



A Review of Controversial Advertisement as a Tool of Brand Promotion in India

Mr. Bharat Kumar Singh¹
Dr. Kaushal Tripathi²

Abstract

Advertising has been an essential branding tool, be it in marketing services or goods, increasing brand recognition, and cultivating brand loyalty or any other tactics. They are intended to carry the organization's image through their creative appeals. Overtime, advertisements have earned the reputation of being the world's information window. They can shape or destroy a society's thinking processes. Many brands have created powerful advertisement campaigns to convey a message to society. However, sometimes these advertisements are accused of being too sexist, too profane, or too open-minded and create controversy, then the brands are forced to pull these ads down to retain their brand image as being termed with Controversial Advertising. The present study aims to find the role of controversial advertisements in building the brand promotion by using Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo's Model of Elaboration Likelihood. The paper will explore various elements of the controversial advertisement of last three years by using case study method. To analyse each advert thematic analysis is been adopted for the study.

Keywords: Controversial Advertising, Brand Promotion, Ethics

Introduction:

An advertisement plays a critical role in influencing customer choices among the varying power of various media platforms (Opeodu OI & Gbadebo SO, 2017). It is the commonly acknowledged source of information among consumers when compared to other sources, as being a creative and innovative source of information, it tends to be major people's preference. Hence media mix considerations are critical for advertisers (Shrivastava, 2014). According to the Advertising Association of the UK, advertisements are messages that are paid for by those who send them and are meant to inform or persuade people who receive them (The Economic Times, 2020). Advertising is an identified sponsor with consumers (a target audience) and provides information about products (goods, services, and ideas), it is simply telling and selling products by the brand to customers and consumers. It is a form of paid persuasive communication that uses masses and interactive media to reach large audiences. It also interprets the features of the products in light of the needs and wants of the target audience (Moriarty, 2015).

With the passing of time, many advertisers are changing the method of advertising, whether being advertised on TV, radio, or in the newspaper. It has always taken risky tactics to promote its products. As the number of advertising increases, it appears that the amount of controversial advertising exhibited in various media has increased. Brand promotion is one of the most important concepts in advertising. As a result, in order to promote the brand, advertisements must sometimes look controversial, and shocking to people in order to get their attention. Shock advertising employs a variety of strategies, some of which include advertising that has sexual undertones or even makes people feel awful about themselves. Some of the causes for this include society becoming more complex, more awareness of the detrimental impacts of some products, and agencies being more creative in order to "cut through the clutter" and get attention and brand awareness (K & Geetali, 2019).

¹ Research Scholar, Bhaskar Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi. Email- bharatkumarjhs@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, Bhaskar Institute of Journalism and Mass Communication, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, Email- k.tripathi29@gmail.com

However, in a country like India, where moral and ethical values are still highly valued, commercials with controversial messages cause public disagreement. Many of these adverts go unnoticed by us, with endorsements and secret messages strewn across social media. The most astute advertising strategy is to do the opposite of what everyone else is doing. Yes, it might be risky at times, but it's better to talk about it than not talk about it (K & Geetali, 2019).

The Controversial Advertising is directly linked with Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. All Indians have right to freely express their thoughts but have certain limitations that is accompanied under the Article 19(2) of the Indian Constitution, which exhibits principle of "decency or public morals." As the fourth pillar of democracy, the media is expected to conduct itself in an ethical and responsible manner. Therefore, advertisers are required to refrain from creating advertisements that are deceptive, inaccurate, misleading consumers, or otherwise insulting public morals. Unfortunately, there have been instances where Indian advertisers have created some advertising that has scandalised the public and has since been outlawed for reasons of morality or public decency (Pathak, 2015). There has been an increase in the quantity of controversial advertising displayed in various media with the increment in advertising frequency.

The complexity of society, growing knowledge of some products' negative impacts, and agencies' efforts to be more inventive in order to promote and improve brand awareness are a few factors contributing to this under controversial advertisement (Waller, 1999). Advertisements that without being subject to immorality and ill-decency has to pull off from the air, as being hyped due to societal factors. Marketing Researcher (Waller, 2004) pointed out that the majority of research has viewed "controversial advertising" as a bad idea, and if controversial advertising simply elicited bad reactions, advertisers would steer clear of this kind of campaign.

