

ADVERTISING ON ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of advertising in raising awareness on environmental issues among the people. Advertising is the activity of producing information that will be of public interest either be it for commercial products or services or general awareness. Regarding the issues of environment, advertising with powerful messages can make people aware about the issue and it can grab the attention of the people. Climate change, depletion of natural resources, pollution, depletion of ozone etc. are some of the major environmental issues faced by the world. Various steps are being taken by the government, NGOs and individuals in order to protect the natural environment. One important step towards protection is to make every people aware so that everyone is conscious about the issue. Contribution of every individual is important and it is the responsibility of each and every people to protect the environment. Regarding the awareness, advertising plays a very significant role in raising and spreading awareness. It is one of the most effective tools of communication and it helps in delivering the important messages about the issue to the people.

Keywords: Advertising, Environmental issues, Natural environment, Awareness, Protection, Communication.

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Introduction

Environmental issues have become a major global issue. Some of the major environmental issues are global warming, climate change, environmental degradation, depletion of ozone, depletion of natural resources such as water, mineral, forest, etc. It is mainly due to human activities that the planet has reached unsustainable levels. One of the primary causes of environmental issues is rapid growth of population, which adversely affects the environment and natural resources. To meet the daily needs and consumption, forests and trees are being cut down. Forests are felled for the construction of houses, malls, markets, industries, factories etc. Because of this growth and development, the habitats and existence of various wildlife are in danger. All these problems affect the lives and health of every individual. In order to protect the natural environment, various steps are being taken by the government, NGOs. It is the responsibility of every individual to protect and also spreading awareness is very necessary. Regarding awareness, advertising plays a significant role in delivering the important social messages to people.

Advertising

The most commonly accepted definition of advertising is the definition given by the American Marketing Association, according to which advertising is “any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of goods, services and ideas by an identified sponsor.” (Kazmi and Batra, 2009). Advertising is the means of informing as well as influencing the general public or people to buy products or services through visual or oral messages. Products or services are advertised to create awareness in the minds of buyers. And the another definition says that “advertising is paid, non-personal communication of information from an identified sponsor using mass media to persuade or influence an

audience so as to maximise profits.” The given definitions talk about the persuasion aspect of advertising but the emphasis is given on the commercial side of advertising. However, it has to be remembered that all the advertisements are not for only commercial purpose, it has many purposes. For instance, advertising giving social messages like save water, save earth, stop pollution, save the girl child, quit smoking etc. do not have any commercial purpose. Thus, the widely accepted definition of advertising does not seem to be an adequate and perfect definition of advertising. The term ‘advertising’ is derived from the Latin word ‘adverter’ which means ‘to turn’ the attention. Every piece of advertising attempts to turn the attention of the listeners, readers and viewers towards a product or service or an idea. Therefore, it can be said that anything that turns the attention to an article or a service or an idea might be called as advertising (Gupta, 2012).

Role of Advertising

Advertising has various purposes depending on what content is advertised. It may be for the commercial purpose, social purpose, political purpose, economical purpose, and many others. Advertising is everywhere, all over the places, on TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, on billboards, hoardings, etc. If an advertisement can really persuade people to buy a product, surely it can be just as effective in persuading us to think in a certain way. Everyday, people are exposed to hundreds of advertisements and if someone claims that it does not have any effect on them, it will be wrong. Either consciously or subconsciously, advertisements have a great effect on everyone’s lifestyle. Advertising does not only change the buying decision, but also it has the power to change the mindset and attitude of people. Creative people in the advertising agencies believe that creativity is necessary for effectiveness and it can push the advertising message into viewer’s mind. Creativity is defined as doing something which is different from others. Creativity is considered as the most important element of the advertising business because grabbing the consumer’s attention with common advertisement without creativity is impossible. It is said that creative ads can grab the people’s attention and have some impact. TV commercials and print ads that are well designed and executed and that generate emotional responses can create positive feelings that are transferred to the product or

service being advertised. For advertising to look distinct and different, creativity is very important (Sharma and Singh, 2012). The use and effectiveness of creativity in commercial advertising can also be used in the advertisement for social cause and for the awareness of various issues.

Advertising can be used as an effective tool for a social cause. A literacy ad campaign says, "it just takes 10 paise and one special person to spread literacy. You." Just how long is it going to take if we were to persuade people in person to take up the cause of spreading literacy? Advertising can be instrumental in bringing a commendable change in society by generating awareness among the people about the social causes. An advertisement of Surf Excel claims that by using this detergent you can save two buckets of water. Water is a scarce commodity and the conscious use of it can make a difference. And the advertisement of Bisleri, a prize winning advertisement, also takes up the issue of safety (Sharma and Singh, 2012).

