

# CULTURE - In Focus

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## **FOREWORD**

The book titled “Culture-In Focus” is a work that tries to view the representation of “Culture” in the popular advertisements. The manner in which Indian Culture and traditional practices are viewed are analysed. The work focuses on the various mode of influence of the advertisements on the lives of the people.



## ***Culture - In Focus***

Culture is an umbrella term, though we use it in different contexts, the commonly understood idea behind culture is the way of life, belief system and related attributes followed by a particular ethnic group or society. The way we understand culture varies from the way we focus on the idea of culture. There are mainly two forms, in which people view culture. The first manner in focus is when a person views another culture, through the lens of an objective observer, of which he/she is not a part. On the other hand the second focus is a kind of subjective view wherein the individual views the culture of the community of which he/ she is a part.

In terms of product endorsement, the clear understanding of a cultural background of the target audience is of vital importance. The humorous tale of the detergent advertisement, can be a real good example to highlight on the necessity to understand the concept of culture

and its significance in the field of advertisements. Once an American company decided to market its detergent in the Middle East, in order to popularize the product, the company sought a popular advertisement agency in the west to create the advertisement. In order to simplify the advertisement and make it clear to the target customers, the company placed bill boards in various places in the chosen cities. The bill board carried a clear message. The first picture showed a dirty white shirt, the second picture a bucket with the detergent and the shirt being soaked in it and the final picture showed the shirt that is tidy in sparkling white.

To the shock of the company, there was no progress in the sales of the product, which lead the group to do a study on the reason for the failure of the product. The end result of the study, gave some clear insights. The product was of good quality, but the advertisement was to be blamed for the failure of the product.



In the Middle East, the reading pattern was right to left, backward reading, unlike the English script. This cultural variation was not understood by the advertisement agencies which lead to the creation of the advertisement that as per the understanding of the target customers conveyed the message in the reverse mode. That is, if a clear white shirt is soaked in the detergent advertised in the bill board, it would spoil the shirt, resulting in a dirty stained shirt. Of course , this is a humourous manner, in which the cultural variation has been highlighted.

Advertisements can be compared to air, it is present everywhere. Whether you are waiting in the bus stand for the bus, or you are awaiting the arrival of your friend in the railway station, you can see and hear it in all places. It is almost omnipresent in the digital era. If you are watching the television programs there is an advertisement that interprets and tells you to consider buy a product or service. If you want to view a video in the Youtube there again you can find you will have

to go premium to block the advertisements. Even if you do not want to watch, the advertisements are all around you. Many might recall the times, when the advertisements have captivated you better than the videos that you have watched. This is basically because of two reasons. The advertisements are short and developed after considerable research. The psychology of the human behavior and observation is focused and then the advertisements are developed. Hence the colour pattern, background and the interest generated for the seconds required for the advertisements to play, creates good impact on the minds of the viewers.

The advertisements try to reflect the lives of the consumers and try to fix their product into their life. The real life situations are recreated so that the viewers are able to relate to the situation. The advertisements are the wagons that promote the product and aids in the escalation of the sales. Hence, the companies are eager to invest for the cause for advertisements, which includes various

aspects that analyse the society. The pulse of the society is reflected in the screen because if the concepts go against the accepted or appealing norms of the society, the advertisement would fail miserably leading to the disgrace of the concern and the product. Hence, one fact that could be understood clearly from the popular reception of the product's advertisement is that when the society accepts a concept, it is a sign of social acceptance and approval, at least by the majority of the viewers.

The marketing strategy of the products is decided after a clear study of the possibility of the product promotion. Celebrity endorsement, humourous appeal, emotional appeal and logical appeal are some of the methods used by the advertisement agencies, when they develop the advertisements.

The emotional appeal is employed especially in the advertisement of products related to marriage, insurance, nutrition and health

drinks. These products are greatly connected to the cultural and traditional lifestyles of the communities. The advertisement companies try to clearly identify the emotional factors attached to these aspects.

Especially in the Indian context the notion is nutrition is conveyed through the mother and child bonding. The health drinks, biscuits and baby food product advertisement are examples for this kind of advertisement. In terms of the biscuit advertisements, the main focus is on the nutrition quality of the biscuits. The advertisements promise good health and body function and increase of stamina as a result of the components included in the preparation of the product.

These are several reservations on the quality of these products, because the preservatives are used as part of the preparation process. The educated masses have inhibitions about these kinds of snacks, even the revolution of the nature

based products are in vogue. That is not the case with the uneducated masses. They blindly believe the content of advertisements. Beguiled by the advertisements, some people believe that their children would get good nutrition if the kids eat the biscuit regularly. The colonial mindset of that prevails even today, the products from the unknown background are viewed as good for health and energy. The example of the people depending on the biscuits and making the children forgo the nutritious meals is a good example of this scenario.

The advertisements emphasis on the concern of the mother's to feed nutritious breakfast to their children. The advertisements on the nutrition content of the biscuits have created an idea in the minds of the less privileged society, that the packed food can be quite beneficial for the children.

