



A Case Study of Unethical Practices of Advertising in India on Some Selective Products

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ABSTRACT

Ethics means set of principles. It is an important issue in case of any advertising. Most of the global, MNCs and local companies use anti social and unethical advertising to gain profit by increasing sale using deceptive and over information about their products qualities and ingredients. This is the reason that companies can't achieve customer's satisfaction and their preferred target. Under this study my objective is to create the customer awareness about unethical practices of advertising in India. This study is not only to identify the status of antisocial, unethical practices of advertising in India but also find out the ways to overcome the problems of antisocial unethical practices. Under this study, I use eight (8) products of different companies which are involved with antisocial unethical practices of advertising (according to ASCI standards) have been used as a sample. Qualitative techniques are used and presented in a descriptive way. In India most of the companies do not follow socio ethical standards and norms in advertising and notable for maintaining the Customer Rights. This is the reason, customer are cheated due to false and unrealistic advertising copy. Informative, effective, creative, truthful, practical, beautiful and social advertising creates a good impact on the socio economic condition of any country.

Keywords: Advertising, Ethical, Unethical Advertising, Consumer Rights, Advertising Copy.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past few years, Unethical advertising has become a hot issue in the Business world. So every consumer, business owner, manager and advertising agency is interested in socio ethical advertising issues. Businesses are the game to earn money and advertising is a best way to sell a particular product. In this information, communication and entertainment age advertisement played a major role to promote and create market for the company products. In the recent era customers are very concerned about creative, meaningful and truthful advertising.

Today advertising is an interesting and challenging field in the marketing industry. Advertising is an effective way to attract, create and sustain the customer. Due to technology advancement and higher education the advertising industry has been increasing year by year to provide the latest information about the product. Advertising is not only used to promote the product but it can also promote the services, entertainment and

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many more things. Advertising can be displayed by various media such as the internet, radio, television, pamphlets, banners, billboards, newspapers, magazine and advertising agency.

In recent times, the advertisers did not pay notice and awareness on their way of distributing messages to the people. Advertisement is considered as unethical because it degrades opponent product and gives wrong information, partial information that significantly affects human life (e.g., side effects of drugs), makes larger-than-life claims, is obscene or dishonest or is next to broad national interest (Singh and Vij, 2007). Maximum organization and advertising agency in India have deceived their customer by making their false advertising copy, confusing and over information. Its result that customized customer, social and other competitive institution also damaged. Because of giving double meaning information in unlike advertising copy, customer's approach is unfavorable about those institutions. They cut down the rival's opportunities to attain customer. The basic objective of advertising is to attract and encourage customers to buy the product. The way of advertising must be ethical. Advertising should be true and right factual informational based, not deceived or unethical (kotler, 2012). But in the present scenario antisocial and unethical types of advertising is increasing in India year after year specially in respect of controversial products. Today customers are cheated by various false advertisement and information sharing. So it is the basic purpose to aware the customer regarding antisocial and unethical advertising.

II. AIM

The Basic aim of this study is to create the customer awareness regarding the antisocial and unethical practices of advertising in India.

Others specific aim of the study is given below:

1. To identify the present condition of advertising in India.
2. To raise the awareness about advertising message and contents for protecting the consumers from the deceive advertising of the companies.
3. To build, develop and explore some probable solutions and recommendations of antisocial and unethical advertising Practices in India.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Some previous analysis works in unethical advertising that have essentially targeted on deceptive and unethical observe within the advertising sector. They are reviewed to find out the existing research gap which is given below-

The foundations of attitudes are beliefs that consumers form about advertising. Attitudes toward advertising are operational and measured by positive or negative beliefs about advertising.

Wilkie and William (1990) granted that advertising has equally positive and negative aspects, however they do not be appropriate to every advertisements. He has listed the "seven sins" charged by advertising's critics [33].

A prior study by (*Dragon International, 1991; Simon, 1995*) has highlighted a few important issues in the ethical buying behavior of consumers [12] [26].

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Olson (1995) has compiled an inventory of inadvertent negative effects of advertising and described these effects in terms of eight criticism categories, drawing on the writings of a lot of social scientists and humanists [23].

Abideen et al. (1998) have targeted on some aspects of unethical practices in advertising utilized by different advertising agencies and promoting clients. The study reveals that more than 3/4 (76%) of the consumers consider that majority of the advertisements in mass media contain one or more unethical or misleading practices. These practices are visible more in product advertisements than in service advertisements [2].

Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000) investigated the response of consumer's to principled and unethical marketing conduct and make out reasons for customers to recognize an advertisement as nasty. In contrast, Chinese and Malaysian customers have given a border line offensiveness score to all 3 things (nudity, indecent language, sexiest image) [10].

Smith (2000) worked that deceptive and dishonest online advertising and business practices. The investigator also the level to which digital communications technologies is being utilized in deceptive and unreliable ways to advertise products and services, and how troubles of this nature can be best dealt with [30].

Singh and Vij (2007) Wrote an article on socio-economic and ethical implications of advertising – A perceptual study and analyzed in detail the public reply to the issues like: targeting children in advertising, 'use of sex in advertisements', 'endorsement of materialism all the way through advertising', 'make use of comparative advertising', 'ethics in advertising', 'use of celebrities in advertising', 'economic effects of advertising'; and 'public strategy on advertising' [29].

Jahan (2010) conducted a study on ethics in selling on Bangladesh point of view: study on only some companies of Bangladesh. The researcher conducted to provide a few approaches regarding ethical practices that are done by some of the firms in Bangladesh. The research also focuses on the link between marketing and business ethics in the business sector and in addition to the ethics based role of marketing programs that occurred in the organization. Companies have to generate high ethical standards on which approach marketing they are participating in ethical marketing [15].

Usman et al. (2010) observe cultural influence on the general mind-set of Pakistani people towards advertising. The researchers examine the cultural impact on the thoughts of people towards advertisements of brands according to product information, social incorporation and contentment, while power distance and masculinity as culture dimensions [32].

Abbasi et al. (2011) tried to explore ethical problems in the contemporary advertising campaigns of contentious items in Pakistan from Shari'ah perspective. The level of indecency towards advertisements of controversial products was found to be significantly associated with religious perceptions and nature of advertising appeals. Nudity and sexist images as advertising appeals were found to have major association with the level of offensiveness of the customers [1].

Liepinyte and Daugeliene (2012) have conducted that interrelation of ambiguous advertising and solution for customers: legal guideline and institutional background in Lithuania [20].

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Singal and Kamra (2012) conducted a practical research on ethical issues in advertising. In advertising, using media as its vehicle is a persistent, dominant force shaping attitudes and behavior in today's world. It goes ahead of the traditional function of 'fair and truthful' information and portrays obscene, unwanted and unethical scene, giving a negative result particularly on the young population of the society. They found out diverse types of unethical advertisements like advertisements with obscenity and sexual connotation, endorsed by children, surrogate advertising, concealed advertisements, false and deceptive advertisements etc. [28].

Ramachandran and Venkatesh (2012) have set up that marketing mix: An area of unethical practices? The researchers plan to develop the model of ethics in marketing. Their prominence is on empirical study in order to demonstrate that many unethical marketing practices may be happening, particularly which are correlated to pricing and advertising practices [24].

Maleki and Pasha (2012) wrote an article regarding ethical challenges and customers' privileges. They find out there are 3 major orientations in unethical advertising. 1. The content of the advertising, 2. The ways that advertisers attempt to push advertising into the customers' mind and 3. The method of tracking individuals' special experience over the net amid the intention of promoting companies' products and services [21].

Zetterqvist and Mulinari (2013) the research attempted of confusing advertising for antidepressants in Sweden: a crash of pharmaceutical industry self-regulation. They investigate that Self-regulatory bodies recognized numerous code breaches. Nevertheless, they botched to protect doctors from untrustworthy information on antidepressants, since as many as 34% of advertisements breached the industry rules. Self-regulatory bodies repetitively failed to challenge inflated claim of antidepressant efficiency, lending facts of lax oversight [34].

Kabir (2013) piloted a study on the unethical practice of advertising in India and he investigated that most of the companies utilize unethical practices to boost their sales of products. The majority of the companies are not following the ethical standard in advertising [16].

Singh (2014) has accompanied an empirical research on ethical issues and principles associated to advertising. Ethical issues in advertising are adjacent to all businesses and consumers. His findings indicate that a different number of industries, companies and advertising organizations use unethical in their advertising to uphold the product. Some companies use the prospective ethical issues in their advertising to accomplish the legal framework. Today, customers are more aware to purchase the products vigilantly. Therefore, the ethics associated to advertising are useful to build up the positive attitude and self-confidence of consumers [27].

