

Visual Culture of the Indian Monumental Architecture and Advertising

Ms. Rashmi Niranjan¹, Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal²

¹ PhD. Research Student Scholar, Jain University Bangalore-560054

² Dean Department of Humanities, Social Science and Cultural Studies, Jain University, Knowledge Campus, Jayanagar, Bangalore

Abstract: *The use of Indian monumental and architectural elements and photography in the Indian visual art and advertising can be traced from the times of British Raj in Indian subcontinent. The study reveals the importance of visual culture of architectural images in advertising and communication. India is large country with many cultures and subcultures. It becomes important for the Indian consumer products manufacturer to reach and persuade the vast and varied background audience into action. During the eighties and nineties some of the fast moving consumer product companies made use of the famous Indian monumental architectural structures as images in their packaging as well as advertisements. These trends and visual culture of monumental architecture, projection of film actors in advertisements help to build and represent the culture, technology, art of the land.*

Key words: *visual culture, monumental architecture, art history, aesthetics, advertising, techniques and technology*

I. Introduction

The Indian history of art as well as architecture is rich source of culture, tradition, techniques, themes, influence of rulers, and use of new techniques and technology and more important of all with what purpose these arts were executed. Each of the art, artifacts and architecture tell about the culture and characteristics of the civilization or the kingdom in which it was made. Finally how the progress in technology has influenced the production of these art, artifacts and architecture, their multiple use in the evolving social and commercial lifestyle of the citizens in the present. Advertising is one of the main sources of commercial, social and visual communication. Hence visual culture and the mediums of advertising in India becomes more important field of study and research.

Methodology: it is an empirical study with qualitative approach, intensive literature study and review. Interviews with professionals and experts were undertaken. Images and photographs of advertisements were analysed.

Findings: suggest that advertising is the main source of communication between the people and their busy schedule lifestyle. Hence the advertisements and the visual culture of these advertising mediums have to be handled intelligently and creatively. To reach the goals and purpose of advertising in achieving cultural identity of the place through the use of relevant architectural props and views in future mediums of advertisements.

Art History: Mughals were the great admirers of art who remained as the prominent emperors until seventeenth century in northern India. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century due to the emergence of the East India Company the Mughals had to follow the systems created by the British East India Company to stay in good terms with their rule to retain their own titles and status. The Mughals managed to remain in power till 1858, after which the East India Company passed over its powers to the queen of England. The ruling policies of princely states were restructured entirely by the queen of England. In spite of the political disturbances the royal courts remained vital to the production of art through the nineteenth century.

Mughals were important loci for the continuation of indigenous artistic traditions as well as conduits for European influences in both art and architecture. During the period of 18th and 19th century the Mughal court continued to produce elaborate art works depicting history and valorious acts of the legendary emperors like Babur and Shah Jahan. Some paintings depicted the ubiquitous indo-saracenic architectural elements in their paintings.

Miniature paintings in India: The earliest miniature paintings are usually accompanied the texts in religious manuscripts and illustrations of mythological epics. The miniature paintings of 10th century are made upon palm leaves while the miniatures of 14th century are made on paper base. The emergence of Mugahal dynasty in mid 16th century gave a new looks to the miniatures by incorporating varied subjects ranging from portraits, court scenes, flora and fauna. The miniature paintings of the Rajasthan (Rajputs) and Pahari hills (Panjabis) continued to bring life to poetry, age old legends, religious mythology and the moods of love and changing seasons.¹ The artists worked together in workshops depending on their ability they were assigned the work of drawing and painting etc.



Fig.1: Babur and the mughal army at urvah valley in gwalior
Mughal miniature painting <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babur>

The artists mainly used the effect of linear perspective, one point perspective, and volume and space orientation to bring the realism in their paintings. The paintings usually show an aerial view so more details can be accomplished. The paintings mainly depicted the building structure or part of the structure along with human figures, animals, vegetation, flora and fauna apart from costumes and jewellery of the time. Some of the examples and pictures are given below.



