

Surrogate advertising assignment

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| SURROGATE ADVERTISING | TERM PAPER SUBMISSION | SUBMITTED

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Advertising has become a big tool for disseminating product Information.

It is being done through different media ??? banners, radio, television & lately the internet. Advertisement in general has also drawn Public ire & government intervention time and again ??? either for moving away from truth and the consumers ' right to know' or for creating false images. This is especially true in the case of surrogate advertisements. The issue of surrogate advertisement gained publicity after the government imposed a ban on it.

The purpose of this project is to highlight & discuss the same. THE CONCEPT OF SURROGATE ADVERTISING Even after the ban, liquor companies continued to advertise their drinks in the form of surrogate advertisements. In this type of advertisement, a product other than the banned one is promoted using an already established brand name. Such advertisements or sponsorships help in brand building and contribute to brand recall. The product shown in the advertisement is called the ' surrogate. ' The surrogate could either resemble the original product or could be a different product altogether, but using the established brand of the original product. The sponsoring of sports/cultural/leisure events and activities using a liquor brand name also falls in the category of surrogate advertising. Essentially it

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is the advertisement of the items on the negative list, such as tobacco and liquor. The masked creative's leave it to the consumer to read between the lines.

Brand managers call it leveraging on the existing equity of the brand, agencies define it as an exercise in brand recall of products on the negative list, while the government comes down heavily on the intriguing concept of surrogate advertising. With the anti-tobacco lobby going strong worldwide, every country has a negative list of products. HISTORY OF SURROGATE ADVERTISING Surrogate advertisements took off not long ago in the UK, where British housewives protested strongly against liquor advertisements “luring” away their husbands.

The liquor industry found a way around the ban: Surrogate advertisements for cocktail mixers, fruit juices and soda water using the brand names of the popular liquors. In India, the trend of surrogate advertisement gathered momentum with the Cable TV Network Regulation Act, which prohibits tobacco and liquor advertisements on TV channels. The liquor industry has intentionally blurred the line between products, advertising ‘old wine’ in a ‘new bottle,’ only this time with a soft-drink label. CURRENT SCENARIO

After the ban imposed on the 12 advertisements identified as surrogates by the Government of India, and the show-cause notices issued to Star TV, Zee TV and Aaj Tak in 2002 under the provisions of the Cable Television Regulation Act of 2002, the whirlwind of surrogate ads hitting the telly has calmed down to a large extent. Advertisers have started diversifying and

shifted their focus to other advertising avenues which often stretched the concept of brand extension to previously unheard-of levels.

Surrogate advertising though banned is still observed and continued on television, generally seen at places like sports stadiums, art exhibitions in the form of sponsorships of the event. Some of them under close scrutiny of the regulations are McDowell's Mera Number One, Gilbey's Green Label ads, Bagpiper soda water, Kingfisher mineral water, 8PM apple juice, ITC-GTD's (greeting cards division) Expression Greeting Cards, Red & White Bravery Awards and Wills sportswear as they are the titanic advertisers under this category.

ANALYSIS THE SUGAR COATED PILL CALLED SURROGATE ADVERTISING

Infinite numbers of debates ensued with regard to the right to intrude by the government or any public interest groups in the free choices of individuals whether to reduce or ban the consumption of foods that show their ill effects on the health of the people in due course. On one end, it is detested with remarks like the job of marketer is not to make society a better place or to save the world. He is mainly there to sell more and earn good profits for the shareholders in a legal way. There is an ethical question. The government is keen that surrogate advertising does not advertise liquor; to that extent the surrogate advertising is wrong.

But manufacturers have every right to sell the product; further the industry on its own has demonstrated the maturity and sense of responsibility to promote instruments of advocacy of restraint and moderation in consumption of alcoholic products. Society for Alcohol Related Social Policy

Initiative (SASPI) is a self-evident initiative in this direction. Mc Dowell's and Seagram's have undertaken campaigns for responsible drinking. Some others also believe that when the license to set up the industry, manufacture and sale is given, it would be suicidal for the authorities to take a high moral ground and stop the advertisement.

The tobacco and liquor industry provide a major chunk to the exchequer in the form of the Central and State excise and under other tax heads. On the other side, there are few people concerned with the personal and societal costs of unregulated consumption. Very sensitive issues are created on certain these products and statistics are developed on the heavy health costs of various diseases caused because of failure to reduce the consumption of such kind of products. These costs affect everyone as they lead to higher medical costs and taxes.

Thus, even those who don't consume such products are harmed because of unenlightened behavior of others. No one is fooled by advertisements for soda water, mineral water, glasses or casks that are patently too rich in visual and detail for the humble products they claim to advertise. “

Surrogate advertising works because society—you and I??? is prepared to accept lies and it will continue to work as long as you tell me that provided I wink conspiratorially, you are prepared to accept that it's okay for me to lie” is what some say. THE NEED OF THE HOUR

What legislations have to be brought out by the regulatory authority that would create a check on the marketers while promoting and selling of their products? What ethical practices does the marketer need to carry out in

order to create a good image among his customers and also to develop a healthy society? Let us look at this issue from both the perspective. The following measure will go a long way in easing the deadlock seen here: The ASCI should have an unambiguous guideline for differentiating acceptable and unacceptable forms of advertising with respect to surrogate products.

Also the ASCI should be empowered to implement the guidelines and issue penalties for non-conformance. The government needs to take a stand on the issue. It must look beyond having the cake (the advertising ban) and eating (tax revenues). Advertising companies must take pains to understand the nature of the products and market that they are dealing with and must refrain from designing and propagating surrogate brands. AS STUDENTS STUDYING ETHICS AND INDIAN VALUES After applying the various schools of thought and the theories we have opine like many others that the greater good is what should prevail.

Money may drive many a campaign but ultimately what matters is how this means to an end deteriorates societal values as a whole. Alcohol and Tobacco fill kitties of many like the companies, the government, advertising agencies that are paid to cleverly throw mud in the eyes of regulating bodies; but we must remember that all efforts prove to be in vain unless the evil is nipped in the bud. These undesirable products have become such an integral part of the lifestyle of people today that eliminating them completely seems herculean. Never the less the focus should not be on whether we can do away with surrogate advertising or not but on how to empower people to display enlightened behavior when under the influence of Alcohol or Tobacco. This would mitigate the damage done by the rampant surrogate

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advertising done by companies. There is no point in turning them against you, rather involve them in doing the same. Further we also believe that all this needs to be accomplished without the violation of the personal freedom of any individual. Greatest lessons are taught by examples and the government needs to lead these initiatives. It needs to show a no nonsense attitude rather than tolerability in this regard.