

NUTRITION ADVOCACY IN PUBLIC INTEREST-India (NAP*i*)

NAP*i*'s Statement on Bournvita Row

18th April 2023, New Delhi: Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest-India (NAP*i*), concerned over the row of events between social media blogger/influencer Mr. Revant Himatsingka and Bournvita Brand owned by Mondelez India; realised the need to intervene and issue a statement from the public health point of view.

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Recognising the Nova (means new) classification of foods^[1], based on the characteristics of food processing (extent and intent both) rather than nutrient content of sugar/salt or fats, understanding that ultra-processed food products (UPFs) are being manufactured through sophisticated processing of food elements; changing food matrix, stripping the fibre off, modifying these and adding flavours, colouring and cosmetic additives to make them attractive and highly palatable. These are aggressively marketed backed by huge budgets to create demands influencing the gullible people with claims like 'Low or Zero Sugar', 'Healthy', 'Immunity building' etc. They believe them and buy and eat little realising that these could be harmful.

The food product Bournvita falls under the ultra-processed food (UPF) category based on its ingredients list. This industrial formulation is inherently harmful.

There is enough scientific evidence^[2] present in the public domain pertaining to the negative impact of increasing consumption of UPFs on human health, which include several chronic diseases such as **obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and depression (Non Communicable Diseases-NCDs)**. Mechanisms are acting through alteration of satiety controls and metabolic pathways, high glycaemic load, deleterious nutrient profile and consumption of potentially harmful additives leading to inflammation affecting micro- biome. More than 60% deaths that happen in India are due to non-communicable diseases and overconsumption of UPFs is attributed to be one of the major reasons.

The aggressive marketing of UPFs drives the increasing consumption of UPFs; leading to unhealthy and unsustainable diets replacing real foods globally. India is rapidly rising in consumption of UPFs too.

The claims by the company are vague and do not showcase or share any scientific evidence which could be referred to and reviewed by the public health scientists. Unfairly targeting someone who did a public service is condemned.

NAP*i* stands by Mr. Revant Himatsingka for speaking the factual information on the nutritional information of the product Bournvita that it is high in total sugar -product is 49.8-gram total sugar per 100 grams.

Also, in the statement issued by Bournvita they are misleading and manipulating the consumers by bringing in the per serve argument. Per serve argument does not apply here as the product is fundamentally way high the unhealthy sugar content standard. Company is also appropriating the value of milk.

Scientifically crafted means nothing to the health of people if the product is inherently harmful by the nature of its processing. Whole of Cadbury/Mondelez team should read evidence of how harmful it could be and then talk. The context of marketing cannot be ignored.

Cadbury by saying it supports "healthy functioning of the immune system" rather it is creating a sense of fear and doubt among citizens of India about their diets and immunity.

^[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdV7eg2Nm3g>

^[2] <https://napiindia.in/scientific-Evidence>

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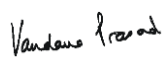
Ms. Nupur Bidla
Social Worker


Finally, NAPi believes that advertisements of Bournvita are misleading and filed a formal complaint to the Department of Consumers Affairs, Government of India about its recent advertisement alleged to violate the provision of Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

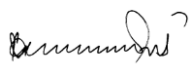
NAPi believes Mr. Revant Himatsingka's video was in public interest to make people aware, not create panic as alleged by the brand.

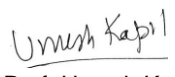
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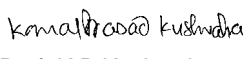
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