



भारतीय विधिज्ञ परिषद् BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA

(Statutory Body Constituted under the Advocates Act, 1961)

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BCI:D:1932/2025

Date: 20.03.2025

To,

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Sub.: Show Cause Notice for Professional Misconduct and Violation of Rule 36 of the Bar Council of India Rules for Video Advertisement in Social Media and directive for the immediate removal of the video advertisement from all digital platforms

Sir/s

In exercise of the statutory powers conferred upon the Bar Council of India under the Advocates Act, 1961, and the rules framed thereunder, this notice is hereby issued to address the present matter. It has come to the attention of the Bar Council of India that your law firm has engaged in advertising by featuring Bollywood actor Mr. Rahul Bose in a promotional video advertisement, wherein it is depicted that clients place blind faith in your firm due to its 20 years of experience in the legal field. Such an act of self-promotion constitutes a clear violation of ethical norms governing the legal profession.

The Bar Council of India emphasises the importance of Rule 36, Chapter II, Part VI, of BCI Rules, which strictly prohibits advocates from soliciting work or advertising, directly or indirectly, through any form of promotion, media, or personal outreach.

The only permissible disclosure of an advocate's credentials is through a website, as prescribed under the Schedule, and only with prior approval from the Bar Council of India. Any deviation from this provision is deemed a violation of professional conduct and attracts disciplinary action under the *Advocates Act, 1961*.

The Preamble of Chapter II (Part VI) of the BCI Rules, under Section 49(1)(c) of the Advocates Act, 1961, mandates that advocates uphold the dignity of the profession and maintain conduct befitting their role as officers of the court. Advertising legal practice undermines this standard by introducing commercial competition, which is contrary to the profession's ethical foundation of trust, integrity, and merit.

The Bar Council of India, in its Press Release dated 17.03.2025, has reiterated its strict stance against unethical legal advertising, misleading promotional activities, and professional misconduct by advocates. The BCI expressly denounces the involvement of Bollywood actors, celebrities, and digital media platforms as promotional tools, which clearly violate Rule 36, Chapter II, Part VI of the Bar Council of India Rules.

In India Legal profession is treated as a noble profession. There is and should be no commercial competition or procurement associated with the Legal Profession. Legal Profession is not treated as a commercial activity or service in India. Law is not a trade, and briefs no merchandise so the leaven of commercial competition or procurement should not vulgarize the legal profession (Hon'ble Justice Krishnairyer, V.R.). The legal profession is fundamentally distinct from commercial business ventures and is deeply rooted in public trust and ethical standards. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has consistently emphasized that legal practice is a noble focused on justice, integrity, and fairness and must not be commodified through commercial advertising or solicitation. Such unethical commercialization erodes public trust and demeans the sanctity of the legal profession.

The manuscript of the vide advertisement by your firm on social media in question is as follows:

Actor-1: "Not all our members crunch cases, some crunch numbers too."

Actor-2: "Not all law firm members ask for a hearing from effectively scheduled meetings and ensure urgent correspondence."

Actor-3: "Kuch log court me to kuch log documentation me ache hote hain or mere jese kuch log poora backend sambhalte hain."

Actor-4 Rahul Bose: "Yes, guys, what's up?"

Actor-5: "Rahul, we had made all changes suggested by you, please sign it."

Actor-4 Rahul Bose: "Hetal, you know how I work. I am not going to sign this right now. Let me proofread it first."

Actor-5 Again: "Thanks."

Actor-4 again: "Are Suresh Ji, kaise ho?"

Actor-6: "Teekh hu Sir."

Actor-4 again: "Sign karna hai?"

Actor-6: "Haan Sir yah per."

Actor-4: "Thank you, Sir."

Actor-4: "Guys, it's 20 years."

Commentary: "At DSK legal, trust is more than a value. It's a relationship. It's why our clients know that every document carries not just a signature but our commitment."



This script clearly conveys an implication that clients should place "blind faith" in your firm due to its longevity in the profession. Such a portrayal is misleading and unethical, as legal practice should be based on professional merit rather than promotional narratives.

Your advertisement, by engaging a Bollywood actor and implying blind faith in your firm based on its years of practice, directly contravenes these ethical mandates. It commercializes legal practice and misleads the public into believing that tenure alone ensures legal excellence. The profession demands that legal practitioners maintain integrity, ensuring that clients rely on their competence rather than promotional tactics.

The Bar Council of India, through its Press Release dated 08.07.2024, explicitly warned advocates against unethical practices following the Hon'ble Madras High Court's judgment in Writ Petition Nos. 31281 of 2019 and 31428 of 2019, pronounced on 03.07.2024. The ruling reinforced that advocacy is a noble profession, primarily driven by societal service rather than commercial motives. The judgment also emphasized that promotional activities through online platforms severely compromise ethical standards and professional integrity.

Pursuant to this judgment, the BCI issued Letter No. BCI:D:3417/2024 dated 06.07.2024, directing all State Bar Councils to take immediate disciplinary action against advocates engaged in unauthorized advertising or solicitation of work via online portals, including but not limited to JustDial, Quikr, Sulekha, and Grotal. The Hon'ble Court categorically denied these platforms any protection under the safe harbor provisions of Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, considering their role in facilitating prohibited practices.

The BCI reiterates that all legal practitioners, firms, and associations engaging in legal practice, irrespective of their structure or nomenclature, are subject to the Advocates Act, 1961. In *A.K. Balaji v. Union of India*, 2018 the Hon'ble Supreme Court reinforced that the practice of law in any form, whether consultancy or representation, falls under the regulatory purview of the Bar Council of India.

The Bar Council of India emphasizes that such advertising practices, and celebrity endorsements, undermine the dignity and independence of the legal profession. The role of an advocate is not that of a tradesman seeking clientele through promotional campaigns but rather that of a responsible officer of the court, bound by a solemn duty to uphold justice and the rule of law. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its numerous pronouncements, has reiterated that the practice of law is not a business but a service to society, necessitating the highest standards of ethical conduct. Any deviation from these standards threatens to reduce legal practice to a mere commercial enterprise, thereby diluting the public's faith in the legal system. The advertisement in question creates a misleading perception that legal practice can be marketed like consumer goods, an approach that is wholly incompatible with the professional responsibilities of an advocate. The use of a Bollywood celebrity in the video reinforces an illusion of guaranteed legal success based on the firm's longevity rather than the individual competence of its members, which is a direct affront to the principles of legal ethics. Such promotional tactics are not only deceptive but also violate the trust that clients place in the legal system. If left unchecked, such practices will set a dangerous precedent, eroding the fundamental values that the profession seeks to uphold.

In light of these precedents and the unequivocal ethical mandate under Rule 36, you are hereby directed to immediately remove the unlawful advertisement from all digital platforms, including social media and video-sharing websites and to provide documentary proof confirming the removal of the advertisement.



You are hereby called upon to submit a detailed written explanation within ten days explaining why disciplinary proceedings should not be initiated against the firm including its partners for professional misconduct and violation of Rule 36 of the Bar Council of India Rules.

You are further required to provide an undertaking that no further advertisements or promotional activities in violation of Rule 36 will be carried out.

Failure to comply with this directive will invite severe disciplinary proceedings under the Advocates Act, 1961, which may include suspension or cancellation of license to practice law.

Your response must be submitted via email to bciinfo21@gmail.com, with a signed hard copy addressed to the undersigned


Srimanto Sen
Principal Secretary
Bar Council of India