However, rather than avoiding it, advertisers are employing it more frequently. In the past, several organisations have found success using controversial messages (e.g., Evans and Sumandeep 1993; Hornery 1996; Waller 1999; Irvine 2000; McIntyre 2000; Phau and Prendergast 2001). This is crucial when the topic of controversial stems from the nature of the product. For some advertisers and their agencies, the challenge is figuring out who could be upset by their controversial campaign and why, especially when the product itself might be controversial, such as condoms and feminine hygiene products. But, in a free market, they should be entitled to do so. In some cases, advertisers, especially those with controversial items, have a social responsibility to avoid controversies among people with their advertising messages (Waller, 2004).

Around, companies use a variety of advertising strategies to increase sales and build their brand. Even if they may not be using controversial advertising techniques for the "proper" reasons, some companies have done so because they believe that "any exposure is good publicity" and that doing so would increase brand awareness. Although some may disagree with an advertisement's content, there is no denying that it may leave a lasting impression on viewers. Depending on what finally happens in the marketplace, a controversial advertising campaign may either be extremely effective or extremely harmful for advertisers. There's no denying that controversial commercials may generate discussion and attract a lot more attention for a brand (K & Geetali, 2019). Hence, a contentious advertising campaign may offend people, which may result in a variety of undesirable outcomes, including bad press, complaints to advertising regulating agencies, harm to a brand's reputation, arousing people's emotions, declining sales, and product boycotts.

This paper aims to explore whether the advertisement is being pulled off due to societal controversies or whether the brand has come up with a clarification statement without pulling off the controversial advert. The researcher will explore various elements in controversial advertisement of last three years and also examine its role in promoting the brand.

Review of Literature

Controversial Advertising

Controversial Advertising can be defined as "either by type of product or execution that can elicit reactions of embarrassment, distaste, disgust, offense, or outrage from a segment of people when presented (Waller, 2004)." The available literature shows controversial advertising is multidimensional in character and were known as 'offensive products' and 'offensive executions.' Offensive products are those connected with consumer concerns and are not permitted to be debated in public, such as female hygiene products, contraception, underwear and so on. Offensive execution refers to commercials that are deemed offensive because to their creative execution, repetition, or themes and topics of the advertisements rather

than the product itself (Barnes Jr. & Doston, 1990). Waller used the example of French Connection UK, which has established an internationally recognised brand based on overtly sexual pictures and the "fcuk" logo. Similarly, Pizza Hut successfully enticed the masses to try its new "stuffed crust" pizza by advising them to "get stuffed," and brands such as Wonderbra, Love Kylie, and Elle Macpherson acquired massive amounts of publicity through low-cost controversial ads (Crosier & Erdogan, 2001).

The Psychology Behind Controversial Advertising

According to (Waller, 1999), the goal of the advertisers behind the controversial advertising is to obtain immediate market awareness. As a result, provocative pictures, posters, slogans, and statements are purposefully employed in marketing. Such practises have grown in popularity over the previous two decades.

Advertising that stirs controversy taps into the psychological component of marketing. For instance, visual elements are used in image advertisements to communicate, and their interpretation is arbitrary (Owoeye, 2019). This implies that each observer applies his or her own perspective to the meanings of a given image. (Paul Martin Lester) suggests five angles through which viewers can analyse and interpret pictures.

- Personal viewpoint: This is based on the strongly held ideas, attitudes, and mindset of the viewers.
- Personal beliefs are frequently difficult to alter such that the observer views the image differently because they do not always align with the cultural perspective.
- Ethics: When images are seen from an ethical angle, it implies that both the creator and the image must uphold moral standards. Utilitarianism, hedonism, the categorical imperative, and the veil of ignorance are a few of the traditional methods employed from an ethical standpoint.
- Historical perspective: Viewers may also interpret photos depending on how they have previously been used and the common implications attached to images of a similar type. For instance, depictions of naked women are frequently linked to misogyny.
- Technical perspective: This is based on analytical methods like using a dark room, positioning objects differently, and other technical ways of presenting images. The application of light to enhance image quality or bring particular features into focus is a common illustration of this method. Additionally, as new technologies advance, applications for image analysis that use computer changes like Photoshop are growing in popularity.
- Cultural perspective: Viewers evaluate images from a cultural perspective by considering their cultural connotations and symbolism. The usage of offensive language, imagery, and other cultural symbols is observed by viewers.

