

## Surrogate Advertising- An Ethical way of promoting Unethical Products

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### **Introduction**

Advertising is a means of communication with the users of a product or service. Advertisements are messages paid for by those who send them and are intended to inform or influence people who receive them.

Advertising is always present, though people may not be aware of it. In today's world, advertising uses every possible media to get its message through. It does this via television, print (newspapers, magazines, journals etc), radio, press, internet, direct selling, hoardings, mailers, contests, sponsorships, posters, clothes, events, colors, sounds, visuals and even people (endorsements).

The advertising industry is made of companies that advertise, agencies that create the advertisements, media that carries the ads, and a host of people like copy editors, visualizers, brand managers, researchers, creative heads and designers who take it the last mile to the customer or receiver. A company that needs to advertise itself and/or its products hires an advertising agency. The company briefs the agency on the brand, its imagery, the ideals and values behind it, the target segments and so on. The agencies convert the ideas and concepts to create the visuals, text, layouts and themes to communicate with the user. After approval from the client, the ads go on air, as per the bookings done by the agency's media buying unit.

As it is clear that advertising plays a major role in promoting a particular brand or product and there are many advantages and positive results of advertising. But as the saying goes "every coin has two sides", likewise advertising also has some negative effects to a certain extent. One such kind of advertising is "Surrogate advertising".

Surrogate Advertising is advertising of illegal banned products like Alcohol and Cigarettes. In simple words, a surrogate advertisement can be defined as an advertisement that duplicates the brand image of one product to promote another product of the same brand. The surrogate or substitute could either resemble the original product or could be a different product altogether but it is marketed under the established brand name of the original product. Surrogate advertisements are used to promote and advertise products of brands when the original product cannot be advertised on mass media. Some instances of surrogate advertisements are: Bagpiper Soda, Cassettes and CDs, Royal Challenge Golf Accessories and Mineral Water, Imperial Blue Cassettes and CDs etc.

Besides Alcohol and Cigarette, Surrogate Advertising is also used in Pharmaceuticals industry. In many countries, pharmaceuticals companies are not allowed to advertise directly.

### **1. Literature Review**

*In May 2018, Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss* says the IPL Bangalore team's name, Royal Challengers, amounts to surrogate advertising. He further alleged that Vijay Mallya, who owns the IPL Bangalore Team Royal Challengers was promoting the liquor brand produced by his United Breweries Group through his team's name. However, The Supreme Court bench pointed out that the team was not named 'Royal Challenge' 'the liquor brand, but 'Royal Challengers'.

*Dr. Gaurav Bissa, Mr. Avadhesh Vyas in their article- Surrogate advertisements on Television- "An analysis with special reference to Indian Youth"* indicated that Surrogate advertisement have a great impact on youth and hence there should be greater awareness of the consequences of such advertisements among the audience is the need of the hour along with the need for new legislations on surrogate advertisements.

*Ms. Deepa Nathwani, in her article- "Impact of Surrogate Advertisements"* stated that such advertisements have a higher brand recall value on target consumers and majority of population within the age group of 16-40 years are being influenced by such advertisements.

### **2. Surrogate advertising in India**

In India, Surrogate Advertisements are done mainly in the tobacco and liquor industry. This is a direct consequence of the ban on direct advertisements of tobacco and liquor. Therefore to promote and advertise their products to the masses, Liquor and tobacco found a way around the ban through surrogate ads. The banned product (alcohol or cigarettes) is not projected directly to consumers but rather masked

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under another product under the same brand name so that whenever there is a mention of that brand, people start associating it with its main product.

India has held a strong stance on the ban of advertising tobacco and liquor products on all media platforms since 1995. The ban was forced after extensive research from the Indian ministry of health found that such products have adverse effects on person's health.

But, however the increase in population saw the sales of tobacco and liquor increase at an exponential rate. Therefore companies were forced to seek an alternative means of advertising, which led to the eventual creation of surrogate advertising in India, and that is why we see major liquor brands promoting their club sodas, mineral water, CD's or playing cards to hammer the brand name into the heads of the consumers

Bagpiper was one of the earliest brands that took to surrogate advertising. The brand introduced the slogan of "Khoob jamega rang jab mil baithenge teen yaar. Aap mai aur Bagpiper" in 1993 and got the then famous Bollywood celebrities such as Dharmendra, Jackie Shroff and others to feature in its soda campaigns. Brands like Kingfisher, Wills actually bank upon such ads to draw attention to their other products. For instance, Kingfisher has promoted everything from bottled water, to soda to calendar under the umbrella of the brand name 'Kingfisher'.

