

**THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION:  
ADVERTISEMENTS IN NEWSPAPERS AND  
PERIODICALS IN BENGAL (1929-1940)**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirement for the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy in Arts, Jadavpur University**

**BY**

**JAGYOSENI MANDAL**

**JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY  
KOLKATA-700032**

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Certified that the thesis entitled '**THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION: ADVERTISEMENTS IN NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS IN BENGAL (1929-1940)**', submitted by me towards the partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Philosophy (Arts) in the Department of History of Jadavpur University, is based upon my own original work and there is NO plagiarism. This is also to certify that the work has not been submitted by me for the award any other degree/diploma of the same Institution where the work is carried out, or to any other Institution. A paper out of this dissertation has also been presented by me at seminar/conference at the Department of History of Jadavpur University, thereby fulfilling the criteria for submission, as per the M. Phil Regulation (2017) of Jadavpur University.

Jagyoseni Mandal  
06/05/2019

Name of the Student: Jagyoseni Mandal,  
Roll No: 001700603005  
Registration No: 142322 of 2017-18

On the basis of academic merit and satisfying all the criteria as declared above, the dissertation work of Ms. Jagyoseni Mandal entitled, '**THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION: ADVERTISEMENTS IN NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS IN BENGAL (1929-1940)**', is now ready for submission towards the partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (Arts) in the Department of History of Jadavpur University.

06/05/19

Head  
Department of History  
Jadavpur University  
Kolkata-700 032

Sudashna Banerjee  
06.05.2019

Supervisor & Convener of RAC

Associate Professor  
Department of History  
Jadavpur University  
Kolkata-700 032

Sudeshana Chattopadhyay  
e.s.19

Member of RAC

Associate Professor  
Department of History  
Jadavpur University  
Kolkata-700 032

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1-9
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	10-24
UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION-AT THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL SCALES	
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	25-49
EARLY COLONIAL ADVERTISING : AGENCIES BEHIND ADVERTISING, ADVERTISING AGENCIES	
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> .....	50-116
READING THE ADVERTISEMENTS OF 1930S	
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	117-118
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	

# INTRODUCTION

## The Argument

This thesis is concerned with advertisements in the print form as published in both English and Bengali newspapers and periodicals in Bengal in the late colonial period circa 1929-40. The main period under focus is the inter-war period, specifically the Great Depression of the 1930s which was a very important decade of Indian history in which economic and political trends converged which influenced the course of subsequent events.<sup>1</sup>

The stock market crash in New York in 1929 sent a shock wave of credit contraction around the world<sup>2</sup> and remains a topic of seminal importance in economic history even today. The aim of this thesis is to find out if there were any changes at all in advertising in Bengal because of the Great Depression. This thesis also aims to find out how profound were the changes if there were any and ask to what extent was Bengal as a part of colonial India caught up in the vortex of the Great Depression? Did the crisis of the Great Depression leave a particular imprint upon the course of the history of colonial India not only in economic but also in social terms?

The significance of the research questions lies in the fact that it takes up a deeper critical attitude and engulfs a wider political aspect. The research question relates to a wide critic of capitalism, which is the way in which the late nineteenth century turn in capitalism created a worldwide market and the crucial roles that advertisements played in influencing people's minds as a means to create a class of consumers for the market in consumer goods. Thus the argument is based within the wider

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<sup>1</sup> Dietmar Rothermund, *The Impact of The Great Depression On India In The 1930s*, Source: *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol. 41 (1980), pp. 657

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

context of how capitalism creates a consumer. In this context, the thesis draws upon Naom Chomsky and Edward Hermann's theory of 'manufacturing consent' that states how among their other functions, the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them and how advertising serve as the primary income source of the mass media.<sup>3</sup> Since this thesis focuses on advertisements, it is also imperative to mention how advertising is a mode of hegemonic expression as pointed out by Antonio Gramsci who sought to identify the relationship between the infrastructure and the superstructure to explain how mode of production and diffusion of the messages of ideology could be formative of socialisation. Advertising production and dissemination are seen as utilities within the determinant cultural milieu of the capitalistic superstructure, hegemonically advocating through both image and text, the consensus of consumption required of its present and future social actors.<sup>4</sup>

Through a study of advertisements in Bengal during the Great Depression this thesis is going to attempt to understand the practice of advertising and how it creates 'the commodity image'<sup>5</sup> in order to create consent for a product.

Thus this thesis is going to show how during the Great Depression the favourable consumer was pursued through advertisements thereby resulting not only in the production of images but also creating consumers. There is a need to historicise it since in the same time that is in the early 20th century the advertising milieu would not be the same in Europe on the one hand and the colonies on

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<sup>3</sup> Edward S. Herman and Naom Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent, The Political economy of the Mass Media*, Pantheon Books New York

<sup>4</sup> Victor J. Viser, *Geist for Sale: A Neoconsciousness Turn Through Advertising in Contemporary Consumer Culture*, Source: *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (March 1999)

<sup>5</sup> The term 'commodity image' has been used by William Mazzarella, in his book *Shovelling smoke: advertising and globalization in contemporary India*, (Duke University Press, 2003) in order to understand the practice of 'globalizing consumerism', or 'the assembly ... of a complex ideology of global consumerism' which he believes can be best understood too through seeing adverts themselves or 'the commodity image' as something which advertising professionals are in the business of selling to their corporate clients as much as to the consuming public.

the other hand. Thus to bring out the importance of the historical conjuncture in nuancing our understanding of the advertising scenario under capitalism this thesis eats in two ways : First, it brings in the specifics of colonial Bengal and second it focuses on a period mainly a decade that is the 1930s and on a particular global impulse with local ramifications that is the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The Great Depression(1929-33) made purchasing power to plummet sometimes making it difficult for manufacturers to sell their products. Thus there was a new concern of companies both foreign and indigenous as well as. Advertising agencies about how to come out of the bottleneck created by the Great Depression by aggressively advertising.This could not have left this world of advertisement unchanged. Therefore this thesis argues Great Depression had Its own specific role in transforming the role of advertisements in colonial Bengal but of course in a way specific to the immediate historical context, economic and cultural. This is also deeply implicated in the way in which manufacturers of consumer products experienced the fall in profits fall in sales and fall in profits is equally implicated in the way in which the elite including the middle class in the present context of colonial Bengal as the target consumers of advertisement and how they were economically affected. However it is important to remember that the change in the advertisement scenario in Bengal was not specific to. The 1930s but was a continuous process especially when one looks at the boom in advertising in the 1920s, however the Great Depression created a bottleneck that compelled the advertisers to take up innovative ways to come out of it, thus marking a watershed in the history of advertising in Bengal.



## **Methodology**

This study combines the historical methods of deconstruction of visual representation and archival work. It has been already mentioned how this thesis theorises advertisements as tools of image production. The archival work for the colonial experience of Bengal as a cultural space has been done in the State Archive of West Bengal, Kolkata. I have also gathered newspaper and periodical advertisements from various libraries especially, National Library of India, Sahitya Parishad Library for old Bengali newspapers and periodicals and the library of the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences. Deconstruction of literary material and visual presentations of advertisements which I have used as a method becomes quite central to this thesis.