In reality, though the less expensive food items are more beneficial to the children. The

mothers fed on the roti made of wheat atta or rice, while they spend extra money to buy the biscuits to feed their children for the breakfast. According to the uneducated masses, they tend to generally believe that the statements told in the media are true, which also holds good for the advertisements.

The advertisements of the tooth paste in the earlier decades focused on influencing the native crowd to abandon their traditional modes of oral cleaning and use the toothpaste. The earlier modes of oral hygiene mostly depended on herbal products like the neem twigs, charred paddy husk, the usage of salt and charcoal was quite common. The advertisements played a prominent role in creating the idea that these kinds of methods used by the native people are primitive in nature. Hence, the main purpose of the advertisements was to instill the idea that they have to change in order to be modern.

The basic persuasion was based on the idea; don't use salt or charcoal, use the toothpaste.

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As times change by the notions change as well. There was a steady increase in the number of people who switched from the traditional form of oral cleansing modes to the toothpaste. Decades later there was a wave of awareness about the merits of the herbal products and awareness about the goodness of the traditional lifestyle. When this phenomenon was in vogue, there developed awareness about the leaning of the people towards the herbal paste products and traditional products. In order to capitalize on this phenomenon, these same companies that advertised on the need to modernize reversed the trend and came up with the idea of back to tradition.

This is a good example of how the advertisement strategies work in promoting the products. Here again, a aspect to note is that some prominent companies use advertisement only to introduce the products, due to their prominent brand name, they are able to sell their products without the aid of the advertisements.

This can be clearly seen in the case of prominent institutions, hospitals and companies. Truly stated by the popular Tamil proverb “Poo Kadaiku Vilamparam Thevaiya” , stand good in some cases. On the other hand when the companies are newly created and sometimes when the established companies come up with innovative products, there is a requirement to create awareness. When the companies have to generate interest among the consumers about the valuable nature of the product the final resort of the companies are definitely advertisements.

The advertisement are essential for the promotion of the product by the companies and the prospective consumers get the details about the product and are able to compare the various options available to them. The increase in the number of options available to the customer is widely known through the advertisements; hence these advertisements indirectly contribute for the quality improvisation of the product.



On the other hand, there are certain negative aspects attached to the advertisements as well. The customers choose the products based their quality; this can be assessed in terms of the products that are frequently used like the detergent, dish wash bar and fabrics. While the products like the electronic goods are purchased once in awhile, the durability of the same cannot be checked by the buyers like the daily use products. Hence it can be noted mainly with the electronic gadgets, the major focus is on the quality, rather than the humourous or the emotional appeal.

A major issue of concern is the food products and the body care products. These two items fall under the daily use products, but the chances of the consumers to analyze the quality of the same is very limited. The common layman has very limited provisions to assess the standards of these products and choose them. Despite the increase of competition in this particular product area there are many instances, in which

the poor quality products are popular and widely purchased.

Here again, the government agencies monitoring the quality control of the products aid the public to be aware of the security standards. At times certain news items really shock the consumers, as it reveals the kind of traps they fall into, in terms of the quality and efficiency of the products. Even the food products have been banned for the presences of deadly chemical which are highly hazardous to health. The companies have to follow ethics and stay true their claims made in the advertisements of their products, being ethical can take the companies and their products to great heights.

When the advertisements claim more than what the products really contains, then the reality is that these advertisements instead of promoting the product lead to the quick downfall of its market value, as advertisement with false claims create negative impact about the product, in the minds of the viewers.

When the products not commonly used in the Indian households are introduced, the advertisements of the products focus on the Indian cultural scenario. Especially the products like the dishwasher are new to the Indian households and it is essential to convince prospective customers about the suitability of the product for the Indian kitchen. Here again, the emotional appeal blended with the logical approach is used. In case of dishwasher, there are no other opponents, because in the traditional Indian households, mostly the work is done manually. Hence the focus of the advertisement is to highlight that the device would save time and cleaning capacity is effective.

The advertisement strategies vary from company to company and also product to product. An interesting story about the advertisement strategy used by a cola company gives insights into the different marketing strategies employed to popularize the product and increase the sales. The main competition in the soft drinks market

was prominently between Pepsi and Coca-Cola. The Coca-Cola in order to increase the sales focused on the factors that give advantage to their opponent, the result of this research study came in with an interesting twist. The company identified that the real opponent to the focused for the increase of the sales was not Pepsi, but water. Yes, when the provisions for the water purifier machines were available, the sales of the soft drinks were less. Hence the company decided to install the cola vending machines in all the nook and corners of the city, hence they tried to improve their revenue.

