

The Dynamics of Advertising in a Globalised Consumer Market: Implications for Ethics and Regulation

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Abstract

In today's globalised consumer market, advertising plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behaviour and driving economic growth. This abstract delves into the multifaceted nature of advertising, exploring its impact on both businesses and consumers. It highlights the consequences of globalization and the rapid expansion of consumerism, particularly in developing countries like India, where the market for goods and services is burgeoning. While advertising serves as a crucial tool for creating awareness, generating interest, and prompting action among consumers, it also raises ethical concerns, particularly regarding the use of misleading tactics. The abstract emphasizes the need for stricter regulations to curb deceptive advertising practices and protect consumer rights. Furthermore, it discusses the social and cultural implications of advertising, acknowledging its influence on societal norms and individual behaviour. Through an examination of the ethical considerations inherent in advertising, this abstract underscores the importance of upholding transparency, honesty, and consumer welfare in advertising practices. By striking a balance between promoting products and safeguarding consumer interests, advertisers can contribute to sustainable business growth and societal well-being in an increasingly interconnected world.

Keywords: Advertising, Globalization, Consumerism, Developing Countries, Market Expansion, Misleading Tactics

Introduction

In the wake of globalization, the world has experienced a significant shift towards consumerism, a trend that has been particularly pronounced in developing countries like India. As economies open up and people's purchasing power increases, there is a corresponding expansion in the market for goods and services. This surge in consumer

demand has created a highly competitive environment where businesses must vie for attention amidst a plethora of choices available to consumers.

Central to this dynamic landscape is the role of advertisements. Advertisements serve as powerful tools for businesses to communicate with consumers, inform them about new products and services, and ultimately influence their purchasing decisions. Through various mediums such as television, print media, and online channels, advertisers are able to reach a wide audience and convey their message effectively.

However, while advertisements are generally seen as beneficial for informing consumers, they can also have negative implications when they employ misleading tactics. The rise of multimedia marketing has only intensified this issue, as advertisers strive to capture the attention of consumers in an increasingly cluttered advertising space. In this competitive environment, some companies resort to exaggeration or false claims in their advertisements, leading to a loss of consumer trust and confidence.

The definition of advertising encompasses any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services through mass media by an identified sponsor. This definition highlights the commercial nature of advertising and its purpose in promoting products and services to consumers. Companies allocate significant budgets towards advertising as part of their overall marketing strategy, recognizing its importance in driving sales and brand awareness.

However, the competitive nature of the market means that companies are constantly seeking ways to outdo their competitors. In this pursuit of market dominance, some companies may engage in deceptive advertising practices, making exaggerated claims or providing false information to consumers. This can lead to a distortion of the marketplace and undermine the trust that consumers place in advertising as a source of information.

The effectiveness of advertising lies in its ability to create awareness and generate interest among consumers. Through targeted messaging and creative communication strategies, advertisers can capture the attention of consumers and persuade them to consider their products or services. However, when advertisements employ misleading tactics, they risk alienating consumers and damaging the reputation of the brand.

The ethical implications of advertising are a matter of ongoing debate. While advertising is essential for promoting economic growth and driving consumer behaviour, deceptive advertising practices can have negative social consequences. Regulatory bodies play a crucial role in enforcing guidelines to prevent false or misleading advertising, aiming to protect consumers from deceptive practices and ensure fair competition in the marketplace.

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the impact of advertising on various aspects of society, including health, education, and online behaviour. Misleading advertisements can have far-reaching consequences, leading consumers to make uninformed decisions or engage in harmful behaviours. This underscores the importance of strict regulatory measures to control misleading advertising and protect consumer welfare.

Despite the controversies surrounding advertising, it remains a critical component of modern economies. Through its ability to inform, persuade, and influence consumer behaviour, advertising plays a central role in driving sales and shaping market trends. However, it is essential that advertisers adhere to ethical standards and employ truthful and transparent advertising practices to maintain consumer trust and confidence.

Advertising is a powerful tool for businesses to communicate with consumers and promote their products and services. However, the use of misleading tactics can undermine the effectiveness of advertising and have negative implications for consumer welfare. Strict regulatory measures are necessary to control misleading advertising and ensure fair competition in the marketplace. Ultimately, advertisers must recognize their responsibility to consumers and adhere to ethical standards in their advertising practices.

Advertising and society

The advertising industry serves a pivotal role in informing individuals about the availability of various products, brands, and services. Its primary objective is not only to create awareness about these offerings but also to ensure consumer satisfaction. Moreover, advertising serves as a catalyst for stimulating consumer desire and prompting purchases, blending elements of creativity, science, economics, and social influence.

In today's fiercely competitive business landscape, companies engage in intense competition to capture consumer attention and maintain their competitive edge. The success and trajectory of a business are significantly influenced by its advertising strategies, which are crafted to

attract and retain customers. However, the impact of advertising on society encompasses both positive and negative dimensions.

While advertising serves as a public good by driving economic activity and fostering market competition, it can also perpetuate harmful stereotypes and objectify individuals, particularly women. Economic factors such as media funding and market competitiveness play a significant role in shaping advertising practices. Advertising techniques often emphasize the benefits of products to entice consumers, leveraging emotional and psychological motivations.

The primary objective of advertising is persuasion, aiming to encourage consumers to try new products or services. Marketers and businesses view advertising as crucial for driving economic growth and maintaining competitiveness. However, the effectiveness of advertising lies not only in conveying factual information but also in leveraging associations, emotions, and subconscious urges to influence consumer behaviour.

Modern marketing strategies frequently exploit emotional and psychological drivers to broaden the appeal of products and commoditize human connections. This phenomenon, inherent to capitalism, has intensified with advancements in marketing techniques. Additionally, there is a growing trend towards cause-related marketing, where advertisers align their products with social causes to appeal to consumers' altruistic motivations and encourage purchases.

Advertising plays a vital role in informing, persuading, and influencing consumer behaviour. While it catalyses economic growth and competition, it also has the potential to perpetuate negative societal norms and exploit emotional vulnerabilities. As advertising continues to evolve, striking a balance between promoting products and ensuring ethical and responsible marketing practices is imperative. This requires prioritizing consumer welfare and societal well-being in advertising endeavours.

Advertisement and consumer perceptions

Consumers are at the heart of the market, driven by their unique needs and preferences. When presented with options from various companies, consumers seek to fulfil their requirements

efficiently through their purchasing decisions. Advertising serves as a pivotal form of communication aimed at persuading individuals to buy or engage with products, ideas, or services. Typically, advertisements include product or service names alongside the benefits they offer, targeting specific audiences to encourage the adoption or usage of the brand.

Early advertisers, as noted by Bryant and Zeeman (1944), held a strong belief in the efficacy of advertising, viewing it as a potent tool for achieving desired objectives convincingly. The concept of communication impact emerged from these early models, focusing on "who communicates what to whom through which medium with what effect." The evolution of technology, including the advent of websites and mobile phones, has expanded the avenues through which advertisers can reach their target audiences.

Despite the advancements in communication channels, consumers still consider various factors before making purchasing decisions. According to Jhangiani and Tarry (2014), advertising plays a crucial role in this process by engaging individuals and attempting to influence their attitudes on cognitive, emotional, or behavioural levels. Through advertisements, companies aim to capture consumers' interest and motivate them to try or purchase specific products by altering or enhancing their perceptions.

Consumers often find themselves deliberating between different products from competing companies. Their ultimate goal is to meet their needs as effectively as possible through their purchase decisions. Advertising acts as a bridge between companies and consumers, conveying the benefits of products or services to entice individuals to choose a particular brand over others. By highlighting the unique selling points of a product or service, advertisements aim to sway consumer preferences and drive sales.

In the realm of advertising, understanding the target audience is paramount. Advertisers employ various strategies to tailor their messages to specific demographic groups, ensuring that the content resonates with the intended recipients. Through market research and consumer profiling, advertisers can craft advertisements that speak directly to the needs and desires of their target audience, increasing the likelihood of a favourable response.

The effectiveness of advertising lies in its ability to influence consumer behaviour on multiple levels. Cognitive, emotional, and behavioural factors all come into play when individuals are exposed to advertisements. Cognitive persuasion involves presenting factual

information about a product or service, appealing to the rational aspect of decision-making. Emotional persuasion, on the other hand, taps into consumers' feelings and desires, aiming to evoke an emotional response that drives action. Finally, behavioural persuasion focuses on encouraging specific actions, such as making a purchase or visiting a website, through compelling calls to action.

However, consumers are not passive recipients of advertising messages; they actively engage with and interpret advertisements based on their perceptions and experiences. Therefore, advertisers must employ creative and innovative approaches to capture consumers' attention and leave a lasting impression. This may involve leveraging humour, storytelling, or visual imagery to create memorable and impactful advertisements that resonate with audiences.

Advertising plays a central role in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing purchasing decisions. By effectively communicating the benefits of products or services, advertisements seek to sway consumer preferences and drive sales. Through strategic targeting and persuasive messaging, advertisers aim to engage audiences on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural levels, ultimately driving them to take action. As advertising continues to evolve in tandem with technological advancements and changing consumer preferences, the importance of understanding and harnessing its power remains paramount in the competitive marketplace.

Informative advertising	
• Communicating customer value	• Suggest new uses for a product
• Building a brand and company image	• Informing the market of a price change
• Telling the market about the new product	• Describing available services & support
• Explaining how a product works	• Correcting false impressions
Persuasive advertising	
• Building brand preference	• Persuading customers to purchase now
• Encouraging switching to a brand	• Persuading customers to receive sales call
• Changing customer perceptions of product value	• Persuading customers to tell others about the brand
Reminder advertising	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining customer relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminding consumers where to buy the product
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminding consumers that the product may be needed shortly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the brand in a customer's mind during off-seasons

Figure:1.1 Types of advertisement

Source: Belch and Belch, an Introduction to Advertising

Individuals involved in persuasion, such as advertisers, must understand how the information they convey influences people's motivations, needs, and objectives. In today's world, advertising has become increasingly pervasive and adaptable. Whether consciously or not, individuals are constantly exposed to advertisements, often through digital platforms. The digital revolution, in particular, has revolutionised the advertising industry, facilitating easier access for businesses to connect with a broader audience, especially through social media channels (Nekatibeb, 2012).

Ethical considerations are paramount for those working in advertising. Advertisers have a moral responsibility to adhere to a code of ethics when promoting their products or services. The primary objective of advertising should not be to manipulate or coerce individuals into making purchases but rather to assist them in making informed decisions. Ethical advertising practices enhance a business's brand reputation and expand its market share by fostering trust and credibility among consumers.

Ethics in advertising

Employing deceptive tactics in advertisements may initially appear beneficial for attracting new customers and driving sales of products or services. However, in reality, such strategies can have detrimental effects on a company's long-term prospects and overall success.

Deceptive advertising practices often involve concealing costs, omitting crucial information, or using misleading visuals to entice consumers into making purchases. While companies may aim to maximize profits through these tactics, they ultimately undermine consumer trust and hinder their ability to make informed decisions.

Deceptive marketing tactics not only fail to effectively communicate product or service benefits but also impede individuals from obtaining the necessary information to make sound judgments. Consumers who feel misled or deceived by advertisements are likely to develop negative perceptions of the brand, leading to decreased loyalty and potential reputational damage. In the competitive business landscape, such unethical advertising practices can harm relationships with customers and erode the company's credibility within the market.

