

## Brand Building and Nationalism : A study on the Commercial Message in Indian Advertisement

**Prof. Girija Shanker Sharma**

*Prof. of MMC*

*Mewar University, Chittorgarh*

**Gunjan Sharma**

*Research Scholar*

*Mewar University, Chittorgarh*

*Email : sijmc.gunjansharma@gmail.com*

### *Abstract*

*India is a vast, diverse country, which attracts much attention as a political and economic entity. Every citizen in India is very emotional towards anything related to nationalism. These emotions are manipulated by political parties, media houses, entertainment industry and business firms. When a nation's patriotic feelings are evoked for commercial gains, it is called Commercialization of Nationalism or consumer nationalism. In this paper, we will study about the concept of consumer nationalism. This paper will discuss about the Commercial messages creating brand identity using a variety of appeals. The appeals cater to the rational and emotional faculties of the consumers. However, this paper tries to explore the exploitation of the spirit of nationalism as an appeal to build brand identity. Nationalism serves both as an inspiration and an emotion in TV commercials. It acquires various statures in different messages: a philosophy, a mass awakening or a collective sentiment, a responsibility, an idea, a relationship, logic and so on. Consumers are offered brands with a package of nationalistic spirit in ads like "Desh ki Dhadkan..." and "Buland Bharat ki BulandTasvir...", "...Swadeshi", "Teste of India...", "Desh Ka Namak", "India KaDil India Ka AC" and so on. It is interesting to note that the use of nationalism for building brand identity is not restricted to any specific product/service category or a corporate. It is used by one and all depending on the kind of identity they would like to create. This study will provides a semiotic analysis of Indian TVCs with an objective to establish a link between the aspects of nationalism depicted and the intended brand identity TV ads. This phenomenon has been analyzed in detail and contradictions have been brought to light. This paper concludes by saying that nationalism should not be commercialized and there should be a healthy competition among the business firms so that the consumer is free to make an informed rational decision.*

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

**Prof. Girija Shanker Sharma,  
Gunjan Sharma,**

*Brand Building and Nationalism : A study on the Commercial Message in Indian Advertisement,*

Journal Global Values,  
Vol. IX, No.2,  
Article No. 10,  
pp.69-77

[http://anubooks.com/?page\\_id=285](http://anubooks.com/?page_id=285)

## **Introduction**

Nationalism is a global concept and nationalists are influenced by a wide range of models. Nationalism has spread along the lines of direction which have to be understood more in terms of degrees of success. The concept of nationalism in India is not a new concept. It is something Mahatma Gandhi used very effectively to rally people against British colonial rule, appealing to people to boycott foreign goods—including lighting bonfires of them. It became the key rallying call for the Civil Disobedience movement Gandhi launched; in part, it was also a campaign for Indian handlooms. India is a state-nation and is a nation in making. India has a history of being a colony. Thus citizens are very emotional towards everything related to nationalism. These emotions are manipulated by political parties, media, entertainment industry and business firms. Literally speaking, commercialization is the process of managing or running something principally for financial gain. Commercialization can be analyzed from various perspectives but if we see from socio-cultural perspective then it can be studied as the interplay of business firms with local festivals, customs, religions, languages, geographical diversities and lastly patriotic national feelings. Commercialization of nationalism is a conscious effort to manipulate the patriotic feeling of people in general for materialistic gain.

Brand building is the total proposition that a company makes to consumers - the promise it makes. It may consist of features and attributes, benefits, performance, quality, service support, and the values that the brand possesses. The brand can be viewed as a product, a personality, a set of values, and a position it occupies in people's minds. Brand building is everything the company wants the brand to be seen as (Paul, 2002). Brand building originates from the company, i.e., a company is responsible for creating a differentiated product with unique features. A company will often use branding strategy as a means of communicating its identity and value to consumers and other stakeholders. Communication tools used to disseminate the brand building is well planned and appropriately implemented. Elements of the promotional mix (advertising, sales promotion, public relations and direct response) should be coordinated in such a fashion that there is uniformity in the message that is communicated from the company to its relevant constituencies. Thus, a brand that is being advertised as a high-quality product may have brand-loyal consumers who will pay a premium price for it (Nandan, 2005).

