CHAPTER 5

Advertising and Ethics

Introduction

Advertising is the practice of informing and influencing others not personally known to the communicator through paid massages in the media. It has been defined as any paid form of non-personal communication designed to promote products, services, organizations, or ideas by an identifiable individual or organization. It is a form of persuasive communication that offers information about products, ideas, and services that serve the objectives determined by the advertiser.

The word ‘advertise’ comes from the French meaning to inform, warn, or announce¹.

Advertising may influence consumers in many different ways but the primary goal of advertising is to increase the probability that consumers exposed to an advertisement will behave or believe as the advertiser wishes. Thus, the ultimate objective of advertising is to sell things persuasively and creatively. Advertising is used by commercial firms to sell products and services; by politicians and political interest group to sell ideas or persuade voters; by not-for-profit organizations to
raise funds, solicit volunteers, or influence the actions of viewers; and by governments seeking to encourage or discourage particular activities, such as wearing seatbelts, participating in the census, or ceasing to smoke. We, consciously or unconsciously, are exposed to a number of advertisements and virtually it is impossible to escape them, however hard we try\(^2\).

**Historical Perspective**

Egypt, probably, seems to be the country of the earliest advertisement. In some 3000\(^BC\), Egyptians stenciled inscription of the names of their kings on the temples and would write announcements of runaway slaves on papyrus. The ancient Greeks placed signboards outside their shop doors. A wine shop was indicated by a bush over the door in Greece and Rome. The Romans whitened areas on walls and painted them with inscriptions. The early town criers were also a medium of advertising\(^3\).

The development of printing in the 15\(^{th}\) and the 16\(^{th}\) centuries gave rise to the modern advertising. The first printed advertisement (in English) which announced a prayer book sale came in about 1477 in London. In 1625, the first newspaper advertisement appeared on the back page of a London newspaper.
The paid advertisements were printed in the United States in 1704. Benjamin Franklin, later, made advertising more readable by using large headlines and by surrounding the advertisements with white space. There were 31 newspapers in the colonies carrying advertisements by 1771.

In the 19th Century the great industrial development gave growth to advertising industry; it was that century, primarily, in the United States that saw the establishment of advertising agencies.

In 1869, N.W. Ayer and Son, Inc. was the first modern advertising agency founded in Philadelphia in the U.S. The year 1982, the Asiad Games, is considered a watershed period in the history of Indian advertising, then came the year 1992, the year of liberalization of Indian trade and commerce which integrated the Indian economy with the global economy. The economic integration opened the doors for multinational companies to setup their business operations, thereby, creating an opportunity for plethora of media houses. Advertising today is the strongest, most lethal and often used weapon in the hands of multinational companies as they have money, technology and skills in abundance.
Functions

Advertising is basically a persuasive communication. Therefore, the aims set for advertisements are communication tasks: to reach a targeted group, to a given extent, and during a given time period.

However, there are three major functions of advertising. The first function of advertisement is to produce awareness and knowledge about goods and services and make them different from others; this creates an awareness of the product and provide the basis for consumers to choose the advertised product over other products. The second function of advertisement is to give information about the product, its characteristics and its place of sale. The third function of advertisement is to persuade buyers to try new products and to suggest reuse of the product as well as new uses.

The identification function of advertisement has the ability to differentiate a product so that it could possess its own unique identity or personality. The example is the long running advertising for Ivory Soap with the punch line ‘It Floats’. The phrase served to uniquely identify it and differentiate it from other bars of soap.

In the same advertisement of Ivory Soap, we find the information function of advertising. Over hundred years, ads for Ivory Soap have
focused on such product attributes, as purity of ingredients, child care, and soft skin. These attributes, in turn, were often related to key profits that could be gained from using Ivory Soap. Thus, a number of ads emphasized “That Ivory Look”, that focused on the relationships between product attributes and the benefits of having a fresh and healthy look.

Again in the same advertisement of Ivory Soap, we find the third function of advertising, i.e. persuasion. Proctor and Gamble, the advertiser, has linked Ivory Soap with getting benefits that are important to buyers; a fresh and healthy look for women, a mild, nonirritating method for bathing babies, and a novelty for children in the tub (because it floats). The benefits of the product give reasons to have and use Ivory Soap and thus provide a basis for persuading buyers. However, to utilize the full potential of advertising as persuasive tool, it should be tailored to emphasize those benefits that are important and meaningful for a particular type of buyer.