The attraction factor, accessibility and consumer support are vital for the long standing success of the product. In order to understand the customer mentality and lifestyle the advertisement companies carry out elaborate research. They use several strategies such as survey method, comparative study of the available products, the possible alternatives used by the customers, the expectations of

customers in terms of the new alternate product and the possible challenges the company would face in the initial stage of introduction. The toilet clearing liquid is quite popular in the Indian household; on the other hand the availability of the bathroom floor cleaning liquid until late was not quite a popular in the market. Hence, the company felt before introducing the new product, the bathroom cleaning liquid, they had to identify the opponent which had to be first studied, in order to develop the marketing model. Through research it was identified that the alternate products used by the people was the detergent. The main reasons identified were that it suited the purpose of cleaning, was easily available and cost effective. Hence, the advertisement of this new bathroom cleaner, clearly addressed the questions that would arise in the minds of the viewers.

Here again, the domestic duties done by the people in the house is focused, mostly in the Indian households, the domestic chores are done

by the women folk, hence most of the domestic products are endorsed by the women models. The traditional kind of attire and the features seen in the common people are purposely brought into the part of the advertisement to increase the appeal.

The Cadbury advertisement which showcases the women cricketers' achievement being celebrated by her partner is a clear example of how the society is slowly recognizing the talent of women in the arena of sports. The Women World Cup Matches unlike the World Cup Matches played by the men's team has lesser viewership. The gender based discrimination causes hurdles for many to explore their hidden potential. As children most of us take interest in sports, but once we reach teenage there is slow phase in which the interest in sports escalates or dwindles. The social condition plays a major role in motivating the individuals to pursue or shun sports.

In terms of the advertisements related to sports there is clear depiction of masculinity being associated with sports, the role of feminine is mostly as the admirers. Hence, the advertisements of the sportswear, sports shoes and related items in many cases are keen on depicting famous men celebrities as their models.

There are prominent women sports person but in many cases the products they endorse are not specifically meant for the stamina or sports based. Mostly the women celebrities and sports persona are seen as brand ambassadors of banking and hygiene products. Here again it can be noticed that the attention received by these women sportsperson is that of a celebrity, not especially of a sports celebrity.

The advertisement field gives more importance to the sportspersons who are into popular sport in the region like cricket. It can be clearly seen the other sports not much is vogue are not given prominence, it is unfortunate, that the Indian players of international acclaim

of various sports are not popular in their own homeland.

The case with the traditional and the ethnic sports are also the same; these kinds of sports are not popular among the urban population, hence the representation is also less. If the advertisements give space for the regional sports it would aid to increase its popularity.

The marketing strategy used by the multinational company is based on the idea of the needs of the Indian customers and their cultural backgrounds. In order to portray the culture of the target customers, the advertisements focus mainly on some key elements. These elements are used to relate with the viewers and create an impact on their minds. The most prominently focussed aspects are mentioned as follows:

Landscape

Traditional attire

Prominent Festivals

Ancient buildings



Art forms of the region in focus

Traditional food recipes of the region

The domestic household settings

The members in a family

Joint family system

Festivals

Providing new outlooks

Depiction of the body language of the natives

Connecting with the situations

Especially when the focus is on the domestic products, the members who appear in the advertisement would appear in the traditional costumes. The popular advertisement of a detergent has creatively used the art form of Bharatanatyam to endorse the idea that the detergent powder is effective on both white as well as the colour fabric, the jibe used for the advertisement is used as the song for the dance, “which emphasises that the white clothes will stay white and the colour clothes will stay bright”.

The viewers recall this advertisement because of the usage of the cultural background, the choreography of the sequence of the grandmother and the granddaughter dancing to the same song in their unique ways, adding to the idea of incorporating culture to the modern era. The strong message conveyed through the advertisement is that the detergent can be very effective with any kind of fabric used in the Indian families, including the old age people to the young children.

Mostly the companies from abroad that launch the product ensure to convince the viewers about the adaptability of the product for the needs of the Indian customers. In order to make the readers view their advertisement more often they bring in popular celebrities of the region and lay focus on the suitability of the product for their daily usage.

In terms of the online shopping, the companies faced a severe challenge at the initial level due the restricted number of users who

were efficient with the electronic gadgets. Once the population became adept in the gadget usage, the online shopping started to thrive, but still they faced certain challenges, in the domestic market. The language of the website and the applications was English, hence the customers not comfortable with the language stayed away due to the language barrier. This problem was solved, when they companies realised the need to have the content in the regional languages as well.

When they planned to convey this news to the viewers instead of telling that the content is available in the regional language, they use a diplomatic tactics to get the emotional bonding of the viewers.

The advertisement focused on the traditional items like “Ammikal”, “Thotil”, “Kiluku”, which are prominently seen in the Indian households, the main motive was to convey that anything you need for any occasion would be available in the website.

Again the consumers, especially from the rural areas have the idea that the online shopping website and apps are to be used only when bulk purchases are made or when the goods are quite costly. This notion again is a hindrance for the increase in sales, hence the company used the humorous appeal to create awareness on their easy to buy policy and specifically they highlighted on the delivery options.

Highlighting the native culture in the positive light is clearly seen in the advertisements that are related to the companies from abroad, which are trying to establish their market in India. They try to focus on the commoners view and chose models who look ethnic and traditional. Most of the women in these advertisements wear the traditional costumes of the region, “Saree” in case of South India and “Salwar” in case of North India. When the company tries to market the product throughout the nation, they mostly try to focus on creating a pan India appeal.

