

ROLE OF TELEVISION ADVERTISING IN SHAPING THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL BEHAVIOUR AND MORAL VALUES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL, INDIA.

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Abstract: This study examines the influence of television advertisements on the psychological, social, and moral values of youth in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. Television advertising has become a powerful medium after economic liberalization in India, particularly affecting highly impressionable groups such as youth. The research explores how advertisements shape behaviour, attitudes, socio-psychological thinking, and moral perceptions among college students. A survey method was adopted using convenient and snowball sampling techniques. Data were collected from 500 college students through a structured questionnaire based on selected socially relevant television advertisements such as Tata Tea's "Jaago Re," Ariel's "Share the Load," Surf Excel's "Daag Achhe Hain," and others. The findings reveal that most respondents consider television advertisements as important tools for spreading awareness, promoting moral and ethical values, improving behaviour, and breaking gender stereotypes. A significant percentage of respondents also believe that advertisements positively influence socio-psychological and cultural values. The study further highlights that continuous exposure to television advertisements strongly affects the mindset and lifestyle of youth. Overall, the research concludes that television advertisements play a constructive role in shaping positive social, psychological, and moral behaviour among contemporary youth in Kolkata, while also influencing their attitudes, perceptions, and value systems.

Index Terms- Advertising, Media, Moral Values, Behavior, College student

I. INTRODUCTION

Advertisement is the by-product of industrialization and rapid income growth. Television commercials cast commendable influence and charismatic spell on viewers. The general notion is that TV commercials target children, women and young people more as they are considered as high impressionable group. Children, women and youth are often regarded as adamant for their demands, desires and point of view which provides much needed fertile hunting ground for advertisers. Advertisements depend heavily on numerous appeals to allure the viewers for trapping them by appealing to their emotions, psyche and intellect. Corporate houses leave no stone unturned to sell their idea or product. They throw to winds all well-established norms, notions and values of society. With ever increasing TV commercials, the age-old socio-moral and ethical values get eroded and diminish the societal norms. The demolition of values has given place and fresh ones are yet to emerge. Everyone, particularly the youth are puzzled in this fast paced valueless market driven society. It puts tremendous psychological stress on youthful minds which may further materialistic desires, cause mental agony and psychological disorders which includes inferiority complex.

II. HISTORY, ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ADVERTISEMENT

The history, origin, and development of advertising in India are deeply intertwined with the socio-political evolution of the country. Crucially, the birthplace of Indian advertising is West Bengal, specifically Kolkata (formerly Calcutta). From colonial-era print notices to a multi-billion-dollar modern industry, the narrative moves from simple announcements to sophisticated, and multi-sensory psychological appeals. On January 29, 1780, an eccentric Irishman named James Augustus Hicky published Hicky's Bengal Gazette (also subtitled *The Calcutta General Advertiser*) in Kolkata. This was India's first printed weekly newspaper, and its pages birthed the country's first print advertisements.

Characteristics of Early Ads: Informational, Not Persuasive: During this era, to "advertise" simply meant "to inform". There were no catchy slogans, psychological branding, or corporate creative strategies.

The Content: The advertisements consisted strictly of classified listings: arrivals of ships from England, property auctions, lost-and-found notices, sales of household furniture, and announcements of births and deaths.

Niche Audience: These ads were written in English and addressed a very narrow demographic consisting of British colonial administrators, merchants, and the highly educated local Indian elite.

Early Development & Swadeshi Movement (19th to Early 20th Century)

As print media expanded across the country throughout the 1800s—with papers like *The Bombay Times* (later *The Times of India*) entering the fray—advertising became increasingly commercialized to cater to high-end luxury goods imported for the elite. However, the landscape fundamentally shifted at the turn of the 20th century, spearheaded by major socio-political events in Bengal and Bombay.

The Dual Catalysts of 1907:

Two major milestones structurally changed advertising in India:

The Swadeshi Movement (1907–1911): Triggered largely by the Partition of Bengal in 1905, this socio-political movement urged citizens to boycott British goods in favour of indigenous products. This massive socio-cultural shift required domestic enterprises (cloth mills, banking, soap, and cosmetic manufacturers) to advertise locally, proving a massive boon for home-grown marketing.

