

Trans fats and its Regulation

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance |
Social Development

Why in News?

Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) at the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva, officially recognised 4 countries for their outstanding leadership in eliminating industrially produced trans fats from their national food supplies.

Trans fats

- They are **unsaturated fats** present in both industrial and natural sources.
- They are also known as trans-fatty acids (TFA).
- Both industrial and naturally occurring trans fats are equally detrimental to health.
- **Industrially produced trans fats** - They are commonly found in baked goods like biscuits, pies, fried foods, margarine, vegetable shortening and Vanaspati ghee, among others.
- They contribute to over 278,000 global deaths annually.

- **Recognised countries** - Austria, Norway, Oman and Singapore.
- The Director-General of the WHO, presented validation certificates to countries that effectively implemented best-practice policies and maintained robust monitoring and enforcement.

*Countries must restrict trans fats to 2 grammes per 100 grammes of total fat or prohibiting partially hydrogenated oils, and also show strict enforcement and monitoring to qualify for the **WHO's validation programme**.*

- **Targets** - WHO had set a target of covering countries that account for at least 90% of the global trans-fat burden with best-practice policies by the end of 2025 and at least 70% within each region.
 - By May 2025, such policies were adopted by 60 countries, covering 46% of the world's population.
- **Challenges** - When WHO launched its call to eliminate industrially produced trans fats in 2018, only 11 countries representing just 6% of the global population had adopted best-practice policies.
- **Regulation in India** - In 2022, it enforced regulations limiting trans fats in oils & fats used in food products to no more than 2 %.
- The Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) 2nd Amendment Regulations, 2021 placed India among the countries with best-practice trans-fat elimination policies.

- After Thailand, India was also led implementation of best practice policies in trans-fat elimination in Asia.
- **Significance of reducing trans-fat** - It can eliminate the cause of 7% of cardiovascular diseases globally and can help in achieving SDG of reducing premature death from noncommunicable diseases by a third by 2030.

Reference

[Down To Earth| Recognising Best Practices of Reducing Trans fats](#)

