



A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF URBAN INDIAN WOMEN

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Abstract

The main objective of the study is to measure the impact of advertising on consumer behavior of urban Indian women. The study aims at measuring paradigm shift in the purchase behavior of women consumers. With growing competition in the market place as well as customers becoming better informed and more choosy, it is imperative that marketing communication of the right kind are made to the right group of target customers. Thus, advertising has acquired the distinction of being the most visible and glamorous method of marketing and communication. Some of the major marketing and communication functions performed by advertising today include informing, entertaining, persuading, influencing, reminding, reassuring and adding value to the product or service being advertised. Advertising demand of a product helps in increasing the sale volume and leads to increase in profile of the company. **INCREASING AWARENESS OF INDIAN CONSUMERS**

As a result of the increasing literacy in the country, exposure to the west, satellite television, foreign magazines and newspapers, there is a significant increase of consumer awareness among the Indians. Today more and more consumers are selective on the quality of the product and services. This awareness has made the Indian consumers seek more and more reliable source of purchases such as organized retail chains that have a corporate background and where the accountability is more pronounced. The consumer also seeks to purchase from a place where his/her feedback is more valued. Indian consumers are more now more aware, discerning and more knowledgeable about technology, products and the market and are beginning to demand benefits beyond just availability of a range of products that came from "TRUSTED" manufacturers. Indian consumers are price sensitive and prefer to buy value for money products

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to discover 'new facts' and 'verify the old' regarding the contemporary trends of advertising of consumer non-durables. An effort has been made to expose the impact of advertising on consumer behavior of urban Indian women. The study makes an effort to explore, examine and analyze the various facts of an advertisement. Another objective is to analyze the impact of advertising on brand awareness and demand creation.

Advertising and its Impact on Society (Women)

Advertisement and media – images have a stronger impact on shaping gender images than books on feminism and scholarly experiments on gender equality. Stereotype and generalisations in ads continue to objectify women, and place stress solely on their appearance, thus devaluing their innate worth. Gender is one such ascriptive characteristic that blocks girls and women both socially and academically from realizing their fullest potential. The power the advertisements carry with them is sensational. They have the ability to change and shape people's opinions of themselves with one picture of an image that is technologically modified to represent the advertiser's perspective of what is seen as perfect by viewers.

Communication simply is transferring of meanings, feelings, and tones from one person to another.

Consumer today seems to be interested in more than just a great ad or quality product.

They are interested in products that echo their own values. (Ajit Varghese MD Max India)

We are witnessing a strong trend where brands are utilizing issues that surround the consumer immediate environment and addressing them through main stream ads.

Advertising from time immemorial has been consistently bad-mouthed by a section of society labeling them as shameless promoters of excess and useless mass consumerism. This has been fiercely defended by the ad fraternity citing examples where advertising has indeed attempted to be an agent of social change.

Three ads of this 'genre' are presently occupying the center stage and inviting both attention and admiration.

The first Ad Airtel Shows Kids on either side of a barbed wire fence; jump the barrier to indulge in a game of football in *No –Man's Land* message communication as a solution to end all conflicts, wars and battles.



The Tata Tea ad comes next *Jago-Re*

The communication thought is truly clutter busting, attempting to migrate tea from being a physical and emotional vitaliser to becoming a catalyst for social –awakening.

The third being *Idea What an idea sir ji*

Amidst the accolade and approval that has greeted these ads, there have been dissenting voices too. Is this brand of advertising relevant to the basic job it's meant to do? Yes.

In today's environment, marketing and branding are increasingly becoming real, rooted and relatable.

Do today's *I-Me-My Self*' generation really connect with the Jago-Re or the Idea-Cellular Communication without barrier stuff, absorbed as they seem to be in living life King Size?

