HFSS food advertisements: Need for regulations

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Where all HFSS ads need to be regulated?

- **Advertising mediums**
  - **Broadcasting**
    - TV, Radio
  - **Print**
    - Newspapers, magazines, comic books
  - **New-age**
    - Social media - YouTube, Facebook, Instagram
    - Search engines - Google, Yahoo
    - Food-themed game applications/advergames
  - **Outdoor**
    - Billboards, bus shelters, moving vehicles, metro-wraps, railway stations, airports, stadiums, cinema halls

**Advertising Code** under the Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995

**AIR code**

**Press Council (Procedure for Inquiry) Regulations, 1979.**

**IT Act, 2000 but no code, or guideline**

**Parliamentary Committee on IT to examine the issue of Safeguarding Citizens Rights on Social and Online News Media Platforms**

**Self regulation by Indian Outdoor Advertising Association – an association of advertisers**

No specific provisions which would help regulate HFSS
How is it regulated?

- **Age**: Below 12 to 18 – ranges from country to country
- **Timing**: For example, a “watershed”, i.e. a time in the evening after which the child audience is likely to be small.
- **Channels**: Define channels based on children’s exposure – where children make at least some percentage (varies across countries) of the audience
- **Content**: Prohibiting the use of characters, cartoons, and celebrities
- **Sanctions**: Defining penalties (not just monetary) the endorser, advertiser are liable to in case of breach of advertising codes
Why should we regulate? – India scenario

- Children are heavily exposed to advertisements
- CSE survey with over 13000 children (9-17 years) shows high screen time, a source of exposure to advertisements, is linked with frequent consumption of packaged food, beverages and fast food.

- Among the children who had screen time of over two hours per day, 73 per cent consumed such foods at least once a day; this percentage was 44% for those with less than two hours

- Kids’ (2-14 years old) viewership on the non-kids channels dominate due to co-viewing -- 87% of the share (Broadcast Audience Research Council)
- Because of co-viewing, easier for kids to influence their parents.

- Food & beverages, the most advertised sector on kids’ channels (45%) and second most on the non-kids’ channel (19%) but garners the maximum impressions on both.
Voluntary actions: How far do they go to restrict HFSS?

- In many countries Food Companies take voluntary initiatives or pledges to restrict food and beverage advertisements primarily targeted at children.

- Such initiatives have loopholes –
  - Companies follow their own selection criteria about foods that are not to be advertised.
  - The age of children and the nutrition criteria are inconsistently defined.
  - The enforcement and monitoring of voluntary codes is not defined.

- Voluntary pledges haven’t been effective in Germany, Australia, Canada, Spain and US – change in food ads children saw on television was little or none.

- Undermine the development of mandatory regulations.
Ads of the year

Says it celebrates the spirit of the new generation in its ‘Har Ghoont Mein Swag’ - announce the ‘SWAGSTAR OF THE MATCH’.

“Kuch accha pak raha hai” - showcases a son teaching a father to cook maggi. On asking why the cooking classes today, the son retorts - “so that you’re not mad at mama when she doesn’t cook anything because she got late at work.”

‘Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye’ ‘Miss Palampur’ and ‘Pappu Paas Ho Gaya’. Occasions like Friendship, Valentine’s Day with #RealDosti, #PopYourHeartOut.

‘Share a Coke' campaign partially de-brands the Coca-Cola bottle by replacing the brand name with words like 'Bhai', 'Didi', 'Ma', and 'Papa' on one side of the label.

All campaigns show kids and their mothers. The ads communicate that the product is a choice of caring mothers and smart kids. Tan Ki Shakti, Man Ki Shakti, Bournvita in 1990, Tayari jeet ki, in 2010 and Bournvita badhaye doodh ki Shakti

Vidooly Advertising report identified these ads as the most watched ads in the F&B sector on YouTube. Others are KFC, Dominos.
Advergames
Ads that help us learn!

#learncolors #coloresparaniños #balloons
5 Bottles Balloons With Beads and Balls Pj Masks Surprise - Learn Colors Pj Masks Surprise Toys

245,564,317 views
### Regulations in other countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Regulations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>The ban decreased fast-food consumption in comparison to a neighbouring province Ontario.</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The first country to introduce statutory legislation to ban HFSS advertising in and around programmes of particular appeal to children under 16 years of age, with additional ‘content rules’. 34% less HFSS advertising however, reductions in exposure are likely limited to dedicated children’s programming. More recently, steps are taken to restrict advertisement on non-broadcast mediums such as London transport.</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>TV advertising for specific food categories has been restricted to children under 18 years of age before, during and after programmes shown between 5 p.m. and 7p.m. and during other children’s programmes.</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Statutory regulations on advertisements directed at children under 18.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Advertising of foods and sweetened beverages is restricted on TV programmes classified as ‘A’ between 2.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. on weekdays and 7 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. on weekends, where over 35 per cent of the audience is under the age 13.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Restricts all forms of food advertising aimed at children under 14 years, regardless of where it occurs. The law also specifies stringent ‘content rules.</td>
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Recommendations

- There should be a comprehensive legally binding framework for regulation of HFSS ads.
- This should include restricting food advertisements during sports, cartoon and other programmes/channels viewed mostly by children.
- Policy framework should be developed for regulations across different mediums including new-age digital media.
- There should be no advertisements allowed for categories, such as soft drinks (non-dairy, non-fruit-based SSBs), on the lines of tobacco-based products.
Thank you!

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