

THE UNDERLYING SECRETS OF ADVERTISING

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The Malayalee, who sleeps on Kohinoor branded bed spread over with Bombay dyeing bed sheet suddenly wakes up hearing the shrill ringtone of his Viva cell phone. Next he picks up the Colgate brush and applies close up toothpaste and goes for brushing. Then he applies parachute coconut oil, froths up the fragrant lux soap and take a bath under jaguar shower. Afterwards he drinks the Kanan Devan tea mixed with Amul milk powder and eats Nirapara puttu. Then he wears his VIP, Crocodile, Levis and Bata and rides away in his Honda bike to his workplace... This is the routine of modern branded malayalee.

Our world has become a brand. Swami Vivekananda has once defined Kerala as Branthalayam (Mental asylum). Today, we can call it 'Brand Alayam' (Abode of brands). Companies wage war at each other to conquer the market. It is the middle class and the poor who suffer in this war. Malayalee, who still cling to the brands, despite being injured by them, are the real ambassadors of this 'Brand Alayalam'. Our society flaunts accessories of vanity and becomes the ambassadors of Brands.

Kerala has become the most fertile land for advertisements. Malayalee doesn't realize that the advertisements are actually aiming at inducing you to buy what others reject.

In fact, advertisements are creating demand. G K Galbreath says "In earlier times, trend was to manufacture according to the demand. Today it has changed. Demand is created first, and then goods are manufactured accordingly. What is important is to make according to demand". Advertisements are actually doing this purpose.

Advertisements convince the people that satisfaction can be attained only by consumption. Advertisements taste success by creating a consumerist culture here. Like Onida's old tagline 'Neighbors envy'. It says you must have all these things if you want your neighbor to envy you. You can taste satisfaction by seeing him envy you. The one who does not cater to the newness of the market is 'old' and outdated. He is a failure. Advertisements uphold a trend of looking at him as uncultured. Today's advertisements declare that you can become 'modern' only if you grab a new product launched in the market. Let us make an attempt to catch a glimpse of the secrets of the advertising world.

The Psychology behind

The science has proven that our thoughts, emotions and activities are the result of very complicated chemical actions and electric movements. It is proven by FMRA scan that when one watches an advertisement, blood flow in some parts of his brain increases. When he sees that product again while shopping, amygdala in brain is stimulated. Along with it, many nostalgic thought recur in his memory. It might be romantic or a flow of emotions or musical feeling. Whatever may be, we buy the product.

A major portion of mental activities happen in the unconscious mind. It is influenced by our childhood experiences, conditions and genetic factors. When we see a branded product, our unconscious mind is influenced by the advertisement images, wordings or persons that are related or not related to us. This is what happens when Cricket player Virat Kohli says “Boost is the secret of my energy”. We begin to think that we must drink Boost to become like Kohli. It especially influences children. We blindly believe the words uttered by Sachin. We, who have actually come to the shopping store to buy other things, will say in our heart: ‘Boost’! That is the power of advertisements.

Same thing happens when actor Mohanlal says, “What is the use of keeping gold at home?” in the advertisement of Manappuram Gold. When we plan to buy something, the visual or voice of our favorite actors will come to our mind. Our love for them by which our unconscious mind is influenced, will induce us to buy certain products.

Brand Ambassadors

Even though we know that celebrities like Sharukh Khan, Sachin, A R Rahman, Mammooty and Mohanlal are becoming brand ambassadors of these advertisements for the sake of money, we often become puppets. Naomi Clean, the famous activists and journalist says, “A very famous brand pays more amount to its brand ambassador than it pays to its employees a whole years”.

