

THE LAW AND GENERAL PUBLIC

The food safety law and what actually happens in Sri Lanka?

If some act is prohibited by law can we permit any party to blatantly breach that law?

Law and the advertising campaign

As per the Food (Flavouring Substances and Flavour Enhancers) Regulations 2013, the following 3 Flavour Enhancers are not permitted to be added to any food for use by young children below three years of age.

1. **Monosodium glutamate (INS.621)**
2. **Disodium 5'-guanylate(INS 627)**
3. **Disodium 5'-inosinate (INS 631)**

Law

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PART I : SEC. (I) - GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA - 01.02.2013

6. The following may be used as flavour enhancers in food :

(a) Monosodium glutamate	-	INS	621
(b) Disodium 5' - guanylate	-	INS	627
(c) Disodium 5' - inosinate	-	INS	631

7. Flavour enhancers –

(i) may be added to foods subject to observance of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and where the label carries clearly a declaration as to the particular substance or substances used ;

(ii) shall not be added to any food for infants or young children below three years of age; and

(iii) shall not be used in the foods specified in Schedule III hereto.



Please check the list of ingredients of “Knorr” marketed by Unilever Sri Lanka Ltd.

NOTE: All the above 3 restricted Flavour Enhancers are added to “Knorr”.

If so how does the general public know the addition of Flavor Enhancers, that are prohibited to be added and refrain from giving that product to young children?



Simple answer is that, the manufacturer should declare warnings to read as *“Not suitable for children bellow 3 years”* on product labels.

Mandatory labelling requirements

The Section 4 (2) (b) of the Food (Labelling and Advertising) Regulations mandates to declare instruction for use.

Accordingly when products such as “Knorr” which contains 3 flavour enhancers should include a warning on the product label and all advertisements indicating “Not recommended for children bellow 3 years” or “Not suitable for children bellow 3 years”

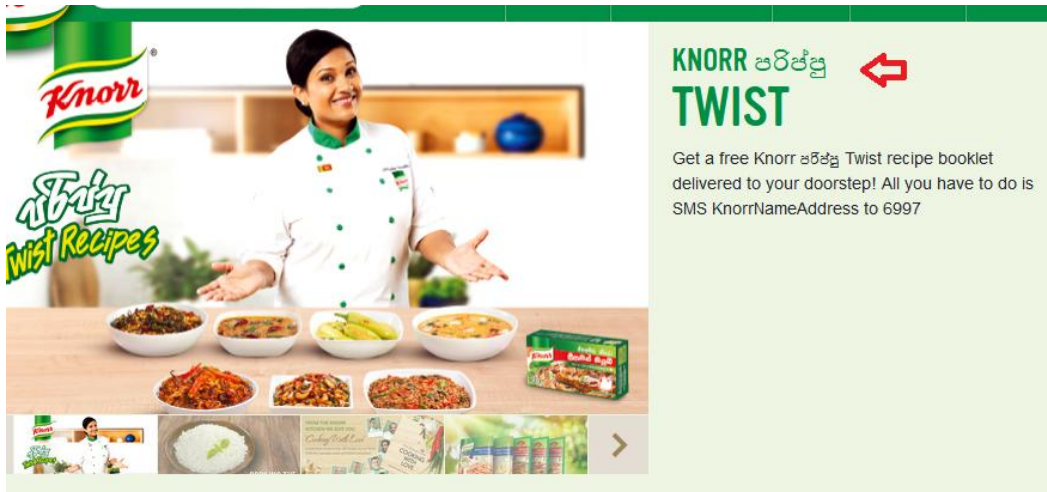
Section 4 (2) (b)

The following declarations shall be on any panel in any one of the three languages;

(b) Instruction for storage and use, if any;

ADVERTESMENTS

The following shows the advertising attitude of Unilever with total disregard to food legislations and the enforcement mechanism of the Food Authority.



