ETHICAL ASPECTS OF MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT
Marketing of a product is as necessary as product’s quality, now days. A big share of Revenue of any company depends on how they market their products. Marketing can be done in many ways. Among them Media Advertisements are very popular now days. With the help of Television, Radio, Magazines, Newspaper etc. every person interact with many advertisements in a day whether he or she is a Child, Middle aged or old person. Advertisements are communicated to the public due to many reasons, ultimately to increase the sales or maximize the Profits. Due to the Mass reach of ads, Advertisers should follow ethical behavior so that the ad does not have any negative impact on any section of the society. This paper is analyzing the ethical issues present in Media advertisement. Forms of unethical advertisements are also elaborated here. Some Unethical Advertisements are also explained here in the Paper. The last Section finds Conclusion.

Keywords: Unethical, ads, Society, Children, Women, Media advertisements

INTRODUCTION
Ethics refers to the Moral Character of an individual and how he or she behaves in the Society. Ethics can also judge about the Right or Wrong. Ethics is related with Morality. It is entirely depends on the individual that how he wants to behave, one can go for Unethical behavior also, because the Morality is voluntarily upheld by the individual.

A Business deals with the people at a very large platform and one-to-one basis as well, so the business is ethically and morally responsible towards Society. As this paper is based on Indian advertisements, India is a country which is very rich in Cultural Values, but now days the advertisers are diluting the Indian culture with the western culture for the sake of fighting competition or to maximize their sales revenue.

The Government of India is doing many things to eradicate the advertisements, which are hurting sentiments of a particular group or section of society. That’s why the government formed ASCI.

The ‘Advertising Standards Council Of India (ASCI) is a self-regulatory voluntary organization of the Advertising Industry, founded in 1985. ASCI maintain the faith of consumer in advertisements. It receives the complaints filed, if any issues are found in the advertisements. ASCI take legal action against unethical advertisements. It also takes feedback from customer time to time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Munjal (2016) analysed that advertising industry, is facing lot of criticism because of ethical issues. Because India is a cultural country, here it is very important for the advertisers to keep proper gap between ethics and cultures or heritage presented in the advertisement. The Government should make
strict laws for the advertisers so that the Indian cultures can be saved. Government should make good efforts to implement the laws.

Khan & Ahmad (2016) analysed the telecommunication sector of Pakistan. They found the factors that the marketers and advertisers should pay a decent attention so that the customer’s acceptable standards can be keep in mind. They also said that the Consultation to Customers is the best approach to get knowledge about mindset of them.

Singh (2012) concluded that the privacy of individuals should be kept in mind by the Marketers. People tend to be irritated by not so ethical practices used by any Marketer. Unsolicited SMSs and Calls make the individual dislike the product or Brand and it creates a mere negative impact in the mind of a Potential Customer. The Marketers should not use Customer’s information for unauthorized use.

Ashraf et.al. (2014) highlighted the ethical dilemmas in advertising. They concluded that sometimes companies turn blind eye just for the sake of advertising of their products. Companies should pay adequate attention towards children ads. Deceptive and negative advertisements. Companies should think about the interest of customers whether their ad is misleading or educating the customers or people. Companies should also keep in mind the culture and values of the country, in which they are advertising their product or brand.

Verma and Gothi (2017) concluded that the advertisements is pervasive, it can make or change the behavior or attitude of the individual. The Advertisers spend money in deciding the ethical or unethical choices for their advertisements. People always questions about the unethical or ethical behavior used in the advertisements.

Above explained literature review shows that almost every author who did research on ethical or unethical aspects of advertisements, concluded that the advertisers should pay some serious attention towards this aspect, because the interaction of advertisements is increasing rapidly. Every company should go through the Cultural or heritage values before advertising in that country, because the unethical advertisements affect the cultural values. But the advertisers do not follow any ethics; they just want to increase the sales anyhow. It is also suggested by authors that the government should make strict rules and regulations in this regard and proper application of those rules is also necessary.

