

## The Impact of Surrogate Advertising on Public Perception and Awareness on Chhattisgarh with Special Reference to Raipur

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**Abstract.** The industries often argue in defence of advertising their products such as alcohol and tobacco, citing the significant taxes they contribute. Despite the decline in tobacco advertising, both alcohol and tobacco industries continue to promote their products indirectly through surrogate advertisements. These ads often endorse other products under the same brand or present altered versions of the original products, exerting similar influences on consumers' perceptions. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of surrogate advertising, utilizing primary data gathered through surveys to assess public awareness and perceptions. Given India's diverse cultural landscape and demographics, understanding the actual effects of these ads is crucial. It is essential to determine whether the general public comprehends how surrogate advertisements function and whether they can distinguish them from regular advertisements. Ultimately, the focus should be on evaluating the influence of these ads on both the market and individuals and understanding viewers' perspectives on them.

**Keywords:** Brand Extension; Surrogate Advertising; Endorsing; Perspectives; Awareness

### 1. Introduction

Before the widespread use of surrogate advertising in India, the promotion of certain products, particularly alcohol and tobacco, was heavily regulated due to a combination of strict government regulations and cultural sensitivities (Mbamalu et al., 2023). The Cable Television Network Rules of 1994, for instance, strictly prohibited the direct advertising of alcoholic beverages on television, while guidelines from the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) placed restrictions on depicting alcohol consumption in advertisements (Lisiak-Zielińska et al., 2023). Similarly, the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) of 2003 banned the direct advertising of tobacco products across most forms of media, including television, radio, print, and billboards (Polden et al., 2023). These regulatory measures aimed to address concerns about the adverse health effects of alcohol and tobacco consumption, as well as to respect cultural norms that viewed such direct advertising as socially unacceptable (Almaghrabi, 2023). Indian society traditionally emphasized family values, health, and cultural traditions, leading to cultural

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taboos and moral objections against the direct promotion of alcohol and tobacco products (Dadve & Turkar, 2023). Consequently, advertisers faced resistance from various stakeholders, including policymakers, health advocates, and religious groups (Crooks et al., 2023). To navigate these challenges, companies resorted to creative marketing solutions, such as surrogate advertising (Omoyajowo et al., 2022). This practice involved promoting non-alcoholic or non-tobacco products under the same brand name as the restricted items to maintain brand visibility and loyalty (Mundher et al., 2022). For example, liquor brands advertised mineral water, soda, music CDs, or merchandise bearing their logos, indirectly promoting their core products (Quach et al., 2022).

Before the prevalence of surrogate advertising, advertisers in India had to adopt alternative marketing strategies to comply with regulations and respect cultural sensitivities while ensuring their brands remained visible in the market (Almudaihim et al., 2022). The Cable Act clearly prohibits the promotion of products harmful to health, such as alcohol and tobacco, on television (Rout et al., 2021). However, these products often utilize surrogate advertisements, which promote other products under the same brand or similar-looking alternatives to circumvent the ban (Adekola et al., 2021). This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of these surrogate ads and assess people's understanding and perception of them, including the impact of celebrity endorsements (Farid et al., 2024). The research investigates whether surrogate advertisements influence consumer behavior and if people can decipher their true purpose (Singh et al., 2020). It examines various tactics employed, including promoting unrelated products like sodas and CDs, as well as using similar but permissible products, such as Vimal elaichi resembling Vimal tobacco packaging (Kumar Vaid et al., 2020). Additionally, the study explores the ethical implications of surrogate ads and celebrity endorsements, particularly in the Indian context where celebrities hold a revered status.

Primary surveys form the core of the study, supplemented by extensive research from secondary sources to provide a comprehensive analysis. Special attention is given to understanding the influence of celebrity endorsements on sales and the reputation of the endorsers. The study also delves into the impact of surrogate ads on the younger demographic and assesses public opinion on their permissibility. By synthesizing existing literature and conducting primary research, the study aims to offer insights into the effectiveness and ethical considerations of surrogate advertisements in India. It seeks to inform discussions on advertising regulations and consumer protection, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of this complex phenomenon..