### **3. Objectives of the Study**

The current study was undertaken to fulfill the following objectives.

- To find out the impact made by surrogate advertisement on consumers buying decision.
- To find out the awareness of consumers towards surrogate advertisements.
- To find out how consumers perceive surrogate advertisements and the products.
- To find out whether surrogate advertisement benefit in a positive or negative manner to the manufacturers of banned products.

### **4. Data Collection**

- a) **Primary Data:** The primary data was collected from the customers through personal interviews, E-mails and telephonic interviews.
- b) **Secondary data:** the secondary data was collected from related articles, websites and other print media. Television and radio were also an important source of secondary data.

### **5. Sampling Design**

- a) **Sampling technique:** Judgemental sampling
- b) **Target audience:** Target audience consist of 120 respondents, and who are literate and above the age group of 16 years.
- c) **Sample size:** 120 respondents
- d) **Sampling area:** Panaji (Capital city of Goa)

### **6. Research Methodology**

The data collected through Questionnaires, Personal interviews and telephonic interviews was appropriately analyzed as below:

a) The **Percentage Analysis** of the data collected was performed to find out the demographic profile of the respondents.

b) The Primary data collected, was aptly analysed through the use of **Pie diagram** and conclusions were drawn accordingly.

### **7. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Demographic factors	Category	No. Respondents	Percentage
Age	16-25 yrs	33	27.5
	26-35 yrs	45	37.5
	36-45 yrs	31	25.83
	45 yrs & above	11	9.17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender	Male	82	68.33

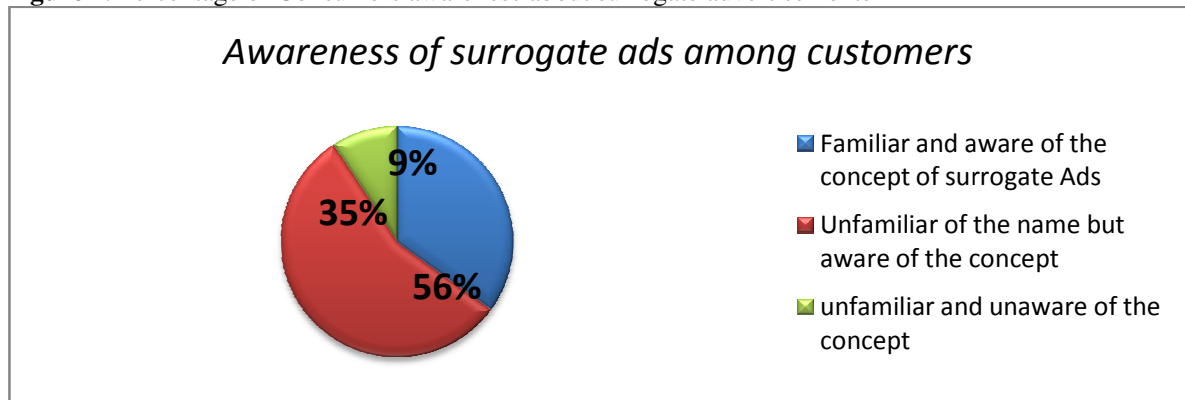
	Female	38	31.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational qualification</b>	Illiterate	6	5
	SSCE	11	9.17
	HSSCE	27	22.5
	Graduate	47	39.17
	Post Graduate	29	24.17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Income (P.M)</b>	Less than 10000	5	4.17
	11000 - 20000	13	10.83
	21000 - 30000	53	44.17
	31000 - 40000	32	26.7
	41000 - 50000	9	7.50
	51000 & above	8	6.67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Primary Source: Categorywise Distribution of Demographic profile of respondents

**The above table indicates that: -**

- 1) Majority of the respondents i.e. 37.5% fall under the age group of 26-35 years, whereas 27.5% respondents fall under the age group of 16-25 years. Rest all are above the age group of 36 years.
- 2) There are 68.33% of the respondents who are Male and 31.7% are female.
- 3) 39.17% of the respondents are graduate followed by 24.17% who are Post graduate. Whereas 5%, 9.17% and 22.5% fall under Illiterate, SSCE and HSSCE respectively.
- 4) 44.17% of respondents earn monthly income between Rs.21000-30000. 26.7% of respondents earn an income of Rs. 31000-40000. Only 5% fall under the category who earns less than Rs.10000.

