



*Union Health and Welfare Minister Harsh Vardhan. File photo*

## **Rise of diet-related diseases suggests people are eating less healthy food: Harsh Vardhan**

ANI | Updated: **Dec 26, 2019 19:25 IST**

New Delhi [India], Dec 26 (ANI): Health and Family Welfare Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday said that the rise of diet-related diseases suggests that people are eating less healthy food than they were eating a decade ago.

Inaugurating the second edition of 'Eat Right Mela' at Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium, here today, he stressed the importance of having a people's movement which encourages people to have healthier diets to help reduce disease burden in the country.

"The right kind of diet will help to reduce disease burden in the country," he said.

Lauding the 'Eat Right Mela' initiative of FSSAI as a commendable effort for citizens to nudge them towards eating right, he said it should become part of public gatherings such as local fairs.

This, he said, will help citizens learn about the health and nutrition benefits of different types of food and get dietary advice from the experts.

"India, on one side, is suffering from undernourishment resulting in infirmities such as wasting and stunting and, on the other, there is another critical area of concern to be addressed - obesity - which is apparently the result of excessive consumption of junk food, wrong choices of food, overeating, and lack of exercise," he said.

"At the same time, the rise of diet-related diseases suggests that people are eating less healthy food than they were eating a decade ago. In this context, the movement of 'Eat Right India' started by FSSAI is a timely initiative," he said.

According to a Health and Family Welfare Ministry release, the Minister launched 'The Purple Book', which is a handbook on diets for diseases.

It said the book provides general guidelines for hospitals on suitable diets for common medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, cancer, gut disorders in a simple format and has been developed and vetted by experts in the field of food and nutrition. It can be downloaded from the website [www.fssai.gov.in](http://www.fssai.gov.in).

The minister also launched NetSCoFAN (Network for Scientific Cooperation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition), a network of research and academic institutions working in the area of food and nutrition, along with NetSCoFAN directory.

The directory has information about various heads/directors and lead scientists of lead and associated partnering institutions.

The release said that NetSCoFAN would comprise eight groups of institutions working in different areas - biological, chemical, nutrition and labelling, food of animal origin, food of plant origin, water and beverages, food testing and safer and sustainable packaging. FSSAI has identified eight nodal institutions who would develop a 'ready reckoner' that will have inventory of all research work, experts and institutions and would carry out and facilitate research, survey and related activities.

It would identify research gaps in respective areas and collect, collate and develop a database on food safety issues for risk assessment activities.

"The need to identify research gaps in respective areas and collect, collate and develop a database on food safety issues for risk assessment activities will be addressed by NetSCoFAN (Network for Scientific Co-operation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition)", Harsh Vardhan said.

He also emphasised the importance of 'Save Food Share Food'.

"Let's develop the habit of not wasting food, and sharing food with those who are needy", he said.

At the event, Elan Professional Private Limited (ElanPro) through their CSR programme declared to support Indian Food Sharing Alliance (IFSA) members to ensure the food collected is held at optimum temperature, which will help to reduce travel and distribution time under the 'Save Food Share Food' initiative of FSSAI.

Presently, 84 food recovery agencies are associated with IFSA network under FSSAI.

The minister also handed over three mobile food testing vans to DN Singh, Commissioner of Food Safety, Government of NCT, Delhi.

Among those present were FSSAI Chairperson Rita Teotia, Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Preeti Sudan and CSIR Director General Shekhar C. Mande. (ANI)