

## **Advertisements Restore Values: A Case Study of Eight Television Advertisements in Indian Perspective**

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**Abstract:** The aim of advertisements is to sell products, services and ideas by means of persuasion. Being paid commercial announcements, it is a bit surprising to see that advertisements are imparting value education. Generally this task is entrusted to family, school, religion; literature etc. TV advertisements are structured in ways that take cognizance of human attitude towards values. They capitalize human psychology, choices, preferences, likes and dislikes. They positive affect Indian culture these days. India, being a country of unity in diversity, ads play a reformer's role in terms of binding people together and thereby bringing about national integration. This paper identifies and explores values embedded in eight tv ads in the light of the theory individual response to mass media propounded by Green and McAlister. It also contends that this kind of value orientation is a positive sign as it is instrumental in both restoring values and solving the contemporary social problems.

**Keywords:** ideas, customers, attitude, diversity, integration, response.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

When it was introduced in India on 15 September 1959, television stated the humble aim to educate, inform and entertain masses. Today tv programmes are full of entertainment and advertisements. Tv has become an inseparable part of human life. It was thrown open after post-liberal scenario; profit making became the main objective. Ads occur before, during and at the end of programmes. "Until 1994 commercials were put out in the beginning or at the end of the shows...today each and every channel relies heavily on commercials for revenue. Commercials break occurred every ten or twelve minutes during broadcasting [1]".

The content of the tv programmes at present makes an interesting study. They show movies and serials dealing with boring family affairs and issues such as love, love triangles (extra-marital relationship) conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and some of them tend to propagate superstitions like exploitation, treachery, revenge, kidnapping, supernatural adventures, black art etc. This representation has cast a negative influence on children, women and youth. This is done with a view to tap the viewers and increase the TRP. Strangely, some of tv ads focus on social issues in order to give value education. This paper examines eight tv ads and their value orientation with regard to solving the contemporary vexed social issues and problems.

### **EXPERIMENTAL SECTION**

#### **What are advertisements?**

Ads are paid announcements that fetch viewer attention. It has both positive and negative impact. "Several media scholars have emphasized advertising's role as a major agent of social reinforcement because of its presumed power for moulding opinions, attitudes and behaviour [2]. Advertising help build, make and support a particular brand. They aim at persuading both existing and potential customers. It brings about behavioural and attitudinal change in people's lives. It is not only an economic but also a social phenomenon. Imagine what would happen to the economic activity if advertising is expelled from human life. In India the growth of advertisement had a parallel with the growth in industry and media. In the post-liberal environment, it has had an exponential growth with the growth of trade and commerce. Some of them have got an educative value. While others show the changing nature of traditional values, attitudes and behaviour and endeavour to re-establish Indian social values.

It is also important to study viewer response and behaviour during the commercial breaks. Generally they switch to other channels or keep glued to mobile phones while housewives do their household chores. This underscores the fact that viewers really don't like to watch ad which occur repeatedly on their tv screen; some of them even consider it as a nuisance. Nonetheless, advertisements do cast influence on viewers' mind and attitude. They are essential

components of any new product launched in the market. The advertisement industry is experiencing a boom these days. The structure and content of ads has undergone a massive change. One such change is inclusion of value aspect. They have begun to play a reforming role by imparting values. They inculcate social values in order to better influence the viewers. Comparatively, tv influences all sections of society due to its reach and geographical coverage. "Rural India has 17 % more homes with TVs than cities Urvi Malvania [3]".