Fig.2: Akbar holds a religious assembly of different faiths in the Ibadat Khana in Fatehpur Sikri
Mughal miniature painting <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akbar>>

¹ <http://ngmaindia.gov.in/sh-miniature-painting.asp>

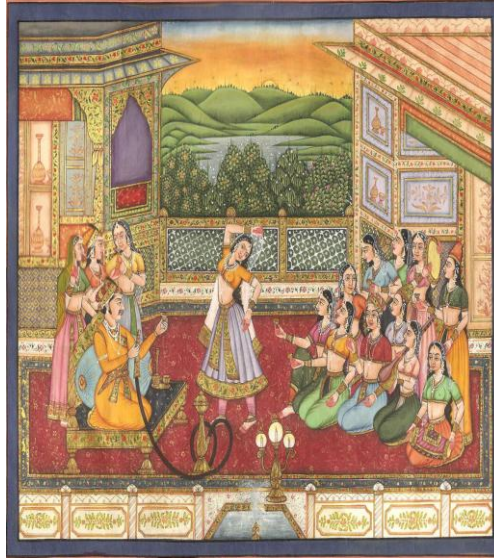


Fig.3:Mughal miniature painting. <https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>>

As the time passed by the patronage of Mughals towards Indian art reduced as the new generations of princes were more interested in other forms of paintings. Nawabs of Oudh were particularly active in this new type of art. Nawab Shuja-Ud-Dawla (ruled 1754-1775) hosted Britisher Tilly Kettle at Faizabad for a year, and Ghazi-ud-Din-Haidar (ruled 1814-27) hired the Scot Robert Hume as his court painter. Raja Rajendra Malik of Bengal furnished his marble palace with copies of Renaissance works and originals by contemporary neoclassical painters, and had family portraits executed by European Traveller artists. Thus this period marked the introduction of easel painting and oil paints to India. First brought into the courts by Tilly Kettle and followed by others such as William and Thomas Daniells, John Zoffany, William Hodges, Emily Eden, Hume. This type of painting was later taught at schools. Many academies opened around 1850's in the major centres of the British importance in India such as Madras, Bombay, Calcutta and Lahore.



Fig.4: Shuja-Ud-Dawlah, Nawab of Oudh, academic painting by Tilly Kettle.
<https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>

Monumental Architecture: Architecture also changed during the time of British raj. While some of the younger generation princes utilized their power to help and improve the conditions of women and poor others spent their time and money to construct lavish European style palaces in India. Starting of reconstruction of Calcutta in 1757 with its famed neoclassical palaces was copied all throughout the country. The famous Victoria memorial hall in Calcutta was established in the year 1921. The building style of Indo-Saracen Revival architecture incorporates the Mughal elements of architecture. After the year 1858, there was growing interest in Indian architecture and as a result the British monarchy tried to follow the characteristics of Mughals. Focus shifted from Calcutta to Bombay where the Victoria Terminus was executed by Frederick W. Stevens (1878) and Prince of Wales Museum executed by George Wittet (1914) though essentially of classical design, these buildings incorporated a number of decorative elements from the Indian vernacular style and its aesthetics.

Aesthetics: aesthetics is the branch of philosophy. Aesthetics has a long history. In the course of its development, not only aesthetic views changed but also the range of questions it embraces, its subject and its purpose. The Greek natural philosophers and the Pythagoreans viewed it as part of philosophy which served to present a picture of the world in totality. Aesthetics is that branch of knowledge which deals with the historically determined essence of human values, their creation, perception, appreciation and assimilation. For further views on aesthetics in the perspective of famous scholars like Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, Boileau, Baumgarten, Hegel refer Aesthetics by Yuri Borev, 1985, page 13.

Visual Culture: visual culture is the aspect of the culture expressed in visual images. Many academies deal with this subject in their curriculum like cultural studies, film studies, art history, critical theory, philosophy and anthropology.² In totality visual culture is the visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology.

Techniques and Technology: techniques or styles in the field of art are most often due the progress and development of technology or simply due to changes or progress in the field of technology. Technology refers to instruments and procedures of production and distribution, such as televisual and computer technologies, that art shares with other fields of human endeavor. (Art in Public: Politics, Economics and Democratic Culture by Lambert Zuidervaart, page 231, Cambridge University Press, 2011). Technique designates media and methods that are somewhat unique to art itself, for example, fragmentary repetition of tonal sequences in minimalistic music and site specific installations in the visual arts. As Lambert suggests the social technologies and artistic techniques, which interact and intersect, together constitute the technical dimensions of the arts.

