

Offshore betting and realty emerge as most violative sectors in ASCI Annual Complaints Report 2025-26; cases surge 21%

- Top 5 violative sectors were offshore betting, realty, personal care, food and beverages, and products in violation of the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act (DMRA)
- 75.4% of violative ads promoted harmful products or situations; 27.5% were misleading
- 86% voluntary compliance; TV and print at 97%; 61% of cases modified or withdrawn without contest
- 97.3% of ads scrutinised for potential violations were on digital media

Mumbai, May 28, 2026: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has released its Annual Complaints Report 2025-2026. Offshore betting, despite regulatory interventions, was the most violative sector, accounting for 6,933 cases. It was followed by realty (643 cases), personal care (576 cases), food and beverages (331 cases) and products violating the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act (274 cases),

ASCI reviewed 11,581 cases in FY 2025-26, a 21% increase over the previous year. These cases pertained to 9,841 advertisements, a 37% rise over the previous year; 98% of the ads scrutinised required some modification. Notably, 93% of these cases came from ASCI's proactive monitoring.

Digital platforms continue to dominate the violations landscape, accounting for 97.3% of all ads scrutinised, with 82% of these being sponsored content on social media platforms. Meta platforms accounted for 79.84% of digital violations.

The report underscores how the speed and reach of digital ecosystems are being used to amplify misleading and harmful advertising. Among violations, ads promoting harmful products or situations accounted for 75.4% of cases, followed by misleading claims at 27.5%. The data indicates a consumer safety risk that is growing beyond misinformation to promotion of categories restricted by law.

This is particularly true of the offshore betting ecosystem, which is marked by high-speed content churn, rapid ad creation and cross-platform distribution. These advertisements are spread widely through influencers, affiliate networks, social media groups and messaging platforms, further complicating identification and monitoring. Between April and December 2025, 854 influencer violations were identified, including accounts entirely dedicated to offshore betting content.

Influencer marketing continues to be an area of concern beyond the betting category. Of the 1,609 influencer ads processed during the last financial year, 97.3% required modification, with over 54% promoting categories prohibited by law or where advertising is restricted. The top five influencer violation categories were illegal betting (54%), personal care (16.9%), electronics and consumer durables (7.9%), food and beverages (6.3%), and fashion and lifestyle (4.3%).

In the beauty and personal care and food and beverage categories, widespread use of exaggerated claims, unsubstantiated health benefits and pseudo-scientific assertions were observed.

For instance, in personal care, the most common violations involve claims of visible, rapid or guaranteed results, such as skin transformation, hair growth or instant outcomes. These complaints were usually upheld due to lack of scientific substantiation, especially when presented as certain or universal. There were also claims around impossible timelines (dandruff gone in “1 wash”), manufactured scientific precision (“11.7x stronger hair”), superlative claims (“India’s No1”) and others around “natural” and “safe” positioning.

In food and beverages, violations centred around misleading or unsubstantiated claims around metabolic health, chronic disease, child development, fertility and organ function for products such as weight-loss supplements, growth formulas and even “drinkable sunscreens”.

The growth of nutraceutical products is blurring the line between food and medicine. Classified as food under Food Safety and Standards Authority of India regulations, their advertising claims are often therapeutic and quasi-medical. Nutraceuticals formed the largest subcategory in food and beverage cases, contributing to 52% of cases with 96% requiring modification.

Overall voluntary compliance increased from 83% to 86%, with TV and print demonstrating near-perfect adherence at 97%. Of the reviewed ads, 61% were not contested, with advertisers promptly withdrawing or modifying them upon notification. This signals an increasing ability of self-regulation to be an agile first line of defence for consumers.

Sudhanshu Vats, Chairman, ASCI, said: “This year’s complaints data is the reflection of an advertising ecosystem that is being reshaped by intense competition, speed and digital amplification. Across categories, we are seeing a growing tendency toward exaggerated claims, manufactured scientific credibility, influencer-led amplification and the normalisation of non-compliance as a post-publication correction exercise. The report's findings underline the urgent need for stronger accountability, better substantiation standards, responsible influencer practices and preventive approaches to governance in digital advertising.”

Manisha Kapoor, CEO and Secretary General, ASCI, said: “In the digital era, ASCI has constantly pushed the boundaries on consumer protection. Our proactive monitoring system has allowed us to act at a scale and speed that complaint-driven models cannot match. Working closely with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has shown how effective stakeholders acting in concert can be when it comes to meaningful consumer protection. Similarly, the partnership with the Telangana Real Estate Regulatory Authority to monitor and curb misleading real estate promotions is helping to reinforce consumer trust in such advertising.”

Read the report here: [Link](#)

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

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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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