



Understanding the Nature of Green Advertising in India: A Content Analysis

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Abstract: *The paper investigates various elements of ecocentrism present in advertisements. It also studies the nature of green advertising and marketing in India. Content of four advertisements have been analysed to study the use of colour, makeup, words, lighting and sound. Themes and messages promoted by these advertisements are also examined.*

Key Words: *Ecocentrism, Green advertising, Green Marketing, Green Products, Inductive Content Analysis, Amitabh Bachchan,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The term Ecocentrism emphasises the way humans contribute to the abuses of the natural world. Human beings are believed to be the direct cause of the ecological crisis that today our planet is facing. Ecocentrism reconceives nature and the planet Earth as primary and humankind as secondary (Newman & Golson, 2011, P 133). Rowe (1994) argued that Ecocentrism is the only promising universal belief-system. It is defined as a value-shift from Homo sapiens to planet earth: Ecosphere. In Ecosphere, there is a shift in value from Homo Sapiens to the planet earth This value shift has been backed by a scientific rationale. With this shift, the preeminent metaphor of life, the organism, is replaced with the Earth (Newman & Golson, 2011, P 133). All organisms on this Earth has been nurtured and evolved from the Mother Nature. They are sustained by the Earth herself. Thus the Earth, not the organism, is regarded as the metaphor for Life. Earth is both Life-centre and creativity centre. We, humans along with all floras and faunas, are mere subservient part of this Whole entity. Thus, various fundamental philosophies give us the idea of ecological awareness and emotional sensitivity to our mother nature, along with various materialistic focuses (Rowe, 1994).

As the ecological concerns have evolved and developed throughout the society, advertisers have become interested in developing green messages and in targeting green customer segments. Previously, environmental friendliness was considered as the extra additional feature for a product, but presently it has been an increasing selling factor. In this regard, advertising is increasingly utilized to effectively present the environmental practices in the production processes of products or businesses. Features such as 'ozone friendly' and 'recyclable' are highlighted. The advertising community has also created a standard lexicon for overused terms such as 'environmentally friendly,' 'recyclable,' 'safe,' and 'natural' (Wehr & Robbins, 2011, P1).

2. GREEN ADVERTISING AND GREEN MARKETING

Advertisers aim to influence their target audience with symbolism, and they transmit collective unconscious images through a combination of discourse and action. In environmental advertising, this discourse is used effectively for saving the environment. Individuals are encouraged to want to save the environment and are cast as a playing a divine role in this effort (Wehr & Robbins, 2011, pp1-2). Green advertising is referred to advertising that highlights the environmental benefits of a product or service. Advertising has three functions, to inform, remind and persuade, the aim of green advertising is to create awareness and tentative strong attitudes towards brands and companies (Singh & Khan, 2015, P156). Green advertising can be classified into three different forms (Wehr & Robbins, 2011, pp 3-4).

- Advertisements which establish a positive relationship between product and environment. It emphasises on the environmental friendly feature of the ad.
- Advertisements which emphasize on a product or service that encourages an environmentalist lifestyle.
- Advertisements which propose cooperation in the responsibility for environmental protection.

Green Advertising is the part of Green Marketing strategy. Advertising plays an important role in Marketing Mix. Today, organizations are using Green Marketing and Advertising to create an opportunity that can be used to achieve



its objectives. Organizations also believe they have a moral obligation for being more socially responsible (Tiwari, P 35).

3. OBJECTIVES :

The present study aims at investigating various ways the elements of Ecocentrism such as Nature, Environment, and Planet Earth have been represented in five environmental advertisements.

- To review previous literature highlighting the importance of green advertising.
- To find out different ecocentric terms used in the advertisements.
- To find out different ecocentric images and videos used in the advertisements.
- To find out in which category of green advertising these advertisements fall.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Many researches have been conducted on Green advertising because people are becoming more aware of saving our environment.

Testa, Iraldo, Tessitore, & Frey studied 13,490 advertisements, which showed only 1,314 (9.8%) advertising messages contain environmental content. Though environment advertising content is much low, but data showed 3% hike in environmental content in comparison to 2001. Mainly multinational companies (68%) and large Italian companies (11%) promote these green messages. The study showed that environmental information in advertising has increased quantitatively and qualitatively in Italy and United States (2012, pp 15-28).

Gupta & Kaur stated that Green advertising is simply a form of promotion tool in marketing, which promote and advertise “green products” — products which are eco-friendly and recyclable in nature. Green advertising is in high demand when it comes to make consumers aware of the “green products” present in the market. If green advertising is motivated then the rate of consumers being influenced towards “green products” can easily rise from 65-70% to 100% (2014, pp 60-63).