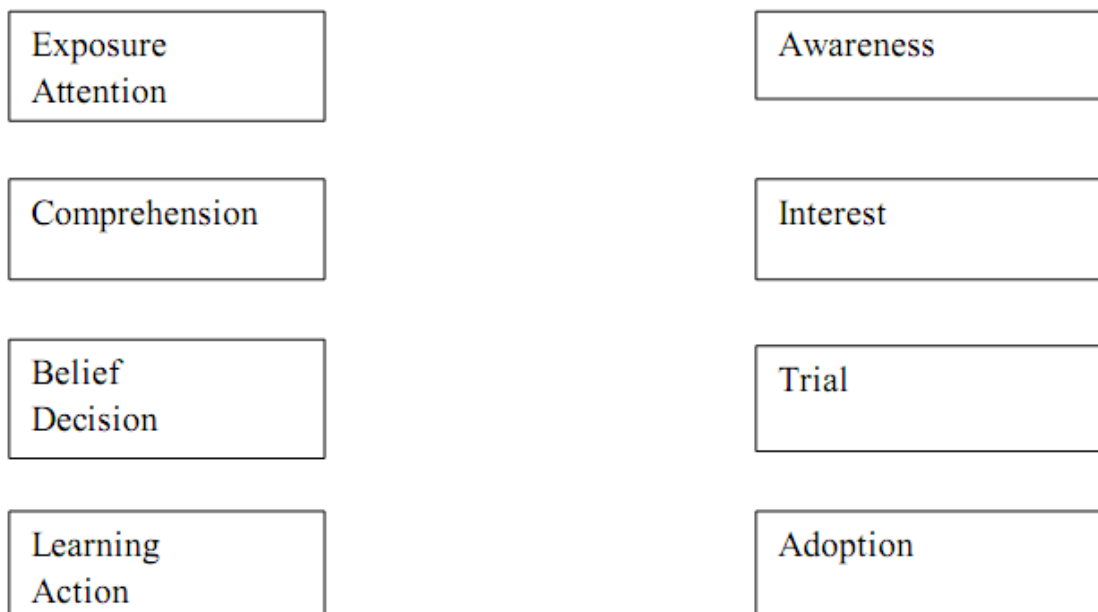
**Role of values in maintaining social system**

Historically, values have evolved through triumphs and tribulations. In the course of time, they acquire their rightful place in a society. They are necessary for sustenance of social institutions. They are essential for progress, psychological wellbeing and play a decisive role in national development and human

happiness. A value is a yardstick to determine human progress. They form an important part of cultural institutions and adequately explain the operation of social processes. By studying values we understand people better. In H. M. Johnsons opinion "values are general standards and may be regarded as higher order norms [4]". Liberty, equality, fraternity, dignity of labour, love, charity, sympathy environmental concern, co-living, patriotism, non-violence, modernity, friendship, secularism, sanitation, sympathy, tolerance, freedom integration are recognized as important values. A society continually absorbs and internalizes them. In a world ravaged by war, violence, social stratification, poverty, economic disparity, terrorism, an unprecedented need of value education is tremendously felt. Sadly, these traditional values do not reflect in the educational curricula substantially. To sharpen human sensitivities is the need of the hour. Some advertisements address this dire need.

**Phase in Psychological process of change in the individual**

**Corresponding phase in community measures of adoption in a population.**



**Fig-1: Theory of Individual Response to Mass Media [5]**

Here, the basic contention is that the media influence varies at the individual and the community level. In the first place a viewer is exposed to a particular event by means of attention, but at the community level it manifests in the form of awareness. Secondly, the component of understanding of the state of affairs and this change results into 'interest' at the community level. Comprehension states that media deepens individual viewer's 'awareness'. Next two components 'belief' and 'decision' state that he begins to take a decision of associating with the product or

service being advertised and at the community level it reflects into 'trial'. A group of viewers feel tempted at the product and finally 'try' it. At last when the viewer learns something and acts accordingly, at the community level the change manifests in the form of adoption. The psychological change at the individual level involves exposure, attention, comprehension, belief, decision, learning, action while at the community level exposure and attention leads to awareness, comprehension leads to interest, belief and decision leads to trial and learning and action leads to adoption.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Jaspal Singh and Namrata Sandhu [6] studied the negative impact of TVCs. They found that the long cherished moral values are being shattered in the modern times. Viewers undermine values, which deteriorate the moral fabric. Viewers display disrespect towards integrity of cultures. This has led to degradation of women, discontent, loss of confidence, familial unrest. Sivaram Srikandath [7] talked about the negative influence. He states that the ads promote technology and modernity, fun, youth and adventure. Durriya Z. Khairullah & Zahid Y. Khairullah [8] highlighted the manifestation of cultural values. The marketers ascribe modern, symbolic, tradition and utilitarian values to their products. Though the Indian consumers are influenced by modern cultural values, they still cling to the traditional ones. In his [9] study, John Vilanilam studied the role of tv commercials in the lives of Indian poor. Majority of ads promote canned food as it is easy to cook and takes the least amount of time and labour. The bright color and appearance of food product is promoted as a sign of nutritional values. Though ads have educative values, the villagers fail to make practical use due to socioeconomic depravity. So they only cultivate a secret desire and create 'revolution of rising expectations'. Barbara Mitra, [10] studied the changing clothing patterns. She argued that tv is making inroads in rural culture. Hairstyle, clothing etc. is changing. Women who traditionally wore sarees, now prefer salwar, kamish, jeans and miniskirts. A hybrid culture is emerging. Subir Sengupta and Latherin T. Firth [11] assessed the role of multinational corporations advertising (MNC) and Indian owned business advertising (IOB) in promoting cultural imperialism. It examined 25 values. MNC favour tradition and maturity while IOB favour modernity, cleanliness and technology. Multinational advertising increases dependency on the west. Ms Merlin Depsy Nithiya [12] found that the tv affects children, youth and women in particular. Every child today is attracted by Boost, Complian, Horlicks. Cosmetic advertisements are more alluring. Beauty products announce that only slim body and beautiful face are the criteria of professional success. Men are presented as confident, strong, brave, courageous, independent and handsome. The notion of beauty and courage are changing

