

A Neo-Colonial Indentation in Advertisement: A Structural Analysis on Selected Cadbury Chocolate Advertisement

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Abstract: *The present paper makes both quantitative and qualitative analysis to unveil the neo-colonial intention in advertisements, and the analysing scale used is the figurative language. The signifiers and the signs used for signification and the levels of signification are quantified for an in-depth analyses. The paper tries to pursue the structural and deep semiotic analysis of four advertisements of Cadbury. It also tries to tease out the neo colonial imprints through different explicit signs and symbols and checks how the food habits change with culture and traditions.*

Key words: *Semiotics, Saussure, figurative language, advertisement, connotation and denotation, Peirce, Sign, Interpretant.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Advertisement is an information or awareness to the public regarding a product or service availed to them. It is also a strategy to leave an imprint in consumers mind to survive in the competitive world of market economy. These targets are met through both visual and sound effects. Different means of medium like newspaper, television, online services have used to serve the purpose to attract the targeted audience. In the contemporary world of huge production and distribution, to create a demand is a task. A particular product might be launched by different companies and to popularise one needs to undergo several stages of planning. Advertisement is the link that connects the product to the consumers. Apart from the industrial and economic point of view, the production, distribution and consumption of a product in the society has socio-political and cultural dimensions. Most of the advertisements try to sell the products and evoke an urge towards a certain product, which leads to the evolution of a brand. Moreover, it focuses on the taste of the consumers and for the inculcation of interest to a certain brand. These can be read in parallel with neo-colonialism since the interest tried to inculcate is that of the west. The basic emotions like anticipation, acceptance are evoked by the advertising companies for the preference and for developing a conviction about the product. Since the advertisement has a hand in the consumer world, especially in third world countries, it has to be analysed for the social, cultural and psychological impacts that it has in the society. In the case of India, which has a history of consumer culture that is as old as trade and commerce, needs to be studied for understanding the impacts made by the advertisements.

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Neo-colonial phase can be traced after the second world war, Second World War has faced by the super power countries with the available resources and militias from the colonies. After the setback witnessed by the British in the Second World War, the notion of decolonisation came to be accepted eventually. The US equipments and military products circulated in the war lead to the emergence of the US as the most powerful nation and this made the US planners to organise the economic system freer and indispensable internationally and made the new order. The independence of the former colonies transferred the power from the colonisers to the powerful elite class and they adopt the systems of colonisers. The expected sovereignty has not attained by the colonies, there was only a slight shift from direct rule to indirect rule. The resources were controlled indirectly by the metropolitan centres of the west. Another way of control was through the disguised helping hands, the developmental aids provided during the time of cold war for the newly independent countries to defend the civil war. International Monetary Fund (IMF) distributed funds for the internal development of the third world countries however, these aid received countries had to follow the liberal policies in the market economy. It constrained government interaction in the market like the provision of subsidies, rationing and the protection of home products from the free market policies. Liberalisation and globalisation have seen as the extension of neo-colonialism because these policies made the new control possible. Neo liberalism emphasised less governmental intervention and the market's regulator would controlled by the socio-economic factors. Globalisation promoted privatisation free markets in economy. Thus, the economy has brought into the hands of MNC's. In cultural terms the concerns raised by the critiques was the cultural colonialism as a part of neo-colonialism. The richer countries take over the value system, traditions and culture through ideological apparatus like media and cultural elements like language and education. There arise a feeling of inferiority and considers foreign lifestyle as better with higher status. Thus, an internalised belief about the superiority of colonisers has evolved out of the colonisation and these mentality get transferred through generations.

II. METHODOLOGY

The semiotics has taken as a parameter to analyse the change in culture from Indian tradition to westernisation. Daniel Chandler's work, The Basics of Semiotics, makes the basis to analyse the selected texts (advertisements). The



Saussurian linguistic concept of signifier and the process of signification has also been taken into account. In addition to this, Pierces concept of triad system of sign in the production of meanings are analysed to check the inherent meanings of the advertisements.

III. OBJECTIVES

Through a semantic analysis of the Cadbury ads the paper explores into the neo-colonial elements present in the ads. It observes the ideological control over the market strategy by taking case studies of Cadbury chocolate advertisements.