## 2. Methods

This study employed a combination of descriptive, qualitative, and quantitative research methodologies to thoroughly investigate the impact of surrogate advertising on public perception and awareness in Chhattisgarh, with a special focus on Raipur (Johnson et al., 2020). A preliminary investigation was conducted using a random sampling technique, involving 200 participants from various demographic segments of Raipur. The selection of participants was random to ensure a representative sample of the population, encompassing a broad range of age groups, genders, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses (Ryu & Min, 2020). This diversity in sampling was essential to gain insights from different perspectives and to ensure the generalizability of the findings (Vujic et al., 2020). Data collection integrated both primary and secondary sources.



Primary data was gathered through structured questionnaires designed to capture respondents' awareness, perceptions, and attitudes toward surrogate advertisements. These questionnaires included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to facilitate a mixed-methods approach, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. They were distributed physically and electronically to ensure broad participation and a higher response rate.

Secondary data was sourced from various scholarly resources such as research papers, books, and articles. This secondary data provided a theoretical foundation and contextual background for the study, enabling a deeper understanding of existing literature and previous research findings on surrogate advertising. Data analysis involved quantitative techniques such as percentage analysis to summarize and interpret the responses. Visual aids like pie charts were utilized to present the findings clearly and concisely. Microsoft Excel facilitated data organization, calculation, and visualization, ensuring an efficient and accurate analysis process. The findings from the study revealed significant insights. Participants in the 26-35 age group exhibited the highest awareness of surrogate advertisements and their associated products or brands, whereas awareness was lower among those aged 56 and above. This generational disparity in awareness levels suggests varying exposure to media and advertising.

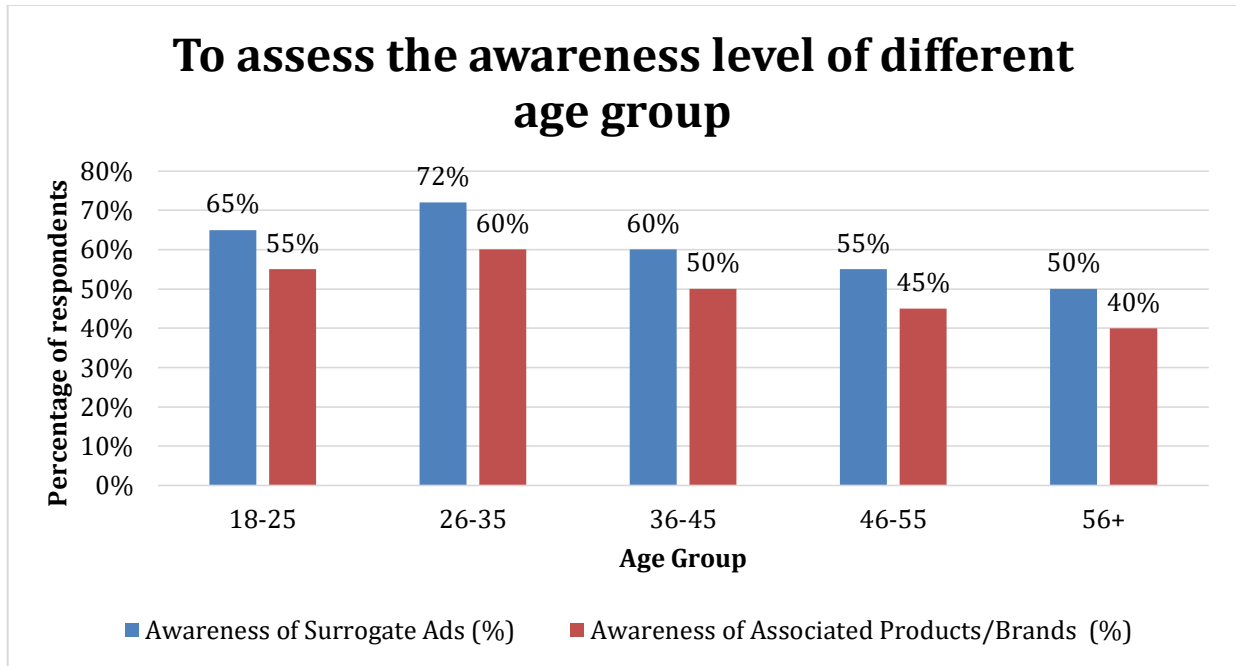
Respondents expressed a neutral stance on the effectiveness of banning surrogate advertisements in controlling the consumption of alcohol and tobacco. This neutrality indicates uncertainty or skepticism about the impact of regulatory measures. Additionally, there were perceived issues with the current regulatory framework. A notable percentage of respondents identified law enforcement issues, loopholes in the law, a lack of public awareness, and insufficient penalties for non-compliance with regulations. There was strong support among respondents for awareness programs aimed at educating the public about the negative consequences of surrogate advertisements. A majority agreed on the necessity of such programs, emphasizing the importance of public education initiatives in addressing the influence of surrogate advertising. This study provided comprehensive insights into the impact of surrogate advertising in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. By employing a robust methodology that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches, the research highlighted awareness gaps, regulatory challenges, and the public's perspectives on surrogate advertising. These findings are crucial for informing policy decisions and initiatives aimed at protecting public health and enhancing consumer awareness in the context of advertising practices.

