

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## TOPIC: CONSUMER RIGHTS

# 'Warning label most effective in identifying harmful nutrients'

A study published in *Nutrients* journal found Health Star Rating, recommended by FSSAI, is least effective

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A new study in India has found that warning labels on food packets are most effective in helping consumers identify foods "high in sugar, saturated fat and sodium" as compared with other labelling formats.

Published in an open access journal *Nutrients* earlier this month, the study is the first peer-reviewed paper on the subject in an Indian context. It found that on most parameters, the Health Star Rating (HSR) format – where a product is assigned between half-a-star and five stars – was least effective.

### FSSAI report

The study comes at a time the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is expected to issue its draft regulation on front-of-package labelling (FOPL) and has indicated that it favours HSR, inviting criticism

from public health experts who have accused it of favouring the food industry.

The authors conducted an in-person randomised experiment on 2,869 adults in six States in India, where participants were shown food packets with one of five FOPLs – a control label (barcode), nutrient-specific warning label (octagon symbol indicating whether the product was high in salt/sugar or saturated fat), Health Star Rating, guideline for daily amount (GDA that gives nutritional content information) or traffic light label (indicating red, amber or green levels of nutrients of concern).

The objective of the study was to evaluate the impact of different labels in helping consumers correctly identify packaged products containing excess levels of nutrients of concern such as sugar, saturated fat and sodium.

The study found that relative to a control label, most



The study aimed to evaluate the impact of different labels on consumers.

number of participants were able to identify a nutrient of concern when they were presented a packet with a warning label with 60.8% recognising harmful nutrients as compared to 55% recognising them when they were shown a GDA label, and 54.8% when shown a traffic light label.

Health Star Rating label performed the worst with only 45% being able to recog-

nise the three nutrients of concern.

Warning label outperformed other labels even where secondary outcomes were concerned such as perceived message effectiveness, which is predictive of behavioural change, argue the authors.

It also performed best on outcomes such as identifying products as unhealthy and making users concerned about health consequences.

The GDA and MTL performed best at grabbing attention. The HSR performed worse than all other FOPL types on most secondary outcomes.

### Consumer awareness

However, the study also found that warning labels failed to statistically significantly reduce intentions to purchase unhealthy packaged products which is why the authors suggest "the need to reinforce any FOPL

policy with a robust and focused communications campaign to increase consumer awareness and understanding."

Of the participants, 50% were women with an educational level of 12 years or less. Their eligibility criteria for the study included being between the ages of 18 and 60 and being involved in decision making related to grocery purchases for their household at least half the time.

### Suitable strategy

"In a country where there is a demographic transition taking place and there is dominance of non-communicable diseases and multiple morbidities such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, we need to adopt a suitable strategy based on evidence to make consumers aware of nutrients of concern. Our recommendation is for adopting warning labels," Dr. S.K. Singh, Professor and Head,

Department of Survey Research and Data Analytics, International Institute for Population Sciences, and the corresponding author, told *The Hindu*.

The FSSAI is expected to bring out draft regulations recommending Health Star Rating system based on a study commissioned by the food regulator and conducted by Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-Ahmedabad), according to the minutes of a stakeholder's meeting in February 2022.

This has led to global and Indian experts criticising the move and raising questions about the IIM-A study too, calling it scientifically wrong, alleging underlying bias as well as faulty interpretation as it too found warning labels more effective in reducing consumer intent to buy products with harmful nutrients yet recommended Health Star Rating.

✓ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is an autonomous statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 (FSS Act).

✓ Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the administrative Ministry of FSSAI.

✓ Headquarters: Delhi.

✓ 7 Key Processes that FSSAI Follow?

1. Set standards of food products

2. Develop safe food practices

3. License food businesses

4. Ensure compliance through inspections

5. Test food for standards

6. Citizens Outreach

7. Train and build capacity

## TOPIC:FEDERALISM

### Federalism applies to judiciary too: Madras HC

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Federalism is a part of the basic structure of the Constitution and it applies to the judiciary as well. A High Court in one State cannot exercise powers which, under normal circumstances, can be exercised only by the High Court in another State, the Madras High Court has said, while holding that only the Karnataka High Court can rule on a dispute related to removing a Bengaluru medical college from the ambit of a deemed-to-be university in Chennai.