Bin Nooh et al. (2014) conducted research on the criterion and challenges of unethical advertising. In recent years, there are lots of ways of advertising to draw customer's attention, including through TV, radio, newspapers and latest trends of advertising is through Internet by means of a social website. However, a lot of advertising brings troubled by a few of people that concerns towards improper advertising show to the public and seen by all levels of ages including children, teenagers, adults and old folks. Because of this, the issue raised up in questioning the inappropriate advertising may get negative thoughts to the next generation compared from the past and the present in Malaysia [8].

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Ajay (2014) has studied on insight of Indian consumers towards Indian advertisements and observed the progress of advertising and its relative effect on the society and the people in particular is considered. The disadvantages of various unethical Indian advertisements and their scheming motives faced by the Indian consumers are assessed. He examined to measure the ethical practices of the print and TV advertisements in India at present and their comparative effects. Advertisements should be well-mannered and not obscene. Sometimes, celebrities endorsing the product and spreading deception are also unethical [6].

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study is focused on the unethical practices of the advertising in India. It is basically descriptive in nature based on Qualitative and Quantitative information. Descriptive study is based on the information collected by direct interview, observation and massive exploration of secondary sources. Both secondary and primary data were collected in this paper. The theoretical part of the study is based on the information collected from secondary sources such as review of scholarly journals, articles and reading materials, on the other side quantitative findings are based on primary data.

A large number of companies are involved with unethical practices of advertising in India. Because of time limit it is difficult to analysis all companies and its product. So we choose eight (8) identified products of different companies' involved with anti social and unethical advertising practices. Generally two types of the method can be used as sampling unit, one is the probability sampling and other is non- probability sampling (Malhotra & Dash, 2011). In this study non-probability sampling techniques are used because I used the convenience sampling method. Due to time and resource constraint: *Energy drink, Fairness Cream, Coaching institutes, Hair Conditioners, Salt, Candy, Slimming product and Face Wash products* have been selected as a sample.

The area of the study was based on **Kota city**.

Primary information has been collected from various sources through observation, discussion, interview and face to face interactions. Secondary data have been taken from various sources such as television advertising, internet, radio, newspaper and relevant articles, etc. After data collection, I analyze the information through qualitative method and presented in a descriptive way.

V. FINDINGS

According to the data collection and literature review, the following findings are discussed with the help of a table.



TABLE 5.1:- Shows the findings of the case study on eight (8) selective products of different companies which are involved with unethical practices in Advertising in India.

<i>Name of the Sample Products</i>	<i>Advertising Message or Copy</i>	<i>Finding of the Study</i>
1. Energy Drink	“Get energy and power by drinking Energy Drink” After drinking a variety of energy drink, people can get extra energy and can finish their all activities rapidly. Energy drink helps the people to do every work easily & it’s very helpful for the health [3].	Energy drinks include large amount of caffeine and a mixture of other dangerous ingredients, which is very unsafe for our health and whole society. Using up of huge amount of caffeine may lead to severe cardiovascular events, seizures, Dizziness, paresthesia (tingling or numbness of the skin), Increased urination, Insomnia, Headache, Increased urination and demise. Adolescent use of caffeine has been linked to dependence, pitiable sleep, and probable development of problems (Menci et al., 2013) [22]. So consumer must not get attracted by these types of advertisement. So, it can be said that they mislead their consumers by providing wrong information.
2. Fairness Cream	“By using this cream You can be bright, beautiful and attractive within 1 week” There are different types of television advertising of fairness creams, which these days are being exposed on different TV channels of India. That are - (a) A Young girl is bothered about her dark face skin. She used a fairness cream and became pale in a few days. (b) A poor dark color gipsy girl use the skin whitening cream become white and then a rich boy marry her (c) A girl changed her face skin from dark to white within 3 days after using these fairness cream. In single words, after using fairness cream any girl must be fair, beautiful, and attractive among a couple of days. Even she’s going to be a star and get good status in society [3] [4] [5].	It is not possible to alter dark skin color to white by applying fairness cream. Participants of the study also discovered that constant use of the fairness cream made their face skin look fresh, but not white. Even they think that the use of the creams could cause skin issues such as pimples, rashes, dryness, hardness and darkness of the face skin. Islam et al. (2006) maintained that common skin lightening chemicals are connected with negative side effects to the face skin. Skin whitening creams cannot be helpful without the use of skin bleaching chemicals like steroids, mercury salts, hydroquinone and other skin detrimental chemicals [13, 14]. According to Shankar et al. (2006) most of these creams are non-prescriptive products and could potentially cause face skin issues [25]. By spreading these types of wrong information, they snatch the rights of the consumer and rupture the rules or principles of advertising message that generate enthusiasm in society.