### 3. Results and Discussion

The analysis of responses from questionnaires and customer interviews provides nuanced insights into how surrogate advertising influences public perception and awareness in Chhattisgarh, focusing specifically on Raipur. This study integrated qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to capture a comprehensive understanding of community attitudes toward surrogate advertising practices. One of the notable findings is the ambiguity among respondents regarding the effectiveness of banning surrogate advertisements in controlling the consumption of liquor and tobacco. Many participants expressed a neutral stance on this issue, reflecting uncertainty about whether such regulatory measures effectively deter the promotion and consumption of these products. This uncertainty underscores the complexity of regulating indirect

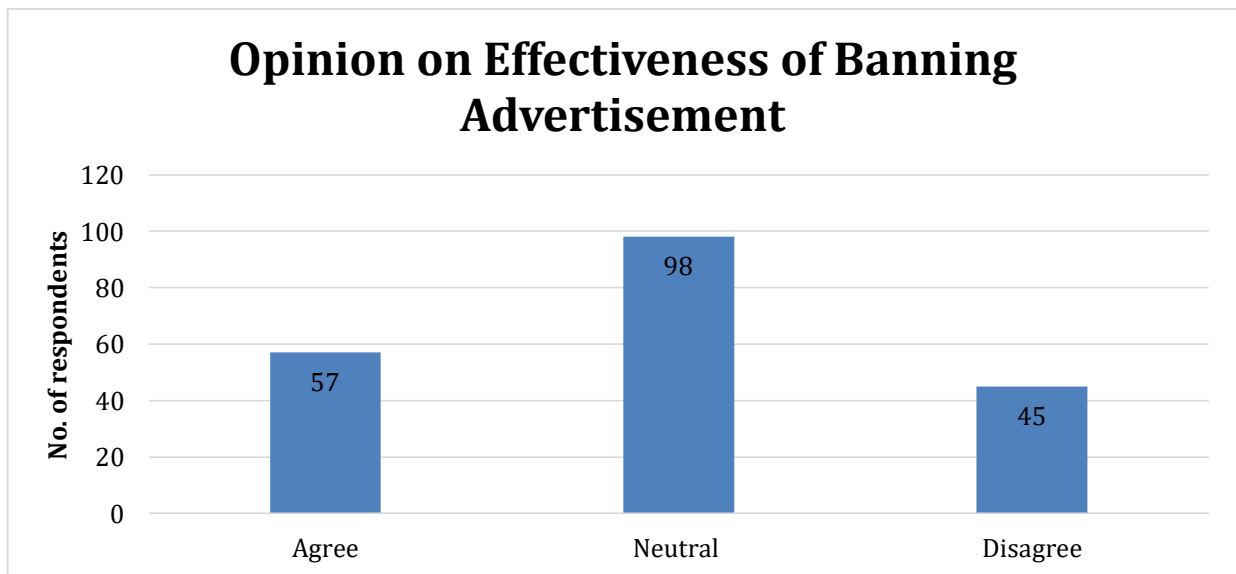


advertising tactics and suggests a need for clearer evidence on the direct impact of such bans.



