

## **Saugata Gupta appointed as ASCI Chairman, sets vision to consolidate the preventive footprint of ASCI**

**Mumbai, September 29, 2023:** During the board meeting that succeeded its 37<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) announced the appointment of Saugata Gupta, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Marico Limited, as the new Chairman of the ASCI Board of Governors. Saugata Gupta is well recognised as a dynamic and accomplished industry leader, with several innovative accomplishments to his credit. Saugata Gupta's association with ASCI spans several years; two years on the Board of Governors and four years as a special invitee on the Board of Governors.

Mr. Partha Sinha, President, Response, Bennett Coleman & Company Limited, was elected Vice Chairman, and Mr. Sudhanshu Vats, Deputy Managing Director, Pidilite Industries Ltd., was appointed Honorary Treasurer.

**In his role as ASCI's new Chairman, Saugata Gupta** sharing his vision, stated, "*Leading ASCI at this juncture is a privilege. We are in the midst of an extraordinary opportunity to reimagine what responsible advertising means and how consumers need protection in the digital age. ASCI is at the very forefront of this effort as it collaboratively shapes the industry.*"

*With the advent of the ASCI Academy, we are active architects shaping a more responsible future. Our mission is to instil the principles of self-regulation into the very heart of the creative process. I eagerly look to take further the ambition we have drawn for ourselves. With the support of my board colleagues and ASCI's exceptional team, we are all set to raise the standards of responsible advertising."*

**Recalling his tenure at ASCI, the outgoing Chairman, NS Rajan** said, "*Leading ASCI over the past year has been an immensely fulfilling journey. I am proud that, as a collective team, we have strengthened our abilities to be ready for the future. The launch of the ASCI Academy is a significant event that I am sure will yield positive results.*"

*In an environment of rapid technological advancements and shifting consumer expectations, ASCI has remained agile and forward-thinking. The complaints management part is now highly streamlined and efficient, and we are developing significant expertise in digital monitoring.*

*I have no doubt that Team ASCI will continue to shape policies, drive innovation, and champion causes that are not only important to the industry but also to our society at large."*

In what has been a dynamic year for the self-regulatory organisation, ASCI has undertaken a series of impactful initiatives. One such highlight was the #GetItRight Brand-Influencer Summit, held in February 2023. This event served as a pivotal platform for brands and influencers to collaboratively explore and learn effective strategies for creating trustworthy relationships with each and consumers.

ASCI facilitated an interactive consultation with the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) in Mumbai, a session chaired by Shri Rohit Kumar Singh, Secretary of the Department of Consumer Affairs. The discussion emphasized the critical issue of deceptive practices and their detrimental impact on consumer rights. In addition, ASCI was part of several government consultation groups.

ASCI delivered a diverse array of insightful reports over the year. These included the 'Wielding Influence Nurturing Trust Report,' illuminating the evolving influencer marketing landscape. The 'EdNext study' offered a forward-looking and responsible approach for the

EdTech sector. A discussion paper, 'Dark Patterns,' exposed manipulative UI/UX tactics. The 'Misleading Advertisements and Trademarks - A Registration Conundrum' whitepaper uncovered trademark usage to defend misleading claims. ASCI also ventured into the intricate domain of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in advertising, offering a comprehensive whitepaper that explored AI's opportunities, risks, and legal intricacies.

ASCI's code was updated with guidelines for the education sector, charitable causes, health and financial influencers as well as online deceptive design patterns. ASCI also expanded its definition of celebrities to include social media influencers, in keeping with new trends observed in the advertising industry.

As ASCI sets its sights on the future, it remains steadfast in its commitment to both corrective and preventive action to redefine the landscape of responsible advertising. It aims to do so through dynamic and multi-stakeholder collaborations, as well as technology investments. A proactive approach underscores ASCI's commitment to staying at the forefront of industry regulation, safeguarding the integrity and responsibility of advertising in the years to come.

### **About the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)**

The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), established in 1985, is committed to the cause of self-regulation in advertising, ensuring the protection of consumer interests. ASCI seeks to ensure that advertisements conform to its Code for Self-Regulation, which requires advertisements to be legal, decent, honest, and truthful and not hazardous or harmful while observing fairness in competition. ASCI looks into complaints across ALL MEDIA such as Print, TV, Radio, hoardings, SMS, Emailers, Internet/website, product packaging, brochures, promotional material and point of sale material etc. In January 2017, the Supreme Court of India in its judgement affirmed and recognised the self-regulatory mechanism as an effective pre-emptive step to statutory provisions in the sphere of advertising content regulation for television and radio in India. ASCI's role has been acclaimed by various Government bodies including The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the Ministry of AYUSH as well as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB). MIB issued an advisory for a scroller providing ASCI's WhatsApp for Business number 77100 12345, to be carried by all TV broadcasters for consumers to register their grievances against objectionable advertisements. On the international front, in 2023, ASCI CEO and Secretary General, Ms Manisha Kapoor was re-elected as one of the four Vice-Presidents on the Executive Committee of the International Council on Ad Self-Regulation (ICAS). Among several awards bestowed by the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA), ASCI bagged a Gold Global Best Practice Award for the Mobile App "ASCI online" (2016), special recognition for its "Guidelines for Celebrities in Advertising"; at the first-ever 'Global Awards for Effective Advertising Self-Regulation' hosted by the ICAS (2019). In 2021, ASCI also won two ICAS awards, one for the ASCI scroll telecast across television in the 'Best Awareness Raising Initiative' and for its extensive digital suo-moto monitoring through the NAMS initiative, in the 'Special Category'. It also got a special mention in the 'Best Sectoral Initiative' category for its efforts and regulatory recognition of its Gaming Guidelines. ASCI received the ICAS Global "Inspiration Award" in April 2023 for successfully promoting ASCI as a thought leader and developing impactful engagement with various stakeholders.

# PRESS RELEASE

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