



ASCI welcomes Ministry of Information & Broadcasting's (MIB) recent advisory on airing of condom advertisements between 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Mumbai, December 15, 2017: The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), is a self-regulatory organization of the industry to promote, maintain, monitor and uphold fair, sound, ethical and healthy principles and practices of advertising content. ASCI's Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) in recent times has received a slew of complaints against the condom advertisements with explicit adult content being aired during family viewing hours, requesting ASCI to declare a ban on these advertisements. However, ASCI has not upheld these complaints seeking a ban on such advertisements as the condom advertisements are promoting product usage which plays a significant role in curtailment of sexually transmitted diseases and has a larger public service cause.

At the same time, ASCI does empathize with the consumers' grievance that some of the condom advertisements are detrimental to the children's sensibilities as they focus on sensationalising the act and play heavily on sexual content to grab eyeballs rather than being educative, informative and focused on the benefits of condom usage for audience of all age groups.

However ASCI, being a body self-regulating advertising content, has no remit over advertising placement in media. Taking all perspectives into consideration, ASCI had suggested the MIB to consider restricting the telecast of sexually explicit condom advertisements during watershed hours of 10:00 p.m. to 6 a.m. so that exposure to pre-teens could be minimised. The concept of watershed hours is also practiced globally in various countries like Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, France, Kenya, UK and US to name a few.

Commenting on this move, **Shweta Purandare, Secretary General, ASCI** added, "It is important to highlight that condom advertisements meant for family viewing, which disseminate health benefits or propagate information on safe sex practices, the implementation of which can diminish accidental pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) / HIV continue to be allowed to air without restriction. The condom advertisements that have come under watershed hour restriction are the ones which lean on sexual innuendos which could be violating certain provisions of Cable TV Act's Advertising Code. Advertisements that were complained against were not about HIV protection, prevention of teenage pregnancy or population control. Instead, they focussed on sexual titillation, highlighting product flavours or features, which made them embarrassing and distasteful to be viewed, especially in the presence of children during family viewing hours. As these advertisements were not objectionable for viewing by adults, they could be aired during the watershed hours. ASCI welcomes this move which provides a pragmatic solution addressing the concerns of all stakeholders."

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. In January 2016, the Supreme Court of India in its 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)



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