

# HUL wins scholarship advt case

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**New Delhi:** Hindustan Unilever (HUL) has won a legal bid to protect the reputation of its Surf Excel brand as The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), Delhi, has passed a judgement in favour of the company and rejected claims made by claimants, who alleged that HUL was running a fraudulent scholarship scheme under the Surf Excel brand, the company said.

HUL had launched Surf Excel 10/10 contest in August 2006 to promote education among children, thereby offering Rs 5 lakh scholarship to the winners of the contest. Under the scheme, in each Surf excel pack, there was a box containing a stained cloth (swatch) having certain score between 1/10 to 10/10 hidden.

After a customer filed

a complaint alleging HUL did not honour the commitment to pay the prize money after he found a swatch, HUL had said a “unique code” was missing. However, the Delhi State Consumer Commission had imposed a penalty of Rs 27 lakh on HUL for “playing a fraud” on its customers by floating a “misleading and fraudulent advertisement”.

The apex consumer court, through its order dated April 19, has ruled in the company’s favour to hold the genuineness of the scheme and bonafide intention of the company, overruling the contradictory finding by various State Commissions, an HUL spokesperson said. Additionally, the NCDRC upheld the presence of secret code establishing that there was no need for company to disclose the presence of a code which was used to weed out the frivolous claims.