## OBJECTIVES

1. To give a comprehensive analysis of the selected eight ads.
2. To identify values embedded in the ads.
3. To relate the values to developments taking place in other fields and walks of life.
4. To specify the contemporary social problems as reflected in the select ads.
5. To highlight the importance of such value oriented ads in restoration of values and resolution contemporary social problems.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the eight selected tv ads broadcast on DD1 and Star Plus during 2016 and early 2017. The products are Tanishq Jewellery, Havells Fans, Cadbury, Raymond, Red Label tea, Jahan Soch Wahan Shouchalay, Gurudeep Sings & Daughters, Surf Excel. The principal focus is of social values such as national and social integration. The research design is descriptive in nature and the tool of data collection is observation. The method employed is case study. The values have been identified and presented in a tabular format. While pointing out the importance and relevance of the values, they are also located in the contemporary social environment. The changing pattern of advertising in the wake of value orientation is viewed in the light of the theory of individual response to mass media proposed by Green and McAlister.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Indian Social Value as Reflected in Television Advertisement

**1. Tanishq- Jewellery- The double knot:** In this ad presents a dusk-skinned mother is getting married to a handsome gentleman. She is making herself up for the wedding ceremony and is nervous over the presence of her daughter child and feels awkward. This is her second marriage. She is probably worried as to what would happen to her daughter in the new household. She knows the fact that generally the child born out of the first marriage finds it difficult to adjust to the new environment. Suddenly her daughter comes to her and compliments that her mother is looking very beautiful. The mother opens the box and looks at the beautiful necklace, she feels happy and sentimental. She has a mixed feeling, exhilarated at the thought of marriage and nervous about the future of her daughter. Happily they go to the wedding platform where the priest is chanting the holy mantras. As a part of the Hindu ritual the bride and bridegroom go round the fire. The baby could not control her curiosity and wants to join them. The bridegroom happily beckons the child to join them. This ad incorporates this reformation sweeping in the modern Indian aristocratic society. The bridegroom not only accepts a widow as a wife but also her child without any reservation.

**2. Havells Fans: Hawa Badlegi:** This ad presents a newly married couple in the office of Marriage Bureau. They are there to register of their marriage. The registrar, a middle aged lady, says that, now onwards she will be called as Arti Varma (Varma being her husband's surname). The gentleman instantly intervenes that she is not going to change her surnames, instead he is going to be Pandit. On hearing this answer the Registrar feels happy and surprised at once. This ad draws from the Indian custom wherein women after marriage drop their surname and use that of their husband. At the beginning the Registrar, as a part of her

routine work, says that she will now onwards be called as Varma. The husband's intervention, on the other hand, represents the unconventional thinking taking roots in India these days.

Another sequel ad shows a couple getting discharged from a hospital after delivering a baby girl. The father hands over a birth certificate application to a lady behind the counter. The nurse is surprised to note that the name of the religion written on it was 'Himu'. She replies as to which this strange religion is. The father explains that it is a combination of Hindu and Muslim and further elaborates that when the child grows she will decide the religion of her choice and that she has got the freedom to be a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian or she may choose any other religion. The ad draws from the Indian scenario where religion plays an important role. In matter of religions, children have no freedom; usually follow the religion of their parents. Though there is unity in diversity in India, occasionally the narrow ideologies resurface and cause tensions among communities. Religious intolerance has been one of the hot debates in India. Amidst all this tension, liberal ideas are also sweeping across India which has begun to shake foundation the religious intolerance. The closing message 'hawa badlegi' is suggestive of the reformations happening in the Indian society.

