

# Socio-economic and ethical implications of advertising ??? a perceptual study ass...

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Socio-Economic and Ethical Implications of Advertising ??? A Perceptual Study Dr. Raghbir Singh\* Sandeep Vij\*\* Abstract Depending upon the public opinion about the social, economic and ethical aspects of advertising, the marketers and the public policy makers should take different stances on how advertising should be treated.

The study has analyzed in detail the public response to the issues like: ' Targeting Children in Advertising', ' Use of Sex in Advertisements', ' Promotion of Materialism through Advertising', ' Use of Comparative Advertising', ' Ethics in Advertising', ' Use of Celebrities in Advertising', ' Economic Effects of Advertising'; and ' Public Policy on Advertising'. The population for the study comprised a sample of 900 respondents, 100 each from the seven North Indian states (Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttranchal) plus Union Territory of Chandigarh and National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Based upon the opinions and beliefs of the public, as revealed by the study, suggestions have been made to the advertisers and the public policy makers. Advertising has played a major role in consumer marketing, and has enabled companies to meet communication and other marketing objectives. Typically, advertising is used to inform, persuade, and remind consumers. It importantly reinforces their attitudes and perceptions. Advertising has been a target of criticism for decades. Advertising has been hailed as a capitalistic virtue, an engine of free market economy, and a promoter of consumer welfare.

Its detractors on the other hand accuse it of an array of sins ranging from an economic waste to purveying of harmful products, from sexism to deceit and manipulation, from triviality to intellectual and moral pollution (Mittal, 1994). Advertising is seen by many as a threat to the cultural identity and self realisation of many developing countries: it brings to many people alien ethical values; it may deviate consumer demands in developing countries to areas which can inhibit development priorities; it affects and can often deform ways of life and lifestyles (Mac Bride, 1980).

Advertising is considered unethical when it degrades rival's product or substitute product, gives misleading information, gives false information, conceals information that vitally affects human life (e. g. , side effects of drugs), makes exaggerated claims, is obscene or immoral or is against broad national interest. While comparative advertising may be considered legal and its widespread use may have granted it acceptance, the debate on whether or not it is ethical, still continues.

There is no unanimity among advertising professionals and marketing clients regarding such questionable practices. However, all agree to one aspect that while considering the question of unethical practices, the focus must be to safeguard the interest of buyers at the micro level and the society at the macro level as their satisfaction is the key to the marketing success. The criticism has been related not only to its intended effects on society, but also to its unintended effects. Most of the criticism has come from " elite" observers of society.

In contrast, the general public has historically viewed advertising in a more positive way. Whereas criticisms of advertising have generally originated from the highest socio-economic classes since the earliest days of the modern marketing era and before, lower and middle class people have historically been more positive toward advertising (Bauer & Greyser, 1968; Fullerton & Nevett, 1986; Steiner, 1976; Zano, 1984). The extent to which these intellectual criticisms reflect more widely held consumer beliefs and attitudes in India is not well known.

Therefore, it is important for advertisers, academicians, researchers and advertising agencies to be concerned about the beliefs and attitudes that consumers have developed about advertising. To understand the Indian public's viewpoints/opinions, this study examines how advertising is perceived in terms of its social, economic and ethical impacts. \* Professor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab (India) E-mail:

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Part I ??? Social Responsibility, Ethics & Marketing Previous Research Beliefs are the foundations of attitudes that consumers form about advertising. Attitudes toward advertising are operationalised and measured by positive or negative beliefs about advertising. Conceptually advertising beliefs and attitudes are different, but because of their direct and close connections, practically they have been treated interchangeably in the previous research. In the past, the perception of the consumers regarding social, economic and ethical aspects of advertising has been measured in the form of beliefs and

attitudes toward advertising. The researchers have tried to measure attitudes towards advertising taking different types of samples. Greyser and Reece (1971) surveyed 2700 Harvard Business Review subscribers in order to examine their attitudes towards advertising. Rotzoll and Christians (1980) investigated 123 employees of four advertising agencies about ethical issues in advertising. Many studies have explored the attitude toward advertising among student samples (Larkin, 1977; Sandage & Leckenby 1980; Dubinsky & Hensel, 1984; Muehling, 1987; Ramaprasad & Thurwanger, 1998).

Zonot (1984) and Mittal (1994) studied attitudes towards advertising among adult consumers. Zhou, Zhang, and Vertinsky (2002) conducted a telephone survey of 825 consumers in five major cities in China. As the importance of international trade and advertising increased, many scholars extended the scope of their studies to cover international consumers. Santos (1976) studied Latin American consumers. Andrews, Durvasula, and Lysonski (1991) examined the attitudes of subjects from Denmark, Greece, the USA, India and New Zealand.

Yoon, Muehling, and Cho (1996) compared attitudes towards advertising between Korean and American consumers. Ramaprasad and Thurwanger (1998) measured attitudes towards advertising among five South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Yang (2000) investigated college students' attitudes towards advertising in Taiwan and compared it with US experience. Bauer and Greyser (1968) conducted a landmark study under aegis of Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) sampling some 1800+ U.