**Figure 1.** Percentage of Consumers awareness about surrogate advertisements

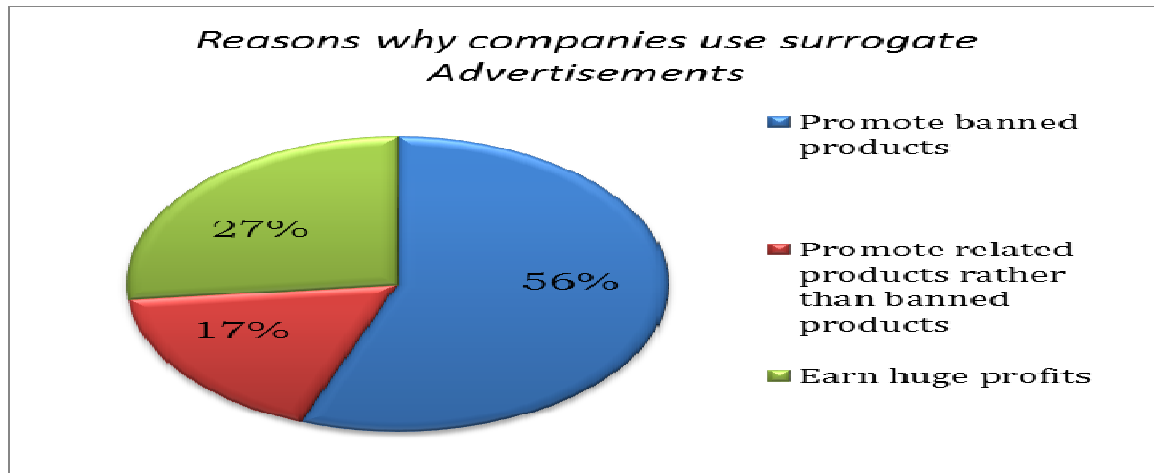


Primary Source

The above figure indicates that –

- 56% of the respondents are unfamiliar with the name (surrogate advertising) but aware of the concept
- 35% of respondents are familiar with the name (surrogate advertising) and also aware of the concept.
- Only 9% of the respondents are unaware of the name and concept of surrogate advertising.