On the other hand, in terms of products that would replace an Indian product that has been in use for a long period of time, like Indian sweets and snacks, the advertisement tactics vary. The purchases of these products are high during the festival seasons, which are connected with the cultural practices of the region. For example, Diwali is a popular festival celebrated throughout the nation, and the noted aspect of this festival is “light and sweet”- Diwali- is well-known as the festival of lights, and sharing sweets with the family and friends is the tradition followed by the people from times immemorial.

When the multi-national chocolate manufactures had to establish the market, they began with the sales of the chocolates commonly consumed by the children. There the task was easy for them because they replace the traditional sweets by increasing the availability of their sweets and it was easy because the traditional sweets did not have a strong form of company marketing. Second method was to influence

the teenage people and they used the valentine message as the model for the same. Here again, when they wanted to claim the festival market, they faced certain challenges. The domestic market has the traditional sweets in abundance, hence celebrity advertisements could not get them great yield.

Hence, by creating advertisements that focussed on the bond between the family members the advertisement gained popularity. The emotional appeal was the success mantra. Here we need to rethink on how even educated people are not using their critical thinking skills, rather they go by the popular notions in the society.

The introduction of the plastics into the Indian geographical space has caused serious disasters to the nation and its environmental sustainability. It might be shocking to know, that, the purpose of the introduction of the plastics was to prevent environmental damage. There was a

need to depend on paper for the carry bags, and to meet the required demand the cutting down of the trees lead to the reduction of greenery. Hence, when the easy to make, cost-effective and handy product when introduced in the market, there was a huge welcome. Decades later the society had to pay the price and ultimately the government had to impose a ban on the usage of plastics. The institutes which contributed to the production of this product itself had to declare themselves as plastic free, in order to be accepted as environmental friendly campus.

Like the case of the plastics, the consumers are lured into the habit of using various products, which have traditional replacements. The “Back to Manjapai” Campaign can be seen gaining momentum in the form of jute bags used by the college students, young and old working professionals as well.

Advertisements are in various forms like media advertisements, print advertisements

which include newspaper advertisements and advertisements circulated in the form of pamphlets. Above all the most appealing mode of advertisement that is most coveted by any company is the endorsement by their valuable customers. This is the backbone of for any thriving business.

Many prominent establishment and institutions have thrived without the backing of the so called professional advertisements- purely by their upkeep of quality standards. Even today, despite the great emphasis on media advertisements there are establishments that have not bothered to go in for advertisements to endorse their product quality. Here again, the supporting aspects for this advertisement is that they have thrived in the market for a long period of time and that gives them an edge over the other establishments of recent origin. The brand name of the company holds good for the sales and promotion.



The traditional goods such as “Manapaari Muruku”, “Uthukulli Venai”, “Marudai Jikarthanda”, “Uppala Maillanchi”, “Kozhikode Alwa”, “Ooty Varki”, “Tirunelveli Alwa” are some of the popular brands which have been popular among the public, for a very long time, even without the aid of the professional advertisements. The youngsters in the same trade have utilized the popularity of the YouTube and other social media networking to popularize these products. Unless otherwise the new generations are oriented about the traditional value and health benefits of the native products, there is definitely the danger of these products vanishing from the market.

The advertisement in various forms have been popular from times immemorial, even in the classic texts, the notion of advertisement appears in different forms. The archaeologists have retrieved bill boards as early as 11th B.C. The papyrus was used for the purpose of creating the bill boards.

The human bill boards were popular during the earlier centuries, the people would be paid wages on a daily basis and then they would carry around the bill board so that the people in the town get to know about the particular product. As times went by, similar to the case of the ban on human drawn carts, based on the ethical standards was also the case with the human bill boards. Hence nowadays, the method of advertisement of human bill boards have stopped, but still their presence can be seen in various forms. The hotels and restaurants on the national highways and famous tourist spots use their employees to hold boards with details of menu for lunch and breakfast to lure the travellers to visit their establishments. The small scale eateries and restaurants depend on this method to sell their products and services. The empathy felt by the public for the employees of these small establishments is also a factor that allures more customers.

Thomas J. Barratt popularly known as “the father of modern advertising” rightly pointed out that the consumer mentality changes as times pass by, it is vital to understand the customer view point before creating advertisements. Hence in order to stay in production the advertisements should also be dynamic. A clear idea about the needs of the customers and their mentality should be known by the producers of the advertisements.

“Tradition and individual choices” - When it comes to the choice of individuals, the traditional values upheld by them matters to a good extend. When a person sees an advertisement, the message conveyed is related by the viewer, associating it with their own idea of that particular concept. Hence, advertisements try to focus on the positive aspects generally seen in a particular culture.

Replacing of a tradition item is never mentioned explicitly; rather the new product

is presented as an additional aspect that would make the event, occasion or day-to-day life easier.