S. households. They identified two distinct effects of advertising; viz. Economic and Social . They found that majority of consumers have a favorable view of the economic but an unfavorable view of the social role of advertising. As per their study, no identifiable large demographic group in the population was distinctively more interested in, favorable to or critical of advertising than any other large demographic group. However many studies have shown that respondents differed in attitudes by demographics.

Durand and Lambert (1985) indicated that attitudes toward advertising are moderately related to respondents' age, gender, income, and education. Andrews (1989) found that students viewed the social aspects negatively and the economic aspects positively. Some studies found that students had generally negative attitudes towards advertising (Haller, 1974, Larkin, 1977). Greyser and Reece (1971) have made a survey of 2700 HBR subscribers and suggest that businessmen respect advertising as a selling tool but are increasingly uneasy about other aspects, such as its truthfulness and social impact.

Reid and Soley (1982) found that there is a significant difference between people's generalized and personalized attitudes toward advertising's social and economic effects and that people are more negative on the personalized than generalized attitude level toward both type of advertising effects. Female students found advertising more offensive and felt it used too many sexual appeals (Dubinsky & Hensel, 1984). Petroschius (1986) found that female students had a more favorable attitude towards the institution of

advertising while male students had a more favorable attitude toward the ethics of advertising.

Private university students were found to have a more critical view of advertising's social effects than state university students (Andrews, 1989). Lysonski and Pollay (1990) found that among business students, Danish, Greek, and New Zealand students were more critical than American students and that female were more critical than males of the sexist portrayal of women in advertising. Zhou, Zhang, and Vertinsky (2002) investigated the relationships among demographic variables and experiences, beliefs, and attitudes.

They found that younger consumers have more positive beliefs and attitudes toward International Marketing Conference on Marketing & Society, 8-10 April, 2007, IIMK 46 Part I ??? Social Responsibility, Ethics & Marketing advertising and those with higher levels of education tend to have more positive attitudes and beliefs. Initiative Media and BBC World (2002) conducted a study on consumers' attitudes towards advertising in India and its relevance to media. They found that positive attitude towards advertising is more prevalent amongst women, middle and lower social class.

Larkin (1977) administered 26 Likert-type statements to 80 college students to measure their attitude toward advertising along four different dimensions: economic effects of advertising, social effects of advertising, ethics of advertising and regulation of advertising. Semenick, Zhou, and Moore (1986) have investigated the attitudes and beliefs held by Chinese managers regarding various economic and social aspects of the use of advertising. Hite

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and Eck (1987) conducted a study to determine the consumers' and manufacturers' attitudes with regard to advertising directed toward children.

The results indicated that consumer respondents have more negative attitudes regarding advertising directed toward children, and for that matter of advertising in general, than did respondents from the business firms. Consumers reported significantly greater disagreement with there being nothing ethically wrong with advertising targeted at children, and that advertisers do not have the right to advertise to whomever they want because of freedom of speech.

It is interesting to note that both the business firm respondents and consumers agree that companies should be held liable for deceptive and unfair advertising; that parents should discuss with children the purpose of advertising; and tell the difference between a television program and a commercial. Wilkie (1990) agrees that advertising has both positive and negative aspects but they do not apply to all advertisements. He has listed the " seven sins" charged by advertising's critics.

Olson (1995) has compiled a list of unintended negative effects of advertising and described these effects in terms of eight criticism categories, drawing on the writings of many social scientists and humanists. Abideen and Muraleedharan (1998) focus on some aspects of unethical practices in advertising used by different advertising agencies and marketing clients. The study reveals that more than three fourth (76%) of the consumers believe that most of the advertisements appearing in mass media contain one or



more unethical or deceptive practices. These practices are seen more in product advertisements than in service advertisements.

**Methodology Objectives** The study aimed to fulfill the following objectives: 1. To explore the perception of consumers regarding social, economic and ethical aspects of advertising. 2. To suggest the implications of socio-economic and ethical beliefs regarding advertising for the marketers and public policy makers. **Participants and Procedure** The population for the study comprised the general public from seven North Indian states (Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttranchal) plus Union Territory of Chandigarh and National Capital Territory of Delhi.

A sample of 900 respondents comprising 100 from every State/U. T was selected on the basis of convenience sampling. The data has been collected personally with the help of a well structured and non-disguised questionnaire. The perception of the respondents regarding 50 belief statements concerning socio-economic and ethical aspects of advertising has been measured. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement with each statement on five point Likert scale. A list of these statements with their labels has been reproduced in Table 1.