**Figure 2.** Reasons why liquor and tobacco manufacturing companies resort to surrogate advertisements

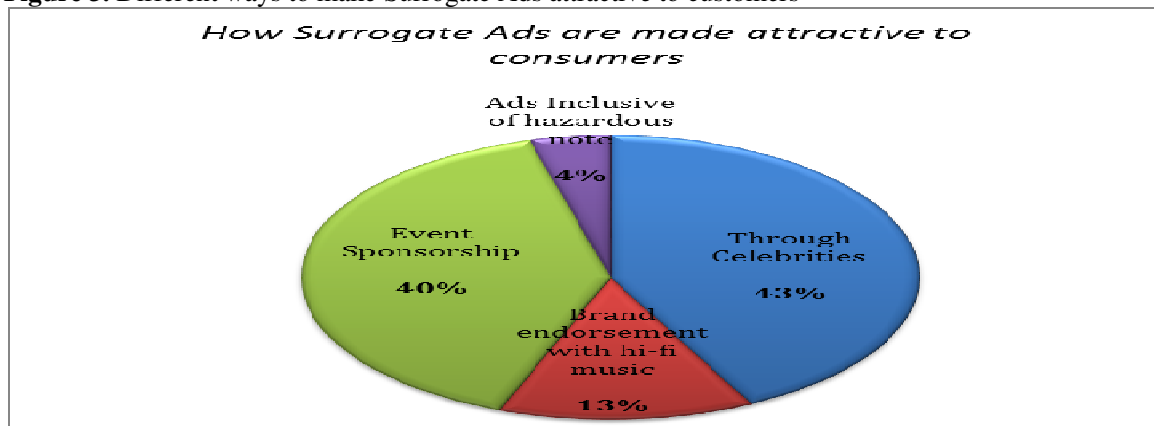


*Primary Source*

The above figure indicates that –

- 56% of the respondents believe that companies resort to such practice in order to promote their banned products like cigarettes, tobacco, gutkha, or liquor products.
- 27% of the respondents believe that companies use surrogate advertising for promotion of related products like Soda, Mineral Water, Music CD's and other related Merchandise.
- 17% of the respondents are of opinion that companies always want to make profits by making use of such advertising technique.

**Figure 3.** Different ways to make Surrogate Ads attractive to customers



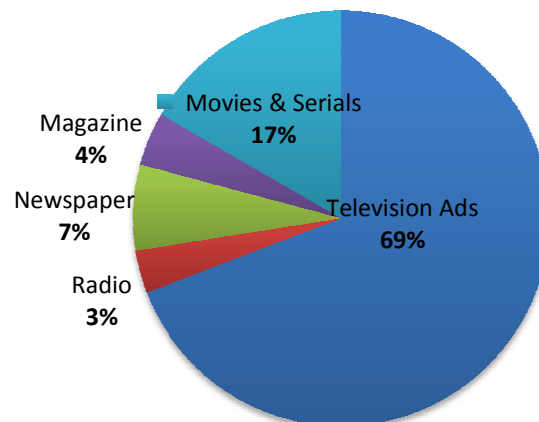
*Primary Source*

The above Figure indicates that –

- 43% of the respondents feel that Companies on purpose make use of limelight Celebrities for the promotion of their products as they have a fan base of millions and always wants to live up that particular lifestyle as the celebrities do.
- 40% of the respondents are of the opinion that Sponsoring any major events where masses of people engage like filmfare awards or cricket match do attract the attention of thousands of people which helps in promotion of their products.
- 13% of the respondents feel that Companies makes use of hi-fi music while endorsing a brand which attracts customers.
- Only 4% of the respondents are of opinion that companies should make compulsory the use of Health Hazard notes when the ads are played to make people aware of health problems which are caused due to consumption of such products. They are also of the opinion that such products are hazardous for health and hence should be banned completely.

**Figure 4.** Appropriate Media to telecast Surrogate advertisements

### *Appropriate media to telecast surrogate advertisements*



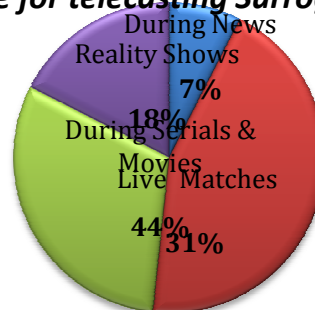
*Primary Source*

The above table indicates that-

- 69% of the respondents were of the opinion that Television Ads are the most preferred medium to telecast such ads as it looks glamorous and entertaining to the customers.
- 17% of the respondents believe that such Ads can be telecasted through Movies and Serials as people follow their favorite celebrity.
- Newspaper and Magazine Are also a preferred medium through which such ads are shown and to some extent Radio also plays a role in promotion of banned products in form of surrogate Ads.

**Figure 5.** Appropriate time for telecast of Surrogate ads

### *Apt time for telecasting Surrogate ads*



*Primary Source*

The above figure indicates that-

- 44% of the respondents feel that such ads can be more effective when they are shown during the telecast of Movies and Serials as it is being watched by many people during prime time.
- 31% of the respondents believe that such ads which are shown during live Cricket or Football matches have a great impact to influence the consumers.
- 18% of the respondents feel that Ads shown during reality shows such as singing or dancing also have a great impact on consumers as it is being watched by many people.
- Only 7% of the respondents are of the opinion that Ads shown during news on news channels are effective on consumers because people do watch news channels as they want to stay updated with the current affairs.