Ethical Dimension

Is advertising Ethical? Is advertising deceptive? Does it create or perpetuate stereotype? Does it create conformity? Does it create insecurity in order to sell goods? Does it cause people to buy things that
they do not really need? And many more questions arise when people react to various advertisements with dislike and then claim that most of the advertising is deceptive and more is bragging in the advertising.

However, the opinion concerning advertisement is divided. Some people who support advertising do not see any negative impact and forwards their argument in favour. And those who oppose advertisement see its negative impact on individual and society and advance their arguments against it.

Here in the following discussion, I would call liberals to those who support advertising and do not see its negative impact, and conservatives to those who see its negative impact on individuals and society and do not support it.

**Liberals**

Liberals are of the view that advertising merely mirrors society as it is. They see advertising as a necessary part of a healthy markets and contend that it has contributed to the growth of GDP and widespread prosperity. According to liberals advertising serves a social purpose by providing the people with information about goods and services available and about new products and services.
Secondly advertising stimulates the economy and is thus an instrument of development. Without advertising or marketing communication products and services could not be sold. Without sales, factories would close down causing unemployment. This would further reduce demand and lead to further closing down of factories and so on.

On the other hand advertising promotes sales. Higher sales mean more production and lower costs and hence lower prices and more employment. This means growth of economy. Thirdly, advertising is a component of a democratic society. The essence of democracy is that people have a choice and the right to exercise that choice. In the democratic economic system there are a variety of goods and services available to choose from. Advertising enable the consumer to make such a choice.

Furthermore, liberals make the following points in favour of advertising.

**Advertising is like an Art and Poetry**

Liberals are of the view that advertising should not be taken as literal representation of truth in the real world, rather an embellished offering of expected benefits. Further, they compare advertising with poetry. Poetry’s aim is to influence readers; to affect their sensibilities
and probably even to change their minds. Poetry's intention is to convince and seduce readers. Poetry, in order to succeed in its purpose, employs all possible tools of distortions a poet can devise. It employs without any fear of criticism allusion, illusion, metaphor and exaggerated, distorted and false description. However, a poetry is still appreciated and praised.

Commerce in the same way takes freedom from reality and literality as the poet and calls its creation as an advertisement. It also employs allusion, illusion, symbols, false promises, exaggeration, distortion etc. in order to influence and seduce audiences\textsuperscript{11}.

Once, when asked what his company did, Charles Revson of Revlon, Inc. suggested a profound distinction: “In the factory we make cosmetics; in the store we sell hope.” He obviously has no illusions. It is not cosmetic chemicals women want, but the seductive charm promised by the alluring symbols with which these chemicals have been surrounded – hence the rich and exotic packages in which they are sold and the suggestive advertising with which they are promoted.

An ad man and a poet both don’t celebrate the literal functionality of what they produce. Rather, each celebrates a deep and complex emotion what he symbolizes by creative embellishment.
Communication, through advertising or through poetry or any other medium, is a creative conceptualization that implies a vicarious experience through a language of symbolic substitutes. However, communication can never be the real thing it talks about. Therefore, all communication is in some inevitable fashion a departure from reality.

**People Need Change**

Liberals justify distortion, falsification, exaggeration, embellishment and augmentation of an advertisement on the ground that change is natural demand of human being. None of us accept the natural state in which God created us. None is satisfied with nature in the raw. All of us change, modify and embellish ourselves. Women modify, embellish and amplify themselves with colored paste for the lips and powders and lotions for the face; men as well as women use devices to take hair off the face and others to put it on the head.

However, every man rejects nature’s uneven blessings. He molds and repackages to his own civilizing specifications. He does it so that life may be made more tolerable than God evidently designed it to be.

Advertisement in the same way brings change to the raw product by reshaping, embellishing and augmenting it, and then present it to the
same applauding humanity that so eagerly buys Lakemi’s exotically advertised cosmetics\textsuperscript{12}.

**People need hyperbolic advertisement**

People seek to transcend nature in the raw everywhere. All times and everywhere people have been attracted by the poetic imagery of some sort of art, literature, music and mysticism. They want and need the promises, the imagery, and the symbols. They simply refuse to live a life of primitive barbarism.