SOME EXAMPLES OF ETHICAL ISSUES IN ADVERTISEMENTS

Surrogate Advertisements
There are some products, marketing of which is banned like Beer, Whisky, Tobacco products etc. The advertisers do marketing of these products with same brand name but with the help of other products, which remind people of tobacco or alcoholic products as the case may be. For example ‘Tuborg’ is doing TV Commercial of Soda but in reality it is a major Beer selling company.

False statement
Some Advertisers use unproven & misleading information to advertise the products, which is wrong. For e.g. some cosmetic companies can claim that their cream contains certain element but in reality it does not.

Misleading price claims
Sometimes companies make false claims of heavy discount but in reality, do not give as much discount as it is shown in the advertisements.

Use of Children in advertisements
Children are used in advertisements, because they are a very strong factor which leads to increase in sales. Children are soft target as they watch all the advertisements on television. Children are not only used in kids products, they are used in almost every ad, for e.g. Nirma, Tide etc. In 2015, kalyan
jewellery advertisement featuring Aishwarya Rai faced a lot of criticism as it also featured a child holding umbrella for the actor, which was promoting Child Labour.

**Sexual content**

Using sexual content in advertisements is also considered unethical. Condom ads are often seen using a very sexually explicit content. A Condom ad featuring Sunny Leone sparked controversy for being sexually explicit. Many people demanded Ban on the advertisement. The Information & Broadcast Ministry orders that the condom advertisements should not be shown in between 11 pm to 05 am.

**Objectification of women**

Sometimes advertisements show women in bad light. Women in Indian TV advertisements are mostly portrayed in decorative role, many ads objectify the women. Body parts of women are shown unnecessarily in advertisements and sometimes excessively. Women are shown in family roles, very few ads portrayed them as working and free.

**Puffery**

Puffery is boastful or exaggerated statement about a product. This is commonly used in advertisements as it is not illegal. No-one can approve or disapprove the statement. For e.g. Airtel in its 4G advertisement claimed that it is ‘the fastest network ever’. This claim is an example of puffery.

**Stereotyping**

Stereotyping in advertisements is used to target a specific community or group. Even in the Modern era, the Women are shown doing domestic chores of household and are shown in the ads for products like washing powder, Cleaning products, child care products etc. The ads are shown as if the women have the sole responsibility of household chores.

**Racial Discrimination**

White people are always shown superior to black people. In Cosmetics advertisements, it is shown that the people with fair or white colour look more attractive than black or dark people. It is also depicted that every dark complexioned person faces so many problems in the society until their complexion turns fair or white. ‘Dove’ has been accused of racism in ads.

**Gender Discrimination**

It is always shown that males are superior to females. Masculinity or males are associated with alertness, physically active, Bravery, financial matters, consciousness of surroundings etc. The females or Femininity is associated with vulnerable, Seductive, confused, not alert, sexually available, playful, delicate etc.

**Inappropriate Advertisements**

Children are vulnerable and easy target for the advertisers for promotion of their certain products such as food, beverages etc. There are some advertisements which are not adequate for the children. The advertisers should make limited use of sexual content, because it affects the children in a certain way which is not good. Children get easily affected by these kinds of advertisements.

**Conclusion & Suggestion**

From the above explained examples or types of unethical advertisements, it is concluded that the advertisers can do anything to push their sales up. Proper ethical behavior is not being followed by them. They do not even Care about the Cultural or Heritage values of India. It is suggested that the Government should make proper and strict rules and regulations, and proper enactment of these rules should also be there. The rules should be properly followed by the Advertisers or Marketers. Strict punishment should also be decided in some cases, for e.g. ads which shows a specific section in bad light, specially Women, should be given proper attention. The advertisers should take care that the Children
will also get interacted with their advertisements, so the sexual content should be used to a very limited extent. Surrogate Advertisements should also be taken care specially by the government.

REFERENCES

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