



## **A STUDY ON THE CONSUMERS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS ON TELEVISION**

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### **Abstract**

*As per the study from various sources, advertising has a very colorful history of thousand years from the primitive history dating back to the word of mouth advertising by 'town criers' to the present day of internet. In day to day life, people face situations wherein they analyze, and decide what is right and wrong. They constantly debate on what is moral or immoral, ethical or unethical and according to the perception of individuals, the decision from their point of view is made. The changing mindsets of the people from generations to generations and the new wants and needs of the people have always been fulfilled. In this process, it is observed carefully that though the needs of the people are met but at the same time their needs and desires have been influenced and manipulated indirectly by the advertisements. The present research study will apply quantitative and exploratory methods. The primary and basic evaluation of the study is qualitative approach and followed with exploratory method where the data is collected through questionnaires, surveys, interviews observation and relevant references. Upon collecting the qualitative data derived from said questionnaires, interviews, surveys and references a careful analysis is done. Case Study on some of the Indian print and television advertisement is subjected to critically analyze the ethical standards in the Indian Advertisements.*

**Keywords: Customer Perspective, Ethical Dimension, Commercial, Television.**

### **Introduction**

In ancient times, the most common form of advertising was by word of mouth, however, commercial messages and political campaign displays have been found in the ruins of Pompeii (Nwagwu: 2006). The first ad in any language to be printed in a disseminated sheet appeared in a German News pamphlet in about 1525, and this ad was about the virtues of a mysterious drug. "Today, advertising continues to evolve with such innovations as "guerrilla" promotions, which involve unusual approaches such as staged encounters in public places, giveaways of products such as cars that are covered with brand messages, and interactive advertising where the viewer can respond to become part of the advertising message. Studying the disadvantages of some of the unethical Indian advertisements and their manipulative motives faced by the Indian customers are assessed in this study. The Focus of the present study was on measuring the ethical practices of the print and television advertisements in India at present and their relative effects. However, it is very difficult to distinguish a clear line of difference between what is true and what is untrue. But the advertisement as such is judged by its impact and by its acceptance by the consumers. The product must fulfill its advertised claims. Advertisements should be decent and not of obscene. Sometimes, celebrities endorsing the product and spreading falsehood is also unethical. Over the years advertising and marketing communication messages have created debatable ethical issues, due to the public belief, that advertisements deeply affect the way people perceive themselves and the world surrounding them, including crucial actions and behavior. In the present study, the development of advertising and its relative effects on the society and the people in particular is considered.

### **Review of Literature**

Advertisements are presented to large audience through various means called advertising media. The types of media for advertisement are endless ranging from banner and balloons to online and mobile advertising. Different types of messages may require different media (**Kazmi, S.H.H. & Satish K. Batra, 2006**).

High degree of consensus among the respondents regarding the issues related to public policy about advertising. Majority of the respondents are in favor of a judicial regulatory body to enforce ethics in advertising. They are in

favor of legal restrictions on sexually suggestive advertisements and advertisements targeting children. So much so that they also favor a legal limit on the amount of money a company can spend on advertising (**Raghib Singh & Sandeep, 2007**)

**Anbarasan, N. A. (2012)** has stated that majority of the respondents are having the habit of viewing television which is the most preferred electronic media for its advertisements due to high-level ethical values.

**Chan and Cai, (2009)** conducted a study to examine the cultivation effects of television advertising viewing on the perceived affluence in society and the materialistic value orientations among adolescents in urban and rural China. A survey of 646 adolescents aged between 11 and 17 was conducted in 2006.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to understand the consumers' perspective on the ethical dimensions of commercial advertisements on Television in Chennai city.

### **Importance of the Study**

This study covers the extent of Consumers' Perspective on the Ethical Dimensions of Commercial Advertisements on Television in Chennai city. Advertising is one of the most integral parts of a business entity and Organizations all around the world spend billions of dollars every year to promote their products globally. Today, advertising has become an indispensable tool of the corporate world. It has undergone a sea change and is moving towards unpredictability. The practitioner cannot really predict the future of advertising. Hence the present study aims at bringing out the various aspects concerned with consumers' perspective on the ethical dimensions of commercial advertisements on Television with regard to the dimensions such as Commercial TV advertisements, product advertisement, and perceptions of Commercial Advertisement in TV, ethical values and unethical practices found in the Commercial product advertisements.

### **Statement of the Problem**

We are in a fast moving world in which business and trade transactions form major part of our lives. Marketers do whatever they can, using different marketing approaches which is applying varied emotional, sexual, spiritual, psychological and many other components in Advertisements, to influence the consumer's perception towards the product or services advertised. As much as these appeals are very successful in advertising campaigns, yet they face many moral and ethical issues. In particular their effects on the youth who are exposed to different visual communications are a major concern. In the present context, marketing and advertising are discourses that reflect and shape cultural values, stereotype norms, and are the central forces that are shaping the international marketing which has the power to persuade and play with the minds of individuals. The main goal of the advertisers is to grab the consumer's attention about a specific good, service, idea or institution. Advertising helps to make the product appealing to a person's basic motives, and influences their behavior and attitude towards the product.

