

PERCEPTION OF INDIAN CONSUMERS TOWARDS INDIAN ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, the development of advertising and its relative effects on the society and the people in particular is considered. The changing mindsets of the people from generations to generations and the new wants and needs of the people have always been fulfilled. In this process, it is observed carefully that though the needs of the people are met but at the same time their needs and desires have been influenced and manipulated indirectly by the advertisements. Studying the disadvantages of some of the unethical Indian advertisements and their manipulative motives faced by the Indian customers are assessed in this study. The Focus of the present study was on measuring the ethical practices of the print and television advertisements in India at present and their relative effects.

However, it is very difficult to distinguish a clear line of difference between what is true and what is untrue. But the advertisement as such is judged by its impact and by its acceptance by the consumers. The product must fulfill its advertised claims. Advertisements should be decent and not of obscene. Sometimes, celebrities endorsing the product and spreading falsehood is also unethical.

KEYWORDS: Ethics in Advertising, Perception of Consumers, Unethical Advertisements, Advertising Law, Cultural Pollution

INTRODUCTION

Advertising is an encapsulated communication about the product or service beautifully designed, clear and concise giving an appealing message which is intended to attract the target consumers. Advertising is the most powerful tool used to persuade the target consumers to buy the product or service or just informing them about the availability of the product or service in the market. As per the study from various sources, advertising has a very colourful history of thousand years from the primitive history dating back to the word of mouth advertising by 'town criers' to the present day of internet. The application of scientific methods to resolve the problems of advertising came as a boon for the advertisers and the technological development, invention of machineries; the industrial revolutions etc. made advertising a nation's economical strength. Rome, Germany, United Kingdom, the United States of America etc. played a significant role in the growth of advertising.

In India, advertising started in the 18th century with the birth of classified advertisements in "Bengal Gazette" – India's first news paper. However, printing has been responsible in increasing literacy and also has been a foster mother of advertising. This then also was the case in India. (Rege 1973: 239) The 'Bengal Gazette' or the 'Calcutta General Advertiser' started under British Raj by James Augustus Hicky on January 29, 1780. (Natarajan 1962: 14)

The 20th Century is marked with the advent of two fascinating media of mass communication namely, radio and television. Radio in India was introduced by All India Radio (AIR) ruled the market from 1922 to 1947 and 1948 onwards television took over. The first experience of public sector advertising on television was in 1980s and went on to become the

major indoor powerful media of advertising. Technological advancements have changed even the effectiveness of these media. Many new media like transit, online, infomercials etc. are showing up to attract the consumers. However, advertising has culminated into a very powerful media of mass communication since then. (www.home.lu.lv)

Present Scenario in Indian Advertising

Over a period of time, Indian advertising is undergoing gradual changes with multi-faceted approaches. Indian advertising has mastered the art of adapting to the rapid changing trends. Social and cultural diversity with the influence of western lifestyles, Indian rural and urban divide have offered unique challenges to the advertising media in India.

Advertising became big business in the 20th century, offering many different jobs in advertising agencies and the marketing section. The use of the media, like newspapers, television, direct mail, radio, magazines, outdoor signs and of course the Internet made this growth possible. It is a form of transporting information to the consumer, but which does not only have positive sides. There are many critical aspects about it, like persuading people to doing unhealthy things, like smoking, or producing special stereotypes everybody tries to follow. Nevertheless, advertising has become international, since producers and companies try to sell their products on a globalized market in almost every corner of the world. (www.rzuser.uni-heidelberg.de)

The advertising industry in India is growing at the rate of 30% to 35% annually. It is estimated to be 1600 crores industry and still growing. Which accounts for 90% of India's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) (www.exchange4media.com). Over the last three decades, tremendous growth has been seen in the Indian advertising after the entry of Multi National Companies and other major brands. India has become a favourite market for these big corporations. The scenario in Indian Advertising is changing rapidly hence creates difficulty in marking a major change.

As the new technology emerged the social changes transforms the way the consumers view the advertisements. In accordance with the conventional practices such as ordinary wall paintings, billboard advertising campaigns, or poster ads are now being replaced by digitalized billboards and hoardings with rich interaction between customers and brands. Modern advertising campaigns speak through rich and influential channels of brand communication.

Indian Advertising is growing at a very fast pace at various avenues. The rising number of brands is also being increased in the present market due to the buying capacity and purchase behaviour of the generations. This has lead to the cluster of competitions among the brands. In the other way it has empowered the consumers in choosing the right product or service with wide range of choices of brands at competitive prices. The amount of competition and the consumer's expectations, lifestyle has seen drastic changes.

In the recent times, internet has revolutionized the Indian advertising segment. It has introduced international trends in the urban sectors. Though exposure to internet accessibility is increasing in India but a major percentage of population is not yet exposed to it (60 to 70 percent of Indian population resides in villages). Newer technologies have shifted the focus to target marketing from mass promotions. Increase in the use of credit and debit cards provides rough information on spending habits of consumers. The manufacturer or the advertiser should remain on their toes to satisfy consumer's changing needs and requirements. Advertisement during programs has become shorter and smarter, specific and majorly more creative are replacing lengthy advertisements. (www.media.about.com)

Work Done in the Area

Soumyamoy Maitra, Lecturer in the Department of Marketing at D.B Pawar College of Management has studied upon advertisements making false claims just to prove that their product is superior.

In the present Indian scenario, Ms. Maitra expresses that it is the advertisers who have to ensure ethical responsible practices while making commercial advertisements and also claims that being ethical and unethical is purely a subjective aspect and it largely depends on the nature of the viewers. (www.indiamba.com)

Om Gupta, in the book titled “Advertising in India: Trends and Impact”, has written about the various advertisement tactics adopted to promote their product to increase their sales volume. Impact of Advertising Agency, sex, portrayal of women in Advertisements, impact of Advertisements in the Indian Rural regions, how the consumers are targeted through Advertisements etc. are discussed. More over Mr. Gupta has viewed Advertising as a great business force. (Gupta 2005)

“Children, Media and Culture” a work of Marie Davies, addresses the continuing concerns around media effects and critically examines the view that technology has dramatically changed modern children's lives also the role and impact of popular media currently including television, the internet, computer games, mobile phones and i-pods, in children's lives. Also addresses the provoking ads showing imagery lifestyles which a common child can barely imagine. This book situates the study of childhood and the media within a framework of different disciplines, including historical, sociological and psychological approaches. (Davies 2010: 84)

SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The works of the authors like Maitra, Gupta and Davis as described previously have analysed about ethics and advertising and is limited to a very brief interpretation. The present research study will be focusing on the Indian advertisements making false claims affecting the Indian Consumers and also Influence of Advertisements on adolescent's life. So with this present research study a methodological analysis is made to give suggestions to create a conscious awareness in the Indian Advertisements.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In the present study, the development of advertising and its relative effects on the society and the people in particular is considered as a major objective. The changing mindsets of the people from generations to generations and the new wants and needs of the people have always been fulfilled. In this process, it is observed carefully that though the needs of the people are met but at the same time their needs and desires have been influenced and manipulated indirectly by the advertisements. Studying the disadvantages of some of the unethical Indian advertisements and their manipulative motives faced by the Indian customers will be assessed in this study.