Consider a sardine can filled with scented powder. Even if the Indian Bureau of Standards were to certify that the contents of this package are identical with the product sold in a beautiful paisley-printed container, it would not sell. For a women, dusting powder in a sardine can is not the same product as the identical dusty powder in an exotic paisley package. Obviously, she desire and need the promises, imagery, and symbols produced by hyperbolic advertisements, elaborate packages, and fetching fashions\textsuperscript{13}.

**People Need Promises and Assurance**

Consumers do not choose to buy a particular product; they choose to buy the functional expectations (promises) that they attach to it, and they buy these expectations as tools to help them solve a problem of life.
Under normal circumstances, furthermore, we must judge a product’s non-mechanical utilities before we actually buy it. It is rare that we choose an object after we have experienced it; nearly always we must make the choice before the fact. We choose on the basis of promises, not experiences.

Whatever symbols convey and sustain these promises in our minds are therefore truly functional. The promises and images which imaginative ads and sculptured packages induce in us are as much the product as the physical materials themselves. To put this another way, these ads and packages describe the product’s fullness for us: in our minds, the product becomes a complex abstraction which is, as Immanuel Kant might have said, the conception of a perfection which has not yet been experienced.

**Advertising Symbols Useful and Necessary**

We need symbol to remove confusion. Verbal symbols help to make the product. They help us deal with the uncertainties of daily life. With symbols we become sure whether this is electric generator or electric shaver. Furthermore, we need advertisements to be sure about product’s quality before experiencing it. In addition, advertisement symbols are necessary to attract attention of buyers.
I agree with the logic of liberals that we need advertisement symbols to differentiate products and to know about its quality. But symbol must be true and real so that we could not be confused. We should get salt if advertisement symbolizes it so, and not sugar. Furthermore, we must get the promised quality and not be cheated.

Advertising: Not Deceiving

Liberals counter the question of deceiving advertisements that they are simply the symbols of man’s aspirations. They are not the real things, nor are they intended to be, nor are they accepted as such by the public. A study some years ago by the Center for Research in Marketing, Inc. concluded that deep down inside the consumer understands this perfectly and has the attitude that an advertisement is an ad, not a factual news story.

People in this modern world are exposed to a large volume of information of varying degree of unreliability. They establishes a system of discounts which they apply to various sources almost without thought. Even a small child watching television dismisses the health and status-giving claims of a breakfast cereal as ‘a commercial’. However, people know what advertisement is false and what is real.
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Linguists and other communication specialists will agree with the conclusion of the Center for Research in Marketing that advertising is a symbol system existing in a world of symbols. Its reality depends upon the fact that it is a symbol. The content of an ad can never be real, it can only say something about reality, or create a relationship between itself and an individual.

Finally in a world where so many things are either commonplace or standardized, it makes no sense to refer to the rest as false, fraudulent, frivolous, or immaterial.

Conservatives

Opponents of advertising claim that it intrudes into our lives, commercializes culture, undermines values, manipulate customers and leads to less happiness as society is reminded of what it cannot afford. It also encourages us to spend money on products we do not need. Some also argue that advertising is responsible for excessive consumption of foods, for example, high in sugar, salt, and fat or alcohol by young people. In short, advertising produces counter-productivity behaviour. Advertising deliberately appeals to negative values such as envy, status seeking and lust. Some advertisers consciously seek to shock and titillate the audiences by exploiting the content of morbid,
pervasive and pornographic nature. It uses manipulative, exploitative, corruptive and salacious methods for persuasion and motivation\textsuperscript{17}.

Furthermore, conservatives make the following points against advertising.

**Stereotyping of Women**

We find stereotyping of women in most of advertisements. Women are portrayed as an object of sexual desire and just for satisfying a male libido. The status of women, most often, as a wife and mother is undervalued or even ridiculed. Many a times, the role of women in business is depicted as a masculine caricature, which denies them their specific gifts of insight, compassion and understanding. The advertisements for Calvin Klein depict women in very suggestive postures. The advertisement of Hindware showing three women skimpily dressed up is simply preposterous as there is no relevance of women with the product\textsuperscript{18}.

