

POLITICAL ADVERTISING IN INDIA: A PERSPECTIVE

Alok Kumar*, Pramod Pathak**

ak.ism.dhn@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The world of advertising is unique, full of vibrancy and has become highly experimental in nature. With the development of modern media, things have started transforming on the advertising front with more inclination to psychological concepts, appeals happen to be one of those. Another intensifying occurrence is the 'political advertising' in India, its concept, shape and size has been increasing multifold in this twenty-first century, be it a national political party or a regional one, all are resorting to such a mechanism to enhance their reach amongst voting population. The current paper tries to bring a juxtaposed analysis as to how knowingly or unknowingly, political parties could have applied the concepts of appeals, of course through the ad-agency route, in the recently concluded Assembly elections of Uttar Pradesh. A literature review covering the details of political advertising history and psychological aspects related to ad-appeals precedes the analysis for better comprehension and understanding. However, it appears that political advertising does inject awareness amongst public but then what prevails is the popular perception in the minds of public. Political advertising is in fact in a state of infancy and would take time to gain maturity and meet the objectives for what it is designed.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE & METHODOLOGY:

The idea behind presenting such a paper is to know (a) how the political advertising has evolved and changed continuously in our country (b) what all advertising concepts and psychological treatments could have been given to such advertising (c) whether concepts of advertising appeals work in political advertising? The methodology is case based and the advertising taken into account is the 'print' format of such advertisements pertaining to the recently concluded Uttar Pradesh Assembly Elections.

INTRODUCTION TO ADVERTISING:

Advertising is defined as any form of paid communication by an identified sponsor aimed to inform and / or persuade target audiences about an organisation, product, service or idea (Belch & Belch 2004). It has a history of its own. As McDonald and Scott (2007) claim, the first type of advertising was what we now know by the name of 'outdoor advertising'. Archeologists have unearthed tradesmen's and tavern signs from ancient civilization such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece indicating that traders and merchants were keen to tell their community what they had to sell and at what price. Similarly ads for slaves and household

products have been found in early written records of the period. Later, town criers and travelling merchants advertised goods and services and in doing so became the fore-runners of today's voice-overs in audio-visual ads (McDonald & Scott, 2007). The Industrial Revolution between 1730 and 1830 boosted the practices of advertising. This can be partially explained by the large scale diffusion of the division of labour which increasingly necessitated informing consumers of the availability of goods and services, the creation of which they were no longer directly involved in, and partly because the Industrial Revolution greatly hastened the scale of production, creating an obvious impetus for manufacturers to advertise in order to sell their produce. As a result, markets transformed from being mainly local to regional to national and finally global. The Industrial Revolution also illustrates the pivotal role of advertising as a necessary lubricant for economic traffic. Whereas Advertising can't be said to create consumer needs, it is capable of channeling those needs by reshaping them into wants. A side effect of these trends was the creation and growing importance of the consumer 'brand', the label with which to designate an individual product and differentiate it from competitors. Advertising professionals were quick to assign

*Doctoral Research Scholar, **Professor, Department of Management Studies, Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad (Jharkhand)

unique labels to products and associate them with unique advantages not shared by competitors. Thus the 'Unique Selling Proposition' (or USP) was born!

POLITICAL ADVERTISING: CONCEPT

Advertising whose central focus is the marketing of ideas, attitudes and concerns about public issues, including political concepts and political candidates. The essential task of political advertising is to gain the confidence of the people for their acceptance of ideas and, in the case of political campaign advertising, to influence their vote. Political advertising differs from commercial advertising in that the product is a person or a philosophy rather than goods and services and in addition, the advertising objectives must be met within a specific timeframe. Also, political advertising carries a moral implication, because the results have potentially far-reaching effects on the population at large. Political advertising raises many controversial social questions concerning the funding of political campaigns, the truth or reality of political claims, and the likelihood of defamatory claims made by political candidates. Political advertising involves the use of advertising by politicians to bring their messages to the masses.

Politicians promote their parties to grab the attention of the electorate. Unlike commercial advertising where products are promoted, political advertising

promotes individual. Political parties' view election strategically. Not only this, they feel that the strategies involved in marketing of products and services by the companies may also boost prospects in the election contests. The history of politics is as old as the history of mankind itself. Politicians have always marketed themselves with an aim to win over their rivals by grabbing more votes during the election season. Their primary aim behind advertising themselves and / or their party is to win over the voters. It is a fact that a lot of hard work goes into advertising. Many factors have to be considered even before actually laying out the final plan. The aim is to identify the best strategy that will usher in success. Unlike marketing of a product or service which can be extended over the life of the product, political campaign is for 'short term' prior to the election and with the election.

