

# WEBINAR REPORT ON CAN **PROCESSED** **FOODS** BE **HEALTHY** & **NUTRITIOUS?**

AUTHOR

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On the occasion of 53rd Annual General Meeting, Protein Food And Nutrition Development Association of India (PFNDIA) conducted a webinar on "Can Processed Foods Be Healthy and Nutritious?" This event was sponsored by Nestle, Hindustan Unilever Limited, Mother Dairy, and IFF.



The speakers for the webinar were, Dr. B. Sesikeran, Former Director, NIN, ICMR Hyderabad., Chairman – Science Advisory Committee, PFNDIA, Ms. Richa Mattu, Nutrition Lead, Hindustan Unilever, and Ms. Shilpa Wadhwa, Head-Nutrition, Health & Wellness, Nestle, India.

On the panel were Dr. Jagmeet Madan, Principal, SVT College of Home Science, IDA, Mr. Indranil Chatterjee, Regional Product Line Manager – South East Asia & South Asia, IFF, Ms. Zamurrud Patel, HOD, Chief Dietician, Global Hospitals, Mumbai and Dr. Pulkit Mathur, Professor and Head, Department of Food & Nutrition & Food Technology, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi.

## PANEL DISCUSSION



Dr Jagmeet Madan



Mr Indranil Chatterjee



Ms Shilpa Wadhwa



Dr B Sesikeran (Moderator)



Dr Pulkit Mathur



Ms Zamurrud Patel





# GLIMPSE

## WEBINAR ON "CAN PROCESSED FOODS BE HEALTHY & NUTRITIOUS?"

Organized by  
Protein Foods & Nutrition  
Development Association of India





**PFNDAI**  
PROTEIN FOODS AND NUTRITION  
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

 <p><b>Dr Jagadish Pai</b></p>	 <p><b>Dr B Sesikeran (Moderator)</b></p>	 <p><b>Ms Richa Mattu</b></p>
 <p><b>Ms Dolly Soni (Convenor)</b></p>	 <p><b>Ms Shilpa Wadhwa</b></p>	 <p><b>Dr Pulkit Mathur</b></p>
 <p><b>Dr Jagmeet Madan</b></p>	 <p><b>Mr Indranil Chatterjee</b></p>	 <p><b>Ms Zamurrud Patel</b></p>

## 1. Making Street Foods Healthy- By Dr. B. Sesikera

He highlighted that processed food is as old as mankind but today the word 'Processed Food' has become synonymous with 'Unhealthy'. Some processed foods could be considered unhealthy due to the ingredients but not all. So, generalizing all processed foods to be unhealthy is wrong. One such category of processed food is street food. Here are some of the highlights from his presentation-

- Street foods are consumed by low- and middle-class consumers in significant amounts on daily basis, especially in urban areas. Street foods can be the least expensive and most accessible means of a nutritionally balanced diet for many low-income groups provided the consumer is aware of what to eat.



- Street foods are affordable, accessible, available instantly, prepared fresh, very palatable, achieve satiety, and give a wide range of choices.

- There are some problems when it comes to street foods like compromised hygiene, poor quality ingredients, and water, poor sanitization of surrounding and waste disposal, selling the food in public places like the sidewalk, improper cooking practices, food is high in fat, salt, sugar, and energy.

## Dr B Sesikera, Former Dir. NIN, Hyd.

### FSSAI- Project Clean Street Food



- Street food contributes significantly to the diet of children and adults in terms of energy, protein, micronutrients. A wide variety of street foods includes major food groups.

- Many Indian traditional snacks can be part of healthy diet e.g. dosa, idli, pav bhaji, bhel, dhokla, chhach (buttermilk), paratha etc. These when formulated properly can be very healthy. Also others could be reformulated to reduce fat, sugar and salt while using whole grains and other healthier ingredients to make them richer in protein, dietary fibre and micronutrients.

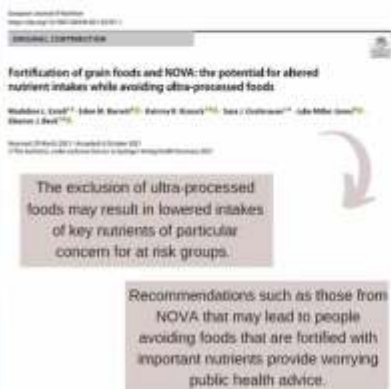
He concluded his presentation by highlighting the initiative taken by FSSAI for healthy and safe street food [Project Clean Street Food] and stressed the importance of being aware and informed consumers when it comes to making street foods healthy.