Especially in terms of occasions associated with marriage like the engagement, mehendi ceremony and wedding, there are lot of purchases done by both families of the bride and the groom. Even the families greatly depend on the matrimonial sites for the purpose of match-making for their children. When it comes to the expectations regarding the family in terms of the Indian scenario, the preference for the bride / groom from the same community is highly preferred. This scenario can be clearly seen in the matrimony advertisements, the study done by these companies have led to the creation of the advertisements that gives a clear idea of the service for the specific communities.

Though world has become a global village due to the digitalization, it is a fact that that the conservative mentality regarding the caste and religion still prevails in the society. There are

advertisements that depict inter-caste, inter-religious and even couples from various national and ethnic background in advertisements of other products, but this when used in the matrimony advertisements would not be appealing to the viewers as their belief system differs from these ideas.

At the same time, the westernization of the wedding pattern can be clearly seen in the Indian scenario, the celebrity wedding being ideal examples for the same. India is noted for its cultural diversity and rich heritage; especially the food cuisine and the Indian attire have even captivated the western world. Many international celebrities have recorded their admiration for the Indian food and rich attire. So, it is evident that replacing these two aspects would be really difficult for the products that are quite not popular in the land.

The advertisements have made this possible, but endorsing the products in appealing

manner. Decades ago the desserts served in the Indian wedding was the traditional ones, but nowadays, the popular dessert is ice-cream. Similarly, the traditional wear for the bride and groom were the traditional saree for women and dhoti and “ankavasthrm” for the groom. Now the traditional wear is slightly undergoing transformation, where in the fusion of other garments are incorporated.

The traditional dhoti is remodeled with additions for the sake of comfort and even the fabrics used have undergone mixing of different fabrics. The case is no different with the wedding sarees. Customarily the brides use to wear the traditional attire of their region, mostly handmade accessories and handloom fabric for the wedding occasion. In Tamil Nadu, Kooru pudavai, usually in red colour was generally worn by the bride during the wedding, and it was considered as auspicious. The same phenomenon is true with the Kasavu saree of Kerala and the case is similar with many states.

Gradually there occurred a change, though it was at a slow pace, which finally has given way to the rise of bridal silk sarees. There are numerous shops that popularize their brands through the advertisements in the visual media, print media and also through flex boards. Since these advertisements are telecasted often, the idea of the wedding attire in the minds of the youngsters has been fixed as the ones they view in the advertisements.

Today, there is a wide awareness about the need to revive the tradition and cherish the ethnicity. Many parents would have observed that, the children even during traditional festive occasions show a liking towards the western wear, it is mainly because the advertisements have influenced them. During the traditional festivals, the educational institutions and other organizations encourage their students and employees to come in traditional attire. This practice is a welcome move so that the tradition is kept alive.

The changes in the daily wear attire of the commoners are also clearly seen, for which again the advertisements have played a key role. The white cotton fabric was commonly used as the daily wear by the people decades ago. It was not dyed and was skin-friendly as well as environmental –friendly. Women wore the cotton sarees, mostly handloom, which was suitable for the climatic conditions. The advent of the new versions of mixed fabric and artificial material based fabric which was comparatively of less cost than the traditional fabric, brought in the change. The introductory offers give by the companies add to the sales of the product as well.

The practice of the photo shoot was commonly done only during the wedding event, which was mainly to recollect the memorable occasion and remember the relative and friends who graced the occasion with their presence. The commercialization of the wedding related photo shoot have extended their arena, nowadays,



the photo shoots are held during engagement, prior to the wedding, baby shower, mark the date before the wedding, trailers are created and circulated in the social media. This trend is quite admired by the youngsters but the parents especially from the middle-class families find it difficult to make the ends meet. These kind of added expenses make the lives of the common people really difficult. Even the pregnancy photo shoots are gaining popularity, which again is an added expense for the parents, in many cases.

The advertisements by the jewelry stores are predominant in India, as gold is an unavoidable aspect in the Indian festivals. The festival of Akshaya Tritiya, also known as Akti or Akha Teej is a auspicious occasion during which new ventures are started. Originally during this festival people use to deposit money, visit temple, buy new utensils, gold and silver jewelry and do charitable activities like donating food, helping poor children pay their fees and offer special prayers. The idea of this festival has undergone

a change due to the impact of the advertisements of the jewelry shops.

Now before and during Akshaya Tritiya, the jewelry shops try to lure the customers to purchase gold on the auspicious day. Hence it has developed as a trend in the society. Gold has been a fascination for the people from times immemorial. Especially the buyers for gold in the Indian market for the domestic use are very high. In the case of many other nations, gold is mainly used for investment, but the increase in the gold price happens to be concern for the common man and women in India. Especially the parents of the girls in the twenties are keen observers of the rise in the gold prices.

The jewelry shops have to thrive and definitively they face tough competition due to the increase of numerous jewelry shops. In most of the advertisement of jewelry shops, the models wear heavy jewelry and appear rich and attractive. This image of the bride covered in

gold represents the idea of beauty for the young viewers. There are a few viewers for whom this advertisement could be a picture of stress because accumulating the expected amount is a pain for the parents in financial difficulty.