According to Duff & Phelps celebrity brand valuation report Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli emerged as the top celebrity endorser for the second year in a row in the 2018. He has a brand value of 1187 crores, the cricketer currently endorses around 30 brands. He is the brand ambassador of Puma, Hero Motocorp, Boost, Volini, Colgate, audi, MRF Tyres, Vicks, Uber India, Philips, Valvoline. Similarly, actor Deepika Padukone chose to endorse Tetley Green Tea, which promotes a healthy lifestyle. Padukone emerged as the second-most popular celebrity endorser of 2018. With a 712.6 crores brand value, Padukone endorses 21 brands. Akshay Kumar, with a 445 crores brand value occupies the third position in 2018. Ranveer Singh occupied the fourth spot in the ranking, with a brand value of 440.2 crores. Shah Rukh Khan, who was at the second spot in 2017, slipped to the fifth position in 2018. His brand value took a beating and was down 43% at 426.2 crores, compared to 2017.

In a study conducted by Cyber media in leading cities of India, 80 % of the people said that even though they forget the brand they still remember the celebrity. Besides, it was proven that the product endorsed by celebrities is chosen over the others. This is how things are going. But remember one thing: These celebrities are just repeating the lines which the ad agencies prepare for money. It is upto us to verify the authenticity of their words before buying them.

The advertisers are spending huge amount of money for hiring these celebrities. They are not spending money for nothing. The money spent for advertisement is regained by the sale of product. Three years ago, 600 ml of a branded soft drink cost Rs. 18. Now it is Rs. 30. If you compare between a traditional hair oil brand and another hair oil brand backed up by huge advertising, you can know this. Ingredients are the same. The brand with advertising back will cost three times than the traditional brand. They include the expense of advertisement also in the cost.

Marketing tactics

If we attempt to reveal the secrets behind the advertisement, the clean image of ads will be lost. One strategy implemented by the ad providers is to attract the customers by offers. 'Gold coin in a soap', they say. Even if they didn't get a gold coin in the first purchase, they will keep purchasing again and again in search of luck. One sees a gift coupon attached with a tea packet. Offers include home appliances. When he scratches the coupon, he sees '1 re discount!' He doesn't realize that he is actually cheated!

Only later does one realize that the trap is in the * symbol (3.25 lakhs*). The trap of 'Terms and conditions'. It will be written that this offer is applicable only in certain main cities and it is for those who are ready to exchange, insurance coverage is excluded etc. The customer will stand stupefied. Then, the finance person will enter the scene with loan offers.

Jewellery ads give an impression that 'gold is everything.' There is an overflow of advertisements of jewellery showrooms. Gold rate is constantly increasing; but there is no break for jewellery ads. Meanwhile, the issue of 'making charges' is heated up. Celebrity actors like Dileep, Jayaram, Mukhesh and Revati become the ambassadors of these ads. Some say 4, others say 5. We will realize the fact behind these ads only when we reach the jewellery. The making charge mentioned in the ad will be applicable only for certain designs. Or it could be the starting price of certain models. 'Anyhow we have come, let us buy something' will be our attitude. And the Malayalee buys gold with no offer.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), which is supposed to ensure the purity of gold, is manipulated by some jewellery to cheat the customers. They sell non-hallmarked gold ornaments along with a limited number of BIS hallmarked ornaments. Gold ornaments ranging from 9 to 23 carats are BIS hallmarked. So, you need to ensure the presence of BIS 916 on the ornaments. In fact there will be five emblems on a BIS hallmarked gold ornament: BIS, a Code indicating purity 916 – 22 carat, 875 – 21 carat, 750 – 18 carat, 585 – 14 carat and 375 – 9 carat and so on. The Code of Hallmarking agencies (Govt. approved agencies). The year of hallmarking, the code of Jewellery showroom for which it is hallmarked. Hope you have understood it is not so easy to choose the right gold.

Pure gold is 24 carats. But, this will get broken easily. It is not conducive for making ornaments. Hence, it is blended with other metals (copper, silver or cadmium) in order to make ornaments. Jewellers say that cadmium is too rarely used for this purpose. If cadmium usage exceeds the stipulated amount, it can even cause deadly diseases like cancer.

White for success in life

This is how the story of an advertisement of a famous cosmetic brand. The ad presents a father and his daughter. The daughter applies for the job of air hostess. When they arrive for the interview, the comment of the receptionist about her skin disheartens them. Now the fairness cream comes to her rescue and it changes her life forever. She becomes fair in week, and she obtains the job. Already many debates have taken place in our society about the wrong message this ad gives. This ad has two impacts on the society. One: that dark skin has no beauty. Two: you need to be fair to taste success in life.

