CHAPTER-1

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A good ad should be like a good sermon: it must not only comfort the afflicted -- it also must afflict the comfortable.

--Bernice Fitz Gibbon

1.1. ADVERTISING AND ITS IMPORTANCE:

Advertising is an indispensable function of all sorts of businesses. It is the most influential institution of socialization in globalized world. Advertisement is a common and accepted part of our daily life, in print in magazines and newspapers, as well as on television and cinema screens, and increasingly on the Internet. Advertising plays a pivotal role in our every day life. Ads are made to appeal to society's needs, both social and material, in the hunt for warmth, food, friendship and love. Through investigation of advertisements it is possible to discover other 'needs' of society, and what is seen as important, a comparison of ads from 1960s and 1990s would show the difference in society from commercialism, and a 'bigger is better' attitude, to a more tearing and sharing', environment friendly perspective.

Advertising is constructed by society to meet its needs, to ensure that people have the products they require in order to make their lives as easy as possible, and that their every need is met. It is made by people for people, to help sustain the economy and maintain the standard of living. In addition to being a construct of society, advertising also plays its part in restructuring
the society that creates it. This manipulation is done in many ways, the use of stereotypes, and the reliance by the media on the sponsorship that comes from advertising, and the way that advertising campaigns tell us who or what we are, or rather should be. Vestergaard and Schroder explain this as '...advertising does not simply reflect the real world as we experience it: the world portrayed in advertisements moves on a day-dream level, which implies a dissatisfaction with the real world expressed through imaginary representations of the future as it might be: a Utopia' (Vestergaard and Schroder, 1985). Its effects on the economy and the society can be felt immediately and over time. Advertising caters to drive competition in the marketplace by stimulating consumer spending and ultimately increasing the amount of profits that businesses make. Advertising compels a business to improve its products and service to survive against the standing competition. A smooth sailing against competition requires that the advertising promises made by corporates, must match the product benefits on offer. Advertising creates a long term effect in the market place. As consumers remain aware of products through various types of advertising, companies are less susceptible to changes or shifts in the ebb and flow of business. Advertising demonstrates some kind of value addition to support a price rise and explains generosity of the advertiser behind a price decrease. The increasing competition has increased the bargaining power of consumers. With rise in consumerism and globalization led improvements in the corporate governance, consumers are
fully aware and can also distinguish between facts and false claims from the marketplace. Thus, they are no longer unwilling participants in this system.

Advertising generally meets the need of information. Advertising broadcasts information about a new product, new idea, and some modification on an existing product etc. It can also create a want where, there is no need. It stimulates consumption and thereby increases product purchase. This multiplication of needs increases materialism manifolds. Social scientists defame this phenomenon, as it makes a consumer spend more than what he earns. In contradiction to the established myth, that suspects it as treachery, another group of theoreticians think that, this stimulation is more fleeting and imaginative than harmful. It creates product images and perceptions for the consumers. To a layman, we purchase goods and services for their use value but most of the products are promoted to satisfy the other needs of the consumers. Depending upon the advertising message and the type of product advertised, consumers expect to satisfy their primary need, needs for self-actualization and self-esteem, their need to belong, and other symbolic meanings gained through the experience of consumer consumption. Role of Advertising is to connect a meanings to the products on offer and consumer needs.
1.2. IMPORTANCE OF ANALYZING ADS:

Advertisements are either loved or loathed, and are therefore worthy of study because they generate these feelings. Williamson provided the basis of the argument for studying ads with the following statement: 'Pervading all the media, but limited to none, advertising forms a vast superstructure with an apparently autonomous existence and an immense influence (Williamson, 1978). Being so widespread and obviously influential (if advertisements had no effect then companies would not spend so much money on advertising) they are therefore worthy of studying for many reasons. To carry out this analysis, we like to look into it as a process of communication. A process that centres around encoding and decoding.

The linguists define encoding and decoding as creation and interpretation of texts or message.

Encoding ——— Creation of a message

Interpretation of a message ——— Decoding

To the theoreticians, decoding does not only involve simply basic recognition and understanding of what an encoded message says but also to interpret and evaluate of its meaning in reference to the social and cultural contexts and the relevant code. General concept of communication is based on a
simple dyadic model. Here a sender dispatches a message to a receiver and the receiver sends back a feedback. Both of them participate in the process and share a common code. Thus understanding and comprehension on the part of receiver is like a mirror image of the sender's original thought.

Code

Message

Sender ———— Receiver

Feedback

Context

Importance of code and social context in the process is given importance by Roman Jacobson (Jacobson, 1960). He states that there are several factors, simultaneous occurrence of which is a must to make a communication operative. They are addresser, addressee, message, context referred to, a code fully or partially common to both addresser and addressee, a contact, a physical channel and a psychological linkage between addressor and addressee.

