

Culture and Society: An Analysis of Indian Advertising Appeals

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ABSTRACT

Advertising to be simple, is an important marketing tool accompanied with the channels of information and persuasion. Every single person come into contact with the advertisements on a daily basis. They have become an inevitable part of the print media, be it newspapers or magazines over the course of time. So is the case considering the broadcast media where the ad-commercials dominate the arena. The Indian advertising industry has seen a tremendous growth from being a small-scale business to a full-fledged industry. This paper aims to throw light on the Indian advertising appeals and how the culture is infected by the same. The advertisements in India are not merely restricted to selling of products. It sells dreams, images, the consummate ways of living and fortify the values of stereotypes. The extend to which the people are affected by the advertisements depend upon the extend to which they are exposed.

The aim behind the appeals is to influence the way in which the consumers view themselves and the way they decide how buying certain products can prove beneficiary for them. India is a country with a vast population and cultural diversity as a result of which the advertising industry has come up with multiple types of advertisements to make sure that they interest and entice the people thus persuading them to buy the products. The appeals are done in such a manner that it influences the purchasing decisions of the people.

KEYWORDS: *Advertisements, small-scale business, Indian advertising appeals, cultural diversity.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The advertising concept is as old as the human settlement. Considering the twenty first century, one can confidently say that the advertisement industry has become a challenging and creative world which focuses more on 'Product Evolution'. To be more specific we can say that this world has basically become the world of ads. Vast technological advancements are seen as each day passes by, which contribute more changes in the broadcasting forms and by these broadcasting forms, we mean the advertising media. Advertising is a mixture of ideas, information, creative writing, layout, sound and even the 3D technology.

The history of advertising dates back to the Egyptian civilization where the papyrus was used by the mankind to pass on information and make wall posters. The pharaohs used the very same papyrus as Public Pronouncements. The ruins of these pronouncements were later retrieved from the ruins of ancient Greece, Rome, Arabia and even in India. Advertising in ancient India was in the form of wall paintings and sculptures. One of the prominent examples to be pointed out are the stone pillars of Emperor Asoka that he used to propagate the religion of Buddhism.

The American Marketing Association, Chicago defines advertising as "any paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor". It has been a forum of communication for almost all the companies now. The reason behind the same is that it reaches a huge mass of audience, help them create a brand awareness thus building a brand image for the public. There is no other medium other than advertising which forms the best marketing strategy. Companies ranging from the large multinational companies to the small retailers depend on the advertising platform to market their goods.

There is a synergy between Advertising and marketing. It is advertising which revolutionised the concept of marketing. Some products would sell without advertisements but, some products will sell better and make a tremendous profit with the aid of advertisements. One of the best examples to be quoted is of Amul in India. The advertisement depicted the Amul moppet who puts the Amul butter on the breakfast table. The advertisement succeeded in capturing the attention of the citizens and persuaded them into buying the product as a result of which it's sales from 1000 tons to around 25,000 tons in the year 1967.

Unlike the other societies, Indian society is much more diverse. There are people with wide range of cultural differences ranging from their language, religion, cuisine and even to their emotional appeals. In India, advertising has now grown to a full-fledged industry. Advertising succeeded in carving its niche in the field of both print and broadcast media. One of the best-known attributes of advertisements is the way how the entice

and persuade the audience for which they have several appeals. History of advertising in India can be traced back to the time during the development of press in the country. The first newspaper was the Bengal Gazette started by James Augustus Hickey on January 29, 1780. The newspaper had a few advertisements addressed to the British residents living in Calcutta. In those days advertisements solely had the function of informing the citizens regarding certain deaths, births, arrival of ships from England etc.

There was a great impact of industrialisation in the country which came as a part and parcel of the colonial rule. This made the more advertisements from the British companies to be printed in the Indian newspapers. Then came up agents who started collecting advertisements from clients for these newspapers and magazines but, on the basis of a commission. They came to be called as 'space sellers.' It was them who later got evolved into the advertising agencies that we see today. The space sellers prepared the model layout of the advertisement copies and also provided other assistance.

The advertising agencies began functioning in the early twentieth century. The first ad agencies established in India include The Calcutta Advertising Agency (1909) and B Dattaram (1915). The major duties that they carried out were they collected the offers of advertisements from their respective clients, arranged the ad copies for them, secured an apt place of these advertisements and made sure these ads got published in the renowned papers of that time. But still the field of advertisement was a small-scale business but the 1980s saw the rapid expansion of the television networks throughout the nation and in 1990s came the liberation policies and the IT technologies which paved way for the advertising industries to become a multi-crore business in the country.

