

Dr. Sakshi Bhushan, Lead, Innovations (Functional Nutrition), Diet & Health Capability and Advocacy Lead, South Asia, Hindustan Unilever Limited

delivered the talk on “Processed Foods: Debunking Myths with Facts”

Dr. Sakshi elaborated on how processed foods play a crucial role in the modern food system by enhancing taste, shelf-life extension, and nutritional accessibility, providing year-round availability. Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are believed to be high in energy but low in nutrients when compared to homemade meals, however, studies have shown otherwise.

She also listed the classifications of processed foods (e.g., NOVA and IFIC) and mentioned international reviews about the impact of UPFs on health. Examples were given of processed foods like fortified cereals and plant-based meats that contribute essential nutrients, challenging the belief that all UPFs are unhealthy.

She concluded by emphasizing the need for processed foods as the consequences of an ‘un-packaged’ world would lead to increased food insecurity, heightened micronutrient deficiencies, increased food wastage and many more.