

ASCI bats for greater inclusion in advertising

~ Updates the code to include issues of gender identity, sexual orientation, body type, age or physical and mental conditions

Mumbai, May 25, 2022: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has updated its code to add greater inclusivity in advertising depictions. The ASCI code already required ads to not deride anyone on the basis of race, caste, creed, gender or nationality. However, new areas of possible discrimination or derision have now been included such as gender identity and sexual orientation, body shape, age, and physical and mental conditions. Advertisements that mock or deride anyone on these bases will now be considered in violation of the ASCI Code.

This clause is now updated as part of Chapter 3 pertaining to advertisements that cause harm, which reads as follows:

3.1. No advertisement shall be permitted which:

(b) Derides any individual or groups on the basis of race, caste, color, religion, gender, body shape, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental conditions or nationality.

As a future-facing organisation, ASCI works to ensure that its guidelines keep pace with the ever-evolving society. As consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about unfavourable depictions of certain sections of society, this change ensures that advertising too keeps pace with these rightful expectations.

Talking about the changes, Manisha Kapoor, CEO & Secretary General, ASCI, said: “We have seen consumers call out ads that mock or deride people, or portray them in unfavourable ways. And it is only right that advertising becomes more inclusive and sensitive to this. It is not acceptable for example, to associate characteristics such as sluggishness with a certain body shape. Similarly, to deride someone with a physical or mental ailment, or their gender identity would now violate the ASCI code. With this change, ASCI hopes to ensure that advertising becomes more inclusive and sensitised to all sections of our country, and does not perpetuate certain portrayals that have no place in a progressive society”

The changes to the ASCI code were approved by the board recently.

PRESS RELEASE



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