ADVERTISING IN INDIAN SOCIETY:

When people speak of advertisement, they think that it is for the purpose of selling products and services. But advertisements are not all about selling products. It sells dreams, images, ideal ways of living etc. India being a society with diverse cultural varieties it has been really advantageous for the advertising industry to flourish because their group of target audience increased. As mentioned earlier, with the Liberation policies being implemented in the country, multinational corporations moved in and imported goods were widely available in the Indian market. Also, there was rapid increase in the consumption of these products. Indian market expanded so rapidly that now nearly anything is available for the people ranging from the products of small-scale business to the luxury goods. As the development of the Indian market continued, one of the prominent developments was in the field of digital technology. The conventional methods of advertising followed in the Indian marketing society is the advertising media on broadcast media like televisions and radios; in print media as we see in magazines and newspapers; and also, on the billboards that are set up almost everywhere in the nook and corner of the cities. However, then came up the social media which gained huge popularity among the Indian citizens and that is when certain companies opted for digital marketing by making use of these social media platforms.

One of the best quoted examples is of the brand of a shampoo named Sunsilk. It made a name for itself among the women of every age group by the year of 2007. Now, it was possible because of their strategy where they mixed the conventional advertising methods with the digital marketing. It used the TV commercials and billboards to capture the attention of the female population and directed them to a website that they created called www.gangofgirls.com. This page became a platform where the girls of any age group could gang up, talk and share their opinions not only about hair and skin but also regarding their life choices, career, family- about their life in short. Indian society has been a patriarchal society. The major aim of this platform was to break the negative stereotype of women and encourage ambitions. Sunsilk no longer targeted the women in sarees with long hair which was the traditional way in which the Indian women are perceived. But instead, they focussed on young girls, with ambitions and life goals, having an opinion of their own.

From the mid-1980s, Indian society has seen a drastic change in the social values. The traditional Indian society has always been caste-oriented. The changes were not very welcomed in the beginning, be it in the social systems or in the economic domain. The society has always been dominated by the group of Brahmins who occupied the highest strata of the caste structure. But as time went by, the thirst for development was seen in the middle- class society of India. There was an increase in the education among them, which increased the middle-class population being employed which in turn contributed towards their desire of earning more and using good quality consumer products. With the advent of internet, social media to be specific, the society which once boycotted the Western goods and values started accepting them widely. Out of the total population which were once completely orthodox, conservative and poor, one-third of them have emerged to become the new urban dwellers. The society saw a series of mass consumption of products which plunged the growth rate of the Indian economy.

CONSUMER PATTERNS IN THE INDIAN SOCIETY

According to Mahatma Gandhi, “the consumer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption on our work. He is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider on our business. He is the part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so.”

The Indian society is an epitome of culture, language and tradition. There are over 1.3 billion people residing in the country which makes it the second most populated country after China. The country comes in the developing category and by 2030, it is estimated that about eighty percent of the households will have middle-class income. The consumer patterns in India is fast-changing. The e-commerce sector is still new to the people. There is always a bargaining system existing in the country and it's quite prevalent in the Indian society. The online payments and transactions are increasing but still many of them choose cash on delivery as an option. Even, some of the major brands have had trust issues. One of the best examples is the Maggie where the was high content of lead. The tradition of nuclear families is at rise in the country. The nation has witnessed an increase in the financial status of these nuclear families. Marriages which were earlier centred only on tradition has now become a cult of beauty, entertainment and luxury.

ADVERTISING APPEALS

Advertising appeals are the various strategies used by the advertising institutions to deliver the proposed messages regarding the products to the targeted audience thus corrupting their decisions and thus persuading them to buy the same. Food, shelter and clothing are the basic necessities. But, among them there are certain products which are meant for the comfort. Advertising aims to project out these products before the public. The strategies they use can be either emotional or rational. The emotional appeals target the youth while the rational appeals are meant for much older age group. With these appeals used, the ad agencies simply want the audience to inculcate the transferred message via products into their personal space.

EMOTIONAL APPEALS:

Considering the emotional appeals, they make use of five major approaches namely: fear, humour, sex, music, scarcity. Either these approaches are used individually or else they combine several of these approaches to propagate the message before the public. Nowadays the emotional appeals are extensively used to attract the people and persuade them more in buying the products.