After scrutiny of the filled questionnaires, 873 were found to be fit for analysis; others were incomplete or lacked seriousness in response and hence weeded out. People from all strata of society were included in the study to make the sample more representative. Table 2 gives the description of demographic characteristics of the respondents. The data has been

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analyzed with respect to sex and age of the respondents. International Marketing Conference on Marketing & Society, 8-10 April, 2007, IIMK 47 Part I ??? Social Responsibility, Ethics & Marketing

Analysis and Discussion This section provides the detailed analysis and interpretation of the public responses to the issues as given below: 1) Targeting Children in Advertising 2) Use of Sex in Advertisements 3) Promotion of Materialism through Advertising 4) Use of Comparative Advertising 5) Ethics in Advertising 6) Use of Celebrities in Advertising 7) Economic Effects of Advertising 8) Public Policy on Advertising On all of the above issues, the overall, sex-wise and age-wise responses of the public have been presented in the tables.

To find out the level of agreement/disagreement with different statements on the basis of sex and age, weighted average scores have been calculated. Weights 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 have been given to the responses 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' respectively. Hence, a higher score indicates greater agreement with a statement than a lower score. Following discussion elaborates the predisposition of the respondents toward these specific aspects relating to socio-economic and ethical criticism of advertising.

Targeting Children in Advertising Table 3(a) shows the responses of the respondents regarding statements relating to targeting of children in advertising. It is clear that 36.7 per cent of respondents agree and 12.8 per cent strongly agree with the statement B28 (Most advertising distorts the values of our youth). About one third of respondents are neutral about this

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statement. Majority of the respondents agree with statement B29 (Advertising stifles the creativity in children). Only 10.3 per cent respondents disagree with this statement. 58. per cent of the respondents agree with statement B33 (Advertising plays an important role in educating children about what products are good for them). Overall, 52.3 per cent of the respondents agree with statement B34 (Targeting children through advertising is highly objectionable). 78.6 per cent of the respondents agree with statement B42 (Advertising leads children to make unreasonable purchase demands on parents). About half of the respondents agree with statement B49 (Most parents are not concerned about the advertising directed at their children). 1.2 per cent agree with statement B50 (There should be a law to control the advertisements targeting children). Table 3(b) shows overall, sex-wise and age-wise Weighted Average Scores (WAS) for the belief statements relating to targeting of children in advertising. The table reveals that the highest agreement is for statement B42 (WAS= 4.03) followed by B50 (WAS= 3.88) and B29 (WAS= 3.70). Sex-wise analysis reveals that there is not much difference between both the sexes so far as level of agreement with respect to different statements is concerned.

Age-wise analysis shows that the respondents belonging to higher age groups have higher level of agreement with respect to statements B42, B34 and B49, while those from age group of less than 25 years have higher level of agreement with statement B33. Thus, the analysis shows that advertising provokes children to make unreasonable purchase demands on parents. Though advertising helps in educating children about products, yet most

advertising distorts the values and stifles the creativity of children. Some parents are not concerned about advertising directed at their children.

However, many agree that targeting children through advertising is objectionable and overwhelming majority of respondents feel that there should be a law to control the advertisements targeted at children. Use of Sex in Advertisements Table 4(a) shows the responses of the respondents regarding statements relating to use of sex in advertisements. The table reveals that 64.5 per cent of respondents agree with statement B23 International Marketing Conference on Marketing & Society, 8-10 April, 2007, IIMK 48 Part I ??? Social Responsibility, Ethics & Marketing (There is too much sex in advertising today).

A large majority (71.2%) agrees with statement B32 (It is wrong for advertisers to use sex in advertisements). Only 45 per cent of respondents agree with statement B36 (Scantly clad women make advertisements attractive). Majority of the respondents (75.5%) agree with statement B41 (Advertisements should always show women in a respectful manner). 69.5 per cent of public agree with statement B46 (Law should prohibit sexually suggestive advertisements). Table 4(b) shows the overall, sex-wise and age-wise weighted average scores for the belief statements relating to use of sex in advertising.

It has been revealed that the highest agreement is for B32 (WAS= 3.96) and B41 (WAS= 3.96) followed by B46 (WAS= 3.91) and B23 (WAS= 3.74).

Least agreement is for statement B36 (WAS= 3.28). Sex-wise analysis of the responses does not reveal much difference in the level of agreement in

males and females regarding these statements. Age-wise analysis also shows almost same level of agreements for all the age groups. However, level of agreement with statements B41 and B46 increases with the age.

Thus, the majority of the public does not think that scantily clad women make advertisement attractive. The public agrees that there is excessive sex in advertising nowadays. They condemn the advertisers for using sex in advertisements and suggest that advertisements should show women in a respectful manner. There is strong support for legal prohibition of sexually suggestive advertisements. Promotion of Materialism through Advertising Table 5(a) shows the responses of the respondents regarding statements relating to promotion of materialism through advertising.

The table reveals that 52.1 per cent respondents agree with the statement B5 (Advertising persuades people to buy things they should not buy). 57.4 per cent respondents agree with statement B11 (Advertising is making us a materialistic society, overly interested in buying and owning things). 55.9 per cent public agree with statement B15 (Advertising makes people buy unaffordable products just to show off). 63.3 per cent of respondents agree with statement B22 (Advertising makes people live in a world of fantasy).

