

# **SURROGATE ADVERTISEMENT: THE MARKETERS TOOL**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In the contemporary world, one of the strongest and most influential means of communication is advertising. It is an informative source and it creates awareness among the consumer. But the coin always has two sides. If it has positive face, it carries some negative influence also. The awareness through advertising if educates people about the products and its benefits, on the other hand it also promotes the products which are health hazardous and shouldn't be consumed. With the intention of protecting society from such products and misleading information, Government of India banned advertisement of such products. But the invested efforts of the companies has opened a new gateway of "Surrogate Advertisements" that is loophole challenge to the Government's action.*

*The purpose of the study was to explore the various dimensions of surrogate advertisements & to access its influence on consumers' buying decision and consumption pattern. Hence with this inspection the required data was collected from 100 respondents using a close-ended questionnaire undergoing a random sampling. Karl Pearson's Chi Squared test was used to analyze the data and assess the desired results.*

**Keywords:** *Surrogate Advertising, Brand Image, Awareness, Tobacco & Alcoholic Beverages, Familiarity.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Advertisement, derived from the Latin word "advertere" which means "to inform" is considered as a major source of passing information to public. Over the period it is valued as an effective source of persuading and influencing society. Its influence induced people to get from their homes, leave their comfort zone, face hefty traffic and parking problem just to satisfy the craving and anxiety generated from advertisements. This much deepening effect has been assessed and adopted by many manufacturer and marketer.

Seeking to its impact, government has banned the advertisements of health hazardous products like alcohol, cigarettes and other tobacco based products, so that it should not further multiply its consumption. According to Law, the alcohol based advertisements are banned in India as per the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Amendment Bill, which was legalized on September 8, 2000 [1] Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 or COTPA is an Act of Parliament of India enacted in 2003 to prohibit advertisement and regulation of tobacco business in India. The Act put restriction on tobacco products including cigarettes, gutka, panmasala (containing tobacco), cigar, cheerot, Beedi, Snuff, chewing tobacco, hookah, tooth powder containing tobacco.[2] Advertisement of tobacco products including cigarettes is prohibited. No person shall participate in

advertisement of tobacco product, or allow a medium of publication to be used for advertisement of tobacco products. No person shall sell video-film of such advertisement, distribute leaflets, documents, or give space for erection of advertisement of tobacco products.[3] However, restricted advertisement is allowed on packages of tobacco products, entrances of places where tobacco products are sold.[3]

After the blanket ban was applied to the promotion of liquor and tobacco based products, the Indian market widely adopted the use of surrogate advertisements. Surrogate advertisements are the form of advertisements where a product is promoted through other similar products, logo, brand etc. The surrogate advertisements include broadcasting through media, the sponsoring of sports/cultural/leisure events and other public service announcements or activities using brand name of a product. The advertisements of bagpiper soda, officers' choice or sponsoring events like manikchand filmfare awards or red and white bravery awards are few of the surrogate advertisements.

The surrogate advertisements primary serves the purpose of brand recall and product recall. In addition to this it is a tool used to compensate the loss incurred due to regulatory change in country. The below mentioned table includes few of the most familiar examples of surrogate advertisements:-

Product Category	Brands	Surrogates
Tobacco	Rajnighanda	Kesar Pan Masala
	Goa Gutka	Pan Masala
	Pan Parag	Pan Masala
	Manikchand	Filmfare Awards
Cigarettes	Red & white Cigarettes	bravery award ceremony
	Gold Flake	Tennis Tournaments
	Wills Lifestyle	India Fashion Week, Lifestyle (textiles) showrooms, Indian Cricket Team/Matches
	Charms	Audiocassettes and CDs.
	Four Square white	water rafting& Gliding
	Wills Lifestyle	India Fashion Week, Lifestyle (textiles) showrooms, Indian Cricket Team/Matches
Alcohol Beverages	Seagram's	Music
	Mc Dowells	Water and Soda
	Bagpiper	Water, Soda, and Music – cassettes & CDs
	Red and White	Bravery Awards

	Bacardi	Music
	Kingfisher	Mineral Water and Calendars
	Wills Lifestyle	Apparels, Accessories
	White Mischief	Holidays
	Imperial Blue	Cassettes & CDs
	Smirnoff Vodka	Fruit Juices
	Royal Challenge	Golf Tournaments
	Aristocrat	Apple Juice
	Officer's Choice	Social Obligation towards Society

Source: An empirical study on surrogate advertisement by Varalakshmi T.[4]

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- I. To access the consumer's awareness towards surrogate advertisements.
- II. To understand the impact of surrogate advertisements on the company's brands.
- III. To know the influence of surrogate ads on consumer buying decision.