In terms of the traditional savories also, replacement was done by the western companies. The biscuit which was totally unknown to the native crowd is quite popular and is widely available in all the nook and corners of the nation. The practice of consuming tea with biscuit has become an accepted trend, not only in the official events but also in the traditional functions.

In terms of the gifts during the birthday functions, wedding ceremonies and other events in the family, the kind of gifts given was utility based. The trend of gifting flowers and cakes is an encroachment of the western culture, which has clearly replaced the traditional model of gifting. The celebration of the birthdays was a family

affair, which was done in a traditional manner; it used to be an occasion when the traditional food would be served, usually in the afternoon.

The western trend of having the birthday party in the evening or night is again a western influenced idea, which has become a custom. Consumption of alcohol which was not prevalent during the family functions such as birthdays, due to the western influence, the practice is seen in the parties in the current scenario. In the western world, the practice of alcohol consumption during along with food was mainly done in order to enhance the digestion in the cold climatic conditions of the nation. The geography and the climatic conditions of India is not the same as the western countries.

The manner in which people appreciated each other, the body language; vocabulary choices are also influenced by the exposure to the media. The advertisements at times try to highlight the problems in the society, like

the discrimination faced by the downtrodden, the need for appreciation by the children, the expectations of the family and friends are all focused in the advertisements. Relations and maintaining contact with them can help people stay connected with their roots, the telecom companies are thriving by exploring on this emotional appeal. The captions of the advertisement of the mobile phones and telecom companies stand proof to this statement.

Many advertisements are developed around the bonding between the parents and the children. The problems of the age old people are also addressed in advertisements; they also suggest the possible solutions to the same.

The famous commercials on Indian television take into account the empathetic perspectives of their target audiences and adapt their messages accordingly. In order to connect with the audience, aspects of Indian culture and tradition are frequently used in advertisements.

The advertisements' portrayal of culture and tradition of a particular region helps in popularizing it as well. At times, it even leads in the increase of the tourists to that particular region.

The commercials for the food items of foreign origin like pizza, sandwich, burger and noodles focuses on the festive occasions associated with the Indian tradition. The Indian family scenario is used as the forum to introduce the idea of companionship and sharing affection. In the case of noodles, the cost and time-effective nature of the preparation is hinted at and highlights that it is ideal for instant celebration. This commercial tries to bring in the native aspects of Indian tradition, such as hospitality and sharing bonds with family and friends. The target groups are children and teenagers; hence this particular commercial tries to convince the purchasers of these goods, usually the mothers who decide on the monthly purchase list. The marketing tactic used by the brands that focus mainly on foreign

food items is the appeal created towards the bonding of children and parents.

By focusing on the mentality of the parents on the well-being of their wards, certain advertisements are created. Especially the products meant for the children. The habit of using diapers for the babies was unknown among the commoners' decades ago, but today it has become a mandate commodity in every household that has babies. The traditional practice followed was to use the cotton material to prepare diapers for the babies. The eco-friendly and skin –friendly white cotton materials was used as diaper, which would be reused after washing and drying in the hot sun. The fabric which is mild enough to be torn using the bare hands was used for the purpose. In order to sanitize the fabric natural herbal items with antibiotic properties were used.

When this practice was in vogue the wastage produced in case of the diapers was nil and hence

it was cost-effective and environmental friendly. The extensive usage of the diapers and the poor waste management issue are posing a real threat to the humans and the environment.

The usages of the diapers for children in the western countries are mainly due to the climatic conditions, which is not the case with the Indian scenario. The increase in the use of diaper for the babies is mainly due to the change in the lifestyle.

As mostly observed the products related to baby care are all endorsed by women models, which are depicted as young mothers or grandmothers. The situation in the real sense is also the same in maximum of the households. Child rearing is viewed as the sole responsibility of women. Even the career break taken by women for the sake of childcare and the returning of the young mothers back to the careers have found place in the storyboards of many advertisements.



The advertisement of the Horlicks for kids tries to motivate the young mothers to return to their sought after careers, which they have sacrificed in order to take care of their children. The 50 -50 Britannia Potato biscuit advertisement also tries to highlight on the need to give options for the women who have taken career break for child rearing.

In a culture where child rearing is viewed a task, exclusively meant for the womenfolk, the role of the fathers and grandfather is limited. Even if the men are keen on helping with the task of child rearing, the inhibitions regarding the social views regarding the gender roles prevent them from openly accepting the responsibility.

The advertisements can really help in bringing the social change. Irrespective of the gender all babies long for the love and care of their parents, hence the products that endorse baby products could also bring the father figure as well into the story board.

The care-taking and ability to do domestic chores should not be tagged as feminine or masculine, these are vital skills for survival and important in building strong relations in the family. There would be real good response if these ideas are propagated through the advertisements.

The festive celebrations of Diwali and Navaratri, which are popular for the extensive festivities, are the central focus of the brands, especially when the vendor of the commercials studies the emotional connectivity of the target audience; these commercials try to market the tradition. These festivities are significant celebrations when traditional food recipes are cooked in households. The commercialization of this traditional aspect can be cited as a significant factor in losing the healthy and tasty traditional recipes.