Majority of respondents (65.9%) agree with statement B24 (Because of advertising, people buy a lot of things they do not really need). Only 48.2 per cent of public agree with the statement B35 (Advertising leads to a waste of natural resources by creating desires for unnecessary goods). Table 5(b) shows the overall, sex-wise and age-wise weighted average scores for the belief statements relating to promotion of materialism through

advertising. The table depicts that highest agreement is for B24 (WAS= 3. 72) followed by statements B22 (WAS= 3. 5), B11 (WAS= 3. 64), B15 (WAS= 3. 53) and B5 (WAS= 3. 45) respectively. Least agreement is for the statement B35 (WAS= 3. 36). Sex-wise analysis reveals that females have higher level of agreement for all of these statements; as compared to the male respondents. Age-wise analysis shows that level of agreement for different age groups is not much different regarding the statements relating to promotion of materialism through advertising. Thus, respondents are moderately negative about the promotion of materialism through advertising.

They blame advertising for making people buy a lot of things they do not really need. Majority of respondents feel that advertising makes people live in a world of fantasy and it is making us materialistic society, overly interested in buying and owning things. Use of Comparative Advertising Table 6(a) shows the responses of the respondents regarding statements relating to use of comparative advertising. The table reveals that 59. 1 per cent of the respondents agree with statement B37 (Advertisements depicting comparisons with competitor's brands are more useful). Only 44. per cent public agrees with statement B39 (In general, comparative advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised). 27. 1 per cent of them disagree and 28. 8 per cent are neutral about it. 49. 7 per cent of the respondents agree with the statement B43 (Advertising one brand against another is offensive and objectionable). About 20 per cent of them disagree with the statement and about 30 per cent feel neutral about it. International

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Table 6(b) shows the overall, sex-wise and age-wise weighted average scores for the belief statements relating to use of comparative advertising. The table indicates that the highest agreement is for statement B37 (WAS= 3. 56) followed by B43 (WAS= 3. 41) and B39 (WAS= 3. 26). Sex-wise analysis reveals that male respondents have higher level of agreement for statements B37 and B39 as compared to females. Age-wise analysis shows that respondents in age group greater than 50 years have a relatively higher level of agreement with statement B39 as compared to other age groups.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that majority of the public is not averse to use of comparative advertising and they feel that advertisements depicting comparisons with the competitors' brand are more useful. Ethics in Advertising Table 7(a) shows the responses of the respondents regarding statements relating to ethics in advertising. The table depicts that only 38. 5 per cent of the respondents agree with statement B3 (In general, advertising is misleading). 57. 5 per cent public agrees with statement B26 (Some products/services promoted in advertising are bad for our society). 5. 9 per cent of the respondents agree with statement B40 (Most of the advertisements appearing in mass media are unethical and deceptive). A large majority (71. 8%) agrees with statement B44 (A judicial regulatory body should be there to enforce ethics in advertising). Only 33. 1 per cent respondents agree with statement B47 (Advertising portrays people the way they really are). Approximately same percentage (32%) of the

respondents disagrees with it. Table 7(b) shows the overall, sex-wise and age-wise weighted average scores for the belief statements relating to ethics in advertising.

The table shows that the highest agreement of respondents is for statement B44 (WAS= 3. 94) followed by B26 (WAS= 3. 56), B40 (WAS= 3. 38), B3 (WAS= 3. 20) and B47 (WAS= 3. 04). Sex-wise analysis shows that the male and female respondents have almost same level of agreement with these statements. Age-wise analysis also shows the similar levels of agreement for all of the age groups. On the basis of this analysis, it can be inferred that public does not agree much that advertising portrays the people the way they really are. There is moderate agreement that advertising is misleading, deceptive, unethical and bad for our society.

But there is a high degree of consensus among the respondents that a judicial regulatory body should be there to enforce ethics in advertising. Use of Celebrities in Advertising Table 8(a) shows the responses of the respondents regarding statements relating to use of celebrities in advertising. The table reveals that 59. 8 per cent of respondents agree with the statement B30 (Celebrities should be used in advertisements). 73. 2 per cent respondents agree with statement B38 (Endorsement by celebrities in advertising increases the cost of the products). About half of the respondents (50. %) agree with statement B48 (Celebrities are used in advertising to mislead the consumer). Table 8(b) shows the overall, sex-wise and age-wise Weighted Average Scores for the belief statements relating to use of celebrities in advertising. The highest agreement of respondents is for



statement B38 (WAS= 3. 93) followed by B30 (WAS= 3. 59) and B48 (WAS= 3. 44). Sex-wise analysis of statements regarding use of celebrities in advertising shows that both the sexes have similar levels of agreement with these statements. Age-wise analysis reveals that level of agreement for statement B30 decreases with the age.