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<p>3. Different Coaching Institutes</p>	<p>The advertisement's claim, "India's favorite" implies that this institute is better over other institutes. The said claim was not substantiated with verifiable comparative data/ market survey data of the advertiser's institute and other similar institutes or through a third party validation, and is misleading by exaggeration. [ASCI report]</p>	<p>It is no right information. According to study there are several other institutes which are above than that particular coaching still it is claiming to be the favourite one, by study it was found that this information is not a truth. So, this type of advertisement creates confusion within the student's mind.</p>
<p>4. Many Kinds of Hair Conditioners</p>	<p>"100% hair fall is stopped Within 14 days" The company also claims that their shampoo and conditional give customer up to 100% dandruff free hair forever, Up to 95% less hair fall, Leaves hair up to 100% flake-free with a fresh scent [3][4].</p>	<p>But hair fall difficulty is remaining invariable. It does not work properly Dandruff never gets removed forever. Stearn (2011) has affirmed that Protein-containing conditioners and shampoo only temporarily stop defects on the surface of the hair scalp, making it smoother and thicker, not everlastingly [31]. Participants of the study also discovered that constant use of shampoo and conditional made their hair smoother and thicker, but not hair fall and dandruff free. So the customer gets deceived due to false and unrealistic advertising message.</p>
<p>5. Salt</p>	<p>The advertisement's claims, "Active salt" and "Keeps you active all day-long", were not substantiated with any technical or scientific rationale or data regarding product efficiency in keeping lethargy or drowsiness at bay (Shown via visuals / reference to Umasi). The claims are misleading by ambiguity and implication that the product's effect is unique or better than of other salts. [ASCI Report]</p>	<p>They deceive their customers by giving wrong information. It may be good for health, but it does not have any activeness qualities. Maximum respondents experienced that this product is working same as other salt there is no specific change in tiredness. So every company should avoid this type of unethical practice by misleading information to the customer by advertisement.</p>
<p>6. Candy</p>	<p>In the advertisement, the specific visuals in the TVC show the 'principal/teacher tossing the candy in the air and catching the candy with his mouth', and 'teenagers tossing the candy in the air and catching it in their mouth'. The advertisement</p>	<p>This is totally unethical advertisement as per the survey it was found that parents were worried if their kids follow same techniques to eat some candy it may be dangerous for them provided they are doing it at safe place if it is done on any bridge or hill station it will be life snatching activity. So, as per the study it is found to avoid such useless things</p>



	features dangerous acts which are likely to encourage minors to emulate such acts in a manner which could cause harm or injury. These depictions refer to dangerous practices without justifiable reason, manifest a disregard for safety and encourage negligence. [ASCI Report]	while advertising small candies.
7. Slimming products	The advertisement's claims, "No medicine, No surgery, No crash diet, No Side-effect, 100% result oriented", and "1 to 4 inches loss in just one session", were not substantiated with supporting clinical evidence and with treatment efficacy data, and are misleading by exaggeration and exploits consumers' lack of knowledge.[ASCI Report]	They deceive their customers by giving wrong information. It may be good for health, but it does not have any change in weight. If every person may become slimmer by taking this product then there will not be any obese person in the country. Maximum respondents experienced that there may be minor change by consuming these products but not as mentioned in advertisement. So, this affects human emotions and trust on such products. So every company should avoid this type of unethical practice by misleading information to the customer by advertisement.
8. Different kinds of Face Wash	"100% prevent your pimples and make your skin clean, fresh, and glowing within 14 days" Its 100% soap free formula has a rich lather that gently 100% remove dead cells, impurities, acne and pimples, kill problem- causing bacteria within 14 days. This face wash activated carbon to easily absorb and lift away the black dirt and impurities from skin surface and deep within pores, helping to reduce the causes of blemish and excessive oil, leaving your skin radiant, clean and smooth, Prevents outbreaks and the recurrence of acne, to help reveal your glowing and natural pure white looking skin [3] [4].	Most of these creams have non-prescriptive products and could potentially cause facial skin troubles. So the information of their advertisement copy is false, confusing and baseless. According to Shankar et al. (2006) most of these creams have non-prescriptive products and could cause face skin troubles [25]. So the information of their advertisement message is false, confusing, and baseless. By spreading these types of wrong information, they grasp the right of the customer and break the principles of advertising copy make enthusiasm in society. These are deceptive as mostly all kinds of cosmetics are harmful for our skin as they have harmful chemicals in it. But they never admit that it in their advertisement message or make customers cognizant about this.