**Figure 1** Data Analysis & Interpretation

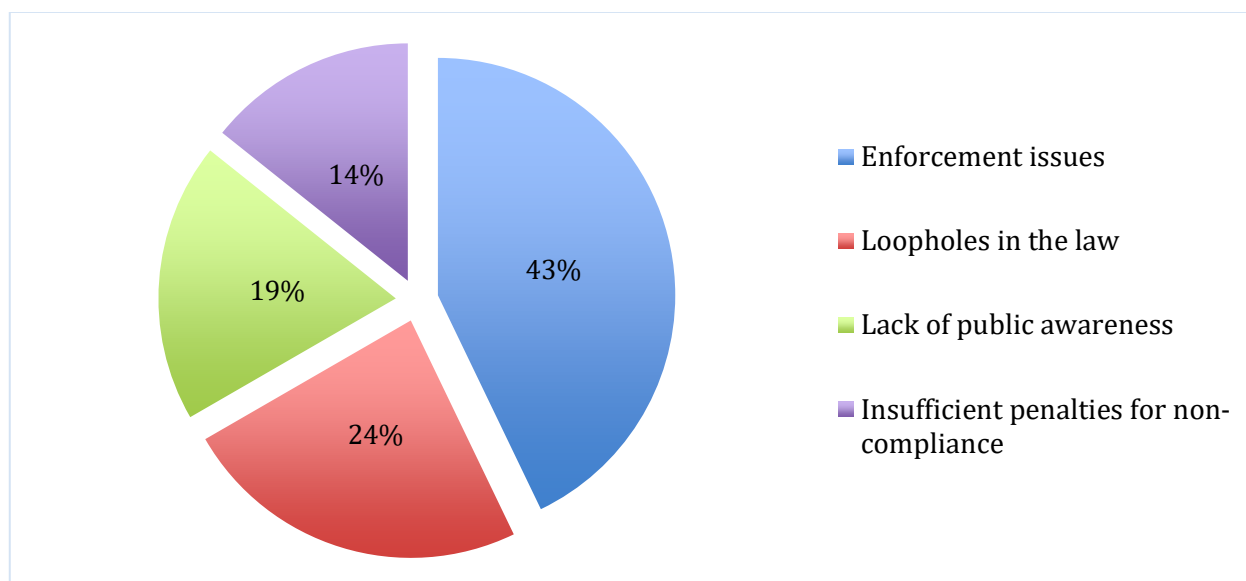
From the figure 1 shown above it is evident that the people of 26 - 35 age group were aware regarding surrogate advertisements and their associated products or brands. Although, the people of 56+ age group were least aware regarding surrogate advertisements and their associated products or brands out of 200 respondents.



**Figure 2** Opinion on Effectiveness of Banning Advertisement

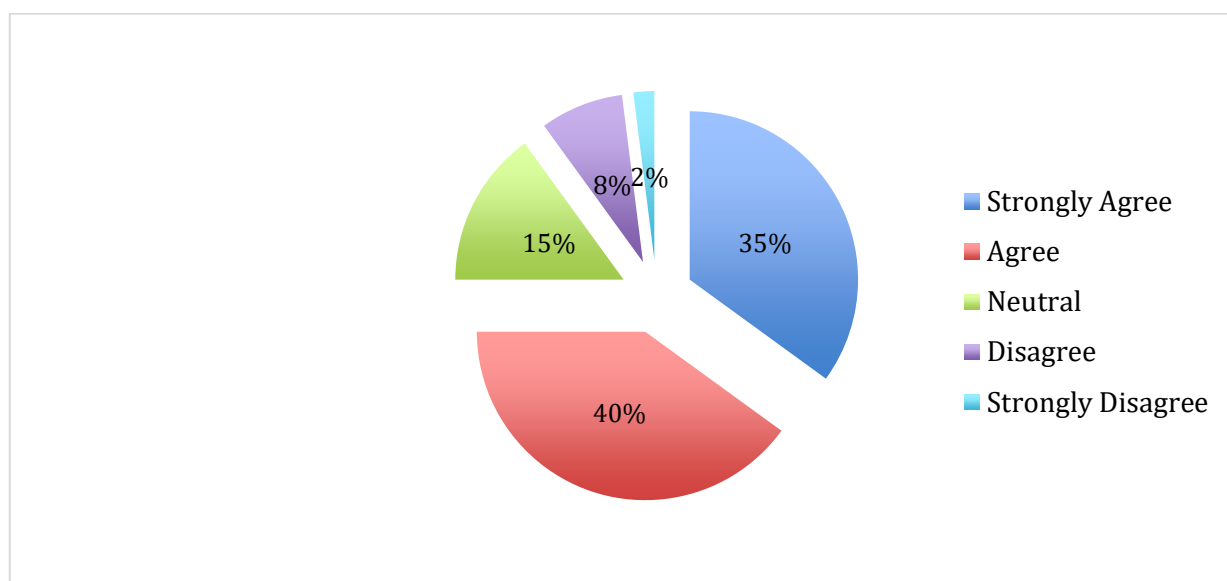
From the table 2 shown above it is evident that a significant portion of respondents