Fear appeal: Fear is an emotional response to danger or threat. With this appeal, fear is instilled in a person through the messages to threaten them and cause a change in attitude. Fear as an emotion has got a tremendous effect on the consumer. This appeal is mainly seen in the beauty, health sector and public service announcements. One of the examples to be quoted is of the Birla Sun Life Insurance where the ad reminds the audience that ‘Life is Precious.’ Next is the ‘Brain on Drugs’ campaign from the 90s, where the negative effects on the brain of teenagers by using excessive drugs were represented using an imagery of fried egg. Anti-drinking and anti-smoking campaigns can also be categorised under the fear appeals. These appeals made the people to reflect more on the negative consequences of their own actions.

Humour appeal: Humour appeal is used in about thirty percent of the advertisements. Humour is an element that helps attracts audience easily. These advertisements create such an impact that the humorous element makes the audience recall the product based on it. The advertisements of Mentos and Centre Fresh were quite popular among the citizens of India because of the humour it contained.

Sex appeal: Sex and nudity have always captured attention from a wide range of audience irrespective of gender. But the advertisements making use of these appeals are low when compared to the other appeals. Common way in which this appeal is used is when there are models adorning the products to be endorsed creating a sexual stimulus. Considering the impact of this stimulus, it is observed that the consumers create an impression of the product depending on the visual information that the ad provides. If the visual element is conceived positively, it creates a positive impact. The same is the situation if it gets conceived negatively. Again, if the content is too sexually explicit, it increases the purchase of the product but also at the same time the sexual appeal is seen interfering with message perception.

Music appeal: Music is an auditory treat. It attracts the audience. It's impact is same as that of the humour appeal. The only difference is that the impact is of a long term. It helps the audience recall even the visuals used in the advertisements. One of the best examples is of the jingle “Sabki Pasand Nirma” from the advertisement of Nirma washing powder and the other one being “Honey bunny” from the advertisement of Idea.

Scarcity appeal: This approach is popularly based on the idea of limited supplies or the purchase to be done within a limited time period. The typical Indian mindset is all about savings. Therefore, these advertising appeals of sales promotion- ‘Buy one get one free’- is widely accepted in the Indian society, especially among the Indian women. The best examples to be quoted is the recent Dhanotsav Shopping Festival by Big Bazaar which provides several offers on cookware, fashion, accessories etc.

RATIONAL APPEALS:

These are the strategies adopted considering the pragmatic or utilitarian needs of the audience. These are usually associated with logical thinking of the consumers. The advertisements involving rational appeals are quite informative in nature. The various rational appeals are follows:

Competitive advantage appeal: This makes use of the strategy where a comparison is carried out between two or more brands. In other words, a brand compares its product with the same product released by the rival brand to show that his product has one or more superior attributes than the rival product.

Price appeal: Here, the price or the value of the product is given primary importance. These strategies are more commonly used during the festive seasons where the companies come up with certain discount rates thus promoting the sale of their products. This is also used by the retailing companies to announce their sales and offers. Example to be stated is of the Bharati Axa Life Insurance providing a low premium for the term insurance.

News appeal: It is the strategy where the certain announcements or news regarding a product is announced before the consumers. This is also used to introduce new products in the market and give information to the consumers regarding certain modifications made in the existing features of the product. Best quoted example is Hutch changing its name to Vodafone.

Popularity appeal: If the message or information has to be directed a large set of audience this appeal is used by the ad agencies. Here, during the advertisements they provide customers with data emphasizing the product's popularity like the number of people consuming the product; number of consumers who have switched from their older product to this particular one; the number of experts in the country recommending it or the position the product holds in the market.

II. CONCLUSION

India being a community that has incorporated a wide range of diversity in it, has always seen an ascending graph when it comes to the product consumption by the citizens. One of the major factors that contributed for this ascending graph of the product consumerism is definitely the advertising. In this competitive world, the advertising industry succeeded in becoming a full-fledged industry of million-dollar business. It was earlier difficult to reach huge masses of people with the information of a new product being launched. With the advent of the broadcast media and print media advertising succeeded in carving a niche for itself. Now, when the advertising field is analysed, it could be told that with the various strategies they adopted to market the products, which are otherwise called the appeals of advertising, it was able to persuade the citizens a lot in buying the products launched. They used the logical perspectives(rational) as well the emotions of the audience to market the products. Advertising thus emerged as a significant tool for the companies to market the products, create a brand image for the same and increasing the consumer value of it as well.

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