Advertising in politics is a relatively new feature in our country. There are two types of advertising in the context of political advertising- positive and negative advertising. If a party tries to project a positive image of it by highlighting its achievements when it was in power, it is referred as positive advertising while in case of negative advertising, one party smears another's image by criticizing it. Both positive and negative advertising are the most common types of political advertising. Negative advertising is more frequently employed to tarnish



the image of the target party or any particular candidate. In the process of tarnishing the rival party, the sponsoring party/ individual tries to create a positive image of itself / him. Negative advertising is usually employed to invoke a negative feeling among the voters about the targeted candidate. These tactics generally shift the focus from what is really important to what is negligible. It is believed that negative ads have a greater impact on the minds of the voters than the positive ones. There are various strategies that parties employ in negative campaigning. These include: attacking the opponents, personality, record, running ads that degrade the opposition party's reputation, leaking out the prejudicial information about the opponent or his party, etc. For instance, prior to the 15th Lok Sabha election, the opposition party tried to tarnish the image of the ruling party by highlighting the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. Though very often negative advertising gives desired results, one must remember that it can also boomerang if the message is not conveyed well.

In an experimental study that was conducted in 1985, Garramone assumed that a backlash effect of negative advertising resulted due to following reasons: firstly, most viewers condemn advertising that attacks candidate and such viewers may develop not positive but negative feelings about the sponsor of the advertisement. Secondly, viewers may perceive negative advertising as an infringement upon their right in making a decision for themselves. Such a perception may result in reactance, a boomerang effect in which the individual reacts in a manner opposite to the persuader's intention.

In a yet another empirical study conducted (MP Gupta, 2000) to find the effects and effectiveness of negative political advertising in terms of information-giving ability, believability and attitudes towards both the sponsor and the target, it was found that people do notice political advertising, it has a favourable recognition and recall (aided recall). Negative political advertising did not cause people to believe that they were better informed as a consequence of their having been exposed to such advertising. However, this seems contrary to previous research (Garramone) which measured information levels and political

practitioners' claims concerning negative information.

Negative political advertising was perceived as untruthful. When non-political organisations join the electoral debate and attack political parties through advertising, audiences do not see such advertising as being released at the behest of the political party opposing the party under attack in such advertisements. This could be an index of electorate maturity or may be electorate innocence! It needs further research. It was also found that negative political advertising produced positive evaluations of both the sponsor and the target.

POLITICAL ADVERTISING IN INDIA - HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

An uncooked form of political advertising in India dates back to the seventies when the former Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi gave the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' (Remove Poverty). Instantly the 'hand' symbol of the Congress too became an identity which now serves as a link between the party and the public (*Congress ka haath aam aadmi ke saath*). But it was 1980 when India witnessed the dawn of real and formal 'Political Advertising'. For the first time in the country, an advertising agency (*Graphic Ads*) was roped in by the Congress party but it was in 1984 (when Rajiv Gandhi stepped in as the new leader of a modern India owing to the catastrophic political scene as a result of the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi) that marketing skew began to intervene in political arena. There was almost no necessity of any campaign in 1984 because the sympathy wave reduced the other political parties to ashes and Congress captured the hitherto massive support of the public which translated into more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha.

However, after governing for five years post-Indira India, Rajiv Gandhi ventured into formal political advertising in 1989 when his party signed up with one of the top advertising agencies of the country, *Rediffusion - Dentsu, Young and Rubicam* to carry out election campaign somewhere of the order of Rs. 20 crores. The campaign brought the 'Mr. Clean' concept for the Prime Minister. Despite heavy campaigning across the existing media (primarily AIR, Doordarshan and some prominent daily newspapers; FM Radio or social networking or

Internet advertising were unheard of during those days), the Congress lost the General Elections to the Third Front headed by Vishwanath Pratap Singh. Rajiv Gandhi's fate did not allow him to understand the nuances of reaching the public through advertising (the word means to turn one's attention!). He too succumbed to the hands of a different nature of terrorism in 1991.

The year 1996 witnessed further actions on the political advertising battlefield. The other political parties too got engrossed in this communication model to reach the general public. The political chankya (as he was called), Mr. PV Narsimha Rao, the Prime Ministerial candidate of the ruling Congress party was projected as a versatile person who could govern a versatile country better. He was tagged with modern iconic words like thinker, doer and of course a reformist. Videos, graphics, melodies, songs entered into the scene for the first time. Congress party hired the agency *Maadhyam* for designing its posters. The party's campaign centered on the typical 'Gandhi' brand and the videos harped on the 'balidaan' (sacrifice) of the Gandhi family. The main opposition party, the Bhartiya Janta Party (or BJP) opted for patriotic fervor in its campaigns.

During the 1998 general elections, both the Congress and BJP had task force of media professionals to demarcate their brands. Through in-house campaigning, the BJP focused on the voter's perspective. Nevertheless, it had a big brand called 'Atal' (Atal Bihari Vajpayee) which got spread across the nation even through theatre campaigns and on cable networks as well. The shift also emerged here with the party embracing modern communication techniques including the Internet. It launched its website www.bjp.org under the stewardship of the campaign committee chief Pramod Mahajan. On the other hand, the Congress could not come out of its 'Gandhi' mindset and the campaign launched focused on the importance of 'Gandhi' dynasty for better ruling or governance. Sonia Gandhi was still within the framework of a 'foreigner' bahu (daughter-in-law). The language barrier was still persistent although the party did all out efforts to make her communicate in local flavours across different regions of the country which she did to the best of her capability.

