

## ADDITIONAL CONCEPTS FOUND IN ADVERTISING IN INDIA

By

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### **1. Religion:**

Violence against women is a critical problem in India and according to the National Crime Records Bureau (2011), majority of crime against women was under the category 'cruelty by husband and relatives' (43.4%). To combat this global medical and human rights epidemic, Indian ad agency Taproot created an anti-domestic violence campaign for 'Save Our Sisters,' a non-profit that seeks to prevent sexual exploitation. The campaign used Hindu symbolism and was titled 'Abused Goddesses.' India is a country that consists of individuals that practice a variety of religions and religion plays a major role in the lives of the average Indian and as per the Indian Census, majority of Indians (80.5%) practice Hinduism. In a series of print ads, images of models posing as popular goddesses in Hindu mythology – Lakshmi (goddess of wealth), Saraswati (goddess of wisdom and learning), and Durga (goddess of power), were taken. All three goddesses however had bruises on their faces and the copy read, "Pray that we never see this day. Today, more than 68% of women in India are victims of domestic violence. Tomorrow, it seems like no woman shall be spared. Not even the ones we pray to." The major objective of the campaign was to highlight the irony in how women are perceived and treated in the Hindu religion versus actual reality.

*Link:* [https://www.buzzfeed.com/regajha/indias-incredibly-powerful-abused-goddesses-campaign-condemn?utm\\_term=.ofm10WG98#.jdnED4ONe](https://www.buzzfeed.com/regajha/indias-incredibly-powerful-abused-goddesses-campaign-condemn?utm_term=.ofm10WG98#.jdnED4ONe)

On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, launched the "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" or "Clean India Mission" to achieve national sanitation. The objective of the cleanliness campaign is to realize a clean and hygienic India by Mahatma Gandhi's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2019. By taking the saying "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" literally, the advertisement, "Don't Let Her Go" has famed Bollywood actress – Kangana Ranaut – playing Goddess Lakshmi. Hindus believe that maintaining a clean household would bring wealth and prosperity to its dwellers, in other words, Goddess Lakshmi resides where there is cleanliness. Taking the opposite angle, the ad shows the Goddess leaving those who decide to litter. The voice over was given by legendary Indian actor – Amitabh Bachchan.

*Link:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jezSduqsRjs>

### **2. Modernity:**

In order to motivate the Indian business community as well as attract foreign investors, foster innovation, and develop skills, the "Make in India" campaign by the Government of India (specifically, Indian PM Narendra Modi) was created to transform India into a world-class manufacturing hub. The underlying principle of the movement was to relax governmental control and maximize governance.

*Link:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmMEqV6LnhE&frags=pl%2Cwn>

### 3. LGBT:

In India, the rights of the LGBT community are being challenged where same-sex marriage is illegal and sexual activities are criminalized. Though homophobia is deeply entrenched in Indian society, LGBT have found greater tolerance in urban cities versus rural India. Brands have taken a step towards inclusivity by depicting LGBT members as regular people who lead normal lives. The ad called "The Visit" by fashion brand 'Anouk,' depicts the tender interactions of a same-sex couple as they prepare to meet the mother of one of the women.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef27m5ocK6Q&frags=pl%2Cwn>

Another ad by Rebtel uses humor to touch upon the sensitive topic of gay marriage. The Indian stand-up comedian Vir Das has a comical conversation with his grandmother who lives in the US.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R8toFitspE&frags=pl%2Cwn>

### 4. Patriotism:

Feelings of patriotism run deep in Indian society and advertising is a great way for brands to showcase their commitment towards their country. For example, Bajaj Auto is India's leading two and three-wheeler manufacturer. Much of their campaigns in the past have been patriotic in nature, which have created an image of Bajaj being a truly Indian brand. A few years ago, the company introduced the Bajaj V, "forged from the invincible metal of the 1971 Indo-Pak war hero INS Vikrant." INS Vikrant was India's first aircraft carrier and was instrumental in the victory over Pakistan in 1971. To stay ahead with the times, the Indian Navy decided to decommission INS Vikrant and sent it to the scrap yard. In order to capitalize on the rich history of the vessel, Baja instead decided to use the metal to manufacture a limited edition motorcycle, the Bajaj V. The campaign reinforces the brand's long running image of patriotism.

Link: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aK9UsBaa7\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aK9UsBaa7_c)

### 5. Tradition:

Traditional customs are commonly depicted in Indian advertising due to their culturally congruent appeals. For example, an Indian wife wears traditional cosmetics/accessories that symbolizes marriage, e.g., vermilion mark worn above the forehead or the wedding necklace ('mangalsutra' or sacred thread). If the marriage ends by either the husband passing away or by divorce, these symbols cease. Camlin, an Indian stationary company, created a campaign to promote its permanent markers. The ad in the link below, takes a humorous look at traditional customs and associated beliefs, esp., with the 'bindhi' and the significant role it plays in the bond between husband and wife.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgSReXWcuTU&frags=pl%2Cwn>