The advertisements have played a significant role in all aspects of life of the people and it has influenced and cast its magical effects on adolescents. It is believed by majority of parents according to their knowledge that the adolescent children do not have the maturity to decide what is right or wrong. ‘Psychological and neurobiological research shows that adolescents often lack the capabilities to make mature judgments, control impulses, weigh the consequences of their actions and resist coercive pressure when they are with other teens, as argued by psychologist Laurence Steinberg, PhD, during the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association Conference, April 14-17 at Phoenix.’. (www.apa.org) Moreover

they become the victim of wrong as they get attracted towards the flashy untrue things. On this context, the present study will find the negative impact of Indian advertisements on Indian adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

The present research study will apply quantitative and exploratory methods. The primary and basic evaluation of the study is qualitative approach and followed with exploratory method where the data is collected through questionnaires, surveys, interviews observation and relevant references. Upon collecting the qualitative data derived from said questionnaires, interviews, surveys and references a careful analysis is done. Case Study on some of the Indian print and television advertisement is subjected to critically analyse the ethical standards in the Indian Advertisements.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the time limit for the present study, the analysis is limited to 15 to 20 Indian print and television advertisements of Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) from 1990 till present. The interviews will be conducted on 4 to 6 experts in the advertising industry and survey will be made on 20 to 25 families of middle income groups which will help to assess the views about the ethical issues in the Indian advertisements. Since the middle income group are the main consumers of the FMCG products.

FMCG are products that are sold quickly and at relatively low cost, which includes non-durable goods such as soft drinks, toiletries, and grocery items. Though the absolute profit made on FMCG products is relatively small, they are generally sold in large quantities, and so the cumulative profit on such products can be substantial. (www.wikipedia.com)

ETHICAL ISSUES IN INDIAN ADVERTISING

“Ethics” according to Oxford dictionary is defined as *‘moral principles that govern a person’s behaviour or the conducting of an activity’* (www.oxforddictionaries.com). The definition of "ethics" is different from scholar to scholar, Albert Einstein once said “I do not believe in the immortality of the individual, and I consider ethics to be an exclusively human concern without any superhuman authority behind it.” (Shermer 2005: 368) Einstein addresses that a man’s ethical behaviour should be based effectually on education, sympathy and social ties but not on the basis of religion. On the other hand A.J Ayer states that “Moral certainty is always a sign of cultural inferiority. The more uncivilized the man, the surer he is that he knows precisely what is right and what is wrong. No morality can be founded on authority, even if the authority were divine.” (www.zer0.org) The popular quote by Mahatma Gandhi is closely related to the ethical decision making “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” (www.pinterest.com)

According to the Joseph and Edna Josephson ethics is defined as “Standards of conduct that indicate how one should behave based on moral duties and virtues.” (www.josephsoninstitute.org) Ethics can be generally defined as “the advisory tool which guides what is the proper course of action for man”. It always prompts the questions like, “What do I do?”, “What I am doing is right?”, “Which is the right way of doing?” and so on. It is the continuous analysis of right and wrong in all the endeavours of an individual.

The word “Ethics” takes its origin from the Greek word "ethos", which means custom, habit, character, disposition or way of living; ethics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with human conduct, more specifically the

behaviour of individuals in society. Traditionally it's the study of what makes the human action right and wrong. Ethics addresses the questions about morality that is concepts such as virtue and vice, justice, right and wrong, good and evil etc. Ethics examines the justification for moral judgments (www.tbs-sct.gc.ca). Ethics is generally known as moral philosophy. In other words it is the moral principles of conduct.

Evolution and Importance of Ethics

Many evolutionists believe that ethics or morality has emerged over time as a human necessity. It is believed that any group of people can survive best only when they adopt a moral code that reduces violence, and promotes the general welfare of the society.

This is how it accounts for common moral codes across the globe; even human beings have adopted similar codes. In essence, this view of moral and ethical codes are maintained, adopted and followed by everyone and have mostly been inherited from parents or from generation to generation and so on in time as long as humans existence on this planet. It presumes that moral truths originate in primitive social groups. Then why is it that selfishness, unfaithfulness, cruelty, etc. are not acceptable? Sometimes selfish group of people who think only of themselves are more likely to survive in a dog eat dog world. Unfaithfulness will lead to further propagation of a blood line with an even larger number of children. This helps assure the survival of the species and all of these moral taboos could easily be seen as virtues to ancient or primitive cultures (www.pleaseconvince.com). And this might have been the source of study for Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory "survival of the fittest."

However ethics is vital for human life. Ethical codes have invariably been influencing everyday decisions and a means of deciding a course of action, without it, the actions will be aimless. There would be no way to work towards a goal. Every child is taught by its parent that it is wrong to lie, cheat and steal. It's eminent to learn about good ethics as they guide our decisions and determine our future. Ethics are learnt throughout life, it teaches an individual to respect, adapt to take responsibilities and good conduct. Moreover it moulds the character of an individual. Ethics makes people honest and law abiding citizens, which contribute to the good of society. Ethics is the basic belief and standard that makes everything run smoothly. Ethics are applied in all organizations and institutions around whether it is political, medical, law, religious, or social.

Ethics, Culture and Law

In Indian culture, according to Hinduism, *Purusharthas*¹ are regarded as the most important purpose of human life or existence. There are four *Purusharthas* namely *Darma* (religious, social and moral), *Artha* (material and financial prosperity), *Kama* (love, emotion and sexual pleasure) and *Moksha* (liberation as well as detachment). (www.wikipedia.com) Out of the four goals, *Dharma* is closely associated to the present study, the word '*Dharma*' comes from Proto-Indo-Iranian² root *dhar*, which means to uphold, sustain, or uplift. It can be thought of as righteousness in thought, word and action. It represents a 'principle' or a 'quality of being'. *Dharma* includes the golden rule "do unto others would do unto you", and therefore the set of all possible values such as speaking truth, being kind, speaking pleasant words, being respectful, demonstrating reverence towards the earth and the natural resources etc. when an individual

¹ It refers to a goal, end or aim of human existence. (www.wikipedia.com) It is the purpose/fulfillment of life. By fulfilling Purushartha, man gets fulfillment for life as well as sustains the society. (www.hindupedia.com)

² It is the reconstruction Proto language of Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European. The speakers, the hypothetical Proto-Indo-Iranians are assumed to have lived in the late 3rd millennium BC. (www.wikipedia.com)

conforms to a certain behavioural norms, it contributes on the maintenance and the upliftment of societal order and thus the society itself. In simple it means the religious and moral law or natural law governing the conduct of the individual and of the group. Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism all have the concept of *Dharma* at their core. (www.hindupedia.com) In Islam too it is defined as “good character”. The holy *Quran* defines and sets the standards of social and moral values. There are various verses in the Quran which provides a set of moral stipulations. (www.wikipedia.com)

Throughout history, famous people have often exhibited some of the best and the worst behaviours. Some of the great social activists in the history have challenged the law of the society. One of the best examples is of Martin Luther King fighting for civil disobedience against bifurcation in the United States of America in the 1950s and 1960s. Inspired by the civil rights movement, thousands of people in Vietnam challenged the laws of conscription (www.blogs.loc.gov) on moral grounds.