## III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study is highly significant as it tends to understand the contemporary practices adopted by marketers practicing surrogate advertisements. The impact of such advertisements on society and consumption of related products. It also intends to access the perception of viewers' of surrogate advertisements.

## IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the companies experiencing the ban of their products are restoring themselves to the new concept called —Surrogate advertising. He also indicate that co's are making huge profits by using such ads as a new weapon now-a-days[5]|| The companies whose products are subjected to the prohibition are following a different way of promoting their products like 'old wine' in a 'new bottle,' or with a soft-drink label somehow they are duplicating the image of well established brand.[6]

The basic question that needs to be answered is whether advertising make any material impact in the sales of alcohol or tobacco products. Kent M. Lancaster and Alyse R. Lancaster disregard that there is any difference in sales of tobacco and alcohol related products with or without advertising. They examined most of the published evidence worldwide on the effects of overall advertising and of advertising bans on aggregate demand of cigarette and tobacco products. Based on their exhaustive research they argued that partial bans on advertising are likely to have a very little or no impact on the consumption of such products, the reason being a complete ban in advertising of such products itself did not had any impact on sales or aggregate demand of these products.[7]

Mehta (2003) is of the opinion that Surrogate advertising is not only misleading, but also presents false and dishonest information in many cases. It has a very negative effect on the markets as a whole. With so much

widespread of surrogate advertising and its ill effects, it's time to tackle the problem and stringent regulatory measures should be in place to curb such practice.[6]

Chander and Sharma in 2006, tried to study the perception of people towards surrogate advertising by using a statistical tool factor analysis. The results of their research were surprising as they found out that in general, the perceptions that govern the attitude of people towards these advertisements is much on the negative side rather than being on the positive side. They neither liked the advertisements nor the favoured them. A large proportion of the respondents felt that surrogate advertising is anti social as it tries to promote the product that is generally considered as harmful for the society, it promotes wrong impressions and tries to fool the customer insulting customer intelligence, leads to moral degradation and is deceptive. However a few respondents took surrogate advertisements as a way of fair practice, entertaining and associated it with modern life style. A set of respondents were completely unaware of the phenomena of surrogate advertising while a few others were confused about the same. This research led to the conclusion that whatsoever may be the positive perceptions revealed, still a lot of people perceived surrogate advertising as negative, unethical and immoral.[7]

## V. RESEARCH METHOD & DESIGN

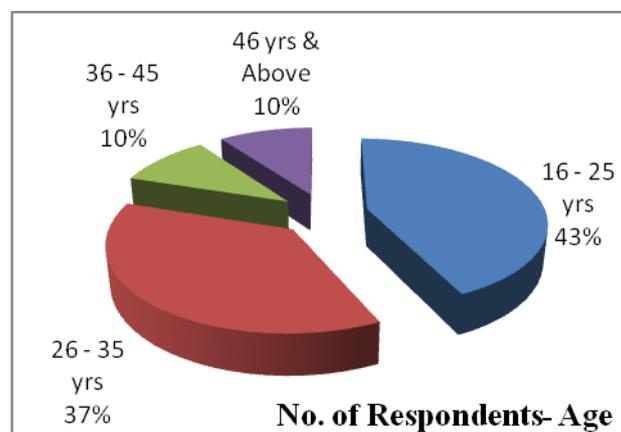
- Sampling Technique: - Judgmental Sampling and Simple Random Sampling
- Sample Type & Size: - 100 respondents were randomly selected and it was ensured that they are above 16yrs and literates.
- Sampling Area:- Delhi & Faridabad
- Data Collection tool: Observation and Interview
- The required data was captured and appropriately analyzed

