



ASCI STRENGTHENS ITS CONSUMER COMPLAINTS PROCESS

~Introduces '**Independent Review Process**' to the overall complaints procedure~

~Appoints Justice Mukul Mudgal (Retd. Chief Justice of State, Punjab and Haryana) as Chairman for all Independent Review Process cases~

~Appoints Dr. CBS Venkataramana, IAS (Retd.) as the new Chief Complaints Officer (CCO)~

Mumbai, May 29th, 2017: In its continuous endeavour to strengthen the professional and ethical standards in the advertising industry and ensure responsible advertising and thereby protect the interests of the consumers, The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has introduced an "Independent Review Process". This procedure facilitates an independent mechanism to review the recommendations made by Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) if either the advertiser or the complainant is dissatisfied with such recommendations.

The new Independent Review Process will have a Chairman, who will be a retired Judge of the Honourable Supreme Court/High Court, assisted by the Secretary General/Chief Complaints Officer, along with the Chairman or Co-chairman who was involved in the CCC recommendation and a Technical Expert, where necessary. Currently, Justice Mukul Mudgal (Retd. Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana, High Court) has been appointed by the self-regulatory organisation as the Chairman for all Independent Review Process cases henceforth.

ASCI has been rapidly progressing on various initiatives for upholding self-regulation in advertising, safeguarding consumers' interest and partnering with various Government bodies in restraining misleading advertisements. This has led to a substantial increase in ASCI's responsibilities and work load. In this background, ASCI appoints Dr. CBS Venkataramana, IAS (Retd.), as the Chief Complaints Officer (CCO), who will play a vital role in driving efficient complaint redressal and 360 degree stakeholder interactions. Serving as an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer for about 33 years, Dr. Venkataramana has undertaken several important assignments at the State Govt. and Central Govt. level. In his role as the CCO, Dr. Venkataramana will be responsible for managing complaint lodging, investigation, redressal and follow up processes for effective compliance of ASCI codes.

Commenting on these initiatives, **ASCI's Chairman, Mr Srinivasan K. Swamy** said, "*ASCI is constantly evolving and seeking effective measures to enable self-regulation in advertising and compliance to ASCI codes. The inclusion of the Independent Review Process mechanism creates transparency for both*



advertiser and complainant in further facilitating fair judgement of complaints. Further, the appointment of Dr. Venkataramana will go a long way in ensuring speedier and more effective complaint redressal process.”

Further details on Independent Review Process:

The Independent Review Process is applicable where the CCC recommendations are made after considering the response received from the Advertiser and on fulfilling the following conditions by the party seeking review:

- a. A written application, in the prescribed form, (available on the website www.ascionline.org) has to be submitted within 10 business days of the receipt of CCC recommendations.
- b. The application is accompanied by a non-refundable prescribed Fee plus applicable taxes.
- c. The Parties will be at liberty to provide additional information/material not submitted earlier together with the application as per (a) above. Additional information/material submitted by the complainant seeking a review will be sent to the advertiser who shall send his response to the ASCI secretariat in 5 business days from the date of receipt of such additional information/material.
- d. The advertiser seeking review confirms suspension of the offending advertisement, pending the Independent Review Process recommendations.
- e. By submitting the Independent Review Process application, it is understood that the advertiser shall accept and comply with the recommendations made by the Chairman of the Independent Review Process.

The Independent Review Process meeting will be convened once in a Fortnight/Month. Both the complainant and the advertiser will be intimated as to the date, time and venue of the meeting at least 5 business days prior to the date of the meeting.

Proceedings under the Independent Review Process are not adversarial or adjudicatory in nature and hence parties may be represented in the meeting by their company officials only.

The Chairman of the Independent Review Process, after hearing both parties, will give his/her recommendations within two business days thereafter. In case, additional information or clarification is required from either party or the technical expert, the Chairman may, as per his/her discretion, continue the hearing on another convenient date.



In the event either of the parties do not wish a personal hearing, the Chairman of the Independent Review Process may complete the review based on the additional information/material submitted and his/her findings would be conveyed over email to both the parties within a period of 2 business days. Independent Review Process shall not be applicable in case of ex-parte CCC recommendations. However, Re-examination of such recommendations will be undertaken by the CCC on payment of prescribed fee plus applicable taxes (which at the discretion of ASCI maybe reduced/ waived off in deserving cases) and adhering to the conditions laid down in clause (a) (d) & (e) above.

About The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)

ASCI is a self-regulatory organization for the advertising industry to promote, maintain, monitor and uphold fair, sound, ethical and healthy principles and practices of advertising for the protection of interest of consumers and the general public. Established in 1985, ASCI's role has been acclaimed by various Government agencies. The Govt. bodies including The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and Ministry of AYUSH have partnered with ASCI to address all misleading advertisements in their respective sectors. The Supreme Court of India in its recent judgement has also affirmed and recognized the self-regulatory mechanism put in place for advertising content by ASCI. On the global platform, ASCI is a part of the Executive Committee of International Council on Ad Self-Regulation (ICAS). ASCI has also bagged six awards at the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA) Global Best Practice Awards.

ASCI & its Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) deal with Complaints received from Consumers and Industry against Advertisements which are considered as False, Misleading, Indecent, Illegal, leading to Unsafe practices, or Unfair to competition, and in contravention of the ASCI Code for Self-Regulation in Advertising. Under its National Advertisement Monitoring Service (NAMS), ASCI proactively monitors over 80% of new print and all new TV advertisements released in the country every month, for contravention of Chapter I of the ASCI code. (Source: www.ascionline.org)

The Advertising Standards Council of India



For further information, please contact:

The Advertising Standards Council of India

Shweta Purandare, Secretary General, ASCI
Phone: 91 22 2495 5070 / 91 9821162785 | Email: shweta@ascionline.org





Ketchum Sampark Public Relations Pvt. Ltd

Kiwishka Prasad

Phone: 91 7506861969 | Email: kiwishka.prasad@ketchumsampark.com

Anuradha Roy

Phone: 91 7506916497 | Email: anuradha.roy@ketchumsampark.com