Thus, it can be concluded that majority of the public agrees that celebrity endorsement increases the cost of the product. Though they agree that sometimes celebrities are used to mislead the consumer yet most of them want that celebrities be used in advertising. Economic Effects of Advertising Table 9(a) shows the responses of the respondents regarding statements relating to economic effects of advertising. The table reveals that 86. 8 per cent of respondents agree with statement B2 (Advertising is valuable source of product information). 61. per cent respondents agree with International Marketing Conference on Marketing & Society, 8-10 April, 2007, IIMK 50 Part I ??? Social Responsibility, Ethics & Marketing statement B8 (Advertising helps raise our standard of living). 63. 2 per cent agree with statement B9 (Advertising results in better products for the public). But only 30. 9 per cent respondents agree with B16 (In general, advertising results in lower prices) while 38. 7 per cent disagree with this statement. 61. 4 per cent respondents agree with statement B20 (In general, advertising helps our nation's economy). Only 31. per cent public agrees with statement B21 (Mostly, advertising is wasteful of our economic resources). About two third of respondents (75. 4%) agree with statement B25 (In general, advertising promotes competition, which benefits the consumer). But only about one third agree with statement B31 (In general, brands that are advertised are

better in quality than brands that are not advertised). Table 9(b) shows the overall, sex-wise and age-wise weighted average scores for the belief statements related to economic effects of advertising. Respondents' highest agreement is for statement B2 (WAS= 4. 9) followed by B25 (WAS= 4. 01). They have moderate degree of agreement for statements B20 (WAS= 3. 66), B9 (WAS= 3. 64) and B8 (WAS= 3. 63). Most of the respondents are neutral to the statements B31 (WAS= 3. 08), B21 (WAS= 2. 91) and B16 (WAS= 2. 81). Sex-wise and age-wise analysis discloses that different sexes and age groups do not differ much so far as the level of agreement with statements relating to economic effects of advertising is concerned. Thus, the above analysis brings out that public finds advertising as valuable source of information.

They think that advertising benefits the consumer by promoting competition and resulting in better quality of products. They do not concur that advertising results in lower prices. At the same time, however, they do not find it wasteful of economic resources. Rather they strongly feel that advertising helps our nations' economy. Public Policy on Advertising Table 10(a) shows the responses of the respondents regarding statements relating to public policy on advertising. The table reveals that 71. 8 per cent of the respondents agree with the statement B44 (A judicial regulatory body should be there to enforce ethics in advertising). 7. 1 per cent of the respondents agree with statement B45 (A legal limit should be placed on the amount of money a company can spend on advertising). 69. 5 per cent of the respondents agree with the statement B46 (Law should prohibit sexually suggestive advertisements). 71. 2 per cent of the respondents agree with

the statement B50 (There should be a law to control the advertisements targeting children). Table 10(b) shows the overall, sex-wise and age-wise weighted average scores for the belief statements related to public policy about advertising. The highest agreement of respondents is for statement B44 (WAS= 3. 4) followed by B46 (WAS= 3. 91), B50 (WAS= 3. 88) and B45 (WAS= 3. 75). Sex-wise analysis reveals that females have higher levels of agreement with the statements as compared to males. Age-wise analysis shows that respondents in the middle age group (25 - 50 Years) have higher level of agreement with statement B44 as compared to respondents of other age groups. It is also evident that level of agreement for statement B46 increases with the age. Thus, there is 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. Conclusions and Suggestions The overall analysis of socio economic and ethical aspects of advertising reveals that public is highly critical of social aspect and highly appreciative of economic contribution of advertising.

Public is not against the comparative advertising and endorsement of products by the celebrities. Most of them want celebrity endorsements and comparative advertising to be used in advertisements. However, an overwhelming majority of respondents wants legal restrictions to be imposed

upon the way advertisements are presented and public policy makers should take a cue International Marketing Conference on Marketing & Society, 8-10 April, 2007, IIMK 51 Part I ??? Social Responsibility, Ethics & Marketing from it while framing the media laws in India.

Depending upon the public opinion about the social, economic and ethical aspects of advertising, the marketers and the public policy makers should take different stances on how advertising should be treated. 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.

There is a strong case for stringent public policy initiatives regarding socially sensitive issues in advertising. Though the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) ' Self Regulatory Code' for television advertisements has been made mandatory for the cable T. V. channels; and some isolated provisions in different Acts regulating the advertisements relating to tobacco, liquor and targeting of children are there, these are not sufficient. Secondly, public is least aware about these isolated provisions. Unscrupulous advertisers blatantly violate these provisions through surrogate advertisements and other means.

Therefore, it is recommended that a comprehensive ' Indian Advertising Regulation Act', applicable to all media; should be passed by the Parliament and a judicial regulatory body ' Advertising Regulatory Authority' should be

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established to 'enforce the provisions' of this Act and to 'spread the awareness' among the consumers about the provisions of the proposed Act. An important implication of public beliefs about socio-economic and ethical effects of advertising is that consumers' predisposition (positive or negative) is determined by these belief factors.