Perhaps the best case of morality versus law in political history is the movement against the laws of apartheid led by Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Both Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King were directly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy and practice of moral resistance to biased laws in India. These examples make the claim that the law demand no respect if it fails to maintain respect for an individual. Hence, The United States of America's former Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren quotes “the law floats on a sea of ethics” (Preston 2007: 21). Taking the all the above into consideration it can be said that the law has been influenced by ethics but ethics is not derived from law. The rule of law keeps the society under control, without the constraint of law, immoral behaviour will lead to uncivil and unethical society. Great personalities like Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's was popularly called “Mahatma” the apostle of nonviolence, Swamy Vivekananda, Abraham Lincoln earned the title "Honest Abe" (Gordon 2000: 08) and George Washington "could not tell a lie" (Shmoop 2010: 02) On the other hand, Richard Nixon resigned in disgrace and Bill Clinton suffered impeachment because they lied.

Most of the people today claim that the morality and ethics are personal and comes from the culture in which they dwell and have accepted the idea that our culture is responsible for our values and morals. People have somehow biased what is morally or ethically ‘right’ and ‘true’. But the people have actualized culture and culture has been the source for all moral truth, and the courts are the venue in which this moral truth is decided (www.pleaseconvinceme.com). Advertising is an encapsulated communication about the product or service beautifully designed, clear and concise giving an appealing message which is intended to attract the target consumers. Advertising is the most powerful tool used to persuade the target consumers to buy the product or service or just informing them about the availability of the product or service in the market. As per the study from various sources, advertising has a very colourful history of thousand years from the primitive history dating back to the word of mouth advertising by ‘town criers’ to the present day of internet. The application of scientific methods to resolve the problems of advertising came as a boon for the advertisers and the technological development, invention of machineries; the industrial revolutions etc. made advertising a nation's economical strength. Rome, Germany, United Kingdom, the United States of America etc. played a significant role in the growth of advertising.

ETHICS AND ADVERTISING

Developments in information and communication technology in recent years have transformed the entire world.

The advancement in science and technology of internet, wireless communication, digital information structure, cellular communication, etc. has led to competitiveness. Even the advertising field too is not away from the competition. Over time, advertising techniques have adapted newest techniques available and have changed drastically. It's a fact that advertising is a psychological, social and business process of persuading people towards the product or service.

The evaluation of advertising success that it results in increased sales, increased shares in the market. Due to tremendous competition in the business, each advertiser or the manufacturer of the product or service desires to excel his rival or competitor in choosing right media for advertising. In the process of tough competition, there are more chances of concealing truth to succeed in the art making more sales and profit. However advertiser or manufacturer should have the social and moral responsibility towards his target consumers because it is the consumers who are paying the price to buy a product which includes the advertising expenditure. So, advertisement should always be in the best interest of the society and the consumers.

Accordingly advertising industry too is not isolated from ethics and morals. Ethics and morality in advertising means well defined, comprehensible and transparent set of principles which govern the way of communication between the advertiser and the target consumer. Ethics is the most important component of the advertising industry.

Though there are many benefits of advertising but then there are some points where it backslides to match the ethical norms of advertising. An ethical advertisement is the one which doesn't lie, doesn't make fake or false claims and should constantly be in the limit of decency. If the advertisers make the advertisement on belief that the customers will understand, persuade them to think, and then act on their advertising message, then this will lead to positive results and the advertisement may not be called unethical. But at the same time, if advertisers believe that they can fool their customers by showing any non practical things like just buying a lottery ticket will make you a millionaire, and then this is not going to work out for them and will be called as unethical (www.managementstudyguide.com).

Some advertising are blamed for informing customers of a product by hiding the facts and this may mislead the customers. Advertising portrays the product as one of the best of its kind in the market, which makes it successful in the business. To achieve this only the advantages of the product is highlighted and the disadvantages are hidden. Though the advertising is true to its quality but not completely. Examples of such advertisements follow.

- **Advertisements of Medicines:** This type of advertisements help in creating awareness, but one catchy point here is that the advertisers show what the medicine can cure but never talk about the side effects of the same product or the risks involved in intake of it. (www.managementstudyguide.com)
- **Advertisements Involving Children:** Children are the major sellers of the advertised product. They have the ability to convince the potential buyers. But when advertisers are using children in their advertisements, they should remember not to show them alone doing their work on their own like brushing teeth, playing with toys, or infants holding their own milk bottles as everyone knows that no one will leave their kids unattended while doing all these activities. So showing parents also involved in all activities or things being advertised will be more logical and considered ethical (www.managementstudyguide.com)
- **Advertisements of Alcohol:** These type of advertisements use surrogate advertising, where mineral water and sodas containing the company's brand name instead of showing original alcohol. These type of ads are totally

unethical when liquor ads are totally banned but propagating them indirectly through advertisements, people are encouraged and influenced to consume alcohol. (www.managementstudyguide.com)

- **Advertisements of Cigarettes and Tobacco:** These products should never be advertised as consumption of these products is directly responsible for cancer and other severe health issues. Though these advertisements are already banned in countries like India, Norway, Thailand, Finland and Singapore but still they use surrogate advertisement, which is unethical. (www.managementstudyguide.com)
- **Advertisements for Social Causes:** These types of advertisements are ethical and are accepted by the people and the society as they contain rightful moral message to the society. For example, the TATA Tea '*jagore*' campaign had societal messages of reminding the citizen of India to vote as it is their right, anti corruption advertisement etc.

ETHICAL ISSUES IN INDIAN ADVERTISING

Advertising has been playing a supreme role in today's world of business and economy. Though advertising have benefitted the people and society but has also been highly criticized. Especially among the Fast Moving Consumer Goods also called FMCG sector, the advertising industry has always been targeted for creating irrational and unnecessary desires and needs of the people. This indirectly creates a sort of race among the people to purchase more and more of advertised products even if they have to spend beyond their limit.