Justice Abdul Quddhose directed the High Court Registry to return a joint writ petition filed by Dr. MGR Educational and Research Institute in Chennai and the

Raja Rajeswari Medical College and Hospital in Bengaluru, challenging an order passed by the Union Ministry of Education on May 24 this year.

The Ministry had withdrawn a notification issued on February 14, 2019 declaring that the Bengaluru college would fall within the ambit of the Chennai university.

Since the order under challenge had been passed by the Centre pursuant to a direction issued by the Karnataka High Court on November 30, 2021 to reconsider the grant of the '2019 ambit notification', the present writ petition ought to have been filed only in Karnataka, Justice Quddhose held.

- ✓ **Federalism** is a system of government in which powers have been divided between the centre and its constituent parts such as states or provinces.
- ✓ There are **two kinds of federations**.
- ✓ **Holding Together Federation** – In this type, powers are shared between various constituent parts to accommodate the diversity in the whole entity. Here, powers are generally tilted towards the central authority. Example: India, Spain, Belgium.
- ✓ **Coming Together Federation** – In this type, independent states come together to form a larger unit. Here, states enjoy more autonomy as compared to the holding together kind of federation. Example: USA, Australia, Switzerland.

## TOPIC: AGRICULTURE

# T.N. govt. sanctions over ₹2,000 crore for crop insurance premium subsidy

Five insurance firms will cover the State through 14 clusters

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Despite the rising premium burden under the Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme (Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana-PMFBY) and the Centre gradually reducing its share of premium subsidy, the Tamil Nadu government has sanctioned around ₹2,000 crore towards its share of premium subsidy for the current year.

As in the previous year, the government has left out crops raised under the ongoing *kuruvai* season, to the disappointment of farmers. This means that crops to be raised during the seasons of *samba* and *thaladi* will be covered.

Of around ₹2,042 crore approved towards the premium subsidy, agricultural crops account for ₹1,985 crore and horticultural crops

₹57 crore. Since the launch of the PMFBY, on an average, nearly ₹2,450 crore was annually paid to around 13.8 lakh farmers towards compensation or claims. The year 2021-22 has not been taken into account for the calculation of the annual average amount of compensation as the settlement of claims for the year is in progress.

A key feature of the PMFBY this year is that five companies – unlike two in the previous year – have been chosen. The companies – Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited, IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance Company, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company and the Reliance General Insurance Company – have been allotted 14 clusters across 37 districts.

This has become possible, says an official of the Agriculture Department, thanks to the government “instilling confidence” in them with its measures to weed out the fictitious enrolment of farmers and coverage of inflated areas, besides “careful execution” of crop-cutting experiments. Last year alone, around 2.5 lakh acres was removed from the ambit of coverage, helping the exchequer save about ₹100 crore.

Another official says that in the event of crop loss, the government has planned to give compensation to farmers through the State Disaster Response Fund. Among the reasons cited for the omission of the *kuruvai* crop are the low probability of crop failure and the factor of cost. Besides, the tender process consumed nearly one-and-a-half months, involving

### Performance pointer

An overview of implementation of the Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme in Tamil Nadu

Year	Farmers enrolled (In lakh)	Area insured (In lakh acres)	Claims particulars	Claims disbursed (₹ in crore)	Farmers' share of premium (₹ in crore)	State govt.'s share of premium subsidy (₹ in crore)	Central share of premium subsidy (₹ in crore)	Gross premium paid (₹ in crore)
2016-17	18.74 (76% NL*)	35.54	Amount	3,634.34	116.86	499.11	499.11	1,115.08
			Farmers	12,94,346				
2017-18	15.70 (72% NL)	31.71	Amount	2,083.45	132.22	556.79	556.79	1,245.79
			Farmers	11,05,155				
2018-19	25.14 (80% NL)	37.17	Amount	2,651.56	171.24	690.63	690.63	1,552.51
			Farmers	18,81,829				
2019-20	22.91 (76%NL)	33.02	Amount	1,243.93	179.19	889.87	889.87	1,958.93
			Farmers	14,18,479				
2020-21	27.79 (88% NL)	43.93	Amount	2,515.02	187.8	1,930	1,021,354	3,139.15
			Farmers	12,37,307				
2021-22**	26.06 (89%)	40.74	Amount	6.85	172.67	724.99	459.42	1,357.08
			Farmers	8,409				
<b>Total</b>	<b>136.34</b>	<b>222.11</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>12,135.16</b>	<b>959.98</b>	<b>5,291.39</b>	<b>4,117.17</b>	<b>10,368.54</b>
			<b>Farmers</b>	<b>69,45,525</b>				

