SELF-REGULATION GUIDELINES ON ADVERTISING OF FOODS & BEVERAGES (F&B)

Preamble

Communication and advertisements related to F&B can have significant impact on the lives of the public in general, and their physical and material well-being in particular. It is therefore imperative that F&B advertisements fulfil their intended roles, and advertisers adopt strict principles of self-regulation, and not mislead the general public in any manner detrimental to well-being. Caution and care should be observed in advertising of F&B, especially ones containing relatively High Fat, Sugar and Salt (HFSS). Recognising the need to promote high standards of business ethics, to ensure commercial communications to consumers are responsible and the need to provide honest and truthful information about food and beverage products are met, the following guidelines are issued.

Guidelines

1) Advertisements should not be misleading or deceptive. Specifically, advertisements should not mislead consumers to believe that consumption of product advertised will result directly in personal changes in intelligence, physical ability or exceptional recognition. Such claims, if made in advertisements, should be supported and substantiated with evidence and with adequate scientific basis.

2) Advertisements that include what consumer, acting reasonably, might interpret as health or nutritional claims, shall be supported by appropriate scientific evidence and meeting the requirement of basic food standards laid down under the Food Safety Standards Act and Rules, wherever applicable.

3) Advertisements should not disparage good dietary practice or the selection of options, such as fresh fruits and vegetables that accepted dietary opinion recommends should form part of the normal diet.

4) Advertisements should not encourage over or excessive consumption or show inappropriately large portions of any food or beverage. It should reflect moderation in consumption and show portion sizes appropriate to the occasion or situation.

5) Advertisements should also not undermine the importance of healthy lifestyles or mislead as to the nutritive value of the food or beverage.

6) Advertisement should not undermine the role of parental care and guidance in ensuring proper food choices are made by children.

7) Advertisements for food or beverages, unless nutritionally designed as such, should not be promoted or portrayed as a meal replacement.

8) Claims in advertisements should not be inconsistent with information on the label or packaging of the food or beverage.

9) Advertisement for food and beverages should not claim or imply endorsement by any government agency, professional body, and independent agency or individual in a particular profession in India, unless there is prior consent, the claim is current, the endorsement is verifiable, and the agency body is named.

Chairman
Board of Governors, ASCI
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