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A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF ADVERTISING

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Abstract: It is evident that advertising has undergone several major changes over the years, both as a creative process and as an industry. The mediums of advertising as well as the content of advertising has seen drastic changes. The representation of women and people of colour kept changing and reflecting the values held by the society at that time. The changes in the social norms have changed advertising as a whole, advertising depends on the consumers and the consumers and their likes and dislikes, as well as what is acceptable socially and what is not. Since these things are ever-changing, it can be said that advertising too, is ever changing.

Index Terms – History of advertising, Trends in advertising, Representation in advertising.

I. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a field that has been constantly evolving through the ages, and has a rich and complex history spanning over several periods of time from scriptures on bricks of the Babylonian periods to Adverts on social media platforms we see now. Therefore, it becomes pivotal to not only understand the history of advertising but also to recognize and acknowledge the various developments that have taken place in the field of advertising, be it portrayal of women and other minorities or the ever-changing themes of advertisements.

II. RESEARCH GAP

After analysis of existing articles, books and papers, it was noticed that even though there were very few papers which focused on the history of advertising and advertisements and not just the advertising industry, they were too focused on the emergence of new technology and mediums and less on the impact of the society. Therefore, my research gap will be an analysis of the history of advertising as well as the developments in the field of advertising such as portrayal of women, portrayal of minorities, effect of changing social values, increased effect of celebrities and endorsements, political correctness etc.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of research -

The Basic Research conducted for the purpose of this paper is strictly qualitative, it is non-numerical and more descriptive in nature. It is Basic research as it is taken up not with the purpose of exploring a new domain, but expanding the knowledge of an already known domain, that is the History of Advertising. The data required is data relating to the history of advertising, therefore it will be collected from different periods of time and can be said to be Time-series or longitudinal in nature. One of the objectives of the research paper is to understand the need for brands to be socially conscious in modern-day advertising by using case studies of backlash against brands. Case Study research is being used for this purpose. Case Study research refers to the type of research where one or more case studies are analysed in detail. This helps to gain a deeper understanding of the case, and inferring conclusions from it.

Research Design

The aim of the research conducted is to analyse the history of advertising, understand the implications of the changes that took place in the societal values on the current advertising scenario. The representation of women and other people of colour and minorities was offensive in the earlier days and has drastically changed to a more positive representation in advertising. The mediums of advertising have also changed over the years, while posters and small standardized classifieds in newspapers were the main forms of advertising in the early 1900's the development of technology gave birth to new mediums from radio and television to the current main medium that is internet and social media. The paper is strictly not based on numbers and the historical method of the qualitative type of research design is used for the paper. Historical method is past oriented and is suitable for cases where data from the past has to be looked at with a fresh perspective.

Sources of data

Since the paper is qualitative and based on historical data and case studies, only secondary forms of data such as Books, Papers, Old Advertisements, Internet writings such as articles etc. will be used for the purpose of collecting data for this paper. These sources have been analysed, interpreted, and presented in a more cohesive manner with the aim of presenting an analysis of the history and trends in the field of advertising.

Variables

The paper aims to analyse the history of advertising and the trends in the field of advertising. Advertising is to appeal to the general public; therefore, they are based on the nature and values of the society of that time period. Therefore, it can be said that advertising depends on the culture and values that the society holds during that time period. Accordingly, the values of that society during different periods of time becomes an independent variable and the nature of advertisements during that particular time becomes a dependent variable.

Data

It was found that Advertising has changed over the ages and is perennially changing. Advertising never stays constant and can be said to be reflective of society. In the older days, when People of colour, Women and other minorities were considered as somewhat inferior, the advertisements portrayed them as such, People of colour were often represented as 'dirty', Women were portrayed as 'submissive' etc. The stark difference between the portrayal of these subjects between then and now is also observed. The mediums of advertising are also constantly changing, advertisers adapt to new forms of media and the latest trends to market brands. The journey from posters to Instagram Posts will be carefully analysed to see what forms of media used for advertisements have lasted the tides of time and which forms of advertising are now no longer in use.