VanDykea & Tedescob analyzed environmental advertising in 1990, 2000, and 2010 to identify trends in advertising content over time. The study revealed a development of public sentiment toward the environment. The influence of advertising on public opinion can be direct or indirect. There is a direct impact of media exposure on the ad communication receivers. The study revealed environmental issues were covered and discussed in the public sphere play an important role in society because “media actively sets the frames of reference” and people use media to understand and discuss various events (2016, pp 36–50).

Ahuja studied various factors that influence consumers’ purchasing decision after viewing green advertising. These factors include both environmental and non-environmental factors. Various elements such as Price, Time, Confusion, Unavailability and Trust play an important role in influencing consumer’s willingness to purchase green products. Indians have started preferring eco-friendly products to live healthy life along with environmental safety. People now prefer green products and services. Government has taken many steps to ‘Go Green’ like framework of legislation to reduce use of plastics bags which is harmful for the society and replace the plastic bags with the paper bags which are environmental friendly (2015, pp 39-43).

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS :

RQ1: What is the relationship between audio elements, visual elements and written materials in these advertisements?

RQ2: How lighting, sound and color have been used?

RQ3: What theme or themes do we find in these advertisements?

RQ4: What message is conveyed through these visual and written materials?

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

The research methodology involves content analysis of four popular environment advertisements. Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use (Krippendorff, 2004, P 18). Content Analysis Research is an empirically grounded method, which includes either inductive, deductive or both methods. The present content analysis relies on inductive approach as it applies qualitative research methods. The inductive method aims at searching out previously researched works from different aspects and the present study also does the same. Content Analysis is an exploratory method and usually begins with an open mind. Inductive approach identifies key theme of the subject by reducing the material into certain categories or themes. These audio-visual advertisements had been searched with the word ‘environment,’ ‘pollution,’ ‘eco-friendly’ and ‘nature’ on YouTube.



7. FINDINGS :

According to Dey (1993) Inductive Content Analysis aims at finding the sender, place, time and the reason from the analysed content. Based on these principles 5 advertisements were viewed on YouTube.

Advisement 1:

Name: Doorway to Green

Company: Tata Pravesh

Time: 3 minutes 2 seconds

Summary: Two groups are invited to paint some scenery. First group comprising of adults is asked to draw with the available crayons and colours. They are asked to choose colours wisely as the next group will arrive later to draw with the rest colours. First group draw colourful pictures. After that next group arrive. This group comprises of small children arrives. They draw with the remaining colours. After that both groups are seated before each other and the first group is asked to show their pictures. Their pictures are full of vibrant and bright colours such as green, light blue, yellow and orange. Then the second group is asked to show. Their pictures are full of dark shades such as grey and black. The members of the first apologize for using the colours selfishly without thinking for the next group. Then both group draw together sharing all colours.

Message: If we use up all the green, our next generation will be left with none.

Advisement 2:

Name: Time Bomb

Company: GAIL (India) Limited

Time: 3 minutes 12 seconds

Summary: The story begins with a man looking at small dried plants. He takes out his energy watch and upgrades the energy level of the plants. Then he joins his family at breakfast table. The children are ready to go to school after the breakfast. Members are pale in colour with full of dark circles. The girl looks through the window at smoke-filled greyish sky. Mother enquires the children about their lunch boxes, water bottles and oxygen (O₂) kit. The girl replies that her kit is finished. Mother gets angry and interrogates the boy named Pratick about the kit. He says it is finished as he has used it during his football match. Mother yells at him telling they are saving each and every penny for their oxygen kit. They cannot move out without the kits. She orders another kit and in a moment a parcel appears through drone. They wear their mask for their journey. Meanwhile, the girl talks to the audiences telling it not 2016 but 2030. She further adds "If you would have stopped the pollution then I could move freely and my dad wouldn't look like 50. Trust me, he is 38. This is my life and soon going to be yours."

Message: Air pollution is claiming one life every 23 seconds India (Source-WHO). By 2030, 1 Billion people will die, due to air pollution.

Advisement 3:

Name: Green Good Deeds

Organization: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.

Time: 1 minute 30 seconds

Brand Ambassador: Mr. Amitabh Bachchan

Summary: A man is shaving while turning the tap on. Suddenly calling bell rings and Mr Bachchan enters with five children asking for "Donation for Environment." The man asks for donation box. One of the children turns the light switch off. They yell telling they got their donation. It is shown that while the switch is turned off, another dark room gets electricity. Different activities such as avoiding plastic while shopping and carrying own bag, turning the tap off while brushing, using car pool, separating the biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste, planting saplings, and conserving water are shown along with the jingle. At last, the man talking to Mr Bachchan remembers his tap is on and rushes towards the bathroom. Mr Bachchan concludes "Chaliye ek aur jur gaye Green Good Deeds Abhiyan se. Hum sab ko bhi har din karni hai green good deed."