There are other thinkers like Stuart Hall (Hall, 1971), who opines that mass media codes offer their readers social identity, which some may adopt and some others may refuse to adopt. The communication process to take place
through the channels of mass media the addresser and the addressee may not share a common social position, a similar psychological mind frame and same code. In this case decoding tends to be different from the sender’s encoded meaning. Umberto Eco uses the term, “aberrant decoding”, to refer to a message which has been decoded by means of a different code. In respect to the code used by the sender. Eco argues that, mass media messages are broadcast to heterogeneous audience. Thus diverse decoding of such texts is unavoidable. David Morely, a British theorist studies, how people belonging to different social groups, interpreted a television program. From his study, he concludes that, people interpret the program manifesting implicitly their own social position, that produces a specific kind of meaning to the message or decoding (Morely, 1992). Morely added that, any individual or group may operate with different decoding strategies in relation to different topics and different contexts. Thus an individual may decode a message in a particular way at one point of time and in another way in another context. Thus we propose to decode the ads with the tool of semiotics and psychoanalysis to find out the advertiser’s intended meaning of the ad message. Afterwards we will pursue a survey, mainly to find out how the general respondents from a particular social position, interpret the message particularly from covert (visual) part of it. Finally we will find out if the intended meaning and the interpreted meaning, match with each other.
There are two ways of looking at an ad, the advertisements themselves and the effects they have. We will study the first part by analyzing a series of ads since 1960s through tools of semiotics and psychoanalysis. And to find out their effects on society, we will analyze the socio-cultural cues portrayed in the ads as well as pursue a rigorous impact analysis. Language is used in advertisements to implant ideas/images into the mind, it is these images that are later remembered, whilst the words themselves are often forgotten (Dyer 1982). The language of images is the predominant language of advertisers, as the structure of advertisements confirms.

Ads can be studied in terms of appearance, the language used in them, their structure, their meaning, the reactions they cause, and aesthetically as an art form. By studying them in these terms we are able to investigate, and dissect the advertisements in order to discover how they work, and what makes consumers buy those products. By answering questions like why do slogans appeal to us, and why do different ads all use a similar structure, we are able to discover much about what appeals to us as consumers, and investigate how advertising companies manipulate this to their benefit. It would be interesting to discover if all advertisements mean the same things to the people with same socio-cultural background, if they are truly universal, or if this is just an impression that they want us to believe, and can everyone react to ads in the same way, or are we as individuals far more independent than advertisers would have us believe?
Given the enormity of advertising clutter, there are ads that trigger substantial interest of the consumers and ads that are grossly ignored. Emerging research in Advertising suggests that information from ads processed to strike the subconscious of the viewers are needed to be decoded because there remains a possibility that they may affect the interest of marketers. These findings are important because they suggest that ads, not explicitly recalled or recognized can influence consumers at a later period, and that measure of advertising effectiveness, relying on recall and recognition may underestimate an ad’s effectiveness. Some people may carry image of some ads that they cannot overtly express, but that may influence their buying behavior.

In the above paragraph, we tried to explain why advertisements in general demand a detailed study. Now we would propose to create a background where we can discuss the importance of cosmetics as we have endeavored to study ads of a cosmetics company, which has always been depicted varied attributes of cosmetics for a good deal of time.
1.3. ADVERTISEMENTS AND WOMEN - A BRIEF PERSPECTIVE:

Advertising is as old as the industrial revolution that took place in the 18th century England. Before that, Say’s law “what is produced, will be sold” was true to the business and large scale factory production was a concept unknown. That was the time, when the man of the house used to spend his day to earn a living. Women used to be engaged in raising children and looking after the household work. Organized market places were not a regular phenomenon. During midday, peddlers used to visit households to sell a large variety of goods to the women. That was the time since when women were recognized as the principal purchasers-

In the advent of 20th century, when the whole world was ailing with the burden of over production and excess supply, advertising was recognized as the only means to cure a lack of sales. The lack of demand enhanced the importance of advertising. As the women constituted the major part of the buyers, advertisers were too keen on promoting their product to the women. Thus we had many a product being advertised by woman as models, especially for household goods, cosmetics, apparels, jewelries etc. To create demand for the product advertisers consciously employed the psychological notions of instinctive desires to trigger a need. Advertising theorists took some of the Freud’s concepts and used them for their own purpose (Bennett
David, 2006). Freud postulated only sexuality as an instinct that transcended the history of advertising. Consumer theorists produced other natural instincts. Fredrick listed 18 female instincts including sex love, mother love, love of home making, vanity, and love for mutation on change, love of prestige, love of reputation (Fredric, 1929). She even gets her hands on the love of trading, being the principal consumers. In the eyes of the admen, however, emotionality and irrationality were permanent basic components of all these instincts and suggestive of consumer (especially female) nature.

With the rapid spread of capitalism, the psychoanalytic concept on individual subjection, to unconscious drives, were vulgarized and institutionalized by purposive admen. The female characteristic traits that were recognized as helpful for the world of business and trading were made sacred through the doctrine of Advertising. In ads, woman was portrayed as devoted mother and doting wife who takes care of house hold drudgery. They were also portrayed as the object of entertainment symbolizing, a razor, a perfume, a car, a cigarette, a bottle of wine and many more. These led to the commoditization of women. But women were seldom shown as decision makers, Intellectuals, careerists, successful leaders etc. Be that what it may, in the heavens of Advertising, women constituted the brightest stars .