Technological Innovation in Calcutta: In 1907, *The Statesman* newspaper in Calcutta installed India's first rotary linotype machine. This revolutionized the printing process, drastically reducing production costs, accelerating newspaper circulation, and making advertising space much cheaper and widely accessible.

Transition to Professionalism: Initially, advertising was managed by "space brokers" who merely bought space in newspapers and sold it to businesses on commission. In 1905, B. Dattaram & Co. was established in Bombay, becoming the first indigenous, Indian-owned advertising agency. By the 1920s and 1930s, multinational giants like J. Walter Thompson (JWT) opened offices in India (1928), introducing data-driven market research, copywriting frameworks, and structured creative designs.

Post-Independence & the Golden Era of Radio (1940s–1960s): Following India's Independence in 1947, the target consumer underwent a complete psychological shift from the colonial elite to the everyday Indian citizen. Culturally relevant themes and regional vernacular languages began dominating marketing copies.

The Sound Revolution:

Radio Ceylon & Vividh Bharati: Because the state-run All India Radio initially banned commercials to prevent over-commercialization, brands turned to Radio Ceylon in the 1950s to broadcast commercial spots. Eventually, India launched Vividh Bharati in 1957, opening up state commercial airwaves by 1967. This era gave birth to iconic jingles from companies like Hindustan Lever and Colgate, weaving products into the everyday audio landscape of Indian households. While print retained its prestige, radio democratized advertising across a nation with vast literacy divides.

The Rise of Doordarshan: The Television Boom & Economic Liberalization (1970s–1990s)

Although television started expanding earlier, Doordarshan aired its first commercial in 1976 (with Bombay Dyeing releasing the first color TV advertisement in 1982). In the 1980s, massive family audiences gathered around single community or household television sets to watch sponsored serials like *Hum Log*, *Ramayan*, and *Mahabharat*. Advertisers shifted from merely listing a product's features to visual storytelling and emotional appeals. Brands like Maggi ("2-Minute Noodles"), Nirma, and Vicco Turmeric transformed from simple household items into deeply embedded cultural symbols. 1991 Liberalization and the "Charismatic Spell" The true psychological and behavioural reshaping of the

Indian consumer began with the arrival of television commercials. The economic liberalization of 1991 opened Indian markets to global corporate houses and introduced private satellite networks (like Zee TV and Star Plus). This created an aggressive explosion in television advertising. Equipped with massive corporate budgets, advertisements began employing advanced psychological profiling and lifestyle marketing. As mentioned in your study, it was during this post-liberalization wave that television commercials cast a "charismatic spell" on highly impressionable groups—especially college students and youth—frequently shifting social values away from traditional community virtues toward hyper-individualism and materialistic desires.

The Specific Evolution in West Bengal / Kolkata: Kolkata holds a unique, prestigious position in the history of Indian marketing, evolving from a colonial administrative information hub into a center for creative and artistic advertising. **The Hub of Literary Advertising:** Because Bengal was the heart of the Indian Renaissance, early 20th-century Bengali advertising was highly intellectual. Pioneering figures, including Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, routinely penned elegant, poetic copy and endorsements for local Swadeshi products like Godrej soaps, Sulekha ink, and safe-deposit banks. **The Creative Agency Wave:** In the mid-20th century, Kolkata became a major base for iconic advertising houses. Agencies like Clarion Advertising Services (founded in Kolkata in 1956) and Advertising & Sales Promotion Co. (ASP) flourished here. **The Cinema Connection:** Kolkata's advertising scene was deeply intertwined with its legendary film industry. Master filmmaker Satyajit Ray began his professional career as a visual artist and principal layout designer at the British advertising agency *D.J. Keymer* in Calcutta during the 1940s. This cinematic craftsmanship heavily influenced the artistic, narrative-driven quality of local print layout and television storytelling. **The Modern Shift:** While the financial epicenter of advertising eventually migrated toward Mumbai and Delhi due to the corporate boom, Kolkata has retained a distinct identity focused on deep socio-cultural branding, emotionally resonant regional festival campaigns (such as heavy corporate sponsorship and visual storytelling centering around *Durga Puja*), and vernacular targeted media.

