



____ **ASCIndia** ____

The Advertising Standards Council of India

Advertising in the Food Industry

South Asian Media Briefing on Food Safety and Environmental Toxins

What is ASCI?

- Advertising standards council of India (ASCI)
 - A voluntary self-regulatory council
 - Formed in 1985
- ASCI team comprises of Board of Governors and Consumer Complaints Council (CCC)
- Overarching Goal of ASCI
 - To maintain and enhance the public's confidence in advertising.

ASCI

- All 4 sections connected with advertising viz.:
 - Advertisers
 - Advertising Agencies
 - Media (owners of press, television, Radio etc.)
 - Related sectors (outdoor agencies, PR, market researchers, ad producers, business schools etc.)

come together & agree to voluntarily comply with a set of guidelines or rules ie the code to protect:

- Consumer interest
- Ensure fair play amongst competitors

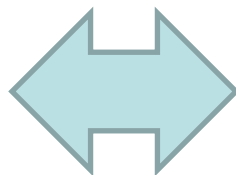
Principles Of The ASCI Codes

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|----|---|
| 1. | To ensure the <u>truthfulness & honesty</u> of representations & claims |
| 2. | To ensure that advertisements are <u>not offensive</u> to generally accepted standards of public decency |
| 3. | To safeguard against indiscriminate use of advertising in situations or promotion of products/ services which are regarded as <u>hazardous or harmful</u> |
| 4. | To ensure that advertisements <u>observe fairness in competition</u> |

**The ASCI code is not in competition with the law:
Its rules are designed to complement legal controls, not to usurp or replace them**

The ASCI Structure

- Independent Secretariat headed by Secretary General
- A 16 elected Board of Governors meets once a month to take policy decisions & review working
- Each of the 4 sections of industry has 4 members each on the Board



- The Board of Governors appoints a **Consumer Complaints Council (CCC)** which is completely independent & lays down its own rules to deliberate & decide on a complaint
- CCC currently has **21 Members**:
Only 9 from within 4 Industry sections
12 from Civil Society at large
(eminent doctors, lawyers, scientists etc)
- *CCC decisions are independent of and binding on the ASCI Board*

Only ASCI has a complaint adjudication board having majority membership from Civil Society

(Unlike other Self Regulatory Organisations(SRO- Bar , Medical, CA Councils etc.)

The ASCI Guidelines on the Advertising of Food & Beverages directed at Children under 13 years of age

Knowing it Better

Guidelines : Food & Beverages

Preamble

Children's choice of diet (food and beverages) and level of physical activity, can impact their general health and well being.

It can have a positive influence by encouraging a healthy, well balanced diet, sound eating habits and appropriate physical activity. Caution and care therefore should be observed in advertising of Foods & Beverages especially ones containing relatively high Fat, Sugar and Salt.

Guidelines : Food & Beverages

Guidelines

- 1) Advertisements should not mislead consumers to believe that consumption of product advertised will result directly in personal changes in intelligence, physical ability or exceptional recognition. Such claims if made in advertisements should be supported with adequate scientific substantiation. All nutritional and health benefit claims in foods & beverage advertisements are required to be substantiated scientifically.**

Guidelines : Food & Beverages

Guidelines

- 2) Unless a food product has been nutritionally designed as a meal replacement, it should not be portrayed as such.**
- 3) Messages in advertising to children will portray accurately the products, in a way that is in keeping with their ability to understand**

Guidelines : Food & Beverages

Guidelines

- 4) Advertisements should not show over consumption of Foods & Beverages. It should reflect moderation in consumption and portion sizes appropriate to occasion or situation. Advertising of promotional offers on Food & Beverage products should also not show excessive consumption
- 5) Advertisements should not undermine the role of parental care and guidance in ensuring proper food choices are made by Children
- 6) Visual presentation of foods and beverages in advertisement should not mislead the consumers of the material characteristics of the products advertised.

Claim

Children who eat Sunfeast Milky Magic go taller

Complaint

This is an extremely exaggerated and misleading commercial that conveys that biscuits are responsible for a person's growth.

Decision

Visual depiction likely to exploit the vulnerability of children.
Ad misleading by gross exaggeration

Claim

“Happy Heart”, “Healthy Soups”

Complaint

This creates an impression that consumption of Maggi soups lead to better heart health.

Decision

Claim, “Happy Heart”, misleading by implication.

Claim, “REAL recognizes that soups which are low in Fat & Cholesterol help heart stay healthy”, misleading by ambiguity.

Claim

Supreme Sunflower Oil is “Toppe (paunch) control oil” “Low Cholesterol”, and “Low Fat”.

Complaint

Conclusions drawn in the Ad are misleading and suggesting a magical remedy.

Decision

Ad likely to lead to the harmful practice of over indulgence, leading to obesity.

Claim

TVC (animated film) shows - “lots of bananas falling from trees and becoming biscuits.”

Complaint

TVC gives the impression that `Tiger Banana biscuits' is full of Banana. But the product contains only 0.5% of banana powder.

Decision

Claims were substantiated.

Claim

“A 100 gm pack of Maggi Vegetable Atta Noodles provides the goodness of 3 rotis (energy, carbohydrates, dietary fibre, protein and calcium)”.

Complaint

Claim needs to be substantiated with independent data.

Decision

Advertiser provided an independent laboratory report. Claims made on the website, TVC, and on the pack, were substantiated.

In Conclusion

- Self regulation is far more sensible than inviting external control
- Adherence to code of conduct adds credibility to advertising
- It is preferable for all working in the ad creation (advertisers and agencies) process to be absolutely familiar with the ASCI code of conduct to avoid expensive mistakes.