Research has proven beyond doubt that 'attitude-toward-advertising-in-general' is one of the important antecedents of 'attitude-toward-the-brand', which, in turn, affects the purchase decision of the consumer. So, it is suggested that marketers should remain in touch with the expectations, perceptions, and opinions of the public for presenting socially acceptable advertisements before them. It is the task of the industry to help people to like advertising. Industry should alleviate the reservations in the minds of consumers about the cultural consequences of advertising.

Therefore, advertisers should integrate diverse needs and values into the planning and execution of their advertising campaigns. An examination of the results presented in this study by the industry may lead to a better understanding of the general opinion of the Indian consumers about the social, economic and ethical aspects of advertising. References Abideen, E. P. Sainul and Muraleedharan, K. P. (1998). Ethical and Social Issues in Advertising. *Abhigyan*, 16 (4), October-December, 39-41. Andrews, J. Craig (1989). The dimensionality of beliefs toward advertising in general.

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Table 1. Belief Statements Used for Measuring the Perception Regarding Advertising LABEL B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7 B8 B9 B10 B11 B12 B13 B14 B15 B16 B17 B18 B19 B20 B21 B22 B23 B24 B25 B26 B27 B28 B29 B30 B31 B32 B33 B34 B35 B36 B37 B38 B39 B40 B41 B42 B43 B44 B45 B46 B47 B48 B49 B50 BELIEF STATEMENT Advertising is essential. Advertising is valuable source of product information In general, advertising is misleading. Quite



often advertising is amusing and entertaining. Advertising persuades people to buy things they should not buy. Most advertising insults the intelligence of the average consumer.

From advertising I learn about fashions and about what to buy to impress others. Advertising helps raise our standard of living. Advertising results in better products for the public. Advertising tells me what people with life styles similar to mine are buying and using Advertising is making us a materialistic society, overly interested in buying and owning things Advertising tells me which brands have the features I am looking for. Advertising promotes undesirable values in our society Sometimes I take pleasure in thinking about what I saw or heard or read in advertisements Advertising makes people buy unaffordable products just to show off.

In general, advertising results in lower prices Advertising helps me know which products will or will not reflect the sort of person I am. In general, advertisements present a true picture of the product advertised. Sometimes advertisements are even more enjoyable than other media contents In general, advertising helps our nation's economy. Mostly, advertising is wasteful of our economic resources Advertising makes people live in a world of fantasy. There is too much sex in advertising today. Because of advertising, people buy a lot of things they do not really need.

In general, advertising promotes competition, which benefits the consumer Some products/services promoted in advertising are bad for our society. Advertising helps me keep up to date about products/services available in the market place. Most advertising distorts the values of our youth.

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Advertising stifles the creativity in children. Celebrities should be used in advertisements. In general, brands that are advertised are better in quality than brands that are not advertised. It is wrong for advertisers to use sex in advertisements. Advertising plays an important role in educating children about what products are good for them.

Targeting children through advertising is highly objectionable Advertising leads to a waste of natural resources by creating desires for unnecessary goods. Scantly clad women make advertisements attractive. Advertisements depicting comparisons with competitor's brands are more useful.

Endorsement by celebrities in advertising increases the cost of the products. In general, comparative advertising presents a true picture of the product advertised. Most of the advertisements appearing in mass media are unethical and deceptive. Advertisements should always show women in a respectful manner.

Advertising leads children to make unreasonable purchase demands on parents. Advertising one brand against another is offensive and objectionable. A judicial regulatory body should be there to enforce ethics in advertising. A legal limit should be placed on the amount of money a company can spend on advertising Law should prohibit sexually suggestive advertisements. Advertising portrays people the way they really are. Celebrities are used in advertising to mislead the consumer. Most parents are not concerned about the advertising directed at their children.

There should be a law to control the advertisements targeting children

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IIMK 54 Part I ??? Social Responsibility, Ethics & Marketing Table 2.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Number of Respondents	Age	Sex	Occupation	Education	Other	Income	Family Type	Religion																																														
Up to 25 years	25-50 years	Above 50 years	Male	Female	Business	Service	Student	Housewife	Retired	Any	Other	Post Graduation and above	Graduation Matric or Undergraduate	Below Matric	Any	Other	Income	Below Rs. 10,000 p. m.	Rs. 10,000-20,000 p. m.	Rs. 20,000-30,000 p. m.	Above Rs. 30,000 p. m.	Family Type	Joint Family	Nuclear Family	Religion	Hindu	Sikh	Muslim	Christian	Others																								
368	418	87	458	415	109	354	267	100	26	17	308	238	192	10	35	459	274	86	54	349	524	673	118	52	13	17	Percentage	42.2	47.9	10.0	52.5	47.5	12.5	40.5	30.6	11.5	3.0	1.9	35.3	37.6	22.0	1.1	4.0	52.6	31.4	9.9	6.2	40.0	60.0	77.1	13.5	6.0	1.5	1.9