Controversial Advertising and Customer's perception

The study (Waller, 2004) has demonstrated that while the sampled population shows no product to be offensive when advertised. Nevertheless, they discover specific justifications for commercials being offensive. A correlation between the four controversial products and the causes for the offence was produced using a Spearman's Correlation Coefficient. Strong associations were observed between women's underwear and nudity as well as condoms with indecent language, nudity, sexist images, and subject too personal. There were also notable disparities in the replies, with women being more offended than males, and gender being a better predictor of offensiveness than age for indicating offence.

Another study based on consumer perception on controversial advertisements revealed that there exists a significant difference between the attitudes of the different segments of people towards controversial television commercials based on their gender, age and educational qualifications. The findings of this study suggest that the negative attitude of young and middle-aged people (age 18–28 years and age 29–39 years) towards advertisements with gender-based products has marginally shifted towards advertisements with social concerns (P. P. Singh & Chahal, 2020).

Controversial Advertising: Promotion or Brand backlash

Brands are using controversial in marketing initiatives more and more in their promotions. If done properly, it may be a terrific method to draw attention to the company. The findings of the study further support the concept that good controversial marketing strategies are ones that convey the desired message while causing some level of controversy. In other words, Controversial marketing is a high-risk, high-reward technique that can improve brand reputation at low levels but can be devastating at high levels (Owoeye, 2019). Sometimes the brand could suffer more damage than benefit if it backfires. Be cautious while running

any form of contentious campaign. Before launching the campaign, you must anticipate every conceivable response in order to decide whether it is worthwhile investing the time and resources (K & Geetali, 2019). In the modern era, advertisements that were once thought to be normal and entertaining have become deemed inappropriate. People have learned the power of the media and stopped taking the information presented to them at face value, moving from viewing commercials to critically analysing and challenging the material (DeSouza & Naresh, 2021). Whatever their format, advertising must be prepared in accordance with the code of ethics. Controversial advertising has the unfortunate effect of undermining social norms and values in a place like India, where television is still the finest medium for reaching the general public with messages (Dr. Somak Sen, 2016).

The following 15 controversial products were listed by (Waller, 1999) and were designed to range from the most offensive to the least offensive: alcohol, cigarettes, condoms, female contraceptives, female hygiene products, female underwear, funeral services, gambling, male underwear, pharmaceuticals, political parties, racially extremist groups, religious denominations, sexual diseases (AIDS, STD prevention), and weight loss programs. Moreover, he listed six grounds for offence: Indecent Language, Nudity, Sexist, Racist, Subject Too Personal and Anti-social behaviour.

He further stated that such contentious messages elicited a negative reaction from the general public, resulting in violations. Calvin Klein was forced to publicly apologise for using controversial advertising depicting child pornography. It sparked indignation among the society. Benetton, a clothing business, was also heavily chastised for using provocative pictures in advertising to convey a message of "social concern" (Waller, 2004).

Theory

Elaboration Likelihood model

It is established in the 1980s by H.A. A social psychology theory called the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) explains how individuals think about and react to persuasive stimuli like ads. The core route and the peripheral route are the two unique information processing paths suggested by the ELM.

The primary path comprises a careful examination of the message, considering the ideas, justifications, and supporting data. When individuals are motivated and capable of carefully absorbing the message, this approach is often taken.

The peripheral route, on the other hand, focuses more on superficial indications, such as the attractiveness or reliability of the source or the use of emotional appeals, and requires less careful study of the message. When no one is around, this path is more likely to be taken.

Peripheral cues are frequently used by controversial advertising to influence viewers. For instance, a commercial that employs sexual images to market a product may be more likely to persuade people through the peripheral route because it may not make a compelling case for the product's usefulness. Similar to this, an advertisement that draws attention through shock value or controversy may also be more likely to be processed via the peripheral pathway.