According to business dictionary, ethical issue has been defined as "A problem or situation that requires a person or organization to choose between alternatives that must be evaluated as right (ethical) or wrong (unethical)." (www.businessdictionary.com)

Advertising has to respect the laws of the land. Ethics and social responsibility play a major role in any society. Advertisements may be legal in the sense that it does not violate any law. But still it may err morally or ethically. Ethics guide what is right and wrong in a given social situation and at a given point of time. Advertisers have always faced ethical dilemmas. Ethics in advertising, as in other aspects of social life, is a complex issue. What something that one person considers ethical, the same another may consider unethical. Every day advertising professionals must make complex decisions about what can and ought to be said in advertisements.

Clients want to make the strongest claims possible for their brands, but the border between the possible and the unethical must be constantly negotiated to sell the product or service. (www.ir.nmu.org.ua) There exists various issues which are essential on judging the Indian advertisements ethical and their influence (positive and negative) on the minds of the adolescents. Various arguments are being raised to advertising for its effect on society, people and its relative effect on the culture too.

Today, Advertising is the fifth largest industry. Advertisements have become part and parcel of our daily life; we come across many advertisements on television, magazines, radio and internet. Advertisements provide us valuable information about the products available in the market. But social, ethical and economic objections have been raised against advertising. As per directive principles of constitution, our government should be a welfare state.

So, it is the duty of government to protect the public from harmful effects of advertisements. Government felt the need for regulating advertisement to protect the public from harmful effects of advertisements. (Trehan 2009: 208)

Advertisements are undoubtedly the major tool used by advertisers or the manufacturer to attract the target consumers to buy the product or services, but there is also number of controversies associated with advertising.

These controversies are concerned about the impact of advertising on society and ethics. The desire to succeed and make huge profit, the manufacturers and advertisers use various immoral methods and use provoking visual and advertising concepts. This race and competition has given rise to many controversies in Indian advertising. The ethical issues of India are divided into four portions and studied under objection of advertising, advertising and controversies, minor ethical issues and major ethical issues.

M.G. Parameswaran, *Executive Director & CEO/FCB-Ulka*, said in an interview that "I was told that Goa Fest was a great way to attract talent. But people who went there said it gave a completely wrong image of the industry" (www.businessstoday.intoday.in). Once again the advertising industry has been caught on fresh controversy. Moreover Indian advertising industry has also been criticized strongly portraying women as an object of desire, women as dependent, women portrayed vulgarly, etc.

The ethical issues are divided based on the negative effects on the culture and society into minor and major issues and further detailed. According to Chunnawala and Sethia the following minor issues have frequently been raised against advertising

- **Advertisements that Drive Desire for Unnecessary Products:** It has been pointed that advertising most of the time creates and encourages the customers to purchase unnecessary products. It persuades the people to buy the product which they do not need or cannot afford. But the counter argument that the advertisement does not create needs, rather it helps the consumers decide which brand to purchase among the various competitive brands.
- **Advertisements that are Deceptive:** Use of exaggeration in the advertisements and flowery language is often argued as deceptive to the customers. Advertisements attract the people to buy goods or services through false claims and false testimonials. However, counter argues that some people misusing advertisement doesn't mean that advertisement as a whole is bad. Exaggeration is required to make people turn towards the product and act accordingly.
- **Advertisements that are Offensive:** Some advertisements are found to be offensive and visually vulgar. Offensive is subjective, determined by time and culture. For example, advertisements using unnecessary sex appeal for the product, like making women run after a boy who has the product being advertised.
- **Advertisements that Create Monopoly:** As it is seen some advertisements creates brand preferences and restricts from free competition. Big companies which are able to invest huge amount on advertising campaign are more likely to eliminate small companies by creating brand monopoly. But counter argue that it is all about survival.
- **Advertisements that Promote Unhealthy Products:** Advertisement attracts people consume unhealthy products like tobacco, alcohol, cigarette, noodles, cerelac (infant supplement to breast milk), etc. which might affect their health. In India, though there is a ban on advertising of such products, manufacturers are still able to advertise and remind their brand in many indirect means, for instance, manikchand Film Fare Awards, Kingfisher Mineral water, Teacher's Achievement Awards, etc.

- **Advertisements that are Create a Sort of Unsatisfied Society:** Advertising affects our society by creating a desire that happier life depends in obtaining the branded goods. Hence creates a sort of insecurity among the people with less purchasing power who are unable to afford to purchase such goods. (Chunawalla & Sethia 2002: 223-228)
- However, advertisers are often challenged with right decisions of their actions which are based on ethical grounds. Certain actions may be within the law but still unethical. Advertising laws and other governing bodies are limited to go up to certain level but it is the responsibility of the advertising professionals to be guided by their own ethical principles. Apart from various criticisms, according to Gupta there are other aspects of ethical issues in the Indian advertisements, some of which are briefed below as major issues in advertising in India. (Gupta 2012: 298-313) According to Chunnawala, Sethia and Gupta the following major issues have been raised against advertising which follow.

MAJOR ETHICAL ISSUES IN INDIAN ADVERTISING

The major ethical issues are categorised based on the negative effects like misleading, deceptive etc. on Indian consumers, adolescents, culture and society which need to be evaluated by the concerned body or organisation are detailed.

- **Concealment of Facts:** Hiding the facts about the product is the major ethical issue on which most of the advertisements are criticized. Advertisers usually tend to suppress information about the product and show only the best and brighter side of the product. They cover up the truth which would make the product fail to attract the target consumers. For example, Fairness face creams claim that the regular application of their cream would make fairer and attractive but do not mention that it contains harmful bleaching agent which is very harmful to the skin. Similarly, hair colouring products do not mention that the product contains harmful chemicals which might damage their hair and as well as scalp and prolonged usage would lead to side effects too. Concealment of facts raises many ethical concerns as the general public are deprived of actual truth about the product and the consumer choices are distorted. Deceptive practices includes the following:
 - False promises
 - Incomplete Description
 - Misleading Comparisons
 - Bait and Switch Offers
 - Visual Distortions
 - False Testimonials
 - False Comparisons
 - Partial Disclosures
 - Small – Print Qualifications
 - Laboratory Application