**Exploiting Children**

Children are easy target and vulnerable to advertisement. Most advertisements directed at children try to exploit their credulity and suggestibility in the hope that they will put in pressure on their parents to buy products of no real benefit to them. Advertising like this offends
the dignity and rights of both children and parents; it intrudes upon the
parent-child relationship and seeks to manipulate it to meet its own ends.
The advertisement for Thums Up showing bungy jumping encourages
children to emulate such stunts, leading to serious accidents. Another ad
for Kidstain from Surf Excel shows children soiling their dresses so
much that you cannot stop your children doing the same. Mockery
shown in the ad for Videocon Bazzon is humiliating for the parents.
However, children are easy target ad most advertisement try to exploit
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Furthermore, conservatives make the following points against
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**Advertisement Promotes Consumer Culture**

By the 1920s, corporations, advertising agencies and market
research organizations began planning ways to produce consumers and
to promote consumption as a way of life. Individual resistance to new
products had to be broken down, and individuals had to be convinced
that it was acceptable to purchase goods that they had previously
produced themselves and that it was morally justifiable to consume, to
spend money and to gratify desires. Previously, puritan work and
savings ethics and a morality of delayed gratification prevailed, so
advertising had to convince individuals that consumption was now a morally acceptable route to happiness and satisfaction.

Advertising also attempted to create problems and fears to which commodities were a solution. Thus, for instance, unless individuals bought products to combat their bad breath or body odor, they would not be socially acceptable. In this way, a ‘commodity self’ emerged in which different products allowed individuals to communicate different aspects of ‘their’ personalities that could be shaped by using the right products and producing the right images. Advertising tells us that new commodities will make us happier, more popular and successful. Fashion in turn provides the constant cycle of new products, styles, and images that keep consumer demand at a high level. Advertising tells us that to be "with it" and up to date we must be fashionable; we must buy and exhibit all the latest products and fashions. Advertising and fashion also promote a worldview complete with ethics, politics, gender role models, and a sense of appropriate and inappropriate daily social behavior. However, these two industries thus have crucial economic and socializing functions in creating consumer demand, shaping behavior, and persuading people to participate in and thus reproduce consumer society.
Advertising: An Instrument of Persuasion

Mainstream writers essentially defend the institutions, life-styles, and values of consumer capitalism, and apologists for the advertising industry interpret it as a form of information that provides consumers with up-to-date news concerning commodities and the impetus necessary to maintain a high level of production and affluence. Likewise, defenders of the fashion industry claim that it too merely provides a constant turnover of new products and styles that meet consumer needs for novelty, change and desire for style.

However, hardly any advertising is purely informative. There are informative ads in the classified sections of newspapers, but television ads are mainly image based creating associations between products and desired conditions, such as happiness and success. Advertising is persuasive, relying on emotional appeals, dramatic or comic images, and manipulation of basic fears and desire\textsuperscript{21}.

Advertising sells Fake Image and False Assurance

In order to sell their products, corporations undertake campaigns to associate them with positive and desirable images. Thus in the 1950s, Marlboro undertook a campaign to associate its cigarette with masculinity and with being a true man. Previously, Marlboro had been
packaged as a mild, women's cigarette, and the "Marlboro man" campaign attempted to capture the male market with images of archetypal and culturally familiar characters such as the cowboy, with its connotations of masculinity, independence and ruggedness. Thus consumption of the product was associated with socially desirable traits—masculinity. For decades, the Marlboro cowboy has been the central symbol in Marlboro ads.

All ads are social texts that respond to key developments during the period in which they appear. As the health hazards of smoking became more widely known, a mandatory health warning appeared on all packaging and advertising. Light and low-tar cigarettes are also responses to the health concern, so Marlboro ads now feature images of clean, pure, wholesome nature, as if it were natural to smoke cigarettes and as if cigarettes were a healthy and natural product. The imagery is itself light, white, green, snowy, and airy, often showing horses gamboling in snow or water, trying to associate cigarettes through the process of metonymy, or contiguous association, with these natural elements. This glosses over the fact that cigarettes are an artificial, synthetic product, full of dangerous pesticides, preservatives, and other chemicals.
The Marlboro ads also draw on images of tradition (the cowboy), hard work, domesticating animals, and other values as if smoking were noble activity sanctioned by tradition. The images and text create a symbolic construct that tries to camouflage the contradictions between the heavy work and the light cigarette, between the natural scene and the artificial product, and between the rugged masculinity of the Marlboro man and the light cigarette. In fact, this latter contradiction can be explained by the marketing ploy of suggesting to men that they can both be highly masculine and smoke a supposedly healthier cigarette, while also appealing to independent-minded women who might enjoy smoking a man's cigarette that is also lighter and healthier.