The Changing Profile of Indian Women

Profile of the Indian urban woman is undergoing a metamorphic change. The individualism of 1980's and 90's has almost completely disappeared. The women today are seeking a balance between home and work. The focus is not only on I, Me, and Myself, but also on what she can do for her family. And even as she matures into a savvy consumer, the Indian women are not rejecting basic societal values. Consider the soaps on television. These TV soaps are creating relevance for old values like extended families and connectivity. TULSI, the icon for this new Indian woman; is traditional, but she is also fully capable of participating in the modern world.

The urban consumer today is lonely and she worries about how the socialization process of her children will happen without any grandparents or relatives around them. She worries about her kids values due to channels like MTV. She frets about not having enough time for her kids. These are a lot of guilt. And the only way to assuage this guilt is to see her connected with the others in one way or the other. We have heard people talking about how they have learnt to cope with domestic troubles by watching these soaps. The relationship between husband and wife is changing too. Today it's all about mutuality. The woman does not want him to transgress her space, but wants him to be there with her in all situations that signify togetherness, shared space and thinking. If they cook, he cooks with her role. The relation with mother-in laws is also changing. They are referring to a slightly bitter, slightly affectionate relationship.

Changing Profile of Newly Married Indian Women

Not too long ago, marriage for typical Indian women meant getting married to a family. Her single point agenda was to fit into a new environment and adapt to her new role as the bahu. The laws of living in a joint family followed the age- old patriarchal code. These were strictly implemented & policed by the matriarch (members Jeth, Jethani, dewar, dewrani etc) for years the women ribbed, cried and slogged through her life conscious not to upset the traditional structure and waited for the day when her dreaded mother-in-law would pass on the family baton to her with no readymade guidelines to run a nuclear family; the woman had to frame rules for herself and others in her unit what should be the changed role of husband in the family? How much he should be involved, what would be the cut-off-point? Who would be ultimately responsible for the children? What values needed to be inculcated in the children? How much of the traditional values should they be exposed to? Who should they learn from?

Ironically, though the new reality requires a new set of laws, today's women is still hyper linking her present to a past that was governed by the patriarchal code. Most of the time she is trying to solve today's problems with the laws of yesterday values. This is a complex game being played at different layers. Things are not always what they seem, what she projects is not necessarily what she really is. In many ways her actions and intentions are at cross purposes with each other Today's mom-in law is seen in commercials frequenting restaurants, shopping malls riding the pillion of the scooty driven by her bahu. She seems to have taken a liking for this jean clad gadget wielding, English speaking woman who looks so unlike her family members from the outside yet manages to transform her into hardcore traditional woman she wants to. And on occasions she does not mind coming forward to the defence of her bahu against other representatives of the patriarchy.

Adjustment is the name of the game!

Consumers view of advertising

1. Advertising should act as a source of information.
2. Advertising should act as a time saver.
3. Advertising serves as an assurance of quality
4. (4)Advertisements serve as a source of entertainment.
5. (5)Advertisements must help consumer to develop positive Attitudes towards product



Want conception - At time the prospects want may be latent. Through advertising the latent want can be activated. The advertising can help the target audience to conceive the want and the products potential for meeting that want.

Want development - A consumer may use a product but may not be aware of the other possible uses. Advertising can be used to stimulate a 'want' for the product in respect of these additional uses. Here the role of advertising is to increase or intensify usage E.g. - Multipurpose use of the microwave oven.

Want focus – Advertising can demonstrate a match between what is sought and what is offered by the firm. Alternatively, it may seek to change the choice criteria or alter relative trade off among attributes or work towards adding additional persuasive communication.

Want satisfaction - Advertising can be used to reassure the consumer that he or she has bought the best, suggest that consumers may repeat or remind them of the reasons they prefer the brand. The aim is to retain the consumer may by allaying any doubts that undermine satisfaction with the purchase. Advertising is used to stress the importance of constantly building up resistance to change by reinforcing the customers satisfaction with brand. Example- Dove, surf excels.

Family Decision Making: Purchase Decision

Different Role of Family Members in Purchase Decisions

Family member plays a variety of roles in decision making. There are five roles that could be played by members of the family.

(I) The Information Gatherer – The individual has the greatest expertise in acquiring and evaluating information from various sources. The information gatherer is most aware of alternative sources of information.

