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No Junk Food Ads On Cartoon Channels; Govt Says No Ban On Mainstream TV!

India is at a strange crossroad of civilization – While 38% of Indian kids under 5 years of age suffer from severe malnutrition, cases of obesity among the same age group is expanding at a fast pace in urban India.

A report states that 22% of Indian kids between 5-13 years are suffering from obesity, and as per WHO, the primary reason for this is “marketing of unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages”.

Indian Govt. has taken note of this urban problem, and has decided to ban advertisements of junk food on kid’s channels, mainly cartoons channels.

However, at the same time, Govt. has also said that they have no such plans to ban junk food ads on mainstream TV channels. So, what happens when a kid watches other channels? Won’t he/she get inspired to eat junk?

No Junk Food Ads on Kid’s Channels

Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore has informed the nation that from now on, there shall be no junk food advertisements on kid’s channels. This will prevent them from getting inspired with such food items, and help them to stay healthy.

FSSAI IN NEWS

As per reports, leading food advertisers, which includes Coca-Cola, Nestle, Pepsi and others, have agreed to this Govt. diktat, and they have pledged not to advertise their junk food on such children's TV channels.

Any food with high fat, high sugar and/or salt won't be advertised on kid's channels from now on.

But Junk Food Ads Are Ok On Other Channels!

Rumors began to float that Indian Govt. is placing a blanket ban on all sort of junk foods on TV.

When asked about this, Information and Broadcasting Minister Smriti Irani has categorically denied. She said that "presently there is no such proposal".

Clarifying that the ban on junk food exists only on kid's channels, she said,

"The expert group in its report made a recommendation regarding the ban on food with high fat, sugar and salt advertising on children's channels or during children shows. On this recommendation, the remarks of the FSSAI were that the food businesses could be asked to voluntarily desist from advertising high fat, sugar and salt foods on children's channels.."

Last year, The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had recommended to the Govt. that junk food advertisements should not be allowed to be run on kid's channels; and now, this recommendation has been accepted, and action has been taken.

FSSAI had also recommended that celebrities should be banned from endorsing food with high salt/sugar and fat.

Will Govt. accept this recommendation as well?

We will keep you posted.