Furthermore, deceptive advertising does not contribute positively to the business world as a whole. Instead, it fosters an environment of mistrust and scepticism among consumers, undermining the integrity of the marketplace. Ultimately, companies that engage in deceptive advertising risk alienating their target audience and facing legal consequences, thereby jeopardizing their sustainability and long-term success.

Importance of Ethics in business

The International Ethical Business Registry highlights a notable rise in ethical expectations within the business and professional realms in recent years. Clients, employees, and customers are increasingly scrutinizing organizations to identify those that uphold fundamental principles in their day-to-day operations.

An organization's commitment to ethical conduct encompasses several key aspects:

- Clarifying what behaviours are deemed acceptable or unacceptable.
- Inspiring individuals to perform at their highest level.
- Providing members with a benchmark for self-evaluation.
- Establishing guidelines for appropriate behaviour and responsibilities within the workplace.
- Serving as a means of identifying one's profession.
- Reflecting professional maturity.

This statement underscores the importance of ethics in guiding organizational behaviour and fostering trust among stakeholders. It emphasizes the role of ethical standards in shaping workplace culture, promoting accountability, and enhancing the reputation of both individuals and organizations within their respective industries.

Importance of Ethics in Advertising

Ethical advertising encompasses a set of principles that govern how businesses communicate with potential customers. In today's global market, ethics play a crucial role in advertising, as advertisements can serve various purposes and offer numerous advantages. However, there are also aspects of advertising that fall short of ethical standards.

One prevalent issue in contemporary commercials is exaggeration, which aims to make them more captivating. This practice often reflects a lack of awareness or a deliberate disregard for ethical norms and principles. Sometimes advertisers may struggle to distinguish between what is ethical and what is not, leading to the exaggeration of product benefits in order to boost sales.

The beliefs held by advertisers also influence their ethical considerations. Advertisers may justify their actions by believing that customers will understand, contemplate, and act upon the messages conveyed in their advertisements. However, it is unethical for advertisers to deceive customers by promoting impractical claims or false information, as this undermines trust and integrity.

Consumers can be misled into making uninformed decisions when relying solely on advertisements to choose a product or service. Failing to disclose the truth or presenting a distorted picture of the product's attributes can lead consumers to overlook potential risks or negative consequences. Consequently, consumers may unknowingly use a product without being aware of its harmful side effects, resulting in financial losses and exacerbating their existing issues.

In summary, ethical advertising requires advertisers to uphold honesty, transparency, and integrity in their communications with consumers. By adhering to ethical principles, advertisers can build trust, foster positive relationships with customers, and contribute to a more ethical marketplace.

False or Misleading advertising

Advertising regulations in many countries explicitly forbid the use of deceptive or misleading tactics. It is illegal to misrepresent the quality or specifications of a product and then sell it at a price lower than its true value. Providing false information through advertising can have serious consequences, as it may lead to a significant number of individuals making poor decisions based on misrepresented facts.

Deceptive or fraudulent advertising not only harms consumer choice but also distorts their judgment by persuading them to believe in false claims. Consumers may be coerced into purchasing products or services at inflated prices, lower quality, or even the wrong items due to misleading advertisements. This manipulation of consumers undermines their ability to make informed and rational decisions.

Advertisements that tout special attributes of a product or service without substantiated evidence can also mislead consumers. Such misleading claims make consumers more susceptible to manipulation and less likely to make sound decisions. Ultimately, deceptive advertising practices erode trust between businesses and consumers, leading to negative outcomes for both parties involved.

Impact of misleading advertising

A misleading advertisement presents information about a product in a manner that is either factually inaccurate or deceptive. Such advertisements can often be identified by examining the content or taglines of the product, such as claims like "boost is the secret to our energy." This type of advertisement raises ethical concerns due to its lack of transparency and ambiguous messaging. The negative impact of a misleading advertisement may not be immediately apparent until after the consumer has made a purchase.

Advertisements may also make promises that they do not fulfil, either explicitly or implicitly, leading consumers to believe that the advertiser has no intention of delivering on those promises. This can result in confusion and disappointment for the consumer. Furthermore, advertising tactics can influence consumer perceptions and even harm competitors of the advertiser in various ways.

Concept of consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour refers to the actions individuals take when purchasing, using, and disposing of goods and services, as defined by Blackwell (2001). This encompasses five key elements: perception, knowledge, attitude, motivation, and actual behaviour. Understanding consumer behaviour is essential for businesses aiming to achieve success with new products and concepts. Effective marketing strategies rely on thorough consumer behaviour research.

For instance, Nike conducted a consumer behaviour analysis and discovered that while the majority of its customers were not professional athletes, many harboured aspirations of becoming one. In response, Nike launched its 'Find Your Greatness' Olympics ad campaign during the 2012 London Olympics. The campaign aimed to inspire individuals of all backgrounds to pursue their athletic dreams, emphasizing that greatness is attainable for everyone, not just elite athletes.

Consumer buying behaviour

Consumer purchasing behaviour encompasses the actions and reactions that individuals undergo during the process of making a purchase decision. This decision-making process involves several stages, including identifying the desired goods or services, carefully evaluating their attributes, and ultimately making an informed choice about whether to buy or not.

Various groups of individuals exhibit diverse patterns of purchasing behaviour. Some common types of customer purchase habits include:

1. Complex Buying Behaviour:

- This type of behaviour occurs when the buyer is highly involved in the purchase decision.
- It is typically associated with expensive, high-risk, or infrequently purchased items.
- Examples include purchasing a laptop, a house, or a television, where extensive research and consideration are involved.

2. Habitual Buying Behaviour:

- In habitual buying behaviour, consumers tend to stick with a particular brand out of habit or routine.
- Products like sugar and bread, which are purchased frequently and have low involvement in the decision-making process, are common examples.

3. Dissonance Reducing Buying Behaviour:

- Dissonance-reducing behaviour occurs when consumers experience post-purchase discomfort or uncertainty after making a significant purchase.

- This often happens with expensive or high-risk products where there are many similar options available.
- Consumers may feel the need to justify or reassure themselves about their purchase decision.
- Buying a car or a phone, where there are numerous brands and models with similar features, can trigger dissonance-reducing behaviour.

4. Variety Seeking Buying Behaviour:

- Consumers exhibit variety-seeking behaviour when they actively seek out different brands or products, even if they serve the same purpose.
- This behaviour is driven by a desire for novelty or experimentation.
- Products such as cooking oil or detergent, where there is little differentiation between brands, encourage consumers to try different options.

5. Impulsive Buying Behaviour:

- Impulsive buying behavior occurs when a consumer makes unplanned and spontaneous purchases, often driven by emotions or immediate desires.
- It involves purchasing a product without prior intention or extensive consideration.
- Impulsive buyers are often swayed by factors such as attractive displays, discounts, or peer influence.
- This behavior is characterized by a sense of urgency or excitement in the moment of purchase.
- Examples include buying snacks at the checkout counter, purchasing clothing on a whim, or buying gadgets because they are on sale.

Advertising's Influence on Consumer Purchase Intentions

The decision-making process of consumers is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, among which advertising plays a significant role. Advertising impacts consumer behavior through several mechanisms, including:

- **Raising Awareness:** Advertising introduces consumers to the existence of a product or service, ensuring that they are aware of its availability in the market.

- **Providing Information:** Advertisements provide essential information about the product, including its features, benefits, and unique selling points. This information helps consumers make informed purchase decisions.
- **Reminding and Reinforcing:** Through repeated exposure, advertising reinforces brand awareness and reminds consumers about the product, keeping it top-of-mind when they are making purchasing decisions.
- **Motivating Consumers:** Effective advertising can motivate consumers to consider a product by highlighting its advantages and creating a desire or need for it.
- **Eliciting Behavioral Response:** Ultimately, advertising aims to prompt a behavioral response from consumers, such as making a purchase or taking a specific action.

However, advertising alone is not sufficient to achieve desired outcomes. Other factors such as product quality, presentation, and pricing also play crucial roles. For instance, consumers are more likely to engage with a brand's advertisement if it evokes an emotional response or effectively communicates a compelling message.

The conceptual framework presented above suggests that the credibility of advertising influences consumers' attitudes and behaviors in making purchase decisions. Research conducted by MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch in 1986 found that advertising credibility positively impacted customer perceptions of advertising, which, in turn, enhanced their purchase intentions.

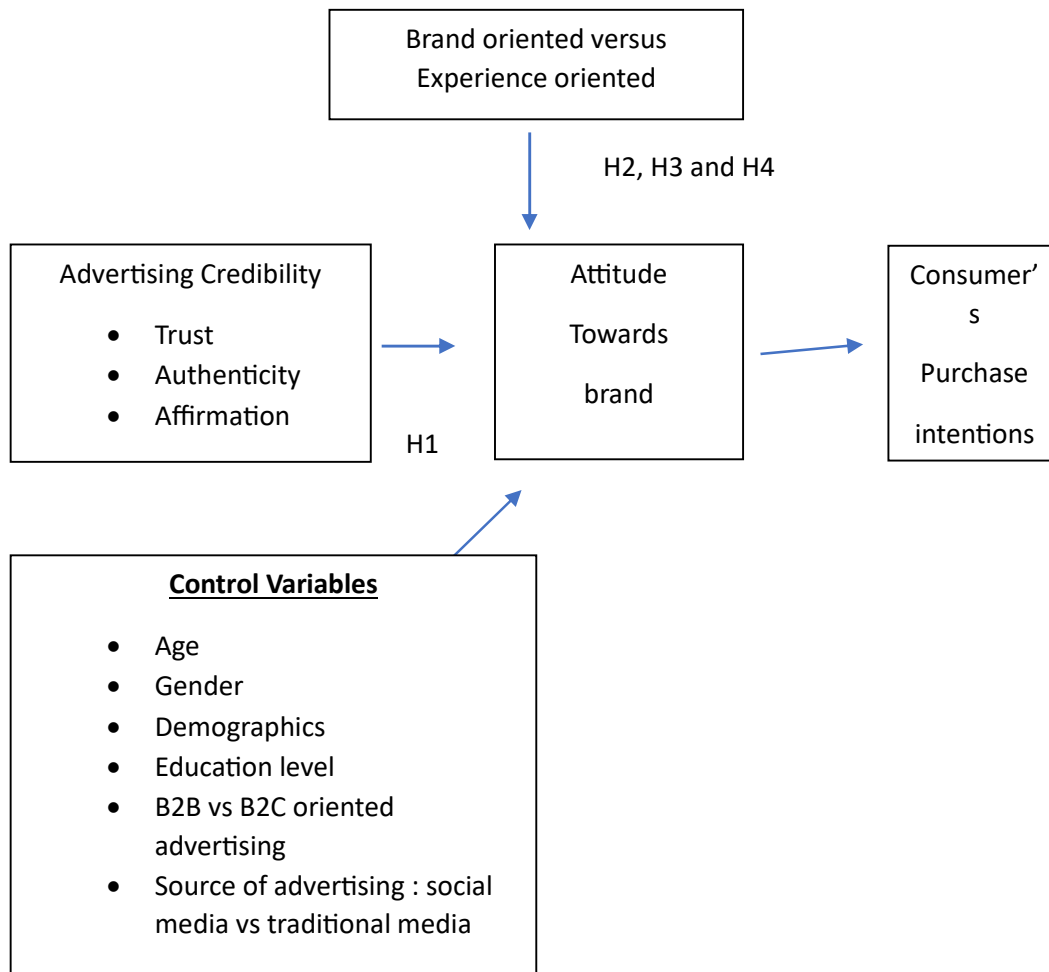


Figure: 1.2: Advertising's Influence on Consumer Purchase Behavior

Source : MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch (1986), page 141 FIGURE 7

Advertisement messaging can significantly influence customers' attitudes and purchase intentions due to three key drivers. Firstly, consumers are more likely to trust a business's advertising if they already have trust in the brand itself. Building trust in the consumer's mind is crucial, and a positive impression of the brand can foster this trust. When a brand's advertising message exudes confidence, reliability, and consistency, it enhances its reputation and credibility.