(II) The Influencer – The person is most likely to influence the manner in which alternative brands are evaluated. This means that the influencer will establish the decision criteria by which brands are compared and will be instrumental in deciding which brand most closely conform to the decision criteria. The influencer may or may not be the same person as the information gatherer.

(III) The Decision Maker – Someone must make the final decision. Again; this could be the same person as the information gatherer and influence but not necessarily.

(IV) The Purchasing Agent - This family member purchases the product. The purchasing agent may or may not have discretion regarding the brand to buy because the decision may have already been made. He or she may only have discretion regarding the store. When an in-store decision is made the purchasing agent and decision maker are the same.

(V) The Consumer - The user of the product or consumer could be the whole family or an individual member.

Consumer Decision Making Styles

“Consumer decision making style can be defined as a mental orientation, characterising a consumer’s approach to making choice”.

The underlying thought of most western consumer decision making models is that all consumers engage in shopping with certain fundamental decision making modes or styles, including rational shopping and consciousness regarding brand, prices and quality. The search for a universal instrument that can describe consumer’s decision –making styles across cultural seems to be problematic.

The *consumer styles inventory* (CSI) developed by spoles and Kendall identifies eight mental characteristics of consumer decision making-

- I. Perfectionism or high quality consciousness.
- II. Brand Consciousness
- III. Novelty- fashion consciousness.
- IV. Recreational, hedonistic shopping consciousness.
- V. Price and value- for money shopping Consciousness.
- VI. Impulsiveness.
- VII. Confusion over choice of brands, stores and consumer information.
- VIII. Habitual, brand – loyal orientation towards consumption.



The Indian Patriarch

The last century saw the beginning of the disintegration of the joint family. The old patriarch who was the power center and the champion of the dominant patriarchal culture also started losing his authority in family. For generations, he had ruled from a high pedestal of social sanctity. To his wife, he was “PARAMESHWAR” to his sons and daughters; he was “PITA”, the face of God. And to other members of his family he was the awe-inspiring *Babuji*, who was moody, unpredictable and a spoilsport. Remember, the Polo commercial where his arrival stopped the Kid’s party? Or in the film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge(DDLJ)*, where *Amrish Puri’s* arrival stops the song and dance in the marriage party.

Until now, the patriarch had total control over money the house that sheltered everybody. Armed with these powers and social sanction, he ruled like tyrant. In film after film, he terrorised members of his family, vetoed marriages, separated lovers and disowned disobedient sons.

But today, this stereotype is being denounced in films. At times the patriarch is portrayed as a villain and like a villain he is either transformed or terminated. Amitabh in *MOHABBATEIN* as the Patriarch of the old gurukul was in a time – wrap, and was so far removed from reality around him that he failed to get recognition from the new generation and had to give away to *SHAHRAKH KHAN*. As the patriarch starts losing grip over the family, the other constituencies whose life he controlled women, children and youth come into prominence. His wife is today one of his strongest critics. We have seen her putting her husband in place in the old “*DHUNDE REH JAOGE*” commercial. She reprimands her husband for wasting her daughter’s hard earned money, “*Beti Ki Kamai Yu Hi Pite Jao*” And this is not the first time that she has done it, whenever the Patriarch had tried to stifle the voice of his sons and daughter, she came up in the defence. She knows what it is to be grounded by the ruthless paternal tradition, “I want my daughter to lead her life on her life on her own terms”. Says farida Jalal in *DDLJ*.

Her intense desire to be in the position of power and rule her husband has been portrayed in a number of Hindi films of the past. But the dominate patriarchal culture never approved such transgression. At the end of each film she was forced to relinquish her power back to the patriarch. In order to do that, most of the time she was painted in black- like the evil stepmother, the jealous wife or a daring bad girl. Such character assassination also allowed the patriarch to justify Use of physical power to wrest back control from his wife. Today she allowed express and exercise her authority without any repressive consequences. Ads portray, though light- heartedly. The existence of power hungry matriarchs trying to dominate and dislodge the patriarch from the position of authority.