In our present research work, we want to study how GD Pharmaceutical portrayed women over the years.
1.4. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Before we begin with our research work, we will study major contributions to the literature that are done in the field of Advertising and relevant for the present work. Here we have mentioned only those works where researchers studied ads either on the basis of their impact on customers, or on the basis of their inherent semiotic and psychoanalytical structure that makes an appeal to the consumer's unconscious mind. We also studied ads where the importance of social and cultural dimensions is examined. After studying the literature, we have observed that there are mainly five streams of attack. These are related to market dynamics, social-cultural issues, role stereotypes, empirical findings, image analyses, transfer of attributes, creativity and decoding.

Market dynamics: Bennett, in the article, Getting the Id Go Shopping, commented that marketers had been trying for long to make shopping a regular habit for the consumers. (Bennett David, 2006). Haincault & Roy, in the book Unconscious for sale, also examined and psychoanalytically investigated the operation of Market dynamics with the perspective of a critic and analyst (Haincault & Roy 1993). Gunter and Furnhan studied the children's market and child psychology (Gunter and Furnhan, 1998). Ron
Beasley & D Marcel says in the book Persuasive Signs, The Semiotics of Advertising, pronounced that so powerful was a brand name as signifier of the product that, on several occasions, it had instead been used by the consumers as metonym to name the product type. Thus brand names according to them need to create a strong signification system that might appeal the collective consciousness. (Beasley Ron, Daneschi Marcel, 2002).

Shaughnessy and Shaughnessy in their book, Persuasion in Advertising, addressed the issue of persuasion from subliminal frame. (Shaughnessy and Shaughnessy, 2004).

Social and Cultural Issues: Schutzman investigated the influence of ad on society. (Schutzman, 1999). Richards, MacRury and Botterill, in their book discussed how not only advertisements but all sort of communications could be studied psychoanalytically. The authors also studied several advertisements from socio cultural perspective (Richards, MacRury and Botterill, 2000). In “On Black Panthers, Blue Ribbons, & Peace Signs: The Function of Symbols in Social Campaigns”, Trischa Goodnow tried to identify the functions of symbols in the rhetoric of social campaigns. Working from a semiotic perspective, 208 social campaign symbols were analyzed for both their visual content and their use in campaigns (Goodnow Trischa, 2006). In the article, “The Portrayal of Women's Images in Magazine Advertisements: Goffman's Gender Analysis Revisited”, Mee-Eun
Kang, studied how ads influence the cultural issues, the image of women etc (Mee-Eun Kang, 1997).

Role stereotype: In “Weighty issues: Semiotic Notes on Dieting as a Secular Ritual”, Joachim Knuf and John Caughlin stated that Diet advertisements emphasized a number of core themes, such as self-image, health, pride, and control (Knuf, Caughlin, 1993). Knuf and John Caughlin have very aptly noticed that ads with the purposeful use of signs transferred readers into an unreal virtual world. Nathanson, described how the customers and prospects, specially the youngsters, made the ad communicators their role models specially for the alcohol ads (Nathanson-Moog, C. 198...). In “A Semiotic Analysis of Wallis Adverts”, Sarah Richards wrote that a Wallis advertisement (a renowned clothes manufacturer for women) aptly reestablished the myth by exposing women as sex objects to men, but simultaneously subverted this ‘tradition’, thus making the man an object of empowerment for the woman from the way she dressed (Richards, 1998)

Empirical study: In the paper, “Cross-advertisement affectivity, Poncin, Pieters and, Ambaye, examined if the similarity between the commercials and their sequence had an effect on consumer perception and consumer behaviour. [Poncin, Pieters and Ambaye, (1989)]. D'Souza and Rao enquired if regular users of established brands be susceptible to the influence
of advertisements that are repeated more than the competitors, even if they have the exposure to the advertisements before? (D'Souza and Rao, 1995).

Image Analysis: In “Myth and Photography in Advertising: A Semiotic Analysis”, Janis, Teruggi Page semiotically examined four advertisements created by surrealist photographer Hugh Kretschmer. He examined that the visuals of ads embodied symbols, metaphors, and mythic allusions as signs of a transformative relationship between female models and products (Teruggi, 2006). Scott and Batra, in their book, A Persuasive Imagery, described the way the ad visuals influenced the social structure. The authors made an efficient enquiry on how several dimensions of visuals created psychological drive and persuasion. (Scott and Batra, 2003). Charles Forceville analyzed several pictorial metaphors in his paper “Pictorial Metaphors in Advertisements”. He tried to explore how the advertisers tried to transfer the qualities of one object to another and how successful they were in doing that. (Forceville Charles, 1994). Berger, John, wrote a series of essays that explained several methods of deciphering photographs and advertisements. (Berger, 1972). Raquel Montania examined that the rise of the World Wide Web for electronic commerce led to a proliferation of companies selling products online. In this article, the effects of semiotic Web design featured on expectations of these performance criteria in a purchase situation were investigated. (Marc, Raquel, 2003). In “Perceptions of Customer Service, Information Privacy, and Product Quality From Semiotic
Design Features in an Online Web Store", Marc L. Resnick and for Silk Cut Cigarettes, Catherine R Langan writes that Silk Cut could make a similar reference by using the colour and typography of a Cadbury’s Dairy Milk advertisement (purple swirls) (Langan, 1998)

Transfer of attributes: In the article, “An Empirical Analysis of Spokesperson Characteristics on Advertisement and Product Evaluations”, Petroshius and Crocker made an serious investigation on how the perceived product quality and intent to purchase of a product are influenced by the attributes like race, sex and physical attractiveness of the communicator portrayed in ads [Petroshius and Crocker, (2006)]. In Semiotics of Bacardi Breezer Commercials, Melanie Selfe remarked that the agency McCann-Erickson replaced the human protagonists with a cat as it wanted to enter the youth market from the market otherwise dominated by older generation (Selfe, 2001).

