

CONFERENCE ON TODAY'S FOODS: CONVENIENCE, SAFETY AND HEALTH SESSION 1: "PROCESSED FOODS: AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR DIET"

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Protein Foods & Nutrition Development Association of India (PFNDAI) organized a conference on Today's Foods: Convenience, Safety and Health. The conference consisted of 2 sessions. The 1st session was on "Processed Foods: An Integral Part of our Diet" which was held on 16th Feb 2024 at 3 pm virtually through zoom & 2nd the session is on "Efficacy & Safety of Adjuncts to Food" which will be held on 15th March 2024.

The session began with Ms. Simran Vichare, Nutritionist, PFNDAI welcoming everyone and appreciating the sponsors for their support.



The Conference was sponsored by: Hindustan Unilever Limited, Mother Dairy Fruit & Vegetable, Nestle India, Amway India Enterprises, Vista Processed Foods, Fine Organic, and Mondelez India Food, the Speaker Sponsorship was provided by: Nestle India Ltd, Marico Ltd, and ITC Ltd & the Souvenir Advertisement sponsorship was provided by Coca-Cola, Roquette India Pvt Ltd, JRS Rettenmaier, Sensient India Pvt Ltd, Aruna Industries, Lucid Colloids, Azelis India Pvt Ltd & Hershey India Pvt Ltd.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Shatadru Sengupta, Vice President - Legal, Hardcastle Restaurants, Pvt Ltd., and Chairman of PFNDAI. He



welcomed and thanked everyone present and highlighted the significance of processed food for consumers. Processing provides necessary nutrients that are often lacking in regular food intake. Some people express concern about preservatives and additives in processed food, but it's essential to recognize that everyday items like salt act as preservatives, and additives serve specific purposes backed by scientific evidence.

The belief that homemade food is healthier than purchased food lacks scientific backing. He also mentioned that the PFNDAI aims to promote awareness of relevant scientific aspects, and this conference is a testament to that commitment.

Dr Shashank Bhalkar,
Executive
Director,
PFNDAI

extended a warm welcome to all the delegates, speakers, panel members present. He explained that food processing has been around since humans began farming. Basic techniques like sun-drying, threshing, and winnowing were used to make crops edible.

More advanced techniques were developed as people diversified, creating processed foods that could be transported over long distances. Today, processing methods preserve nutrients, creating foods that are both secure and nutritious. During the session, we will discuss the benefits of processed foods. Finally, he thanked all our sponsors for supporting the conference.

The theme address was delivered by **Prof Dr Jagadish Pai,** Editor, PFNDAI.

He explained the significance of processing and the role it plays in the importance of processed foods



in today's time. He emphasized that in the vast landscape of consumer choices, the food we eat plays a crucial role in our well-being.

Therefore, every packaged food item available in the market must have a label that includes comprehensive nutritional information. This information empowers consumers to make informed decisions about what they eat. After his speech, he welcomed all the speakers, panellists, and the panel moderator, setting the stage for further discussion.

Ms. Simran Vichare, Nutritionist, PFNDAI, welcomed the first speaker for the session. **Ms.**

Meenu Yadav, Principal Manager-Technical Regulatory Affairs, Marico Limited, delivered a

wonderful presentation on "Contributions of Processed Foods in Providing Nutrition & Food Safety." Ms. Meenu's presentation provided a thorough insight into the critical role of food processing in ensuring food safety and nutrition. She defined food processing as a scientific and technological activity involving procedures like washing, cutting, heating, freezing, and packaging, which alter the natural state of

food. The impacts of food processing on food are diverse, including enhancing safety by controlling hazards, maintaining nutrient levels for improved nutrition, ensuring quality in sensory characteristics, and adding value through convenience and shelf-life.

The importance of fortification in addressing micronutrient deficiencies in India is underscored, with fortification identified as a complementary strategy alongside diet diversification and food supplementation.

Her presentation was concluded by emphasizing the well-established benefits of processed foods on health and safety, acknowledging the evolving nature of the food system.

Ms Meenu highlighted the need for collective action to improve the health of current and future generations, summarizing the multifaceted impact of food processing on food safety and nutrition.





