

## Perception of Consumers on Social Responsibility Content in Commercial Advertisements

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### Abstract

Advertisements play an indispensable role in persuading the consumers in procuring their products and also in deploying their branding values to the society. Generally, advertisements are crafted with the underlying aspects, highlighting the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) of the Brand that makes their product lucrative, which indeed influences the decision-making of the consumer, whether to buy the product or not. Hypodermic theory incorporates more about the influence of advertisements on the mind of people. Advertisements are often conceived with innovative ideas and creative efforts that spotlight the nature and key features of the product that motivates the target group to purchase the products. In this day and age, commercial advertisements are designed with social responsibility content to lure the attention of the people. Some advertisements portray the social issues like contamination of freshwater lakes, scarcity of water, pollution, poverty and much more relevant topics along with their products. To some extent, the consumers find it difficult to apprehend the objective or the USP of the product. This research study focuses on the opinion of consumers and viewers about the advertisements crafted with social responsibility and also its relevance of this social responsibility marketing whether the unique selling proposition of the brand to the consumer.

**Keywords:** CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), Advertisement, Consumer, brand making.

### INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is the main responsibility or the greatest challenge to live in the modern world, which has become a substantial part for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. India is the first country to introduce corporate social responsibility content along with the advertisements. The corporate companies allocate lump sum to marketing and branding in the advertisement, by creating novel content with a deep sense of social commitment that persuades the people and at the same time develop their brand value. This creates a communicative way of transient arena where the reactions and the public opinion become the source to maintain a brand name. This context evolved as the corporate began to invest more on projects that could touch the lives of common man. The marketing strategies made them promote their product at their maximum. As a change of thought Indian content creators attempted new trends in ads with the underlying tag as CSR advertisements or Corporate Social Responsibility Advertisements. This business plan shows how the consumers are happily and honestly believing their company products, through emotional appeal. Consumers become very much loyal in their responsibilities to respect the product value. The society often tends to respect the product and accept their insecurity towards the advertisement content. In this respect the consumers are allotted their space for consumption based on the content.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Advertising is highlighted for using CSR messages and it becomes a tool among the advertisers. Taking into account medium communication of social information through advertising is more subject to arouse undesired reactions and consumer skepticism relating to other communication sources. (Maria& De Los& Perez, 2017). Corporate social responsibility can be useful to the company in more than one way and it also provides public perception of the company. Increasing sales, improving employee morale also can find the company in another way. Nevertheless, spending assets on CSR initiatives is one thing, but communicating accurately to the collaborator is a challenge for companies in order to bump up their anticipated benefits (Couvreur, 2015).

Corporate sponsorship is a key part to the mode of advertising and publicity. A self-congruity gets developed as the consumer recognizes their sponsorship for the social cause. Self-congruity theory refers to the relationship between the consumer's self-concept and a brand's image (George, 2016). The CSR efforts of the company may be with the non-economic goals, but due care will be taken to increase the brand value among the society (Omran,2015). It will be initiated as a part of their commitment of making the society around them better, which will be out of their regular regulations or boundaries. During times of crisis or natural disasters or a simple social change, people expect intervention of corporate companies to contribute to society. (Barnet, 2007). Consumer perceptions of corporate responsibility do not always reflect reality, which is critical when making CSR decisions. Misconceptions among consumers can take many shapes.. (Lopez & Smith,2014).

The increasing rate of CSR information in commercial advertisements, proves that management heads are assertively 'thinking' to market trends and shifts in stakeholder views and opinions, leading to more attention and resources being directed towards this area.(Saat& Selamat,2014). Customers' assumptions and opinions, on the other hand, are seen to have a direct impact on the design and effectiveness of corporate strategies, therefore research on them is relevant in both academic and business circles. (Pérez & Bosque, 2015). CSR is described as "context-specific organisational actions and policies that take into consideration stakeholders' expectations as well as the triple boom line of economic,social,and environmental performance," according to a more recent paper. (Rahman & Serrano & Lambkin, 2017).