Company paintings: company painting or kampani kalam in hindi is a hybrid Indo- European style of painting made by the Indian artists who painted for European patrons of British East India Company or other foreign companies in the 18th and 19th centuries. Company painting blended the traditional elements from Rajput and Mughal painting with a more western treatment of perspective, volume and recession. Company paintings were first produced in Madras presidency in South India which later disseminated to other parts of India such as Calcutta, Murshidabad, Patna, Benaras, Lucknow, Agra and other western cities of India.

Raja Ravi Varma (April 29, 1848 - October 2, 1906) the famed Indian artist of 18th century, from princely state of Travancore, presently in Kerala, painted the scenes from Indian literature, mythology and Indian epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata. His paintings are one of its kinds which reflect fusion of Indian traditions with the techniques of European academic art. During the time of Raja Ravi Varma the neoclassical style of architecture was in vogue and the influence is seen in his paintings. The large scale pillars, flight of steps, marble floors gave a touch of richness and aristocracy. It depicts the visual culture of high art and lifestyle of the time. The oleograph reproductions of godly subject decorated the walls of pooja room (sacred space in Indian homes) of the rich, middleclass as well as the poor people of India.



Fig.5: painting by Raja Ravi Varma

<http://webneel.com/25-best-oil-paintings-raja-ravi-varma-18th-century-indian-traditional-paintings>>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_culture



Fig.6: painting by Raja Ravi Varma

<http://webneel.com/25-best-oil-paintings-raja-ravi-varma-18th-century-indian-traditional-paintings>>



Fig.7: painting by Raja Ravi Varma

<http://webneel.com/25-best-oil-paintings-raja-ravi-varma-18th-century-indian-traditional-paintings>>



Fig.8: painting by Raja Ravi Varma

<http://webneel.com/25-best-oil-paintings-raja-ravi-varma-18th-century-indian-traditional-paintings>>

The paintings depicting Scenes from the literature, mythology and epics became one amongst the important decorative artifacts in the collections of the rich.³ Raja Ravi Varma became known in the west when he won the first prize in the Vienna Art Exhibition in 1873. Some of the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma were used for commercial purpose too like the covering of scent sticks, match boxes and cement bag covers during his time displaying the commercial exploitation by the manufacturers and traders.

Advertising: the activity or profession of producing advertisements for commercial products or services. In other words advertising is nothing but a paid form of non-personal presentation or promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor with a view to disseminate information concerning an idea, product or service.⁴ The American historian Jackson Lears (1994) has said, advertisements have become ‘perhaps the most dynamic and sensuous representations of cultural values in the world’ (Richards et al, 2000:1). In short advertisement benefits the producer, educate the consumer and supplement the salesman. On total advertisement is the link between the producer and the consumer.

With the recent trends set in the field of advertisements in terms of cultural identity and connectedness of the citizens with the product, it becomes a pressing issue to be given a thought. In today’s commercial and busy world the advertisements are the main source of connection between the material culture and human culture, so it is more important that the main aim of the commercials and the advertisements is to help develop a visual culture that impart connection between the humans and the culture of the society they want to build. Below are some of the examples of the advertisements of yester years as well as the present time that help to build some kind of connectedness between the product and the customer apart from disseminating the culture of the place.

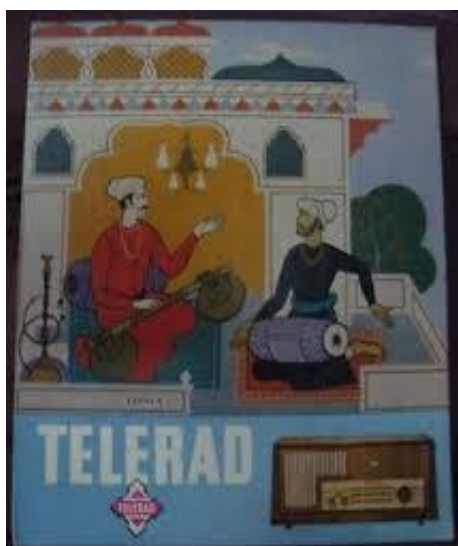


Fig.9: Telerad radio company has made use of mughal painting showing Tansen singing
<https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>>