Creativity and Decoding: James B Twitchell in his book '20 ads that shook the world' gave a detailed account of 20 great advertisements which were not only cutting edge commercials but also made a difference to the agencies that created them and to the advertiser(company) (Twitchell, 2000). Steel, has taken a different approach. In this book he encouraged consumer research based on common sense and creativity. (Steel, Jon, 1998). Foucault, Michel in his book, The Order of Things, gave an interpretation of the methods used
in printed advertisement. These interpretations shed light to the process of decoding ads [Foucault, Michel, (1970)]. Judith Williamson's in the book 'Decoding Advertisements', endeavoured to interpret advertisements using semiotics. Williamson's looked for how advertisements constructed and promulgated meanings, necessarily involving the customers in a system of signs and symbols, as a token in that system. (Williamson, Judith, 1978). In “Encoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising Production”, Matthew Soar argued for the expansion of cultural studies to include sustained research into the subjective aspects of commercial cultural production. In, A collection of essays, Barthes commented on the structural analysis on narratives and on issues in literacy theory, on the semiotics of photograph and film, on the practice of music and voice in the process of communication etc. (Barthes, Roland, 1977).

The literatures discussed above have studied ads and their influence on the customers. Most of the research studies, discussed so far investigated to extract meaning of the ads at several planes. Williamsons in her book decoded ads and discussed the way the psychoanalytical and semiotic cues, concealed on the surface might trigger interest about the product. Scott, Batra, McRury Botterill, Suitzaman et al discussed the influence of ad on the subconscious of the consumer. There are other studies that have examined how ads proclaimed the rules of the game, deciding about roles played by men and women in the society, their aspiration, sense of beauty, sense of
happiness and satisfaction. The above literatures also studied how the ads defined the image of the women in the society. In our present study, we will examine the ads for Boroline over the years. Being a cream, advertisers followed the established myth, that skin care products were mostly used by women. Thus we will study in our present work how did the company made an effort to penetrate through the unconscious mind of the consumers and made its own place. We will study various dimensions and change in them over the years if any change have at all taken place. Again all the publications that we have discussed were written in the context foreign countries and the western culture. Hereby we propose to examine ads in the context of a regional vernacular juxtaposed in the back drop of Indian culture.

1.5. PROBLEM UNDER STUDY

1.5.1. Product under study

We propose to select a product field of cosmetics for our study. The use of cosmetics was age old. The use and importance of cosmetics were cultivated and taken care of by our ancient forefathers. Various old archeological works, sculptures, monuments, art and literature bore insignificant and prominent evidences of use and importance of cosmetics in the ancient time. The ancient epics, which portrayed the ideal men and women in the context
of a nation, were always instrumental in praising men and women for their physical beauty and brawn. The stunning beauty of Helen, the gorgeous queen of ancient Greece, caused a prolonged war, around which the Greek epic Iliad was developed. Again the beauty of the exquisite princess, Draupadi, was the root cause for the battles of the Indian epic Mahabharata. Thus, women who consist of an important part of our research work were always praised and patronized for their beauty. The ancient times showed women as ruling the world by the virtue of their elegance and beauty. Women of today as well as the good old days still crave for beauty. Thus cosmetics bring them the means and maintenance that can enhance their beauty. Now the old myths are abolished that proclaim the beauty in women makes them commodity in the hands of men. Now beauty is considered an attribute, very close to health and hygiene. Beauty is considered as the means to empower women adding values to their persona and individuality.

Cosmetics are the means which promises to cure a lack of beauty in men and women. Thus, cosmetics constitute the sacred emblem that brings the peace in mind. The Management Guru Philip Kotlar, quoted the objective of some cosmetic manufacturer as, "We don't sell lipsticks, We sell hope". Thus in the modern era of materialism, where men and women are continuously confronting the complication of many types are granted a promise of hope and happiness by cosmetics. Thus monumental part of corporate earning is spent for creating and communicating the commercials for cosmetics. The
net amount of fund spent on cosmetic commercials are just next to the fund spent for Liquor and tobacco ad commercials.

1.5.2. Brand of our Choice:

We propose to study Boroline ad commercials for our present research work. We chose Boroline, the cream of the good old days. Its origin dates back to 1929, when a pharmaceutical company, G.D. Pharmaceutical, having Mr. Gaur Mohan Dutta at its helm, set its sail. Today both the company and the cream have all most lived for a century but have not lost its past glory. In the early years, Boroline was all most the only one that merged the concept of beauty and hygiene. It was a cosmetics and a skin capsule in disguise. That was the time when competition was an abstract thought. Boroline cut a good pie of the market for its own. Boroline was highly appreciated for its quality and performance. Boroline was a panacea to serve all purposes. Be it minor cuts and wounds or dryness and roughness of skin, Boroline was to serve them all. Thus, it reigned the era of mass marketing like a king. With the passage of time, competition grew thick and heavy. There was a cream for dryness, another for beauty, another for antiseptic purposes. Thus, the era of specialization and micro marketing became popular. Boroline still maintained its age old stance. This is the cream which penetrated the layers of the economy segment, and reached the people who still can not hear the
luxury of buying cosmetics. It is also purchased and used by affluent and rich. Purposes may differ but the product remained the same.

