

Advertising for *Lolitaji* ?

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(In this article the author looks at Indian advertising scenario and how it has empowered Indian women .He highlights about the greater role that advertising can play other than just associating the brand with the customer for marketing success)

Do you remember *Lolitaji* of sixties and seventies? Yes the lady who came to Indian silver screen and changed the life of both the worlds. *Lolitaji* came to the screen in seventies with that blue bag to purchase a brand of her own choice from the local shop. She represented aspirations of the middle class housewife of seventies those were just planning to come out of their houses and take up jobs in outside world. That was the time when the status and prestige of women in the social strata of India was taking a turn due to modern education and outlook.

The advertisement of this kind represented the aspiration level of customers making the brand so popular that till date in many parts of India detergent powders are still called as Surf. In any marketing communication we not only look at the level and capacity of the advertisement in generating sales or brand recall but we broadly reflect the life style and aspirations of people of that period. Literature was treated as the reflection of the society in the classic age but in the modern commercial world we find advertising to be doing the same job that is of reflecting the lifestyle, value and dreams of the generations. Surf reflected the ever desire of a woman to take her own decisions what so ever the

situation may be .In the seventies how many of women in the urban and small towns were coming out to do even their monthly shopping?

When Lolitaji came to the market to buy her *apna* Surf with a bag in her hand she was not only doing a brand choice from the poor quality local detergent powder to the blue and smooth Surf, probably she was associating herself with that mind set of capable of taking her own decision. That made the brand live longer than many contemporary brands of her time. Surf has always been the confidence booster for the user. They have constantly kept that image .The recent campaign of *Surf Excell Hai na* is another extension of that confidence level. So marketing communication serves a larger purpose than it is aimed for. This kind of brand association helps the brand to occupy a distant space in the customer's perception of all brands in a product category. Marketers use that space to convey everyone of the association attached to the brand. So the marketer can convert the mere brand positioning to a source spring of added value. The story of Surf is not an end in itself as this procedure of empowering women customer continued over few more campaigns.

Decision making on many of the household products has swiftly moved to the housewives from the male counterparts, which has aided the marketer to communicate more effectively about the brand value to the new gender customers. Perhaps the growth of Indian advertising industry can be credited to this development of empowering women customers by portraying their aspirations in the advertisements. Think about this. In a male dominated society like that of ours, how difficult it would have been for marketers to reach the office going males through direct marketing and convincing them about buying a washing machine or a refrigerator or for that matter a sanitary napkin for his daughter!

This social change has also made television industry to flourish The house wives are reachable through the television sets and convincing them about

buying by associating brands with their lives has helped in the growth of Indian Market.

If Surf campaign is an indicator of social significance for women in brand choice we have another campaign in which the poor husband comes back home to find wife doing *kathak* at home and the discussion roles on about buying a washing machine. By the time the husband talks about his intention of buying a washing machine the daughter declares that the purchase is already done. I wonder how many housewives today can go and buy the washing machine worth few thousands without taking the husband in to the confidence. Yet it is a reflection of economic independence and self-assertion of the middle-class women.

Sex has always been a social dogma in our society. So anything relating to sex is a forbidden topic at home. If one looks at today's advertising world we can aptly identify that this proposition has undergone a change. On one hand we have *Goli ke humjoli* campaign where the confident women on screen talks about her decision to take products which make her independence to work and help her in avoiding pregnancy. The elderly mother is sitting pretty in front of television and liberating her daughter from using cotton during those difficult period days. She selects the brand that her growing up daughter should use and make herself free from the period of uneasiness and social restriction. Other family planning campaigns are also empowering women in her decision in spacing her pregnancy

Today *Lolitaji* is target of every brand in every form. What happened to the society, which is predominantly male - dominated? How swiftly the power of decision making from a sanitary napkin to refrigerator and even to an after shave (You remember Old spice after-shave campaign) lotion has gone from males to the female customers! Why the Indian male says that the housewife is confident

and knowledgeable enough to take these decisions? This is surrender or realization by Indian male customers?

Come what so ever advertising has played a greater role beyond its sales and informative pitch to change the mind set of Indian male in reposing confidence on their counter parts and to empower Indian housewife in taking larger decisions at home front. So our modern day *Lolitajis* are going to be the most powerful class in future for Indian marketers .A strong brand association reflecting this class of people is going to stay as the main forte of advertising success in Indian Market.

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