IV. HYPOTHESIS

The paper attempts to check into the deep line of the texts to find the new form of control, which is different from the peripheral forms of control. Indian culture has been represented in the light of a neo-colonial/ globalised scenario. It focuses into the questions like:

- What is neo-colonialism.
- How it encounter the pan-traditional drive?
- How the signs open numerous ideas.

Scope and limitation

It has a wider implication in a globalised world to know about the ideological control over a market strategy that affects a wider range of population regardless of the class differences. It has further scope in the technical interpretation of advertisement to know how it influencesthe masses. Apart from this, it could not consider the consumer culture and the consumer response to the market in a broad sense. A technically hyper-real side of the advertisement is yet to be explored with the same parameters. The limited number of ads incorporated to explain a general topic can also seen as a limitation.

Advertisement as a tool

While analysing the evolution of advertisement in India, the effects of colonial mentality and advertisement as a major marketing tool for the MNCs to sell their products in India, can be concluded as the major reason for the popularity of advertisement. This in parallel shows the interest of wide variety of population belonging to different sections and sectors of the society on the new marketing trends. Popularity of market trend by the rural and urban people alike is due to the succession of visual media in nook and corners of suburbsand also due to the colonial hangover that they carry in their hearts. Market and those market products made a part in the self-identification process of the individual, their status and class and to an extent was decided by the products that they purchase. Goods and service thus has turned to be prestige factor and the status was compared with the lifestyle of the west. Considering all these factors, ideological force has also taken their step into advertisement. French Marxist philosopher Althussure, has divided the societal controlling agents into two, RSA (Repressive State Apparatus) and ISA (Ideological State Apparatus), RSA forms the visible controlling agents that impose the so-called order through force like police, army, law and so on while ISA brings in the order through the invisible factors that influence ideologically like church,

school and so on. The effects and impacts of advertisement can be categorised as an invisible one and can be put along with the elements in ISA.

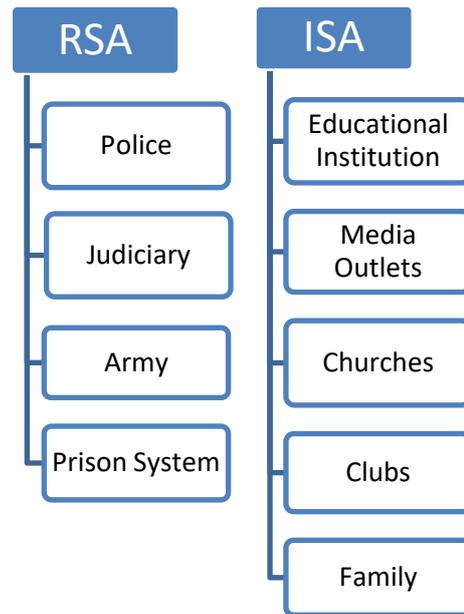


Figure 1: Controlling Apparatus

According to psychology, Ideological State Apparatus can be referred as a “psychosocial” a combined effect of both psychology and society. Through the societal institutions, it assimilates to the people the way of seeing and evaluating things around. Advertisement to certain extent performs the same by inculcating the interest of West based MNCs. The semiotic analysis is made to analyse the visual grammar and the ideologies hidden behind in advertisement. As a text, it has more technical aspects rather than aesthetic aspects. Cadburys being a popular chocolate manufacture in the world has an influence in the Indian market and Indian culture. Analysing the rich cultural background of India, the marketing features concentrate on the key points like festivals, family and tradition. The main texts for the analysis are four popular advertisements of Cadburys. Cadburycame into Indian market from 1948 and it was in 2010 Cadburys introduced Diarmilk. The ads in India has been conceptualised by Ogilvy and Mather. In the Rakshabandhan celebration advertisement which came out in 2014, it starts with an establishing shot that visualise the background of a boarding school. There a boy, setting a gift for her sister on the auspicious day of Rakhsha Badha (Indian tradition to tie a Rakhi by the sister to her brother to ensure the love and protection from him). One of the friends of this boy calls him to check the Rakhi thread delivered by the postman but he finds none for him. He comes back to his bed with a gloomy face. As a surprise, his sister and parents visit him, she ties rakhi and he gifts Cadbury Celebration in return. The marriage celebration advertisement of Cadburywith the tagline ‘For the growing friendship’ (Badhti dosti) is the second advertisement for the study. The film is set in a limited town where a lady on the balcony with a Cadbury Diarmilk chocolate. She overlooks at the procession of a marriage in the street and enjoys the music. Soon mother-in-law comes to the scene and the lady puts her veil on as a part of their custom to show the