The 1999 general elections witnessed the rise of political advertising. The BJP unleashed a series of high-profile campaigning through a special media cell headed by Arun Shourie. A separate office also came up guided by the Information and Broadcasting Minister of the ruling NDA, Mr. Pramod Mahajan. It was from here that the image building and positioning strategies were kick-started! The BJP was actually contesting as a part of the National Democratic Alliance and its required increase in vote share depended heavily on its partner parties in different states across India. Moreover, it had to fight the anti-incumbency factor. Another BJP giant, Arun Jaitley, also a member of the media cell opined that BJP could only fight such situations with a 'feel good' factor which got incorporated into its campaigns later on. The feel good factor was the first 'emotional' appeal to have been exhibited through political advertising. The Kargil victory and the historic Pokharan-II further accentuated this appeal and the iconic 'Atal' brand got the better of any other advertising proposition. All these culminated into slogans like 'Leader you can trust, in war, in peace' (for AB Vajpayee). Looking positive, movement towards betterment and handling the opposition Congress campaign were the marketing challenges for the BJP. The agencies *Trikaya Grey* and *Crayon* were on the job for BJP, focusing on rural electorate through *melas* and *haats*, folk dances and street theatres.

Congress on the other hand was working with agencies like *Madison*, *Concept* (for print ads) coordinated through stalwarts like Pranab Mukherjee, Kapil Sibal, Jairam Ramesh, Kamal Nath and Jagdish Tytler who helped the agencies develop a dozen print runs through national and regional dailies based on the stability plank. Sonia Gandhi got positioned as the undisputed leader of the Congress and a family emissary of Indira Gandhi. Congress positioned itself as a reliable political party that could provide a vision to the country working on harmony through secularism. The fight got refined to Vajpayee versus Sonia rather than being BJP versus Congress. The foreign origin and lack of political familiarity of Sonia Gandhi further dented the prospects of Congress which was in a frantic mood to regain power. Jairam Ramesh commented then, while BJP might have a *Nirma* in Vajpayee, Congress was like *Hindustan Lever* with a sting of

strong brands! He had further indicated that elections in our country are all about 'reach' (to voters) rather than becoming smarter! Also, marketing activity covers merely 20 per cent of the electorate!

For the 2004 general elections, use of information technology revolution for competitive edge was on cards. BJP became hi-tech and started getting poll feedback daily with analysts doing all sorts of calculations. Building up database, approaching the electorate through e-mails and SMS but with caution was on the party's strategic intent. The 'India Shining' (or *Bharat Uday*) campaign (a sort of surrogate one!) set the ball rolling for the BJP led NDA. The Agency Grey Worldwide released a plethora of such advertisements through the press and visual media until the intervention of Election Commission of India. The ads highlighted the accomplishment of the five year NDA regime from social to economic betterment. The target group was very wide and the state run Doordarshan was used mostly as it has the widest reach in the country and the primary channels are free-to-air. Newspapers across India were selected for the print run of these ads, mostly in colour, besides hoardings across highways and selected city roads. For the technology savvy electorate, the e-media helped the campaigns. LK Advani, the BJP doyen, known in the Indian political history for his 'rath yatras', opted for yet another such thing called 'Bharat Uday Yatra'. The entire idea was to make the common person feel good through 'India Shining'.

The 'India shining' campaign escalated the problems for the Congress which was already out of power and had other issues (like infighting) to fight. While 'India Shining' was on the popularity trend, the Congress thought to take out some gloss off this campaign by posing questions to each campaign. The Agency Orchard Advertising got the Congress account of ad-handling for the 2004 general elections while the PR exercises were handed over to *Perfect Relations*. The Congress questioned the 'India Shining' with unfulfilled promises of the NDA Government. The USP this time was the common man (*aam aadmi*) which culminated into the popular tagline - *Congress ka haath, aam aadmi ke saath* (the hand of Congress with the common man). It also found a weak link in BJP campaign, education and

employment. This was highlighted by the Congress. Two incidents, waning of the 'Atal' charisma (appeal) and addition of new young voters in the electorate also helped the Congress counter the hi-tech campaign. Person-to-person connectivity through Road shows with star campaigners (including film and sport personalities) worked for the Congress. Sonia's foreign issue was given a beating by people later when such critics were highlighted by the BJP. Young leaders like Jyotiraditya Scindia, Sachin Pilot and Jiten Prasad were inducted into the core campaign team to infuse new blood into the party and to get connected with the youth aspiring for a better tomorrow with good education and job. However, after the Election Commission directive on February 29, 2004, all sorts of political ads were taken back. Even road-signs depicting Atal factor for the Golden Quadrilateral Highway projects were removed. It appeared that no more such advertising would occur in future. The use of public money for such campaigns created negativity amongst public. Later the results showed that BJP led NDA had to face the public ire!