**3. Cadbury Dairy Milk Chocolate:** This ad symbolises freedom and rebellion. This is an encounter between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law. Both of them wear sarees and look very traditional in their attire. The image of a mother-in-law here is that of a dictator while the daughter-in-law has to play a subsidiary role. Their relation is not characterized by frankness, understanding, cooperation etc. Generally, a daughter-in-law never enjoys liberty. There is lack of communication between them. On the contrary, a mother-in-law in the presence of her daughter-in-law does not like her daughter behave independently or live a fashionable life. Most of them live under the pressure of their mothers-in-law. They are supposed to be soft spoken and never initiate any discussion. They seldom eat with the elders. Meanwhile, a street procession happens to pass in the street. The daughter-in-law offers her a piece of Cadbury she is chewing (such offers are seldom made by daughters-in-law in India).

It was a street procession where men were in large number. Traditionally, young women were not allowed to watch such musical processions even through the balconies. Initially there is a sort of frown on the face of the mother-in-law when she noticed that the daughter-in-law was watching the procession while chewing Cadbury. Watching such a public spectacle is considered as a sign of bad manners on the part of married young women. The entire encounter is characterized by non-verbal communication. The daughter-in-law offers her a piece of Cadbury and its

tastes her mood changes. Both of them go downstairs and perform dance on a romantic song in unison.

**4. Raymond the Complete Man:** This ad is based on the notion of a 'complete man'. A couple is leaving for their offices in the morning. The mother is rather tense and uncomfortable. Probably, she might have forgotten something concerning the baby. She gets off and goes into the house. After finishing the chore, she comes back, sits in but again goes inside. The husband watches this with a sense of understanding. He, too, gets off and goes into the house. Later the mother, father and grandmother come out and the mother is seen fondling the baby. As the mother walks a few steps towards the car, the father still holds the baby and the baby cries stretching its hand towards the mother. It means the baby wants either of them stay at home. At this critical moment, the father stays back and the mother drives off.

The ad projects the responsible modern husband who is not subject to traditional orthodox views. Traditionally, nursing babies is considered the job of a mother. It is expected that women generally stay at home doing domestic chores while men go to work. The complete man projected here is an exception to this idea and his attitude to women is wholesome in that he does not believe in gender biases. He willingly allows his wife to go while he prefers to stay at home and look after the baby.

**5. Red Label Tea:** A middle class middle aged Hindu couple returns home. The wife fumbles her purse for the key but to no avail. At the same time, a Muslim woman and her daughter living in neighbour returns home too. She understands the awkward situation and invites them to rest in her home. The husband denies the offer. Upon this the confident Muslim lady announces that she is preparing tea but it does not affect them in any way. However, when the tea starts boiling and as its aromatic smell spreads the wife admits that it is very aromatic. The husband asks his wife that she must have had knee pain and therefore they must go and rest there for some time. After sipping a full one cup of Red Label tea, the husband requests her for another cup as it is very delicious. He is not able to control the temptation. It is communicated in the background that there is flavour of 'taste of togetherness'. It is implied that the Hindu family hasn't had good communication with their Muslim neighbour which is displayed by the Hindu husband's initial stern reply 'we are fine'. The Muslim lady goes inside, her daughter peeps and says, 'Mother is calling'. This too has no effect on the couple. It is only when the smell of tea spreads that they begin to react positively. Emphasis is placed on Red Label which brings people of different religious background together. The message in this ad is important in the backdrop of '3365 communal incidents which occurred in the country from 2011 to 2015 [13].