If the wife sets the tone of rebellion, it is the son who is emerging as the new face of power. He is computer savvy; the face of today’s education he does not need to stay in his dad’s ancestral house because he capable of buying his own. Empowered by the financial Institutions, he can realize his dreams overnight – “*Kal Ankhon Me Thi Aaj Haantho Mein Hain*” Maruti 800 commercial. On the other hand spiraling inflation, dwindling interest rates have played havoc with his dad’s bank balance reducing him from a provider to a solicitor for help. “*Kash Mere Ek Beta Hota*” or “*Beti Ek Cup Coffee Milegi*” (fair & lovely)

There is complete role reversal between the father and the son. Today the old man lives in his empty house, sometimes alone, sometimes along with his old spouse. Children are more of a visitor than member of his family (Baghban). Whenever he is shown as the part of his wife are projected as outsiders.

They come as guests (Asian Paints Commercial) and behave like guests with their roles in the family being marginalised. In the move commercial, the Patriarch and his wife are sitting quietly while the Bahu is stressed and suffering back pain. She does not help her out. You do not ask your guests to work in your house. In the first version of the ad; the saas brings out a pack of moov and offers to message. In a later version. She is just an onlooker while her son does the needful.

The change is more pronounced in caricature. Like all people in the position of power the teacher has also been ridiculed in films and commercials. While the older version laughs at his cane-wielding disciplinarian profile, the current ones like (Khatta Mitha Hajmola, Britannia Chocó’s, and Kissan Jam) project a more friendly, fun- loving vibrant side of him.

This is the patriarch that youngsters would love to see. A face that is soft and gentle. A presence that enhances happiness rather than add to the tension. Unlike the traditional patriarch, papas of today do not cry when daughters leave for in-laws house. Rather they console her with Pizza treat or gift her mobile phone (Pizza Hut, Alpenliebe, and Reliance Mobile Commercial). They are more of facilitators than a dictator. They organize meeting for the would-be groom and bride in Pizza – parlours and coffee houses. Let’s the young generation make their choice. Patriarchs will take care of kundali and pandit ji’s of the ritualistic world. They will ceremoniously come and give their “*ASHIRWAAD*” be it Shaadi ka mandap or a cricket match or in a TV commercial- (Reliance telecom – *Shwag Ki Maa*)



All popular Hindi films are full of pragmatic patriarchs whose sole desire is to single mindedly follow the desires of their young ones :- If it seems that this portrait of the patriarch is far too tailor – made for the younger generation and therefore, not realistic, one needs to look at him from the patriarch’s own point of view. What does he want to be?

What image does he want to project? What are his dreams and desires?

One strong universal desire among patriarchs today is to defy time and not to dismiss oneself as old. Barring a few grey strands and wrinkles he can do whatever his young counterpart does like playing basket ball in the rain or dancing to a fast number in a party. Retiring does not mean rusting. *Main retire hongra toh sirf kam se (ICICI PRUDENTIAL)*. Amidst the wave of change there are aspects where the role of the patriarch remains totally unaffected. One role the Patriarchs continue to play in their offspring’s family is that of a cheerleader. BAHU has prepared good dishes they appreciate (Aashirward Atta). The moment a grand- child is born in the family, they get busy selecting names for the new born (Maruti Versa) The Son has bought his new versa and they take a joyride in it. They are the ones who continue to form the frame of happiness in the family, be it their own or of their sons and daughters.

The patriarch remains unchanged when he is playing the role of grandparents; because in this role, he reveals himself at his simple benevolent, friendly and lovable best. Although grand children are now physically separated from grandparents due to lack of *SPACE* or the son’s moving out; this relation continues as projected in these commercials E.g. - Alpenliebe and Britannia Marigold.

Commercial show that grandparent and grand children can bridge any gap, be it physical or social- they breaks the physical handicap of the old lady through Alpenliebe.