Secondly, customers tend to believe in brands that appear genuine and authentic. For a brand to be perceived as authentic, its advertising must convey genuineness and sincerity. Consumers rely on feedback, recommendations, and reviews to validate a brand's

authenticity. The overall perception people have of the brand and its advertisements, whether positive or negative, contributes to its authenticity.

By incorporating all three elements of advertising credibility into advertising messaging, businesses can positively impact customer attitudes and behavior when making purchase decisions. It would be intriguing to examine whether these correlations remain robust under closer examination.

Meaning and concept of advertisement

Advertising serves as a crucial means of reaching customers for a product or service. Defined by the UK Advertising Association, advertisements are messages that are paid for and intended to inform or persuade recipients. Through advertising campaigns, companies engage with their customers regarding current and future offerings.

Products and services are often marketed by emphasizing the advantages they provide in social, economic, or psychological aspects compared to those who do not utilize them. Various media channels, both traditional and contemporary, are employed for communication. Traditional mass media includes newspapers, television, magazines, and radio, while contemporary platforms encompass blogs, web series, email, and emerging tools like WhatsApp Business.

The emergence of mass production and modern advertising occurred during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mass media serves as a means to reach the widest audience possible, encompassing platforms such as television, the internet, radio, and print media. Advertisements have evolved into a critical determinant of personal style and functioning in various contexts. The subtle shifts in advertising approaches have been reshaping societal norms and behaviors, demonstrating the pervasive influence of advertising in modern society.

Global advertising industry

In 2020, the global advertising industry is projected to reach a value of \$190.4 billion, marking a 28% increase from the previous year (Data Monitor Plc, Oct 2020). According to Wells et al. (2016, p.5; 1973, p.11; 1999, p.674) and other scholars, modern advertising is defined as "a paid persuasive communication that utilizes non-personal mass media, as well as other forms of interactive communication, to reach broad audiences and connect an identified sponsor with a target audience." Notably, public service announcement advertisements, where media space is not paid for, are excluded from this definition.

For an activity to be considered an "advertisement," it must involve one or more media channels and an identified sponsor promoting a product, service, idea, or goods openly to a group of people. There exist various types of advertising, each with its own rules and requirements. Kotler (2006) describes advertising as any non-personal, financially compensated method through which an acknowledged sponsor presents and promotes ideas, products, or services. Essentially, whenever a message is communicated through a medium accessible to the general public, it qualifies as advertising.

Examples of advertising mediums include newspapers, billboards, radio, television, and more. Advertisers typically either pay a fixed rate or negotiate deals with media outlets to disseminate their messages. Advertising is a persuasion technique aimed at reaching the masses, typically operating in a one-way communication mode from the advertiser to the public. Unlike personal selling, which involves direct interaction with buyers, non-personal advertising is funded by marketers and targets a broader audience.

Advertising involves a complex ecosystem, with advertising agencies responsible for developing advertisements, media outlets airing them, and a multitude of professionals contributing to the process, including copy editors, graphic artists, brand managers, market analysts, and designers. Companies enlist advertising agencies to promote their brands or products, providing essential information such as visual identity, core values, and target demographics. Agencies then transform concepts into graphics, text, and layouts, collaborating with clients and media buying units to finalize advertisements.

Advertising serves as a potent tool for selling products, services, images, and ideas to consumers. It is an indispensable component of any business or industry, playing a crucial role in the marketing and communication process. Advertising persuades customers to make purchases through a combination of facts and persuasive arguments, encompassing functions such as marketing, public relations, information dissemination, and persuasion.

The Indian Advertising markets

According to research conducted by the advertising agency Dentsu, the Indian advertising industry is expected to bounce back to pre-pandemic levels by 2022, with a projected growth rate of 12.4%. However, certain sectors such as print, cinema, outdoor advertising, and radio are anticipated to take longer to recover, while television and digital advertising are expected

to lead the way. In 2019, digital advertising comprised 21% of total ad revenue, a figure projected to increase to 29.4% in 2021 and further to 32.7% by the end of 2022.

The Asia Pacific (APAC) region is anticipated to surpass pre-pandemic advertising expenditure levels earlier than previously forecasted. Australia and India are expected to experience faster growth compared to the rest of the world. Conversely, advertising spending in China is predicted to surpass pre-pandemic levels. In 2021, advertising spending in APAC is forecasted to increase by 8.0%, reaching a total of \$229 billion. This growth rate is slightly lower than the projected worldwide growth rate of 10.4%, which is expected to reach \$634 billion. In India, advertising spending is expected to grow by 10.8% in 2021, following a 12.9% decrease in 2020.

Television remains the dominant advertising medium in India, accounting for 40.9% of total spending and growing at a rate of 7.7% compared to 2020. However, digital advertising is expected to see significant growth, with a projected increase of 12.8% in 2021, reaching \$124.5 billion, or 54% of total ad spending in the region. Social media advertising is forecasted to grow by 33.4%, video advertising by 10.8%, and search advertising by 7.8% to reach \$23.1 billion.

Offline/linear advertising spending is expected to increase by 2.8% to \$104.8 billion in 2021, following a 15% decline in 2020. Despite the anticipated recovery, overall advertising spending levels in APAC are expected to remain below pre-pandemic levels. Out-of-home advertising is projected to rise by 7.5% in 2021 as restrictions on social gatherings are lifted. However, the film industry is expected to experience a decline of -5.0% in 2021 before rebounding in 2022. Similarly, radio advertising is forecasted to expand by 4.3% in 2021, while print advertising may continue to decline due to the emergence of new digital delivery methods, with a minor predicted decline of -2.7% in 2021.

Pros and Cons of Advertising

This tutorial will help you comprehend the benefits and drawbacks of advertisements. An advertiser uses advertising to inform, persuade, or influence the target audience when they fund a mass media campaign to promote a product or concept.

Pros of advertising

A) From the Manufacturers' Perspective

A well-marketed product makes it easier for salespeople to close deals in the marketplace. When a brand is well-known and popular, consumers are receptive to salespeople's efforts. It supports salesmanship by helping the audience comprehend the product and its applications more clearly through the advertisement and by requiring less work from the salesperson to persuade the consumers.

i. A rise in sales

The primary goal of the manufacturer's product advertising is to increase sales of his goods. Mass persuasion via advertising is the marketing strategy used for goods produced in large quantities.

ii. Enhancing Salesmanship

It establishes a foundation for the salespeople's efforts. All a salesman needs to do when meeting with a potential customer is inquire about a product that the consumer has already seen promoted. In this sense, advertising benefits the salesman by giving him more assistance and relieving some of his workload.

iii. Reduced Prices

Increased sales and mass manufacturing of goods are the results of advertising, which also lowers average production costs and boosts profitability. Spreading advertising and selling expenses over a higher number of transactions also lowers the average selling price.

iv. Increased Interest from Dealers

Advertising has to create demand before merchants may share with others. Thus, stores that offer advertised items greatly benefit from advertisements. For retailers, increasing sales of these products is not a top priority. This makes advertised things seem more tempting to them.

v. Reduced Inventories and Fast Turnover

A well-planned advertising campaign generates a responsive market to enable a quick sale. Because of this, businesses may keep running their operations and have lower inventory in relation to sales.

B) From the Viewpoint of Consumers

- i. A rise in quality
When someone is forced to consume a product due to advertising, they often believe that the product will have better ingredients than similar products from other companies.
- ii. Possession Facility
Customers find it simpler to make purchases after advertising. In the retail sector, fixed and resale pricing points are commonplace, which is advantageous. Advertising offers a clear, affirmative promise that clients won't be overcharged.
- iii. Customer Overage
Promotion of some items helps a lot of individuals. Customers are more likely to spend extra for items that seem to be more useful to them. These items are singled out. If these goods are sold at their original, lower price, there will be a surplus of consumers who will be more satisfied or appreciate these products more.

C) From the viewpoint of Middleman

- i. It's Possible to Maintain Retail Prices
Customers are eager to receive high-quality goods at consistent costs over time. Every consumer has a family budget, and they work hard to balance their expenses and discretionary money to lead respectable, socially acceptable lives.
- ii. Take On The Role Of A Salesperson
For this company, travelling salesmen do the same tasks as the least expensive advertising. This explains why the majority of retail companies choose to spend money on advertising to get customers to their locations where counter salespeople can assist them rather than hiring a sizable army of travelling salespeople.
- iii. Guarantees Speedy Sales
Every store requires a rapid turnover since they carry inventory from several producers. Advertising increases sales by highlighting the vast array of these items to customers.

D) From the viewpoint of society

i. Modification of Intent

Advertising has fundamentally altered the foundation of human drive. The present generation works harder to provide for the pleasures and semi-luxuries of life, whereas individuals in previous generations lived and worked primarily for the basics of existence.

ii. Maintaining the Press

The financial viability of newspapers, periodicals, and journals is largely dependent on advertising. Newspapers might not be able to stay separate from their competitors due to a shortage of advertising money.

iii. Support for Artists

They create advertisements for writers and designers to perform creative labour to support themselves.

iv. Motivation for Research

Manufacturers do research and develop new items or applications for already-existing products when they are guaranteed a substantial profit. This guarantee is presented via advertising, which promotes industrial research and all of its benefits.

Cons of advertising

Like anything else, advertising has its limitations. A tiny number of individuals who are just interested in themselves may misuse it for their own selfish ends. The main problems with advertising are listed below:

i. Postponed Revenue Outlay

Since advertising takes up a significant portion of the organization's entire budget, this charge is classified as delayed income. Investments in this field could not provide benefits right away, which would reduce its use.

ii. Falsification of the facts

Misrepresenting goods and services in advertising is a major detriment to the medium. Advertisers usually overstate the advantages of a product and make

false promises in their advertising campaign to entice consumers to do activities that benefit the marketer but harm the customer.

iii. The Deficit of the Consumer

Customers' low purchasing power makes advertising an effective tool for arousing desire. It makes people unhappy. It is obvious that social unrest is undesirable, especially when a sizable portion of the populace is impacted. But it's important if it acts as a spark for societal change.

iv. Obstacles to Admission

The influence of advertisements on industrial concentration varies. The concentration level of a particular product might vary depending on a number of factors, including its production and marketing strategies. Nonetheless, there is conflicting evidence on this subject.

v. National Resources Wasted

Advertising has drawn criticism for allegedly destroying things' usefulness before their typical lifespan has passed. It's not only that items are brittle, sensitive, and fragile that there is so intense pressure to destroy older models of them before they become outdated.

vi. Expense Growth

Regarding the question of whether advertising drives up or down a product's price, there is a lot of disagreement. This is true in a sense since the costs involved are covered by the price of the finished product. It would be unfair to assume that a decrease in advertising expenses would inevitably lead to a decrease in product costs. Although advertising is one of the expenses of marketing, it is an expense that benefits the product's distribution.

vii. Product Distribution

Critics claim that advertising promotes the spread of almost similar items, which aids in the selling of a variety of goods and services.

viii. Increase in Needs

Advertisers take use of human desires like as the need to own, the want to be well-known in the community, and other similar drives to persuade people to purchase items they do not need. Various types of appeals are occasionally used to pique people's interest in the products. Sentiments and emotions of customers are used for financial gain.