Time Period

Advertising is a field that has been constantly evolving through the ages and has a rich and complex history spanning over several periods of time from scriptures on bricks of the Babylonian periods to Adverts on social media platforms we see now. The time period for the paper is since the beginning of modern advertising in the 18th-19th century to the present day. The first forms of print advertising and the segue into Television advertising, and the current digital advertising phenomenon will be analysed.

Time series/ Cross sectional

Time Series method of data collection refers to when data is collected over various periods of time. Cross-sectional method of data collection refers to when data is collected from different sources/ places during a single period of time. Since the paper is based on historical research, Time Series method of data collection would be the most appropriate method. Data will be collected over different periods of time to gain a better understanding of the developments that have taken place over those different periods in the chosen fields.

Tools Used for Analysing data

Since the data is strictly qualitative, scope for using tool is greatly reduced as there are no numbers involved. Basic Excel will be used for Charts/ Images. Apart from this, Books, Internet Sources, Scholar articles and other forms of media will be used for the data.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

1. Advertising over various time periods.

Medieval Period

Advertising is in no way a modern phenomenon, while it is commonly believed that the birth of newspapers led to the creation of advertising, it is not unbelievable that businesses and businessmen have had the desire to make the existence of their goods known since the beginning of buying and selling. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to believe that advertising has existed since time immemorial. The first forms of advertising would be signs hung up over shops or other places of business, these signs would either involve writings regarding the goods or paintings depicting the product or relating to the service.

17th Century

During the early 17th century, advertising was again limited to walls of the place of business or hanging boards depicting what is sold there. Tokens also rose to prominence; tokens would work as identity marks for the shops using which a customer could recommend that particular shop to others etc. In some ways, tokens could very well be considered to be the current day brand logos or brand identities. During this period, newspapers also started to gain prominence, but were used as tools of leisure and the concept of advertising in newspapers was still not common. In the later part of the 17th century, posters and bills rose to prominence, with many traders listing their products as well as prices on such bills and sending them out. During this time 'the billstickers' also were quite common, their job was to stick such bills or posters on walls, homes etc. This was not looked upon kindly as it tended to disfigure the buildings but the practice is continued till date in a few countries.

18th Century

During the 18th century, newspaper advertising rose to huge prominence, the first paid newspaper advertisement was in 1704 regarding a property in oyster bay. The advertisement read so – “At Oyster-bay on Long-Island in the Province of N.York, There is a very good Fulling-Mill, to be Let or Sold, as also a Plantation, having on it a large new Brick house, and another good house by it for a Kitchin & work house, with a Barn, Stable, etc. a young Orchard, and 20 Acres clear Land. The Mill is to be Let with or without the Plantation: Enquire of Mr. William Bradford Printer in N.York, and know further.” This was the beginning of what would revolutionize the advertising industry. 25 years later, in 1729, Benjamin franklin started publishing the Pennsylvania Gazette, this paper had an entire section dedicated to advertisements and was mostly funded by the ad revenue, this allowed the readers to pay a minimal charge, therefore allowing a large section of society to have access to the newspaper and increasing the advertisements reach. This model is very commonly followed even today.

19th century

The 19th century involved a massive leap in the popularity of advertising via newspapers, the profession of advertising also rose to prominence, with the first ad men being employed, ad men would initially ensure that the advertisement reached the paper in time and ensured that it was published, but with the increase in popularity of advertising, admen started to play major role in the creation of the advertisements as well. Soon enough, advertisements started to get more creative as well as competitive, therefore, the creation and content of the advertisements was left to the ad men or advertising professionals. The increase in demand for ad men led to the creation of the ad agencies across America as well as Britain. One of the first advertising agencies was set up by George Reynell, called 'Reynell & Sons'. Reynell & Sons is currently under the TMP worldwide agencies, and called TMP Reynell. Given below is an ad for pears soap, widely considered as one of the most creative and best advertisements of that time.