The 2009 General Elections came up to become glamour induced. 'Celebrities' (including film stars and sports persons) took on the campaign trail, reasons could have been numerous, like to garner more media attention, endorsements could make public inclined towards voting as well as towards a certain political party, even power could have got associated. It could be understood as a win-win situation, both for the party as well as the celebrity. Not only this, certain estimates say that the total ad-spend could have crossed US \$ 3 billion (more than US Presidential Election). Television, Radio (including FM), Mobile services, other digital media (including social networking) and outdoor media along with of course print media helped political parties gain reach amongst the 'new' and young India (who became voters for the first time!). BJP was using social media more than the Congress (even for raising funds). Congress instead used the famous song "Jai ho" (Slumdog Millionaire) for canvassing purposes since it was youth centric (like the youth anthem of today-Kolaveridi). BJP countered with "Bhay ho" (Be fearful-hinting at the voters to remain away from Congress). Mass media marketing, direct marketing techniques were also resorted to. Blogging too was on the canvassing

menu. However, internet penetrations being quite low still in India forced parties to also heavily rely on other traditional media.

APPEALS DEMYSTIFIED:

Normally, it is expected that an advertising message should appeal, directly or indirectly, to those key needs which influence behaviour response. Appeals are broadly classified as *rational*, *emotional* and *moral* appeals. Rational appeals are those directed at the thinking process of the audience. They involve a sort of deliberate reasoning process which a person believes would be acceptable to other members of his society. A rational ad is believed to be effective. Emotional appeals are those which are not preceded by the careful analysis of the pros and cons of making a purchase or subscribing to an idea. Emotions are those mental agitations or excited states of feeling which prompt us to make an action. Emotional motives may be below the level of consciousness. Emotional appeals may be positive or negative. 'Fear' appeal falls here. More psychological elucidation of the fear appeal appears in the next section. Moral appeals are those appeals which appeal to the audiences' sense of right and wrong. These are often used in messages to arouse a favourable response to social causes.

We know, clutter is a significant problem in every advertising medium. Humour has proven to be one of the best techniques of cutting through clutter. It helps in getting as well as keeping attention. The success of *humour* as an advertising appeal is based on three factors - watch, laugh, remembers. For success, the product / service / idea should be connected directly to benefits. It should tie together the product features, the advantage to customers and the personal values of the means-end chain (a method to design an ad; based on a model called MECCAS or Means-End Conceptualization of Components for Advertising Strategy; Olson, Reynolds, 1988). Another technique of breaking through the clutter is *Sex* appeal. It no longer works to a great extent in today's scenario; rather, it has reached a saturation point. To recall its usage in different advertising parlance, five ways have been employed - subliminal techniques (attempts to affect viewers' subconscious mind through icons), nudity (partial / full), overt sexuality, sexual suggestiveness and sensuality. Although sexually oriented

advertisements attract attention, brand recall is lower here because sexual theme 'distracts' them from paying attention to the brand name! (Severn, Belch & Belch, 1990).

APPEAL - PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTLOOK:

McDonald and Scott (2007) argue that from the early 19th century to the 20th century, print ads used what we call now an 'informational' or 'argument based' appeal. They straightforwardly informed the consumer what was for sale, at what price and where one could buy it. The approach became known as the 'tell' approach, a more subtle variant of the more pressing 'hard-sell' approach of 'salesmanship in print' which aligned a set of persuasive arguments to convince prospective buyers and thus became known as 'reason-why approach'.

Partly as a reaction to this aggressive approach, a more subtle 'soft-sell' approach was developed in early 20th century which sometimes used an 'emotional' or 'affect-based' appeal, aiming to influence the consumer's feelings and emotions rather than his thoughts. The development of the soft-sell approach was in line with the societal and academic trend of the time increasingly to view human nature as governed by instinct, emotions and non-rational process (Beard, 2005). Fox (1984) has stated that argument-based and affect-based appeals have co-existed through the ages, rather than one approach evolving out of the other. Hence, even the beginning of the 20th century witnessed illustrations of emotional appeals next to informational ones, what we see even today. In today's advertising practices, hard-sell and soft-sell appeals co-exist (Kardes, 2002).

Thinking about the impact of advertising invariably implies choosing a perspective for doing so. If we consider the *psychological* approach, this aims at identifying effects of advertising at the individual level. Its objective is to relate specific advertising stimuli to specific and individual consumer responses. Moreover, it seeks to articulate the intrapersonal, interpersonal or group level psychological processes that are responsible for the relationship between ad stimuli and consumer responses. Specific outcome measures at the individual level include thoughts, feelings and actions or more formally, cognitive, affective and behavioural consumer responses. Cognitive

consumer responses are beliefs and thoughts about brands, products and services that consumers generate in response to advertising. They include the 'traditional' ad effectiveness indices such as brand awareness and brand recall / recognition, as well as newly formed associations about products and brands which are sometimes a function of the persuasive information encountered in advertising. Affective responses entail various more or less transient emotions and moods that can occur as a function of ad-exposure and differ in valence (positive versus negative) and intensity (Arousal). Behavioural responses include the intention and actual behaviour in response to advertising, such as buying the product, choosing a brand but also product trial, brand switching and abandoning a product.