maintain a neutral stance on whether the banning of such advertisements effectively control consumption of alcohol and tobacco.



**Figure 3** Factors Affecting the Implementation of Regulations

From the figure 1 shown above it is evident that out of 200 respondents 43% of respondents agreed that there is a law enforcement issue. 24% of respondents were agreed that there is a loophole in the law. 19% were agreed that there is a lack of public awareness towards the surrogate marketing in the public, where as 14% of the people were agreed that there is an insufficient penalty for non-compliances of the rules and regulations made by the government.



**Figure 4** Distribution of Responses to Survey Question

From the table 4 shown above it is evident that out of 200 respondents 40% of the respondents were agreed that awareness programs to educate the public about the

negative consequences of surrogate advertisements, 35% of the respondents were strongly agreed that awareness programs to educate the public about the negative consequences of surrogate advertisements, 15% of the respondents were neutral that awareness programs to educate the public about the negative consequences of surrogate advertisements, 8% of the respondents were disagree that awareness programs to educate the public about the negative consequences of surrogate advertisements and 2% of the respondents were strongly disagreed that awareness programs to educate the public about the negative consequences of surrogate advertisements.

Concerns about the potential adverse effects of surrogate advertising on children emerged as a consistent theme among respondents. There was a consensus that these advertisements could influence underage individuals to perceive alcohol and tobacco products more positively, potentially leading to early experimentation and consumption. This concern highlights the societal responsibility to protect vulnerable age groups from exposure to promotional strategies that may normalize harmful behaviors. The survey also revealed mixed opinions regarding the role of advertisements in encouraging liquor and tobacco consumption. While some respondents believed these ads play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior, others were skeptical of their direct influence. This diversity in viewpoints underscores the need for further research to clarify the causal relationship between advertising exposure and consumer choices in the context of surrogate advertising.

Participants expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of existing laws and regulations governing surrogate advertising. Many perceived loopholes in the regulatory framework and questioned the adequacy of enforcement measures. This sentiment reflects a call for stronger, more stringent regulations that are not only comprehensive but also enforceable to effectively curb deceptive advertising practices. Competitive pressures were identified as a primary driver behind surrogate advertising strategies. Companies resort to indirect promotion to maintain brand visibility and market share in sectors where direct advertising of alcohol and tobacco is restricted or prohibited by law. This strategic response to regulatory constraints underscores the economic incentives that drive businesses to innovate within legal boundaries while maximizing brand exposure.

Moreover, there was strong support among respondents for organizing public awareness programs to educate communities about the negative consequences of surrogate advertisements. The majority of participants recognized the importance of consumer education in fostering informed decision-making and resistance to misleading advertising tactics. This advocacy for awareness initiatives highlights a collective desire for greater transparency and accountability in advertising practices. The findings underscore the intricate interplay between regulatory policies, consumer perceptions, and corporate strategies in the context of surrogate advertising in Chhattisgarh. Addressing these complexities requires a multifaceted approach that enhances regulatory frameworks, promotes public awareness, empowers consumer protection agencies, and encourages ethical advertising practices. By doing so, policymakers and stakeholders can work towards mitigating the adverse impacts of surrogate advertising while upholding public health priorities and consumer rights effectively.