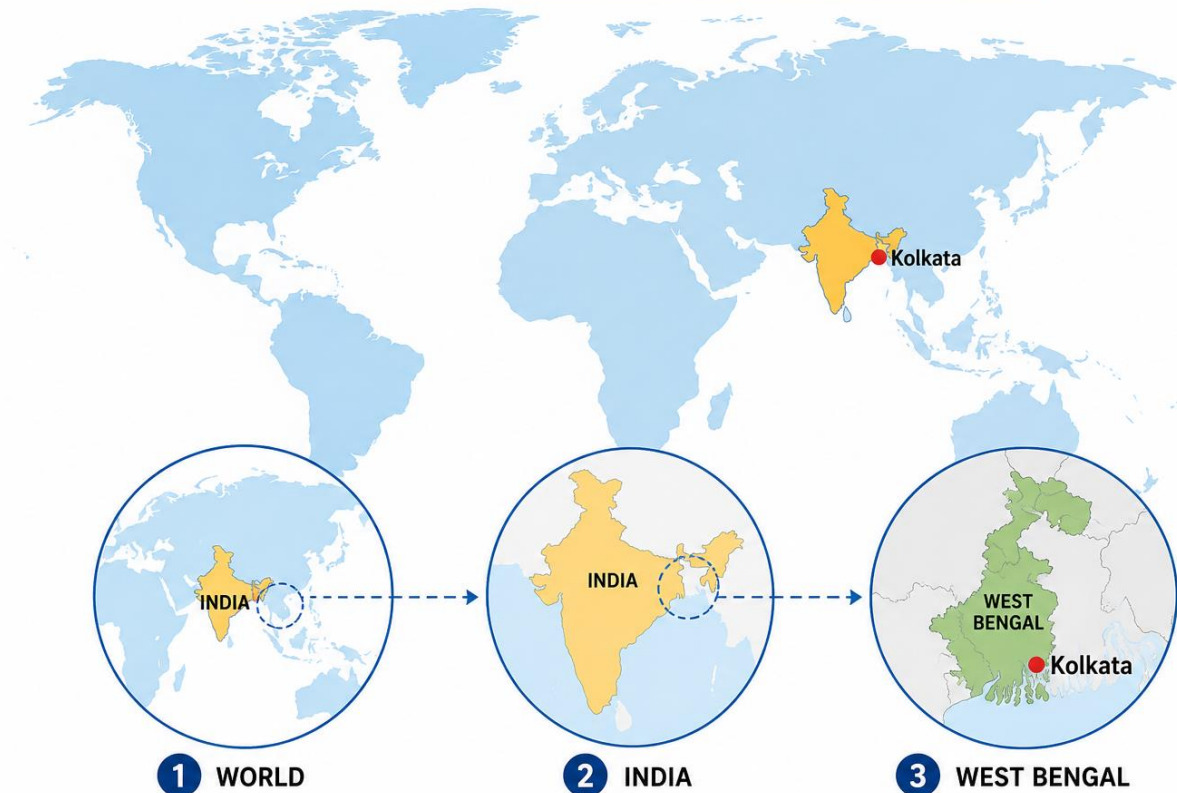
III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the provided text, television advertising in India drives a consumerist lifestyle that erodes traditional social and moral values, triggering psychological stress and status anxiety among impressionable college students. Foundational global literature exposes the core mechanics behind this shift: **Packard** analyses psychological manipulation and subconscious profiling, while **Postman** highlights how image-driven television shifts focus away from moral contemplation. **Pollay** addresses the amplification of materialistic traits like envy, and **Jhally** explains brand consumption as a source of self-worth. Further global research by **Schor, Valkenburg, Kasser, Dittmar, and Linn** connects these commercial strategies directly to identity deficits, parental circumvention, peer validation, and diminished well-being. Within South Asia, researchers examine the local fallout. **Unnikrishnan and Bajpai, Singhal and Rogers, Ninan, Butcher, Fernandes, Brosius, Rajagopal, and Mehta** trace how economic liberalization and deregulated satellite broadcasting systematically restructured the Indian public sphere, prioritizing corporate interests over public morality. Empirical regional data by **Sonawat and Jayan, Nair, Kotwal et al., Latif and Abideen, Baheti, Anita, Sharma et al., and Bhanawat** confirm that these emotional, hybrid commercial scripts outpace classroom socialization, causing moral degradation, academic alienation, family tension, and severe mental agony among youth.

IV. Research Area

Geographical location of Kolkata, West Bengal and India in World Map.