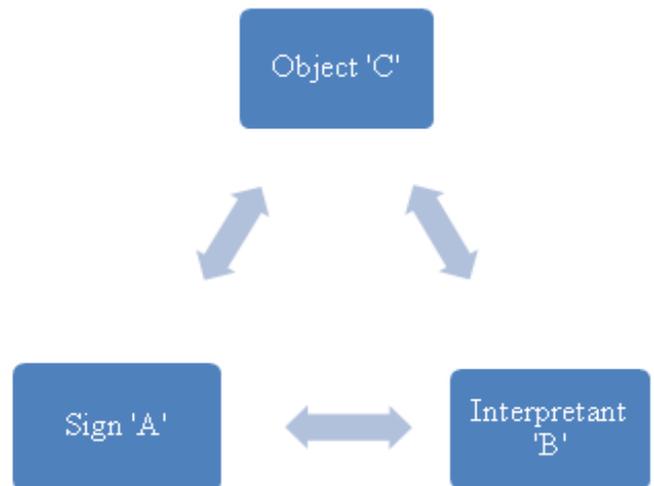
respect. She offers a bar of chocolate to mother-in-law and after the consumption, lady and the mother-in-law grooves into the mood of party. Next action is on the street where both the women display their western moves to the music. The ad film ends with the tagline “name for the growing friendship” “ have some sweets”. In the 2017 advertisement of Cadbury, situation is a family with six members and the each members are engaged in different activities where father in the family asks the question what is there for the meal? The explanation of food menu by mother makes everyone to escape from home because that seems every disinteresting. The entry of the mother from the kitchen blocks the father’s move to escape and he suddenly asks, Meta meh kya hei? (what is there as sweet) or as dissert after the meal,that brings happiness and love. These scenarios signify the common idea of a difference from the initial stage to next stage that the product ‘chocolate’ brings. Figurative tools for the analysis

Metaphor	• Literally inapplicable to convey a figurative expression of a word or phrase but that is applied to an object or action and can be understood only in comparison with the nature of the objects or action
Connotation	• An abstract meaning of a term, in addition to its primary or literal meaning.
Denotation	• an object or concept to which a term refers or the primary meaning of the word.

Figure 2: Figurative tools

In simple words, figurative means the diversion from the literal meaning to a non-literal sense. There are numerous figures of speech in English language and literature. Some are taken for the deep analysis of the invisible meanings to understand the structure of the advertisement. Metaphor is often said as the synonym for figurative language. Metaphor is broadly used to indicate representation, which signifies the so-called real object. In theoretical terms, metaphor consists of a primary object, which is figuratively represented through secondary object. For example in the proverb, time and tide waits for none, tide is the secondary object that metaphorically explains the features of the time, that it keeps going. In a literal sense, it is hard to examine a metaphor and it always needs a creative and imaginative sense to experience it. Metaphor can be symbolic that alludes to different events. If one needs to understand a metaphorical language then the person should hold all the conditioning of that language culture. Metaphors need not be verbal always, visual metaphors involve the process of transference, where it transfers the idea through two different images. In addition to this, denotation and connotation come as an umbrella term, which can incorporate the shades of other figures of speech. It is an obvious fact that a word has different colours of meanings and people use euphemism for those words that cannot utter explicitly under a cultural condition. Sexual connotations are more popular since these have restriction in a so-called modest environment. Denotation meant the literal meaning and the surface level meaning for the common understanding upon which, the structure of language stands. A unified understanding adheres to denotation however, connotation is context specific, it stands close with a person’s age, class, group and other factors. Connotative point gives more interpretive scopes. How the sign is

interpreted is what that matters. Connotation is thus context-dependent Charles Sanders Peirce was a semiotician and he called semiotics as ‘semeiotics’ and the attributed meaning was the philosophical study of signs. He has divided system of semiotics into three categories as a sign, object and interpretant. An action that influence or involves these three categories is what he calls as a ‘semiosis’. Peirce analyses the conceived concepts like representation, interpretation and assertions as his three categories. He considers philosophy as a mediator between natural science and empirical science. The definition of Peirce’s triadic sign relation is like, a sign that is represented as ‘A’ gives way to



an interpretant sign, which is created in the quasi mind and the relation of sign ‘A’ and interpretant sign ‘B’ corresponds the same to ‘C’, the object.