\*Non-Loanees | \*\*Settlement of claims is in progress

a re-tender too. As in the previous year, the authorities are expecting the enrolment

of around 25 lakh farmers and coverage of 40 lakh acres. Sensing that there ex-

ists scope for bringing more loanee farmers (who have taken crop loans) under the in-

insurance net, they are planning to pay greater attention to them.

- ✓ Launched in 2016 and is being administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- ✓ It replaced the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS).

#### **Eligibility:**

- ✓ Farmers including sharecroppers and tenant farmers growing notified crops in the notified areas are eligible for coverage.

#### **Objectives:**

- ✓ To provide insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers in the event of failure of any of the notified crops as a result of natural calamities, pests & diseases.
- ✓ To stabilize the income of farmers to ensure their continuance in farming.
- ✓ To encourage farmers to adopt innovative and modern agricultural practices.
- ✓ To ensure the flow of credit to the agriculture sector.

## Premium.

- ✓ There will be a uniform premium of only 2% to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops and 1.5% for all Rabi crops.
- ✓ In the case of annual commercial and horticultural crops, the premium to be paid by farmers will be only 5%.



## TOPIC: BHAKTHI MOVEMENT

# Missing Sambandar sculpture traced to U.S. auction house

- ✓ **Sambandar**, also referred to as Thirugnana Sambandar was a Saiva poet-saint of Tamil Nadu who lived sometime in the 7th century CE. He was a contemporary of Appar, another Saiva poet-saint.
- ✓ According to the Tamil Shaiva tradition, he composed an oeuvre of 16,000 hymns in complex meters, of which 383 (384) hymns with 4,181 stanzas have survived.
- ✓ These narrate an intense loving devotion (bhakti) to the Hindu god Shiva.
- ✓ The surviving compositions of Sambandar are preserved in the first three volumes of the Tirumurai, and provide a part of the philosophical foundation of Shaiva Siddhanta.



## TOPIC:INFRASTRUCTURE

# Davidar committee submits report on Smart City Mission

Projects taken up in 11 major cities, including Chennai, come under scanner

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The **one-man committee**, led by retired IAS officer P.W.C. Davidar, has submitted a report about the implementation of the Smart Cities Mission projects in Tamil Nadu.

According to a press release, Mr. Davidar submitted the report to Chief Minister M.K. Stalin in the presence of Chief Secretary V. Irai Anbu on Saturday. Last year, Mr. Stalin had announced that a probe would be conducted into the Smart Cities Mission projects.

**The committee looked into whether the selection of works under the Smart Cities Mission was in accordance with the guidelines.** It also checked whether the Smart Cities Special Purpose Vehicles in each city had functioned in accordance with



**Going all out:** Smart City projects at an estimated cost of ₹960 crore have been taken up in Chennai. • M. VEDHAN

the guidelines.

During the past five months, Mr. Davidar had inspected the works being executed under the project in 11 cities - Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchi, Tirunelveli, Erode, Thanjavur, Tiruppur, Vellore, Salem, Madurai and Thoothukudi - and compiled and submitted the report.

Following the report that details whether due procedure was followed in the award of contracts for the works and whether adequate measures were taken to ensure their quality, the government is expected to make a decision shortly.

Each of the 11 major cities in the State, including Chen-

nai, had taken up around ₹1,000 crore worth of Smart City projects. The committee screened projects worth a total of ₹10,651 crore before submitting the report. The deadline for the completion of the projects has been extended to June 2023 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said.

In the city, projects at an estimated cost of ₹960 crore have been taken up under the Smart Cities Mission. More than ₹700 crore of funds have already been utilised in the city.

Projects such as the command and control centre, T. Nagar pedestrian plaza, restoration of waterbodies, Villivakkam lake restoration, smart classrooms, smart metering by Metrowater and Tangedco have been taken up.

**THANK YOU**