LOCATION OF KOLKATA



Geographical location of Kolkata in World map

V. NEED OF STUDY

TV advertisements create many desires among youth, and when these desires are not fulfilled, young people often feel stress, disappointment, and inferiority. Male youth are mostly attracted to vehicles and clothing, while female youth are more interested in cosmetics and food products. TV advertisements promote fashion, new gadgets, and modern lifestyles, encouraging young people to move away from traditional values and practices. TV advertisements often portray women as objects and strongly influence children's and youth's minds, which may weaken moral values. Youths believe that, TV advertisements, and entertainment channels are responsible for the decline of social, cultural, and moral values. **On the other hand**, there are some Television advertisements aim at influencing youths who have high purchasing power. These young people care for established social, moral or family values. Following TV advertisements promotes the psychological, social, and moral values of youth, such as: **Tata Tea – “Jaago Re” Campaign** (encouraged social awareness, voting rights, education, and responsible citizenship), **Surf Excel – “Daag Achhe Hain”** (promoted kindness, helping others, friendship, and empathy among children), **Ariel – “Share the Load”** (highlighted gender equality and shared household responsibilities), **Cadbury Dairy Milk – “Kuch Meetha Ho Jaye”** (focus on happiness, family bonding, friendship, and celebration), **LIC- “Zindagi Ke Saath Bhi, Zindagi ke Baad Bhi” Family-oriented Advertisements** (emphasized family security, responsibility, and care for loved ones), **Asian Paints- “Har Ghar Kuch Kaheta Hai” Festival and Family Campaigns** (promoted togetherness, respect for traditions, and family values), **Amul Social Advertisements** (often spread messages about unity, patriotism, and social awareness with humour) A number of studies in India and abroad have been done about the role, impact and influence of TV commercials. Almost all of them are in divergent proportions, reveal that TV commercials target children, women and adolescents. Women are reduced to a commodity and consumerism at the peak. Since a large part of India's population is youth, it is important to understand how TV advertisements influence their socio-psychological and moral behaviour, as advertisements gradually affect young minds over time.

VI. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

This study aims to examine the influence of TV advertisements on the psychological, social, and moral values of youth in Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

West Bengal has great geographical, regional dialectical and economic diversity. For the study, Kolkata (Capital City of West Bengal) is selected for survey as most developed urban locality. In this research Convenient and snowball sampling is used. Survey is done with the help of 10 point questionnaire. College Students are the population and 500 students are sample. At the time of survey, selected ads were mentioned above in the questionnaire

VIII. DATA COLLECTION

Each Question is based on Selected Advertisements.

List of TV Advertisements

- Tata Tea- “Jaago Re” Campaign
- Surf Excel- “Daag Achhe Hain”
- Ariel- “Share the Load”
- Cadbury Dairy Milk- “Kuch Meetha Ho Jaye”
- LIC- “Zindegi Ke Saath Bhi, Zindegi ke Baad Bhi”
- Asian Paints- “Har Ghar Kuch Kaheta Hai”
- Amul- “The Taste of India”

1. What is your opinion about above television advertisements?

Spreading awareness

Informative

Entertaining

Engaging

2. Which part of your life do those advertisements effect the most?

Social values

Behaviour and Attitudes

Socio-Psychological Values

Moral Values

3. Among those advertisements how many advertisements do you watch in a day?

All

Almost all

4. How do you how do you opine the overall impact of television advertisements on the social life of yours

Highly Positive

Positive

Positive to Some Extent

5. What is the necessity of advertisements in society

Product Awareness

Social Awareness

Marketing and Selling

Breaking gender Stereotypes

6. Do you think those TV advertisements are responsible for the increase of social, moral and cultural values?

Yes

To Some Extent

7. Which values are mostly affected by the above television advertisement?

Social values

Psychological values

Socio- Psychological values

Moral values

8. How do the above television advertisements influence youths?

By increasing moral values

By increasing social psychological values

By increasing values in behaviour and attitude increasing ethical values

By Increasing Ethical Values

IX. DATA ANALYSIS IN THE FORM OF PIE CHARTS

The study examines the impact of television advertisements on the socio-psychological and moral behavior of youth in Kolkata, West Bengal. The data collected from 500 respondents reveal several significant findings regarding the perception and influence of television advertisements.