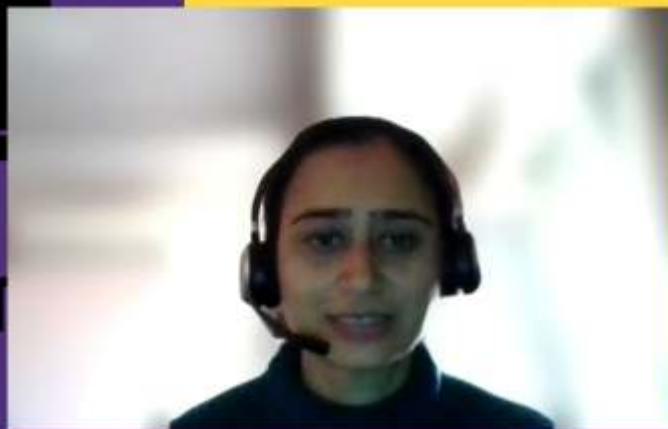


## Ms Richa Mattu, Nutrition lead, Hindustan Unilever

### Should we exclude so called "UPF" from our diets?



Source: Estell et al. 2021



## 2. Are Processed Foods Safe and Healthy? - by Ms. Richa Mattu

She enlightened the participants regarding how processed foods can be healthy and safe.

Here are some of the highlights from her presentation-

- Food preparations and processing can be defined as any change that is made to food to alter its eating quality or shelf life. Food

processing includes anything that changes food's original form be it at home or industrially.

- Food is processed for increasing availability, altering antioxidant levels, for convenience, tailoring for specific needs, safety, increasing



diversity, changing texture and flavour, fortification and enrichment, reducing waste, preservation, etc.

- There are various barriers when it comes to processed foods. For example, Consumers expect processed foods to have recognizable and fewer ingredients. Also, consumers avoid purchasing products with too many additives and processed foods are considered to be less healthy

- The evidence indicating the negative impact of ultra-processed foods on health is based on data and not on the level of processing. So, according to the WHO obesity data, there was no correlation between ultra-processed food availability and obesity.

- Rather than eliminating ultra-processed foods, we should acknowledge their utility and consider that their reformulation might have a more meaningful impact on improving the nutritional quality and health at the population level.

Ms. Mattu concluded her presentation by emphasizing the fact that the healthiness of a product is determined by its nutritional quality and not the level of processing. So, processed foods can be a part of a healthy and sustainable diet.





### 3. Processed Foods for Convenience and Health- By Ms. Shilpa Wadhwa

She highlighted how processed foods can be convenient and healthy at the same time.

Here are some of the key points from her presentation-

- According to the global hunger index, hunger levels are highest in Africa, south of the Sahara, and South Asia. Nutritional inadequacies in Indian diets are reflected in young children both in urban and rural areas.

- Both fresh and processed foods make up vital parts of the food supply chain. Processed foods contribute to both food and nutritional security.



- Food processing includes a wide variety of activities and makes food palatable, accessible, and safe. Most of






the foods stored in our pantries are processed. Hence, processed foods can be classified into different categories from minimally processed to highly processed foods.


- Processed foods can be a convenient partner for working women as processing increases the shelf life of products, saves time and effort, provides food that is safe, hygienic, healthy, and affordable.

- Processing leads to increased food safety and nutritional value of food products. Fortification and

**Ms Shilpa Wadhwa, Head - Nutrition, Health & Wellness, Nestlé India**

**Classification of food processing systems**

Category I	Category II	Category III	Category IV	Category V
Minimally processed: Foods that require little processing or production which retain most of their inherent properties	Foods processed for preservation: Foods processed to help preserve & enhance nutrients & freshness of foods at their peak	Mixtures of combined ingredients: Foods containing sweeteners, spices, oils, colors, flavors & preservatives used for promotion of safety, taste & visual appeal	Ready to eat processed: Foods needing minimal or no preparation. Group subdivided into 'packaged ready to eat foods' & 'mixtures possibly store prepared.	Prepared foods/meals: Foods packaged for freshness & ease of preparation
				



enrichment of foods can enhance the nutritional value of a product and address specific health concerns.

- Food processing plays an important role in ensuring sustainability.

She concluded her presentation by emphasizing that food processing has increased food availability, seasonal fruits are available throughout the year through preservation, canning, and freezing.

Also, processing contributes to food safety and nutritional security. Each presentation was followed by a question and answer session where the respective speaker answered the questions raised by the audience.

Finally, a panel discussion on the various aspects of processed foods and health was conducted. The panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Sesikeran. The panel discussion was followed by a vote of thanks. The webinar concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Dolly Soni.