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CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI:** With consumption of ultra-processed packaged foods soaring to unprecedented levels, India is prioritizing the adoption of a science backed Front of Pack Labeling (FOPL). At an event, leading industry representative and food manufacturers said a global best practice FOPL would be a major boost for increasing exports of packaged food products especially those produced by MSME units in the global market.

India clocks one of the highest growth rates for ultra-processed food and beverages – items high in added sugar, salt and additives, besides being ultra-processed. According to Euromonitor sales data from 2006-2019, the retail value of packaged junk food and soft drinks in India grew by 42 times in just 13 years. The food processing industry, which the Govt of India views as a major sector for employment generation, is currently worth \$ 200 billion and expected to grow to \$ 500 billion. With 32% of the Indian food market covered

by the 'processing industry,' the massive MSME sector manufacturing delectable and highly popular desi snacks and confectionaries, is a key driver of this exponential growth. Recognizing this potential the government is incentivizing food parks for processing industry and also has an eye on enhancing the export of processed foods. The Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industries



(PLISFPI) with a fiscal outlay of Rs. 10900 crores, encourages global standard food manufacturing companies in India and supports

Indian food brands for export in the international market.

Mr Manish Agarwal, Vice President ASSOCHAM, Uttar Pradesh, said, "A big goal for the Indian food MSME is to embrace healthier versions of traditional food which are in line with global exports can be a big boost for export. India can benefit greatly from tapping into this massive potential by aligning with global standards for food labeling and thresholds for salt sugar and fat – opening up a huge market for Indian traditional snacks."