### **Objectives of the Study**

**This study is designed with the following objectives**

1. To review and document the conceptual foundations related to commercial advertisements of consumer goods on television.
2. To analyses the effect of demographical variables in perception of ethical issues in Commercial Advertisements of consumer goods.
3. To study the ethical values present in the commercial advertisements of consumer goods.
4. To find out the unethical practices adhered in commercial advertisements of consumer goods.
5. To evolve a relevant model to explain relationship between the factors that influence Commercial advertisements.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

There is no significant difference between set of demographic variables such as gender, marital status, age, educational status, occupation, monthly income and size of the family and the ethical dimensions of commercial advertisements.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Sampling Design**

The primary data were collected by taking 150 sample respondents with the following random sampling method; accordingly, 50 respondents were identified in South Chennai, 50 respondents from North Chennai and 50 respondents from Central Chennai were identified in each unit. The questionnaire was administered by convenient simple random sampling method. The age group of the respondents was not considered; however, the data was collected from whoever was available at home by issuing the questionnaire. Of the 150 questionnaire issued 138 were collected from the respondents. After scrutinizing it was found that 125 questionnaire were under usable state.

#### **Area of the Study**

The geographical area of South Chennai, North Chennai and Central Chennai was chosen as the Universe. The main reason for choosing Chennai is that the city is the Metropolis, with residence from almost all the states in India. The people of all the classes are exposed to Television.

#### **Period of the Study**

The study covers recent three years i.e. from June 2014 to Sept 2014 for analysis of primary data relating to various aspects of Consumer Perception and opinion towards Ethical Dimensions of Commercial Advertisements on Television. The primary data were collected using a well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered among 150 respondents from heterogeneous group to study their perception and opinion towards the Consumers' Perspective on the Ethical Dimensions of Commercial Advertisements on Television in Chennai City

#### **Research Design**

The Researcher used Descriptive Research Design to study the Consumer perception and opinion towards the Consumers' Perspective on the Ethical Dimensions of Commercial Advertisements on Television in Chennai City. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first part related to general information on socio-economic and demographic details of the Households in Chennai City. The second part related to Opinion of respondents regarding commercial advertisements viewers, modern advertisements appearing in Television, Motivation to buy a particular brand, Factors influencing the person to purchase a particular brand products and the general outlook in a product advertisement. The third part related to Belief statements used for measuring the perception regarding advertising; Brand, Targets on children, Sex posed advertisement, Promotion of materialism, Comparative, celebrity and ethics in advertising.

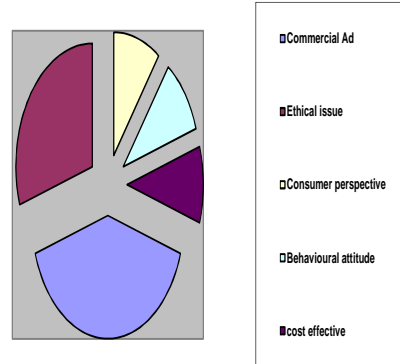
#### **Data Collection**

The study is mainly based on primary data collected from the field survey using *pre-tested* questionnaire. The researcher collected reviews and secondary data from various sources such as research study, survey reports, magazines, News papers, bulletins, annual reports, websites, internet and books. The published research reports and market studies also helped the researcher to probe into the problem.

#### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

##### **a) Consumers' Perspective on the Ethical Dimensions**

<b>Total respondent</b>	<b>= 150</b>
1) Commercial Ad	= 40%
2) Ethical Issue	= 30%
3) Consumer perspective	= 10%
4) Behavioral Attitude	= 10%
5) Cost-effective.	= 10%



### Limitations of the Study

As the study was a Primary and Secondary research, there are certain limitations to the study. In an attempt to minimize errors, qualitative and quantitative research was conducted. However, there were inevitable limitations.

1. The researcher focused only on television commercial advertisements as the medium.
2. The area of the study is also limited to Chennai city only.
3. The study is based on perceptions and hence may vary with time.

### Major Findings

1. With regard to personal profile of the respondents the study reveals that majority of the respondents are female married in the age group of about 21 years and below 50 years, graduates, employed in government/private between Rs.10,000 to 20,000 income with 4-6 members as family size.
2. With regard to time slots majority of the respondents view the commercial advertisements during early fringe and during Prime Time.
3. The factors that most attracted in watching TV advertisements are sense of humor, Theme and presentation.
4. Celebrities' endorsement of a product is the initial factor that motivates the respondent to buy a particular brand.
5. The favorable opinion regarding modern advertisement that advertisement is truthful and ethical.
6. There is significant difference between male and female, married and unmarried, age group, occupation, family income, family size etc.
7. There is association between perceptions of commercials advertisements and level of influence of commercial product advertisements.
8. There is an association between perception of commercials advertisements and level of ethical values and unethical practices.
9. It was inferred that the influence of Commercial Advertisement on female were higher as compared to male.
10. The study shows that people above Age Group 50 were more sensitive to Ethical Issues as compared to people below 20.
11. As regarding to Educational Qualification under the Higher Secondary have more Ethical values than professionals.

### SUGGESTIONS

1. It is inferred that the overall Perception of Commercial Advertisement among the income group below 10000 is higher as compared to the income above 50000.



2. Under the dimensions of influence of Commercial Product Advertisement is higher when their family size is below 3 compared to the Family Size above 6.
3. There is significant relationship between Perception of Commercial Advertisement and Ethical Issues.
4. Children and Youth is most significant factor that extracts influence of Commercial Product Advertisement followed by Public Policy and Economic Implication.
5. The study shows that the sex appeal in Commercial Advertisement is higher among professionals as compared to Students.

### Conclusions

The world of advertising has come a long way. Some people describe it as an untrue, misleading and obscene. Advertising Industry has been facing a lot of criticism in the recent times as the advertising practices have not always been ethical. In today's competitive market, due to free allowances, the advertisers are sometimes following the unethical practices to fight the competition. For many years, the advertising industry has practiced, promoted voluntary self-regulation. Most advertisers and the media recognize the importance of maintaining consumer trust and confidence. Advertising is an important and legitimate means for the seller to awaken interest goods and services. The success of advertising depends on public confidence; hence no practice should be permitted that tends to impair this confidence.

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