1.5.3. Media Covered:

We propose to study Boroline ads in the print media. Writing and printing celebrated many a birthday before the other media came in to being. At present though television, radio, internet etc took over the claim of the print medium, in the good old days when our chosen brand had passed through its early years and youth in the product life cycle, they were hardly recognized as media for promotion.

Culture and education of a society move ahead shoulder to shoulder with time, through the effort, efficacy and encouragement of middle class. Desh is a magazine in Bengali vernacular which is already a septuagenarian. It is still widely praised and patronized by Bengali middle class. Boroline has been a regular client of the magazine. We could be happier to find out any other magazine in English vernacular as that might cross the barrier and narrowness of regionality. But there were no English magazine that had covered Boroline for long.
1.5.4. Period of Study:

We will propose to study ads for Boroline for a span of 40 years of time covering four decades as 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. We consider an extensive time frame to make out the changes in ads which are irregular fluctuations thus, ignorable and the trends which need substantial analyses.

1.6. CHAPTER PREVIEW:

In chapter 3, we have studied select ads of Boroline and dissect those commercials to find out if the science of sign gave us a different meaning than what was apparent from the surface. Our choice of ads was made based on semiotic consideration covering a span of 40 years.

From our analysis we have observed the change in the image of women in the ads and their signification over the four decades. Unfortunately we have noticed that Boroline did not focus on a particular age group. It tried to address women belonging to catchall segment consisting of young, teenager and middle aged. This may confuse its customers because the skin care requirements of women belonging to different age groups are markedly different. This difference is given more weightage by women of the affluent class. Thus Boroline could either follow concentration strategy, targeting a
specific age group or may adopt a differentiation strategy by introducing different offers for different age groups.

Attribute based market positioning of Boroline as showcased through the Semiotic cues, were also investigated in details. In the early years Boroline was projected as beauty cream, after wards Boroline was projected as an antiseptic cream, in the later years covering 80s and 90s advertiser was silent about the product attributes and positioned itself as the part and parcel of Bengali culture.

We also pursued a communication test on the positioning of ads over the years. It can be reinforced from the communication test that Boroline was signified as diamond, the most important purchasing item, the protector and nourisher of skin during 60s and the till mid 70s. During early 90s, it was signified for god and the saintly men. Then it was signified as close friend to its customers. Again in late 90s, it was signified as the saviour and the supreme power. Thus, in the early years, G.D. Pharmaceutical tried to promote Boroline for certain product related attributes. But in the 90s, when it gathered the confidence that it has already established a position among its customers and prospects about its product attributes, it positioned itself as a supreme power connoting the market leader’s position.

We have also studied competitive positioning of the cream over the years. Boroline did not reveal its market position in most of the ads. We might take
it as a monopoly market enjoyed by the cream in its targeted segment. But in some years (e.g. 1966, 1969 and 1992) Boroline was protective and defensive about its market position. In some other years like 1971, 1977, Boroline announced itself as the market leader.

We have studied the image of Goddess in ads and its signification. The ads in 1963, 1972, 1973, 1994, 1996, portrayed Goddess Durga. In the early years Goddess represented Bengali women, afterwards it portrayed Goddess symbolical to Bengali tradition and culture. After wards mostly she was portrayed as indexical to peace, happiness and wisdom.

Age Group targeted by Boroline as revealed through the semiotic cues has divulged that, G.D. Pharmaceutical had been targeting different age groups at different point of time but its main focus remained the youth segment. In 90s it started targeting all age groups and even the old. It might be because it could not generate expected response from the youth according to its expectation.

We have also studied approach adopted by Boroline for addressing the customers and prospects. Boroline has been very skillful to address its customers through its repeated presence and absence. The presence is shown to be connoted by beauty, security, merriment, peace and joy. The absence is evidenced by sorrow, restlessness, insecurity, grief etc. This syntagmatic approach of recurrence of presence and absence seems to be rational and
useful for Boroline in creating an enduring position in the heart of its customer.

We have studied the Economic Class targeted by Boroline over the years. In the early 60s Boroline addressed business class, in mid 60s lower middle class, in 1972 and 1976, upper class. After wards it was mostly vague about the targeted class. Boroline had been shifting focus from one economic stratum to another. To our mind, this targeting strategy was not very wise for GD Pharmaceuticals as it may confuse its customers.

In chapter 4, we have studied select ads of Boroline and dissect those commercials to find out if the psychoanalysis as initiated by Freud and Lacan gave us a different meaning than what was apparent from the surface. Our choice of ads was made based on psychoanalytical consideration covering a span of 40 years.