Objectives of Study:

1. To study the elements of controversy in the advertisements.
2. To find and analyse advertisements which termed to be controversy in the last three years.
3. To study the role of such advertisements as a tool in brand promotion.

Research Methodology:

In this research, Case study method is been used to build the better understanding of controversial advertisements. To analyse the broad elements of these adverts thematic analysis is been adopted and Elaboration Likelihood Model is acquired to study their role in brand promotion. The researcher has purposively visited news article containing controversial advertisement and chosen the brands like Mohey, Fem, Fab, Ceat tyres, PaytmFirstGames and Tanishq within span of three years. Due to the controversies most of the adverts is been pulled off by the brands from media. Thus, researcher has used YouTube to view the advertisement. The appeals and themes apparent were examined. The researcher has also gone through Newspaper reports and people's reaction from online media platforms for framing the analysis.

Case Studies

1. **Name: Layer's Shot**
Year: 2022

Two TVCs produced by the perfume and deodorant company Layer'r Shot appear to promote sexual assault against women. The ads in the series featured a group of men making fun of the word "Shot," which is also the name of the product and, coincidentally, a sexual innuendo. The women in the advertisements initially feel uneasy about the men's intentions before being relieved when they reveal they are discussing the perfume and this is how it has been portrayed in the video advertisement.

On the internet, people started protesting the company and looking for the creative team behind the concept. It turns out that the internal team was the source of the concept. The advertisements were taken down after being in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. The Ministry of Broadcasting and Information issued an order to Twitter and YouTube remove the advertisement and even leave no trace of it on their platforms.

Ministry of I&B and ASCI Statement: I & B released a statement "damaging to how women are portrayed in the name of morality and decency, as well as in breach of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code). A sizable portion of social media users were outraged by the perfume brand's videos and said they promoted sexual assault against women". As soon as ASCI became aware of the advertising campaign, it promptly triggered a special procedure known as "Suspended Pending Investigation" (SPI) and requested that the advertiser submit a response. It was perhaps violating its policy against provocative advertising in a severe way. ASCI's chapter II, which states that advertisements should contain nothing indecent, vulgar, especially in the depiction of women, or nothing repulsive which is likely, in the light of generally prevailing standards of decency and propriety, to cause grave and widespread offence,"

Brand Statement: The company stated that it had 'voluntarily' alerted all media partners to cease airing or broadcasting both of the divisive commercials in same month only. They never sought to offend anyone's sensibilities or feelings, insult any woman's modesty, or advance any culture (ET Online and Agencies, 2022).

2. Name: National Road Safety

Year: 2022

The Indian Road Safety based commercial saw a major backlash for allegedly encouraging dowry. Nitin Gadkari, the federal transport minister, tweeted a link to the advertisement, which features Bollywood star Akshay Kumar. It depicts a bride leaving with the groom while her family is there to see her farewell. The character who plays the father's friend and a policeman step in to remark that the newlywed couple would be safer in a car with six airbags as opposed to only two.

3. Name: Paan Masala

Year: 2022

Last year, Bollywood actors Shah Rukh Khan and Ajay Devgn worked together on a Vimal commercial. The actor once again worked with Vimal on a new advertisement with fresh addition, featuring actor Akshay Kumar alongside Ajay Devgn and Shah Rukh Khan. Devgn and Shah Rukh Khan may be seen in the advertisement sitting in a car while wearing all-black attire. Devgn remarks, "Dekhein kaun naya khiladi aaya hai," while driving. Samantha Dete, please Shah Rukh Khan responds, "Pyaar se samjhayenge, dheere dheere se," in response. Later, when the actors exit the vehicle, they notice Kumar chewing on a package of Vimal. SRK comments, "Yeh too api zubaan hain," to which Kumar responds, "Toh dil bhi ek hone chahiye." They all three then extend their fingers in a "V" salutation.