In its advertisement Telerad Radio Company made use of the Mughal miniature painting of 16th century to promote its product. The painting depicts the famous musician and singer Mian Tansen, one among the nine jewels of Akbar’s court. The Indo-saracenic architectural splendour of the Mughal in the background of the singer heightens the richness of advertisement. Giving a symbolic message that when you here from Telerad the clarity of the voice and music is as clear as though you hear from the live close concert of the legendery court singer and musician Mian Tansen.

The advertisement of soap detergents Chetak and Shakti shown in the image (fig.10) the Indo-Saracen architecture in marble built during British colonial India. The advertisement is of 1980’s showcasing the hero and heroine of Bollywood. The symbolic meaning of the advertisement indicate that the use of soap will bring shine and whiteness of marble for the fabric and even the high class and celebrities recommend the soap product. These advertisements also promoted the architecture and architectural style indirectly.

³ <http://webneel.com/25-best-oil-paintings-raja-ravi-varma-18th-century-indian-traditional-paintings>

⁴ <http://www.publishyourarticles.net/knowledge-hub/business-studies/advertising/1028/>



Fig.10: Film actors Hema Malini and Dharmendra
<https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>>

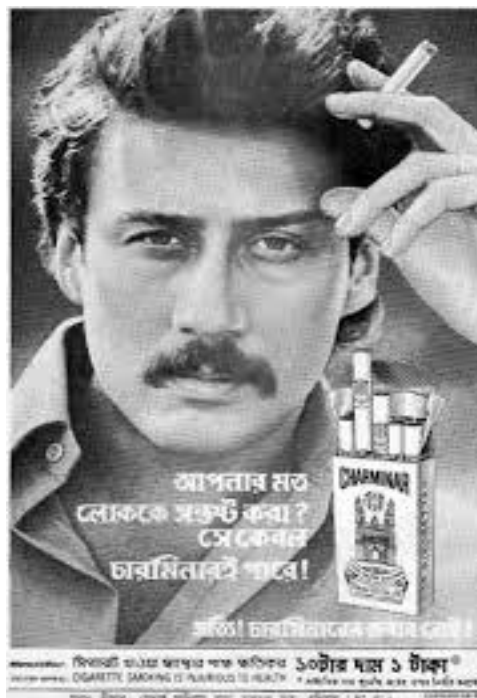


Fig.11: Jackie Shroff the Bollywood actor in the advertisement of Charminar cigarette.
[http://www.cigarettespedia.com/index.php/Charminar_\(The_Vazir_Sultan\)_S-10-H_-India](http://www.cigarettespedia.com/index.php/Charminar_(The_Vazir_Sultan)_S-10-H_-India)>

Print advertisement of Charminar cigarette shows Bollywood actor Jackie Shroff indicating the boldness and confidence one gets by using Charminar cigarette. The illustration of architectural monument Charminar of Hyderabad links the classic and aristocrat history of the company Vazir Sultan Tobacco Company started in the year 1930 at Hyderabad.



Fig.12: The packaging of Charminar cigarette shows illustration of architectural monument Charminar in Hyderabad.

[http://www.cigarettespedia.com/index.php/Charminar_\(The_Vazir_Sultan\)_S-10-H_-_India](http://www.cigarettespedia.com/index.php/Charminar_(The_Vazir_Sultan)_S-10-H_-_India)>

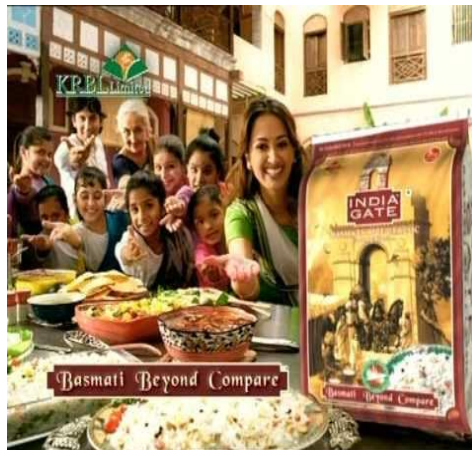


Fig.13: Advertisement of India Gate Basmati rice showing a tradition followed in Indian family
https://www.google.co.in/?gws_rd=ssl>