Figure 3: Peirce’s Semiosis

- Sign ‘A’ is the representation or a description of something that has room for interpretation and it cannot be limited as symbolic, linguistic or artificial.
- An object is the main concern or the subject of both the Sign ‘A’ and ‘B’. The object can be considered as the centre and the signs ‘A’ and ‘B’ as its orbits.
- An interpretant ‘B’ is the more detailed description of the object that is brought out from sign ‘A’.

V. ANALYSIS

Cadbury is a multinational British confectionary company owned by Mondelez International and its headquarters in Uxbridge in Great Britain. It has its market around 50 countries and it is the second largest chocolate brand in the world. In India, Cadbury has the highest market share of about 70%. The inclination towards the western culture in advertisement is illustrated by foregrounding different elements in the advertisement of Cadbury since the Cadbury market strategies are directly aimed at revamping the traditional cultures. The chocolate has been placed in a very significant cultural and social context. The chocolate as a sweet (a foreign sweet) has a pan- Indian notion attached to it.

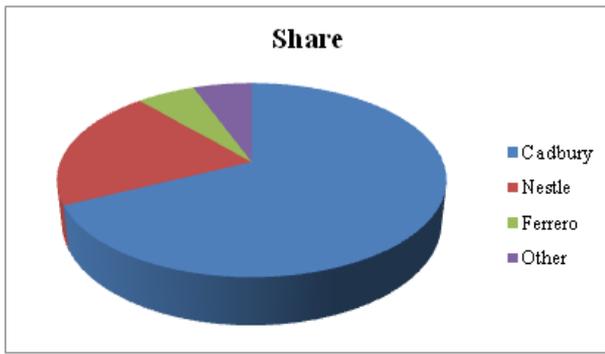


Figure 4: Major Share hold of Cadbury in India.
source: Economic Times, 3rd May 2014

In the three advertisements selected for the study, the inherent sign systems and mis-en-scene elements of the visual texts are keenly observed and analysed to explore into the various possibilities of representation through the codes and connotations of the text. The Cadbury's Rakshabandan advertisement checks how the western chocolate fits into an Indian occasion by putting apart all the Indian special desserts.

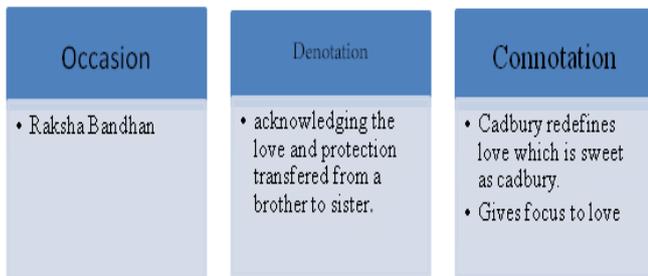


Figure 5: Rakshabandhan: denote and connot

Cadbury has run different campaigns to make the difficult job of replacing the Indian dessert sweets with Cadbury chocolate. For the above strategy, they focused on the Indian customs and tradition yet they give it a modern look. Here, in the advertisement came up in 2014, an English educational institution run by Christian management is the background and the boy who is in his hostel waiting for the Rakhi (thread to be tied on the hand) by parcel. A profile of priest with a stick in the establishing shot reveals the English boarding school system that had its history from colonies. Even though, the celebration named is Raksha Bandhan, where 'Raksha' means protection and 'Bandhan' means bond, Cadburys shift the focus from Raksha to Bandhan by redefining the love bond with the gifting of Chocolate. The company tries to convey the priceless love that Cadburys hold when it is gifted. When advertisement redefines the Sankrit words 'the bond of protection' to bond of love, it tries to overwrite the hierarchal structure of men and women and it instils the value of love which against the original version of Hindu cultural identity. Although the practise of this ritual had politicised by a group to promote Hinduism, in commercial world, the advertisement wipes out the religious connotations and focus only on the western values for a general market, apart from religion.

