

## **CUTS International, CAG, GSA submit 8-point Charter of Demands to FSSAI**

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**Our Bureau, New Delhi**

In a bid to make food safer and healthier, organisations such as CUTS International, Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group(CAG), Consumer Voice, Generation Saviour Association (GSA) and DISHA Foundation, recently presented an eight point Charter of Demands to FSSAI.

This charter highlighted immediate steps to be taken for the elimination of trans-fats from the Indian food system by 2022 and specifically demanded for earliest notification of regulations with two per cent limit of trans-fats for oils, fats and all food products. The organisations announced that they will be working as a coalition to create nationwide awareness and demand for healthier and safer foods, free of trans-fats.

Trans-fat, a toxic compound used in foods, clogs arteries, causing heart attacks and death. Worldwide, more than half-a-million deaths occur due to intake of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids and more than 72,000 of such deaths occur in India annually.

Presenting his views, George Cheriyan, director, CUTS International, said, “We appreciate the recent initiative by FSSAI, which launched the logo for Trans-Fat-Free, and believe that FSSAI has played a very active and constructive role in promoting the food safety scenario in our country.”

“Having said that, in a federal structure like India, a regulator alone cannot ensure the proper implementation of the regulations, which is a mandate of the state. The lack of infrastructure and interest of the concerned officials in most states, is a major roadblock to achieve the 2022 target,” he added.

Ashim Sanyal, chief operating officer, Consumer Voice, said, “The most effective way to eliminate industrially-produced-trans fat in food is through regulatory action. FSSAI has already committed to limit trans-fatty acids in all oils and fats to not more than two per cent, by January 2022.”

“However, the proposed regulation have set this target only for fats and oils and have excluded the overall presence of trans-fats in all types of food,” he added.

“In the coming days, we will work closely with both the Central and state governments, besides food industry to accelerate the elimination of industrially-produced trans-fats from the entire food chain,” Sanyal said.

“I applaud the latest initiative by FSSAI which enables the states with a lack of NABL-accredited labs to send samples for testing to private labs and the cost of the testing will be paid by FSSAI,” he added.

Most processed foods, including biscuits, snacks and wafers, and traditional and street food, such as jalebis, laddoos, samosas, puffs and cakes, are popular across age and socio-economic groups. But these contain high amounts of trans-fats. Removal of these fats from the food supply will be a big step in reducing the risk of heart diseases.

The charter of demands submitted includes the need for strict implementation at state level, including the setting up of the required infrastructure mechanisms (labs, technicians, etc.), institutional mechanisms, mandatory assessment report, sensitisation and capacity building of state food commissioners and food safety officers (FSOs) on the implementation of trans-fats regulations.