## **Pre-existing Literature**

The study requires us to engage with certain conceptual and historical issues that is essentially related to the study of advertisements and economic history. I have drawn upon the works of some seminal historians to conceptualise my thesis. The first among them is Dietmar Rothermund . Rothermund in his book *India in the great depression, 1929-1939* has mainly studied three trends which he argues were originally independent of each other but then fell into a pattern which profoundly influenced the future course of Indian history. These three trends were, firstly, the worldwide decline of agricultural prices, an area which Rothermund further explores in his book 'The Global Impact of the Great Depression' where he describes the Depression-era experience of the Third World peasantry, a group that has been largely ignored in the Depression literature. Further, he develops a fairly complex argument to explain why peasants suffered throughout the region, but more in some countries than others. (World prices of various agricultural goods fell during the interwar period; first as supply grew faster than demand, then as demand fell in the 1930s

(aided by protectionism). Rothermund argues that these price declines had a spillover effect on the action of international traders; in any case the price of rice and cotton collapsed as well despite much less evidence of overproduction. Yet such price declines alone could only hurt peasants to the extent that they relied on foreign sales. Peasants suffered even more because of the worldwide contraction of credit.)<sup>6</sup> Secondly, British financial policy in India and lastly, the Indian freedom movement and the development of the social base of the National Congress.

Claude Markovits in his book *Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs: Indian Business in the Colonial Era* has dealt with three main aspects of the history of Indian business: The relationship between business and politics, the position of merchants and businessmen in the economy and society of late colonial India, and how particular merchant networks extended the range of their operations to the entire subcontinent and the wider world. Another book by the same author, 'Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39: The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party'

Has helped in understanding the response of India's most important indigenous businessmen to the growth of political nationalism in the 1930s which was a critical decade in Indian politics.

Douglas E Haynes, in his book *Towards a History of Consumerism in Colonial South Asia* talks about the history of consumption practices in colonial India, although his work is mostly concentrated in Western India.

The thesis also resonates the view of William Mazzarella in 'Shovelling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India' where he presents us with what he calls 'an ethnographic

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<sup>6</sup> Dietmar Rothermund, *The Global Impact of the Great Depression* Dietmar Rothermund, Routledge, London, Book Review by Rick Szostak, in *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Dec., 1997), pp. 984

study of globalizing consumerism.<sup>7</sup>The practice of 'globalizing consumerism', or 'the assembly ... of a complex ideology of global consumerism',<sup>8</sup> is, according to Mazzarella, best understood through seeing adverts themselves or 'the commodity image' as something which advertising professionals are in the business of selling to their corporate clients as much as to the consuming public. Mazzarella's exposition of the commodity image is directed in part against what he sees as the 'totalization narrative', present equally in marketing, Marxian, and structuralist literature, which sees both commodification and the production of images (whether the commodity image or otherwise) as entailing 'the subsumption of concrete particulars to abstract universals.'<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, originality is a vain and dangerous claim to make in a field that has attracted as much attention as Indian economy and advertisements. However it might be possible to claim that so far there has been no sustained attempt to examine how advertising in colonial Bengal responded to the economic crisis during the Great Depression and in turn was shaped by it.

## **Overview of the Chapters**

The different historical concerns of this study has been organised through three chapters along with an Introduction and a Conclusion. Following this introduction, Chapter 1 aims at understanding the impact of the Great Depression at the global and the local scales. It talks about the global ramifications of the Great Depression and proceeds to to discuss why India was affected by the Great Depression and argues it was essentially because India as a British colony during this time was integrated with the Global economy. This chapter talks about the financial link between India

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Pp.1

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.,Pp. 12

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Pp. 37

and Britain and extensively discusses the problems that resulted due to credit contraction which hastened the decline of agricultural prices was aggravated in India by a deflationary policy of the British-Indian government. The chapter also talks about India's sterling obligations or the home charges and the jeopardisation of both revenue and remittance. The chapter also talks about the political alignments of businessmen that were subject to very rapid shifts being linked to wide fluctuations in the economic situation during this period and touches upon the response of the business class to the political situation during this period as they were drawn into taking a closer interest because economic and politics of swadeshi were now being defined in more Gandhian terms. The chapter then focuses on the impacts of the Great Depression on consumers and their purchasing powers. This section of the chapter argues that the purchasing power of consumers plummeted during this period because of the widespread unemployment caused due to the Great Depression. The chapter talks about the burgeoning middle class who were becoming the main target consumers during these years as the British officers and civil servants as well as the well-off Indian urban classes were largely unaffected by the Great Depression.

As the concern of this thesis is to link depression with the world of advertisements with India and Bengal in particular the second chapter of this thesis looks at the pre-existing advertisement scenario in Bengal. It starts with the definitional developments of Advertising in India and moves on to talk about the various disseminating organs of advertisements such as the almanac(panjika), newspapers and periodicals. The chapter then talks about typography, technique and skill where it essentially traces the development in printing technology in Bengal over the years and the basic differences in typography in English and Bengali. Finally the chapter talks about various advertising agencies both foreign like J.Walter Thompson and indigenous like B.Duttaram and Sons that played a pivotal role in innovating advertisements in Bengal. The chapter touches upon how the people coming into work in these advertising agencies like Annada Munshi who joined

D.J.Keymar,Calcutta in 1935 were involved with the art in industry movement. This chapter thus argues how the emergence of a consumer-oriented , brand name capitalism during the interwar years which also included the Great Depression was associated with a reorientation of the subcontinent's place in the larger international economy.<sup>10</sup>

The third and the final chapter of this thesis deals with the deconstruction of literary material and visual presentations of advertisements published in *The Statesman*, *The Times of India* and *The Mussalman* in English and *Prabasi*, *Jugantar*, *Swadeshi Bazar Patrika*, *Bharotborsho* and *Arani* in Bengali. The chapter is divided into several themes. It looks at the different approaches undertaken by foreign and swadeshi companies to sell their products in the depression market. It looks at the modes of image production and politics of representation in advertisement that were creating consumers simultaneously while creating advertisements specially targeted towards the middle class consumer. This chapter extensively deconstructs advertisements of the financial sectors such as advertisement of banks, loan companies and insurance companies followed by the various dynamics in the advertisements of products such as tea, textiles tonics and beauty products. This chapter seeks answer to how the times of the Great Depression are reflected in advertisements and how advertisements are shaped by the Great Depression and in order to do so the crucial question to which this chapter answers is who were the target audience and how were they affected? Thus this chapter studies the advertisements of this period from different perspectives in order to deconstruct both its texts and what it represents visually. It studies advertisements as published in the vernacular (Bengali) print media in contrast with those published in the English newspapers and periodicals. It also studies them as advertisements produced by the multi national corporations, the global manufacturers as opposed to the ones given by local producers. The chapter also studies the

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<sup>10</sup> Douglas Haynes, *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, pp. 72

advertisements that bore the undertones nationalist campaigns along with foreign commodities thus trying to encompass a wider perspective. This is because a fascinating milieu happened during this period in the advertising industry as a result of economic conditions and socio-political factors and led to the production of several fascinating advertisements marking the transition period in the world of Indian advertising that lay the foundation of it for the coming decades. To sum up, the final chapter views the advertisements from majorly three perspectives-who gave the advertisements, who were the target audience of the advertisements and thirdly what was the modes of image production via these advertisements.