Advertisements' Historical Evolution

Advertising serves as a longstanding method for disseminating information about products and services to the general public. Utilizing a variety of media platforms, such as print and electronic publications, advertisers aim not only to inform but also to persuade and attract potential customers by highlighting the unique qualities of the goods or services being promoted.

Advertisements deliver non-personal messages to market and sell diverse products, services, and concepts. Often, publicity-seeking corporations drive commercial advertising, although it's important to note that advertising differs from public relations. The spectrum of advertising mediums includes both traditional and contemporary options. Traditional media examples include newspapers and television, while contemporary platforms like blogs and YouTube are gaining prominence. Additionally, newer avenues such as WhatsApp Business are increasingly utilized for advertising purposes. Traditional mass media like movies and magazines also play a role in advertising strategies.

The foundation of modern advertising can be traced back to Edward Bernays' "Madison Avenue" campaigns of the 1920s, which revolutionized promotion techniques. Notably, tobacco advertising during the same era contributed significantly to the evolution of modern advertising practices.

19TH CENTURY

Thomas J. Barratt, often referred to as "the father of modern advertising," played a pivotal role in revolutionizing advertising practices. Barratt leveraged targeted slogans, visuals, and language to promote the Pears Soap Company. Among his notable catchphrases was the iconic, "Hello and welcome to the day. Is Pears' soap your favorite?"

Barratt introduced several key concepts to ensure the success of his advertising campaigns. He recognized the importance of creating a strong and recognizable brand image for Pears Soap, advocating for saturation marketing to maximize the product's visibility. Moreover, Barratt prioritized customer preferences, adapting the company's approach to align with evolving consumer tastes.

The integration of paid advertisements into newspapers marked a significant milestone in advertising history, with Presses, a French newspaper, pioneering this practice in June of 1836. Commercial advertisements generated revenue that made public newspapers more accessible and affordable to a wider audience.

20TH CENTURY

The rapid industrialization in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries led to a significant expansion in the production of manufactured goods. To profit from this increased supply, a corresponding rise in demand from consumers was necessary, prompting workers to transition into becoming consumers themselves. This shift gave rise to the concept of mass marketing, which aimed to influence the economic behavior of the population on a larger scale.

Advertisers in the 1910s and 1920s targeted human instincts, believing that these instincts could be harnessed to drive consumer desire for commodities. Edward Bernays, a nephew of Sigmund Freud, became a prominent figure in this approach and is often credited as a pioneer of modern advertising and public relations.

Throughout the 20th century, various means of advertising emerged and continue to be used today:

Radio Advertising (1920s): The introduction of retail and manufacturing radio stations led to increased sales of radio equipment. Advertisers seized the opportunity to reach a large audience through radio broadcasts, promoting products and businesses to listeners.

Television Advertising (1950s): In the early 1950s, the Dumont Television Network began selling advertising time on television to raise funds for their programming. This marked the commercialization of television advertising and paved the way for the widespread use of televised advertisements.

Cable Television (1980s): The emergence of cable TV and channels like MTV introduced new opportunities for advertising. MTV, in particular, revolutionized advertising with the use of music videos, attracting viewers who tuned in specifically to watch advertisements. Specialized channels like QVC and the Home Shopping Network also emerged, capitalizing on the growing popularity of cable and satellite television.

Internet Advertising (1990s): The "dot-com" boom of the 1990s saw the growth of online advertising with the introduction of ad servers. Entire organizations began offering various incentives, from coupons to free Internet access, in exchange for advertising revenue. Personalized advertisements based on browsing history became commonplace in the 21st century, making online advertising more tailored and interactive.

Celebrity Endorsements: Brands leveraged the fame and popularity of celebrities by using their identities to endorse products. Consumers associated the products with the celebrity endorsers, leading to increased sales. However, this approach also carried risks, as a decline in a celebrity's popularity could negatively impact the brand's sales associated with that celebrity. These developments in advertising have shaped the landscape of marketing and continue to influence consumer behavior in the modern era.

21st-century advertising: digital marketing, new media, and advertising

In the 21st century, advertising plays a crucial role in influencing the purchase decisions of consumers. Companies utilize various messages and strategies to persuade their target market and shape their buying behavior. With the rise of digital technologies, the importance of advertising has grown significantly, as online platforms have become essential channels for effective engagement between marketers and consumers.

The emergence of New Media has provided marketers with new opportunities for advertising. Digital platforms offer innovative marketing campaigns and facilitate easy access to a wider audience. Leveraging the digital space allows advertisers to reach consumers in more personalized and targeted ways.

Cost-effective communication has become a key aspect of advertising effectiveness in the 21st century. With the abundance of digital channels, advertisers can optimize their resources to achieve maximum reach and impact. Efficiency in communication is essential for ensuring that advertising efforts yield tangible results.

Moreover, consumer engagement has evolved in the digital age. The way consumers respond to advertising messages has become faster and more impulsive. With the prevalence of social media and instant communication platforms, consumers can easily interact with brands and make purchasing decisions in real-time.

Overall, advertising in the 21st century is characterized by its reliance on digital platforms, innovative campaigns, and the ability to engage consumers in meaningful ways. As technology continues to evolve, advertisers must adapt their strategies to effectively reach and influence their target audience in an increasingly dynamic and competitive landscape.

Concept of new media

Any digitally delivered media, including podcasts, blogs, music, and newspaper articles, is referred to as "new media." A website, email, smartphone, or streaming application might all be considered new media due to their internet connection. Two unestablished forms of new media include podcasts and mobile applications. Online resources for computer-assisted communication encompass a vast array of formats, such as blogs, podcasts, vlogs, social networks, text messaging, wikis, virtual worlds, and other forms of communication facilitated by the Internet. New media comes in a wide variety of forms that don't all fit into one group. It is possible to refer to online publications as "new media" or "old media."

Some new media formats, like podcasts and smartphone applications, are entirely original. Explanation becomes considerably more challenging when the meaning is subject to frequent change. "New media" refers to any digitally distributed media, including podcasts and blogs. Because they are connected to the internet, a website, email, smartphone, or streaming app can all be considered forms of new media. It also changes all the time. As new technologies become more widely used and evolve quickly, the meaning of "new" is continually changing. When DVDs and CDs were originally released, they represented the newest and most cutting-edge methods for listening to music and watching movies. A rising number of individuals use streaming services, such as Netflix and Spotify, in addition to various new media formats, which include but are not limited to:

1. Email Blogs Websites Social media networks
2. Streaming services for movies and music
3. Augmented and virtual reality

Digital Marketing and Advertising

Digital marketing encompasses any marketing strategy that involves the use of electronic devices, whether or not they are connected to the internet. While traditional methods like radio and television commercials fall under this category, newer digital tactics have proven to be more effective in reaching modern consumers.

In today's digital age, consumers increasingly rely on the internet to gather information before making purchasing decisions. As a result, businesses must adapt their marketing strategies to effectively engage with consumers on the platforms they use most frequently. Digital marketing allows businesses to connect with their target audience through various online channels, such as social media, search engines, email, and websites.

With the ever-growing importance of online presence and engagement, digital marketing has become a critical component of any successful marketing strategy. By leveraging digital channels effectively, businesses can reach their target audience more efficiently, increase brand awareness, drive website traffic, and ultimately boost sales and revenue. Therefore, staying abreast of digital marketing trends and techniques is essential for businesses looking to maintain a competitive edge in today's market.

Types of Digital Marketing

To expand your audience base, implementing a variety of digital marketing strategies is essential. Here are six effective strategies:

- **Content Marketing:** This involves creating and sharing valuable content such as blog posts, how-to videos, and instructional resources. Content marketing helps establish a connection with your target audience, address their concerns, and ultimately drive sales.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** The goal of SEO is to optimize your website to rank high on search engine results pages (SERPs) like Google. This is achieved by creating high-quality, relevant content and adhering to SEO best practices to improve visibility and organic traffic.
- **Social Media Marketing (SMM):** SMM involves leveraging social media platforms to promote your business and engage with your audience. You can either create paid ads or organic posts on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach a new audience and showcase your products or services.
- **Influencer and Affiliate Marketing:** Collaborating with influencers or affiliates who have a large following in your industry can help you reach a wider audience. By partnering with reputable individuals, you can leverage their credibility and influence to promote your brand or products to their followers.
- **Email Marketing:** Building an email subscription list allows you to communicate directly with your audience and keep them informed about sales, events, and new products. Providing value to your subscribers through personalized content and exclusive offers can help nurture long-term relationships and increase customer loyalty.
- **Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Advertising:** PPC advertising involves placing ads on search engines or social media platforms and paying a fee each time your ad is clicked. This strategy allows you to target specific keywords or demographics and drive immediate traffic to your website or landing pages.

By incorporating these digital marketing strategies into your overall marketing plan, you can effectively reach and engage with your target audience, drive traffic to your website, and ultimately increase sales and conversions.

Digital advertising

Digital advertising has become the cornerstone of modern marketing, and its prominence is expected to continue growing in the foreseeable future. For businesses, advertisers, and marketers to remain relevant in this dynamic landscape, staying informed about current trends is crucial. However, with the myriad of digital advertising formats available, it can be overwhelming to keep track of them all. To effectively navigate this complexity, it's essential to understand the basic categories of digital advertising.

There are six primary categories of digital advertising: website ads, social media ads, search engine ads, video ads, email marketing, and video email ads. While each category has its unique characteristics, there are often overlaps or similarities between them. For instance, users browsing Facebook may encounter both social media ads and display ads seamlessly integrated into their newsfeeds. Similarly, video ads can be combined with display ads to create a cohesive advertising experience.

Although the diverse landscape of digital advertising may seem perplexing at first, a deeper dive into each category will provide clarity and insight into how they can be effectively utilized in marketing strategies.

Social media marketing has become increasingly integral to modern businesses, offering numerous advantages and opportunities for engaging with target audiences effectively. Let's delve deeper into the features and advantages of social media marketing:

Features of Social Media Marketing:

- **Platform Diversity:** Social media marketing leverages various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc., each with its unique characteristics and user base.
- **User Engagement:** Social media facilitates interaction between businesses and their target audience, allowing for direct communication and feedback.
- **Targeted Advertising:** Through advanced targeting options, businesses can tailor their marketing efforts to reach specific demographics, interests, and behaviors.

Advantages of Social Media Marketing:

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Compared to traditional marketing channels, social media marketing offers a lower barrier to entry and can be implemented at a fraction of the cost.
- **Wider Reach:** Social media platforms enable businesses to reach a global audience, breaking down geographical barriers and expanding their market reach.
- **Social Interaction:** Social media fosters increased social interaction and communication among users, providing businesses with opportunities to engage and build relationships with their audience.
- **Interactivity:** Users are actively engaged with social media content, allowing for real-time interaction and modification of the media environment based on user preferences.
- **Targeted Marketing:** Marketers can target specific audience segments based on their interests, preferences, and online behaviors, ensuring that marketing messages resonate with the right audience.
- **Customer Service:** Social media platforms serve as channels for providing customer support and resolving queries, enhancing the overall customer experience and satisfaction.

By leveraging these features and advantages, businesses can harness the power of social media marketing to connect with their audience, drive engagement, and achieve their marketing objectives effectively.

Social media marketing's drawbacks

The internet environment makes social media marketing a complex and difficult process. All users have easy access to information on the web due to its openness, which emphasizes how crucial it is to have consistency in all facets of online marketing communication, including strategy, design, execution, and monitoring (Hart et al., 2000).