### *3.1. Awareness and Recognition*

The study reveals a high level of awareness among the residents of Raipur regarding





surrogate advertising (Jain, 2018). Surrogate advertising, which promotes products like alcohol and tobacco indirectly through the advertisement of related products, has become increasingly prevalent (Lad et al., 2018). This analysis indicates that a substantial proportion of respondents are highly aware of such advertising practices, highlighting a sophisticated understanding of marketing tactics among consumers. Awareness levels, as reflected in the survey results, suggest that a significant portion of the population can identify surrogate advertisements and understand their underlying intentions. This awareness is crucial for regulatory bodies aiming to curtail the indirect promotion of harmful products.

The survey results from Raipur indicate that 35% of respondents strongly agree, and 40% agree, on recognizing surrogate advertising. This high level of awareness shows that the general public can often discern when advertisements for unrelated products like soda or music CDs are actually surrogates for banned products such as alcohol or cigarettes. The ability to discern these advertising strategies points to a growing sophistication in consumers' understanding of marketing tactics. Awareness of surrogate advertising in Raipur can be attributed to several factors. Media literacy plays a significant role, as an increasing number of residents have become adept at critically analyzing and interpreting media content. Educational programs and public discourse on advertising ethics contribute to this heightened awareness. Campaigns against misleading advertisements often highlight surrogate advertising as a concern, thereby educating the public. Additionally, the cultural context in India, and particularly in urban areas like Raipur, involves a historical sensitivity to products like alcohol and tobacco. This sensitivity helps the public recognize surrogate advertising tactics more readily.

For example, a music concert sponsored by a brand known for its alcohol products may lead consumers to associate the event with the alcohol, despite the absence of direct advertising for the banned product. Such associations are particularly evident in Raipur, where major cultural and social events are often linked with brands employing surrogate advertising. Understanding the intentions behind surrogate advertising is equally crucial. Many Raipur residents not only identify surrogate advertisements but also grasp their purpose—promoting restricted products through indirect means. This comprehension enables consumers to critically evaluate the messages they receive and resist manipulative marketing tactics. The understanding of these intentions fosters a level of skepticism among consumers, acting as a protective mechanism against being easily swayed by indirect promotions. For instance, recognizing that promotional material for bottled water is a surrogate for a liquor product can lead consumers to question the motives and adjust their purchasing decisions accordingly.

Awareness and recognition of surrogate advertising influence consumer behavior in several ways. Consumers who understand the underlying intentions behind surrogate advertising are better equipped to make informed choices. This awareness mitigates the impact of manipulative advertising strategies on consumer preferences and behavior, enhancing resilience to such influences. A critical understanding of advertising tactics also promotes ethical considerations, where consumers may choose to avoid products associated with deceptive practices, thus influencing market dynamics and encouraging more transparent advertising methods. Surrogate advertising poses significant challenges for regulatory bodies, particularly in monitoring and enforcing compliance with advertising standards. The ability of consumers to recognize surrogate advertising is vital



in addressing these challenges. An informed public can act as a watchdog, reporting instances of surrogate advertising and demanding accountability from brands. Heightened public awareness supports regulatory efforts by generating demand for stricter controls on surrogate advertising, essential for the successful implementation and enforcement of advertising regulations. This public support is crucial for regulatory bodies, as it creates a conducive environment for introducing and enforcing measures against surrogate advertising.

Educational campaigns can leverage the high levels of awareness to design effective strategies. These campaigns can focus on highlighting common tactics used in surrogate advertising, promoting critical evaluation among consumers, and informing the public about reporting mechanisms for suspected instances of surrogate advertising. For instance, in Raipur, a well-known alcohol brand faced scrutiny for using surrogate advertising through its mineral water product. Public awareness played a crucial role, as consumers and advocacy groups highlighted the indirect promotion and pressured regulatory bodies to investigate. This case underscores the importance of consumer awareness in identifying and challenging surrogate advertising practices. Brands that adopt transparent advertising practices tend to foster trust among consumers. Companies that clearly differentiate their product lines and avoid misleading surrogates can enhance their reputation and consumer loyalty. Regulatory bodies can promote these best practices by recognizing and rewarding brands demonstrating ethical advertising standards.