Together, the three main chapters of this thesis contributes to the study of the impact of the great depression on advertisements in periodicals and newspapers in Bengal in the period between 1929 to 1940.

# CHAPTER 1

## UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION-AT THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL SCALES

With the capitalist world economy taking a new turn towards what is often called new imperialism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, India as a British colony came to be closely integrated with the capitalist world economy. Consequently, India also became vulnerable to the crisis that capitalism's a systemic peculiarly prone to. The Great Depression of the 1930s was a major instance of such a crisis. And its impact was global and deep. As the present thesis tries to study the inter-relationship between the Great Depression as a phenomenon and the transformation in the nature of advertisements in Bengal, this chapter studies the Great Depression as an economic phenomenon.

### **The Global Ramifications of The Great Depression**

The Great Depression, the worldwide economic collapse that began in 1929 and ended only well after the outbreak of World War II a decade later, remains a topic of widespread fascination. There are several reasons for such continuing interest. Among them is the fact that the experience was seared into the lives, memories, and outlooks of an entire generation, coloring its members' views of their subsequent experiences. Another reason for the intense interest in the Depression is that it seemed to contradict the expectations of most Americans and their experiences of relative prosperity throughout most of the time since. Then there is the era's defiance of the modern trend toward individualism and the identification of personal well-being with material consumption. Those who object to the modern rush toward ever greater selfishness and self-indulgence are drawn to the alternate visions of co-operation and rejection of consumerism evident in the Great

Depression.<sup>11</sup> It is this identification of personal well being with material consumption that we are concerned with however it become imperative to talk about the history of the Great Depression as a global phenomenon and most importantly India during this period before we delve into it. The Great Depression was the worst domestic crisis the United States faced in the twentieth century and the second worst, after the Civil War, in American history. However, it was by no means confined to the United States. Rather, the economic collapse became a global phenomenon. The worldwide ramifications of the Depression constitute another major reason for contemporary interest in the era. As its role in the appeal of dictatorship and controlled economies indicates, the Great Depression severely tested both democratic political institutions and market-based economies.<sup>12</sup> The Depression was an incredibly dramatic episode—an era of stock market crashes, bread lines, bank runs, and wild currency speculation, with the storm clouds of war gathering ominously in the background all the while. Fascinating, and often tragic, characters abound during this period, from hapless policymakers trying to make sense of events for which their experience had not prepared them to ordinary people coping heroically with the effects of the economic catastrophe.<sup>13</sup>

The Wall Street collapse of September–October 1929 and the Great Depression which followed it were among the most important events of the twentieth century. They made the Second World War possible, though not inevitable. The widespread belief among economists who have studied the Great Depression is that the cause of the initial downturn in the United States was the tight monetary policy that the Federal Reserve began in early 1928. This policy was carried out largely for one reason: to stem the rapid advance in stock prices. Officials at the Federal Reserve were convinced that a speculative frenzy was taking place on Wall Street, and they were especially

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<sup>11</sup> Encyclopedia of The Great Depression, Volume 1 , A-K, Editor-in-Chief, Robert S. McElvaine, MacMillan Reference USA, pp.9

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp.10

<sup>13</sup> Bernanke Ben, Essays on The Great Depression, Princeton University Press, PP. 7



concerned about member banks' role in providing the fuel by lending for stock market speculation. From January 1928 to May 1929 the Federal Reserve took a series of actions designed to tighten credit conditions. They sold \$405 million worth of government securities, raised the discount rate in three stages from 3.5 percent to 5.0 percent, raised the buying rate on bankers' acceptances, and engaged in moral suasion in which they jawboned member banks to stop making speculative securities loans. It was indeed a tight monetary policy. In terms of magnitudes consciously controlled by the Fed, it would be difficult to design a more contractionary policy than that initiated in January 1928; the Fed had virtually no more securities to sell nor balances of acceptances to be reduced. What potentially could have been an extremely contractionary policy turned out, in fact, to be only mildly contractionary. If bank borrowing from the Federal Reserve had remained unchanged, the monetary base would have fallen by \$889 million, or 12.0 percent of its total, over just the seven-month period from December 1927 to July 1928. This decline would have occurred because of a gold outflow, the sale of u.s. government securities by the Federal Reserve, and reduction of bills of acceptances held by the Federal Reserve. Yet the monetary base declined by only 1.2 percent during 1928, in large part because there was an enormous increase in member bank borrowing from the Federal Reserve. This borrowing alone offset more than half of the contraction in the base caused by the other factors. Banks were eager to borrow from the Federal Reserve because they could borrow at 5.0 percent, the discount rate at the time, and then turn around and lend out the funds at rates even higher. Even though the discount rate had been increased from 3.5 percent to 5.0 percent, money market interest rates had gone up even more. Money market rates had risen sharply for two reasons: rising demand for money associated with increased trading volume in the stock market and increased demand for credit for the purpose of purchasing stocks. The effects of the tight monetary policy and the rising demand for money had long term effects on the US Economy and consequently on the economy of the world. According to R. A. Gordon, residential construction had been falling since its peak in early 1928. Excess capacity

developed in the auto and tire industries by late 1928, and overall spending on consumer durables peaked in the first quarter of 1929. The index of industrial production peaked in the spring of 1929. According to the National Bureau of Economic Research, the peak in aggregate economic activity occurred in August 1929. Therefore, the Great Depression began in August 1929 when the economic growth slowdown turned into an actual decline in economic output.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the Great Depression that was born in the United States of America, where three factors, which were initially unrelated to each other, contributed to its sudden impact on the world economy: an overproduction of wheat, the incompetent management of the American credit system, and an uncontrolled stock market overwhelmed by a speculative frenzy. Great Britain and Portugal left the gold standard in 1931, and their currencies depreciated. Before World War I the international gold standard had maintained an automatic equilibrium in the world market, due to the powerful position of London, which controlled the flow of gold worldwide. After the war the United States emerged as the arbiter of the flow of gold, but instead of letting it flow, it hoarded it in the interest of internal price stability. In spite of this, there was a concerted effort, led by London, to restore the international gold standard.

### **The Great Depression and India: The Financial Link**

The Great Depression of the 1930s and the second world war, coming in quick succession greatly exacerbated the crisis in the British economy. As in the past, Britain once again turned to her colonies, principally India. British financial demands on India increased manifold since first world war. For example, Home Charges,<sup>45</sup> constituting a substantial part of the tribute, increased from

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<sup>14</sup> Refer to : Thomas Hall and David Ferguson ,The Start of the Great Depression, 1929–30,University of Michigan Press. (1998),Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.11061.9>,pp.64-70.

approximately 2 million Euros in 1913-14 to 32 million Euros in 1924-25. Military expenditure doubled from 5 million Euros to 10 million Euros and interest charges on external public debt increased from about 6 million Euros to 14.3 million Euros between 1913-14 and 1934-35.

