDs) programme.

1. Adopt “Nova Classification” of Food groups and launch state level surveys to find out the consumption pattern of food in both urban and rural areas.
2. Set up a ‘State task force’ to advise on research and surveys, as well as monitoring.
3. Launch an awareness campaign on how to identify UPFs and AVOID eating. Attached document “ The Unseen Dangers of Ultra Processed Foods” in local languages may be adapted and disseminated within the Health Ministry’s Urban Health and NHM.
4. Develop regulation to control marketing of the UPFs.

Your utmost attention to this subject would be very valuable to the health of people of Assam in the short and long term.

We look forward to a positive response from your end. We would be happy to respond if you or your team has any questions/clarification.

With our best regards,

Sincerely,

Dr. Arun Gupta, and Manisha Chowdhary (BPNI Member from Assam) on behalf of BPNI And NAPi

Encl: aa

Copy to:

1. Members of Parliament from Assam
2. Mission Director, NHM Government of Assam
3. Smt. Debola Devi Das, Director Social Welfare Assam.
4. Sh. Partha Majumdar, Poshan Abhiyaan, Assam.

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