Table 3(a). Statement-Wise Responses Regarding Targeting Children

Label	B28	B29	B33	B34	B42	B49	B50	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree																																											
112	12.8	154	17.6	164	18.8	172	19.7	268	30.7	97	11.1	251	28.8	320	36.7	412	47.2	350	40.1	284	32.4	418	47.9	354	40.5	371	42.5	302	34.6	217	24.9	222	25.4	284	32.5	146	16.7	279	32.0	165	18.9	106	12.1	69	7.9	108	12.4	112	12.8	30	3.4	122	14.0	67	7.7

Table 3(b). Targeting Children (Weighted Average Scores on the Basis of Sex and Age)

Label	B28	B29	B33	B34	B42	B49	B50	Overall
Males	3.7	3.74	3.55	3.58	3.96	3.47	3.88	3.38
Females	3.49	3.65	3.62	3.50	4.11	3.41	3.88	3.38
A1	3.44	3.67	3.52	3.57	4.11	3.43	3.94	3.38
A2	3.44	3.67	3.52	3.57	4.11	3.43	3.94	3.38
A3	3.56	3.74	3.40	3.70	4.13	3.63	3.87	3.38

Responses Regarding Sex in Advertisements Label B23 B32 B36 B41 B46

Strongly Agree 247 28. 3 361 41. 4 107 12. 3 279 32. 0 307 35. 2 Agree 316  
36. 2 260 29. 8 287 32. 9 380 43. 5 299 34. 2 Neither Agree nor Disagree  
184 21. 1 147 16. 8 288 33. 0 126 14. 4 175 20. 0 Disagree 92 10. 5 68 7. 8  
127 14. 5 75 8. 6 69 7. 9 Strongly Disagree 34 3. 37 4. 2 64 7. 3 13 1. 5 23 2.  
6 Table 4(b). Sex in Advertisements (Weighted Average Scores on the Basis  
of Sex and Age) Label B23 B32 B36 B41 B46 Overall 3. 74 3. 96 3. 28 3. 96 3.  
91 Males 3. 73 3. 86 3. 38 3. 87 3. 84 Females 3. 76 4. 08 3. 18 4. 05 4. 00  
A1 3. 67 3. 80 3. 32 3. 88 3. 74 A2 3. 80 4. 11 3. 22 4. 00 4. 02 A3 3. 79 3. 93  
3. 41 4. 08 4. 13 Table 5(a). Statement-wise Responses Regarding Promotion  
of Materialism Label B5 B11 B15 B22 B24 B35 Strongly Agree 153 17. 5 206  
23. 6 204 23. 4 161 18. 4 205 23. 5 124 14. 2 Agree 302 34. 6 295 33. 8 284  
32. 5 392 44. 9 370 42. 297 34. 0 Neither Agree nor Disagree 262 30. 0 247  
28. 3 214 24. 5 198 22. 7 181 20. 7 252 28. 9 Disagree 95 10. 9 101 11. 6  
112 12. 8 94 10. 8 86 9. 9 170 19. 5 Strongly Disagree 61 7. 0 24 2. 7 59 6. 8  
28 3. 2 31 3. 6 30 3. 4 International Marketing Conference on Marketing &  
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Marketing Table 5(b). Promotion of Materialism (Weighted Average Scores on  
the Basis of Sex and Age) Label B5 B11 B15 B22 B24 B35 Overall 3. 45 3. 64  
3. 53 3. 65 3. 72 3. 36 Males 3. 40 3. 61 3. 45 3. 61 3. 61 3. 29 Females 3. 0  
3. 67 3. 61 3. 69 3. 85 3. 44 A1 3. 42 3. 60 3. 53 3. 63 3. 68 3. 30 A2 3. 50 3.  
68 3. 51 3. 66 3. 75 3. 41 A3 3. 33 3. 61 3. 63 3. 63 3. 77 3. 40 Table 6(a).  
Statement-wise Responses Regarding Comparative Advertising Label B37  
B39 B43 Strongly Agree 128 14. 7 119 13. 6 116 13. 3 Agree 388 44. 4 266  
30. 5 318 36. 4 Neither Agree nor Disagree 229 26. 2 251 28. 8 270 30. 9

Disagree 102 11. 7 194 22. 2 146 16. 7 Strongly Disagree 26 3. 0 43 4. 9 23  
 2. 6 Table 6(b). Comparative Advertising (Weighted Average Scores on the  
 Basis of Sex and Age) Label B37 B39 B43 Overall 3. 6 3. 26 3. 41 Males 3. 66  
 3. 35 3. 40 Females 3. 45 3. 15 3. 43 A1 3. 56 3. 23 3. 41 A2 3. 57 3. 26 3. 41  
 A3 3. 51 3. 36 3. 40 Table 7(a). Statement-wise Responses Regarding Ethics  
 in Advertising Label B3 B26 B40 B44 B47 Strongly Agree 84 9. 6 179 20. 5 93  
 10. 7 251 29. 9 77 8. 8 Agree 252 28. 9 323 37. 0 307 35. 2 366 41. 9 212  
 24. 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree 346 39. 6 223 25. 5 326 37. 3 192 22. 0  
 305 34. 9 Disagree 140 16. 0 102 11. 7 135 15. 5 39 4. 5 228 26. 1 Strongly  
 Disagree 51 5. 8 46 5. 3 12 1. 4 15 1. 7 51 5. 8 Table 7(b).