In chapter 3, we have studied how the image of women, image of goddess, positioning of Boroline, segments targeted were portrayed through the ads. In 4th chapter we have found out how the psychoanalytical tropes signifying the mother (happiness), the symbolic father (sorrow), the child (sufferer) are portrayed over the years.

The mother, the closeness with whom will result in the ultimate happiness to the child (presented mostly as the customer) is depicted in many ways. Mother was mostly described as beauty in the early 60s. Later on, mother
was mostly presented as an embodiment of peace, wealth, and other object of desires. But as early as in 65, Boroline was described as the mother. There Boroline was aptly conspicuous about its position as market leader. Another major shift can be seen in the year 1993, when the customer was considered as the mother. This indicates a change in the market structure - shift from the producers’ market in the 60s, to the consumer’s market in the 90s. Thus, the change in the economic dimension of the country is very prominently reflected through these ads.

The symbolic father represents the evil force that takes the mother away from the child, inflicting immense distress. Boroline had been instrumental in reuniting the mother and the child. To this effect Boroline always tried to stick to the age old Bengali culture and tradition. Thus, in the 70s for a couple of times it considered modernity as the symbolic father. In 63, it considered even the festival as the symbolic father. It depicted festival as the time for shopping and celebration, but Boroline might not be the part of the shopping list. In the year 65, Boroline was an item of priority in the shopping list and the existence of the symbolic father the celebration is grossly dismissed. Here Boroline took a very aggressive market stance. In 1977, the symbolic father was considered as the age. GD Pharmaceutical might have adopted this strategy to curb the competition from those companies who sell wrinkle reduction creams. The symbolic father was absent in 1965, 1973 and 1988. The absence in general reveals that borolines was not only trying hard
but actually accomplished the most sacrosanct job of satisfying its customers. In 93, the symbolic father is represented as competitors in a very subtle way. This shows the company might have faced some kind of competitive threat in the 90s.

The child is the sufferer once the symbolic father separates him from the mother. In most of the ads child is represented by the customer. Thus, customer was projected as the sufferer. This might be because of the fact that, in most of the cases, Boroline had projected itself as the provider of solution to the customer’s problems. But the customers were kept absent in the ads during 80s. Ignoring customers seemed to be a big mistake by the company which was later realized by the company. Thus the ad in 93, represented Boroline as the child and the customer as the mother.

In most of the ads Boroline was projected in the presence of the mother, reflecting the ultimate desire of the child (mostly the customer was met. But in 1976, 1978 and 1982 Boroline was projected in the absence of the mother. In most of the early years Boroline was projected as the agent who eliminates the cause that keeps the child away from mother. But in the first half of 80s and 90s it took the position of goddess. Again in 1993, the company was quite rational to realize that, not the company but the the customer was the deity and the company is the mere subject.
Boroline that was once part and parcel of Bengali culture and day to day life had designed and redesigned its ads not only to deal with the conscious mind of its consumers but with deliberate effort successfully hit the unconscious mind. As we browsed through the ads over the years, it seemed a manifested truth that Boroline has been ceaselessly trying to fulfill the desire of its subject, may be in the form of enhancing its subjects beauty or health and hygiene. Basically a successful marketer does not sell a product to its customers but it gives solution to the customers’ problems. By a deep inner thinking GD Pharmaceutical realized that the major problem that a customer suffers from is that they are being separated from the mother. The mother is sometimes represented by beauty or by youth or by tradition. As the clueless civilization, standing as a symbolic father takes the subject away from his/her mother, the subject suffers from a continuous agony of separation. Thus it gives birth to a frustrated demand, which later is translated into a desire. This repression or lack is the root cause of the problem of the subject. Now the desire of the subject also gets influenced by the big other along with the little other. A sexual non rapport may aggravate these problems to a pitiable state. Thus Boroline from the house of GD Pharmaceuticals projects itself as the substitute mother and tries to pacify the needs and wants of its customers in these ads under consideration.

In chapter 5, we have conducted an impact analysis of a set of 10 ads covering the period under study. Only those few ads were selected which
seemed to be important as they depict either some sort of addition or deletion of a concept, when compared with the earlier ads.

On the basis of the existing theory and the problem under consideration, a questionnaire has been framed so that respondents may answer mainly on the basis of the visuals of the ads. Questions were so set as to seek the viewers' opinion on social and cultural issues, attribute related issues, target segment considered, image of women and the related changes.

Test for the brand recall proportion of Boroline as a beauty cream equals to 0.25, against the alternative that it is less has been carried out confirming the fact that the brand recall proportion of Boroline as beauty cream is at most 0.25. Again a test for the brand recall proportion of Boroline as an antiseptic cream equals to 0.75, against the alternative that it is more has been carried out confirming the fact that the brand recall proportion of Boroline as antiseptic cream is at least 0.75.

The survey analysis showed that Boroline has a very strong positioning in the market for its antiseptic properties as concluded by both male respondents and female respondents. Now, we will give a preview of the changes that were reflected through the following dimensions of the ads in the passage of time.

Dimension-1 Data (responses from male respondents) treated with a non-parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is
equal to 130.589 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 50.998, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 36.

Data (responses from female respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 64.465 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 51.133, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 36.