With the onset of the Great Depression, the economic situation in India changed drastically. World prices, especially those of primary produce, plummeted and India's export earnings collapsed. With agricultural prices being so low, the government was unable to collect full revenue. Also, with the fall in export earnings, there was great difficulty in securing remittance to meet India's sterling obligations or the home charges. With both revenue and remittance in jeopardy, the colonial government was in the throes of a major financial crisis. Under continuous pressure from London, the Government of India sought to ease remittance by resorting to severe deflation, contracting currency repeatedly, causing havoc in the Indian economy, severely aggravating the negative consequences of the Depression.<sup>15</sup>

The world wide credit contraction which hastened the decline of agricultural prices was aggravated in India by a deflationary policy of the British-Indian government. The policy was aimed at maintaining the high exchange rate of the Rupee which the British refused to devalue in spite of constant Indian pressure. In chapter three where the impact of the Great Depression on the nature of advertisement and advertising would be examined the thesis would link this particular development to the chapter. The basic decisions on that policy had been made before the depression began when the Rupee was tied to the gold standard at a fixed exchange rate. In order to defend the exchange

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<sup>15</sup> See Aditya Mukherjee, "The Currency Question in Colonial India", *Yojana*, Vol 51, Special Issue, August 2007, Aditya Mukherjee, "The Depression Years: Indian Capitalists' Critique of British Monetary and Financial Policy in India, 1929-39" in Amiya Kumar Bagchi (ed.), *Money and Credit in Indian History: From Early Medieval Times, Tulika*, 2002 and *Imperialism, Nationalism...*, op cit, Chapters 3-4 on Finance and Monetary Policy 1926-39, for a detailed discussion of British policy and Indian response on this question. Much of the advantage that Indian industry got due to the rise in tariffs in this period was smothered by the deflationary fiscal and monetary policy of the government. See, A K Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900-39*, Cambridge, 1972, p.66

rate against the challenge of the depression the Government of India resorted to a severe currency contraction. The circulating paper currency which amounted to about Rs. 185 crores in the years before 1929 was considerably reduced after October 1929 until it was down to Rs. 148 crores in September 1931.<sup>16</sup>

Great Britain returned to the international gold standard at the prewar parity in 1925 and had to abandon it again in 1931. A total breakdown of the remittance mechanism was averted by the massive export of gold from India that the government encouraged in this period. The gold exports were crucial in compensating for the drastic drop in India's export surplus on commodity transactions. Between 1931-32 and 1938-39, on an average, more than half (about 55%) of the total visible (positive) balance of trade (i.e., balance of transactions in merchandise and treasure) was met through the net exports of treasure, with the exports of gold increasing sharply in years when the commodity balance of trade was particularly low. For example, in 1932-33, gold exports constituted about 95% of the total visible positive balance of trade.<sup>67</sup> Clearly, remittance had to be maintained at all costs, if the export surplus in commodities (necessary to convert the rupee revenues into remittance) fell short it was made up through export of gold. British India was completely at the mercy of the currency policy made by the secretary of state for India in London. India's silver currency had served its colonial rulers very well, because it absorbed a large amount of the silver that became redundant in Europe when most countries demonetized it and shifted to the gold standard. But the colonial government of India collected taxes in depreciating silver while it had to pay its "home charges" (such as debt service) in gold. When it could not make both ends meet any longer, the Indian mints were closed to the free coinage of silver in 1893. The silver rupee became a token currency that was managed by the secretary of state. In 1927 a currency act was passed that pegged the rupee to the gold standard at a rate above the prewar parity. This feat had been

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<sup>16</sup> Dietmar Rothmund, *An Economic History of India\_ From Pre-Colonial Times to 1991* (1993), pp. 121

accomplished by a slow and steady deflation. Used silver coins were not replaced by new ones but melted down. The silver was quietly sold abroad by the British. When the Depression hit India, the exchange rate of the overvalued rupee was defended by further deflationary measures. This finally led to an enormous outflow of “distress gold” (mostly gold coins and ornaments) that indebted peasants turned over to the moneylenders. Since the respective colonial governments did not impose gold export embargoes, this gold flowed freely to London and other centers. This export filled the gap caused by the decline of the value of commodity exports and thus cured India’s balance of payments problem with a vengeance.<sup>17</sup> Thus India remained a constant source of capital to Britain through remittances, during a period when Britain just flitted from one crisis to the other (especially the two world wars and the Depression), that the most gross use of imperial authority was made to turn the instruments of economic policy in her favour and against Indian interest.<sup>18</sup>

Moritz Julius Bonn (1873–1965), the scholar who coined the term ‘decolonization’ in the 1930s , witnessed the years of The Great Depression and criticized the practice of exchange manipulations and protectionism as ‘Vertical colonialism’ which meant the penetration of subject societies by colonial powers. The slump in commodity prices caused by the Great Depression reduced the value of colonial possessions, but since most colonies were indebted to their European masters, imperial control was tightened so as to save the creditors from bankruptcy. Great Britain was forced off the gold standard in 1931, but the flow of gold from the indebted periphery to the centre then supported the newly created Sterling Area. It was backed up by ‘Imperial Preference’, a tariff wall protecting the British empire. This greatly annoyed the USA which had always pursued an ‘Open Door’ policy.

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<sup>17</sup> Refer to, Encyclopedia of The Great Depression, Volume 1 , A-K, Editor-in-Chief, Robert S. McElvaine, MacMillan Reference USA, pp.63, 129-130

<sup>18</sup> Aditya Mukherjee, How Colonial India Made Modern Britain, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 45, No. 50 (DECEMBER 11-17, 2010), Published by: Economic and Political Weekly, Pp. 9

American anti- colonialism, which became more assertive under President Roosevelt, owed much to this development.

The economic policy of the imperial powers changed under the impact of the new challenges which they had to meet. Economic liberalism was abandoned step by step, while protectionism emerged as a reaction to the depression. State intervention was introduced to meet the need of managing the economy during the Second World War. While the apparatus of colonial rule had been of modest dimensions before the war, it was far more formidable by the end of the conflict. The concept of economic planning had emerged during the war and then became a characteristic feature of post-war imperialism.<sup>19</sup>

When the impact of the Great Depression hit India in the second half of 1930, the deflationary effect of the overvalued currency further precipitated the already dramatic fall in prices. When the British abandoned the gold standard and let the pound sterling float in September 1931, the Finance Member of the Government of India recommended that the rupee should be permitted to float, too. The Secretary of State prohibited that as he feared a flight from the rupee. India remained wedded to its high exchange rate which could be easily maintained as a flood of gold poured out of India, providing it with an admirable balance of payments. This was rightly called ‘distress gold’, because it was sold by innumerable peasants who had to pay land revenue and interest on their debts at the same old rates while their income had been severely reduced by the fall in prices.<sup>20</sup> Since the depression had led to a dramatic fall in prices of colonial products, whereas the maintenance of colonial rule proved to be a financial burden, decolonisation seemed to be inevitable. But the colonial rulers were also creditors and wanted to keep their debtors under control. Indian

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<sup>19</sup> Refer to, Dietmar Rothermund, *Routledge companion to decolonization* , Routledge, 2000, pp. 14, 31, 32

