

How does advertising influences food choices

Advertising may be a sort of communication to market a product and attract consumers. It's an integral part of business today and has seen a boom in recent times. As per Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), a billboard is defined as 'Any audio or visual publicity, representation or pronouncement made by means of any light, sound, smoke, gas, print, electronic media, internet, or website and includes through any notice, circular, label, wrapper, invoice or other document'. Media and advertisements play a serious role in changing the dietary patterns of individuals in any country. Advertising in itself isn't a drag but when these advertisements are misleading and make false claims then they become a drag .

Advertisements equally influence food consumption behaviour of adults and youngsters . Children are the simplest target for such promotional activities. Various packaged food companies have targeted their sale of products to children by promotion through inclusion of gifts with the food item for instance a toy, goggles, scale, bottle, lunch box etc. These gifts are often linked to their favourite cartoon character on television. Children often get attracted towards these things and hence force their parents to shop for them.

Moreover various Bollywood celebrities and sports stars also promote food items meant for youngsters. Consumption of food items promoted by such advertisements features a definite impact on the eating patterns of youngsters . Over a couple of decades there has been a rising trend of obesity and diabetes in children. Surprisingly, the reality of today is that Type 2 Diabetes rather than Type 1 has become the most sort of diabetes in children . This increasing prevalence has been attributed mainly to unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity in children especially in urban areas. These children have access to Television and are persuaded by various misleading advertisements. Marketing companies often target children of working parents. These parents often attempt to catch up on spending less quality time by buying unhealthy food items which children insist on.

For a few food items the oldsters themselves are influenced by the advertisement and truly believe that these food items are going to be beneficial for his or her children. Since advertising plays a crucial role in changing the dietary patterns of youngsters , a study was planned to review the claims and appeals made by various food companies in their advertisements to influence children to consume their products. With this background a study was planned to seek out the prevalence of misleading advertisements and their claims with reference to food items.

Discussion

The marketing strategy behind such commercials is predicated on social learning theory which states that children learn by observing and imitating the behaviour of others. This has resulted in children from high socio-economic status preferring food over traditional nutritious food. The childhood obesity epidemic is often primarily attributed to adverse environmental factors of which misleading advertisements is a crucial component. These promotions are inversely related to intake of fruit and vegetables among adolescents.

Food advertisements are a crucial source of data and a strong tool of communication to discourage consumption of unhealthy food items. Although televised food advertisements target all age groups, food items are the foremost heavily promoted product category targeting young children.

An advertisement becomes misleading when it gives the customer an incorrect understanding of the merchandise like a chilly drink claiming to bring happiness to the family or a health drink claiming to enhance the tutorial results of the youngsters . to touch the emotions of the elders, various food advertisements were found to possess an emotional content which is beyond scientific scrutiny. Misleading advertisements are the one where the claim is materially false and that they persuade the buyer to shop for the merchandise . Media doesn't only have a negative impact on the life-style of youngsters , it also can be wont to have a positive impact on dietary habits and behavior change.

Conclusion

Prevalence of misleading food advertisements was high. This is often a cause for concern because the same is an indirect contributory thought about the increase in prevalence of obesity in children in our country.