Ethics in Advertising (Weighted Average Scores on the Basis of Sex and Age)  
 Label B3 B26 B40 B44 B47 Overall 3. 20 3. 56 3. 38 3. 94 3. 04 Males 3. 14  
 3. 52 3. 38 3. 92 3. 11 Females 3. 27 3. 60 3. 39 3. 96 2. 97 A1 3. 15 3. 53 3.  
 88 3. 73 3. 05 A2 3. 28 3. 57 3. 38 4. 10 3. 05 A3 3. 07 3. 61 3. 40 4. 03 2. 99  
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 IIMK 57 Part I ??? Social Responsibility, Ethics & Marketing Table 8(a).

Statement-wise Responses Regarding Celebrities in Advertising Label B30  
 B38 B48 Strongly Agree 143 16. 4 261 29. 159 18. 2 Agree 379 43. 4 378 43.  
 3 282 32. 3 Neither Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree nor Disagree 224 105  
 22 25. 7 12. 0 2. 5 164 50 20 18. 8 5. 7 2. 3 249 154 29 28. 5 17. 6 3. 3  
 Table 8(b). Celebrities in Advertising (Weighted Average Scores on the Basis  
 of Sex and Age) Label B30 B38 B48 Overall 3. 59 3. 93 3. 44 Males 3. 61 3.  
 93 3. 46 Females 3. 57 3. 93 3. 43 A1 3. 73 3. 89 3. 40 A2 3. 52 3. 96 3. 50  
 A3 3. 33 3. 91 3. 34 Table 9(a). Statement-wise Responses Regarding

Economic Implications of Advertising Label B2 B8 B9 B16 B20 B21 B25 B31

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Strongly Agree 399 45. 221 25. 3 165 18. 9 83 9. 5 200 22. 9 120 13. 7 314  
 36. 0 81 9. 3 Agree 359 41. 1 318 36. 4 387 44. 3 187 21. 4 336 38. 5 152  
 17. 4 344 39. 4 236 27. 0 Neither Agree nor Disagree 88 10. 1 186 21. 3 194  
 22. 2 265 30. 4 219 25. 1 253 29. 0 147 16. 8 274 31. 4 Disagree 23 2. 6 82  
 9. 4 94 10. 8 157 18. 0 73 8. 4 225 25. 8 50 5. 7 233 26. 7 Strongly Disagree  
 4 0. 5 66 7. 6 33 3. 8 181 20. 7 45 5. 2 123 14. 1 18 2. 1 49 5. 6 Table 9(b).  
 Economic Implications of Advertising (Weighted Average Scores on the Basis  
 of Sex and Age) Label B2 B8 B9 B16 B20 B21 B25 B31 Overall 4. 9 3. 63 3.  
 64 2. 81 3. 66 2. 91 4. 01 3. 08 Males 4. 23 3. 69 3. 64 2. 87 3. 62 2. 97 3. 97  
 3. 09 Females 4. 36 3. 56 3. 64 2. 74 3. 70 2. 85 4. 07 3. 07 A1 4. 34 3. 65 3.  
 70 2. 90 3. 64 2. 82 4. 06 3. 13 A2 4. 26 3. 61 3. 59 2. 73 3. 70 2. 94 3. 98 3.  
 06 A3 4. 24 3. 60 3. 62 2. 84 3. 52 3. 11 4. 01 2. 94 International Marketing  
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 Regarding Public Policy Label B44 B45 B46 B50 Strongly Agree 261 29. 9 204  
 23. 4 307 35. 251 28. 8 Agree 366 41. 9 382 43. 8 299 34. 2 371 42. 5  
 Neither Agree nor Disagree 192 22. 0 178 20. 4 175 20. 0 165 18. 9 Disagree  
 39 4. 5 81 9. 3 69 7. 9 67 7. 7 Strongly Disagree 15 1. 7 28 3. 2 23 2. 6 19 2.  
 2 Table 10(b). Public Policy (Weighted Average Scores on the Basis of Sex  
 and Age) Label B44 B45 B46 B50 Overall 3. 94 3. 75 3. 91 3. 88 Males 3. 92  
 3. 68 3. 84 3. 88 Females 3. 96 3. 82 4. 00 3. 88 A1 3. 73 3. 61 3. 74 3. 81 A2  
 4. 10 3. 83 4. 02 3. 94 A3 4. 03 3. 92 4. 13 3. 87 International Marketing  
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