In a sequel ad a couple goes to visit their son who is now well placed probably in a city. It is a surprise visit that coincides with their son's birthday. As the door opens, the parents wish a happy birthday to their son named Chirag. The excited mother announces that they will surely have a daughter in law that year meaning they are going to arrange his marriage. Later, the son introduces them to Pallavi who lives with him. The parents were displeased to know that he already has a live in relationship. Earlier they were excited and had planned a lot about his marriage. They want their son marry in a traditional fashion. Live in relationship is still not accepted in Indian society and is considered a taboo. They could not sit comfortably and their facial expressions display a sense of strong disapproval. Meanwhile, Pallavi returns with a tray of Red Label tea. As she serves tea, the mother tells that her husband is a diabetic. Instantly, Pallavi replies that the tea is without sugar while in other cup contains only two spoons of sugar. In embarrassment the son inquires whether it is not good tea. The mother with a smile replies that it is bad neither. The ad communicates the fact that the parents have already accepted Pallavi as their daughter in law for her skill of anticipation. Especially the mother's happy approval suggests that such marriages are taking place in India too and that they have begun to play an important in social unification. They are free of evils like dowry, gaudy rituals, financial investments, honor killing etc. The tea is projected as an icebreaking agent.

**6. Jahan Soch Vahan Souchalay:** (Where there is thought, there is toilet) : This government sponsored ad opens amidst wedding rituals in a north Indian Rajasthani family living in a rural setting. The head of the family scolds the band to stop trumpeting as some post-wedding customary ceremony is underway. The newly wedded bride is to drink water. The band having stopped, the bride opens her mask and sips water from the glass and the proud father and socially conscious mother prompt their son to ask his wife to refrain from opening the mask as it is not a sign of civilized society. Meanwhile Vidya Balan asks the mother of the bride where the toilet is. She awkwardly answers that there is no toilet inside the house and therefore she must go in the open. Upon this, Vidya Balan laughs and replies that in that case the bride must open her mask and show her face to everyone. She reiterates that they must construct a toilet inside their house so that the bride need not walk a distance. The mother in law admits that she has never thought in this way. Then Vidya asks her that it is time to think and act now. This ad appears at a time when Sarv Swachhata Abhiyan has been a major policy adopted by the state and central governments. The problem of sanitation is a burning issue in India. "According to Census 2011 only 53.1 % families use toilets and 46.1 % don't have access at all. [14]. Open defecation is a major challenge facing the fast developing economy

and has been an obstacle in ranking India HDI. Women are the worst sufferers due to this malpractice. The government has introduced many celebrities in advertisements for spreading awareness among the rural communities.

**7. Gurdeep Singh & Daughters:** In this typical Amir Khan ad, a customer enters a sweet shop and admires the Punjabi shopkeeper for having an extraordinary sale in his shop. The shopman answers that this is all because of the efforts and hard work of his children who have listed their shop on internet and the sale has gone up. The customer compliments that his sons must be very talented. Gurdeep, corrects him that it is not sons but daughters. The customer was greatly astonished to know this strange fact. In India it is taken for granted that only boys have the potential to transform the family business. The ad communicates the fact that girls are not in any way inferior to boys and that they can be equally industrious and successful. It is conveyed that success never depends on gender but on thinking. Here is another modern value celebrated. Two sisters have taken up the business in their hands and made it successful. It tells that gender prejudices need to be shunned. Towards the end of the ad we see that the name plate 'Gurdeep Singh & Daughters' is the culmination because the custom of writing 'brothers' on shop boards is very common in India. Female foeticide has been a rampant cultural malpractice in India. 'According to 2011 census Sex ratio in India are 943 India 217:15'[15]. The Government has taken a series of measures in order to curb this malpractice. It is a part of 'Save Girl' movement.

**8. Surf Excel: Easy Wash:** This ad features grandparents going out of station. As the grandpa tells this to his grandson, he immediately rushes to the rack and polishes his shoes. The Grandpa does not scold him for having spoiled his dress with shoes polish stains, instead he compliments that he has done an excellent job. However, looking at her daughter in law, he regrets that he has added to her washing work. She happily replies that she is not at all worried about it because she has got Surf Excel Easy Wash. In this ad the position of grandparents in Indian household is highlighted. In the past, grandparents enjoyed a high position and they were respected and called the head of the family. In the globalized scenario, however, this is rapidly changing. They are looked upon as a burden. However, change is now taking place and they are once again being respected. The grandpa-grandson relationship is remarkably presented here. The grandson polishing shoes for his grandpa underlines their healthy relationship. Similarly the daughter in law reacts in a positive and mature way to the entire episode.

In a sequel ad a grandmother and her grandson walks into a grocer's shop and as she is about to pay, a ten rupee note falls down. The child crawls underneath

and brings it back but only after smearing his shirt and pants with dust and mud stains. The happy grandma soothes the child not to worry as with the very ten rupee they can buy a Surf Excel Easy and thus get rid of the stains.