Thus, the choice of sign/symbol/image depicted in the ads, have undergone significant change over the years. Once the association between time and sign/symbol/image is established, a test for proportion is carried out to study the point of change in respect of social customs and religious practices. The test results confirm the occurrence of a prominent change between the two periods under consideration namely 1963-1976 and 1976-2000. Thus the signs/symbols/images projected a social orientation in the initial years and a religious orientation in the later years.

Dimension-2. Data (responses from male respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 215.06 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is
equal to 61.07, calculated value is greater than tabulated value, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 54.

Data (responses from female respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 186.26 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 72.39. calculated value is greater than tabulated value, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 54.

The choice of targeted age group varied over the years.

Once the association between time and targeted age group is established, a test for proportion is carried out to study the point of change in respect of age groups. The test results confirm the occurrence of a prominent change between the two periods under consideration namely 1963-1976 and 1976-2000. Young and teenagers were targeted in the early years while in the later years; no specific age group was projected. Thus in the later years Boroline might have targeted all age groups.

Dimension-3. Data (responses from male respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 213.06 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 61.07, calculated value is greater than tabulated value, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 45

Data (responses from female respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 104.95
which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 61.07, calculated value is greater than tabulated value, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 45.

Thus, the target audience has experienced change with time as company became unfocused afterwards. Once the association between time and targeted addressee is established, a test for proportion is carried out to study the point of change in respect of buyers and mere visual. The test results confirm the occurrence of a prominent change between the two periods under consideration namely 1963-1976 and 1976-2000. Thus the company has targeted buyers in the beginning and afterwards did not give stress upon any specific group.

Dimension-4: Data (responses from male respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 93.7 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 51.13, calculated value is greater than tabulated value, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 36.

Data (responses from female respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 101.57 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 51.13, calculated value is greater than tabulated value, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 36.
The mode of promoting the product suggesting appeal in the ads and the time frame in the analysis are associated.

Once the association between time and suggested is established, a test for proportion is carried out to study the point of change in respect of direct and indirect appeals. The test results confirm the occurrence of a prominent change between the two periods under consideration namely 1963-1976 and 1976-2000.

In the early years the advertisers appealed directly to the customers and the appeals were attribute-based. But in the later years, they focused on indirect and tradition based appeals

Dimension-5. To carry out attribute analysis we have calculated average ranks assigned by the respondents. The attributes for which the average rank value is maximum, has been considered as the projected attribute. The entire analysis has been undertaken separately for male and female respondents. Thereafter we have conducted a gender wise comparative study.

It has been observed that, in certain years, namely, 1963, 1972, 1976, 1982, 1999 the attribute analysis conferred similar results for both male respondents and female respondents. But for some other years, namely, 1964, 1966, 1986, 1994, and 2000, our attribute analysis conferred dissimilar results. It can be said that, the years when the attribute analysis projected
similar results for both male respondents and female respondents, the attributes were strongly projected through the ads. But in the years, where value analysis gave dissimilar results, the attributes were weakly projected through the ads.

Dimension- 6. Data (responses from male respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 116.191 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 40.113, calculated value is greater than tabulated value, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 27.

Data (responses from female respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 88.256 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to 40.113. Calculated value is greater than tabulated value, at 5% significant level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 27.

A chi square test for association of attributes revealed that, culture projected through religion and art was associated with time.

Dimension- 7. Data (responses from male respondents) treated with a non parametric chi square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 834.45 which is greater than tabulated value of chi square is equal
to 103.07, calculated value is greater than tabulated Value, at 5% significant
level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 81.

Data (responses from female respondents) treated with a non parametric chi
square test reveals that, calculated value of chi square is equal to 159.23,
which is greater than tabulated value of chi square, which is equal to
103.07. Calculated value is greater than tabulated Value, at 5% significant
level and at degrees of freedom is equal to 81.

The value system and life style have undergone significant changes over the
years as reflected by the chi square test carried out separately for male and
female respondents.

Once the association between time and projected value system is established,
a test for proportion is carried out to study the point of change in respect of
feminine and over aggressiveness values. The test results confirm the
occurrence of a prominent change between the two periods under
to the male respondents in early years feminine values were given emphasis
while in later years, over aggressive values are given importance. But
according to female respondents, feminine values were given prominence in
the initial years but no specific value system was emphasized in the later
years.
Conclusion:

All the above analyses give a clear projection of company’s marketing strategy. The advertiser tried to promote its product relying on its primary benefits, promising to satisfy a lower level of needs of the customers. Thus the ad-themes were made based on social customs and events. This had happened in the initial years. In those days, the organization was in the growth stage in the PLC. The market was almost competition free. This was the time when the company adopted a direct and attributes based rational ad appeal in its ad strategy. The organization adopted a concentration strategy for segmentation and targeted young buyers. This was the time when women are portrayed in the ad depicting feminine values.

In the later years, when Boroline moved on to the maturity stage of the PLC, GD Pharmaceuticals sought to promote its product relying on higher level of needs like, establishment and retention of peace, prosperity, well being, wisdom etc. Thus the ad themes were made, on the basis of religious cues. This might be the time, when the company started facing mushrooming competition in the market. Thus company might have speculated that, it could not stand taller in the market by its attribute based positioning. Thereby, the company wisely adopted an indirect and tradition based ad appeal which might be emotional in nature. The company adopted an aggregation strategy in the segmentation front, inviting people from all age groups and without addressing any specific customer representative from the
market. Later years it has projected over aggressiveness values through the projected female figures in the ads. This might imply that in the later years the company was too desperate to catch hold of its market share to arrest a fall.