- **Use of Sex Appeal:** In India women have been respected and have been worshiped. The portrayal of women as the object of desire seems to be a popular trend in recent days. Portraying women as sex object and display their figurative body to sell products is an example of sexual exploitative advertisements. An advertisement which portrays women as sex objects is considered humiliating and cheap tactics, especially if sex is not relevant to the product. For advertisements of lingerie, condoms, etc. sex appeal is relevant, hence displaying their body is considered to be ok. Advertisers also use nudity in the advertisements to promote their product, which is also considered unethical. For example, Levis commercial, showing bare chested young man with his pant button opened revealing partly his inner wear had a statement “bare what’s inside, live unbuttoned”, which itself cannot be termed as decent. These types of advertisements cause severe offence.
- **Advertisements Using Children:** Adopting children in advertising is also contending. Advertisers are using children to promote the products or services which are not meant for children but for adult products. There are various advertisements where advertisers are utilising children as they have become a strong influencing force for the parents in the recent times. Some advertisements try to convince children to purchase the advertised product by offering free gifts or toys, etc. which is considered to be unethical as the children as innocents and targeting innocents is considered wrong.
- **Promoting Unhealthy Products:** In recent years advertisements of unhealthy consumable products like soft drinks, noodles, etc. have increased. Manufacturers of soft drinks focus their attention on youngsters. Even celebrities like Hritik Roshan, Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Aishwarya Rai, Ranbir Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor, etc. and sports personalities like Sachin Tendulkar, Veerendra Sehwag, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, etc. are extensively promoting soft drinks.
- **Advertisements with Dangerous Stunts:** It is unethical if an advertiser fails to think about the adverse effect of their advertised message on the consumer psychology. Hence, advertiser must be careful not to depict unsafe or dangerous stunts in their advertisements, which, if imitated by the people can cause serious injury. Instead advertisers must encourage safe practices in the stunts like wearing helmets, not using mobile phones when driving, not drinking or smoking while doing stunts, fastening seat belts, etc. which also gives a positive message to the masses.
- **Using Inappropriate Stereotypes³:** Usually in Indian advertisements men are shown as strong, independent, etc. and women are shown as softer, empathetic, dependent, etc. but sometimes women are portrayed as childlike, indecisive, obsessed with their own physical appearance, submissive to men, simple house wives, etc. Another group which is often subjected to stereotyping is the group of senior citizens. Generally elderly people are shown as dependent on their children, burden for their children, etc. which is also considered to be unethical.
- **Subliminal⁴ Advertising:** For the past many years the Fair & Lovely advertisements have been portraying fame & fortune are related to fair and beauty. According to their claims in advertisements, a tube of their fairness cream

³ A stereotype is a representation of a group that emphasizes a trait or group of traits that may or may not communicate an accurate representation of the group. A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing: *the stereotype of the woman as the carer.* (www.oxforddictionaries.com).

⁴ The term ‘subliminal’ means below the threshold of consciousness; perceived by or affecting someone’s mind without their being aware of it. (www.oxforddictionaries.com).

will bring huge success. It also suggests that fair & beautiful girl gets the boy. In some advertisements they have shown women using Fair & Lovely becomes attractive and gets a job and becomes a success person. According to their claim, educational qualification is not required to get a job but the main qualification for a woman to get a job is the way she looks, which subconsciously convey the message that dark skinned people cannot be successful in their personal life as well as professional life. However, many are of the opinion that Fair & Lovely has violated Indian Advertising ethics by insulting the majority dark skinned Indian women.

- **Manipulative Advertising:** Various Indian advertisements are planned to create demand by attracting the consumers emotionally. An advertisement uses different kinds of emotions to arouse the feelings among its consumers which might drive the consumers towards the product. For example, using patriotic feelings like Bajaj's "Hamara Bajaj", Hero Honda's "Desh ki Dhadkan", Tata Salt's "Desh ka namak", etc. similarly, these tactics are majorly used in the baby products like baby soaps, oils, diapers, etc. by attracting mother's feelings emotionally.
- **Puffery⁵:** Advertisements which praises the product to be sold with exaggerations, vaguely and generally stating no specific facts. For example, "Eveready" batteries claim nothing outlasts an eveready battery, "VIP Franchise" would not attract girls for you, detergent powder "Wheel" & "Vim" bars show lemons on their package but contains just lemon fragrance, "Lux" claims to contain milk and honey but it is up to the consumer to decide whether it really contains what it has claimed? These types of exaggerations are unethical.
- **Glorifying Glamorous Looks:** Advertisements have always glorified glamour looks in both male and female. In advertisements, female models are shown excessively thin, fair and with perfectly beautiful body. Similarly, males are shown as masculine, well built chest, arm muscles and wide shoulders. These types of advertising strategies are questionable because they lead to dangerous practices. Some are of the opinion that youths are highly influenced by these types of strategy, women follow unhealthy practices of dieting extensively in order to get a thinner body shape and men also get into the habit of consuming steroids to build masculine body which is very dangerous.
- **Surrogate⁶ Advertising:** when the advertisements of certain products are banned in a country, advertisers promote such products in an alternate manner, which is termed as 'surrogate advertisement'. The Indian Government has banned advertisements of liquor and tobacco, due to their harmful effects on health. As an alternate, these liquor and tobacco manufacturers started promoting their brand by introducing various other products in the market with the same brand name. For instance, Hayward's Soda, Kingfisher Mineral water, Smirnoff cassettes and CDs, etc. similarly tobacco manufacturers too are following the same trend. For example, Wills Lifestyle, Manikchand Filmfare Awards, etc.
- **Improper Language Usage:** Advertisements in recent days have received complaints of containing improper or slang words. It has also been criticised against the advertisements that the dignity of the language has been seriously destroyed. Especially in television commercials, though the vulgar or some slang words are censored by a 'beep' sound but people can easily guess the word by the lip movement. (Gupta 2012: 299-311)

⁵ exaggerated or false praise: *his puffery actually was not far from the truth* (www.oxford dictionary.com)

⁶ Surrogate means: substitute for oneself (www.merriam-webster.com)

With the deeper understanding of the major ethical issues in Indian advertising, it has given a clear picture of the different issues as well as the seriousness of bringing an awareness of the ethics in Indian advertisements. But still the growing competition and attempt to increase the sales, manufacturers or advertisers use hard core marketing tactics which many a times ends with deceptive and misleading advertisements. This damages the confidence of the people on the advertisements. Thus, there is a requirement to put a check on such unethical advertisements to protect consumers against misleading and deceptive advertisements and also to ensure the public that the advertisements are always in the public interest.

Controlling Body to Check Ethical Issues in Indian Advertising

Advertising is an important and legitimate means for the seller to awaken interest in his goods and services. The success of advertising depends on public confidence; hence no practice should be permitted which tends to impair this confidence. The standards laid down here should be taken as minimum standards of acceptability, which would be liable to be reviewed from time to time in relation to the prevailing norm of listener's susceptibilities. (Kaptan 2002: 104) Traditionally advertising has been a self regulating industry wherein members voluntarily regulate themselves without intervention from external bodies or the law.

The single most important self regulatory body in India is the 'Advertising Standard Council of India' (ASCI), which has adopted a code of conduct that guides advertisers in their commitment to honest advertising and fair competition in the market place. In addition, codes of conduct are also outlined by agency associations like 'Advertising Agencies Association of India' (AAAI), and media and industry associations. The central and state governments have enacted various laws related to trade and commerce, which concern advertising and promotions. In spite of comprehensive legal structure in place, communicators have to also recourse to ethics when dealing with issues like surrogate and subliminal advertising, advertising to children, exaggeration, sex and violence in advertising, etc.

Apart from the government, consumer and voluntary organizations also keep a watch on advertising. (Shah 2009:249) There are many regulatory acts enacted by the Indian government to keep an eye on the ethical issues in Indian Advertisements.

