Science & Technology · GS - III

Discuss the challenges associated with regulating dietary supplements and health-related advertising in India. Suggest measures to protect consumers while promoting responsible innovation.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 02/11/2026	GS - III	Science & Technology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

FSSAI regulation; scientific substantiation of claims; misleading advertisements; consumer awareness; regulatory enforcement; transparency and accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

Dietary supplements are increasingly marketed for fitness, nutrition and general well-being. However, unsupported health claims can mislead consumers and create risks, particularly when products are treated as substitutes for evidence-based medical care.

Key Challenges

1. Scientific validity: Health claims may rely on limited or low-quality evidence that does not establish effectiveness or safety for the advertised purpose.

2. Regulatory compliance: Products must meet applicable food safety, composition, labelling and advertising requirements. Monitoring large numbers of products and online promotions remains challenging.

3. Consumer vulnerability: Celebrity endorsements and influencer marketing can increase consumer trust without necessarily establishing a product's scientific validity.

4. Accountability: Consumers may struggle to distinguish verified benefits from promotional claims and to obtain remedies when advertisements are misleading.

Way Forward

FSSAI and consumer protection authorities should strengthen risk-based inspections, verify health claims, enforce labelling and advertising rules, and improve grievance-redress mechanisms. Brands should disclose ingredients, relevant evidence and limitations transparently. Public awareness campaigns should encourage consumers to consult qualified healthcare professionals and remain cautious about exaggerated claims.

Conclusion

A credible supplement market requires scientific integrity, transparent communication and effective enforcement. Protecting consumers while allowing responsible innovation can strengthen public trust in India's health and nutrition sector.

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