4. Name: Mohey 'Tradition wahi, soach Nayi- #KanyaMaan'

Year: 2021 (Sept)

A prominent bridal apparel company, Mohey, released an advertisement with actress Alia Bhatt that focused on the idea of "Kanyadaan," or sending the daughter out after marriage. The advertisement was not well received and caused a lot of controversies, mainly because of interfering in Hindu traditional rituals and the wrong interpretation of cultural subject matter. The advertisement attempted to draw attention to the misogyny inherent in the Kanyadaan ceremony and to convey the idea that daughters aren't just objects to be married off. The idea of Kanyamaan - Tradition wahi, soach nayi was introduced. The idea indeed emphasises equality, but many interpreted it as a criticism of the Hindu wedding ceremony. Next, the hashtag "boycott manyavar" started to spread on social media.

5. Name: Fem, Dabur

Year: 2021 (Oct)

The Fem bleach commercial, Dabur India received negative feedback. Karva Chauth inspired the creation of this advertisement. Some of the Indian audience were offended by the advertisement's depiction of a same-sex couple's love. (Some people did value the idea behind the advertisement). The corporation has pulled the ad campaign in response to criticism on social media sites and from a BJP politician.

Brand Statement: Dabur India posted on their Twitter account, "Fem's Karwachauth campaign has been pulled from all social media handles and we unconditionally apologise for accidentally hurting people's sensibilities." We acknowledge that not everyone will share our viewpoint, and we appreciate their right to have one. We don't want to disrespect anyone's religious or nonreligious beliefs, customs, or traditions. It had stated that if we had offended anyone or any group, it was inadvertent, and we apologised(Standard, 2021).

6. Name: Fab India

Year:2021(Oct)

Due to a Diwali-themed campaign dubbed "Jashn-e-Riwaaz," Fab India is getting flak. The Urdu word used in the advertisement caused a stir, and many segments of society criticized it as culturally insensitive for "necessarily incorporating Muslim ideals in a Hindu event."*Brand Statement:*FabIndia succumbed. It took down the advertisement and clarified that Jashn-e-Riwaaz was not its Diwali clothing line, but rather the upcoming Jhilmil Si Diwali (twinkle of Diwali) collection.

7. Name: Ceat tyres ad

Year: 2021 (Oct)

The Ceat tyre advertisements featuring Aamir Khan have generated a lot of controversies. In the advertisement, Aamir Khan gives his advice to avoid setting off fireworks in public places. This has raised debate about the advertisement. A BJP member from Karnataka objected to the advertisement, saying that if lighting fireworks in the street was a problem, Muslims should also be prohibited from blocking roads on Fridays and other significant holidays.*Brand Statement:*Safe and intelligent transportation has been CEAT's top priority, according to Amit Tolani, Chief Marketing Officer of CEAT Tyres Ltd. Our mission of "Making Mobility Safer and Smarter Everyday" is the centrepiece of the new ad with Aamir. Our Secure Drive Car and compact SUV tyres are your car's best buddy on any road thanks to the better braking performance and maximum riding comfort. The campaign emphasises how important it is to buy reputable, trustworthy tyres. Aamir has been a fantastic brand advocate for CEAT and embodies its honesty, zeal, precision, and innovation(Media, 2022).

8. Name: Sabyasachi

Year: 2021 (Nov)

The advertisement featured a woman wearing a low-neck dress, appearing alone and in an intimate position with a guy.The advertisement received criticism on social media and from several MPs, designer brand Sabyasachi pulled their Mangalsutra campaign back after major controversies. Thebrand expressed its "great sadness" over the fact that the commercial offended some people.The Mangal sutra campaign aims to discuss inclusivity and empowerment in the context of making tradition and culture a lively discourse."We are quite disappointed that the campaign, which was meant to be a celebration, has instead offended a segment of our society. Sabyasachi has therefore chosen to halt the promotion " posted on Instagram.

9. Name: Rapido Ad

Year: 2021 (Nov)

Arjun (Telugu version) and Ranveer Singh were recruited by Rapido for its first ever celebrity endorsement campaign (Hindi).The actors played the shop proprietors on the side of the road and suggested one of their consumer for opting Rapido motorcycles over overloaded buses appeared in both versions.However, the Telugu advertising clearly included a TSRTC bus, which infuriated the Corporation.