Consumers from all over the world are drawn to brands and goods that are emotionally linked to their actions. People tend to link themselves with the brand, according to studies, and emotional ties have a significant impact on customers and their buying behaviour. (Raikar, 2019). Advertising, by definition, tries to persuade customers to purchase things and services, many of which are unnecessary. Although customers have long been advised to heed the caveat emptor warning, it is debatable whether advertisers have any ethical obligation to rein in their marketing pitches' frequently overstated claims.(OpenStax, 2018).

## METHODOLOGY

This study aims to analyze how the consumers perceive the advertisements, which are crafted with the CSR motives, through content analysis, survey and qualitative analysis. The main objective of the study is to identify how the socially relevant aspect is portrayed in the commercial advertisements and how the brand is marketed through that. This study also tries to find out how far the consumers perceive the marketing strategy of the advertisements. In this study, four samples of advertisements shown in India are selected. The results of qualitative analysis direct the quantitative study in understanding the objective which explores the consumer

and viewers' perception on the commercial advertisements. The quantitative analysis is carried out with the questionnaire among respondents. This study was conducted in Kerala mainly in the metro city Kochi. The city which was chosen for research was popular for its commercialization with more shopping malls and super markets all over the city.

### **Research Question**

- How is the perception of the audience different in CSR advertisements?
- What effect are they putting forward to make the brand adorable?

### **Objective of the Study:**

- To identify the transformation of creation of advertisement content relevant to the social issue that constructs the USP of the concerned brand.
- To identify the popularity of such an advertisement among viewers and consumers.

### **Research Questions**

To know the reality behind the creation of advertisements that states the nature of social issues of the society.

### **Hypothesis**

The commercial advertisements created with the social issue, as a content, are only crafted for their Unique Selling Proposition (USP) on brand marketing

### **Theoretical Framework Hypodermic Needle Theory**

The theory says that the media has a direct and immediate and powerful effect on the audience. The origin of persuasion especially in advertisements have been one of the main aims of the theory. Then the theory points out that mass media can influence a large number of groups of people. This paradigm proposes that the media surrenders the ability to operate as a needle, injecting the message into the audience, who are merely the receivers. (Amna & Muhammad & Fizza, 2015). The people believe what they hear and see through the visual platforms. For this study the researcher chooses hypodermic needle theory as a tool to reach the hypothesis. The viewers get an immediate reaction in their mind and accept the thought of what they are hearing, from this aspect they are these platforms working as a needle to the viewers. The elements of persuasion adding in to people are the unique strategy they adopt. Especially advertising developing their brands through such emotional ads that we nowadays considered as CSR advertisements. From these aspects the CSR ads are emotionally and technically adapting some kind of strategies to develop their brand name and brand values.

### **Research Design**

This study has been designed as both quantitative survey analysis and content analysis. The researcher attempts to find out how the CSR advertisements are making their brands more attractive through the emotional appeal to the viewers and how they portray the content as socially relevant. The first and second objective will answer through the survey analysis and the second objective will study with the content analysis of a few CSR advertisements. A detailed questionnaire will be prepared and circulated among 300 people by using the random sampling. The population was selected from the Kochi area because most of the regional and national

advertisements are very popular in this metropolitan city. Most of the people in the city happen to watch advertisements, as social media ads or on television and the researcher chooses the youngsters to identify the reality among these advertisements. The audience perception should be considered as the independent variable and the factors affecting their perception like visual presentation, content, emotional flow of ad, editing etc. become the dependent variables for the study. From the collected data the researcher will find out the results through the various mathematical tools which have been provided for the research. TheselectedadvertisementssuchasSamsungtechnicalschool,TheMarutiSuzuki,ICICIBank and BhimaJewellery(*published on April 16, 2021*) are discussed here, including the content of the advertisements and the way they portray the ad through the visual analysis.

## FINDINGS

On the basis of the survey conducted the researcher developed certain analysis providing the information regarding the results. The total population selected for the study is 300. As per the survey analysis the detailed description of the results are as follows.