Consumer thoughts, feelings and behaviours might be affected by advertising stimuli, i.e., we need to understand the type of relationships that could exist between advertising stimuli and consumer response. Primarily, relationships are correlational or causal. When an advertising stimulus (like number of arguments in a message) and consumer response (like attitude towards the product / service) correlate, then an observed change in one variable is associated with a change in the other. A positive correlation implies that arguments are associated with a more positive attitude (as illustrated above) or the vice versa. Zero correlation implies that no relationship exists between the two variables. Correlation is informative because it enables us to predict the values on one variable when the values of the other are known. In addition to prediction, a psychologist wants to explain consumer responses in response to advertising stimuli and here correlation coefficients fall short. Correlation is necessary condition but not a sufficient one. Let the illustration go like this. To infer that A causes B (ad appeal makes people vote), three conditions need to be met: A must precede B (ad must precede voting), changes in A must be associated with changes in B (different ads may appeal differently) and no other explanation for the change in B must be present than the change in A (change in voting must be explained only by change in ad; third variable problem); correlation only tells us something about the second condition, not the first and third.

The main problem in inferring causality is usually not the temporal sequence but the third variable problem. Certain non-obvious cause may interfere and become responsible to cause the response. A *mediation analysis* could attempt to identify the intermediary psychological processes that are responsible for the effect of an independent on a dependent variable. According to an article by Baron and Kenny (1986) to demonstrate mediation, we would have to show that the independent variable had an impact on the assumed mediator, that variations in the mediator significantly accounted for variation in the dependent variable and that controlling for the mediator significantly reduced or eliminated impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. It seems believable that the amount of thinking does not only depend on the number of arguments presented in an advertisement but also on the degree of personal relevance of the advertised product for the target audience. What all this suggests is we are not assuming that the effects of advertising variables are invariant across consumers. Rather, we need to take the psychological make-up of the consumer and situational constraints into account when making predictions about the effect of some ad factor on some individual outcome measure, i.e., consumer is not a passive recipient absorbing whatever he is exposed to. Hence, advertising effects can be best understood as joint or interaction effects between situation and person variables (Kardes, 2002). An advertising message may have a larger impact on one group of consumers than on the other or the direction of effect may vary for different group of consumers.

Situational variables are external, environmental variables that act as the independent or moderator variables (contextual variables that strengthen or change the direction of the effect of the independent on the dependent variable) that affect some consumer outcome. Examples of situational variables include source and message variables in advertising stimuli and other communication tools that make up marketers' promotional mix. Person variables are dimensions that are internal to a specific individual and typically act as moderator variables. These include variables that are specific to a person and a situation, such as consumer involvement or pre-existing product knowledge, or

they may vary over persons but be constant over situations, such as individual difference characteristics. Individual difference variables include personality traits such as the need for *cognition* or the need for *cognitive closure*.

Let us now switch over to source and message variables in advertising. In many cases, sources are individuals delivering the message may also be organisation or brand behind the product / service. Credibility includes the dimensions of source expertise and trustworthiness. Source credibility influences message processing and persuasion mainly when recipients are not particularly motivated to process the message. Since this is often the case with ad-messages, organisations focus on trustworthiness which can be conveyed by stressing that the message source does not have a vested interest in delivering the message. A source variable, *source attractiveness*, has received great attention now-a-days. Many products / services are sold by appealing to sex and physical beauty that creates 'halo'. It is understood that what is beautiful is good! From the perspective of the advertiser, the attractiveness halo-effect can be easily extended to have a positive impact for a product / service. Advertising message variables include *argument quality* and *message structure*. Areni and Lutz (1988) have suggested that argument quality is based on perceptions of the valence of the argument, as well as the likelihood of occurrence. Hence, a strong argument highlights a product attribute coupled with 'certainty' that it would be delivered with the product. Message structure refers to how the product information is communicated? Presenting strongest arguments first proves beneficial always in terms of consumer attention and increased processing intensity but arguments at the end may benefit because they are most recently activated in memory.

Two other message variables that are particularly relevant for understanding advertising effectiveness are *message sidedness* and *argument based versus affect based* appeals. A one-sided message is the classic, biased, lopsided ad that contains only arguments supporting a conclusion favourable to the advertised brand. A two-sided approach includes both positive and negative, or supporting and counterarguments. Advertisements can use different types of appeal. They can appeal to reason and use arguments or they

can use emotions and feelings to get the message across. Hence, they can choose an argument based or a more affect based appeal. The usefulness of each of these approaches depends on the product to be advertised and the involvement level of the audience.

Another type of emotion is 'fear'. They are also known as *fear arousing communications* (try to scare consumer into action). Fear appeals in advertising frequently refer to risks that the consumer can either prevent or reduce by buying or not buying the product. Risks as physical, social, financial, opportunity and related to product performance are frequently encountered in advertising. Hovland and colleagues (1953) studied the impact of such an appeal on the acceptance of a recommendation that would reduce the threat. They found that the weakest appeal was most effective in changing attitudes and behaviour. Here the concept of 'defensive avoidance' was introduced arguing that the strong fear appeal was so threatening that it was more effective for recipients to reduce fear by rejecting the appeal as alarmist rather than accepting the recommendation. The drive-reduction model of fear appeals (Janis and Feshbach, 1953) assumes that individuals who are informed of an impending threat will be motivated to search for responses which reduce the threat. When a recommended action promises to protect them and thus reduces fear, it will be reinforced and become part of the individual's permanent response repertory. The model predicts that higher fear should result in more persuasion, but only if the recommended action is perceived as effective in averting danger!

