



## Role of advertisement in print media

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### Abstract

Advertisement plays an important role in achieving growth in sales of product and services. Effective advertising refers to informing the public about the right product at the right time through the right medium. The right media selection is the crux of the success of the entire advertising campaign. With more than two billion users around the world, the potential reach alone has advertisers drooling.

Advertising is multi-dimensional. It is a form of powerful marketing tool, a component of the economic system, a means of financing the mass media, a social institution, an instrument of business management, a field of employment and a profession. The current article highlights the role of advertisement in print media.

**Keywords:** advertisement, consumer, product, brand

### Introduction

Advertisement, in the present atmosphere of global competition, is a powerful social and economic force. Consumers look to it for information in respect of products, brands and services that might help them in selection and to meet their material needs. From the critics of advertising we hear that it works by playing on people's hidden fears and motivations, or by manipulating consumer demand for the advantage of the advertiser or by distortion or misrepresentation. Advertising, in the real world, does its work in many marvelous ways.

Advertisement, in the present atmosphere of global competition, is a powerful social and economic force. Consumers look to it for information in respect of products, brands and services that might help them in selection and to meet their material needs. Without these services immediate contact is not possible while sitting away from home and at a distant place.

All the studies show that a lot of work has been done and is being done on the relevance and need of advertising but so far no attempt in this regard has been made. Sometimes advertising does not include objective information because the primary function of commercial advertisements is to sell a product/service to the prospective buyer. Advertising as an institution and as a business and social process has the greater responsibility within the economic system of any country.

Advertising or advertizing in business is a form of marketing communication used to encourage, persuade, or manipulate an audience (viewers, readers or listeners; sometimes a specific group) to take or continue to take some action. Most commonly, the desired result is to drive consumer behavior with respect to a commercial offering, although political and ideological advertising is also common. This type of work belongs to a category called affective labor.

Advertising in its present form is about 200 years old. But,

advertising has been in use in some form or the other in the history of the mankind, even in the ancient times till 5th century and then in the Dark Age, middle age and till 19th century. The 20th century presented the means like radio, television and satellite communication which increased the reach of the advertiser all over the world.

The purpose of advertising is to induce the customers to buy products. Advertising communicates information to potential customers and attempts to persuade them. Advertising has an impact on increase in sales but for it to be successful, it has to be well coordinated with the entire marketing mix. There is a tendency among the general public to look at the advertisements with some amount of distrust. This poses a challenge to the advertisers. If one advertisement among the several advertisements seen regularly is not truthful, the public tends to feel that all advertisements are like that i.e., dishonest. Media such as newspapers, radio, television, outdoor board, and websites are used for advertising. Through these media marketing communication takes place. The study in this research focuses on unethical marketing communication with specific reference to the portrayal of women.

An advertiser has to be conscious of his moral and social responsibility. A false or misleading advertisement will certainly be harmful to the reputation of the company and the product being advertised. Hence the advertiser has to be mindful of ethics involved in advertising. Ethics is a choice between good and bad, between right and wrong with reference to a particular culture at a given point of time.

### Research study

General public is exposed to advertisements in media such as newspapers, television, outdoor, cinema and cyber media. The advertisers, i.e., the manufacturers of products and the providers of services try to communicate the superiority and advantages of their products or services through the

advertisements. In a highly competitive market scenario, the advertisers have to compete for the attention of the public. For grabbing the attention of the public when there is so much clutter of advertisements, the advertisement has to stand out. It has to be attractive, catchy, beautiful, and colorful.

The caption, the message, the layout, the visuals have to create the desired impact and effect intended by the advertiser. In the process of capturing public attention, the advertisers compete with each other to make their advertisements stand out or noticed among the several other advertisements. While attempting to catch the public's attention and mindshare, there is a lot of one-upmanship among the advertisers. Everyone wants to be the best, wants his message communicated effectively so that the product/service being advertised gets maximum market share.

During this one-upmanship, the advertisers and the agencies which handle the communication through the advertisements sometimes tend to go overboard. As a result one or all of the following happens:

- The claim in the advertisement become tall, inflated, unsubstantiated
- The claim becomes untruthful or misleading
- The communication becomes unethical
- The visuals or depiction of women in advertisements become indecent. The advertisers tend to use more glamorous, sexually attractive models. Women are depicted more as sex objects. Such depiction is resorted to even if it is not relevant to the product or service being advertised.