<sup>20</sup> Hermann Kulke, Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India*, Routledge, 2004, pp. 361

nationalists proclaimed that India should refuse to acknowledge the 'national debt' with which the British had saddled their country. Such proclamations scared the creditors who defended their control so as not to be driven into bankruptcy by their debtors. Therefore, colonial rule became more desperate and high-handed at the time when it was approaching its end. On the other hand, the Indian freedom movement gained added momentum due to its association with economic nationalism.<sup>21</sup>

Opportunities for market-based growth in agriculture were always limited, and probably only existed in ecologically balanced areas growing crops for which there was a substantial export demand. For export crops this stimulus virtually came to an end with the onset of the Great Depression that hit the Indian rural economy in the late 1920s. The collapse of international demand for primary products after 1929 weakened the Indian rural economy considerably and disrupted the capital and labour markets based around export-led production that had grown up since 1900.<sup>22</sup>The impact of the Great Depression not only affected the peasantry but also Indian industry and foreign trade. The Indian textile industry clamoured for protective tariffs and the Government of India actually increased customs duties on textiles in several steps up to 75 per cent in 1933. The British textile industry feared that the Indian market would be lost to it and campaigned for 'imperial preference' that is preferential tariffs for British goods at generous rates. The export of gold from India amounted to about 3 billion rupees in the period from 1931 to 1936. India's creditworthiness increased very much owing to this and, as interest rates were reduced at the same time, the British Indian government could have easily raised the money for a large-scale development programme.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 305

<sup>22</sup> B.R. Tomlinson, Peasant, Labour and Colonial Capital, Rural Bengal Since 1770, in *The New Cambridge History of India, The Economy of Modern India, 1860-1970*, pp. 139, Cambridge University Press

Schuster recommended this, but he was not permitted to go ahead with such a programme. Thus India gained nothing from this creditworthiness.<sup>23</sup>

This immunity that indigenous textile industries sought from competition from British made textiles is reflected in advertising pertaining to textiles as seen in the third chapter such as in advertisements of Mohini and Basanti Cotton Mills.

Rajat Kanta Ray has pointed out that the beginnings of the national economy that emerged in free India in 1947 can be detected none too obscurely in the conflict growing out of this invasion during and after the First World War, and through the troubled events of the 1930s and the Second World War.<sup>24</sup> These years have emerged from recent historical writings as the period when the nascent Indian capitalist class created wider commercial, financial and industrial networks spanning the subcontinent, a process backed by the closer integration of the indigenous produce and credit markets across the land. Indian bankers and merchants, from whose ranks many of the new industrialists emerged, added a corporate industrial and business component to their earlier investments, carrying on at the same time their involvement in the tightly intermeshed inland exchanges they had meanwhile concentrated in their hands. By a common historical consensus explaining these developments, the First World War, the Great Depression and the Second World War have been identified as successive shocks that profoundly shook the colonial business structure. A common historical consensus explaining these developments, the First World War, the Great Depression and

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<sup>23</sup> Dietmar Rothermund, *An Economic History of India\_ From Pre-Colonial Times to 1991* (1993), pp. 111

<sup>24</sup> Rajat Kanta Ray, *The Bazaar: Changing Structural Characteristics of the Indigenous Section of the Indian Economy Before and After the Great Depression*, pp.13



the Second World War have been identified as successive shocks that profoundly shook the colonial business structure.<sup>25</sup>

At this juncture, it is important to emphasise that the , impact of the great depression on the Indian economy and society was not unilinear. Although the world Depression severely affected the Indian economy as a whole In those industrial sectors where certain new industries did not have any significant British competition the great depression proved to be a favourable time precisely because whatever little competition there was from Britain and elsewhere in the western world was considerably minimised by the Great Depression.

### **Impacts on Consumers and Their Purchasing Powers**

If one looks at the import statistics of India during this period, it will show an interesting feature, which was very characteristic of the pattern of consumption : 155 million rupees worth of alcoholic beverage, were imported from 1930 to 1938—almost as much as the amount invested in new cotton textile machinery. This explains the lack of dearth in advertising of expensive alcoholic beverages in the Statesman throughout the Depression Years as shall be shown in the third chapter of this thesis. These beverages were certainly not consumed by the peasantry but by British officers and civil servants as well as the well-off Indian urban classes: these remained well off during the Depression too. The high exchange rate made imports cheap, the low agrarian prices meant cheap food and low wages for domestic servants. Thus, urban classes and rural masses had an altogether

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<sup>25</sup> Amiya Kumar Bagchi, *Private Investment in India 1900-1939* (Cambridge, 1972); Rajat K. Ray, *Industrialization in India: Growth and Conflict in the Private Corporate Sector 1914-1947* (New Delhi, 1979); B.R. Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj 1914-1947* (London, 1979); Claude Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39: The Indigenous Capitalist and the Rise of the Congress Party* (Cambridge, 1985); and Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism in India* (Delhi, 1979).

different experience of the years of the Great Depression.<sup>26</sup> However while Rothermund points out how the British officers and civil servants as well as the well-off Indian urban classes were largely unaffected by the Great Depression and they retained substantial purchasing power, he does not talk about the burgeoning middle class who were becoming the main target consumers during these years as we shall see how more and more advertisements were being directed towards the middle class consumer especially in the vernacular.

One of the main products that was directed towards the middle class through advertisements during this time was tea. Prices and purchasing power were falling in the world market in the first half of the 1930s. From traded goods, the depression spread to non-traded ones. Paradoxically, the recession followed a buoyant 1920s when many industries were in expansion, witnessed new entry and new investment commitments. The problem that the manufacturers of the were to face as the Great Depression unfolded was not just a slow-down in demand, but also continued or planned expansion in supply. Since the market demand and supply were not necessarily visible to individual firms in the industry, there could in such a case be a tendency to over-produce, until the inevitable and ruinous price-crash happened, as it did in a number of goods. In India, the two major exportables, tea and jute, were both subject to such a prospect.<sup>27</sup> over produce

Bishnupriya Gupta has talked about the International Tea Cartel During the Great Depression where she has cited The Empire tea producers statement in the Reports of the General Committee Indian Tea Association, Calcutta which states :

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<sup>26</sup> Claude Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics*, Cambridge University pRESS, 1931-39

<sup>27</sup> Tirthankar Roy, *The Depression and Industrial Strategy*, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 32, No. 25 (Jun. 21-27, 1997), p. 1468

*‘Whilst the present world trade under Depression has affected markets outside the UK, the home market-which is the principal market of the world for tea-is being seriously threatened by the alarming strides made in the recent years in the importation of foreign grown teas. The prospects of the industry during the years 1923 to 1928 encouraged the planting of considerable areas of new tea in Java and Sumatra, the produce of which is coming into the market in increasing quantities. It is essential a) to create a demand for Empire tea and b) to obtain protection for such teas in the home market.... The preference on Empire tea which existed from 1919 to 1929 constituted a certain protection in this market, but with the removal of all duty (by the last conservative chancellor in a futile effort to catch votes), the United Kingdom was thrown open to free import of all teas.’<sup>28</sup>*

How keenly and how nervously they were registering that demand was falling, one should not be surprised therefore to find them proposing in the same breath a boost in advertising or a revamped investment in advertising if only to shore up demand for their product.

