Designing Transparent Labelling – Navigating the Dynamic Regulatory Landscape in India

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- Ms Shipra highlighted the importance of transparent food labelling as a key tool for helping consumers make informed purchasing decisions. Transparent labelling is a shared responsibility between regulators and food businesses, ensuring that accurate and relevant product information is communicated clearly to consumers.
- She outlined India's regulatory framework governing food labels, primarily through FSSAI's Labelling and Display Regulations, 2020, Advertising and Claims Regulations, 2018, Legal Metrology Rules, and Plastic Waste Management Rules. These regulations mandate declarations such as product name, ingredient list, nutritional information, allergen details, FSSAI license number, net quantity, date marking, country of origin, MRP, and consumer care information.
- Special emphasis was placed on ingredient and allergen labelling. Nutritional labelling requirements include nutrients along with serving-size information and percentage Recommended Dietary Allowance (%RDA) to help consumers make informed choices.
- She also discussed the regulation of food claims and advertisements. Nutrient, comparative, equivalence, and health claims must be scientifically substantiated and should not mislead consumers or undermine healthy dietary practices.
- To create effective transparent labels, companies should focus on legibility, accuracy, completeness, clarity, consistency, and accessibility. The use of QR codes and digital tools can provide additional product information while overcoming packaging space limitations.
- Finally, the session highlighted current challenges such as frequent regulatory updates, compliance across multiple regulations, limited label space, and increasing e-commerce requirements. Opportunities lie in technology-enabled compliance, digital labelling, industry-regulator collaboration, and consumer education. The key takeaway was that consumer-centric, science-based, and transparent labelling practices are essential for building trust and ensuring regulatory compliance in the evolving Indian food industry.