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSTC) :TSRTC has sent an official notice to Rapido, a bike taxi firm. Afterward, it has been ordered by a Telangana court to remove an advertisement featuring Telugu movie icon Allu Arjun. The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation claimed that the advertisement was defamatory, and the court agreed (TSRTC). The contentious advertisement used an actual Telangana bus and made a direct comparison between Rapido's service and the TSRTC buses.Brand Statement: Rapido had slightly altered the advertisement after receiving a legal notice.TSRTC went to court because the firm altered the commercial rather than withdrawing it as asked in the notification.

The corporation and its affiliates are currently prohibited from "telecasting, broadcasting, streaming, duplicating, or distributing" both the "original and modified" copies of the advertisement by the Xth Junior Civil Judge of the City Civil Court, Nampally, Hyderabad.

10. Name: Tanishq ad

Year: 2020 (Oct)

Tanishq, a jewellery company, removed one of its advertisements after facing criticism on social media for depicting an interfaith union. In essence, the advertisement told the story of a young, pregnant "Hindu" woman who marries into a "Muslim" family and finds love, respect, and acceptance there. However, many started to demand a boycott of the company, saying that by recognising an interfaith union, it was encouraging "love jihad."

ASCI and CCC's Statement: "This panel was unanimous that nothing in the advertisement was indecent, vulgar, or disgusting, which is likely in light of commonly accepted norms of decency and appropriateness, to cause grave and widespread offence," the advertisement body stated. The advertisement did not contravene the ASCI codes of honesty, sincerity, and decency in advertising; hence the complaint was not upheld. As a result, should the advertiser wish to show this advertisement, ASCI has no objections (B. Singh, 2020).

Brand Statement: The next month only, on November 13 Tanishq posted a message to its official social media website. The company issued a statement saying, "We are profoundly disturbed by the unintentional arousal of emotions and withdraw this film with consideration for the injured feelings and well-being of our employees, partners, and retail staff." The Ekatvam campaign's goal, according to the statement, is to "celebrate the beauty of oneness and the coming together of people from many walks of life, local communities, and families during these trying times" (B. Singh, 2020).

Brand Iconic Shows backlash: Kumar is well renowned for his cinema lobby advertisements that promote the use of sanitary napkins and even urge viewers to give up smoking. But the actor supporting a tobacco company has sparked a fresh Twitter meme frenzy. According to News18, Kumar is seen in an old video saying that endorsing gutkha and related goods is a "Galat kaam," and that his Bollywood colleagues should not do it. He also says that he won't.

11. Name: PaytmFirstGames

Year: 2020 (Sept)

A commercial for one of India's top digital payment services featured master shooter Sachin Tendulkar. However, there was a weak spot, which included a tiny child being slapped. The rest of the advertisement shows how the young child puts a lot of effort into being the ideal student and eventually develops into the Master Blaster. Internet users were horrified by what they perceived as a justification for the assault on the child (Buzz Bazar, 2022).

12. Name: Kent

Year:

The Noida-based company advised using its product instead of having a maid knead flour to produce dough since "her hands can be diseased," according to the advertising. The advertisement, which uses Hema Malini and her daughter Esha Deol as campaigners, attracted a lot of criticism from users on social media. On Twitter, many people criticised the advertisement and reported it to the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) for being insensitive to domestic helpers, who already face discrimination from housing societies all over the nation. The advertisements have been removed from the business's Instagram and other social media accounts (ET Online, 2020). *Brand Statement:* "Our recent social media promotion of Kent Atta and Bread Maker was inadvertent, poorly articulated, and incorrect. Consequently, it was removed right away. Mahesh Gupta, chairman and managing director of Kent RO Systems, issued a statement saying, "We are deeply sorry for this occurrence and wish to apologise to everyone, especially to the people whose sensibilities were hurt." *ASCI Reaction:* It claimed that while it had received complaints, they had not yet been addressed because the advertisement was unavailable.