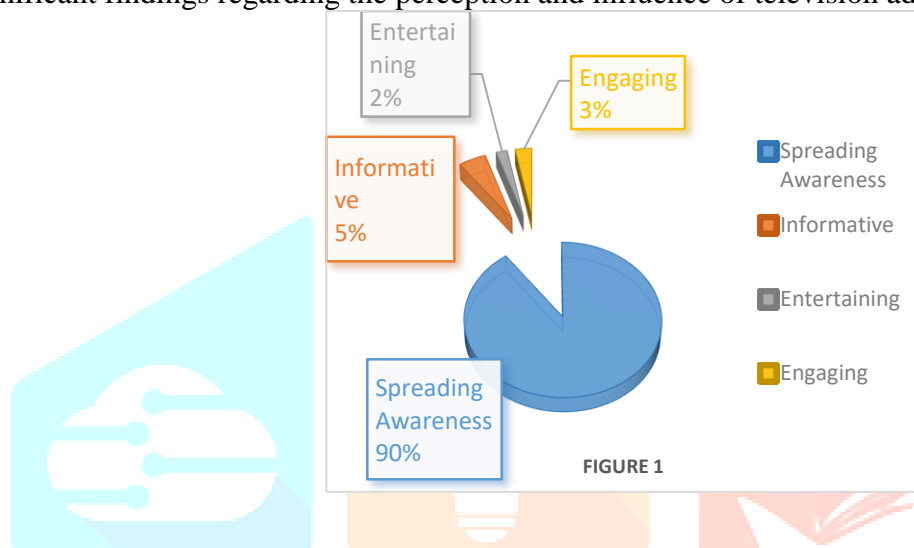


Figure 1: Opinion about Television Advertisements: The first pie chart shows that **90%** of respondents believe that television advertisements mainly help in **spreading awareness**. Only **5%** consider them informative, while **3%** find them engaging and merely **2%** view them as entertaining. This indicates that the majority of youths perceive advertisements as tools for social awareness and communication rather than pure entertainment.

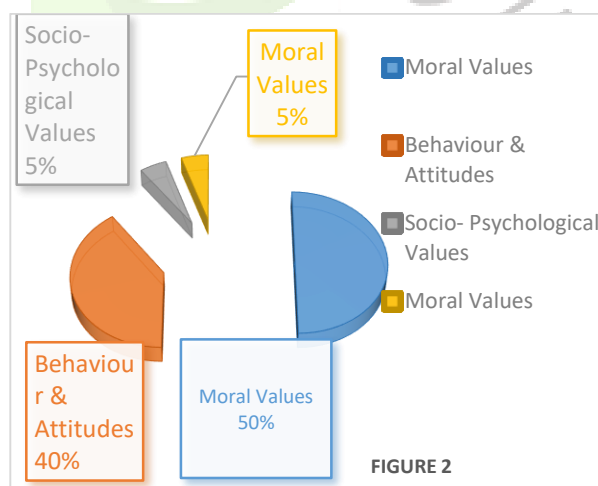


Figure 2: Area of Life Most Affected: Figure 2 reveals that television advertisements mostly influence **moral values (50%)** and **behaviour & attitudes (40%)** among youth. Only **5%** respondents believe that advertisements affect socio-psychological values, while another **5%** relate them to other moral aspects. This demonstrates that advertisements strongly shape personal behaviour, ethical thinking, and attitudes of young viewers.

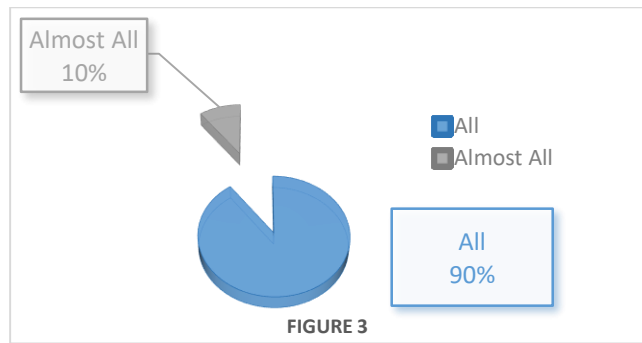


Figure 3: Frequency of Watching Advertisements: According to Figure 3, **90%** respondents watch **all** the listed advertisements regularly, whereas **10%** watch almost all of them. The findings indicate a very high exposure of youth to television advertisements, increasing their influence on everyday life and thought processes.