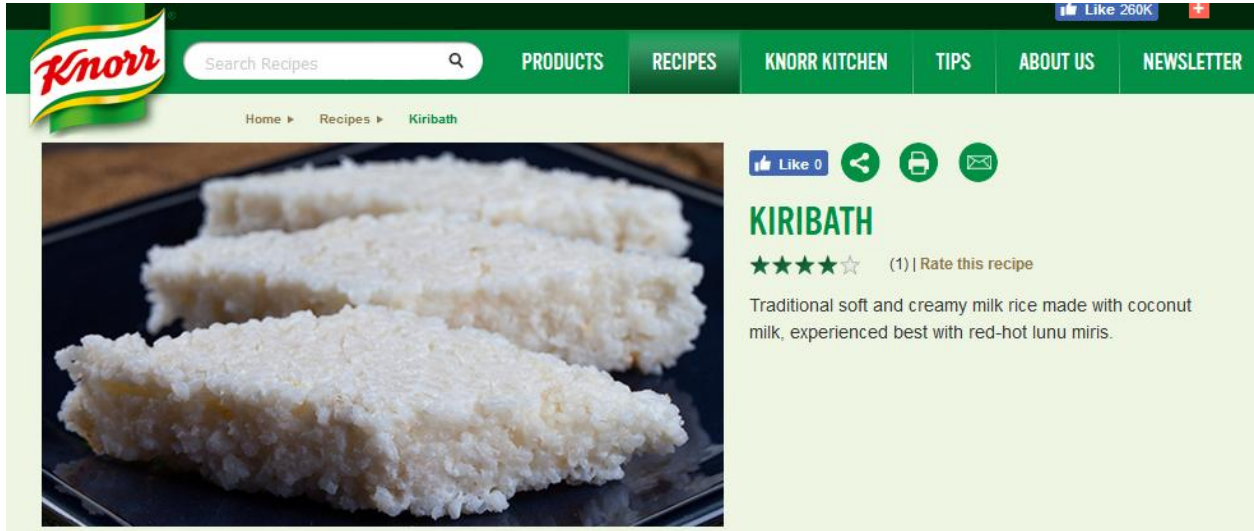
If **Monosodium glutamate, Disodium 5'-guanylate and Disodium 5'-inosinate** are not permitted to be added to any food for use by young children below three years of age, can you see any warning or statement to that effect stated in the advertisement?

Note: Even though “Knorr” is not a product exclusively prepared for young children it is added to food preparations (ಐರಿಚ್ಛೇದ) by mothers. When they prepare special “Dahl curry” with less chili powder for young children, then it becomes a food specially meant for young children.

අවුරුදු 3 ට අඩු ලමයින්ටත් කිරි බත් රසකර කර කවනව.

ලමයින්ගේ හොඳට කනව.

අපි කවදද *Knorr* කිරිබත් කෑවෝ?



අවුරුදු 3 ට අඩු ලමයින්ට දෙන නව වසා කියල දැන්වීම් වල සඳහන් කරල නැහැනේද?

අම්මල කොහොමද ඒක දැනගන්නේ?

නීතිගේ හැටියට භාවිතය පිළිබඳ උපදෙස් දැමිය යුතුයි. ඇයි එහෙම නම් එහෙම දන්නෙ නැත්තේ?

1. සමාගම නීතියට බය නැති නිසා
2. නීතියක් ක්‍රියාත්මක නොවන නිසා-----
3. නීතිය ගැන පාරිභෝගිකයා දන්නෙ නැති නිසා පාරිභෝගික හඬක් නැතිනිසා -----
4. මේ ලංකාව නිසා
5. අපි නිතරම ඉන්න නිසා
6. බලධාරීන්ට බලපෑමක් නොකරන නිසා

Consequences of feeding young children with added flavor enhancers

There are many adverse effects.

Simple reason is that;

When young children's taste buds are addicted to **Monosodium glutamate, Disodium 5'-guanylate, Disodium 5'-inosinate** flavour enhancers we cannot feed them with fruits, vegetable and other nutritious items. They prefer only the Ajinomoto taste foods and refuse (say "NO" to) all other foods.

Are there any measures to curb this type of violations?

1. **Yes.** Not only this, all violations of this nature can be easily tackled and curbed.
2. **How.** There are over 2000 Public Health Inspectors, 400 Medical Officers of Health and around 75 Food & Drugs Inspectors appointed as Authorized Officers under the Food Act No 26 of 1980 to enforce the law.

Authorized Officers have powers to initiate legal action, so they should take appropriate action.

3. **Easiest and most effective:** There are powers vested under the Food Act empowering the Director General of Health to prohibit the advertisements which are in contravention of food laws. Provisions to those effects are given under the Section 2 of the Food (Amendment) Act No. 20 of 1991, and read as:

“(3) the Chief Food Authority may, after giving the labller or advertiser of any food an opportunity of being heard, **prohibit the labeling or advertising of such food** in contravention of the provisions of subsection (1) of this section”.

Accordingly, the DGHS should call explanation from the advertiser and take appropriate action.

Conclusion:

I know my effort will not be very effective. We cannot force present regulators and enforcement officers to take stern action.

I thought of sharing this information with you just to make an awareness and also to keep you informed about the way things are happening in Sri Lanka.

Please share your comments on this presentation. If this type of information is useful to you I can send more such information.

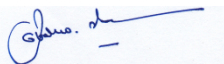
Please remember the quote made by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Our lives begin to end
the day we become silent
about things that matter."

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Thank you.

Submission made by



P. Madarsinghe



Former Assistant Director Food Control Administration Unit, Ministry of Health

Director-Food Products Evaluation & Consultative Services

Telephone- 077 355 9758 – 035 222 3070

E mail preammadarasinghe@gmail.com

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