Advertising Regulatory Acts Enacted by Government of India

Most of the countries around the world have adapted to advertising guidelines which have been addressing to various issues such as unfair business practices, false and unauthorised products, etc. In recent years in India, there is a tough competition among the brands due to which advertising is being used extensively. Even government of India as well as state governments use advertisements to create awareness among the citizens. Like other countries, in India too there are laws enacted by the government of India as well as a independent Self Regulatory Organization (SRO) of the advertising industry have been set up to ensure to protect consumers against false and deceptive advertisements and promote healthy advertising.

A major enactment which contains the regulation of advertising in India by the government of India is given below:

- The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940
- The Drugs and Magical Remedies Act, 1954

- The Copyright Act, 1957
- The Indecent Representation of Women (prohibition) Act, 1986
- The Consumer Protection Act, 1986
- The Cable Television Networks Act, 1995
- The Trade Marks Act, 1999
- The Competition Act, 2002
- The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 (www.ascionline.org)

The above mentioned laws have very important implications for both the manufacturers as well as the consumers. Apart from the enactment of these laws by the government of India, there is a self-regulatory voluntary organization of the advertising industry named as Advertising Standard Council of India. (ASCI)

ASCI – Self Regulatory Organization of India

The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), established in 1985, is committed to the cause of Self-Regulation in Advertising, ensuring the protection of the interests of consumers. ASCI was formed with the support of all four sectors connected with Advertising, viz. Advertisers, Advertising Agencies, Media (including Broadcasters and the Press) and others like PR Agencies, Market Research Companies etc. (www.ascionline.org)

The Consumer Complaints Council is ASCI's heart and soul. It is the dedicated work put in by this group of highly respected people that has given tremendous impetus to the work of ASCI and the movement of self-regulation in the advertising. The ASCI has adopted a code of self regulations in Advertising. It is a commitment to honest advertising and to fair competition in the market. The mission of ASCI states – *“To maintain and enhance the public's confidence in Advertising”*.

It stands for the protection of the interests of consumers and all concerned with advertising like advertisers, media, consumers, advertising agencies, and others who help in creating and placement of advertisements. (www.ascionline.org)

According to ASCI no Advertisement Shall be Permitted Which

- Derides any race, caste, color, creed and nationality.
- Is against any provision of the constitution of India.
- Tends to incite people to crime, cause disorder or violence, or breach of law or glorifies violence or obscenity in any way.
- Presents criminality as desirable.
- Exploits the national emblem, or any part of the constitution or the person or personality of the national leader or a state dignitary.
- Portray a derogatory image of women.

- Women must not be portrayed in a manner that emphasizes passive, submissive qualities and encourages them to play a subordinate, secondary role in the family and society.
- Portrayal of the female form, should be tasteful and aesthetic, and within the well established norms of good taste and decency.
- Exploits social evils like dowry, child marriage.
- Promotes directly or indirectly production, sale or consumption of: Cigarettes, tobacco products, wine, alcohol, liquor or other intoxicants.
- Provided that a product that uses a Brand name or Logo which is also used for cigarettes, tobacco products, wine, alcohol, liquor or other intoxicants, may be advertised on cable service subject to the following conditions that: - The story board or visual of the advertisement must depict only the product being advertised and not the prohibited products in any form or manner. (www.ascionline.org)

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The advertisements have played a significant role in all aspects of life of the people and it has influenced and has cast its magical effects on adolescents. It is believed by the majority of the parents according to their knowledge that the adolescent does not have the maturity of deciding what is right or wrong. The word 'adolescence' is derived from Latin 'adolescere' which means 'to grow up'.

Adolescence describes the years between 13 and 19 but the later age can be also be 24 is considered the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood. However, the physical and psychological human developments when changes occur in adolescence bring up issues of independence and self identity. During this time, external appearance tends to increase in importance and desires for trying new things are aroused. (www.psychologytoday.com) "Psychological and neurobiological research shows that adolescents often lack the capabilities to make mature judgments, control impulses, weigh the consequences of their actions and resist coercive pressure when they are with other teens, argued psychologist Steinberg⁷." (www.apa.org) Moreover they become the victim of wrong as they get attracted towards the flashy attractive things. On this context, the present study will find out the negative impact of Indian advertisements on Indian adolescents.

To assess the effect of advertising on adolescents two methods are adapted here. The first one is to study the level of ethics in Indian advertisements; survey was conducted on twenty five Indian adults of middle income group and twenty five Indian adolescents. For the survey, the respondents were asked to answer the questionnaires⁸ which are related to earlier discussed ethical issues in Indian advertisements. Similarly to check the effect of unethical Indian advertisements on the Indian adolescents, the second method, and interview was conducted on ten families of middle income group who are the parents of the adolescents. In the interview, a set of ten print and ten television advertisements were shown to the families and were asked to answer the questions related to what they feel about the advertisements shown. Four categories of advertisements were chosen as the source for the interview which are Soft Drinks, Cosmetics, Automobiles and Deodorants. Each of the categories contained five different brands of products. Discussion was also conducted with a lawyer to understand the legal aspects of advertising.

⁷ Laurence Steinberg, a Psychologist quoted during the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association Conference, April in Phoenix.

⁸ Attached in appendix

Survey of the Influence on Indian Advertisements on Adolescents

The first is the study on the level of ethics in Indian advertisements through survey method containing questionnaires of objective type which were asked randomly to the individuals who had come for shopping at superstores. The age group of the adult respondents was between 35 and 65 years and adolescent respondents between 16 and 24 years. The profession of adult respondents include doctors, engineers and self employment. Majority of adolescent respondents were students but some were employed in private firms. The respondents included both educated male and female and were supportive. The interpretation and analysis of the survey data has been shown below.

- **Does an Advertisements Show the Fact without Concealment?**

Concealment of facts is yet another ethical ground on which Indian advertisements are criticised often. Advertisements suppress the truth and portray only the brighter side of the product. They neglect to mention those facts which would make their product less desirable. For example, advertisers of detergent power do not mention that contains harmful chemicals which can damage the skin. To study on what the consumers think whether the information provided by the advertisements are suppressed which would distort their choice of purchase, majority of 96% said that to a greater extent that advertisements do not show the fact without concealing.

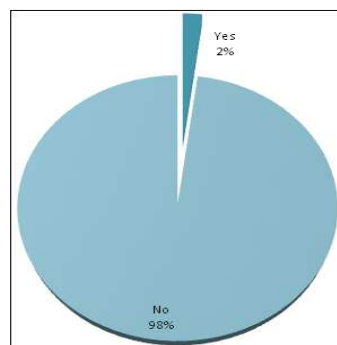


Figure 1: Advertisements without Concealment

- **Does Advertising Help Shape the Views of Society?**

Advertising is the part of any society. It has a both positive and negative impact on the people which indirectly contribute to society. To know whether the advertisements contribute to shape the views of the society positively, for which the 62% of the respondents are of the opinion that advertising have been contributing to shape the views of the society.