The fairness cream company has gained 15 to 25 percent increase in sales. The transformation of the dark-skinned girl into a fair girl is represented in the label of the product. The dark side is gloomy, but the fairer face is happy. The company knows that once they use it, they will use it again and again. Dermatologists say that excessive use of fairness creams can reduce the melanin from the skin and leave indelible black marks over there. Despite these warnings, we use them excessively. The

increase in sales has inspired the companies to introduce fairness cream for men. Everyone knows that it is neither dark skin nor fair skin that decides one's success. The lives of APJ Abdul Kalam, A R Rahman and Nelson Mandela are perfect testimonies to this fact.

Sex symbols

New trend is to introduce women as sex symbols even in the ads where a female model is not necessary. Studies say that such ads primarily influence teenagers and children. They are wrongly influenced. We know how the liquor companies tackled the ban of advertising. They, instead, created ads of bottled water and soda with the same brand name.

We can see in ads that half naked women chasing young men who uses a particular deodorant. Likewise are the ads of two wheelers. Barely clad woman must sit behind the man riding a bike. Cigarette companies conduct sports and entertainments in the name of their brands. And they are doing these things with the product with the warning 'cigarette smoking is injurious to health'!

Children are targeted

One third of Indian population is children below 15 years. In the world population, children constitute 18%. The statistics indicates that major target of Indian market is children. In earlier days, products for children were targeting their parents. But today, they are targeting children themselves.

Children are the models today for not only for products for kids, but even for the adults. Children are big influencing forces. Children will compel their parents to buy the products seen in the ads. They do not know if the product is beneficent or not.

Another danger is to misguide them by fantasy visuals. Children will try to imitate them and end up injured or even worse. Ads of fast food, junk food and snacks cause obesity among children. Not only obesity, these snacks full of fat and sugar can cause mental and physical problems to the kids. Toffee with added fruit flavors will decrease the liking for real fruits.

In a study conducted among children who watched TV continuously and those who did not, it was found out that those who watched too much of TV took more time to read a book or solve mathematical puzzles.

Spending too much time in front of television will distance a child from the world of realities. He will lose the world full of fun and laughter. He will be adamant to get whatever he sees on the TV. He never cares about the financial status of his family. Only solution for this issue is to put a control over watching TV and to educate him about the financial status of the family.

It is easy to influence children. By trapping the kids, the ads put their parents too. A study published in 'The journal of Pediatrics' indicate thus: "26% of parents give to their children what they watch in the ads aired along with cartoon programmes."

In the clutches of the Monster

We know that media is inevitable for broadcasting advertisements. Newspaper, Television, Radio and internet are the main media. These media have already been in the clutches of the monster named advertisements. Consequently, these media hides any news that is against these ad providers. Media often falls prey to paid news and secret contracts.

Innumerable media ventures are rushing in search of advertisements. They will create any low standard strategy to increase their rating and circulation. The content is sensationalized.

Words of Y. P. Hallen, a former member of Press Council, are still relevant: “The media persons desire to report responsibly and honestly. But, often they cannot. In certain circumstances, they are forced to withdraw the stories they have written. Some of them resign or are expelled. Today there are two kinds of media persons: First: Those who do not believe in the principles of media. They have no complaints, and they live happily. The second type of people really desire to be good journalist. They are dissatisfied with today’s system”.

There are situations in which the media persons themselves have to find out advertisements. The barrier between editorial and marketing is becoming wafer-thin. If you cannot find advertisements as per your target, you will be expelled from the job. Thus, ads reach us in the form of news. Poor common man thinks and believes that these are real news.

Go for the essentials

The advertisements have succeeded in making us complain about what we do not have, looking at others. In order to rise to the status of others, we try grab new products and technologies. Very often, we become puppets of advertisements. The only way out is to think prudently and choose prudently what we really need.

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