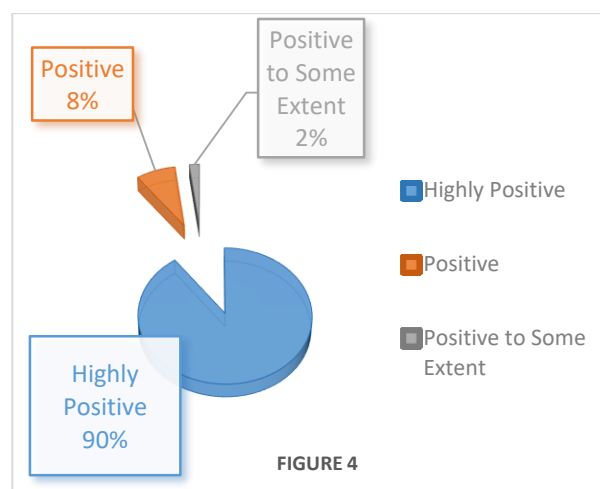


Figure 4: Overall Impact on Social Life: Figure 4 highlights that **90%** respondents consider the overall impact of television advertisements on their social life as highly positive. Another **8%** perceive the impact as positive, while only **2%** think the influence is positive to some extent. This suggests that most youths acknowledge the constructive role of advertisements in shaping social awareness and communication.

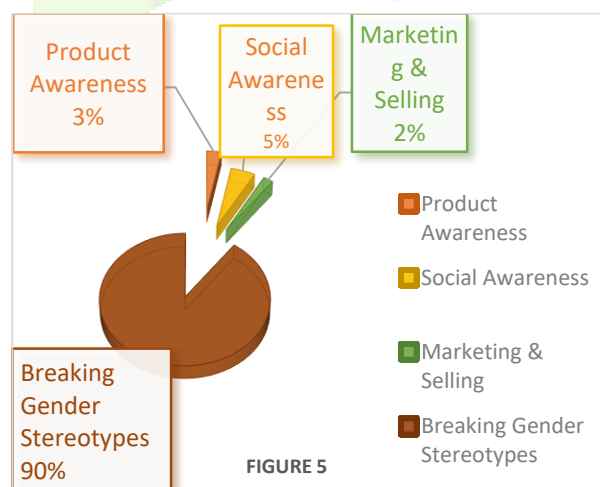


Figure 5: Necessity of Advertisements in Society: The fifth pie chart shows that **90%** respondents feel advertisements are necessary for **breaking gender stereotypes**. Only **5%** associate them with social awareness, **3%** with product awareness, and **2%** with marketing and selling. The data indicate that young viewers largely value advertisements for promoting gender equality and social change rather than commercial purposes alone

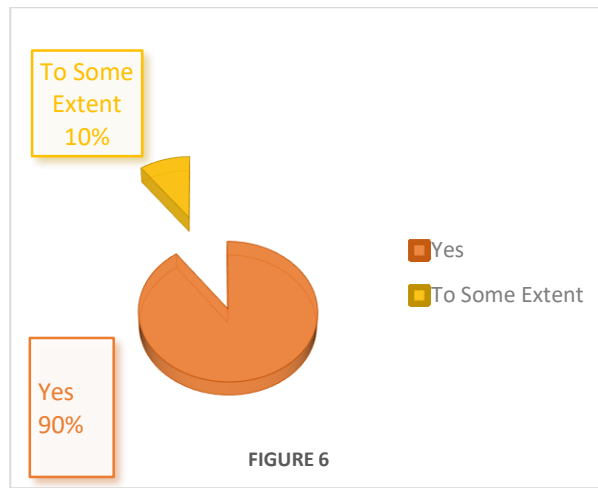


Figure 6: Increase of Social, Moral and Cultural Values: Figure 6 demonstrates that **90%** respondents believe television advertisements are responsible for increasing social, moral, and cultural values, while **10%** think they contribute only to some extent. This reflects a strong belief among youths that advertisements can positively influence society and cultural understanding.