Leventhal (1970) introduced a more cognitive theory (Parallel response model) which no longer assumed that emotional arousal was a necessary antecedent of the adaptation to danger. A threat is cognitively evaluated and can give rise to two parallel or independent responses, danger control and fear control. Danger control involves the decision to act as well as actions taken to reduce the danger while fear control involves actions taken to control emotional responses. Witte (1992) later extended the parallel response model by adding the plausible assumption that the perceived efficacy of the recommended response determines whether

individuals engage mainly in danger or fear control. If a recommendation seems effective in averting a threat, individuals will engage in danger control and if ineffective, they focus mainly on fear control.

TRADITIONAL APPROACHES FOR ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS:

Tellis (2004) distinguishes the modeling and behavioural approach. While the former focuses on the aggregate level, the latter focuses on individual consumer responses as a function of specific advertising input variables. Hence, ad variables function as the independent variable and consumer responses as independent ones. According to the sales response model, sales follow the law of diminishing returns: the incremental impact of advertising on sales diminishes with increasing the communication budget. Another model assumes that initial impact of advertising as a function of communication budget is low. In this phase, advertising wear-in occurs (Blair & Rabuck, 1998). After this phase, sales increases exponentially with increasing expenditures up to certain saturation point where the impact of advertising levels off. After this, added investments may even lead to adverse results.

Hierarchy-of-effects models do not make assumption of a direct link between ad message and consumer response but instead propose several intermediate steps. It incorporates the 'consumer learning' concept following to their exposure to advertising. The AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model, originally for personal selling, got usage in advertising. It proposes linear sequence of effects. It also explains that if consumer has never been exposed to the brand before, advertising must induce consumer attention in order to foster brand awareness. If the consumer is aware of the brand but is unaware about any of its attributes, advertising must educate the consumer by first arousing interest and second, describe the product's attributes in order to induce consumer desire. Once the flame of desire has been sparked, consumers will consistently act upon it and buy the brand.

DAGMAR - Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results (Colley, 1961) suggests that advertising can yield nine different

effects that are hierarchically ordered-starting with category need, brand awareness, brand knowledge / comprehension, brand attitude, brand purchase intention, purchase facilitation and purchase, all the way up to brand satisfaction and brand loyalty. It is more explicit, is compatible with two essential functions of advertising: to inform and to persuade. Consumer is 'passive' is assumed. Various models also in consumer behaviour are reminiscent of the researches of mid or late 20th century. Things have changed now.

Consumer Attitudes can be influenced by effective marketing communications. An attitude is a mental position taken towards an entity that influences the holder's feelings, perceptions, learning processes and subsequent behaviours (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitude comprises of three components - affective, cognitive and conative. The affective component contains the feelings or emotions a person has about the object, topic or idea, the cognitive component refers to a person's mental images and understandings while the conative component is an individual's intention, action or behaviour (Bagozzi, Tybout, Craig & Sternthal, 1979). The most common sequence that takes place when an attitude forms is cognitive - affective - conative.

The cognitive response model (Greenwald, 1968; Petty, Ostrom & Brock, 1981) spearheaded the new attention to information processing issues. It too includes the concept of 'consumer learning' (as explained before). However, in contrast to a fixed set of consumer responses, this approach emphasizes the mediating role of 'cognitive responses' that people generate when being exposed to a persuasive message. Consumer no longer is passive, has become active recipient and makes sense of it. In essence, the cognitive response approach holds that once a receiver is exposed to a persuasive message, he/she may actively add to and elaborate upon message content. This means that message recipients may come up with counter-arguments when they view the message arguments as weak, they may derogate the source of the message, doubt the authenticity of arguments, etc. Conversely, a message containing strong arguments may provoke more positive thoughts such as supportive

arguments, implementation intentions in line with the advocacy in the message, or favourable thoughts on the source credibility. It is the valence of these thoughts (positive/neutral/negative) that determines the direction of any resulting attitude change. Thus cognitive responding may lead to persuasion, resistance or maintaining status quo! Cognitive responding is a function of the extent of motivation and ability to engage in elaborative thinking, with higher motivation and ability resulting in more extensive cognitive responding.

Most of the theories of information processing, social judgment and decision-making were based on the assumption that individuals are able and willing to engage in careful and time-consuming information processing in order to arrive at a decision. In recognition of the fact that individuals are often neither willing nor able to carefully examine all the information that is available to them but base their decisions on rule-of-thumb heuristics, social psychology saw the development of *dual process theories of persuasion* according to which information processing, judgment and decision-making are viewed as continuum.