In a situation as stated above the consumer gets misled and is derived from the correct information which will enable him to decide in favor or against purchase of certain product or service. In case the advertisement depicts models in an indecent or vulgar manner it is likely to cause grave or widespread offence to the general public.

Media advertisements' effectiveness has its own say. A major proportion of the respondents endorse the proposition that advertisements in media affect the customer behaviour for the sale of mobile services. Whether appearance of the celebrities in advertisements affect the customers' buying behaviour, to this, more than half of the respondents disagree.

Company's brand ambassadors and the advertisements presented by them are indeed liked by the viewers, the question is only of rating. The advertisements presented by the companies through brand ambassador's act as emotional appeal to the viewers, to some extent. The data further provides that a vast majority of the urban respondents disagree with the statement that advertisements affect the sale of mobile phone services.

An overview of various aspects and issues of the present study through the review of literature available on the subject has been presented in this chapter. The investigations made in the previous studies have been of great significance in understanding the intricacies of the issues taken up for this study and also in finding the gap for further research in the field. The conclusions drawn from the earlier research works have served as a guide mark for this study.

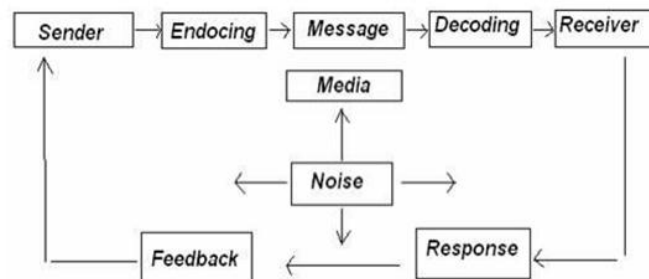
### Marketing communication

One of the basic concepts of marketing is the marketing mix,

which is said to be the set of controllable variables and their levels which marketer uses to influence the target market. The tools used in order to reach and control the target market, are collectively known as the elements of the marketing mix, or the four Ps, including product, price, place, and promotion.

Promotion, also referred to as marketing communication, is the way of communicating the information of product, price, and place to the consumers.

It is essential to emphasize the importance of effective communication because of the geographical and psychological distances that separate companies from intermediaries and customers. Figure 1.1 below shows the communication process with its fundamental elements



**Fig 1:** Elements of Communication Process

As clear from the figure 1 all the nine elements of the communication process together have the possibility to create effective communication between marketers and their intermediaries and customers. Among these sender and receiver are the active parties in a communication; encoding, decoding, response, and feedback are the communication functions; message and media are the communication tools; and noise is everything that interferes with the intended communication.

In order to get messages through, marketers must encode their messages in a way that takes into account how the target audience usually decodes messages. They must also use an efficient media through which to transmit the message and reach the target audience. By the use of the chosen media, marketers should develop appropriate feedback channels to monitor response to the message.

In order to form a total marketing communication program to reach selected target markets, several tools are available with marketer. These tools are related communication techniques, also referred to as the promotional mix and include sponsorship, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, and advertising.

### Discussion

Advertising became a major economic force around the middle of the nineteenth century, with advent of the mass market for manufactured goods. Advertising helped develop this mass market by establishing branded products that stood for uniform quality at good prices. However, as markets matured with a proliferation of similar brands, sales promotion gained importance.

Currently, most of the firms spend about three-fourths of the promotional budget on sales promotions, and one-fourth on advertising. Thus, sales promotions have become a very

important component of the promotional mix. Second, advertising and sales promotion are closely interlinked. Expenditures on advertising have a direct bearing on expenditures on sales promotion. Third, personal selling and publicity may not be close enough to advertising and sales promotion to merit an in-depth treatment.

However, advertisements through electronic media play an important role (about thirty eight percent) in the popularity of mobile phone services. Indeed, electronic and print media has its own some say. In urban segment an abnormal trend has been seen where hundred percent respondents in the age group of 15-20 years agree that advertisements in media affects the customers' buying behavior for the sale of mobile phone service.

Overall analysis opinion goes against the version that promotion schemes launched by the various companies have an impact on the customer's buying behavior. More than three-fifth respondents like/very much like to go through deeply into the advertisements while reading newspapers/magazines and also while seeing television. One significant analysis has emerged that source through advertisements in electronic media plays a guiding role for the rural and urban respondents both.

The study intends to reveal what is happening with regards to marketing communication and whether the general public is satisfied, concerned or indifferent to what is happening around them. The study aims at finding out to what extent the public is aware or not of the very existence of a self regulatory body like ASCI (Advertising Standards Council of India) which has been in existence for over 25 years. One of the outcomes of the study is an assessment of the extent to which ASCI has been effective in curbing unethical marketing communication that takes place through the media advertisements.