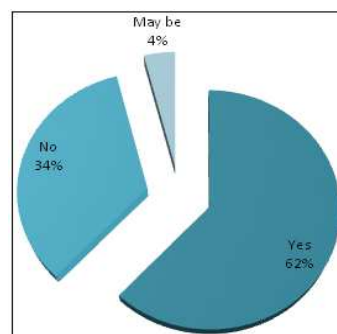


Figure 2: Advertisement to Shape the View of the Society

- **Do you Feel that Some Indian Advertisements Promote Unhealthy Foods Like Soft Drinks, Noodles etc.?**

Indian Advertisements are highly criticised for promoting unhealthy food targeted specially towards adolescents. And surprisingly all the respondents strongly said that Indian advertisements are extensively promoting unhealthy food products.

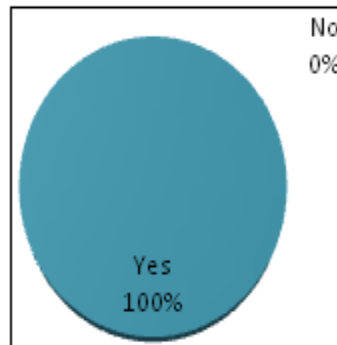


Figure 3: Promotion of Unhealthy Food

- **Some Indian Advertisements Drive Demand for Unnecessary Purchases**

Advertisements use various tactics to drive demand for the products which are not very much necessary and also for repeated purchase. The objective of this question was to know whether the blame on the Indian advertisements driving unnecessary demand is true. Of the respondents, majority of 90% said that to a greater extent the advertisements drive demand for unnecessary purchase.

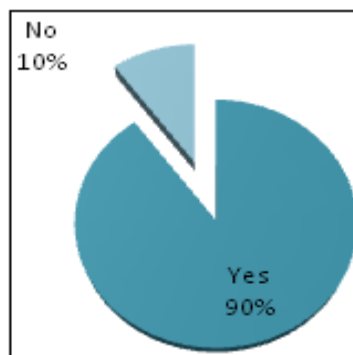


Figure 4: Drive Demand for Unnecessary Purchase

- **Does an Indian Advertisement Violate Public Standards?**

Advertisements have significant influence on people's behaviour, so the advertiser should be careful not to depict unsafe or dangerous practices. But the advertisers are tend to break this and are often blamed for violating public standards.

For example, the TVC of a bike shows that the person driving very rashly and making stunts in traffic another one showing that after drinking a soft drinks gets energy and jumps from a waterfall without any safety measures. All these are accountable for violation of public standards.

To which 78% of the respondents are of the opinion that advertisements violate public standards.

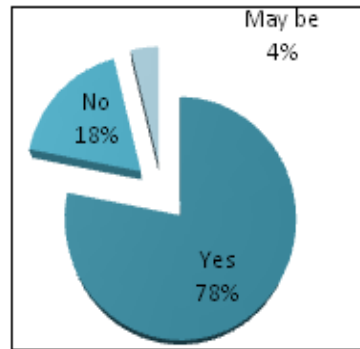


Figure 5: Violation of Public Standard

- **Does Indian Advertisement Contribute to Cultural Pollution?**

An advertisement has greater influence on culture. Advertisements have both positive and negative impact on the culture. The objective behind this question was to know whether advertisement contribute to cultural pollution, which came out be yes by having majority of 84% respondents saying that advertisements contribute to cultural pollution.

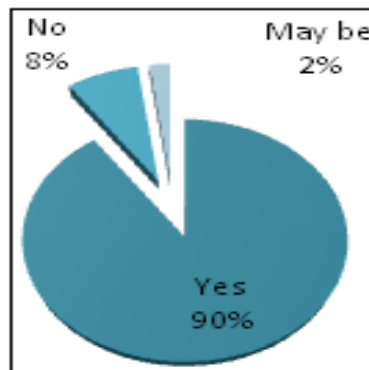


Figure 6: Contribute to Cultural Pollution

- **Does the Information Provided in the Advertisement Reliable?**

It is evident that advertisements provide information about the product or service. But the major question is how far does the information provided by the advertisements are reliable? Of the respondents, majority of 34% said that to a greater extent the product information given in the TV advertisement was reliable.

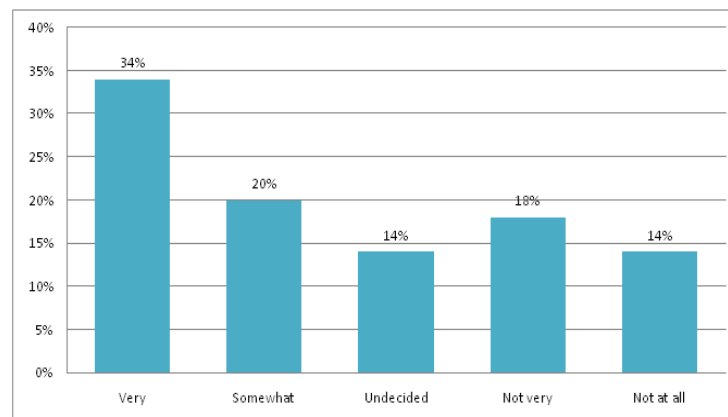


Figure 7

• Which of the Following Indian Advertising Media you Find Most Influencing?

The advertisers use many media available these days to effectively advertise their products. For the present study the FMCG sector has been chosen and the FMCG products are advertised majorly in print, television and outdoor media. According to the survey, it shows that television is the most dominant medium with 58% of respondents; print media is 38%, others mediums have very small share of 4%

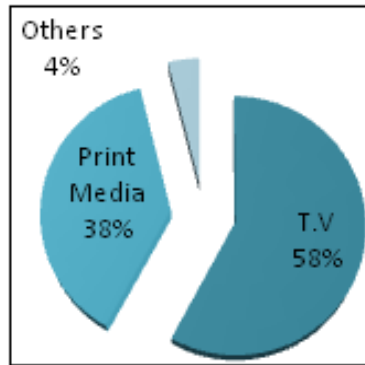


Figure 8: Influence on Customer Purchase

Similarly to check the effect of unethical Indian advertisements on the Indian adolescents, interview was conducted on ten families of middle income group who are the parents of the adolescents. In the interview, a set of ten print and ten television advertisements were shown to the families and were asked to answer the questions related to what they feel about the advertisements shown. Four categories of advertisements were chosen as the source for the interview which are Soft Drinks, Cosmetics, Automobiles and Deodorants. Each of the categories contained four different brands of products and the result and analysis follows.