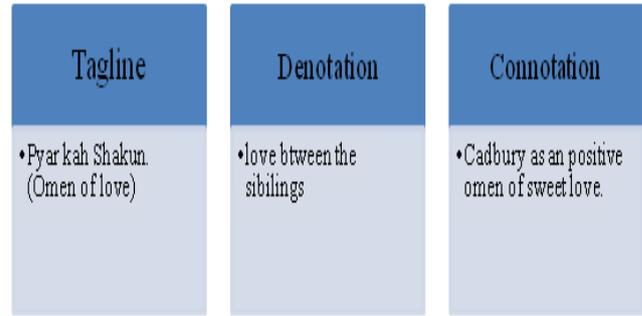


Figure 6: Rakshabandhan Ad's Tagline Analysis

The second factor considered for the same advertisement is the tagline. Here, the focus is not to the sacred thread to be tied but on the product marketed that is Cadbury Celebrations. As the chocolate name signifies, it primarily gives importance to the celebration and the possible market that the product has. The tagline has an emotional effect as it is emotionally connected to the love between siblings and the western chocolate Cadbury stands as an omen to binds them together with love. India being a diverse country with cultural diversity, believes in Shakun or superstitious omens. Thus by connecting India even in taglines, company tries to sell the foreign chocolate in this land and making it as a practise my replacing all traditional sweets.



Figure 6: Rakshabandhan Ad's Apparel Analysis

In the advertisement, the apparels proclaim the western inclination. With that the company clearly defines west as modern and new in ideas and taste since the product is a chocolate. The brother and sister are celebrating a traditional ritual but they seems in modern cloths. The little brother has shoes and shocks on his legs and he worn a knickers and shirt. Sister is in pants and shot top not in traditional salwar wear. Thus, Rakhi celebration has taken as a superficial element to display the product and to hold the Indian market.

The 'Marriage Celebration Ad' of Cadbury looks how the relationship finds changes from the normal traditional system.

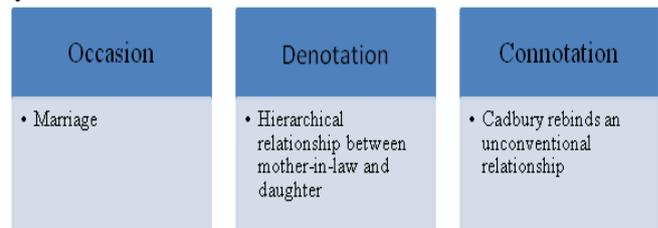


Figure 7: Marriage Celebration Ad Analysis

As per the tactics to find way into all age group customers, Cadbury focused on different sections of the society. The women were a target and the concepts moved deep inside the hierarchical family structure. In the second advertisement, two women are the main characters or



the consumers of Cadburys. The formal atmosphere of the two changes when the daughter offers a small piece of Cadbury chocolate to mother-in-law. Mother-in-law starts enjoying the marriage procession with music, happening in the downside of their flat. They both go out of the house and dance for the procession. This incident gets meaning when the semiotic signs are analysed deeply. The traditional relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter are very formal and respectful, that is evident from the body language of the daughter in the beginning. Later, both of them break the barriers and move out of their constructed roles. Women moving out of the house have great impact in Indian patriarchal concept. Cadbury comes with the modern views of liberation through its presentation.

Tagline	Denotation	Connotation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Badhti Dosti (Growing friendship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building up friendship in relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and unconventional relation which is redrawn with Cadburys

Figure 8: Marriage Celebration Ad's Tagline Analysis

In the advertisement, the tagline just denotes building new friendship in relationship and it gets further meaning when the advertisement is analysed with the context in Indian background. The selected consumers for the tagline is a mother-in-law and a daughter. The conditioned ideas of relationship between them is reverted with the visuals of revelling dance of them. Here, by the advertisement tries to portray the Indian concepts of women as obedient and shy to the new that is non-hierarchical and unconventional.

Apparels	Denotation	Connotation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unveiled saree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional wear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional but unconventional.