Lastly, it can be said that marketing of strategy adopted by GD Pharmaceutical was well framed and apt. thus Boroline was one of the very few brands in the field of personal care, that has live a very long life and had a very strong market positioning. But it’s really difficult to keep that charm of early years alive in a product which has all ready crossed its mid 70s. Thus Boroline needs a face lift, which may make a significant difference in its market share.

Semiotic vs. Survey based Analysis:

Mode of promoting the product: A communication test revealed that, till mid 70s, GD Pharmaceutical tried to promote Boroline for certain product related attributes and its approach was direct. In the 90s, when it gained confidence that it had all ready established an enduring position among its customers and prospects about its product attributes, it positioned itself as the supreme power. The survey analysis (pursued in chapter 5) also confirms the same. Thus from the perspective of mode of promoting the product, the convergence of the views from the respondents and the technical views depicted a strong ad appeal.
Attribute Analysis: the semiotic analysis revealed that, in 1963, Boroline was projected as beauty cream. But a regression analysis based on survey revealed that, Boroline was depicted as antiseptic cream. On the other hand, in 1966, both the semiotic cues and the male responses from the survey analysis projected Boroline as antiseptic cream. The responses from the female respondents also fell into similar line, as they perceived Boroline as family cream. Thus, in 1966, Boroline adopted a stronger appeal. From mid 60s to mid 70s, the attributes revealed from the technical analysis and the survey analysis were quite dissimilar. Since 80s semiotic cues were too weak to reveal any kind of attribute based positioning of Boroline. Similarly the attribute analysis obtained from survey approach never showed any kind of trend about any specific attribute over the years. This unclear and unfocused ad design could be detrimental for building and retaining a healthy customer base. If customers are not categorically informed the specific use value for purchasing Boroline, they might be taken over by competitors who would address the customers with a clearer and specific product positioning.

But the analysis on brand recall (5.3.1, Chapter,5), showed that, respondents widely recognized Boroline as antiseptic cream. It can be concluded that the visuals of ads were quite inconsiderate to portray any specific product attribute. There lies a gap. There is no consistency between body copy and
visuals. Thereby, it may be suggested that, GD Pharmaceutical should be more careful about ad designing.

Analysis on age group wise targeting: The investigation through survey following regression analysis and the analysis based on proportion, revealed that (5.2.3, Chapter 5), GD Pharmaceutical targeted the youth in 60s and 70s but happened to be unfocused in the 80s and 90s. The semiotic analysis also confirmed the same. Thus, it can be concluded that, age wise segmentation was very strongly portrayed in the ads.

Analysis on signs/symbols/ images: From the survey analysis (5.3.2), it was revealed that, the signs, symbols and images depicted social customs in the 60s and 70s but religious practice in 80s and 90s. The semiotic analysis confirmed that, the autumnal festival meant shopping, merriment and celebration in the 60s and 70s but emancipation of the supreme power by the destroying the evil spirit in the 80s and 90s. The ad of 2000 is an overall deviation from the rest of the years, as both semiotic cues and survey responses confirmed the projection of nature. Previously the women wanted to look after their skin only on special occasions like during the time of autumnal festival. Thus, purchasing of a skincare product could be a part of their celebrating the festive time. But after wards in the mid 70s, the skin care became a regular affair for the women. Thus purchasing of Boroline
could no longer remain a part of festive-time activity. To address this transition in the consumer behaviour, Boroline in 80s and 90s projected itself as the emancipation of divine power. But in 2000, Boroline again projected itself in the backdrop of the nature, as GD Pharmaceutical observed the consumers’ awareness and preference for herbal products.

1.7. SCOPE OF FURTHER APPLICATION AND RESEARCH:

Decoding of ads through semiotic and psychoanalytical tools, may help the marketers realize the effectiveness of their ads. These are scales which measures to what extent the ads may penetrate through the unconscious mind of the viewer, and how much interest it may trigger off in the prospects’ mind. Advertising is indispensable and expensive. Very often marketers spend a fortune, making advertisements which get only a step motherly attention from the part of consumers and prospects. If ads are thoroughly edited by the tools of psychoanalysis and semiotics, they may bring better results.

We have pursued research only for ads of Boroline. A similar research can be done on ads of other skin creams with medicinal properties. Thus a competitive analysis can be conducted effectively. Again if the yearly gross
sales figures are available, a study could be done comparing effectiveness of ad design and sales turn over.

1.8. LIMITATION OF OUR PRESENT WORK:

We have pursued our research work on the ads in a regional vernacular (Bengali). Thus it portrayed regional socio-cultural trends. If we could have pursued the same study in the ads in English, we could have examined socio-cultural trends and changes in various parameters on a national level.

We have conducted a survey on a small scale basis. If we could do it on a much larger scale, we would get a result that would represent the universe in better way.

Our sampling units cover respondents having very little differences in demographic parameters e.g., qualification, age etc. thus they don’t represent various social groups, and age groups of the universe.
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