The advertisement of India Gate Basmati rice show group of different culture and generation people in the background symbolically meaning the entire People of India opt for the brand because of its quality and taste. The depiction of India Gate, a image symbolizes the respect and love of the entire India towards the martyrs of India who fought and saved India. Similarly the basmati rice is also the collective result of the farmer's effort, which the entire section of people from India salute and rejoice the taste as well as the flavor of the brand.



Fig.14: The package of India Gate Basmati rice depicts the image of architectural monument "India Gate".
https://www.google.co.in/?gws_rd=ssl>

All the three advertisements on Brooke Bond Taj Mahal tea showcase the tradition of Indian art and culture. Zeenat Aman an Indian actress posing in front of the marvel of Indian architecture around 1980's. The actress herself dressed in Islamic attires supporting the Mughal architecture in the background.

The second advertisement highlights the music (tabla player) maestro Zakir Hussain with a cup of Taj tea. He was awarded Padmashree and Padmabhooshan in the year 1988 and 2002 respectively. His posing in front of the Taj Mahal with a cup of Taj tea connects to the international audience as he is an international figure in the field of music. The connection between the foreigners and the Indian culture becomes more natural and stronger. As true as the sip of the Taj tea takes you near the experience of seeing Taj Mahal live!



Fig.15: Advertisement of Taj Mahal Tea, <https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>>



Fig.16: Advertisement of Taj Mahal Tea, <https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>>



Fig.17: Advertisement of Taj Mahal Tea, <https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>>

The third advertisement of the Taj Mahal tea shows the Hindi film actors sitting in a balcony of a building away from the Taj Mahal yet relishing the atmosphere of the marvel in a cosy home like surroundings.



Fig.18: The package of Brooke Bond Taj Mahal tea depicts the image of Indian architectural monument “The Taj Mahal”, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.
<https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>>

From all the three advertisements it gives some kind of message that the distance between the monument and the viewer is increasing by the decades passing and that gap and aristocratic experience can be compensated over a cup of Taj Mahal tea!



Fig.19: Amul advertisements with sketches of buildings in the background.
<https://www.google.co.in/blank.html>>



Fig.20: Prime minister Narendra Modi in campaign advertisement.
Advertisements of political events show the structures that speak of facilities and growth.

II. Conclusion

The study suggests that the future mediums of advertising have to take into account the connection it builds amongst the product and potential consumer as very critical. Advertising being the main source of communication has to exploit upon how best it can build cultural connection with the city and citizens. There could be many openings for the public private partnership business and projects. The placing of tourism advertisements showcasing the cultural and historical importance of the place through Out Of Home advertising and spaces allotted for the same is one way of achieving. And the present as well as future aspects of advertising have to learn the importance of visual culture in the field of communication and advertising.

Bibliography

- [1]. The Dynamics of Advertising, Barry Richards, Lain MacRury, Jackie Botterill.
- [2]. Decoding Advertisement: Ideology and meaning in advertisements, Williamson, Judith (1978), London.
- [3]. Visual Culture Methodologies---an introduction to the interpretation of visual materials, Gillon Rose, --- sage publication
- [4]. The Visual Culture reader, Nicholes Mirzoeff, Routledge, 1998.
- [5]. Art, Design & visual culture Malcolm Barnard, -- New York, Martins Press
- [6]. The relating visual culture, Jessica Evans
- [7]. The medium is the message, McLuhan, Marshall and Fiore, Quentin (1967), London: Allen Lane.
- [8]. Art in Public: Politics, Economics and Democratic Culture, Lambert Zuidervaart (2011) Cambridge University Press,.
- [9]. The Dynamics of Advertising, Barry Richards, Lain MacRury, Jackie Botterill. Routledge (2000) New York.