

## **ASCI AIMS FOR CONSOLIDATION – SUBHASH KAMATH RE-ELECTED AS CHAIRMAN**

*~ To inject fresh perspectives, new members on advertising self-regulator's board include prominent members from civil society ~*

**Mumbai, October 28, 2021:** The Advertising Standards Council of India's (ASCI's) board has elected Subhash Kamath for a second consecutive term as Chairman. NS Rajan, Director, August One Partners LLP, was re-elected as the Vice Chairman of the board. The vote, which followed the 35<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting, ensured continuity for the several initiatives the advertising self-regulator had kick started over the past year.

"I thank the board for its support and trust," Kamath said. "We have flagged off important initiatives in the digital space, such as the influencer guidelines and the monitoring of promotional content. We are becoming future-ready in this ever-changing marketing and media landscape. The second term will allow me to push further with these initiatives, which are showing immense promise. As we expand our presence, we are engaging more with consumers as well to increase awareness of their rights."

Initiatives that were flagged off under the chairmanship of Kamath included:

- Influencer guidelines for labelling promotional content, which helped consumers distinguish paid content from organic
- Alliance with French digital service provider Reech for monitoring influencer content, using artificial intelligence, for paid marketing communication
- Real-money gaming advertising guidelines, introduced in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, made it mandatory to inform consumers of the associated risks
- The complaints management system is being digitally transformed
- Guidelines for brand extensions of liquor and tobacco advertising were updated
- Based on the Advisory on COVID-related advertising by the Ministry of AYUSH, more than 200 potentially misleading advertisements were escalated to the ministry
- ASCI issued its own COVID advisory for advertisers in October 2020
- The 'Chup Na Baitho' campaign encouraged consumers to report ads with misleading claims. The campaign reached more than 1 million social media users, making them aware of their rights and how to file complaints
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting further recognised ASCI's process and role in monitoring advertisements
- MoU with Food Safety and Standards Authority of India to identify ads in potential violation of its regulations

In 2020, ASCI's efforts were recognised by the International Council for Advertising Self-regulation (ICAS). ASCI won two of the four awards it was nominated for and received a special mention in a third category. ASCI Secretary-General Manisha Kapoor was named one among the four vice-presidents on the ICAS Executive Council.

In Parliament, ASCI was called upon to give information on its work on misleading and objectionable ads; its data supported answers to eight questions.

The ASCI board was expanded this year with the inclusion of members such as renowned academician and social activist Dr Ranjana Kumari, leading educationist Dr Indu Sahani, technology entrepreneur Rajesh Patel, and finance sector expert and former editor Rajrishi Singhal – strengthening governance through partnering with external stakeholders and civil society.

As the marketing landscape evolves swiftly, ASCI's initiatives promise to be more digitally inclined. Its digitization efforts will continue on the complaints management system as well as through a new website and learning tools for the industry. ASCI will also focus on consumer, industry and student education and thought leadership initiatives through collaborations.