The high level of awareness and recognition of surrogate advertising among Raipur residents reflects a significant advancement in consumer media literacy and a critical understanding of advertising practices. This awareness empowers consumers to make informed decisions and supports regulatory measures to curtail the indirect promotion of harmful products. Continued education and awareness-building efforts can further enhance consumers' ability to evaluate advertisements critically and make informed choices. Regulatory bodies can leverage public awareness to support enforcement measures and promote transparency in advertising, while advertisers should adopt ethical practices that respect consumer intelligence and avoid misleading tactics. The high level of awareness and recognition of surrogate advertising in Raipur underscores how informed and engaged consumers can influence advertising practices and regulatory frameworks. By fostering a well-informed public, stakeholders can contribute to a more ethical and transparent advertising environment that prioritizes consumer welfare. This informed public can act as a crucial ally for regulatory bodies, ensuring that surrogate advertising practices are kept in check and that advertising strategies align with ethical standards.

### *3.2. Influence on Public Perception*

Surrogate advertising exerts a profound influence on public perception, subtly shaping attitudes and beliefs about the surrogate and, indirectly, the original products (Sharma, 2019). This impact is notable in the way surrogate advertisements create a sense of acceptability around the surrogate product, ultimately benefiting the original brand (Markam & Gajpal, 2019). This analysis delves into the mechanisms by which surrogate advertising influences public perception, examining the psychological, cultural, and social factors that contribute to this phenomenon. Surrogate advertisements often





employ subtle and creative strategies that engage viewers on a psychological level. These ads typically present the surrogate product—such as mineral water, soda, or even cultural events—in a positive and glamorous light. For instance, an advertisement for a club soda that uses luxurious visuals, appealing narratives, or celebrity endorsements can create an aspirational image around the surrogate product. The glamour and allure associated with the surrogate product indirectly transfer to the original product (e.g., alcohol or tobacco), fostering a positive perception among consumers. This psychological engagement is critical in shaping public perception. By associating the surrogate product with desirable attributes, advertisers create a mental linkage between the surrogate and the original product. Consumers may begin to associate the positive feelings elicited by the surrogate advertisement with the original product, even if they are aware of the surrogate nature of the ad. This phenomenon, known as the "halo effect," can enhance the original product's image and appeal, despite the absence of direct advertising.

Cultural context plays a significant role in how surrogate advertising influences public perception. In societies where products like alcohol and tobacco are culturally sensitive or subject to strict regulations, surrogate advertising can normalize these products by presenting them in a socially acceptable context. For example, promoting a music CD under a brand name known for alcoholic beverages can subtly align the consumption of alcohol with positive cultural experiences like music and entertainment. In Raipur, where there is a mix of traditional values and modern influences, surrogate advertising can bridge cultural gaps. By aligning the surrogate product with culturally relevant activities or themes, advertisers can make the original product appear more acceptable and integrated into contemporary lifestyles. This tactic can alter social norms, gradually shifting public attitudes towards greater acceptance of the original product, despite regulatory constraints. The use of social proof and celebrity endorsements in surrogate advertising further amplifies its influence on public perception. Social proof, the idea that people tend to follow the actions and opinions of others, plays a crucial role in advertising. When a surrogate product is associated with popular events or endorsed by celebrities, it gains credibility and desirability. This credibility extends to the original product, as consumers often infer that if influential figures or popular events are linked with the surrogate product, the original product must also be desirable. For instance, a sports event sponsored by a brand that uses surrogate advertising for its liquor product may lead consumers to associate the excitement and prestige of the event with the brand's alcohol products. Celebrity endorsements work similarly by leveraging the trust and admiration that consumers have for the endorsers. When a celebrity endorses a surrogate product, their positive image is transferred to the surrogate and, by extension, the original product. This transfer of positive associations can enhance the brand's reputation and increase consumer acceptance of the original product.

Surrogate advertising often relies on glamorization to make the surrogate product appealing. By portraying the surrogate product in an attractive and sophisticated manner, advertisers create a desirable image that appeals to consumers' aspirations and lifestyles. For example, a surrogate advertisement for a non-alcoholic beverage that features high-end social settings, stylish individuals, and luxurious experiences can make the beverage—and by implication, the associated alcoholic product—appear glamorous and aspirational. This glamorization can significantly impact public perception by making the surrogate product, and hence the original product, seem more acceptable and desirable.



