

ASCI investigates advertisements for liquor brand extensions appearing during IPL

MUMBAI, November 2, 2020: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has, for the past few weeks, been intensely monitoring possible surrogate advertising during the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL). ASCI has put in place daily updates on the monitoring of alcohol brand extension advertising, instead of its regular weekly feeds, for immediate processing of complaints. Complaints against eight such advertisements, which are in potential violation of the ASCI code, have been registered over the past one month. These include whisky, beer and white liquor brands. In all these cases, ASCI has written to the advertisers within 24-48 hours of airing of the commercials, seeking a response.

The advertisements picked up range from those selling music CDs to packaged water, non-alcoholic beverages and merchandising. Key to ASCI's investigation is determining what are surrogates for liquor and what constitutes genuine brand extensions.

ASCI's codes and guidelines are clear about what qualifies as a genuine brand extension:

- For a brand extension of a product (liquor, tobacco, etc) to be considered genuine, it must be registered with an appropriate government authority such as the Food and Drug Administration and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India etc.
- In-store availability must be at least 10% of that of the leading brand in the category that the product competes, or sales turnover must exceed Rs 5 crore per annum or Rs 1 crore per annum in each state it is distributed in
- It must have a valid certificate from an independent organisation for such turnover and distribution data

Advertising for such brand extensions cannot feature what is prohibited by law or banned products. Neither can the advertising allude to or hint at products that cannot be advertised.

As per the law, advertisements for liquor brand extensions can run on TV if they have a CBFC certificate. The IPL broadcaster for TV has confirmed to ASCI that all advertisements are checked for CBFC clearance so that they are not in violation of the Cable TV and Network Act. Keeping that in mind, ASCI has processed complaints on advertisements appearing in OTT, digital and print media.

Manisha Kapoor, ASCI Secretary-General, said: “We are being extra vigilant because the IPL is one of the biggest marketing platforms in India. We are looking at advertising across media – print, OTT, digital. When we spot potential violations, we ask advertisers to substantiate their claims of their product or service being a genuine brand extension within seven days. This includes sales, distribution and market share data that must be certified by an independent body. Only if they fulfil the criteria for a genuine extension, is the advertisement allowed to continue. If the advertiser fails to respond within the allotted time, the complaint is taken up ex-parte by ASCI's independent Consumer Complaints Council.”

ASCI is the self-regulatory body of the advertising industry that has as its members, agencies, advertisers, media houses and other stakeholders. Its mission is to increase consumer trust in advertising by ensuring honesty and adherence to ethics in all marketing claims.

Press Release



The Advertising Standards Council Of India

For further information, please contact:

The Advertising Standards Council of India	Pitchfork Partners
Manisha Kapoor, Secretary General, ASCI 91 98213 31442 manisha@ascionline.org	Arpit Tiwari 91 9082049493 arpit.tiwari@pitchforkpartners.com
Hilda Macwan 91 9665050812 hilda@ascionline.org	Shilpa Shanbhag M: +91 8097342664 shilpa.shanbhag@pitchforkpartners.com