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VI. CONCLUSION

It is clear that unethical practices in advertising may often occur in the most areas in India. We get a lesson that most companies seem to be involved in unethical practices and can therefore confusing the customer. Many firms even they are assigned to behave ethically, but their practices show falsity and frauds.

According to this, the unethical advertising practices occurrence characteristics in modern society are: the criteria's of justice, integrity, honesty and the eligibility, noncompliance, the creation of a false impression, the presentation of false and inaccurate facts, the conversion of social values of products, the manipulation of impulsive consumers, the control of sub consciousness, the impact on persons economic behavior or possibility of the impact.

Advertising message is the main important part of any advertising. So each company or advertising agency must provide right information to their customers by advertising message. Advertising message should be ethical and reliable. Factual, true, creative and attractive advertising makes a good impact on the economy of the country. The marketer must try to gain the morality and reliability besides earning the profit. We hope that every company will respect all the advertising rules & regulation and maintain or honor consumer rights. They can get benefit by giving the informative, right, reliable information to customer and developed the society with moral values.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The review of existing literature, findings and suggestion made by the experts or respondents helped the researchers to find out ways and means of improving unethical advertising in India. In the business sector ethical behavior is very important; the earning of profit must not be the main objective of an organization. If management develops proper rules and regulations, including reward and punishment equally for personnel on the basis of their capability, ethical standards, put off corruption and paying-off, then ethics in the business process can be enhanced. At the time of making advertisement, each company must follow the business ethical values and societal marketing philosophy. They have to work for the improvement of society. They must provide the right information on advertising of message to the customer that can increase the reliability of common people. The Marketer must try to get the morality and reliability besides getting the profit. They should help to set up the customer's right in India.

All advertising must be free, fair and reliable towards the target audience. The ethical and truthful advertising is that the key to make sure relationship and property selling. It also ensures social safety and security. That helps to create up a far better selling setting that is sweet each for sellers and consumers teams. Other recommendations to enhance moral standards and norms within the sector follow:

1. The India Government has undertaken a number of reforms with the intent of monitoring, controlling and diminishing the prevalence of corruption and unethical practice in advertising and society at large.
2. Companies must have to maintain the social responsibility and should follow the rules and related laws of advertising in India.

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3. India Government should establish a self regulatory voluntary organization of the advertising industry 'Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCB). Their objective are going to be that each one advertising material should be truthful, legal and honest, decent and not objectify women, safe for consumers, especially children and last but not the least, fair to their competitors.
4. Ad agency and advertiser ought to avoid the confusion and false info regarding merchandise, services even that are profitable for short terms.
5. Company ought to think about the purchasers right and to try and do work consequently.
6. Develop the proper principles of advertising and check out to keep up it and if broken anyone than prepare penalty straightaway.
7. To implant honest business practices towards shoppers by informing advertisers and advertising producers regarding their duties and responsibilities to shoppers.
8. Ethical education ought to be stressed, particularly, innovative practices aimed at promoting a high standard of morals and ethics in business.
Training institutes ought to be inspire to rearrange coaching courses, workshops and conferences on business ethics.
9. To extend promotional material in respect to contradict the deceptive statements within the media.
10. Additional awareness is to be created and therefore the board has got to perform effectively and ban all advertisements that don't follow the ethics.
11. Socially and economically boycott or reject all kinds of deceptive, false, irritating and untruthful advertising.
12. India Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) should monitor strictly about the misleading advertising which is circulated in India.
13. Consumers Association of India (CAB) should measure the effectiveness of all advertising weekly or monthly and take necessary action against the unethical practices.
14. Codes of ethics ought to be developed and used to inspire personnel, increase their capability, judgment power, and effective managerial skill.
Personnel subject to skilled and moral codes of conduct of their several organization ought to be inspired to stick to those codes.
15. Media and public financial institution ought to take care to forestall unethical advertising and move to flow into all honest advertising.
By maintaining the on top of mentioned recommendations and suggestions the marketers ought to broadcast or telecast their advertising. Then the country, society, nation and whole world are going to be benefited. It may help to increase the good will of the company by developing positive, harmony, perfection and ethical advertising.

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