20th Century

The 20th century was the most revolutionary period when it came to advertising mediums, Newspaper advertising continued to dominate for the first half of the century, advertising agencies gained importance and advertising was acknowledged as a mainstream career. Newspaper advertising continues to be an extremely important medium or tool of advertising for several brands even today. This is because the popularity of newspapers, though fading, is still quite high among the older generations. During world war I, radios were used as effective means of communication between the troops and base or the leadership. After the world war ended in 1918, the idea of using public radio as a means of entertainment was suggested in 1920. By 1922, advertisers had capitalized on this phenomenon and the first paid radio advertisement was played in August of the same year. This advertisement was by the Queensboro corporation and was regarding the sale and availability of an apartment complex. Radio advertisements were initially long programmes, lasting anywhere between 20 to 50 minutes each. Soon enough there was dissatisfaction among the general public for excessive radio advertising, they called radio advertisers opportunistic. This led to a fall in radio advertising. Soon enough, a new method of radio advertising was thought of, this method was sponsoring programmes. Most radio dramas or other entertainment programmes would end

with a short note thanking the sponsor and advertising the product. During this time, TV's also gained wide popularity. As expected, advertisers turned their eyes towards tv as well and on July 1, 1941, the first ever TV advertisement was played between a baseball game. It was a new kind of short and simple spot for Bulova watch co. TV advertising became immensely popular among companies with ad agencies starting to develop advertisements for important matches, programmes etc. Throughout this time, while Radio advertising started losing traction little by little, Newspaper advertising stayed strong was remained a popular choice for Advertisers.



Figure 1- source- www.theuijunkie.com.

Early 21st century –

The beginning of the 21st century was a big change for Advertising as the introduction of mobile phones and SMS played a major role in catalysing digital advertising. The first form of mobile advertising was SMS fashion in the early 2000s. The first SMS advertisement was a Finnish newspaper in 2000. Between 2000- 2007, SMS advertising became a main form of multimedia advertising. TV and newspaper advertising was still more common as they had wider reach due to the fact that not everyone had access to mobile phones. Advertisers would also choose the form of media to use based on the product and target market. Advertising to kids and middle-aged women was mostly done through TV advertisements, Men through Newspaper advertisements and Teenagers and other youngsters were targeted through SMS advertising. Apart from this, during the 21st century web advertising went on to become immensely popular, an extremely high number of websites used advertisements to finance the working of the websites and web ads became the norm. Website advertising is still one of the most common forms of advertising and provides financing to a huge number of websites. The rise of smartphones and social media sites had once again changed the landscape of digital advertising. Advertisements on Facebook, Myspace and YouTube became the norm.

2. Portrayal of women in vintage advertising-

In the early days, women were rarely depicted in advertisements, even if they were, religious icons such as the Virgin Mary, Greek Goddesses or other angelic figures were used. But as printing technology improved, Human figures in advertising became increasingly common. Women were only portrayed in advertisements targeted towards women, for example, they were portrayed enjoying a cup of tea or wearing a new corset.



Figure 2 source - www.corsetier.net.com

In the 19th Century, the emphasis and pressure placed on women to look desirable or be the perfect woman grew exponentially. The advertisements too reflected this, most advertisements targeted to women were about their beauty or figures. Emphasis was placed on being of the 'right proportions' and most advertisements were telling women what to wear to look slim, how to make their hair sit right, how to hide fat etc. The advertisement depicted below stand out as an epitome of the kind of advertising prevalent during those times. It advertises tools to hide or conceal fat in various parts of the female body.

20th century is when the representation of women took a major turn. Women started being represented in advertisements targeted towards men. They were portrayed as obedient wives whose biggest duty was to serve her husband. The submissive woman became a common trope in advertisements. Sexist stereotypes were often seen and used in advertisements. For eg – in the 1953 Alocia aluminium advertisement, a woman can be seen looking surprised and happy that she was able to open a cap and the tagline read – 'Even a woman can open it?'. This advertisement is a classic example of a sexist stereotype – women are weak, being used in advertising.