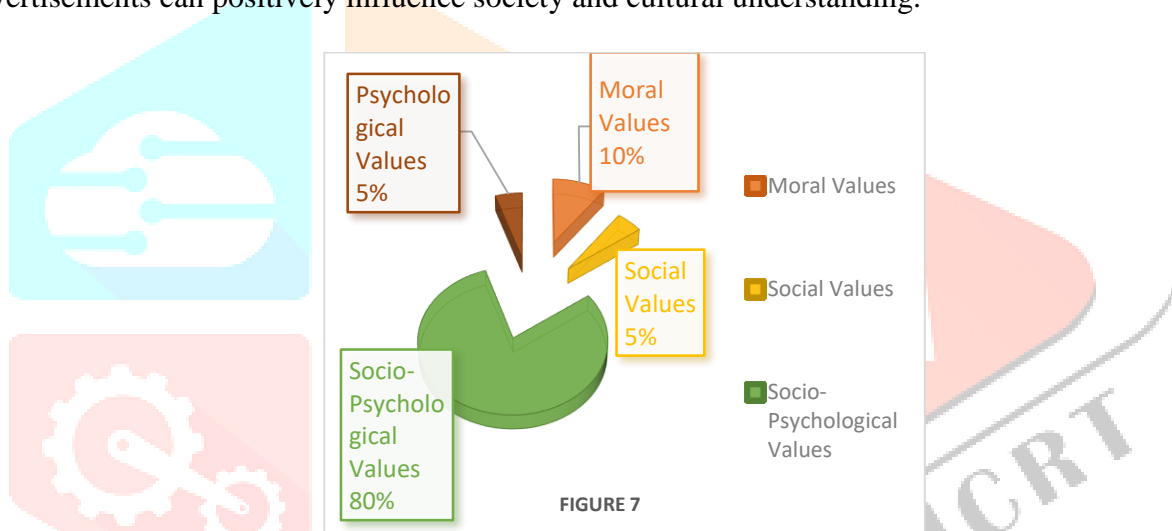


Figure 7: Values Mostly Affected: The seventh figure indicates that **80%** respondents think advertisements mostly affect **socio-psychological values**. Moral values account for **10%**, while social and psychological values each receive **5%** responses. This suggests that television advertisements deeply influence the emotional, psychological, and social mindset of youth.

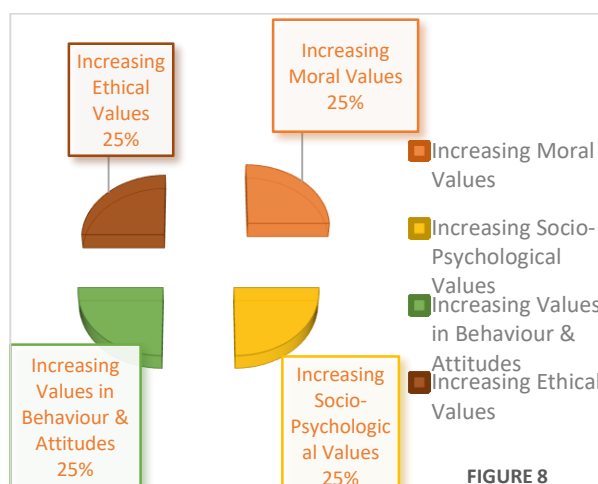


Figure 8: Influence of Advertisements on Youth: Figure 8 presents an equal distribution of responses. 100% (As the selected multiple options) respondents each believe that advertisements help in:

- Increasing moral values,
- Increasing socio-psychological values,
- Improving behaviour and attitudes,
- Increasing ethical values.

This balanced response shows that television advertisements influence multiple dimensions of youth development simultaneously.

Overall Interpretation

The overall analysis suggests that television advertisements play a major role in influencing the moral, behavioural, psychological, and social life of youth. Most respondents believe that advertisements spread awareness, promote positive social values, and help in breaking gender stereotypes. However, the study also highlights that continuous exposure to advertisements significantly shapes the attitudes and socio-psychological mind-set of young viewers. The findings support the idea that television advertising has become a powerful medium affecting both the personal and social behaviour of contemporary youth.

X. Conclusion:

It can be said from above those charts, 80% respondents think advertisements mostly affect socio-psychological values. 90% respondents believe television advertisements are responsible for increasing social, moral, and cultural values, moral values (50%) and behaviour & attitudes (40%) that 90% of respondents believe that television advertisements mainly help in spreading awareness, 100% respondents believe that advertisements help in Increasing moral values, increasing socio-psychological values, Improving behaviour and attitudes, increasing ethical values. This can be clearly said by predictive analysis, that TV advertisements has positive influence on the psychological, social, and moral values of youth in Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

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