### 4.1 PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS OF CSR ADVERTISEMENT (based on whether the advt was watched or not)

Percentage of people who have watched the advertisement

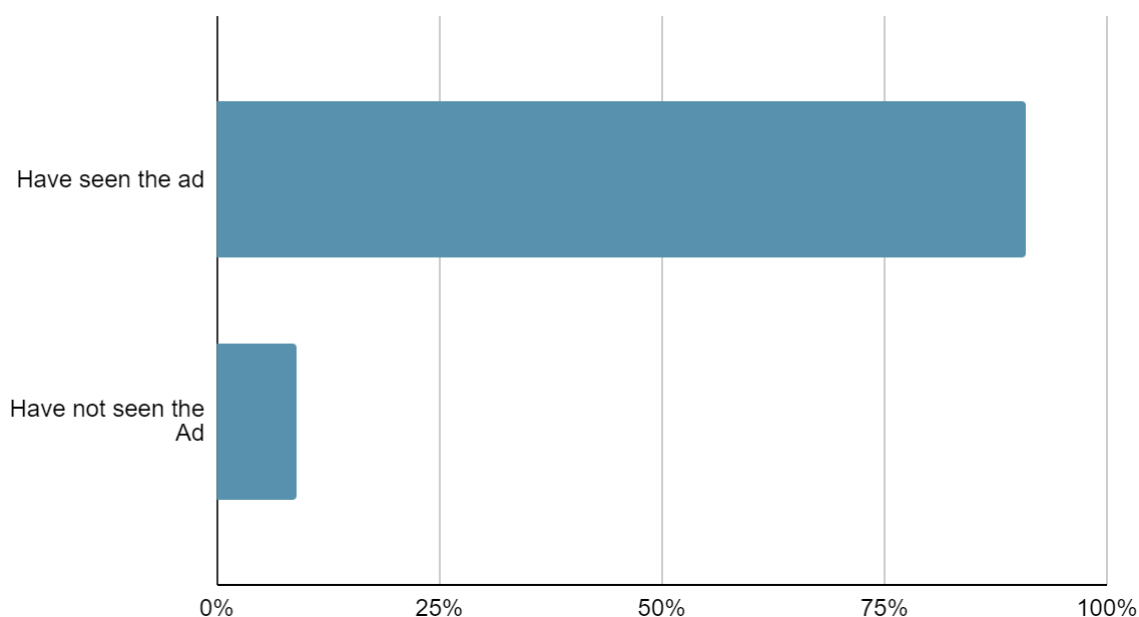


Table 4.1 Percentage analysis - whether viewed or not

From the study we could see that most of the people have seen the advertisement. People tend to have much affinity towards the advertisements, with a social concern, as they become popular through social media. The survey was conducted among the youngsters in Kochi. The respondents have seen the advertisement through social media platforms and television.

Only 9% of the people had not seen the advertisements either on the television or in the social media platforms. The young generation have watched advertisements through social media platforms, as being heavily dependent on mobile phones. This study focuses on the youngsters in Kochi City. Apart from the nine percent, 91% of the youngsters are watching advertisements through social media platforms. Nowadays when an advertisement becomes popular, it will get featured as a sensational story in the online news channels and online news portals. So people are rather watching the ad on YouTube or Facebook, moreover the news portals also provide detailed descriptions of the same advertisement. From a population of 300 people, 78 % of the people are interested in watching CSR advertisements because it creates a bond between the viewer and the content. But there are people who are not at all interested in watching CSR advertisements. Those youngsters are included in the category of unemotional bonding with the ads. Around 22% of the people are not at all believing in this kind of advertisement.

**4.2 PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS ON VIEWERS OF BHIMA JEWELLERS LATEST CSR ADVERTISEMENT**

The latest ad of Bhima Jewellers conveyed the meaningful message and breaks the patriarchal concepts. Without any dialogues the advertisement has reached and warmed up the viewers mind. In this study, a question was added related to the recent Bhima Jewellery CSR motive advertisement. And it is said that most of the people are watching the new ad and it has become a discussion among the marketing world. Around 69% of the youngsters responded that watched this ad though different portals. This adds to the importance of the present. The ad picture is shown as follows.



