

Politics of Food Culture: A Study Based on Advertisements

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We may call food as anything that help living beings, including human beings, for their physical existence or enjoyment. Every culture or other civilization has its own way of food. We may even call the evolution of culture has its origin from food. That which learn the primal homosapiens to live a social existence could be traced as with food or to be more precise, the discovery of agriculture. The variety of food materials or their availability as well as climate of particular place, influence the food habits of the people who reside in that particular area. For example, we may notice that the menu of the people of cold countries finds greater prominence for non-vegetarian food. The food culture of people is the result of social, economic, political or agricultural factors evolved during various stages. It does indeed have a political backbone. Looking at Kerala, we may take it that the primary food of the Keralites is rice based, the land or the climate of this State should invariably be suitable for that. The reason for the great importance for agriculture in this land the people of the state get fish profusely from Arabian sea, back waters and rivers with which the state is blessed with. People are here relish on different varieties of meat as well, which are available in plenty. The free availability of spices and coconut has made significant influence in the food habits of the people. Attraction to fast and junk foods is gathering momentum at a tremendous space among the people. Kerala has become a place which attaches great value for fast food. Television and advertisements, we exhibit through it, has played a very significant role in making the conditions to this extend.

Television Advertisements and Kerala Society

Advertisement has become a medium that has found a place in the private life of men. Television has been playing a pivotal role in the process. It is the primary aim of television to address various human issues. It is because of the understanding of the power of television to enter in to the world of family and their privacies that made global capitalism to use advertisements through television to get into the private world. It is precisely because of these advertisements get great relevance in the society.

‘Advertising is a marketing communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-presence message to promote or sell a product, service or idea (William J Satio, np:465)’

Advertisements are a part of day to day life. It has come to the point that advertisements use people rather than people use advertisements. Advertisements do have a psychological and social influence beyond simply an economic significance. Most of the values of modern way of life and values get rival first in advertisements. Advertisements show as how scientific and technical methodologies can be rented to harvest desired goals in ordinary life. It gives prominence to experience their concern in the realization of product. The sights that give prominence to experience suggest the relationship between the product and the consumer. The basic way of modern advertisements is to reproduce as experience of the importance of products that have potential marketability through representation.

Television Advertisements and Food Culture

Advertisements have grown to the level of influencing many people and develop thereby an upper hand on the society. It gets best expressed in terms of food-based ads. The world of advertisements with regard to food habits has reached a level to ignore even studies on food related matters. The modern food advertisements create a beautiful blend between what is tradition and what is current. Modern advertisements encash love, affection, desire and the like human feelings to attain desired economic ends. Love occupies a central position in almost all conceptions of modern world advertisements. Love is a feeling that gets reflected through the relationships like husband and wife, mother and kids, father and kids, brother and sister, friends, neighbors and so on. And because of the same love and its various ramifications find deserving places in the food-based consumptions. Advertisements make use of the basic principle that tasty food can be an easy way to human mind.

Advertisements about food were available even in olden times. But they did not have the popularity as they have been found today. Mohanlal's taste bud ad is an example for that. It bares the tagline that ' the skills of a thousand mothers are there behind it'. Still another ad was that of Shama curry powder. Its tagline was this: 'a pinch is enough to make you happy '. In the similar lines go the ads of Whirlpool, Kanandevan tea, Rasna, Frooti, etc. Their primary aim was to present products of potential marketability. But today things are changed, and different methodologies have to be employed to attract the minds of potential consumers.

The Politics of Modern Ads

'Hunger for the good ' is the line of ad published by Kerala government to survive the flood disaster we experienced recently. This line of advertisements makes man think there does exist a hunger which can be bad or good. This piece of advertisement gets interacted with the Kerala society which considers food as a matter of celebration and luxury. There does exist a clear politics that piece of advertisement reminds the people of Kerala that there survives a group of people with severe difficulties though the initial bottlenecks. The flood which was brought in

have been reasonably tided over. As a matter of fact, such an idea becomes more understandable to such survivors. The invocation to keep aside the money for a meal to support the flood hit people suggest the changed socio-political surroundings, evolved as a result of the disaster. Most of the ads getting released today center around modern taste habits.

An advertisement of Nestle released in 2014 says 'good food, good life'. It tells the society that sharing of foods doubles joy. 'Let's stand together with Kerala ' is an ad that got released in 2018 through which Nestle interacts with the spectators.

The site of Kerala's favorite fare chips the ads of Horlicks oat's stating ' A change for health', that of Milma 'the goodness of milk, goodness of the land' etc. come for living behind traditions. Advertisements like these that destroys traditional values talk more to the modern world. Ads like these embrace the highlights of the modern world. The ad of Nirapara highlighting rice steam cake to the people. The ad highlights Kerala's own fare which has got the support of nature and tradition. Most of the ads today reveal diametrically opposite ideas to wish one can only look at and wonder as to how ingenious things could be if they are rented for serving sheer commercial purposes. In an ad about Sambar powder the caption is this: 'certain pure relations are those cannot be expressed with words'. Taste that the dishes carrying when they come from mother.

Sambar is depicted as an epitome of mother's love. 'Good food is good medicine' is another ad which tenders around food. Fast food has become as the life style of the Malayalees. Fast food has made the world a single market, acceptable to middle class people. Domino's Pizza hut, Chick king, Burger King and the distributing agencies like Swiggy, Ubereats, Zommatto, etc. can be found around. Marking change like these exist based on their primary statement that availability is in your fingertips, as the fares are being brought to our doorsteps. The modern nuclear families find it as a great boon.

Conclusion

Food comes in advertisements as an evident symbol of Socio-political dominance. It communicates certain very definite meanings in front of the consumer or viewer. It is a fact that there does exist in Kerala a sector of people, which is unable to digest this change in spite of the ardent of the new consumer culture that has taken strong roots within the state. Those who are suitable to change like these are not but poor victims of the influences that capitalist tycoons inflict the society with their profit and interest. The marginalized are still marginalized. Even in ads. They find no place in the world of the ads. It still reminds a question as to whether we will have to redefine human passion and relationship, in the light of the kind of picture the world of advertisement that has brought in the world today.

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