A 1989 Marlboro ad features the gnarled hands of an old cowboy holding a lighted cigarette. The subliminal message is that you too can smoke and live to a ripe old age (whereas the "real" person who played the Marlboro cowboy for many years had just died of cancer after giving many interviews warning of the dangers of smoking). It thus invites the consumer to a pleasurable experience and subliminally tries to allay fears that the experience is a dangerous one that might actually be life threatening.
Thus ads offer symbolic gratifications to consumers and try to associate their products with socially desired values. The well-known Virginia Slims advertising campaign with its slogan, You've come a long way, baby, tries to denote social progress for women, associating this progress with the right to smoke. Many of these ads try to visualize the positive change for women. They often depict the bad old days when, for example, a working woman lights up a cigarette and angers her boss, contrasted with the modern beautiful Virginia Slims woman confidently and happily holding a cigarette in her hand. The ads connote a message of progress, linking Virginia Slims to the modern woman who has progressed from oppressed servant of men to independent subject of her own life. The appearance of the 1989 Virginia Slims woman contributes to this message; for example, her hair is teased, her makeup is perfect, her smile is dazzling, and her clothes are flamboyant, with mismatched earrings connoting independence, style, and nonconformity. A red hat, carelessly tossed back over her shoulder, a gold bracelet, an exotic short shirt, all are carefully contrived to effect an image of individuality, daring and sexuality.

It is interesting to compare the contemporary Virginia Slims woman with the earlier images. As recently as 1983, the Virginia Slims woman was much more conventionally pretty, more conservatively
attired, and less flamboyant and sexy. The shift in image reflects changes in cultural ideals and the new yuppies emphasis on high fashion and individuality as well as the collapse of moral taboos about women's sexuality. Also, during the Reagan 1980s there was increased emphasis on wealth and luxury, reflected in the new image. Thus ads sell not only products but social values and ideals.

The Virginia Slims woman is very slim, like her brand name, maintaining the powerful cultural pressure on women to achieve this socially desirable trait. In fact, Lucky Strike carried out a successful advertising campaign in the 1930s that associated smoking with weight reduction, and Virginia Slims plays on this tradition. The connection of smoking and slimness is far from innocent and has contributed to eating disorders, faddish diets and exercise programs, and a dramatic increase in anorexia among young women, as well as rising cancer rates.

Thus, advertising sells its products and view of the world through visual and verbal rhetorics, design and layout, to which tremendous psychological research, artistic resources and marketing strategies are devoted. Advertising, fashion and consumerism are of crucial importance in producing the needs, values and daily behavior that dominate our lives.
To keep a high level of consumer demand in place, the advertising and fashion industries have to persuade consumers to change deep-rooted habits, to throw away old products and to buy new ones continually. Advertising and the fashion industry thus combine individuality and conformity in curious ways. Individuals consume and pursue fashion to individuate themselves, yet do so in order to be socially accepted to fit in and be popular. Moreover, mass-produced goods and fashion are used to produce a fake individuality, a commodity self, and an image.

Advertisement Celebrate Capitalist Values

Television is one of the most ubiquitous and influential promoters of advertising and fashion. TV advertising is expensive, sophisticated, and ever more frequent during an era in which the deregulation of television allows the networks to show as many ads as they desire during a given time period. Television ads are typically 60-, 30-, 15-, or even 10-second dramatizations of the value of consumerism as a way of life and the joys and benefits of the consumer society. TV ads frequently adopt the conflict-resolution structure of television programming. Situation comedies and action/adventure programs present problems and conflicts and then offer solutions that celebrate traditional values,
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institutions and authority figures. Similarly, in advertising a problem is shown, the commodity is offered as a solution, and happiness is the outcome.

Classic television ads presented problems like ring around the collar and tired blood and commodities that would solve these problems. They portrayed numerous sagas of young men or women unable to get dates because of bad breath or unappetizing hair, magically transformed into highly attractive and successful sex objects through the mouthwash or shampoo advertised. Television advertising is especially suitable for portraying such magical transformation and metamorphosis, building on fantasy imagery borrowed from myths, fairy tales, or contemporary media. Television is our primary storytelling medium, and ads provide brief narrative dramas that vividly present the agonies and ecstasies of life in the consumer culture.