**Figure 6.** Consumers perception about Surrogate advertisements

### *How Surrogate Advertisements are perceived by the customers*



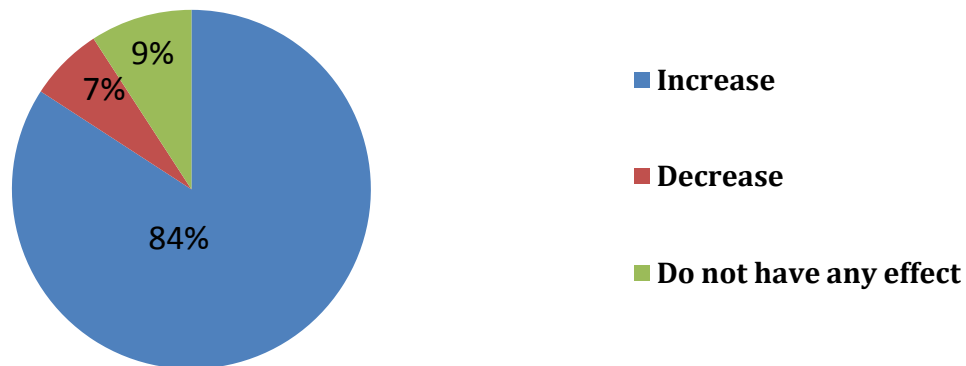
#### *Primary Source*

The above figure indicates that –

- 34% of the respondents feel that such ads are very much entertaining and glamorous as it involves usage of Celebrities endorsing the products.
- 26% of the respondents are of the opinion that such ads are totally misguiding specially the youth segment who fall for the glamour of the Ad and consume the banned products like liquor or tobacco.
- 23% of the respondents believe that liquor and tobacco products are very much harmful to health and should be totally banned by the government.
- 17% of the respondents are of the view that Surrogate ads are informative in terms of social obligations irrespective of the real motive of the marketers marketing such products.

**Figure 7.** Impact which Surrogate Ads have on consumption rate of banned products

### *Impact of Surrogate ads on consumption rate*



#### *Primary Source*

The above figure indicates that-

- 84% of the respondents believe that Surrogate ads have a great impact on the minds of consumers specially the youth segment which results in tremendous increase in consumption of banned products.
- 7% of the respondents feel that surrogate ads have a decreasing effect on consumption rate of banned products due to Statutory warning note attached to it.
- 9% of the respondents are of the neutral opinion. They feel that such ads neither increase nor decrease the consumption of such products.

#### **Conclusion**

Advertising techniques have always been a powerful medium through which the marketers try to promote the products, may it be a healthy food or products which are banned by the government. The companies have always found a best route to market the products to the target customers by always enticing the consumers and making it more glamorous. When the Government imposed a ban on Tobacco and Liquor Products, The Companies were forced to find an alternative way by getting through the loopholes in the system by inventing the concept of Surrogate Advertising.

From the above Research it can be concluded that Surrogate Advertising technique has proved to be a boon for the marketers as it has a tremendous impact on the mindsets of the targeted consumers. As it can be referred from the primary data of the research, most of the people are aware of the concept of surrogate ads and also aware that a ban has been imposed on Liquor and Tobacco Products by the government due to which Companies are resorting to such kind of Advertising Techniques.

The marketers of such products are able to identify their customers in a very accurate manner as to how to attract their attention by making Celebrities to endorse such products because they have a huge fan base which results in the increase of consumption of such products. They also believe that sponsoring a mega event like Movie awards function namely Filmfare or any sports matches like cricket will indirectly have a significant impact on the consumers.

That surrogate advertisements have influenced the target population to remind and recall the brand name or brand product and that regulated advertisements somewhat influence the consumers to consume Liquor or Tobacco Products. The Marketers are always on the lookout for various kinds of surrogate ways to market such kinds of products. Manufacturers of surrogate products can use television as a suitable media to broadcast the surrogate ads whereas it's during the live matches or the reality shows that have proved to be the appropriate time to make their consumers watch such advertisements.

Surrogate Advertisement technique have proved to be a successful strategy for marketers to promote their banned products and mostly the youth segment is more influenced by such ads since they follow their favorite celebrity who they perceive to consume such products irrespective of the real motive of the marketers behind the Ads.

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