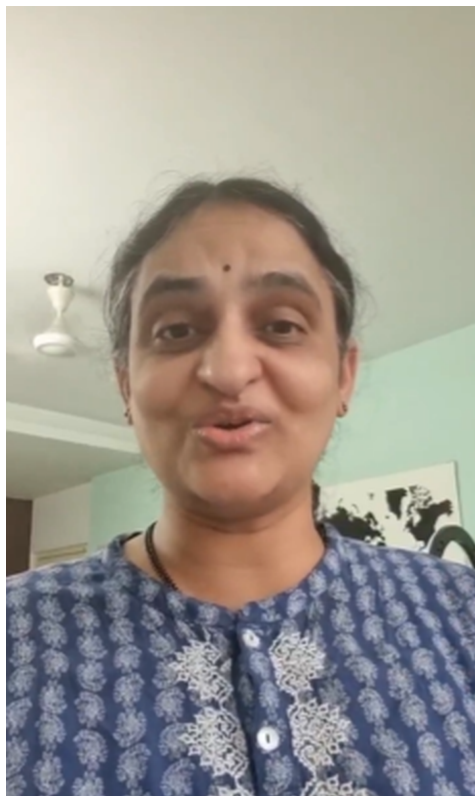


Hyderabad paediatrician's eight-year battle leads to FSSAI prohibiting usage of ORS on food products

This victory belongs not to one person, but to people's power, all the doctors, advocates, moms, and influencers who stood with me, says Sivaranjani Santosh who persisted with legal campaign

Updated - October 17, 2025 10:37 am IST - HYDERABAD

SIDDHARTH KUMAR SINGH



Paediatrician Dr. Sivaranjani Santosh who persistently fought against sugar-rich beverages falsely marketed as oral rehydration solutions (ORS). | Photo Credit: Videograb: X/@dr_sivaranjani

A Hyderabad-based paediatrician's long-standing fight against sugar-rich beverages falsely marketed as oral rehydration solutions (ORS) has resulted in a major regulatory change. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued an order stating that no food brand may use the term 'Oral Rehydration Salts' or 'ORS' on its products unless the formulation adheres strictly to the standards recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The directive, issued on October 14, mandates the immediate withdrawal of all previous permissions granted to food business operators (FBOs) for using 'ORS' in conjunction with their brand names. Specifically, it rescinds two earlier orders, dated July 14, 2022,

and February 2, 2024, that had allowed the use of 'ORS' as part of a trademark with a prefix or suffix, provided the label included a disclaimer stating, "The product is Not an ORS formula as recommended by WHO."

Misleading labelling

On October 15, day after the directive on October 14, FSSAI issued a detailed clarification reaffirming that the use of 'ORS' in any food product's name, whether fruit-based, non-carbonated, or ready-to-drink, violates the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and related regulations. The regulator stated that such labelling 'misleads consumers by way of false, deceptive, ambiguous, and erroneous names or label declarations,' and therefore contravenes multiple provisions under the Act.

A paediatrician's fight

This regulatory intervention stems from a persistent legal campaign by paediatrician Sivaranjani Santosh, who began questioning deceptive marketing practices nearly a decade ago. In 2022, she filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) before the Telangana High Court, challenging the sale of beverages falsely advertised as ORS despite not meeting WHO-recommended electrolyte and glucose standards.

WHO-approved ORS

The World Health Organisation prescribes a standard oral rehydration solution with a total osmolarity of 245 mOsm/L. This composition includes 2.6 grams of sodium chloride, 1.5 grams of potassium chloride, 2.9 grams of sodium citrate, and 13.5 grams of dextrose anhydrous (sugar) per litre of water.

In contrast, several products marketed as ORS by pharmaceutical companies contain significantly higher sugar levels, around 120 grams of total sugar per litre, with nearly 110 grams being added sugar. Their electrolyte balance is also inconsistent with WHO norms, providing just 1.17 grams of sodium, 0.79 grams of potassium, and 1.47 grams of chloride per litre.

Reflecting on the outcome, Dr. Sivaranjani described the FSSAI order as the culmination of years of persistence and public support. "It was a war. Eight years of battle, three years of filing PILs, and four to five years of fighting indifference. This victory belongs not to one person, but to people's power, all the doctors, advocates, moms, and influencers who stood with me. I stood steadfast, and we won," she said.

Published - October 16, 2025 12:27 pm IST

In Case You Missed It



'Socio-educational survey not limited to backward classes': CM Siddaramaiah lashes...



Telangana Food Safety task force flags unhygienic conditions in diet kitchens of...



LCA Tejas Mk1A manufactured in Nashik plant of HAL completes maiden...



210 Maoists lay down arms in Chhattisgarh



LIC introduces two new insurance plans



United Nations condemns military takeover in Madagascar as coup...



Sri Lankan PM Harini Amarasinghe meets PM Modi in New Delhi



New Gujarat Cabinet sworn in: Harsh Sanghvi named Deputy CM; Rivaba Jadeja...