The above statement talks about the need to create a demand for the tea brand in the market in the years following 1929, that is the years during the Depression. The following table shows that there was a drastic decrease in profit in tea during this period. The profits ran into negative in the year 1931 and 1932. On the other hand during this period there were a significant number of advertisements of tea in newspapers across the vernacular and English newspapers. This can only mean one thing; that these advertisements put up by the tea companies were targeted to create a market and a consumer base among the middle class Indians (as shown in the third chapter) in the hope that they would somehow enable them to create a demand and thus find a way out of the bottleneck created by the Great Depression.

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<sup>28</sup> Indian Tea Association, Calcutta, Reports of the General Committee, as cited by Bishnupriya Gupta in *The International Tea Cartel during the Great Depression, 1929-1933*, *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Mar., 2001), pp. 144-159, Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Economic History Association

A tendency to align with the ideology of swadeshi was noticed among a certain section of the Indian businessmen during this period. Of course there was already a segment of swadeshi enterprise initiated by nationalists minded youths in the trail of the anti partition agitation in Bengal. However in this instance we are referring to Indian industrialists of the interwar period who were drawn from among the Marwaris and Parsis who now found it congenial for their business and products to appeal to the consumer interest if any in swadeshi.

In the 1930s they were drawn into taking a closer interest because economic and politics of swadeshi now been defined in more Gandhian terms. developments during this Time affected their interests more directly. During the 1930s, the political alignments of businessmen were subject to very rapid shifts , linked to wide fluctuations in the economic situation. <sup>29</sup>Thus a detailed study of the economic environment of the 1930s is therefore necessary to an understanding of business politics and innovations. urban classes and rural masses had an altogether different experience of the years of the Great Depression. The urban classes had no particular reason for political dissatisfaction at that time and this is why the social base of Indian politics shifted to the rural areas in the 1930s— this was of major importance for the future course of events.

Thus this was an interim period for India who along with the struggle for freedom had to struggle with overcoming its economic exploitations as every industry starting from textile to jute to agriculture was affected severely due to the Great Depression of the 1930s. It was because India during this time was had now come to be very closely integrated with the global economy as the colony of the British government . It was also a period in India when establishment and marketing

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<sup>29</sup>Rade Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39: The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party*. Vol. 33. Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp.27

of indigenous goods were given utmost attention by the indigenous businessmen starting from this period along with the struggle for independence. Advertisements played a major role to aid the colonised nation in its pursuit of regaining its economic foothold in its own land. It is important to remember that India's economic history should be read as an ever evolving process. The main emphasis of this thesis is on the first half of the twentieth century, which was punctuated by two world wars where the Great Depression in the intervening period, severely affected the Indian economy between the 1930 and 1933 while the post -1933 recovery had only a limited impact on India. Dietmar Rothermund who is an expert on Indian economy specifically during this period writes India overcame the aftermath of the Great Depression only due to the advent of the Second World War. This was because just like the First World War the second one also meant a great deal of war profits to India. <sup>30</sup>The following ensuing chapters shall thus trace how advertisements were used by the business houses both small and big, foreign and indigenous, as a multifaceted tool to come out of this bottle-neck created by the Great Depression in the Indian economy.

Global phenomenons jolted world capitalist economy where the Great Depression emerged as a major crisis and how India felt the impact has been the main focus of this chapter. However since our concern is to link depression with the world of advertisements with India and Bengal in particular the ensuing chapter would utilise its space to help situate the impact of the great depression on advertising within its appropriate historic context. In order to do that the ensuing chapter will try to take a look at the pre existing advertising scenario in Bengal.

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<sup>30</sup> Dietmar Rothermund, *Economic History of India: From Pre-Colonial Times to 1991*, pp. 72

## CHAPTER 2

### EARLY COLONIAL ADVERTISING : AGENCIES BEHIND ADVERTISING, ADVERTISING AGENCIES

The aim of this thesis is to trace whether the Great Depression had brought in any change in the world of advertising in colonial Bengal. This thesis aims to do that through a study of the print media. In order to be able to assess the way in which and the extent to which the Great Depression transformed advertisements in Bengal, one has to ask whether in the preceding period the world of advertisement was static? This chapter will demonstrate the world of advertising was not static in the preceding period, that there were continuity in the period, yet, in the world of advertising there were changes initiating nonetheless.

#### Definitional Developments

The history of advertising in India is almost as old as the history of modern print media in the country. James Augustus Hickey, a Britisher, published the first newspaper of India on January 29 1780, by the name Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser. However the title of the newspaper did not refer to advertising in its modern sense, though it carried a few advertisement in its first issue. Taking their models from the journals of London, these papers were full of classified advertising - simple messages typeset by the newspapers and 'classified' into different categories for reader's ease of reference and usually printed across the full front page.<sup>31</sup> . It used the verb "to advertise" in its archaic sense of "to inform". Other newspapers published during the same decade also carried a few advertisements. Although the publicity attending consumer goods has reached

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<sup>31</sup> A. Alikhan (1999): "A Century of Indian Advertising". Advertising Brief, December 30th, 1999,33-47

stupendous levels today, it tends to be treated , especially by professional publicists as if it were on a continuum with the cries of street vendors and fairground barkers selling their wares. The implication is of a practice that has a timeless quality, and whose elaboration via markets and technology is secondary to its fundamentally human nature. Thus one chronicler of the advertising industry , Subrata Banerjee, writes without explanation : ‘We must accept the contention that advertising is as old as human civilisation.’<sup>32</sup>

Variations in typography, incorporation of illustrations and decorative motifs were a later upgradation in newspaper advertisements when it was realised that to the reader a picture of an article actually being used has a strong suggestive value. Then onwards more emphasis was laid on visual composition. Advertisements were not only seen in newspapers but also periodicals and almanacs. Advertisements that appeared in the almanacs do not form a part of this thesis due to logistical constraints but deserves to be talked about, even if briefly because almanacs form a significant part of the advertisement culture in Bengal in its early phase.

### **The Disseminating Organs of Advertisements**

The almanac(*panjika*) secured a place in the Bengali households from the early 19th century. It was placed in the shrine and worshipped with the family Gods ,and became a standard rule-book in Bengali families who used it as a supreme guide, especially after it moved from handwritten manuscripts to the printed word. Almanacs began with Sanskrit sermons printed in the Bengali scripts and only pandits could decipher them. And here the interest of the pandit and the publishers coincided. As Hara-Parvati Sangbad (The Story of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati) states : “By

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<sup>32</sup>Subrata Banerjee, “Advertising in India: Evolution and Technique,” in Mass Media in India 1980-81 ,pp.23-32

listening to the reading of almanac, one would earn as much virtue as by bathing in the Ganges in a holy place.”So buying a single copy of the almanac ensured a whole year’s virtue.