Instead of preparing the age-old recipes, which has the indigenous raw materials grown in

the native soil, the ease of purchasing sweets has captivated the mindset of the so-called modern Indian. The gift in a well-packed appealing designer pack further adds to the status quo; the brand names matter, but it is high time this process of easy living is analyzed and the pros and cons studied.

Birthday celebrations in India have become a westernized affair, the regular menu of most birthday celebration focus on western food recipes, especially pastries. The birthday cake has become part and parcel of any celebration; the terms “black forest” and “white forest” are prestige tags. The raw materials used for this memorable occasion are refined flour and oil, which contribute least to a healthy life.

Decades ago, the scenario was entirely different; the sweets of indigenous origin, which were rich in fiber, the raw material for which was millets, pulses, fruits and vegetables, were popular. The life of the Indian of the previous

century was closely linked with nature. The daily activities incorporated the natural elements from the earliest moment of the day in the morning, starting from using the neem twig or the charcoal made from the rice husk. Instead of the oral paste and lotion, which has chemical substances as the base, people used fresh, cost-effective, natural antiseptic goods, which aided their healthy life. The cases of oral issues such as tooth decay, mainly in children, were addressed using natural cures. The need to bring back this scenario has been highlighted in various medical journals. Even a popular toothpaste brand has noted on its website that the toothbrushes without plastic lids for protection were of better effect in curtailing dental decay.

The breakfast brands like oats, biscuits, and Chocó spreads try to convince mothers of the need to use these products to feed their children with healthy nutrients. The commercials can identify their targets and mostly use emotional

appeal tactics to convince the prospective customer.

As per the Indian tradition, breakfast is vital since it provides energy for the day's activities. Combining the pulses rich in proteins with the energy-giving carbohydrates in the grain with the combination of the vegetables offers a healthy breakfast. In the case of the breakfast-related commercial, the breakfast table is usually westernized, with packed materials such as spreads, jams and juices. The concept of instant breakfast is being popularized, and this mainly captivates the youngsters as these commodities indirectly promise an energetic body and mind without excess weight gain.

Unlike homemade food recipes, the expiry time is only a few hours, and the packed goods contain preservatives, which keep these tinned items from decay. The old tradition of storing the leftover rice with water and onion soaked in it, and later consuming it as porridge has enormous

health benefits. It has rich probiotic properties; it is incredibly healthy for digestion and ideal to cure gastric-related discomforts.

The commercials showcase the table, which has packed juice items; even the goods that contain carbonated water are projected as the ideal kind of breakfast. Even when the goods claim that they have high nutrient components, the lure is towards achieving an ideal figure of 36-24-36, the hourglass shape, the toned body that looks fit. Here again, the concept of health is replaced with the idea of beauty.

“Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder”, hence the way in which we behold beauty also has to be viewed from critical perspectives. The increase in the rate of people with obesity and diabetics are mainly attributed to the lifestyles changes. It is vital to maintain good health by following a healthy lifestyle by consuming only quality food at the correct propositions. The advertisement that try to tell people that you need

to look attractive, in reality is also conveying the message that you have to feel unhappy about not fitting into accepted standards of fitness. The fear of being a misfit in the society is conveyed, which triggers negative image about their appearance and body image.

The filters used by people to enhance their profile pictures used in the social media accounts stands to proof to the prevalence of the lower self esteem among the people. Even the kids are victims to this scenario, when they feel they do not fit into the beauty standards, they develop an inferiority complex. The children who are overweight or obese feel insecure of being mocked at by others, this gives them negative vibes and at times they even go to the extent of avoiding social gatherings and show lack of interest in participating in the school activities.

The advertisements are filled with models who are fair, slim and attractive, the common man being represented in the advertisements

are rare. The presence of the “Gora Complex” in the society is seen through various modes, the term refers to the inferiority complex of the South Asians with reference to the fair skinned westerns, like the British and American people.

Popular Indian artist Amrita Sher-Gil made a strong statement about the fascination of the people towards fair skin in her noted painting “Bride’s Toilet”. This painting vocalized the preference for the fair, slim and beautiful bride, which also highlighted about the restrictions present on the womenfolk in terms of their choices. The women in the painting “Bride’s Toilet” are helping the bride dress up for her wedding ceremony. The background conveys that the family belongs to the lower income category and the lack of happiness in the picture speaks millions about the domestic confinement of women. Amrita Sher-Gil painted this famous art piece in 1937, which is part of her South Indian trilogy in which the setting represented is a bride’s room. Though almost a century has

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passed, the quest for the “slim. fair and beautiful bride” remains intact.