What these commercials and films seem to say is the fact, when rituals overpower a role; it loses its relevance in society and it is to have a look at it from a fresh perspective. In defining the emphasis has shifted from the physical (age) to mental maturity (to be in control). The journey of a Patriarch is the journey from unbridled ego to controlled authority. A movement from cold and pristine isolation to warm and colourful participation. A change of role from to a youthful and contemporary facilitator.

Conclusion and Suggestions

“Overall, there is a growing desire visible for keeping up with the latest trends and possessing new and trendy products which is further fuelled by peer pressure, thus making it a lucrative segment for marketer.”

1. Women respondents perceive different advertising appeals in which ‘**emotional appeal**’ in the advertisement is more relied for purchase decision while ‘**fear appeal**’ is least relied for purchase decision to buy cosmetic products and designer wear.
2. Women respondents take purchase decision on the basis of advertising, the majority says ‘**infavour**’ while advertising is concerned and minority says ‘**not in favour**’ for the purchase of cosmetic products and designer wear.
3. Women buy on the basis of advertising appeal, majority buying decisions are ‘**pre determined**’ or ‘**decide at point of purchase**’ while minority buying decision are ‘unplanned purchase’ for cosmetic products and designer wear.
4. Women spent ‘**1-2 hours**’ viewing television in majority and minority says ‘**do not watch Television**’ for the purchase of cosmetic products and designer wear.
5. Women Purchase Decision is Influenced by Product Advertisement, majority says ‘**buy a product when it is required**’ and minority says ‘**buy when influenced by others**’ for cosmetic products and designer wear .
6. Women choice for Branded vs. unbranded purchase is influenced by Brand awareness majority says ‘**buy branded product**’ and minority says ‘**buy unbranded product**’ for cosmetic products and designer wear.
7. Women purchase decision is affected by advertisement, majority says ‘**yes**’ and minority says ‘**no**’ i.e.; negligible number of women purchase products sans its advertisement for cosmetic products and designer wear.
8. Women prefer Brand while choosing new product, majority says ‘**chooses tailor stitched clothes**’ and minority says ‘**chooses readymade clothes and boutique clothes**’ for designer wear.
9. Effect of new brand on women consumer buying behaviour majority says ‘**selects when brand is widely in use**’ and minority says ‘selects brand when are currently available in market’ for cosmetic products and designer wear .
10. Impact of brand recognition on women buying behavior, majority says ‘**no**’ in advertisement and minority says ‘**yes**’ for cosmetic products and designer wear .
11. Media channel viewed by women consumer is influenced by advertising, majority view ‘**colors channel**’ and minority view ‘**Zee channel**’ for cosmetic products and designer wear.
12. Women make Purchase decision on the basis of media channel influence, majority says ‘**yes**’ and minority says ‘**no**’ for cosmetic products and designer wear.



13. Women consumer association with compulsive buying and disposable income majority says '**low involvement towards fashion and compulsive buying**' minority says '**large involvement**' for cosmetic products and designer wear.
14. Women consumer association with disposable income majority says '**moderate involvement towards disposable income**' minority says '**very large involvement**' for cosmetic products and designer wear.
15. Women consumer association with disposable income and impulsive buying, majority says '**moderate involvement towards disposable income and impulsive buying**' minority says '**very large involvement**' for cosmetic products and designer wears.
16. Impact of Frequency on women consumer purchase is influenced by, majority says '**once a week**' and minority says '**once a day**' in advertisement for cosmetic products and designer wear.
17. Hindrance created by advertisements while television viewing by women, majority says '**sometimes**' and minority says '**always**' for cosmetic products and designer wear.
18. Women consumer association between Fashion involvement and impulse buying majority says '**moderate involvement**' and minority says '**very large involvement**' for cosmetic products and designer wear.
19. Impact of variables on purchase decision by women '**all variable responsible for maximum influence in purchase decision**' where as the least contributing factor towards the purchase decision is '**gifts/schemes**'. **There is minimum impact of advertisement on women consumer purchase decision on the basis of gifts/schemes.**

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