Controversial elements in Advertisement

S.No.	Brand Name	Controversial Element in Ad	Year	Authority Action	Brand Reaction	Broad Element of Controversy
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1.	Layer's Shot	Visual	2022	ASCI has suspended the ad	Issues Apology Statement, Ad was withdrawn	Indecency
2.	National Road Safety	Storyline	2022	No action	No reaction	Hindu Culture
3.	Paan Masala	Brand Endorser	2022	No action	No reaction	Brand Icon
4.	Mohey	Storyline	2021	No reaction	No Reaction	Hindu Culture
5.	Fem.Dabur	Storyline	2021	Objection by Political Leader	Ad was withdrawn	LGBTQ Community
6.	Fab India	Body Copy	2021	Objection by Political Leader	Ad was removed	Religion
7.	CEAT Tyres	Storyline	2021	Objection by Political Leader	No Reaction	Religion
8.	Sabyasachi	Image	2021	Objection by Political Leader	Ad was withdrawn	Indecency
9.	Rapido	Image	2021	TRTC sends legal notice	Ad has been modified	Defame
10.	Tanishq	Storyline	2020	No objection in Ad: ASCI	Ad was withdrawn	Religion
11.	PaytmFirst Games	Action	2020	No Action	No Reaction	Child Abuse
12.	Kent	Image and tagline	2020	Before scrutiny, Ad was removed, 'ASCI'	Ad was withdrawn	Defame

The case studies and tabulation of the above-mentioned controversial advertisement gives a clear picture of ad storyline along with the ASCI and Brand statement. The tabulation shows several controversial adverts occurred in last three years with their Controversial element and the broad area of controversy.

Among the top twelve ads, the major issue had arisen on the religion, followed by the Hindu Culture, Indecency and Obscenity in ads, Defamation was also a major issue in the adverts, along with Child abuse and portrayal of LGBTQ community. The table also present column of Concerned authority Action along with Brand Reactions towards controversy. Interestingly, without intervene of authority some ads were pulled off. It can be the effect of prolonged massive controversies on social media. As a result major ads were pulled down by the brand in order to maintain their Brand image.

Result and discussion

From the analysis, it can be concluded that public perceptions are crucial for brands to continue existing in current cutthroat marketing environment. When an individual or group stereotype doesn't match with the brands ad message, the advertisement becomes controversial. the major area of controversies is on Religion, followed by Culture and then Indecency and obscenity, Defamatory, LGBTQ community.

Indecency and Obscenity

In a country like India, Television is still largely used to disseminate the information to masses and it is viewed by all the age group. In between the family show, delivering the advertisement which contains indecency and obscenity could hamper the family atmosphere and different message to audiences.

Culture

India is Hindu dominated state (Pew Research Center, 2012). The majority of population have strong belief and faith towards Hindu mythology. Thus, any wrong projection by brand could leads mass revolt and protest. In the advertisement of National Road Safety, actor Akshay Khanna as policeman mentioning about car safety which is indirectly targeting to dowry system which is illegal and unethical under (The Dowry

Prohibition Act 1961). This has resulted the advert in major controversies. Along the brand Mohey in their advert questioned for why only kanyadaan? in Hindu marriage ritual thus resulting in major controversy.

Brand Icon and Defamatory Statement

Celebrity and their image matter the most for the success of any film or even advertisement. This can be easily related to recent Akshay Khanna surrogate advertising. He is been always equated as fitness freak but endorsing ad like Pan masala has hamper and trolled him in social media. Thus, putting the brand in controversy.

The brand Kent atta maker in order to boost the growth of its product in their advert has defame maid as her dirty hand to make flour dough. This resulted in major backlash for the brand and ultimately withdrawn of ad.

Advertisements and religious sentiments

There are religious symbols everywhere in India. Religious symbols and rites are frequently featured in television programmes, as well as Bollywood movies, radio, and print advertisements. Respondents may, therefore, have a habitual indifference rather than a heightened affective reaction in the sea of ordinary religious cacophony. Since a citizen is exposed to congruent religious symbols more frequently than non-congruent ones (at home, in family conversations, during prayers, and during visits to one's religious institution), there is a higher level of exposure and, as a result, a higher level of selective screening of congruent symbols (Kumra et al., 2016). With religious factors adverts show anything that has a touch of religious factor get trolled on name of religious issues. This sometimes becomes positive in doing brand promotion but majorly impacted poorly in Brand growth. The same applies in the brand Fab India, CEAT Tyres featuring an muslim Bollywood actor Aamir Khan on Diwali advertisements.