## VI. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

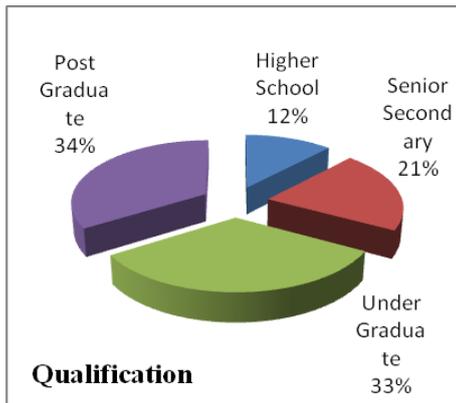
- Demographic Interpretation

- 1) Age wise division of respondents
- 2) Qualification of respondents
- 3) Income of respondents

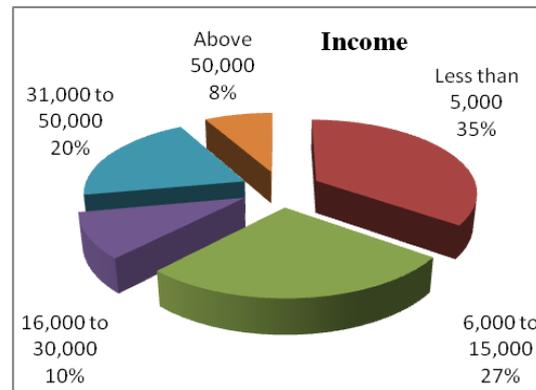
### 1) Age of respondents



## 2) Qualification



## 3) Income



- It interprets that 43 respondents are from 16-25 age group whereas 37 are from 26-35 years and 10 each are from 36-45 & 46 above.
- Out of 100 respondents 34 are post graduate, 33 are undergraduate, whereas 12 are from senior secondary and 12 respondents have qualified from higher school.
- 35 respondents are earning less than 5000. It also includes the students who are pursuing studies and not yet joined their jobs and getting pocket money less than 5000. 27 respondents are having income of 6000-15000 whereas 10 are from 16,000 to 30,000 and 20 are having income from 31,000 to 50,000 and only 8 respondents are earning more than 50,000. It includes both from service class and business owners. The income is individual not the family income.

## VII. OBSERVATION

1. Many respondents believe that surrogate advertisements are not required. Respondents also believe that such advertisements may distract youth.
2. Respondents who are habitual of alcohol, tobacco are even of opinion that banning advertisements is a right step as the brand or the decision of consumption lies to one's self. The major observation says that banning advertisements is a right step whereas few of them says that there is no need of banning such advertisements. Also some of respondents say that the products should be banned.
3. Most of them say that such advertisements are very much effective in reminding the original product.
4. Many respondents believe that reason for showing surrogate advertisements are the company's intents to promote their banned product and face competitions whereas few believe that it is just to earn more and more profits.
5. Most of the respondents believe that television advertisement is more effective than any other media of advertisements.
6. Many respondents believe that advertisements during daily soaps are effective whereas some says news and few says any event.
7. Some of them believe that surrogate advertisements are misleading and also some perceptions say that these provokes to higher consumption.
8. Some of them believe that surrogate advertisement increase consumption rate.

9. It is also observed that people are expecting positive response from the recent advertisements showing the adverse effect of tobacco (based products) and alcohol consumption. People believe that this reality check can work as an eye opener and may help in curbing this problem.
10. When asked about such advertisements from the addicted ones, they responded that such advertisements are scary and because of this family pressures and self realizations have increased.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

It was observed during the research that people who are of non consumer group are very arrogant towards this practice but what astonish is that the consumer group also doesn't feel any relevance of such advertisements. Both the groups feel that these advertisements may mislead the youth which is a serious and alarming situation. Otherwise a general opinion quotes that this is a decision of one self, so any such advertisement can't create much impact. The problem which needs to be curbed is something more of self control and leading to a right path, so any law is helpless beyond a limit.

As everything has a double fold effect, so surrogate on one hand when reminds about the product on the other hand also conveys a message that the advertisement of alcoholic/ tobacco based products are banned because they are harmful for health.

However, (on a contradictory note) from the studies it is clearly indicated that surrogate advertisements fulfills its purpose as for a marketer it is an impressive and money folding practice. So the purpose of the same is being fulfilled. So from marketing perspective this practice is a four starred one and reaping benefits of investment.

The recent practice of showing adverse effects of consumption through a small clipping in movie halls or television is an effective eye opener. This could be an area for further research. Government can further increase such practices and spread more awareness.

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