



What TV ads say vs. what they really mean

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We've all seen Bangladeshi TV advertisements. It might be in brief bursts during *Ittyadi*, in longer bursts during cricket matches, or in never-ending streams during your favourite *Eid-er natok*.

When you come across enough of these ads, you start to notice some discrepancies in what they promise and what the product will actually deliver. The following are only some of the many ways your favourite products have attempted to bamboozle you.

GLARE & UGLY

The advertisements for this product are all about empowerment. By using this magical eraser of a cream, you will get promotions at your job and men will swoon when they see you – all while looking 4.375 skin tones whiter. How exciting.

In reality, this product will make you somewhat paler. But that won't get you jobs or promotions; skills and sound work ethics are what your employers care about, unfortunately. You'll also be conforming to society's ridiculous standards for beauty: it ain't right if it ain't white. These products aren't super healthy either. By the time you're 40, your skin will probably have the texture of Jabba the Hutt's underside. If it's empowerment you want, look elsewhere.

ELBOWS-UP

This particular toothpaste is great; I enjoy

brushing my teeth with it. But the ads for it are just weird. They always involve two strangers locking eyes in a crowd, and then partaking in some primitive mating dance. Once they're done with the dance, they stand two inches apart and breathe heavily onto each other's faces, pretending to be fire-breathing dragons.

I'll admit it looks cool when you have two attractive models in an ad, but what if people who see it start trying to replicate them? Please don't be this crazy person who goes around blowing on people's faces. The toothpaste does not give you hypnotic breath, and that is not how you

get a boyfriend/girlfriend/SO. The ads are lying to you, do not take them literally.

Can you imagine walking down the already hostile streets of Dhaka when someone comes up to you and starts breathing on your face? You'd have to keep your *elbows up* to keep the creeps away. Yes, I went with that joke; no, you shall not have an apology.

EVERY CONSUMABLE PRODUCT EVER

This is directed towards those ads which somehow make a connection between eating their product and higher intellect. While these types of ads may work for

consumables aimed at gullible kids and their gullible parents, they make no sense when applied to something like cooking oil. When the ad shows someone successfully foiling an arranged marriage by the power of cooking oil, what are they trying to tell us?

The link between *oil* and *intellect* is tenuous at best, unless their target audience is people sitting for admission tests. Because in that case, I'm sure people would have forked out whatever you asked for, magic GK-granting cooking oil. Why bother sifting through those thick general knowledge books when all you need is to eat deep-fried *ilish*/French fries/onion rings every day? Maybe that should be their marketing campaign for next year's admission session.

LUNGI ADS

Actually, you know what? I don't have anything against these ads. They're the most accurate kind. What you see is what you get, and what you get is extremely comfortable *lungi*. The jingle is pretty catchy too, so they're actually the perfect example of what TV ads should be.

Tune in next week for the follow-up: Japanese ads and why they are so strange. Boy, is that going to be a traumatising ride.

Wasique Hasan is disappointed by the absence of Jub-jub in the later Harry Potter books. Sympathise with him at facebook.com/hasique.wasan