The top five negative aspects of social media marketing are as follows:

- a. **Time-consuming:** On social media, effective two-way communication takes a lot of work. Developing enduring business relationships on social media can result in higher profits. Social network marketing takes on a different form.
- b. **Trademark and Copyright Issues:** Steinman and Hawkins (2010) state that companies using social media to advertise their goods and brands online must

- safeguard their trademarks and copyrights. A company's trademarks and other intellectual property rights are just as significant as the goods or services it offers.
- c. Issues with Trust, Privacy, and Security: If a business uses social media to market its goods or services, people may start to question the quality of such offerings. Businesses must take appropriate measures to reduce their exposure to risk when managing personal data since they may be held legally responsible. Customers are very inclined to remain with social media marketers because of the distinctive qualities of transactional security and privacy (Hoffmann et al., 1999).
 - d. Content Created by Users (UGC): More and more individuals are sharing their opinions on a variety of issues via the internet. As the Internet has grown, so too have new means of producing and sharing knowledge.

Terminology related to ethics

Ethics and morals are closely related concepts, but they are not identical.

According to the Chambers English Dictionary, ethics is the branch of philosophy concerned with human character and behavior. It combines morals with values and involves the rules that guide human conduct. Ethics also refers to how individuals behave by societal or professional standards. In contrast, morals pertain to an individual's sense of right and wrong, typically guided by personal beliefs and the notion of virtue, especially in areas like sexual conduct. Morality is concerned with the quality of actions being right or wrong, and it often includes the practice of moral duties independent of religion.

The distinction between ethics and morals can seem subtle but is important: morals are personal principles that define what an individual believes to be right or wrong, while ethics are external rules or guidelines, often shaped by society, institutions, or professional codes of conduct, that govern behavior. Morals reflect an individual's personal beliefs, while ethics apply those beliefs within a broader social or cultural context.

In simpler terms, ethics is the study of what is right or wrong within a social or professional context, often as dictated by external sources. Morals, on the other hand, are the personal standards individuals hold regarding right and wrong. While both deal with right and wrong behavior, ethics is concerned with how

these behaviors are applied in specific settings or groups, and morals are about personal values and beliefs.

Ethics can be understood as the set of behavior standards accepted by a particular group, whether it be in a professional, family, or social context. While a person's personal moral code tends to remain consistent, the ethics they practice can vary depending on the group or context they are in. For example, ethics are essential in various professions such as medicine, business, and corporate environments. Similarly, ethics play an important role in advertising.

Advertising ethics can be categorized into three main types: social ethics, professional ethics, and personal ethics.

1. *Advertising and Social Ethics*: Applying ethical principles like truthfulness, respect for human dignity, and social responsibility in advertising is crucial for ensuring that ads are socially responsible. Social responsibility encourages individuals to engage in activities that positively impact society. A good example is an advertisement by Idea Cellular, featuring Bollywood actor Abhishek Bachchan, which promotes a message against caste discrimination. This ad received widespread praise from both the advertising industry and the general public for its positive social message.
2. *Advertisement and Professional Ethics*: Professional ethics are expressed in a code of standards that identifies how professionals in the industry should respond to certain ethical questions. In India, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), a self-regulatory organization for advertising founded in 1985 (www.ascionline.org) which has committed to honest advertising and fair competition within the restriction of commonly accepted standards of public modesty. Adopting unreasonable approaches for the promotion of products or services are unsafe and harmful to society or to an individual, notably to the younger generations. It is also expected to be followed by all bodies concerned with advertising like advertisers, media, advertising agency, etc.
3. *Advertisement and Personal Ethics*: Decisions are to be made based on an internal moral periphery that senses when something is right or wrong. This moral periphery assists to communicate when an advertising message is

manipulative or misleading. It is then the responsibility of the advertiser or the advertising professional to use personal judgment and moral reasoning in declining such ideas. (Valli2014: 77).

Ethics and Advertising

Recent advancements in information and communication technology have revolutionised the world, with developments in the internet, wireless communication, digital information, and cellular networks driving competitiveness in various fields. The advertising industry, too, has adapted to these technological changes and has undergone significant transformations. Advertising is fundamentally a psychological, social, and business process aimed at persuading people to buy a product or service. Its success is often measured by increased sales and market share.

In today's highly competitive environment, advertisers and product manufacturers are constantly striving to outperform their competitors by selecting the most effective advertising media. This fierce competition increases the temptation to exaggerate or distort the truth to boost sales and profits. However, advertisers and manufacturers must recognise their social and moral responsibilities toward consumers. After all, consumers bear the cost of the product, which includes the expenses associated with advertising. Therefore, advertising should always prioritise the well-being of both society and consumers, ensuring that it serves the public interest and maintains ethical standards.

The advertising industry is not exempt from ethical and moral considerations. Ethics and morality in advertising refer to a clear, understandable, and transparent set of principles that govern the communication between advertisers and their target audience. Ethics is a crucial aspect of advertising. While advertising has many advantages, there are also instances where it fails to adhere to ethical standards.

An ethical advertisement is one that avoids lying, making false claims, or crossing boundaries of decency. If advertisers create ads with the belief that customers will understand the message, be persuaded by it, and act accordingly, the ad is likely to produce positive outcomes and can be

considered ethical. However, if advertisers attempt to deceive customers with unrealistic or misleading claims—such as suggesting that purchasing a lottery ticket will automatically make someone a millionaire—this would be unethical and likely to backfire.

Ethical Issues in Indian Advertising

In the contemporary business and economic landscape, advertising plays a pivotal role. While it has provided significant benefits to both individuals and society, it has also been the subject of considerable criticism. This is particularly evident within the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, where advertising is often accused of generating irrational and artificial needs among consumers. Such advertising strategies encourage a culture of excessive consumption, compelling individuals to purchase products beyond their financial capacity.

According to the Business Dictionary, an ethical issue is 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, therefore, must adhere not only to the legal frameworks of the land but also to broader ethical and social responsibilities. Although an advertisement may not breach any laws, it can still be morally questionable. Ethics serve as a guide for determining what is deemed right or wrong within a particular societal context and at a specific time.

Advertisers frequently encounter ethical dilemmas, as the line between persuasive communication and ethical transgression can often be blurred. Ethics in advertising, much like other facets of social interaction, is a complex matter. What is considered ethical by one individual may be perceived as unethical by another. Advertising professionals are regularly tasked with making nuanced judgments regarding the content and nature of the information they convey. While clients often push for aggressive and exaggerated claims to promote their brands, advertisers must continuously

negotiate the boundary between acceptable persuasion and unethical representation (Johansson, 2008: 226).

In India, these challenges are particularly pronounced when assessing the ethical dimensions of advertising and their impact — both positive and negative — on adolescents. Numerous debates have emerged, focusing on advertising's broader implications for societal values, cultural norms, and individual behavior.

(A) Objections to Advertising

Indian advertising has often been criticized for presenting products by emphasizing only their positive attributes, leading to accusations of bias that can distort consumer purchasing decisions. Chunnawala and Sethia highlight several key objections to advertising practices:

- Heavy investment in advertising alone cannot guarantee the success of a product.
- In a developing economy like India, advertising is perceived as a waste of national resources.
- Advertising fosters dissatisfaction among individuals who aspire to own advertised products but lack the financial means to do so.
- Indian advertisements frequently mimic the style and content of their foreign counterparts.
- The primary criticisms leveled against advertising revolve around the following concerns:
 - Advertising encourages consumers to purchase goods and services that are often beyond their financial reach.
 - Advertisements predominantly appeal to consumers' emotions rather than engaging their rational faculties.
 - Advertising is frequently biased in its portrayal of products.
 - Competitive advertisements often feature conflicting claims.
 - Advertising tends to be excessively repetitive.

- A considerable portion of advertising content is perceived as vulgar, intrusive, and irritating (Chunnawala and Sethia, 2002: 241).

Currently, advertising ranks as the fifth-largest industry, becoming an integral part of everyday life through mediums such as television, magazines, radio, and the internet. Advertisements do provide valuable information about the products available in the market; however, they have also been subject to widespread objections. In accordance with the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution, the government is committed to functioning as a welfare state, thereby bearing the responsibility to shield the public from the harmful effects of advertising (Trehan, 2009: 208).

Despite serving as a vital tool for attracting target consumers, advertising in India is accompanied by numerous controversies, particularly concerning its societal impact and ethical dimensions. Driven by the intense desire for success and profitability, manufacturers and advertisers often resort to questionable methods and provocative visual and conceptual strategies. This competitive environment has exacerbated ethical concerns within Indian advertising. These ethical issues can broadly be categorized into four areas: objections to advertising, advertising-related controversies, minor ethical issues, and major ethical concerns.

(B) Advertising and Controversies

Controversy has become a defining feature of the Indian advertising industry. While scandals such as allegations of manipulated results at the Goa Fest were quickly overshadowed by the celebrations at Cannes, new controversies continue to emerge. One such case involved Reckitt Benckiser, which reportedly demanded a fee of ₹4 lakhs from media agencies wishing to participate in a pitch for its business, along with a 2.5% commission on the revenue agencies earned through media buying for the company (www.economictimes.com). This move sparked significant debate within the advertising community, both online and offline, highlighting ongoing concerns about transparency, fairness, and ethical practices in the industry.

(C) Minor Issues in Indian Advertising

M.G. Parameswaran noted in an interview that while the Goa Fest was promoted as an event to attract new talent to the advertising industry, attendees reported that it instead projected a misleading and unflattering image of the profession (www.businessstoday.intoday.in). This reflects a recurring trend where the Indian advertising sector finds itself embroiled in fresh controversies.

Furthermore, the portrayal of women in Indian advertisements has drawn considerable criticism. Women are often depicted as objects of desire, shown as dependent on others, or portrayed in a vulgar manner, reinforcing regressive stereotypes. Ethical concerns within Indian advertising have thus been broadly categorized into two groups: minor and major issues, based on the degree of their negative impact on culture and society.

According to Chunnawala and Sethia, several minor ethical issues have been repeatedly highlighted in critiques of Indian advertising, setting the stage for deeper discussion and analysis.

Minor Ethical Issues in Indian Advertising

Several minor ethical concerns have been consistently raised against advertising practices in India, primarily based on their subtle yet significant negative impacts on culture and society. According to Chunnawala and Sethia (2002: 223–228), these concerns are outlined as follows:

- **Promotion of Unnecessary Desires:** Advertising often stimulates consumer demand for products that are not essential. It persuades individuals to purchase items they may neither need nor afford. Critics argue that advertising manufactures artificial desires; however, defenders contend that advertising merely assists consumers in selecting among competing brands rather than creating new needs.