The matrimonial columns in the newspapers, especially the Sunday edition, carry the advertisement from people of various ethnic, social, financial, religious backgrounds, but one common uniting factor seen in all these advertisements is the similar words slim, fair and beautiful bride”. It is high time that people come out of this mentality and learn to appreciate the individuals and their uniqueness. Something which is interesting to note is that the term teetotaler is seen in the advertisements of the grooms. The space and liberty enjoyed by the people in the society is clearly reflected in the key terms used in these advertisements. There happens to be a great demand for the traditional homely bride who is educated. The young women who are well placed in the white-collar jobs get number of responses. The case is different with the women with the blue collar jobs; they find it difficult to find the matches.

Even in the case of the women in white-collar jobs when they cross twenty-six years of age, they face difficulty in finding suitable matches. Women are at disadvantage in the matrimonial scenario prevalent in India. They have to either compromise on their career choices by going for a marriage leaving no time to establish their career or rather they have to limit their choices in terms of their partner preference. The Bharat matrimony advertisement, rightly pointed out the prevalence of the disparity between genders in terms of choices.

The matrimonial advertisements mostly have attractive models as the prospective bride and groom. The models are slim, fair and the background portrayed is usually that of the upper middle class. The companies really need to rethink on these aspects because the people from different backgrounds look for matches. Though the age group of the majority could be assessed based on the details uploaded by the seekers, their aspects related to the financial

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status, the appearance and other related aspects cannot be understood. People try to find partners for a lifetime, look for understanding and similarities which could help them thrive in their married life. Hence, if the advertisements provide space for people from all sections of the society, it would be ideal. The “Jodi” app created by a popular matrimony website is an outcome of such an understanding. This application has numerous profiles which can be easily accessed by people in their regional language itself and also it specifically tries to aid the people from the lower income and educational background. Hence these options which were mainly available for the privileged has now reached the unprivileged as well.

The invisible social divide is clearly seen when the matrimonial alliances are in progress, at times, financial background causes difficulties in identifying the suitable matches. At times, when the process goes on with no positive results, the response from the other applicants

not being positive would create stress on the minds of the youngsters. Many youngsters find that the matrimony websites have enlarged their horizons and they are able to connect with people throughout the globe. Additionally, the aid of the social media accounts and other social activities of the people posted in the accounts, help them to have better idea about the person with whom they are seeking the alliance. Of course there are certain cons to this as well; the data in the website and the social media sites would be fake. As customarily, informed in most of the advertisements the viewers should take caution, always take these ideas “with a pinch of salt”.

Similarly the elite matrimony concept also helps the people to focus on their specific requirements related to match-matching for their children. The dating sites have also taken its roots focusing mainly of the young population in the metropolis, though not much into vogue. Change is the one that does not change, hence we need to be ready for the change time brings

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in, but always the caution has to be maintained. Critical thinking and positive view towards life can help in fostering a better society, even in challenging circumstances.

The social awakening about the goodness of the herbal products, health based products led the advertisements of the products in containers to create appeal focusing on the presence of the herbal ingredients in their products. The introduction of the diet cola is also a part of this development. It is a common known fact that the soft drinks are not ideal for people with health conditions like diabetics. Hence the companies tried to convince the viewers by using the advertisement of diet cola, meant for the people with health conditions.

The instant beverages also highlight their refreshing quality, which can help the consumer to refresh and feel relaxed. These commercials try to hub on comfort. Some goods that boast of the presence of native goods, such as the native

cow milk in the biscuits, lure away the customer from the need to consume the original than opting for the processed version.

The native breed of cow milk and country breed chicken eggs are widely acknowledged for their high nutrient quality. The availability of these goods to the public is limited in the urban settings, hence they are forced to adapt to the available versions commonly seen in the market.

The health-based advertisements such as green tea try to create an image of the ideal health as a body toned, slim and attractive. The quality of strength is given less emphasis. From diapers for children and body lotion to baby food, the commercials try to project love and care as components to market their products. Discretion is vital, and the viewers should assess the product and not fall prey to marketing gimmicks.

In terms of the cosmetics the companies have established a good marketing ground, mainly because they have succeeded in bringing in their

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products into the lives of the natives. “Make the customer feel that the product is essential for them and thus start marketing it”, this model is clearly seen in many cosmetics advertisements. There are numerous advertisements for facial cream, shampoo, eyebrow pencil, lipstick, hair conditioner, fairness cream, body lotion, hair remover cream and the list is endless. The quality of the same are not tested by the consumers, they mostly purchase the product based on the brand name of the products. Some events in the news about the harmful nature of the chemical used in the production of the product have created some kind of awakening in the consumers regarding the product quality.

The real beauty of the individual does not depend on any external accessory; they are only additions to the physical appearance. The enlightened scholars have clearly defined that a strong personality, a noble heart with compassion and an awakened intelligent self are the real traits of beauty. The physical beauty is only skin deep

and people need to realize that health and good lifestyle are vital.

The final word regarding the choice of the products is definitely that of the consumer. When the right to buy or decline is held in the buyer's hands, this power should be utilized for promoting quality and economy of the nation. The patriotic move of supporting the "Make in India" products by the consumers is highly commendable. India is a land with a rich cultural heritage noted for its traditional values. We have to take pride in our goods and patronize the products produced in our homeland, contributing to the welfare and the development of the nation.