Bhima Jewellers Ad Published on April 14, 2021

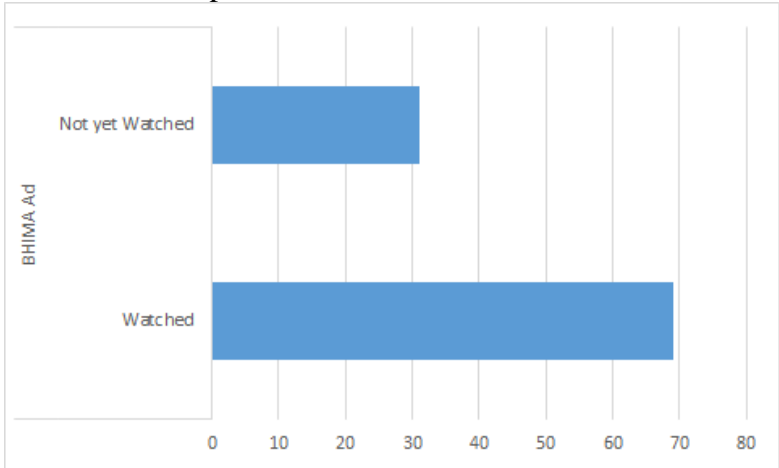


Table 4.2 Percentage analysis on viewers of Bhima Jewellers latest CSR advertisement

Compared to the commercial advertisements, few ads are made with the underlying social concepts instead of conveying the benefits about their product or service. Around 55% of the respondents agree there is a significant distinction in the ads with social themes, with some elements like heart-touching situations, emotional appealing incidents, novelty in concept etc. At the same time 45% of the respondents report that there is not much distinction between a commercial ad and an ad with a social theme.

There are four options given in the questionnaire to choose which made the holding factor of the CSR advertisements. Out of the 100%, 12% of the people agreed that they believe in content creation. 18% are focusing on the thematic creations and 15% of them believe the motivational thoughts they are providing in the ads. Apart from that 55% of the youngsters in Kochi believe that all these matters are becoming the factors of creation of CSR advertisements. These advertisements are also giving some socially relevant messages to the people. In some ads they are portraying the women and gender differences and also addressing the problems faced by transgender community. All these issues are becoming socially unacceptable and creating an alienation to such people. This could become a breaking up of stereotypes and that will be relevant in society. This becomes one of the best expressions they are choosing for the brand promotions. 67% of the respondents say that the CSR advertisements are handling the socially relevant issues and making them more socially committed to the people.

**4.3 PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ON INFLUENCE OF CSR ADVERTISEMENT IN BRANDMAKING**

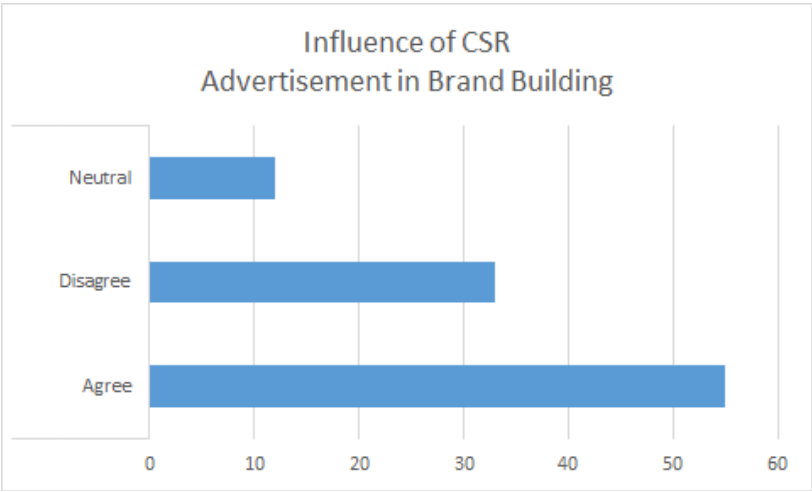


Table 4.3 Percentage of respondents on influence of CSR Advertisement in Brand Building

The brand building of advertisements is discussed in this research. The objective of the study mainly concerns to find out how the brand building gets facilitated by the deployment of advertisement. The researcher tries to enquire how the companies get through building their brand name, with the CSR advertisements. In this study, about 55% of the people agree that these CSR advertisements are useful to uplift the brand name while 33% of the people have a neutral opinion in regard to it. Companies uphold the view that advertisements with socially relevant and appealing content will draw the attention of the people, in turn fostering the overall sales turnover. It will serve to act as an awareness campaign, which the companies believe to be their contribution to the society. There are 12% of people who do not consider the advertisements with social content as a means of brand building. Most of the people are very much influenced by the advertisement because of the emotional appeal of the story which creates an attachment to that

brand for their goodwill. As per the survey conducted, people tend to believe in the brand more close-to the heart.