UP ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2012:

Uttar Pradesh has always been a centre-stage of Indian politics, be it the General Elections of the Lok Sabha or the Assembly Elections. Before 2012, let's take a flashback of 2007. Major campaigning using political advertising was witnessed in the 2007 Assembly Elections (where Mayawati's BSP captured power) of Uttar Pradesh (UP). The Samajwadi Party (SP) campaign was spearheaded by the famous Bollywood icon - Amitabh Bachchan. Several ads featuring famous and iconic places of UP on the background illustrated "UP me dum hai" (UP is strong). Perhaps it was on the lines of "Bharay Uday" (or India shining) of BJP in 2004 Lok Sabha polls but

the SP think-tank failed to understand that illusions don't bring reality, it proved costly for SP as it lost the elections.

The promotions crossed limits of patience when photographs of common man applauding the efforts of the Government in bringing about a qualitative change in their life were pasted in the ads of SP in the form of print ads and hording. The ad-copy contained lines like, *Mulayam mere gamme ki mithas hai* (Mulayam is the sweetness of my sugarcane), *Mulayam mere rozgar ki ummeed hai* (Mulayam is the hope for my employment), *Mulayam meri medical ki degree hai* (Mulayam is my medical degree) etc. The BJP and Congress could not project a proper Chief Ministerial candidate and they too failed in their ad-campaign. However, things got a change in the recently concluded UP Assembly Elections 2012 where SP could capture power dethroning the arch-rival Mayawati's BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party).

The contest in UP Assembly Elections in February 2012 was mostly four-cornered: the ruling BSP and the opposition SP, BJP and Congress candidates were out to prove their supremacy. This paper actually restricts to these four major political parties (or alliances). The BJP and the Congress (as usual) were the two major advertisers across different media. Let us first go through the slogans of these four parties. BJP used "Hum denge saaf suthri sarkaar" (We would give a clean Government), SP used "Aapka ek vote badlaav la sakta hai" (Your one vote can bring about a change), BSP said "Hamne jo kaha wo kar dikhaya" and the power-drought ridden Congress had no option but to vie for change in 22 years, they highlighted not one but many catch lines, "Unhe 22 saal diye, hame 5 saal do" (You gave them 22 years, give us 5 years); "Sonchiye zara!" (Think a bit!); "Utho, jaago, badlo Uttar Pradesh" (Get-up, Wake-up, Change Uttar Pradesh).



SMS
A K A R A S I



As seen in the advertisements (displayed at different locations in this paper), the Congress resorted to 'rational' appeal communicating to the masses (Ads in Hindi only) that the state's development agenda has been put on the backburner in the past 22 years of the non-Congress

regimes, true to a great extent but absence of an 'icon' about who would lead the party in UP let it down perhaps. The schemes of the Central Government for the state were also on the front scene like Food Security Bill or Reservation Policy for the Minorities etc. The ads said there were no employment and no prosperity, how long will you keep quiet?





On the contrary, the BJP resorted to both 'emotional' (fear) and 'rational' appeals. As seen in its ads, the party targeted all the other three major parties / alliances and appealed to voters not to vote for these three parties otherwise they would have to pay the price! The ads attacked the poor Governance of erstwhile state Governments, the corruption prevailing at the Centre and State etc. Their other parallel ad run in the UP press highlighted the schemes what they would implement provided they come to power like putting an end to black

-marketing of seeds (UP leads in giving country maximum food-grains), Unemployment allowance for youth Rs. 2000=00 monthly, Reservation for Upper castes, *Aanganwadi* employees / *Shiksha-mitra* to be regularized, Farmers getting loans at 1% interest, waiver for farmers on loans up to Rs. 1 lakh etc. The BJP ads seemed to have caught under 'defensive avoidance' concept. The fear aroused by the first series of ads may not have been linked to the second set of BJP ads depicting its offerings to public if it came to power.



Mayawati's BSP resorted to the 'hard-sell' approach telling the public what the manifesto said, the BSP Government did it. It was with respect to electricity supply in state, bringing Delhi metro to UP, Sugarcane dues paid to farmers, building wider roads and bridges, upgrading urban amenities, better facilities to lawyers etc. The statement in each of the ads "*Virodhi kuch bhi kahen par jo zameeni haqiqat jaante hain, wo BSP ke saath hain*" (Let opponents say anything but those who know the

ground realities are with BSP). The ads reflect that party was convinced that it did better than other previous regimes and hence was in no mood to embrace the 'soft sell' approach or target individuals or groups. The party actually was confident that it would return back to power, however, it could emerge as the largest opposition party finally. The ads resorted to the 'source attractiveness', only Mayawati was seen communicating with public (icon of BSP).



As per Leventhal's parallel response model, a threat is cognitively evaluated and can give rise to two parallel or independent responses, danger control and fear control. Danger control did the BSP out while fear control ousted the BJP and Congress (both being in shambles if the organisational structure is considered in the state). This could have let the SP in following lack of choice among the public. Depiction of youth icon in SP, Akhilesh Yadav (the current Chief Minister of UP) as an answer to the national

youth icon of the Congress, Rahul Gandhi could have worked for it! Since depictions at the end are beneficial because they are most recently activated in memory, it could be another reason for SP's success, only Akhilesh Yadav was seen wearing the Red Samajwadi cap and served as the queue terminator (last person to be seen), exactly on lines with Congress ads depicting Rahul Gandhi at the end (a case of cognitive closure!).