By the late 19th century traders realised that almanac was one of the best mediums of reaching people’s doorsteps with with advertisements of commercial goods. Advertisements for all kinds of goods and services found their place here- ayurvedic medicine and doctors, seance performers, hair oil and perfume, magic lanterns, lithograph prints by Ravi Varma, amulets, medicines to make the old young, railway fares and time-tables, etc. Such advertisements lured the readers in two ways: with seductive language and dazzling pictures. While pictures had been printed in the almanacs since the beginning (with prints made by metal etching , ornamental borders made in the local presses and designs imported from abroad on the cover of the almanacs), it took several decades for advertising images to find their way into the almanac.

When almanacs started publishing advertisements ,everyone from petty traders to big trading houses rushed to exploit the opportunities of this medium. Thereby a huge demand for artists, trained and untrained was created. The reason why mentioning this is important is to point out that the process of advertising in Bengal was a continuously evolving one that found its expressions through various mediums and different approaches which was always indicative of the fact that changes in the economy had played one of the most vital roles in how the advertising industry developed in colonial India.

With the advent of the British rule, Bengal witnessed significant changes in material culture. The growth of consumerism, along with commodification of modern life curated advertisement as an inevitable part of its promotional agenda from 1860 onwards. Advertisement was seen as a medium, to establish a relationship between the consumer and the goods or materials services they offer.<sup>33</sup> Thus what is also evident from this is that for the advertisers it was the readership that mattered the most because the readers were the consumers.

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<sup>33</sup> Liz Mc Fall, Advertising : A Cultural Economy (SAGE Publications Its., 2004), pp. 37-45



An article that came out in 'The Statesman' of August 20, 1905 confirms that the English language newspapers were aware of the indispensability of advertisements. It states that :

*“Unquestionably, advertisement has had a most potent influence for good in the development of journalism. Contrast the issue of any daily newspaper of fifty years ago with the issue to-day. Half a century ago, because of few advertisements it had little news. Now it supplies news from all quarters of the world because it has an abundance of advertisements. The newspaper reading public may, therefore contemplate the advance of the advertiser with satisfaction, for it means besides the advantage of a convenient handbook of business a steadily improving news service and more brilliant contributions for their penny or half-penny.”<sup>34</sup>*

Newspaper acted as an appropriate platform for advertisers to print their advertisements, the major impetus behind it was papers receiving colonial patronage were allowed to use the official postal system either free or at a subsidised rate with the presidency. This enabled advertisers a superior circulation within the literate segment of the society. But at the same time it also profited the owners of newspapers since they earned revenue from advertisements published by the government.<sup>35</sup>

Robin Jeffrey writes before independence, nationalist newspapers, especially in Indian languages, often did not pursue ads. And advertising therefore went largely to the English-language press which before 1947 was often British-owned. Among the small community of advertisers and

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<sup>34</sup> Ranabir Ray Chaudhury Early Calcutta Advertisements 1875-1925, (Calcutta Nachiketa publications), pp. vii

<sup>35</sup> Arun Chaudhuri, Indian Advertising : 1780. To 1950 AD, Tata McGraw-Hill Education, pp. 1

advertising agencies, a consensus developed that only English language newspapers had readers with significant purchasing power.<sup>36</sup>

However it is not entirely true that Indian language newspapers did not pursue ads because advertisers thought English language newspaper readers had significant purchasing power. While the products that were advertised in the native language newspapers were often significantly different from those published in the English language newspapers, number of reasons can be attributed to why evolution of advertising in the Indian language newspapers was comparatively slow than the English language newspapers. One of the primary reasons for this was the development of printing technology. It cannot be denied that the evolution of advertisement goes hand in hand with the evolution of the printing press.

### **Typography, Technique and Skill**

In the last two decades of eighteenth century and turn of the nineteenth century, Calcutta welcomed the inception of commercialised printing mechanism. It triggered the commercial growth of publishing, which was utilised to produce multitudes of printed products.□ For the second half of the nineteenth century till the end, the circulation of Bengali newspapers had steady increase within urban, semi urban areas. During the last quarters on an average it stood around six to seven thousand. In the earlier decades the circulation failed to cross the three digit number even. Among the available newspapers priced between 4 annas- 8 annas on a monthly basis, had the highest

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<sup>36</sup> Advertising and Indian-Language Newspapers: How Capitalism Supports (Certain) Cultures and (Some) States, 1947-96 Author(s): Robin Jeffrey Source: Pacific Affairs, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), pp. 57-84 Published by: Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2761228> Accessed: 19-03-2019 12:26 UTC

<sup>37</sup> Anindita Ghosh, Book History 6, pp.27-44

circulation.<sup>38</sup>Linguistically, India is the most complex country in the world: eighteen official languages, written in ten different scripts. In 1920, the Indian National Congress under Gandhi's leadership reorganized itself into provinces based on language, even though these did not correspond to the administrative divisions of British India. This innovation recognized the power of local languages to touch the minds and hearts of far larger numbers of people than English could ever reach, or, indeed, even Hindustani. Such developments greatly stimulated the growth of a nationalist press in regional languages. Of the twenty largest newspaper publishers in India in 1994, seven originated in this 1920-32 period of intense nationalist idealism.<sup>39</sup> Indian language newspapers act as both mirrors and prisms. As mirrors, they reflect regional concerns and idiosyncrasies back to the societies and the language-speakers they serve. As prisms, they refract those concerns and idiosyncrasies to an Indian nation and in turn interpret national and global issues to their regions.Changes in printing technology explains the rapid expansion of circulations in Indian language publications.Technology retarded the expansion of Indian language newspapers. While mechanical casting of type from hot metal first became available in Roman script in the 1880s, the Linotype Company developed such technology for Bengali, the first Indian language to get it, only in 1935. The technical difficulties imposed by the nature of Indian scripts, and the small market for such machines, meant that it was the mid-1970s before a Linotype hot-metal machine was made for a "small" language like Oriya (23 million speakers in 1981).The lack of mechanical typesetting slowed the composition of Indian language newspapers. A Linotype hot-metal machine set type about five times faster than someone setting type by hand. Thus IndiaN language newspapers had to have earlier deadlines than English-language newspapers. News was stale by the time a newspaper was moved fifty miles from the production centre. The potential to produce

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<sup>38</sup> Swapan Basu, *Bangla Patrikar Prachar Unish Shatake*, Gangchil, pp. 42

<sup>39</sup> *Hindustan Times* (English and Hindi), *Ananda Bazar Patrika* (Bengali and English), *AI* (Hindi), *Gujarat Samachar* (Gujarati), *Sandesh* (Gujarati), *Mathrubhumi* (Malayalam), *Sakal* (Marathi). This is measured on the basis of daily circulations.

attractive Indian-language newspapers was also limited. Manufacturers of printing equipment saw little profit in the development of equipment for Indian languages. Most languages made do with one or two long-existing typefaces because there was no incentive to improve them. But such "design by neglect" was costly. Because Indian scripts add components above and below the line, they take up more vertical space than Roman characters. Because they are more complex, they must also be larger to be legible. Indian-language newspapers got fewer words into a given space than English-language newspapers and therefore had either to use more newsprint or give less news. New technology in the form of offset printing and photocomposition of type transformed these conditions. The offset press arrived in India in the late 1960s. To become effective for Indian languages, however, it needed cheap, powerful personal computers equipped with software to compose Indian scripts. Software development that began in 1979 produced programs in Devanagari by the end of 1980, albeit thirty years after Roman-script software had been developed. Software for other Indian scripts followed in the early 1980s.<sup>40</sup>