- **Deceptive Advertising Practices:** The frequent use of exaggerated claims and embellished language in advertisements has been criticized for misleading consumers. Such practices entice individuals to purchase goods or services based on false claims or fabricated testimonials. Nonetheless, it is argued that while certain advertisers misuse these tactics, exaggeration in moderation is a necessary technique to capture consumer attention and interest.
- **Offensive Content:** Some advertisements are perceived as offensive or vulgar, often exploiting unnecessary sexual imagery. The perception of what is deemed offensive varies according to cultural and temporal contexts. For example, certain advertisements portray women in stereotypical or demeaning ways, using sex appeal to sell unrelated products, which has drawn widespread criticism.
- **Creation of Monopolies:** Advertising can contribute to the formation of brand monopolies by creating strong brand loyalty, thereby stifling healthy market competition. Larger companies, with the financial capacity to invest heavily in advertising, often overshadow smaller businesses. However, proponents argue that such market dynamics are a natural aspect of competitive survival.
- **Promotion of Unhealthy Products:** Advertising is frequently implicated in promoting the consumption of products detrimental to public health, such as tobacco, alcohol, instant noodles, and infant supplements like Cerelac. Although regulations in India restrict direct advertising of certain harmful products, companies often circumvent these rules through surrogate advertising — for instance, through sponsorship of events like the Manikchand Filmfare Awards, Kingfisher-related events, and the Teacher's Achievement Awards.
- **Cultivation of an Unsatisfied Society:** Advertising often conveys the message that happiness and social status are linked to the acquisition of

branded goods. This narrative fosters a sense of dissatisfaction and insecurity, particularly among individuals with limited purchasing power who are unable to access such goods.

These minor ethical issues underline the need for responsible advertising practices that balance commercial interests with societal well-being.

Major Ethical Issues in Indian Advertising

While advertising professionals often operate within the boundaries of the law, they are still frequently confronted with the challenge of making ethically sound decisions. Certain actions, though legally permissible, may nonetheless be ethically questionable. Given that legislative frameworks and regulatory bodies can only enforce standards to a limited extent, the onus lies on advertising professionals to uphold ethical norms through self-regulation and personal integrity.

Despite widespread criticisms, Gupta (2012: 298–313) emphasizes additional significant ethical concerns prevalent in Indian advertising. Chunnawala, Sethia, and Gupta have collectively identified and detailed the following major ethical issues that require careful evaluation by both regulatory authorities and industry stakeholders:

1. Concealment of Facts

One of the most prominent ethical concerns involves the deliberate suppression of crucial information about products. Advertisements often highlight only the positive features while withholding negative aspects that might dissuade potential buyers. This selective portrayal distorts consumer decision-making and misleads the public.

For instance, advertisements for fairness creams suggest that consistent application will result in lighter, more attractive skin tones but omit critical disclosures regarding harmful bleaching agents contained in the products, which may cause serious skin damage. Similarly, hair coloring products often fail to inform consumers about the presence of

harsh chemicals that can harm hair and scalp health, with prolonged use potentially leading to adverse effects.

Such concealment of facts not only deceives consumers but also undermines their ability to make informed purchasing decisions. This unethical practice encompasses several deceptive strategies, including:

- False Promises: Making exaggerated claims that the product cannot fulfill.
- Incomplete Descriptions: Providing only partial information about the product's features and side effects.
- Misleading Comparisons: Drawing unfair comparisons with competing brands without presenting objective evidence.
- Bait and Switch Offers: Advertising a product at a low price to attract customers, only to pressure them into purchasing a more expensive alternative.
- Visual Distortions: Using exaggerated or manipulated images to misrepresent product performance.
- False Testimonials: Featuring fabricated or paid endorsements presented as genuine customer experiences.
- False Comparisons: Comparing products unfairly by highlighting selective advantages.
- Partial Disclosures: Omitting vital product information that could influence the consumer's decision.

- **Small-Print Qualifications:** Placing important disclaimers in fine print to downplay risks or limitations.
- **Laboratory Applications:** Presenting laboratory results in ways that exaggerate product efficacy or mislead consumers regarding everyday usage.

Each of these deceptive practices raises serious ethical concerns, necessitating vigilant oversight and a commitment to ethical advertising principles to protect consumer interests and maintain societal trust.

2. Use of Sex Appeal



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/JnkmmqiYioVdtV8M9>

In Indian culture, women have historically been revered and held in high esteem. However, a troubling trend has emerged in modern advertising where women are increasingly portrayed as objects of desire. The use of women's bodies merely to attract attention and drive sales — particularly when unrelated to the product being advertised — is considered a form of sexual exploitation. Such portrayals are deemed demeaning and ethically objectionable, especially when the use of sex appeal bears no relevance to the product category.

While it is generally accepted that sex appeal may be contextually appropriate for products such as lingerie or condoms, using sexual

imagery to promote unrelated goods is regarded as unethical.

Advertisers also employ nudity to capture attention, which further intensifies ethical concerns. For instance, a Levi's commercial depicted a bare-chested young man with his pants unbuttoned, partially revealing his innerwear, accompanied by the tagline "Bare what's inside, live unbuttoned." Such imagery has been criticized for lacking decency and for promoting values incongruent with the cultural ethos, thereby causing widespread offence.

3. Use of Children in Advertising



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/ebG1eMGunxcxkaED6>

The utilization of children in advertising presents another critical ethical issue. Increasingly, children are featured in promotions for products or services that are neither designed for nor appropriate to them. Recognizing the growing influence of children over parental purchasing decisions, advertisers often exploit this dynamic to drive sales.

Many advertisements target children by offering incentives such as free toys or gifts, effectively manipulating their innocence to foster consumer behavior. Such practices are widely criticized as unethical, given that children, due to their vulnerability and limited capacity for critical evaluation, are easily influenced. Targeting this impressionable demographic is considered an exploitation of innocence and raises significant moral concerns within the advertising industry.

4. *Promotion of Unhealthy Products*



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/Z6mW9etbUTBicz1C8>

A growing ethical concern in Indian advertising is the promotion of unhealthy consumable products, particularly among the youth. In recent years, there has been a noticeable surge in advertisements for products such as soft drinks, instant noodles, and other processed foods that are often high in sugar, salt, or unhealthy fats.

Manufacturers of these products frequently target young consumers, deploying aggressive marketing strategies that glamorize their offerings. Notably, prominent Bollywood actors like Hrithik Roshan, Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Aishwarya Rai, Ranbir Kapoor, and Kareena Kapoor have been enlisted to endorse such products. Additionally, celebrated sports figures, including Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, have lent their influence to similar campaigns.

The endorsement of unhealthy products by widely admired celebrities raises significant ethical questions, as it can mislead young audiences into associating these products with health, vitality, and success, despite their potential negative health effects. The persuasive power of celebrity endorsements amplifies the risk, making it imperative to reassess the ethical responsibilities of both advertisers and endorsers.

5. *Advertisements Depicting Dangerous Stunts:*



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/Rb5Vo9RajUNfgEeU9>

Another major ethical concern in Indian advertising is the portrayal of unsafe and dangerous stunts. It is considered unethical when advertisers fail to recognize the potential negative psychological impact such messages can have on consumers, especially impressionable audiences like adolescents and young adults.

Advertisements that showcase risky stunts without adequate warnings or safety measures may inadvertently encourage viewers to imitate these actions, leading to serious injuries or even fatalities. Therefore, advertisers bear the responsibility of promoting safety and caution within their creative content. It is crucial for them to depict essential safety practices—such as wearing helmets, avoiding the use of mobile phones while driving, refraining from alcohol and smoking during stunts, and fastening seat belts.

By emphasizing safe behavior and integrating positive messages into stunt-based advertisements, advertisers can fulfill both their marketing objectives and their ethical obligations to society.

6. *Using inappropriate stereotypes:*



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/Q7JSzcWogheZW5vu9>

In Indian advertisements, men are typically depicted as strong, confident, and self-reliant, while women are often shown as gentle, caring, and dependent. However, women are also frequently portrayed through limiting stereotypes—such as being childish, indecisive, overly concerned with their appearance, submissive to male authority, or confined to the role of a traditional homemaker.

Another commonly stereotyped group in Indian advertising is senior citizens. They are usually represented as reliant on their children or as a burden to their families, which raises ethical concerns regarding ageism and respect for the elderly.

7. *Subliminal Advertising and Fairness Creams*



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/fLHPy1DpDpiArEuP8>

For years, advertisements for Fair & Lovely have implied that success, recognition, and love are tied to fair skin. Their messaging suggests that using their fairness cream can lead to dramatic transformations—such as landing a

desirable job or attracting a partner. Some commercials even show women achieving success solely through improved appearance, subtly conveying that fair skin is more valuable than qualifications or skills.

This narrative implies that dark-skinned individuals are less likely to succeed in both personal and professional spheres. Such subliminal messaging has drawn significant criticism for perpetuating discriminatory beauty standards. Many critics argue that Fair & Lovely's marketing strategies have crossed ethical boundaries by demeaning the natural skin tone of the majority of Indian women.

8. *Manipulative Advertising*

Many Indian advertisements strategically use emotional appeal to create demand. By tapping into sentiments—such as patriotism or maternal instincts—brands attempt to forge a connection with consumers. Notable examples include Bajaj's "Hamara Bajaj", Hero Honda's "Desh ki Dhadkan", and Tata Salt's "Desh ka Namak". Emotional targeting is also common in baby products like soaps, oils, and diapers, where advertisements are designed to emotionally influence mothers.

9. *Puffery*

This form of advertising involves exaggerated claims that lack factual evidence. For instance, Eveready batteries claim to be unsurpassed in durability, VIP Franchise implies it boosts romantic appeal, and detergent brands like Wheel and Vim showcase lemons on their packaging but only offer lemon fragrance. Lux soap claims to contain milk and honey, leaving it to the consumer to question the truth of such claims. These exaggerated promotions are considered misleading and unethical.

10. *Glorifying Glamour and Unrealistic Beauty Standards*

Advertisements often portray idealized images of beauty and physique. Women are depicted as overly slim, fair-skinned, and flawless, while men are shown with muscular physiques and broad shoulders. These representations set unrealistic standards and can lead to harmful behaviors, particularly among

youth. Many women engage in extreme dieting, while men may turn to steroids, putting their health at risk in pursuit of these unattainable ideals.

11. Surrogate Advertising

When direct advertising of products like alcohol and tobacco is banned, companies often use substitute or "surrogate" advertisements. These promote related products under the same brand name—such as Haywards Soda, Kingfisher Mineral Water, and Smirnoff music CDs. Similarly, tobacco brands use lifestyle extensions like Wills Lifestyle clothing and Manikchand Filmfare Awards to indirectly promote their products. This tactic circumvents regulations and is ethically questionable.

12. Improper Language Usage

Recent advertisements have been criticized for using slang, vulgar expressions, or language deemed inappropriate. Although some offensive words are censored with beep sounds in TV ads, the intended words are often still obvious from lip movements. Such practices are considered disrespectful to the language and culture, especially when aired in public media.

Regulatory Framework for Ethical Advertising in India

Advertising is a vital and legitimate tool used by businesses to attract interest in their products and services. However, the effectiveness of advertising heavily relies on public trust. If advertisers employ misleading tactics, it can erode consumer confidence. Therefore, ethical standards must be upheld, and the benchmarks set in India should be treated as foundational guidelines, subject to periodic updates in line with evolving norms (Kaptan 2002: 104).

Historically, advertising has been largely self-regulated, with industry members voluntarily adhering to ethical practices without requiring legal enforcement. The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) serves as the primary self-regulatory organization. It enforces a code of conduct that guides advertisers toward truthful and responsible communication while encouraging fair competition.

In addition to ASCI, several other bodies—including the Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI), media associations, and trade bodies—have established their own ethical guidelines. Besides these self-regulatory mechanisms, both central and state governments have enacted various laws to oversee advertising practices. Despite the legal structure in place, ethical considerations remain essential, particularly in controversial areas like surrogate advertising, targeting children, or the use of exaggerated, violent, or sexual content in ads. Consumer watchdogs and voluntary organizations also play a role in monitoring unethical advertising (Shah 2009: 249).