Television stands at the center of our symbol system and provides mythic and ritualistic celebrations of dominant values and institutions. Thus ads can be read as capitalist morality plays that celebrate dominant values, specific modes of action, and the 'good life', much as medieval morality plays celebrated Christianity. Anheuser-Busch's 'The night belongs to Michelob' ads of the late 1980s used high-tech, fast-paced
imagery to associate the beer with a modern consumer life-style of cars, dance clubs, bars, and urban street culture. The images were dazzling, the editing was fast, and the pictures were tracked with loud music and Michelob slogans. The ads thus sold both beer and the fast life in the fast lane, linking Michelob to the paradise of consumer capitalism. During the late 1980s we were also treated to nightly incantations that "the heartbeat of America is today's Chevrolet." The cars sped through attractive landscapes and showed individuals, couples, and families enjoying the mobile and fun-filled life made possible by their cars. These ads equated owning and driving a car with being a real American, and used patriotism to try to persuade U.S. citizens to buy American cars rather than foreign models.

TV ads are highly sophisticated, highly creative and produced with the newest high-tech instruments and aesthetic strategies. Tremendous amounts of time, talent and resources are devoted to producing such images, which are typically more expensive than programming. In fact, consumers pay for the programming through higher prices for the goods they purchase. Many television series, like *Dallas, Dynasty,* and other prime-time soaps, are themselves advertisements for wealth, luxury, fashion and a high-consumption life-style.
In a way, advertising is the art form of consumer capitalism, and it runs the gamut of aesthetic forms, from nitty-gritty realism to fantastic surrealism. As Goldman has argued that certain ads promote an idealized version of American history and the institutions and values of corporate capitalism as they try to huckster their products. For instance, McDonald's ads frequently contain images of small-town America, family life, middle-class affluence, and integrated Americana that surround the images of the Big Macs and Macmuffins that they are trying to sell. Other ads promote American ideology by equating consumerism with 'freedom of choice' (e.g., between light and regular beer) or tell you to be an 'individual' by buying this or that product. Note that individuality and freedom are here defined in terms of possession, consumption, and style, as opposed to thought action, dissent, rational behavior and autonomy, which were the basis of previous definitions of individualism promoted by the Founding Fathers and nineteenth-century individualists such as Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman.

Kantian Perspective

In Kantian perspective advertisement is justified up to the extent that it provides true and correct information to make audiences aware of
products and its quality before practical experience. But the moment it resorts to distortion, deception, exaggeration, etc. it stands unjustified. Because these negative values cannot be universalized or universally practiced or can become universal moral law according to the first categorical imperative of Kant.

According to the second categorical imperative too advertisement would not stand justified as it treats consumers as an object or means by providing them false, deceptive, exaggerated, distorted, augmented and embellished information. Furthermore, it considers consumers as a fool who will accept whatever it provides. Had the consumers been treated as a subject or an end, they would have not been provided deceptive and distorted information. In addition advertisers themselves would not like to be cheated or deceived by any agency, so how they would choose to deceive or cheat others. Thus the third categorical imperative too seems to be violated by advertisement. Hence, advertisement stands unjustified in Kantian perspective if and only if it provides false, distorted, deceptive and exaggerated information.
Utilitarian Perspective

Advertisements full of distortion, false promises and assurance, exaggeration and deception seem to maximize happiness for only businessmen who are very few in number. But for consumers or general masses who are in majority, it brings unhappiness or disappointment when they realized that they did not get the product or services as promised and assured. However, if we weigh the overall happiness and unhappiness produced by advertisements, we find that unhappiness weighs more than happiness. Because the number of unhappy persons (consumers) are more than the happy persons (businessman). Therefore, advertisement stands unjustified according to utilitarians.

Conclusion

As far as my understanding about advertising is concerned there is nothing intrinsically bad or good about advertising. It is an instrument and much depends on how it is used. It can have positive and beneficial results or negative and harmful impact on individuals.

Though there are governing bodies to monitor the behaviour of the advertisers, but the onus falls more on the consciences of the professionals. They should be sensitive to their duty and be fair enough in respecting the audiences morally and socially. Since all humans have
freedom of speech and expression, it is largely up to the advertisers to ensure responsible practices in their profession. If they observe proliferation of unethical practices, conscientious advertisers should get alert and rectify by shunning them completely. We just cannot think to obliterate advertising completely from the contemporary world, since it plays an important role in economic growth by providing information and ideas about products and services and in bringing people together in a group.

However, negative impact of advertising can be avoided if professionals observe high ethical standards in terms of truthfulness, human dignity, social responsibility, fairness, etc. We must also learn to read and decipher advertising to see through the hype so that we can analyze and criticize advertising’s persuasive technique.