

Food regulator issues notice to McDonald's for 'irresponsible advertising'

On November 9, 2019, McDonald's issued a full-page advertisement in a national daily that read, "Stuck with Ghiya-Tori Again? Make the 1+1 Combo you love".

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The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued a showcause notice to McDonald's

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued a showcause notice to McDonald's for a newspaper advertisement it considered "irresponsible advertising". The fast-food major could face a fine of up to ₹10 lakh in case it is unable to give a satisfactory response.

On November 9, 2019, McDonald's issued a full-page advertisement in a national daily that read, "Stuck with Ghiya-Tori Again? Make the 1+1 Combo you love".

"The central licensing authority and FSSAI's designated officer at New Delhi and Mumbai have taken cognizance of this and issued showcause notices for contravening the provisions of Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018 as to why further action should not be initiated against McDonald for this," read the notice dated November 20.

The FSSAI objected to the advertisement saying it was promoting unhealthy substitutes for healthy food.

“It is pushing the concept of creative liberty too far. They are trying to promote their food which is unhealthy viz-a-viz healthier vegetables like ‘tori’ and ‘tinda’. The FSSAI considered the matter and found it contravening the provisions of Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018,” said Pawan Agarwal, chief executive officer, FSSAI.

McDonald’s has been given time till December 27 to respond.

“Our designated officers issued the notice a couple of days ago, and technically seven days are given to an FBO to respond to allegations. If the officer concerned is not satisfied with the response then it will go for adjudication. There is a provision for fining up to Rs 10 lakh for a violator,” said Agarwal.

Singapore recently banned advertisement for the unhealthy sugary drinks in a move to combat rising diabetes rates. “The aim is to create a healthy ecosystem, and not promote foods that are of low nutritional value,” Agarwal said.