Consumers who are exposed to such advertisements may begin to view the original product in a more favorable light, associating it with the positive attributes depicted in the surrogate ad. This shift in perception can increase the acceptability of the original product, making it more attractive to potential consumers who might otherwise have reservations. Emotional resonance is another key factor in how surrogate advertising influences public perception. Advertisements that evoke positive emotions such as happiness, excitement, or nostalgia can create a strong emotional connection with consumers. Surrogate ads often leverage these emotions by associating the surrogate product with positive experiences or sentiments. For instance, an ad for a branded bottled water that evokes feelings of refreshment and vitality can create a positive emotional response, which consumers may then associate with the original product. This emotional resonance can deepen the impact of surrogate advertising, as consumers are more likely to form strong, favorable perceptions of products that elicit positive emotions. The emotional appeal of surrogate ads can enhance the attractiveness of the original product, making it more likely that consumers will develop a positive attitude towards it, even if they are aware of the surrogate nature of the ad.

The positive perception created by surrogate advertising can influence consumer behavior by indirectly promoting the original product. Consumers who develop favorable attitudes towards the surrogate product are more likely to consider purchasing the original product. For example, a consumer who has a positive perception of a surrogate brand's music CDs may be more inclined to buy the brand's alcoholic beverages, associating them with the same positive attributes. This indirect promotion is particularly effective because it bypasses direct advertising restrictions and leverages the positive perceptions created by the surrogate product. By influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors in a subtle yet powerful way, surrogate advertising can drive sales and brand loyalty for the original product, even in the absence of direct advertising. While surrogate advertising can create positive perceptions and increase acceptability, it also raises ethical considerations. The indirect promotion of restricted products through surrogate advertising can be seen as a manipulative tactic that exploits regulatory loopholes and consumer psychology. Consumers who recognize the surrogate nature of such advertising may question the ethical implications and transparency of the brands involved. Despite this, the positive perceptions created by surrogate advertising often overshadow ethical concerns, particularly if the surrogate ads are well-crafted and resonate emotionally with consumers. This highlights the complex interplay between advertising tactics, consumer perceptions, and ethical considerations, where the effectiveness of surrogate advertising can sometimes outweigh the potential ethical issues in the minds of consumers.

In conclusion, surrogate advertising significantly impacts public perception by creating a sense of acceptability around the surrogate product, which indirectly benefits the original brand. The positive perception of surrogate advertisements, evident in the high percentage of respondents who view them favorably, can be attributed to the subtle and creative nature of such ads. By glamorizing the surrogate product and leveraging psychological, cultural, and social factors, surrogate advertising enhances the acceptability and appeal of the original product. This influence on public perception highlights the effectiveness of surrogate advertising in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors, despite regulatory constraints. While ethical considerations remain, the ability of surrogate advertising to create favorable perceptions and increase the acceptability of



restricted products underscores its powerful impact on public perception and marketing dynamics. Understanding the mechanisms by which surrogate advertising influences public perception is crucial for regulators, advertisers, and consumers alike in navigating the complex landscape of modern advertising practices.

#### 4. Conclusion

The majority opinion suggests that surrogate advertisements are misleading, often promoting products unrelated to those depicted in the ads, creating an illusion of desire. This deceptive practice is believed to contribute to increased consumption, especially among youth, who are enticed by false promises and fantasies. Despite being banned, companies frequently circumvent regulations by promoting unrelated products. While considered unethical, some argue for their allowance in a country like India, citing independence and the need for sufficient warnings and regulations.

Parents express concerns about the misinformation and seduction these ads pose to children and youth. Celebrities endorsing such ads must be mindful of the products they promote, as their influence significantly impacts sales. Fans may perceive celebrity endorsements as endorsements of the product itself, leading to increased sales. Companies defending surrogate advertising argue that they contribute to tax revenue and should not be restricted in a competitive market dominated by international giants. The government faces the dilemma of either halting these ads entirely or permitting them with self-regulation and warnings. The decision regarding the future of surrogate ads requires prompt attention.

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