India became independent in 1947. Since then, till 1991, the closed door economy and policies of quotas, controlled production and distribution were described as the "License Raj". One needed several permits before setting up a manufacturing facility. The quantity to be produced was dictated by the Government. One could not increase the production even if there was a shortage in the market and demand exceeded supply. As a result, what was witnessed was "Sellers' Market".

There were long waiting periods for two wheelers like scooters and motorcycles, cars. The numbers of manufacturers were limited and the available brands and models were also limited. Imports of such items and consumer products, FMCG products were very much restricted. Cell Phones, laptops were not available. There was a long waiting period even to get land line phone connection.

However, the situation changed dramatically since opening up the economy in 1991. India adopted the policies of globalization, foreign investments and imports of products were increasing. Soon the scenario changed from "Sellers' Market" to "Buyers' Market". The manufacturers and marketers realized the importance of marketing and realized that the customer was king. Competition increased, availability of competing brands, products, makes, models continued to increase across a wide range of products like automobiles, two wheelers, telephones, cell phones, office equipment, consumer products, consumer durables, FMCG

products and so on and so forth. Scenario completely changed in the market since 1991.

The days of allocation, rationing, shortages were over. Need to reach out to the market, to customers was felt strongly. Customers became aware that they had multiple choices and the marketers had to actively compete among themselves to attract the customer's attention and ultimately to make the customer buy the product which was being marketed.

An analysis of the advertisement revealed the following data (Table 1) about the type of information present in newspaper advertisement. It was found that 77.58% of the advertisement contained information about the availability of product. It was also found that 93.58% advertisement contained at least one cue. It was found that 83.5% advertisements contained at least 2 cues.

**Table 1:** Type of Information in Newspaper Advertisement.

Type of Information	No. of Commercial Ads Containing the Cue	% of Sample
Price or value	255	25.07%
Quality	512	50.34%
Performance	130	12.78%
Components and contents	412	40.51%
Availability	789	77.58%
Special Offers	310	30.48%
Taste	16	1.5%
Packaging or Shape	105	10.32%
Guarantees or Warrantees	130	12.78%
Safety	18	1.7%
Nutrition	15	1.47%
Independent Research	62	9.04%
Company Sponsored Research	11	1.08%
New Ideas	2	0.19%

An analysis of the sample (Table 2) found that 40% of the advertisements were informational as compared to 26% as perceived by a consumer. It was also found that correlation between advertisements influencing consumer behavior was highest for durables with 84.09%. It can be seen that informative content had an influential impact on consumer behavior.

**Table 2:** Impact of Informative advertisement on Consumer Behavior

Category	Total no. of ads	No. of informative ads	No. of informative ads according to consumer	No. of Ads Influencing the consumer	No. of Informative ads Influencing the customer	Percentage correlation between influence and informative ads
Durables	360	220	145	255	185	84.09%
Pharma	25	17	12	21	14	82.3%
Foods and beverages	42	11	10	35	9	81.8%
Services	210	82	51	110	52	63.41%
Cosmetic apparels and footwear	280	44	28	195	12	27.3%
Miscellaneous	100	34	19	52	21	61.76%

**Significance of the study**

Findings and recommendation from the study will enable the organization like ASCI to know whether the public awareness campaign they have been carrying out have been noticed by

the public and to what extent they have been effective. It will enable ASCI to decide on whether there is a need for them to regularly undertake public awareness campaigns.

Advertising is a big component in the market economy. It plays a significant role in motivating consumers to either use a particular brand or to increase their consumption of that brand. Newspaper forms an effective form of media in a developing country such as India where its reach is to almost every household. According to the 55th Annual Report of Registrar of Newspaper for India (RNI) in 2011 India leads the world in terms of newspaper circulation with nearly 330 million newspapers circulated daily and it grew at a rate of 6.25% over the previous year.

### **Conclusion**

The advertisers have a social responsibility to be honest, truthful while communicating through the advertisements. The study aims at finding out whether the claims made by the advertisers have any unjustified or unsubstantiated or misleading claims. The visuals, particularly the depiction of women in such communication should be decent. A family with children should not become uncomfortable while seeing some commercials on TV or in newspapers or on outdoor media or in cyberspace. The study will be relevant from the point of advertisers' obligation towards social responsibility.

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