In another sequel ad a tiffin falls down from the grandmother and all the oranges and curry get scattered on the floor. The proactive grandson

immediately gathers all but couldn't and therefore he removes his shirt makes a makeshift sack of it, fills all the oranges into it and hands over to the grandmother. The worried grandma says that he has done an excellent job but spoiled his dress. The mother comes hurriedly and adds that they need not bother as a ten rupee Surf Excel will clean all the stains. Both the ads convey the value of helpfulness, cooperation, pro-activeness, tolerance etc.

**Table 1: Values emerging in the ads**

SI No.	Advertisement	Projected of Social Values
1.	Tanishq- Jewellery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ changing attitudes towards remarriage</li> <li>▪ change in traditional thinking</li> <li>▪ modernity</li> <li>▪ moral support to children</li> <li>▪ changing views about colour biases</li> <li>▪ liberal outlook towards children born out of first marriage</li> </ul>
2.	Havells Fans: Hawa Badlegi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ secularism</li> <li>▪ changing attitudes of husbands tolerance</li> <li>▪ religious</li> <li>▪ universalism</li> <li>▪ freedom</li> <li>▪ national integration</li> </ul>
3.	Dairy Milk Cadbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ friendship</li> <li>▪ balance in tradition and modernity</li> <li>▪ freedom being granted to daughters in law</li> <li>▪ integration</li> <li>▪ communication</li> </ul>
4.	Raymond the Complete Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ changing attitudes of husbands</li> <li>▪ modernity</li> <li>▪ responsibility of being a father</li> <li>▪ communication</li> <li>▪ sympathy, care</li> <li>▪ women empowerment</li> </ul>
5.	Red Label Tea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ friendship, secularism</li> <li>▪ live in relationship</li> <li>▪ neighbourly duties</li> <li>▪ religious tolerance</li> <li>▪ persuasion</li> <li>▪ changing attitude towards honor killing</li> <li>▪ national integration</li> </ul>
6.	Jahan Soch Vahan Souchalay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ change in traditional thinking</li> <li>▪ orientation of people regarding sanitation</li> <li>▪ motivation</li> <li>▪ hygiene</li> <li>▪ modernity</li> <li>▪ rural upliftment</li> <li>▪ woman empowerment</li> <li>▪ environmental awareness</li> </ul>
7	Gurdeep singh & Daughters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ attitudinal change about daughters, female foeticide</li> <li>▪ modernity in thinking.</li> <li>▪ change in traditional mindset</li> <li>▪ promotion of gender equality, modern technology</li> <li>▪ women empowerment</li> </ul>
8.	Surf Excel : Easy Wash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ respect and love with grandparents</li> <li>▪ intimate kinship</li> <li>▪ joint family</li> <li>▪ understanding</li> <li>▪ helpfulness</li> <li>▪ communication</li> <li>▪ modernity</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSION

TV has become an inseparable part of human life. Education and information were basic aims but now advertisement and entertainment dominate the scenario. National and multinational corporations are making huge financial investment in order to reach to the customers. Some advertisements negatively affect culture while there are quite a few that strive to maintain ethical standards and demonstrate social responsibility. According to Green and McAlister positive values in ads will help a country like India in a big way. If more and more companies join hands in this mission of social advertising, they will help maintain national integration, inculcate human values and gradually a visible change will be reflected at the community level. This shift in advertising, according to Multinational Corporation, will immensely help in resolving communalism, female foeticide, degrading sanitation situation, inter-generational conflict etc. and will lead India towards a developed nation.

The rapidly dropping sex ratio has been a matter of concern in India. Female foeticide is a grim issue in parts of India. Gerontological situation too is volatile and therefore India needs to do better on this front. In order to improve India's ranking in the Human development Index, it needs to boost up efforts in the field of open defecation. Family being the key social institution, the decline of intra-family communication often leads to conflict. A better man-woman communication is commonly presented in most of the ads. No doubt the basic motive of any ad is to persuade the customers but at the same time they can serve as the counsellors.

This can be viewed as a new shift occurring in tv broadcasting and needs to be further encouraged. Considering its reach and extent value based advertising should prove instrumental in realizing national integration. They create awareness and change the mind set of people making them active participants in pluralistic Indian society. On the basis of the theory and review we can say that tv ads if go hand in hand with the values, can do a yeoman service to the nation.

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