CONCLUSIONS:

Through the above discussions it can be opined that advertising appeals are here to stay and intensify during election campaigning. The 'soft sell' approach is the need of the hour. Public likes some rational reasoning in such advertising campaigns. Although, political advertising is a relatively new feature in the Indian political scenario, it is here to stay and its shape may get transformed depending upon the changes in media technology. The advertising twists and turns would, to a large extent, depend upon the demographic realities and the prevailing economic and social scenario. The ad-agencies meanwhile should gear up to provide customized political advertising solutions so as to increase the effectiveness and meaningfulness of such ads amongst the public. At the same time, political parties must rational out the ad-copy; the consumers (voters here) are increasingly becoming knowledgeable and smart, to what extent would the ads pacify them is a question for political parties to answer.

However, one thing is very clear, the elections have been won by different political parties at different times due to the popular perception prevailing at that time concerning the parties or candidates, ad-campaigns had little role to play despite high levels of creatively involved. The voter is more mature than advertising.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS:

Many more researches / studies can be conducted concerning political advertising related to the influence of celebrities in election campaigning, impact of social media political advertising on youth, measuring the effectiveness of political advertising through traditional and modern media, enhancing the ad-appeals in the entire election campaigns, influence of party brand on future political advertising etc.

REFERENCES:

- Sanjeev Varma, 2009: Do all Advertising Appeals Influence Consumer Purchase Decision: An exploratory Study, *Global Business Review*, 10:1 (2009): 33-43
- Mukul P Gupta, 2000: Negative Political Advertising: Some effects from the 13th Indian General elections 1999, *Global Business Review*, 1:2 (2000): 249-277
- B. Prem Kumar, 2007: Political Advertising-Boon or Bane, *Advertising Express*, October 2007:19-21
- Mrinalini Pandey, 2010: Understanding the Arts and Science of Celebrity Political Endorsements in India, *Advertising Express*, July 2010:35-39
- Akansha Aggarwal, 2010: Political Advertising during 2009 General Elections, *Advertising Express*, April 2010: 33-35
- B. Venkata Deepika, 2009: Political Campaigning through different Media, *Advertising Express*, October 2009:20-23
- Varsha Jain, 2009: Political Advertising through Social Media, *Advertising Express*, September 2009:19-24
- Ed. Doris Rajakumari John, 2008: Political Advertising in India, *Case Studies in Advertising Strategies-Trends and Practices*, ICFAI Books:30-39
- M. Fishbein & Icek Ajzen, 1975: Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behaviour-An Introduction to Theory and Research, *Reading MA*, Addison Wesley, 1975
- Bob M. Fennis & Wolfgang Stroebe, 2012: *The Psychology of Advertising*, Psychology Press, 2010: 2-4, 10-21, 29-37, 154-159, 173-180
- Jerry Olson & Thomas J. Reynolds, 1983: Understanding Consumers' Cognitive Structures-Implications for Advertising Strategy, *Advertising Consumer Psychology*, Lexington Books:77-90
- M. S. Latour and R. L. Snipes, 1996: Don't be afraid to use fear-appeals-An experimental study, *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36:2 (March-April 1996): 59-68
- Karen Flaherty, M. G. Weinberger & C. S. Gulas, 2004: The Impact of perceived humour, product type and humour style in Radio Advertising, *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 26:1 (Spring 2004): 25-37
- Max Sutherland, 2010: *Advertising and the mind of the consumer*, Allen & Unwin, 2010: 36-47, 60-71
- Rajeev Batra, J. G. Myers, D. A. Aaker, 1996: Ch. 19 Advertising and Society, *Advertising Management*, Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi: 668-676

- S. A. Chunawalla & K. C. Sethia, 2002: Ch. 17 Advertising World, *Foundations of Advertising-Theory and Practice*, Himalaya Publishing House, Mumbai: 383-399
- Kenneth E. Clow & Donald Back, 2007: Ch.6 Advertising Design: Theoretical Frameworks and Types of Appeals, *Integrated Advertising, Promotion, and Marketing Communications*, Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi : 165-186
- Shreekumar K. Nair, 2008: Emotional Advertising-A Conceptual Framework, *Managing Emotional Appeal in Advertising*, Ed. Rao, Wawge, ICFAI University Press: 3-14
- Ravikant S. Wawge, 2008: Emotional Appeals and Ad Execution-An Art of getting Emotional response, *Managing Emotional Appeal in Advertising*, Ed. Rao, Wawge, ICFAI University Press: 39-45
- Nitin Gupta, 2008: Emotional Appeal...It's all around us! *Managing Emotional Appeal in Advertising*, Ed. Rao, Wawge, ICFAI University Press: 55-63
- G. M. Garramone, 1985: Effects of Negative Political Advertising-The roles of sponsor and rebuttal, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 29 (1985): 147-159

PRESS ADS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:
UP City editions of *The Pioneer*, *The Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, *Amar Ujala*, *Dainik Jagran*, *Hindustan*, *Rashtriya Sahara* and *Gandiv* (month of February 2012).