ASCI GUIDELINES FOR ADVERTISING OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, PROGRAMMES AND PLATFORMS

Preamble

Educational institutions such as universities, colleges, schools, coaching classes, Edtech platforms etc., which offer education and training programmes, play a vital role in building the intellectual capital of India. Parents place a very high value on the education of their children and are known to make great personal sacrifices to enable their children get the right education. Unlike a tangible product, where it is frequently possible to judge the value of what is being offered by inspection and demonstration, in the field of education and training, the value of a programme is judged mainly by means such as degrees, diplomas and other qualification nomenclatures, recognition, affiliations, testimonials, accreditations, admissions/job/compensation promises – of which, the variety being advertised are many.

The advertising of these products and services can have an impact on the minds of growing children and vulnerable parents. Therefore, in addition to being truthful and honest, and complying with Chapter I of the ASCI code that requires ads to be honest, ads must also consider any harm that can be caused through the depictions or messages. Chapter III of the ASCI Code requires advertisements addressed to children to not contain anything, whether in illustration or otherwise, which might result in their physical, mental or moral harm, or which exploits their vulnerability.

Guidelines

Further to complying with the general rules of ASCI's Code for Self-Regulation in advertising, the advertisements of educational institutions, programmes and platforms shall comply with the following guidelines:

1. The advertisement shall not state or lead the public to believe that an institution or course or programme is official, recognised, authorised, accredited, approved, registered, affiliated, endorsed or has a legally defined situation unless the advertiser is able to substantiate with evidence.

2.(a) An advertisement offering a degree, diploma or certificate, which by law requires to be recognised or approved by an authority shall have the name of that authority specified for that particular field.

2.(b) In case the advertised institution or programme is not recognised or approved by any mandatory authority, but is affiliated with another institution, which is approved or recognised by a mandatory authority, then the full name and location of the said affiliating institution shall also be stated in the advertisement.

2.(c) The name of the affiliating institution, as indicated in 2.(b), shall not be less than 50% of the font size as that of the advertised institution or programme in visual media such as print, internet, hoarding, leaflet, prospectus etc., including television. In audio media such as radio or TV, the name of the affiliating institution (if applicable), must be stated.

3. Advertisement shall not state or lead the public to believe that enrolment in the institution, programme or preparation course or coaching classes will guarantee the student a rank, high marks, temporary or permanent job, admissions to institutions, job promotions, salary increase, etc. unless the advertiser is able to submit substantiation to such effect. In addition, the advertisement must carry a disclaimer stating 'past record is no guarantee of future prospects.' The font size of the disclaimer should not be less than the size of the claim being made in the advertisements.

4. Advertisements shall not make claims with a numerical value of 100% with respect to claims that are abstract and non-quantifiable in nature. For eg: 100% Placement/Job assistance, 100% Job opportunities/Job oriented courses.

5.(a) Advertisements shall not make claims regarding the extent of the passing batch placed, the highest or average compensation of the students placed, enrolment of students, admissions of students to renowned educational institutes, marks and ranking of students passed out, testimonial of topper students, institution's or its programme's competitive ranking, size and qualification of its faculty, affiliation with a foreign institution, institute's infrastructure, etc. unless they are of the latest completed academic year and substantiated with evidence.

5.(b) Advertisement stating the competitive rank of the institution or its programme shall also provide the full name and date of the publication or medium, which released the rankings.

5.(c) Visuals of the infrastructure of any institution shown in an advertisement shall be real and existing at the time of the advertisement's release.

5.(d) Testimonials of toppers in an advertisement shall be from students who have **completed the** testimony programme, exams or subject only from the advertising institute.

5.(e) An advertisement stating the number of passing out students placed for jobs shall also state the total number of students passing out from the placed class.

6. An advertisement may not show **school** students compromising on sleep or meals to study as this normalises unhealthy habits which are detrimental to student health.

7. While an advertisement may show disappointment with low scores, it must not portray an average or poor scorer as an unsuccessful student or a failure, or show him/ her/ them as demotivated, depressed or unhappy, or receiving less love or appreciation from parents, teachers or peers.

8. An advertisement must not create a false sense of urgency or fear of missing out that could accentuate anxieties amongst **school** students, or their parents.

9. While an advertisement may feature students of any gender, the advertisement must not suggest that certain subjects are associated with particular genders alone. Advertisements must also not suggest that students with high scores are always associated with stereotypical characteristics such as wearing thick glasses. This does not prevent advertisements from depicting such students so long as they do not suggest that only these students are successful.

Chairman
Board of Governors, ASCI
March 9th 2023