Following advertisements are analyzed through this chapter.

### **Samsung technical school-A CSR initiative- We care for the Girl Child**

This advertisement has broken the stereotype of the society with an inspiring story of Seema Nagar. When she was born her father expected that will be a boy child. The barrier of expectation has been shattered, and she is now a girl child. This shocked his father and society, but his father raised her as a male, and she enrolled in the Industrial Technical Institute of Samsung technical school, Jaipur. She was confronted with gender norms in society, but she defied them and began studying. She achieves great success in her academics and contributes to her own village. Her ambitions are no longer underestimated by anyone. She has enormous plans for her hamlet, and she wants to build a service centre. With the use of technology, Samsung has provided people in India with the possibility to live a better life. This has been the CSR initiative of the company and at one side they provide the socially responsible charity but on the other hand the brand making is also there. As they suggested, “we care for the Girl Child” will still be moving on still now.

### **The Maruti Suzuki CSR initiative-Skill Development**

The Maruti Suzuki took initiative for the skill development, road safety etc using the CSR motives. For getting more productive machinery items from India the people want to develop their skills. These skills in mechanical engineering can be done with the help of Maruti Suzuki.

These are the projects they are doing as corporate responsibility. For making good machines we need the maximum productivity from the people. While studying through the ITI people get more practical knowledge to receive the skill at maximum. This is not only dedicated to the believed consumers but also to the communities around the country. This has become one of the social issues they are now dealing with. From these motivational thoughts Suzuki has successfully dedicated their brand to the society. Even though the CSR advertisements are somehow helping the company to stick on their brand and keeping the attention of the people.

They developed their skills with the manual education system and made the future generation work sensibly. The free skill training provides employment chances and opportunities.

### **ICICI Bank continues to impact unprivileged people across the nation**

This ad incorporates the CSR activities of ICICI Bank, as the central theme, portraying their aid towards nurturing the talents among the lower sections of the society. They initiated various efforts to identify the deserving families in the suburbs and rural areas, and thereby to equip the skills of the students, with the guidance of expert mentors. The company also helps the self-help groups to achieve their goals, adding to the brand credibility of ICICI Bank, which will help the people to believe and trust the company. The advertisement also tries to give a new vision apart from the stereotypical thoughts of the people, motivating the parents in the rural areas of India to send their children to learn the new age skills. The ad also includes some informational content expanding the possibility of perpetuating the value of the brand to the common people.

### **Bhima Jewellery – Pure as Love**

The Bhima Jewellery Advertisement, released in April 2021, has become a trending one and was indeed a thought provoking one. A transgender woman gets featured in the jewellery ad, donning in an elegant manner. The life of transgenders portrayed with parental support has been one of the

unmatched and outstanding factors in that advertisement that persuade the people. The ad tries to narrate the deep feelings of marginalization faced by transgender women in the society and where in contrast, the plot of the ad tries to make herself proud of her family, which is supportive and very progressive in thinking. As the ad tries to be an eye-opener addressing the core emotional ties among transgenders, the people were eager to watch through the different portals and also to share the news feed in social media. The content is crafted using the high-end making techniques of a movie, that increases the visual experience. This ad will hopefully serve to include more opportunities for the transgender community to have the decent means of living.

## CONCLUSION

As per the study conducted, the consumer's perception on CSR advertisements are being somehow positive to create their brand making. The survey and the content analysis were also done to get the idea from the youngsters in the city of Kochi. As per the survey conducted, around 55% of the people are agreeing that the brand building is also becoming a part along with the CSR activities of the company. People are very much attracted towards the brand when they get emotionally attached to the advertisement. From the survey conducted most of the people are interested in watching the CSR advertisement and they are more attached to the content discussed in the ads. The emotional bonding of relationships, socially responsible content, and the background music are also complimented by the respondents. With the content analysis, it is understood that each advertisement selects socially relevant topics with some emotional appeal. The content of the ad attracts the viewers to buy the product or in inculcating the brand name in their minds, that the CSR advertisements are really influencing the people and it also helps to make a brand popular among the people.

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