Figure 9: Marriage Celebration Ad's Apparel analysis

The advertisement clearly gives a distinction before the consumption and after the consumption of Cadbury Dairy milk. When the daughter sees the mother-in-law she veils herself as a part of custom and respect. Later they share the chocolate and their mood changes. The veiled saree moves off from her head and they make western steps being in the centre of the marriage procession. When the bridegroom joyfully asks for the way they runs together holding hands. The saree in Indian tradition signifies modesty and so called femininity however, being in saree they breaks the conventional ideas associated with saree. As the neo-colonial revolutionary writer and politician of Africa Kwame Nkrumah has pointed out the state which had subjected to neo-colonialism, in theory gets independence but in practise, its economic system thus its political policies are directed from outside. That kind of influence can be seen even in a food product like chocolate. From the liberalisation policies in the market to advertisement, it changes the culture of the consumers. The final advertisement sets in a family, a major value centre as far as Indian tradition is concerned. Here Cadbury chocolate tries

to make a way into the habits of familial system.

Occasion	Denotation	Connotation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family meal time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweetness of family interactions • Dairy milk chocolate to add more sweetness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacing the usual habits with dairy milk

Figure 10: Family Ad's Analysis

The advertisement tries to replace or to make a new habit of adding a dessert into the meal. As a part of the campaign to cover all the age group customers, the primary concern to break was that the concept, chocolate was meant only for children. To achieve this goal, the advertisements made family as its background. In the selected advertisement for the study, it includes different age group members who all are bored with the usual food menu for the meal and tries to escape from having the meal. The mother catches the father from the plan and to change the mood, he asks about the dessert. This makes a happy face in mother, thus tries to convey that the Cadbury could bring happiness and prompting very family to follow a system of eating chocolate after a meal.

Tagline	Denotation	Connotation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetaah meh kay hai (what is there for the dessert). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enquiring about the sweet dessert for the day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking for something sweet. • this can be a word, love, smile and here it is in the form of chocolate.

Figure 11: Family Ad's Tagline Analysis

The tagline seems simple but by the word 'sweet' connotes sweet words, sweet smile, love which can make the atmosphere happy and sweet. Here, in this scenario, only Cadbury can bring out happiness. It is projected as the symbol of happiness, which is different and new from the usual food culture. Thus, neo-colonialism in African philosophy is an influence that west indicted through mind, spirit and body and decolonisation needs a liberation from all these shackles.

Apparels	Denotation	Connotation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youngsters and men in western cloths • Mother in salwar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youngsters are modern in their outlook • Mother seems traditional in her ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconventional • follows modern ways

Figure 12: Family Ad's Apparel Analysis

As in the case of other advertisements, in the third advertisement also, the youngsters are in modern wears and are equipped with modern gadgets like smart mobile phone and laptop. Thus, the Cadbury is served and loved by all the generations. Since the product is foreign, the advertisements have tried to nationalise it at the superficial level to get the acceptance of all. However, in the Indian background what is served is foreign and it invites foreign style. Hence, in the contemporary scenario neo-colonialism does not limit itself to the territorial control rather explore the modern capitalist business

involvements in the former-colonised countries.

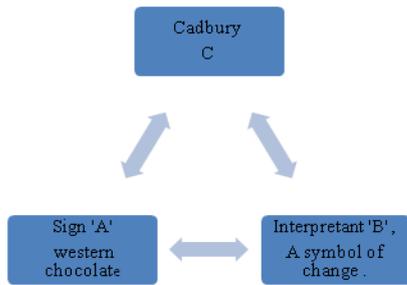


Figure 13: Triad System of the Sign Cadbury

While reading the advertisements together, in Peirce’s terms, the object ‘C’ produces the sign as a chocolate and it also gives way to interpretation like a symbol of change. Since the sign conveys so many kinds of westernisation in its presentation, it aims at the unconscious hangover that Indians have about the colonial past and a tendency to look into the west and western lifestyle as superior.

VI. CONCLUSION

Putting all these factors together, what the western chocolate share in Indian homes is western culture in chocolate flavour. The signs and symbols are the obvious marks of western branding. Neo colonial invasion can also be seen as a market strategy for a unified market thus; the companies can look more into a globalised taste. Furthermore, the constrain of conveying the sense taste is made up with the inclusion of emotional dramas to get hold of the consumer’s mind set. Superficial strategies like cloths has also worked out to accept the western ideas.

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