Message: Go Green, No Plastic, Save Environment

Advisement 4:

Name: Breathe Free

Company: Volvo Auto India.

Time: 2 minutes 34 seconds

Summary: The story begins with a long shot of a city full of grey smoke. The next shot shows a message written "1.7 million children die every year due to polluted environment (WHO Report)." The next shot shows a close up of a table

with an inhaler. Mother enters the grey and dark room and calls a small boy from sleep. The boy wears mask and goes to school. All are wearing masks outside because of pollution. The boy tries to look outside in the playground but nobody is out due to pollution. He is all isolated without any friends. He tries to see twinkling stars in the sky but he fails. Then he takes out the tab to see the stars but his mother refrain him. He again looks at stars in magazine. His father finds out his dream and takes him to ride to a forest by their car. Both of them enjoy the green environment and bright stars. At last the man along with his wife brings many plants and adds greenery to their surroundings. The boy comes joyfully with his football.

Message: Do your bit today to clean the air of tomorrow.

8. RESULT AND DISCUSSION :

Green advertising creates a positive effect on consumer's purchase intention and builds a strong bond between the advertiser and consumers. It has a positive impact on consumers purchase intentions and builds strong trust between the two. The study confined to green advertising which has national, international as well as universal approach.

RQ1: Relationship between audio elements, visual elements and written materials

Advertisement of Tata Pravesh presented messages in green colour. Close-ups of crayons are taken to show bright colours such as green, yellow, orange and blue. Different colours are used in advertisement Time Bomb. Indoor lights are red, blue and green in colour. Walls are painted green. The girl says "This is not 2016, its 2030. India is playing in World Cup Football. Mobile internet is running at 10G instead of 4G. But the pollution level increased so much that we can't step out without oxygen kit." These words portray the future condition of the Earth. The way human lifestyle changed due to technological advancement is also shown. Age and physique of humans will change in future due to pollution.

Actors are used skillfully in these ads. Makeup of the actors in Time Bomb is quite similar to zombies with pale skin full of dark circles. Volvo ad uses face mask to show the polluted atmosphere.



Figure 1.1: Time Bomb ad portrays actors as bloodless dead bodies. Amitabh Bachchan, the brand ambassador of Green Good Deeds Campaign. Picture Courtesy- YouTube

RQ2: Use of Lighting, Sound and Color

- Tata Pravesh – Sound changes from happiness to sad one when the second group showed their pictures. For first group bright colours are used, whereas second group uses dark shades.



Figure 1.2: Adult group uses bright colours, while children group uses left over dark shades. Picture Courtesy- YouTube

- GAIL (India) Limited – Sound of air spraying come when the girl put on the O2 kit mask. Deep sound of inhalation and exhalation are also used. Sound of siren is used factory chimneys emitting gas and smoke is shown. Black and grey colour is used for showing polluted environment.



Figure 1.3: Ad Time Bomb uses dark colours to depict harshness of air pollution. Picture Courtesy- YouTube

- Green Good Deeds – Jingle with Hindi convey messages such as “switch off here, life gets on there”, “avoid plastic, adopt jute bag to save marine life,” “here tap gets off, there future is changed,” “do car pool to fill air with smile.” The ad of Green Good Deeds uses the colour green wisely. Volunteers wear Green t-shirts. Van used for water conservation also painted green. Jingle in Hindi uses the word green (hara) “Kuch hare bhare kaam apni dharti k naam.” The ad was launched for celebrating World Environment Day on 2018. The logo uses a picture of a tree and different colours.

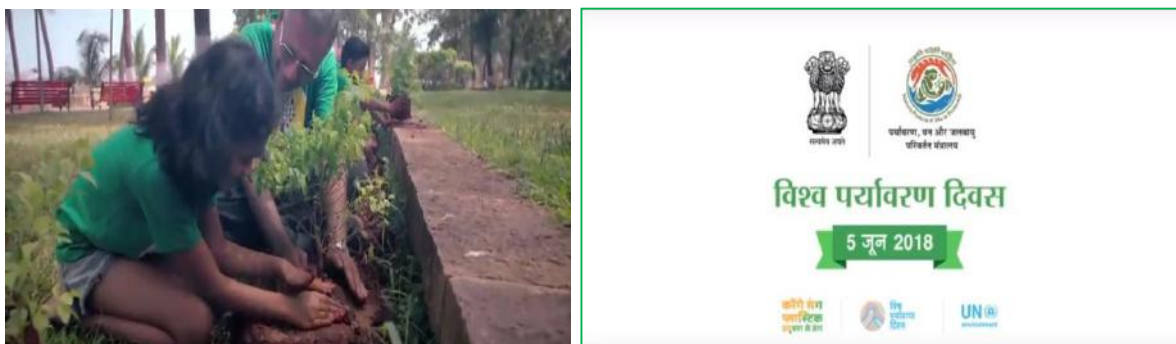


Figure 1.4: Green Good Deeds Ad uses colour green in T-shirts, Text, and Logo. Picture Courtesy- YouTube

- Volvo Auto India – Volvo uses dark shades for showing pollution, while green to show clean atmosphere. Jingle of the ad alters the famous nursery rhyme to shows the darkness of polluted environment. “When the blessings Sun is gone, when He nothing shines upon. When the world could see the light, Twinkle Twinkle all day night. Twinkle Twinkle little star, How up wonder where you are. Up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky.” The ad also uses the term “Toxic Air” published in a newspaper with red font to depict the evil side of polluted air.