Apart from this many advertisements used casual sexism as means of humour to cater to their male audience. A few good examples are- An advertisement for slacks showed the man stepping on the head of a woman who is likened to a carpet and a Van heusen advertisement showing a subservient woman serving her husband who is wearing a Van heusen tie.

show her
it's a man's world

Van Heusen
man's world
ties

For men only! . . . brand new man-talking, power-packed patterns that tell her it's a man's world . . . and make her so happy it is. And man! . . . how that Van Heusen seamanship makes the fine fabrics hold their shape. And for Christmas . . . here's the Christmas tie that is *really* different. **\$2.00**

Other Van Heusen ties from \$1.00 to \$2.50

Phillips-Jones Corp., N. Y. I. N. Y., Makers of Van Heusen
Shirts, Suits, Skirts, Ties, Raincoats, Handkerchiefs, Caps

© News Dog Media

Figure 3 source - www.dailymail.co.uk.com.

It's nice to have a girl around the house.

Though she was a tiger lady, our hero didn't have to fire a shot to floor her. After one look at his **Mr. Leggs** slacks, she was ready to have him walk all over her. That noble styling sure soothes the savage heart! If you'd like your own doll-to-doll carpeting, hunt up a pair of these he-man **Mr. Leggs** slacks. Such as our new automatic wash wear blend of 65% "Dacron" and 35% rayon—incomparably wrinkle resistant. About \$12.95 at plush-carpeted stores.

Dacron for Fall

Get yourself a new pair of **Mr. Leggs**

THOMSON COMPANY, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York 10, N. Y.

© News Dog Media

Figure4 source - <https://www.dailymail.co.uk.com>.

3. Depiction of People of colour in vintage advertising –

People of Colour (POCs) were not depicted in mainstream advertising as free individuals until the late 18th or early 19th century. The only depictions of POCs before that was of slaves being advertised. These advertisements were extremely racist and often included racial slurs. Given below is one such advertisement talking about the sale of slaves. The people were depicted looking dirty and poor.



Figure 5 source - www.smithsonianmag.com.

After Slavery was abolished, POCs were still depicted as servants or maids in popular advertising, apart from this Several advertisements depicting Black people as ugly or dirty were published. Pears, a mega-famous brand released an advertisement where a black baby was shown being turned white due to using pears soap.



Figure 6 source – www.latrobe.au.com.

Pepsi ad 2017

In the April of 2017, while tensions were high in the U.S, Pepsi released an Ad featuring supermodel Kendall Jenner. The ad consisted of imageries where tensions were brewing between a set of protesters and the Police, Kendall Jenner walks up to the Police offer and hands him a can of Pepsi and this is shown to stop the conflict. When the ad was released, there was swift and severe backlash against the brand and Ms. Jenner. People were angry that a big company such as Pepsi was making light of a serious situation in the United states. Since the protesters in the Ad resembled the protesters for the widely supported Black Lives Matter movement in the US, people were even more enraged and accused Pepsi of being racist and tone-deaf. Pepsi pulled the Ad and issued an apology to the Public. Jenner was shown to be very disheartened by the entire incident and said that she would have never done the ad if she knew what it was signifying.

Dove Facebook Ad 2017

In a Facebook Ad from 2017, Dove showed a black woman removing her top and metamorphosing into a white woman after using the product. The ad was meant to show that women of all colours use dove, but the placement and visuals of the ad made it grievously misfire. There was immense criticism for this Ad, many people accused dove of being Racist and said that the Ad was extremely Insensitive and Colourist. Dove took down the Ad immediately and issued an apology.