Government-Enacted Advertising Regulatory Laws

Like many countries, India has adopted formal laws to address unethical advertising practices such as false claims, unfair competition, and unauthorized promotions. Due to increasing competition, advertising has become a major tool not just for businesses but also for the government, which uses it to raise public awareness.

The following legislation plays a central role in regulating advertising in India:

1. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986

This law was enacted to protect the rights and interests of consumers. It offers robust safeguards against defective products, poor service quality, and deceptive advertising. The Act establishes a three-tier redressal system with District Forums, State Commissions, and a National Commission. Consumer Protection

Councils are also formed at district, state, and national levels to ensure the Act's implementation.

According to the Act, any of the following misrepresentations in advertisements—whether written, spoken, or visual—are considered unfair trade practices:

- Claiming that a product or service is of a certain standard, quality, or model when it is not.
- Misrepresenting refurbished or second-hand goods as brand new.
- Falsely asserting that a product has specific approvals, features, or benefits.
- Offering guarantees on performance or lifespan without valid testing.
- Promising replacements or ongoing service that will lead to a specific result, without the intent or capability to deliver.
- Misleading the public about pricing in a way that distorts consumer decision-making.

2. The Competition Act, 2002

Before 2003, the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act, 1969 regulated advertising practices deemed harmful to public interest. Under the MRTP Act, the MRTP Commission could issue cease-and-desist orders and award compensation to individuals harmed by misleading advertisements. This law was eventually repealed and replaced by the Competition Act, 2002, which officially came into effect on March 31, 2003.

The Competition Act aims to:

- Prevent activities that negatively impact market competition.
- Safeguard consumer interests.
- Ensure fair trade practices among competing firms in the Indian market.

Under this Act, advertisements that are false, misleading, or disparaging toward a competitor's products or services are considered unfair trade practices. Several landmark cases under the older MRTP Act involved such disparaging ads and set precedents for future regulations.

A key concern under the Competition Act is abuse of dominant market position. If a company uses excessive advertising to create barriers for smaller competitors or dominate the market unfairly, this behavior can be scrutinized. For example, if a firm invests disproportionately in advertisements to suppress new entrants or limit competition, this may be deemed anti-competitive.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is empowered to investigate such cases. It can take action against companies that exploit their dominance or promote anti-competitive behavior through advertising, including levying fines or ordering corrective measures.

3. The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954

In recent times, there has been a noticeable surge in misleading advertisements in newspapers and magazines promoting drugs and treatments that claim to cure serious or incurable illnesses. These advertisements often target uneducated and vulnerable individuals, encouraging them to self-medicate or turn to unqualified practitioners. To address this growing concern, the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act (DMR Act) was enacted in 1954.

The purpose of this law is to regulate and restrict the advertisement of drugs in specific cases and to ban any promotion of so-called "magical" remedies. According to the Act, a drug refers to any substance used internally or externally for diagnosing, treating, or preventing diseases in humans or animals. A magic remedy includes charms, talismans, mantras, or any object claimed to possess miraculous healing powers.

The Act prohibits advertising drugs related to:

- Miscarriage prevention or contraception.
- Enhancing sexual performance.
- Regulating menstrual cycles.

Diagnosing, treating, or preventing certain specified diseases such as cancer, blindness, diabetes, heart disease, paralysis, leprosy, tuberculosis, insanity, and others.

Any advertisement promoting the effectiveness of such drugs or magical remedies is illegal under the Act.

4. The Trade Marks Act, 1999

The Trade Marks Act, 1999, which replaced the earlier Trade and Merchandise Marks Act, 1958, governs the use of trademarks in advertising. It defines a trademark as any mark that can be graphically represented and is capable of distinguishing the goods or services of one party from those of another.

The Act aims to ensure proper registration and legal protection of trademarks and to prevent misleading use. If an advertisement uses a method intended to confuse consumers—by making one product appear similar to another—it is considered a violation. Anyone who falsely applies a trademark may face legal penalties, including imprisonment, a fine, or both.

5. The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995

With the rapid expansion of cable television networks in India—driven largely by access to foreign satellite channels—there emerged a need to regulate content, including advertisements. To address this, the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act was enacted in 1995, and later amended in 2000 and 2002.

This Act empowers the Central Government to establish an advertising code under Rule 7 of the Cable Television Network Rules. The code mandates that advertisements aired through cable networks must comply with Indian laws and should not offend public decency, morality, or religious sentiments.

The amendment introduced in 2000 explicitly bans advertisements that, either directly or indirectly:

- Promote tobacco products, cigarettes, wine, alcohol, or any form of intoxicant.

- Endorse infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, or baby food products.
- These provisions aim to protect public health and uphold ethical advertising standards in cable television broadcasting.

6. *The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply, and Distribution) Act, 2003*, commonly known as the Tobacco Act, is a significant law aimed at prohibiting the advertisement and promotion of tobacco products. Under this law, tobacco encompasses cigarettes, cigars, beedis, pipe tobacco, hookah tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, pan masala, gutka, and any other chewing material containing tobacco.

The Act strictly prohibits the advertising of tobacco products and forbids anyone from engaging in the following activities for any financial gain:

- Displaying or allowing the display of tobacco product advertisements.
- Selling or permitting the sale of films or videos that contain tobacco product advertisements.
- Distributing or permitting the distribution of leaflets, handbills, or documents that advertise tobacco products.

However, these restrictions do not apply to advertisements on the packaging of tobacco products or to advertisements displayed inside a shop or warehouse where such products are sold.

Anyone who violates the advertisement provisions of the Act may face penalties, including imprisonment, fines, or both.

7. *The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986* is a law designed to prevent the indecent portrayal of women in advertisements, publications, writings, paintings, images, or any other medium. The Act defines "Indecent Representation of Women" as the depiction of a woman's figure in a way that is considered indecent, derogatory, or likely to corrupt or harm public morals.

The key provisions of the Act include:

- Prohibition of Indecent Representation: It forbids the publication or display of advertisements that contain indecent representations of women.
 - Exceptions: The law does not apply in the following situations:
 - If the representation is part of ancient monuments as defined by The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
 - If the representation can be justified as being in the public interest, specifically for purposes related to science, literature, art, education, or other matters of public importance.
 - The Act aims to safeguard the dignity of women and ensure that their portrayal in public media is respectful and does not harm societal values.
8. *The Indian Penal Code (IPC)*, 1860 makes it a criminal offense to advertise or distribute any obscene publication, including its sale, hire, or circulation. Additionally, it is an offense under the IPC to publish advertisements related to lotteries that are not state-authorized or approved by the state government. The IPC also prohibits the sale, distribution, public exhibition, or circulation of any obscene material such as books, pamphlets, papers, drawings, paintings, or other obscene objects.

Certain types of advertisements are considered offensive and punishable under the IPC, including those that:

- Promote disharmony, enmity, or hatred between different religions, castes, communities, races, languages, places of birth, or residences.
- Make assertions that any group of people, due to their religious, racial, language, regional, caste, or community identity, cannot bear true faith and loyalty to the sovereignty and integrity of India.
- Advocate, suggest, or propagate that any group of people, based on their religious, racial, language, regional, caste, or community

identity, should be deprived of their rights as citizens of India, or that their actions may lead to disharmony or hatred between groups.

- Insult a religion, its beliefs, or a place of worship of a specific group of people with the deliberate intention to outrage their religious feelings.

Violations of these provisions may lead to punishment including imprisonment and/or fines. The IPC aims to preserve public order and prevent advertisements that can cause social disharmony or harm to religious sentiments.

Advertising that promotes unethical behavior

1. The **Thumbs Up advertisement** featuring actor Akshay Kumar was a notable example of an advertisement that attracted attention for its ethical implications. In this commercial, Akshay Kumar was shown driving a car recklessly and negligently, with the sole aim of obtaining a bottle of Thumbs Up. His pursuit led to an accident, and the commercial concluded with him lying in a hospital bed with a fractured leg while drinking the beverage.

This advertisement raised concerns about promoting **dangerous and irresponsible behavior**, particularly reckless driving, to encourage the purchase of a product. The ad implied that the thrill and excitement of getting a Thumbs Up bottle were worth the risks involved, which could influence viewers, especially younger audiences, to imitate such behavior.



Image 3.7(Source: www.googleimages.com)

Complaint and Decision:

The **Consumer Complaints Council (CCC)** reviewed the advertisement and raised issues concerning public safety and the promotion of risky behavior. It was argued that the ad glorified dangerous actions (reckless driving) and was irresponsible, as it could potentially influence viewers, especially adolescents, to engage in unsafe driving practices.

The decision given in favor of the consumer, based on ethical grounds, was that the advertisement violated the **Code for Self-Regulation in**

Advertising, which mandates that advertisements should not encourage harmful or unsafe behaviors. The advertisement was deemed to be in violation of ethical standards, as it could have a negative influence on public safety and morality.

Judgment:

The **Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)**, which governs ethical advertising in India, took action against the ad. ASCI concluded that the advertisement violated the guidelines by promoting unsafe behavior and requested the advertiser to withdraw or revise the commercial. As a result,

the ad was pulled from circulation, and the company was asked to create advertisements that did not encourage reckless behavior.

This case is an example of how advertising that promotes unethical behavior can be challenged and corrected through regulatory bodies, ensuring that consumer safety and public morals are prioritized in advertising practices.

2. The **AXE Deodorant – Dark Temptation** advertisement is a controversial example of an ad that was criticized for its ethical implications. In this commercial, the visual shows a young man spraying AXE deodorant on himself, after which his body is transformed into chocolate, and he begins to attract the attention of women. As the boy walks through the streets, multiple women are shown licking, biting, and acting suggestively towards him. Throughout the ad, the boy is depicted enjoying the attention, with scenes including women licking his ears and biting his buttocks.

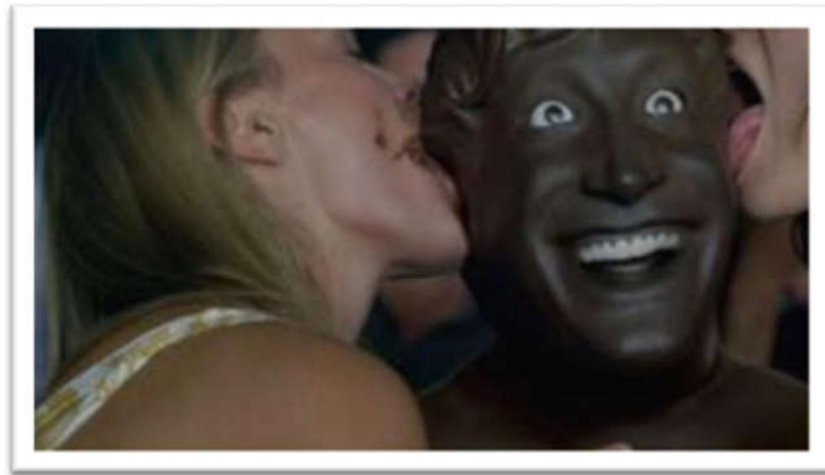


Image 3.8(Source: www.googleimages.com)

Complaint:

The complaint against the advertisement focused on its **vulgarity** and **sexual innuendo**. The portrayal of women licking and biting the boy was seen as **highly objectionable** and inappropriate. The advertisement was perceived to **objectify women** and depict them in a way that could be considered offensive. It also promoted an unrealistic and degrading idea of how people should interact based on physical attraction.

The complaint pointed out that such content was not only **disrespectful** but could also **encourage inappropriate behavior** or unrealistic expectations about relationships and personal interactions. The ad used suggestive content to sell a product, raising concerns about the portrayal of gender dynamics, particularly the objectification of both women and men.

