

ASCI's Ad-literacy programme covers 1 mn students across 2,063 schools

- 10,66,374 students from Grades 3 to 8 have participated in structured advertising literacy sessions
- Programme covered 13 states in 8 languages, equipped children with critical thinking skills to navigate advertising responsibly
- Programme impact shows significant rise in ad literacy levels

Mumbai, May 18, 2026: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) today announced that its classroom advertising literacy initiative, AdWise, has covered more than a million students. 10,66,374 students across 2,063 schools have been reached across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Delhi NCR, Karnataka, West Bengal, Punjab, Assam, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

The programme was developed by ASCI Academy in the context of digital advertising which is all pervasive, as well as new formats of advertising where brands are increasingly embedded into content, such as influencer advertising. The intent was for students to be well equipped with the means to navigate this new world of advertising and recognise its commercial nature.

The intervention has shown significant improvement in ad-literacy levels of students as measured by assessment tests before and after the program.

For grades 3 to 5, the percentage of students who could:

- Correctly recognise purpose of ads rose from 43% to 94%
- Think critically about ad claims increased from 39% to 90%
- Understanding persuasive intent of ads rose from 32% to 87%
- Identify ads that mimic content increased From 36% to 90%
- Understand what to do before believing ad promised increased from 37% to 93%

For grades 6 to 8 students who could:

- Recognise the purpose of ads rose from 45% to 92%
- Understand influencer promotions rose from 39% to 88%
- Identify ads that mimic content increased from 31% to 84%
- Understand online safety increased from 45% to 91%
- Understand the persuasive intent of ads increased from 36% to 88%

Through interactive classroom sessions, the programme helps students identify advertisements, distinguish content from promotions, understand persuasive messaging techniques and make informed choices as consumers and digital citizens.

The sessions were delivered in eight languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati and Assamese.

Manisha Kapoor, CEO and Secretary General, ASCI, said: "Children today are growing up in an ecosystem where advertising and content are deeply intertwined. The impact of the programme

is evident from the numbers – on all parameters, scores more than doubled after the classroom sessions. This means a far more aware generation of students. Media and Advertising literacy are significant life-skills in a world where children are increasingly exposed to content and brands from a very early age. We hope that more such programmes and curriculum integration will take place going forward. We would like to commend our partners, SHARP NGO, in helping us reach more than a million students.”

The AdWise programme uses age-appropriate learning modules, activities, videos and classroom discussions tailored for different student groups. In addition to students, the initiative also provides resource material for teachers and parents to support continued learning beyond the classroom.

ASCI has consistently focused on strengthening responsible advertising practices and consumer awareness, particularly for children and young audiences. Through AdWise, the organisation aims to continue expanding access to advertising literacy across schools in India.

About the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)

The 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, point of sale material, etc. ASCI has collaboratively worked with various government bodies, including the Real Estate Regulatory Authority of Maharashtra as well as Telangana, Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the Ministry of AYUSH, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB). In August 2023, the ASCI Academy, a flagship program of ASCI, was launched to build the capacity of all stakeholders to create responsible and progressive advertising. ASCI Academy aims to raise standards of advertising content through training, education, outreach, and research on the preventive aspects of advertising self-regulation.

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