

ASCI Report, 'The Heat is On', Finds ~98% of Summer Ad Claims Examined Needed Correction

- Of the 40 ads reviewed, 21 advertisements were modified or withdrawn by advertisers without being contested; 18 others were found in violation
- Advertising of skin-brightening and tan-removal products for babies and children emerged as an area of serious concern, as did instant beauty transformation claims

Mumbai, 06 August 2026: Every summer, brands compete for consumer attention with claims promising relief from the heat, protection from the sun, and quick beauty fixes. To assess whether these seasonal claims were backed by evidence, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) assessed 40 advertisements across categories, including personal care, cooling appliances, air purifiers, sunscreens, wearables and travel-related products between April and June 2026. The findings were published in 'The Heat Is On: ASCI Review of Summer Advertising Claims' report. This report reflects ASCI's ongoing commitment to closely examine emerging claims within specific sectors of interest.

The review found that 39 of the 40 advertisements examined needed modification following ASCI's intervention. Of these, 21 advertisements were modified or withdrawn without contest, while 18 were ultimately found to be in violation of the code by the ASCI Consumer Complaints Council. Only one advertisement successfully substantiated its claims and was not found in breach.

Advertising for sun protection and tan removal products emerged as the largest violative category, followed by home appliances and furnishings positioned around cooling, air purification and indoor comfort.

Instant beauty transformation claims remained widespread, with advertisements promising results such as "De-tan and Glow in 30 Seconds", "Visible Difference in 5 Days" and "Remove Stubborn Tan in 2 Minutes". Advertisers that failed to substantiate these claims were required to modify or withdraw their advertisements.

One of the greatest areas of concern was the marketing of skin-brightening and tan-removal products for babies and children. Fourteen advertisements in this category reinforced harmful colour-based stereotypes by appealing to parental anxieties around tanning and complexion. The review also found an increasing number of products including sunscreen jackets, cooling apparel, air-conditioners and air purifiers being positioned as health and protection solutions, with broad claims relating to UV protection and defence against pollutants, allergens and bacteria. In many cases, these claims were not supported by adequate scientific evidence.

The majority of upheld cases revealed consistent shortcomings across categories:

- **Absence of Substantiation:** Claims going live before supporting evidence existed.
- **Failure to Engage:** No response to requests to engage, putting consumers at risk of potentially unsubstantiated claims.
- **Weak Support for Technical and Leadership Claims:** Leadership and performance claims frequently outpaced the evidence.
- **Insufficient Due Diligence by Endorsers:** Influencer and celebrity endorsements often lacked evidence of due diligence, weakening consumer trust.

The findings highlight the growing need for robust substantiation as seasonal advertising becomes increasingly competitive and claim-driven. Responsible advertising not only protects consumers from misleading claims but also helps build long-term trust in brands.

Manisha Kapoor, CEO and Secretary General, ASCI, said: “Summer advertising often responds to seasonal consumer needs, whether it’s staying cool, protecting against the sun or achieving quick skincare results. While innovation is welcome, the claims made must be supported by credible evidence. Our review found that many advertisements relied on broad or exaggerated claims that could not be substantiated, while some reinforced harmful stereotypes. Responsible advertising helps consumers make informed choices and builds lasting trust in brands.”

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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