The second speaker for the session was **Dr Sesikeran**,

Chairman-Scientific Advisory Committee, Hon. Scientific Director-PFNDAI, Former Director, NIN (ICMR), Hyderabad.



He delivered an excellent presentation on the topic: **"Glycaemic Index and Glycaemic Load in Management of Blood Glucose Levels"**. Dr Sesikeran commenced his presentation by defining GI as a metric of a food's ability to elevate blood glucose when compared to pure glucose.

This metric categorizes foods based on their GI values and describes how to calculate the whole meal GI. He emphasized the impact of different food compositions on postprandial plasma glucose levels and highlighted the significance of fibre in predicting glucose levels. He also explored the factors that affect glycaemic response, such as ethnicity, metabolic status, and eating habits.

Furthermore, he compared postprandial glycaemia in

different ethnic groups and suggested the potential benefits of low-GI diets for people with diabetes mellitus. Additionally, he provided insights into managing glycemic response through dietary

strategies, emphasizing the significance of consuming whole foods, and incorporating specific nutrients to lower glycemic response to high-GI carbohydrates. He concluded his talk by stressing the need for individualized dietary considerations for people with diabetes and highlighting the importance of monitoring postprandial blood glucose spikes.

The last speaker for the session was

Dr N Ramasubramanian, Director - V R Food Tech. He presented on the topic **"Processed Foods - Benefits and Misconceptions and Challenges"**.



Dr N. Ramasubramanian discussed the pivotal role of food processing in his presentation, emphasizing its historical significance in making food edible, preserving it, and extending shelf life. The shift from home-based to industrial processing was attributed to societal

changes like population increase and women entering the workforce. Challenges associated with processed foods, such as nutrient and taste loss and negative perceptions, were addressed.

The presentation suggested solutions like food fortification, non/reduced thermal processes, and controlled atmosphere packaging. The NOVA system classified processed foods, highlighting health concerns with ultra-processed foods due to high levels of calories, salt, sugar, and fat. The document advocates collaboration for minimizing negative effects, focusing on innovation, consumer education, equitable regulations, and the concept of "Thoda Kum" by FSSAI.

A star rating system for nutritional assessment is recommended, considering both concerns and positive aspects. The presentation was concluded by stressing the need for collaborative efforts to address processed food issues equitably, emphasizing consumer, industry, and regulator cooperation to foster positive change.

After every presentation, the speakers eagerly addressed all the questions raised by the attendees.



Ms Simran Vichare introduced the moderator and members of the Panel discussion. The Panel Discussion started wherein Dr Jasvir Singh Director, Head of AMETI Regulatory Affairs (IFF) was the Panel Moderator.



There were 4 Panel members present namely, Ms Naaznin Husein, Director Freedom Wellness Management,



Dr Jagmeet Madan- National President, IDA,



Mr. Jitin Garg - Scientific and Regulatory Affairs Lead - India, Mondelez &



Dr Sidhishwarr Rindhe- Plant QA Head- Pan India, Vista Processed Foods



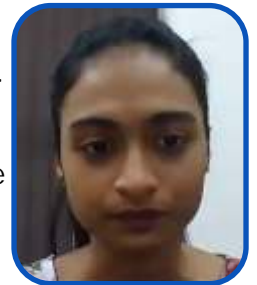
The panel discussion addressed various aspects of processed foods and their impact on health.

Key questions were posed to the panellists to explore the role of processed foods in a healthy diet, consumer education, convenience, moderation, advantages of processing, and the connection to food security.

In summary, the panel discussion highlighted the potential benefits and challenges of processed foods in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, emphasizing the need for informed choices, education, and collaboration between stakeholders.



At the end of the conference, Ms Samreen Shaikh, Junior Food Technologist at PFNDAI, presented a vote of thanks. She expressed her gratitude towards all the speakers, panel members, and the PFNDAI team for their support in making the session successful.



She also thanked the conference sponsors, speaker sponsors, and souvenir advert sponsors for their contributions. Lastly, she thanked the attendees for patiently listening throughout the conference.

The entire webinar recording is available on the following link:
<https://www.facebook.com/pfndai/videos/308565945544623/>