Figure 4 source -https://media-assets-02.thedrum.com/cache/images/thedrum-prod/s3-dove_2--default--940.jpg

V. DATA INTERPRETATION -The evolution of advertising mediums –

The first forms of advertising were usually outside of the physical places of sale or in the physical markets themselves. As new technology is developed, new forms of entertainment are soon to follow and as a new form of entertainment or medium which has a wide reach is developed, advertising in that medium is soon to follow. The invention and popularisation of the printing press was the first major development to the field of advertising, it revolutionised advertising for generations to come, posters and pamphlets could be mass printed, Newspaper became a major medium for advertising. Newspaper advertising is still one of the most popular kinds of advertising. While Radio had a massive impact on the advertising field, it did not grow to become as popular as Newspaper advertising. Yet, Radio advertising paved the way for television advertising. Television advertising was another major milestone for the Advertising sector, television advertising changed the landscape of advertising and added immense scope for creativity and facilitated targeting a large crowd. Digital advertising is the main medium prevailing right now, it started with SMS advertising and has evolved into social media advertising, webpage advertising etc.

Advertisers choose mediums which have a lot of traction. Therefore, it is observed that major corporations invest in advertisements for mediums that are popular. It is visible that as new and more popular mediums are found, the old ones start facing waning popularity and hence lose advertisements from major corporation. For example, while Radio advertising was used majorly earlier it is rarely used now. It was also observed that all these forms of advertisements still exist. It is up to the company and the advertiser which medium they want to use. The medium has to be selected after considering various factors such as the budget, target audience etc.

Representation of Women and People of colour –

Women were not given fair representation in mainstream advertising, at first women were rarely even present in advertising and were used only in advertisements targeted to women as an ideal body type or skin type. But as the years progressed, they started being shown in male-directed advertisements as weak, submissive and obedient to their husbands. A few of these advertisements were outrageously sexist and showed men standing over their wives etc. The advertisements also pandered to sexist stereotypes such as the weak woman who can't open tight lids as seen in the Alcoa aluminium advertisement.

People of colour were earlier seen in advertisements as slaves, they were not seen as independent individuals until very late and when they started being represented, they were seen as dirty and cleanable, many soaps released advertisements where a black person was seen turning white due to the soap or lotion etc. These advertisements were meant to show the cleaning properties of the soaps.

The portrayal of women took a huge turn during the 21st century, they were portrayed as more independent and self-sufficient, while the importance of being slim and fit was still advertised, it stopped being as crude as earlier. People of colour too, witnessed better representation in advertising, they were shown as regular customers and on par with their white companions in all fields.

Advertising Mishaps and the need to be socially conscious -

Advertising in large part is dependant on the values of society. Advertising is made for the people receiving it and hence is made taking into consideration the values and beliefs of the society at that time. The Racism and Sexism portrayed in the earlier days was representative of the values that society holds. It is important to cater to the values of the target audience. While we now consider those advertisements wrong, it is very possible that the mindset of the society of that time echoed similar beliefs and the concepts were not considered to be offensive at those times. But values and beliefs are constantly changing and can be different between generations, genders, races, sexualities etc. Therefore, it becomes pivotal for brands to adapt to these changing values and make advertisements accordingly, in the cases of Pepsi and Dove that were observed, the brands offended sentiments that were integral parts of the current society. Pepsi and Dove are both brands used by young or middle-aged people the most and their target market found their ads racist. In the current political climate, offending sentiments of certain sections of society can be extremely easy. Advertising can be a slippery slope and advertisers must exercise necessary caution.

VI. Limitations

While conducting research for the project it was found that data about the history of advertising in non-western countries such as India is not readily available. There is a lack of documentation of the kind of advertisements that were prevalent during those times in non-western countries. Therefore, the paper is not capable of providing a holistic view of the advertising history.

Apart from this, Advertising has an extremely rich history and the paper does not venture into details of the history of the mediums, kinds of advertisements or the formation of the advertising industry.

VII. Managerial Implications

The history and developments in the field of advertising can help advertisers and marketing professionals learn a wide array of concepts relating to the Advertising industry, analysing the sectors rich history can help in understanding the trends in the field. Advertising historically has echoed the values of the society which it targets. Having a thorough understanding of the current society's values will help advertisers avoid mishaps such as the Pepsi commercial. Advertisers must also keep in mind that the advertising they release now has the potential to affect their brand image years later. They must be socially conscious and create advertisements that are able to bring them attention but not attract backlash. Therefore, it can be said that understanding the past will help advertisers be better at their job in the present as well as the future.

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