On the other hand, social advertising has a significant role in promoting societal change. Social advertising is the advertising that is meant to inform the public or people about social issues (French, et al. 2010). This kind of advertising raises the awareness of social and environmental issues. The main objective of this advertising is to spread social consciousness among the people and to promote the unnoticed important social issues. Advertising and media supports each other and they both go hand-in-hand. Singh(2006) stated about the importance of media in educating and creating awareness about social issues that " Media plays an important and determining role in educating and creating awareness among the public regarding various social issues and transmitting crucial information so that people become knowledgeable" (Pahad and Upadhyay, 2009). It has become very popular and one of the effective means to create social awareness and to bring change in the mindset of people. Powerful images in advertising, resonant music, powerful words can bring feelings and emotions in people to promote the societal change.

Advertising is one of the pervasive and comprehensive forms of communication. It can be used to reach a large number of people at the same time and therefore, it is a medium of mass communication. Communication has a vital role in addressing any social

issue or global problems. The first and important step toward action on social or environmental issue is to make people aware about the issue. There are various advertising media such as radio, television, newspaper, posters, hoardings, billboards etc. through which the social and environmental advertising message can be spread. These all have different purposes and effectiveness. Every advertising media can spread the messages to people at different level.

Newspaper: Newspaper have a high level of credibility. Readers rely on newspapers for factual information in stories giving newspapers great credibility. There are many advantages of newspapers. It is relatively very cheap as compared to other media and it can reach almost everywhere (Sharma and Singh, 2012).

Magazines: Magazines are considered as the most specialised of all the media, which are read and preserved over a longer period of time as compared to newspapers. Generally, newspapers are published daily, bi weekly, weekly or fortnightly and it contains current news, political, social and economic. However, magazine contains features of general interest. Most often, readers linger over an advertisement for a longer period of time because they read magazines in waiting situations or during leisure time (Rege, 1990).

Poster: It is one of the common and popular forms of outdoor advertising. It serves as a reminder or supporting the media that has already achieved with the help of other media. It can reach almost all the people who go out and it would act as repeated reminders (Rege, 1990).

Billboards: Billboards are the common form of outdoor advertising. One primary advantage of billboard advertising is its long life. Local services like hotels, restaurants, resorts, service stations etc. are heavy users of billboards. It provides an effective way to communicate to the travellers. Every person who travels by a billboard has the potential of being exposed to the advertising message (Sharma and Singh, 2012).

Transit Advertising: It is the advertisements displayed on the vehicles and in transit stations. It consists of paper posters placed inside or on transit vehicles such as metro, truck, bus, car, etc. Large numbers of vehicles carry transit advertising in densely

populated areas and it has a potential for broad reach in the markets or public places. It also offers high frequency because transit riders repeat their trips frequently.

Television advertising: Television provides the ability to communicate with sight, sound, motion and emotion. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then, a moving picture is worth ten thousand words. One great advantage of Television is the opportunity it provides for presenting the advertising message. The combination of sight and sound offers tremendous creative flexibility and makes possible dramatic representations. Television advertising makes it possible to reach large audience, nearly everyone. It can create a powerful and emotional impact and has the power to create high impact with viewers by offering dynamic and visual messages. The combined power of sight, sound, motion and emotion create a synergetic effect that is more effective than when individual senses are stimulated (Sharma and Singh, 2012).

Radio advertising: The radio is audio in nature, appealing only to the sense of sound. Radio advertising has a wider coverage which can convey messages even to the remote areas. Introduction to FM have really given boost to radio advertising. One advantage is that it is mobile. People carry it to the places wherever they go and people listen at home, at work, etc.

Online advertising: It is a form of advertising which uses internet to deliver the advertising message. With the advent of technology, the internet has positioned itself as one of the very few media alternatives that can be used for almost all advertising purposes.

With the help of all of these advertising media, advertisements having important social messages can be spread effectively. It has to be remembered that spreading only basic advertising message may not have much impact to the people and society, but advertisement with creativity can grab the attention of people.

Conclusion

From the above study, it can be concluded that advertising can be a powerful communication tool for creating awareness on social and environmental issues. It can be used to reach a large number of people at a time and therefore, it is a medium of mass communication. By using various advertising media such as newspaper, poster, television, internet, etc., social and environmental awareness can be spread among the people. It has been observed that advertising has the power to change the mindset and attitude of people. If an advertisement can really persuade us to buy a product, surely it can be just as effective in persuading us to think in a certain way. It has been observed that creativity plays a very significant role in advertising. The use of creativity in the commercial advertisements helps in grabbing the consumers. This can also be an effective method and tool for creating social and environmental awareness. Powerful images in advertising, resonant music, powerful words etc. can bring feelings and emotions in people to promote the societal change. Social advertisements with creative and powerful social messages can deliver an emotional connection with the people. It can promote the unnoticed important social and environmental messages and problems to the people.

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