Brand building can also be viewed in the wake of brand concept; it is based on the consumer needs that a brand can satisfy. There are three types of consumer needs that a brand can satisfy: functional, symbolic and experiential (Park et al., 1986). A brand with a functional concept is designed to solve externally generated

consumption needs. Consumers will be motivated to buy and use functional brands in situations where the product is viewed as addressing utilitarian needs. A brand with a symbolic concept is designed to associate the individual with a desired group, role or self-image. Brands with a symbolic concept facilitate the communication of symbolic meaning to the individual and to others. A brand with an scientific concept is designed to fulfill an internally generated need for stimulation and/or variety. The primary motivation for selecting certain products is the enjoyment that is derived by consumers from consumption of these products. The communications that are delivered about product/services/corporate veiled behind the spirit of nationalism target the self-image of the consumer.

For instance, when **Lifebuoy's ad** ends up with the punch line “making billion Indians safe and secure”, or “Healthy Hoga Hindustan” it establishes the role of the consumer in making the nation healthy. And of course, it reiterates that both the product (Lifebuoy Toilet soap) and the corporate (HUL) are committed to the health and hygiene of the country; this establishes their brand identity.



### Depiction of Nationalism in Indian TVCs

“Maine deshkanamakkhayahai”, “Aarahoonmein India”, “Gharaagya Hindustan” and “Deshkidhadkan”. Statements as patriotic as these bring about the “swadesh effect”. ‘Bulund Bharat kibulandtasveer’ in the Hamara Bajaj campaign of the 80s, is still etched in our collective memory. The ad not only became a furor from its inception but also became as popular as the national anthem.

In a recent Tata Tea commercial, a woman is shown preparing tea and comparing the process with the making of a revolution. Her husband reads out the day’s headlines from a newspaper, which are all about corruption. In response, she says, “Deshubalrahahai, ayega josh, dam, mithas, badlegadeshka rang” and ends

with Chayepiyein, sochbadlein hen” there are other advertisements like Hero MotoCorp’s AR Rahman musical, Samsung Champ’s Youth Parliament, Rotomac Pen’s ‘Write to Information’, Life Insurance Corporation and State Bank of India’s commercials and Big Cinema’s ‘The silent anthem’. ”JaagoRe “ is the another ads in the series in which the communications is delivered about product/services/ corporate veiled behind the spirit of nationalism target the self-image of the consumer.



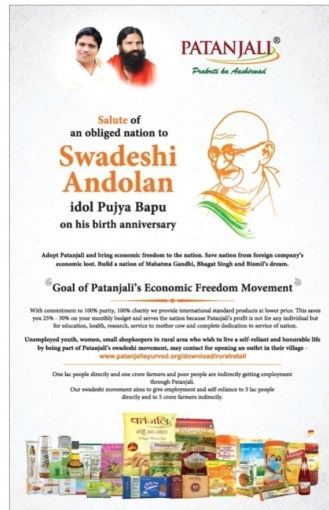
Today, many products in India are using this rhetoric to make a case for their product. This concern is not just economic – the rhetoric also takes its roots from the prevalent political conditions and their subsequent appropriation and legitimization in popular culture. When something attains enough importance to be the rallying point of a community, culture or the nation as a whole, it also becomes a commodity.

In a capitalist world, sentiments can be fetishised to serve the purpose of the bourgeoisie. If you take a cursory glance at the television commercials of the day, many things – motorbikes, cement, cooking oil, building tiles, etc. – are often sold in the name of and by using the face of the army.

Sometimes, the desperation to use the imagery is so strong that the product-makers try to forge connections where none exist. Motorbike companies use a masculine imagery to equate the army with virility. Thus, the keywords of chivalry, strength, honour, etc. become the keywords of the bike as well. But, for a product like cooking oil or cement, the analogical rhetoric doesn't work.