Table 1

Product Category	Brand	Responses		
		Good	Satisfactory	Bad
Soft Drinks	Slice	20%	46%	34%
	Fanta	26%	30%	44%
	Coke	34%	23%	43%
	7 UP	07%	55%	38%
	Tropicana	67%	22%	11%
Cosmetics	Fair & Lovely	05%	22%	73%
	Lotus Fairness Cream	30%	46%	24%
	L’Oreal Total Regenerist	29%	18%	53%
	Pond’s Age Miracle	12%	38%	60%
	Vivel Fairness Cream	21%	20%	59%
Automobiles	Bajaj Pulsar	43%	23%	34%
	Honda Activa	62%	42%	14%
	Hundai I10	20%	46%	34%
	Maruthi Swift Desire	24%	30%	46%
	Ford Figo	53%	23%	24%
Deodarants	Axe	0%	06%	94%
	Nike	24%	28%	48%
	Fogg	21%	20%	59%
	Lady Bird	21%	27%	52%
	Zatak	02%	12%	86%

The response to the survey and the interview was supportive as the respondents were aware of the difficulties they are facing by the influence of Indian advertising on their children. Parents of the adolescents are of the opinion that the effect of Indian advertising on the adolescents is increasing day by day. They said that their children get influenced by some of the advertisements and some of the parents showed their anger that the Indian advertisements these days target children instead of addressing the parents to sell their products.

The advertisements make children to believe that if they don't use or own the product advertised they will be inferior. Hence the children pressurise their parents to buy the product. The parents were of the opinion that the Indian advertisements promote unhealthy food extensively especially soft drinks and questioned that why the earlier Indian advertisements such as encouraging to eat an egg an day which carried jingles '*Sunday ho ya Monday roz khao ande*' are not being shown these days? They suggested that the advertisements of these kinds like promoting healthier food, healthier eating habits and healthier life style should be advertised frequently, so that their children would get influenced by these advertisements and the majority favoured it. Parents also suggested that there should be more laws to govern these misleading Indian advertisements.

CONCLUSIONS

With the fast expansion of marketing industry, high level of competition, in recent days advertising has emerged as the most demanding and challenging business as well as industry. Advertising plays an important role by creating primary demand for the product or service and its usage rate thus increase in the form of customers. It not only stimulates the product distribution but also builds brand preferences and loyalty. It also reduces the time between the purchases and persuades the consumers to try various new products in the market. Advertising is a persuasive promotional tool especially for companies whose products and services are targeted at mass consumer markets.

The world of advertising has come a long way. Some people describe it as an untrue, misleading and obscene. Advertising Industry has been facing a lot of criticism in the recent times as the advertising practices have not always been ethical. In today's competitive market, due to free allowances, the advertisers are sometimes following the unethical practices to fight the competition. For many years, the advertising industry has practiced, promoted voluntary self-regulation. Most advertisers and the media recognize the importance of maintaining consumer trust and confidence. The body of self-regulation in advertising is widening day by day. Even the code of ethics drawn up by the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) do not have much impact. They do not provide solutions to every ethical dilemma. Advertising is an important and legitimate means for the seller to awaken interest goods and services. The success of advertising depends on public confidence; hence no practice should be permitted that tends to impair this confidence.

In today's challenging market economy, advertising has become vital element of the modern society. Each company or brand is battling for consumer's mind space. This tremendous competition had lead to hardcore marketing tactics which lead to various unethical practices in Indian advertisements The Focus of the present study was on measuring the ethical practices of the print and television advertisements in India and their relative effects and consequences on the mindset of the adolescents. The present research contented that half of the Indian advertisements are of unethical ways of persuading consumers towards their product. The study also argues that the adolescents are easily misled by the advertisements. The guidelines and the codes laid down by Advertising Standard Council of India have ruled over. The interpretation and analysis of the survey and interview the hypothesis have been proved. During the process it

surfaced out that the Indian advertisements should be socially, culturally and morally ethical. The standards laid down here should be taken as minimum standards of acceptability which would be reviewed from time to time in relation to the prevailing norm of listeners' susceptibilities. The following standards of conduct are laid down in order to develop and promote healthy advertising practices in All India Radio. Responsibility for the observance of these rules rests equally upon the Advertiser and the Advertising Agency.

A particular action may be within the law and still not be ethical; Target Marketing is a good example for this. There is no law to restrict tobacco and alcohol companies from promoting their brand, which usually target youngsters.

Advertisements promoting permissiveness and objectifying women are heavily criticized in the society. Therefore, even advertising has ethical value. In today's competitive and buyer's market, an advertisement has to be truthful and ethical. If an advertisement is misleading, the credibility of the organization is lost. To view the truth in advertisement, it has to be seen from the consumer's point of view rather than the legal. The advertising industry has been frequently criticized for putting out misleading or exaggerated claims in respect of product, goods and services advertised. It is also believed that the advertisements have destroyed the dignity of the language.

Advertising is driven by the social process, thus it must follow the time-tested norms of social behaviour and should not insult our moral sense. In short ethics are rules of conduct or principles of morality that point us towards the right or best way to act in a situation. Ethics vary from person to person and society-to-society. Advertising contributes towards both negative and positive influence on society. It is criticized for encouraging materialism, manipulating consumer to buy things they do not need; stereotyping, fraudulent and so on. Let's discuss the various criticisms concerning the influence of advertising on society. Advertising is a promotional activity for marketing a commodity. In the present day of mass production and distribution, advertising serves as a powerful tool.

However, it is very difficult to distinguish a clear line of difference between what is true and what is untrue. But the advertisement as such is judged by its impact and by its acceptance by the consumers. The product must fulfil its advertised claims. Advertisements should be decent and not of obscene. It must be truthful. Sometimes, celebrities endorsing the product and spreading falsehood is also unethical.

Advertising is highly visible business activity and any lapse in the ethical standards can lead to severe consequences for the company and the image of the brand. An advertisement which is questionable on ethical grounds invites criticism. It may also lead to some action taken against the advertisers by public interest groups, Advertising Standard Council of India (ASCI) and consumer protection council. Thus the professionals in the advertising industry need to have strong ethical standards while designing their advertising campaigns. They should always try to eliminate the socially harmful aspects of advertising and observe high ethical standards with regard to truthfulness, human dignity and social responsibility. As Leo Burnett says, "let's gear our advertising to sell goods, but let's recognize also that advertising has a broad social responsibility." In this way, the advertising industry will make an exceptional and important contribution to the society and country. The present research brought out the importance of the ethics in Indian advertisements and the lack of ethics leads to cultural pollution. The lack of ethics in Indian advertisements, most of the time leads damaging effects on the mindset of the adolescents which in return bring discomfort among the parents. This study gives clear directions for the advertisers to be more socially responsible.

On the opinion about regulation, majority favoured it and the important concepts related with the same area - self

regulation by advertisers and agencies, self regulation by trade associations, self regulation by business and self regulation by media. In the present day, even the consumers are aware of the law and this should be known to every advertiser. Which makes the advertiser to be more cautious while designing the advertising campaign.

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