Similar Complaints:

This particular advertisement did not receive just one but **several similar complaints**. The repeated nature of the grievances highlighted how the ad resonated negatively with the public, and people expressed discomfort with the messaging and visual content.

Judgment and Action:

In response to the complaints, the **Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)**, which ensures ethical advertising practices, was likely to have taken action to address the concerns raised. AXE, as a brand, had faced criticism for similar ads in the past that were accused of being overly sexualized and objectifying women. ASCI typically reviews ads like these and issues directions for modification or withdrawal if they violate advertising codes or if they are deemed to be offensive or inappropriate. For this ad, the **ASCI** may have recommended that the brand revise the advertisement to remove the **objectionable elements**, specifically the suggestive and inappropriate physical contact between the characters. It is also likely that the ad was either **modified** or **pulled** from circulation to comply with ethical advertising standards.

This case highlights the importance of ensuring that advertisements maintain a balance between **creativity** and **respectful representation** of individuals, particularly in sensitive areas such as **gender** and **sexuality**.

Decision Taken by CCC: The CCC found the visuals of the girls licking the chocolate and girls biting the boy's butt were indecent and likely to cause widespread offence. Hence, the CCC ordered the advertiser to modify.

3. The **Cadbury Fruity Gems** advertisement showed a child eating fruits, followed by another child eating Fruity Gems with the same flavor, implying that the Fruity Gems could replace the natural taste of fruits. At the end of the advertisement, the child eating fruits is shown opting for

Cadbury Fruity Gems, suggesting that the candy is a desirable substitute for the healthy option of fruits.



Image 3.9(Source: www.googleimages.com)

Complaint:

A **father of a six-year-old girl** filed a complaint, claiming that his daughter was deeply influenced by the advertisement. After seeing it, she refused to eat fruits and insisted on eating **Cadbury Fruity Gems** instead. The complaint raised concerns about the advertisement's **negative impact** on children and how it **exploited their vulnerability**, as the ad appeared to encourage children to prefer sugary snacks over healthy food options like fruits.

Decision Taken by the CCC:

The **Consumer Complaints Council (CCC)** reviewed the advertisement and found that it exploited the vulnerability of minors, particularly by suggesting that children should choose sweets over natural and healthier food options like fruits. The CCC concluded that the ad violated ethical advertising standards, particularly the rules regarding the protection of children from being influenced by advertising in a harmful way.

As a result, the CCC **recommended that the advertisers** either **modify** the advertisement to ensure it does not encourage unhealthy eating habits or **withdraw** the advertisement entirely. The decision emphasized the need for advertisers to be mindful of the influence their campaigns can have on

young audiences, especially when it comes to promoting unhealthy food choices.

This case illustrates the **ethical responsibility** of advertisers to ensure that their content does not exploit the vulnerability of children, especially in cases where the advertisement promotes unhealthy eating habits. It also highlights how advertisements can shape children's preferences and behaviors, making it crucial to create ads that promote **healthy choices** rather than reinforcing unhealthy habits.

Promotions of Products where the Ruling was made in favor of the Advertiser

1. The advertisement for *Ayurveda Mix Plus Kashaya Soap*, published in the Malayalam bi-weekly magazine *Gruhalakshmi* in August 2016, claimed that the soap contained 80-88% Total Fatty Matter (TFM). This claim was challenged in a complaint.

Complaint:

The complaint argued that the soap's Total Fatty Matter (TFM) could not possibly be 80-88%, as claimed in the advertisement. It was pointed out that: The soap was oil-based and handmade, and typically, handmade soaps have an average moisture content of around 20%.

Additionally, such soaps generally contain about 6-7% glycerine, making it highly unlikely that the TFM could exceed 70%, as stated in the ad.

The complainant further argued that in order to have a TFM of 80-88%, the moisture content of the soap would need to be reduced to around 10%, and the glycerine would need to be removed entirely.

Thus, the complainant stated that the claim of 80-88% TFM was false.

Response from the Advertiser:

In response to the complaint, the advertiser defended the claim by stating that the soap was made using pure coconut oil and manufactured through cold processing, which could allow for a higher TFM percentage. To support this, the advertiser provided two independent test certificates:

- One from an SGS lab.

- Another from the Kerala Government lab.

Both test reports indicated that the TFM of the soap was more than 84%, which validated the claim made in the advertisement.

Decision Taken by CCC:

Based on the test reports provided by the advertiser, the Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) reviewed the case and found the data credible. Since the independent test certificates confirmed that the TFM value was indeed higher than 84%, the CCC did not accept the complainant's claim and decided in favor of the advertiser.

The CCC concluded that the advertisement's claim was accurate, and the soap did, in fact, contain the high TFM value it advertised, as substantiated by the test certificates.

Conclusion:

This case underscores the importance of independent verification and scientific evidence in addressing advertising claims. Despite initial skepticism about the TFM value based on industry standards for handmade soaps, the advertiser's ability to provide validated test results from reputable labs helped establish the accuracy of their claim. The CCC's decision highlights how objective evidence can resolve disputes over advertising claims.

2. *The Idea Cellular advertisement* depicted a scenario where rural children, due to a lack of adequate schools and educational facilities in rural areas, are unable to access education. The ad highlighted that these children couldn't afford the high fees of urban schools, implying that education was out of their reach. The commercial then suggested that learning could be facilitated through mobile phones, as a solution to these challenges.



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/nAfUT1XWLcDn8Dfu5>

Complaint:

The complaint raised concerns that the advertisement misrepresented the education system in rural Maharashtra. The complainant argued that the situation depicted in the advertisement was not accurate and did not reflect the actual state of education in rural areas. It was claimed that the ad gave a false impression about the availability and accessibility of education in these regions, which could mislead viewers into thinking that rural children were entirely deprived of education.

Decision Taken by CCC:

After reviewing the complaint, the Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) concluded that the advertisement did not degrade or misrepresent the education system in Maharashtra. The CCC determined that the ad's portrayal, while not entirely reflective of the reality, did not harm or mislead the audience in a way that would necessitate action. The council found that the ad did not go beyond creative license and was an attempt to highlight the potential of mobile phones in facilitating education in rural areas.

Thus, the CCC decided in favor of the advertiser, concluding that the advertisement was acceptable and did not require modification or withdrawal.

Conclusion:

This case highlights the balance between creative advertising and factual accuracy. While the advertisement might have exaggerated certain aspects of the rural education system, it did not cross the line into harmful misrepresentation. The CCC's decision reflects a recognition of advertising's role in highlighting social issues, such as education accessibility, without necessarily adhering strictly to every detail of the real-world situation.

This chapter provides a critical reflection on the ethical issues in Indian advertising, such as misleading claims, false information, concealment of facts, puffery, manipulation, and reinforcing stereotypes. It delves into how these issues can range from minor to major infractions and discusses the controversies that often arise in Indian advertisements. These ethical concerns necessitate the existence of regulatory and monitoring bodies, like the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), to oversee and address such issues.

The chapter emphasizes the importance of ethical responsibility among advertisers and the agencies involved in creating advertisements. It sheds light on the role of ASCI in handling complaints regarding misleading or unethical advertisements and the various steps through which complaints can be lodged, whether they pertain to the advertisements themselves or the products being advertised.

The Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) of ASCI is portrayed as an impartial body that listens to complaints and passes fair judgments. The examples provided in the chapter demonstrate how the CCC strives to ensure that advertisers adhere to ethical standards and that justice is served to those who are affected by misleading or unethical ads.

This discussion highlights the positive impact of regulatory bodies in ensuring that advertisements align with social values and do not mislead or harm the public. It gives hope to society that unethical advertisements will be monitored and addressed, thus fostering responsibility in the advertising industry and helping to maintain public trust.

In conclusion, the chapter underscores the significance of ethical advertising and the role of organizations like ASCI in fostering a transparent and responsible advertising environment in India. It reassures the public that there are systems in place to ensure that unethical practices are checked, promoting fairness and accountability in the industry.

Conclusion

The advertising industry in India has evolved from a small-scale business to a significant sector in the country's economy. With the expansion of the marketing industry, the rise of intense competition has made advertising one of the most demanding and challenging businesses. Advertising plays a crucial role in generating demand for products and services, boosting sales, and building customer loyalty. It helps in product distribution, brand preference creation, and persuading consumers to try new products.

The Indian advertising industry has made remarkable progress, securing a spot on the global stage. Over time, it has provided immense opportunities for businesses and employment. India has witnessed an influx of creative professionals contributing innovative and entertaining advertising ideas. However, alongside this growth, the industry has also faced criticism for producing misleading, deceptive, and at times, vulgar content. In the face of intense competition, some advertisers resort to unethical practices to stand out.

The industry has largely adhered to voluntary self-regulation through bodies like the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI). While

these regulations help maintain consumer trust, the influence and effectiveness of these codes have often been questioned. Despite the existence of advertising laws, they may not always have a significant impact, particularly in some product categories.

Research Findings and Hypotheses

The study explored four key research questions, and the results were as follows:

Effectiveness of Advertising Laws in India

While there are laws governing advertising, their effectiveness is often seen as limited, especially for certain products. The first hypothesis was validated, indicating that the impact of advertising laws is positive for some products but negligible for others.

Ethical Issues in Indian Advertising

Indian advertisements are often criticized for promoting materialism, manipulation, stereotyping, and fraudulence. The study confirmed that ethical issues are prevalent in Indian advertising, validating the second hypothesis.

Role of Indian Advertising Agencies in Regulating Advertising Laws

Advertising agencies and organizations are aware of the laws but tend to bypass them to stay competitive. This finding confirmed the third hypothesis, emphasizing the crucial role these agencies play in regulating advertising laws in India.

Ethical Issues in Food and Hygiene Products from the USA Advertised in India

Many ethical issues arise from advertisements of food and hygiene products from the USA in India, particularly when these ads target children. This confirmed the fourth hypothesis, which identified concerns related to the marketing tactics used for these products.

Ethical Considerations and Responsibility in Advertising

The study concludes that advertising is an integral part of today's competitive market economy. However, ethical issues such as misleading claims, manipulation of consumer choices, and the targeting of vulnerable groups are rampant. These unethical practices have a damaging impact on society and consumer behavior.

Despite the existence of self-regulatory bodies like ASCI, there is a need for stronger enforcement and broader acceptance of ethical guidelines within the industry. Advertisers must be more socially responsible, ensure their campaigns are truthful, and maintain fairness in competition. Moreover, self-regulation by advertisers, agencies, and media has been favored by many, suggesting that the advertising industry must take more accountability for the content it produces.

Recommendations

The research recommends the establishment of a certifying authority that would evaluate and certify advertisements before they are aired or published. This would ensure that all advertisements meet ethical standards, reduce the chances of unethical advertisements being broadcast, and build consumer confidence.

Additionally, advertisers must be honest in their claims and ensure that their ads are not harmful, offensive, or misleading. Transparency, truthfulness, and social responsibility should guide the advertising industry's practices. The industry needs to reflect a balance between creative expression and social responsibility. As Leo Burnett once said, "Let's gear our advertising to sell goods, but let's recognize also that advertising has a broad social responsibility." By upholding these standards, the advertising industry will make a positive contribution to society and the country.

In conclusion, the lack of ethical advertising leads to cultural pollution, especially impacting children. This study emphasizes the need for advertisers to be more socially responsible and to prioritize ethical practices in their campaigns. Self-regulation and the establishment of ethical guidelines will ensure that advertising in India remains truthful, non-deceptive, and socially responsible.