Advertisements and LGBTQ community

In India, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons confront several issues that non-LGBT people do not. Others despise them and treat them poorly. In our nation, it is against the law and punishable by punishment for two people of the same sex to engage in sexual behaviour. Earlier, the Indian Penal Code's Section 377 declares that having gay relations is a crime, although it has been decriminalised. Indian advertising are adopting the West's practise of declaring their sexual orientation in public. Because homosexuality is still a very difficult topic to discuss in India, this is causing ideological tensions in the culture (Clément, 2020). Thus, brand like FabIndia without showing any indecency in their ads has captured, many trolls in social media and resulting in backlash of the advert to maintain its brand image.

Advertisements and Child Abuse

Child abuse is very sensible area to be portrayed in advertising. As advertising being medium of creativity, tends to arose audience attention and interest by adding emotional factors in it. In the above analysed ads, to show how child is distracted from career path, *a coach has slapped the kid*, to add you are not meant for this. This is turnover into major issue and controversies.

Conclusion

The data reveals that 50% of the scrutinised controversial advertisements have been withdrawn from air, making no contribution to subsequent marketing and promotional efforts. Few of them were removed at the very initial stage of the controversy, i.e., before ASCI or another relevant authority could file any complaints. Thus, it has been analysed that ASCI only makes a very small amount of input towards the selection of controversial advertisements.

The data also demonstrates how challenging it is to draw conclusions or identify the prevalence of controversial commercials. Every other advertisement contains a unique aspect of controversy, still the main areas of controversy are the storyline, visual, and the body copy. The Vimal Paan Masala commercial's brand icon, Akshaya Kumar the Indian Bollywood actor and fitness freak was questioned for promoting tobacco-based advertisement. The huge sensation and controversies made the actor to apologised for their active promotion in surrogate advertising. Similarly, Aamir Khan Indian actor featuring in CEAT tyres Diwali ad was trolled for objecting no roadside crackers in the storyline of ad and being a Muslim by religion. Controversial advertising creates a dissonance impact on viewers' thoughts and takes people attention while giving new point of discussion and acting as tool for brand promotion. Brands are coming with controversial advertising for promoting their products, known as "Shock Marketing". A well-placed, shocking marketing effort will help brand to stand out from the crowd and get establish in competitive world as relatable to the peripheral route of elaboration likelihood model. However, it may also be like playing with fireworks

without following the necessary safety measures. Brand might suffer more damage than benefit if it backfires. It must be cautious while running any form of controversial campaign. Before the launch it should forecast all potential responses and decide whether it is worthwhile investing the time and money (K & Geetali, 2019). If done properly, it may be a great method to draw attention to your company. Generally, the efficacy of controversial advertisements in persuading consumers depends on a variety of factors, including the relevance and strength of the arguments presented, the credibility of the source, and the motivation and ability of the audience to process the message. Controversial advertising has great potency for becoming a tool of great publicity for Brand Retention and Brand Recognition. Afterwards, brands come with the normal creative adverts to retain its Brand Image. Thus, making the controversial advertisement is also becomes as part of marketing gimmick. Controversial advertising with convincing justifications or supporting data (Dr. Somak Sen, 2016), can also be handled via the central channel of elaboration likelihood model. For instance, an ad that challenges social norms or stereotypes may provoke careful analysis and consideration of the message, leading to a change in attitudes or behaviour.

Depending on what finally transpires in the marketplace, a controversial advertising campaign may either be extremely effective or extremely harmful for advertisers.

It may offend consumers, which may result in a variety of reactions like bad press, complaints to regulatory agencies that oversee advertising, decreased sales, and product boycotts. If an advertiser wants to run a divisive campaign, they must, so be careful not to cross the thin line between appealing to the market effectively and upsetting some people. Attention being major element of advertising model, thus by inserting religious elements in advertisement cause major attention towards ads, giving a trigger towards a cognitive response (Kumra et al., 2016). However, there are occasions when the distinction between creativity and below-the-belt content is seriously blurred, embarrassing both society and the businesses and artists (Qureshi, 2022)

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