With Patanjali, Ramdev and his followers have promoted a stridently nationalist line. They would claim that when you buy a Patanjali toothpaste, you aren't just preventing cavities but also buying freedom from the West. Newspaper advertisements underscore the argument: “Though we got political freedom 70 years back, economic freedom is still a dream. ... The way [the] East India Company enslaved and looted us, multinational companies are still doing the same .” Some of

these ads have featured a map of India overlaid with a cross to symbolize the rapacious British East India Company, which for some reason upset Indian Christian organizations. Patanjali's messaging thus effortlessly links nationalism, Hinduism and the virtue and quality of the company's goods — and Ramdev's multitude of TV programs gives him plenty of scope to spread the message.



base line, 'Leading the Way', while the sales pitch is on an emotional plank, 'DeshkiDhadkan', a communication that depicts Hero Honda as a part of every Indian's daily life. It had become the second-largest selling motorcycle model in India. It is launched as a 'Public kaNaya Transport' showing people ready to move from public transport to private transport. It clocked sales of 100,000 bikes within just 100 days of its launch. This shows that corporate plays with the nationalism and people patriotism.

The **Amul girl** was the brainchild of Sylvester da Cunha, the managing



director of the advertising agency AS. The ads were designed as a series of hoardings with designs relating to day-to-day issues. The brand recall for the Amul girl is phenomenal across India today. And the biggest reason for this is the topical nature of the ads. The Amul ads have witty one-liners which capture relevant events that have caught the fancy of the nation.

Humara Bajaj “Bajaj auto Pvt. Ltd.” Launch scooter with name of Great Indian king MaharanaPratap’s pet horse “CHETAK” and from then they are using the consumer nationalism. Humarabajaj “**Buland Bharat kiBulandTasvir**”.

Tata Salt runs a campaign ‘NamakkeWaastey’ that aims at catalysing conversations and generating mass support for the Indian Olympians. While sport has been a binding force that transcends social and economic barriers to unify the citizens of the country, we as Indians have been sparing in terms of showing our love and support towards only a few sports. Often coming from humble backgrounds, our Olympians tirelessly work towards their goal of winning the medal for the country, with minimal support and due to sheer passion for sports and love towards the country.

### **Social Responsibility campaign Shiksha (Education)**

Padhega India. Badhega India.P&G’s flagship Corporate Social Responsibility Program Shiksha is an integral part of our global philanthropy program - Live, Learn & Thrive. Shiksha began with P&G India’s research which revealed education as

the one cause that consumers are most concerned about and are looking for a simple way to contribute to. With this insight and founded on P&G’s purpose, Shiksha was launched in 2005 to enable consumers to contribute towards the cause of education of under-privileged



children through simple brand choices. Shiksha has evolved into the national consumer movement. Over the years, the program has received generous support from many thought leaders & celebrities such as actors AnupamKher, SushmitaSen, Saif Ali Khan, Sharmila Tagore, R Madhvan, AbhayDeol, KonkonaSen, Tabu and Soha Ali Khan; social activist Dr. KiranBedi; artist Jatin Das and many more.

Their many more brands, which runs the **commercial nationalism** and **consumer nationalism** like **MDH** Masale “yahi ha asali India”, **Voltas** “India Kadil , India Ka AC” Aditya Birla Group “Taking India to the world” Patanjali “Swadeshi”, and other brands which regularly gives advertisement on nationalism like Cadbury, Nestle, Maggi, Parle- G, Tajmahal Tea etc

The paper concludes that nationalism as a concept and an emotion is quite significant in creating brand identity of a product of a corporate. The companies who use nationalistic spirit as a brand building related tool use signs and symbols that are

closely connected with the audience (socio-economic-political and psychological). These companies project or identify themselves as a contributor to the nation's betterment and pride. The study suggests an opinion study to measure the brand image created by these ads. This shall be useful to find whether the project brand building of the company matches its brand image in consumers' view.

### **Measuring Nationalism**

Nationalism can be defined as devotion to the interests or culture of one's nation. It is also related to patriotic feelings, principles, or efforts for one's own nation; an extreme form of this, especially marked by a feeling of superiority over other countries. It sometimes goes under the name of "patriotism." The variations of nationalism most relevant for philosophy are those that influence the moral standing of claims and of recommended nationalist practices. It is sometimes referred to as complex range of attitudes, claims and directives for action ascribing a fundamental political, moral and cultural value to nation and nationality and deriving special obligations and permissions from this ascribed value. This spirit of nationalism enthuses in an individual the urge to do whatever possible to uphold nationhood.