Figure 1.5: Breathe free campaign of Volvo uses dark greyish shade to show polluted air, whereas green is used to show clean air. Picture Courtesy- YouTube

RQ3: Advertisement Themes

The themes of these advertisements are

- Tata Pravesh - Save a tree, use your resources wisely, save for future generation

- Time Bomb- Choose Natural Gas to control the pollution
- Green Good Deeds- To join save environment campaign
- Volvo Auto India- Use Volvo cars and join breathe free campaign

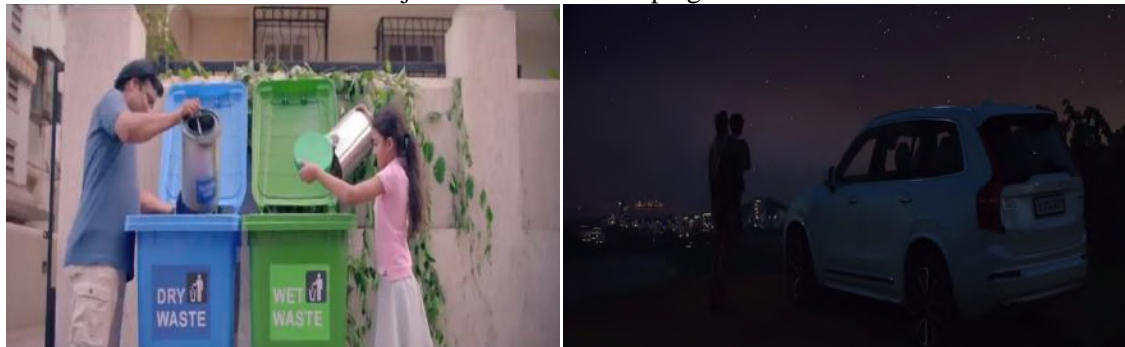


Figure 1. 6: Green Good Deeds promotes use of different bins for dry and wet waste. Volvo Auto India promotes car usage to enjoy the beauty of nature. Picture Courtesy- YouTube

RQ4: Advertisements Message

- Tata Pravesh – If we don't use our green resources properly, our future generation will not be able to use them.
- GAIL (India) Limited – Air pollution kills one person in every 23 seconds, one billion people will die by 2030 due to pollution.
- Green Good Deeds – Adopt healthy green habits to save our planet.
- Volvo Auto India – Volvo promotes us to use their car. Volvo car uses 'Clean Zone technology' to make air clean, and breathable.

9. CONCLUSIONS:

Advertising industry in India has witnessed a massive change in past few decades. Advertisers of heavy industries such as steel, oil, steel, and machinery manufacturers are aligning towards green or environment advertising. Automotive and petro-chemical industries are also showing their concern towards Ecocentrism topics such as Save Environment and Save Earth. Both Government of India and other private organizations are investing on green advertising to promote 'green message.' Earlier, Green marketing and green advertising both focuses on product-oriented claim than on image-oriented, process-oriented or environmental-oriented claims. But currently, advertisers in India are focusing on building environment friendly image or promoting good habits through their messages.

Four advertisements analysed in the current study are selected as these ads are highly popular on Social media. Previous literature review show green advertising has played a great role in making people aware about environment protection along with brand promotion. The main objective of advertising is to increase sales and generate more and more profit. But now, due to changing environment, companies are no longer concern for only generating revenue. They have to be socially responsible and think about the environment to survive in the market. Volvo and GAIL advertisements emphasise on polluted air and promote usage of their product to keep environment clean. TATA Pravesh doors endorse the message that 'Doors and Windows made of steel with elegance of wood.' Advertisements of Volvo, GAIL and TATA Pravesh fall in second category of green advertising as they mostly emphasise on their product to encourage environmentalist lifestyle. Out of these four advertisements Green Good deeds ad persuade to adopt good green habits to protect our mother nature. It is totally image-oriented, process-oriented and environmental-oriented advertisement. Other three made product oriented claims. Green Good Deed ad falls under third category of advertising as it promotes cooperation between human and environment. All four advertisements use characters, makeup, colour, lighting, and sound beautifully to promote their messages.

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