### **Conclusion**

When the nation becomes a medium to sell a product, then the whole idea of the nation – everything it constitutes and everyone who adheres to it – becomes subservient to the vicious circle of capitalism. This creates a facade of wants by creating an illusion of incompleteness, scarcity and need, by utilising the rhetoric mentioned above. It also reinforces the material basis of emotions like nationalism by defining them in their exteriority and their tangible manifestation. Lastly, it also turns nationalism into a product to be sold in the market.

In such a case, capitalism not only acquires benevolence, it also gets legitimacy and credibility which garb the ulterior motive of the rhetoric and makes us consumers of the fetishism. We are obliged to feel that serving capitalism is equal to serving the nation. We satiate our egoistic desire of serving the nation – not by active participation in the process of nation-building, but by the passive process of consuming the products, whose manufacturers make us realize that we are rendering our services to the nation.

Consumers get a sense of self-fulfillment by supporting the most 'visible' form of nationalism that is the army or indigenous products. We can afford to ignore wrong, because we believe we are doing our bit for the nation. This self-fulfillment is as much a facade as that 'perceived scarcity' which we internalize so that we have to fulfill it through capitalism.

Capitalism doesn't fulfill the tenets of nationalism – it just satiates our false egos and makes us feel better about ourselves. At the same time, it adds two different categories – 'capitalism of the self' and 'capitalism of the other'.

### **References**

1. <https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2017/11/army-ayurveda-and-appropriation/>
2. [http://brandz.com/admin/uploads/files/BrandZ\\_India\\_2016\\_Report.pdf](http://brandz.com/admin/uploads/files/BrandZ_India_2016_Report.pdf)
3. Balakrishnan, R. (2016, Aug 10). Reclaiming Bharat: Can ads & brands become nationalistic without jingoism. ET Bureau. Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>
4. Kashyap, K. (2016, Oct 24). Nationalist Startup PatanjaliAyurved Leads Natural, Organic Trend As Indian Consumers Need Shift. Forbes. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com>
5. Cayla, J. (2009, May 22). How do foreign companies market to India. Yale Insights. Retrieved from <http://insights.som.yale.edu>
6. Padmanabhan, A. (2016, Oct 17). The business of nationalism. Live Mint. Retrieved from <http://www.livemint.com>
7. Sharma, M. (2016, Oct 12). India's open for business, assuming you're Indian. Live Mint. Retrieved from <http://www.livemint.com>
8. India's Patanjali takes on Western consumer-goods firms (2017, Apr 29). The Economist. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com>
9. Cook, I. (2017, July 24). Patanjali takes a very nationalist view of its business. BT Online. Retrieved from <http://www.businesstoday.in>
10. Kulkarni, T.B. (2017, Apr 14). The Commercialisation of Nationalism. Huffpost. Retrieved from <http://www.huffingtonpost.in>
11. Abraham, D. (2017, July 5). Vivo, Oppo, IPL, and the Chinese invasion of cricket. The Hindu Read. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com>
12. Tewari, S. (2016, Oct. 21) Surgical strikes: Are brands cashing in on nationalism in ad campaigns. Live Mint. Retrieved from <http://www.livemint.com>
13. Breuilly, J. (2013, Jun 03). A history of nationalism. OUPblog. Retrieved from <https://blog.oup.com/2013/06/oxford-handbook-historynationalism/>
14. PC Jeweller Releases TVC With Brand Ambassadors Akshay Kumar And Twinkle Khanna(2017,Oct
15. EXCHANGE4MEDIA NEWS SERVICE. Retrieved from <http://www.exchange4media.com>



16. <https://www.thestar.com/business/2016/10/12/in-india-nationalism-is-a-hot-commodity.html>
17. Mahapatra, D. (2016, Dec 01). Play nat'l anthem in cinema halls, audience must rise: SC. The Times Group. Retrieved from <http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com>
18. Nandan, Shiva (April 2005). An Exploration of the Brand Identity- Brand Image Linkage: A Communications Perspective, Brand Management, VOL. 12, NO. 4, pp **264-278**
19. Parameswaran, M G (2003), Understanding Consumers: Building Powerful Brands Using Consumer Research. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.