As Stephen Baker in his book 'Advertising Layout and Art Direction' has pointed out that type matter is just as much part of an advertisement as is the illustration, in the beginning of the visual era of advertising advertisers had limited resources in Calcutta. The primary importance was stated to 'headline' of an advertisement which chiefly comprised of the name of any particular notice of services and company. Sometimes it simply reads advertisement or notice or in Bengali, 'bugyopti' . (fig) Here the headline was isolated from the rest of the copy of the advertisement in a number of ways . Firstly different sizes or type points were used to differentiate the headline from the given set of information. This particular point is an arbitrary unit of measurement for types. Secondly headlines were printed in bolder type popularly known as bold or black face type to emphasise the

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<sup>40</sup> Advertising and Indian-Language Newspapers: How Capitalism Supports (Certain) Cultures and (Some) States, 1947-96 Author(s): Robin Jeffrey Source: Pacific Affairs, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), pp. 57-84 Published by: Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2761228> Accessed: 19-03-2019 12:26 UTC

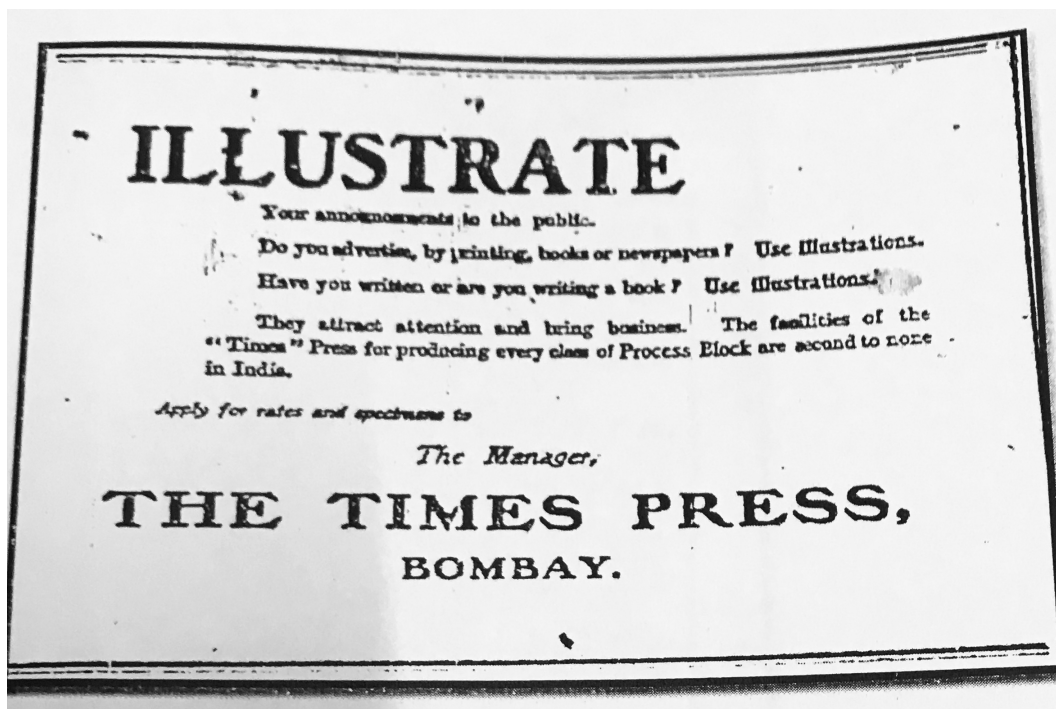
word or group of words. Thirdly long headlines were set in more than one line to make it more sensible and easier to read. Fourthly space was provided in between each letter of the headline commonly known as letter spacing. Since eye is not accustomed to jump from letters to letters for that letter spaced headline was designed to arrest reader's attention. Finally the entire headline was composed using capital letters. Combination of all these insertions became beneficial for their purpose. Besides, drop letter or drop cap was used in an effective way to seize the reader's attention by enlarging the initial letter of the first word in the text and dropping the letter two lines from the base line. Later frequently they started dropping the entire word from the first line all in capital letters. Moreover special attention was paid to line spacing as right amount of spacing between lines makes the text easier to read. Nevertheless apart from the first three features most of these were applicable for English types only as Bengali typefaces were still evolving during this period.<sup>41</sup> The word *Bigyapon* (Bengali advertisement) was printed at the top of every advertisement published but it came in a smaller typeface than was customary in the English papers which also printed the word Advertisement. At times the advertisements displayed stylised typography, which teaches us a lot about the importance of clarity of lines in forming the body of a typeface in any Indian language. Indian languages have alphabets that extend in all directions either because of the *matras* or because of the character of an alphabet as pointed out by Arun Chaudhuri.<sup>42</sup> It is indeed fascinating how despite not only economic crisis during the 1930s that is during the period of the Great Depression as well as technological backwardness the Indian newspapers during carried significant amount of advertisements and played distinctive role in India's social, economic and cultural transformation.

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<sup>41</sup> Stephen Baker, 'Advertising Layout and Art Direction' Tata McGrawHill, pp. 102

<sup>42</sup> Arun Chaudhuri, History of Early Indian Advertising, Tata McGraw-Hill Education, pp. 106

The limitations of typography prompted artists and the ad makers to venture out other possibilities. They realised even the moderately literate or illiterate section of the society can only be incorporated if the advertisement can convey the necessary information through a pictorial format. Not only just this segment pictures has the power to draw the attention of the reader even if s/he doesn't read a whole article. For Brewster and Palmer , an image is easily identifiable and decipherable because mind grasps them swiftly for that man used pictures to express ideas before he used letters.<sup>43</sup> In September 24, 1904 an advertisement appeared in 'THE TIMES OF INDIA' entitles 'ILLUSTRATE your announcement to the public,' which claimed that 'They attract attention and bring business.'



THE TIMES OF INDIA , SEPTEMBER 24, 1904

While the emphasis on advertisements was seen in The Statesman stated earlier in this chapter or Times of India was seen as early as in the first half of the 1900, it was only during the 1930s that

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<sup>43</sup> Brewster , Palmer abd Ingraham, *Introduction to Advertising*. The Minerva Group, Inc., 2001. pp. 187

such advertisements were seen in Bengali newspapers and periodicals such as the Swadeshi Bazar where an advertisement came out in the 1930 of a book titled 'Bigyapontawtto o Canvasing', that stated that it was inevitable to give advertisements for the progress of business in today's time however not many people have a clear idea about how to write advertisements or to publish them. Thus it was the first book to be published in the Bengali language.

নবম—বাংলার শব্দত...  
দশম—বিদেশে আমদানী রপ্তানি, আবর্ষ কৃষিক্ষেত্র, বাজার

## বিজ্ঞাপনতত্ত্ব ও ক্যানভাসিং

বাংলা ভাষায় এই পুস্তক প্রথম প্রকাশিত হইল। আজকাল ব্যবসায় বিজ্ঞাপন না দিলে চলে না, কিন্তু কি ভাবে বিজ্ঞাপন লিখিতে ও  
করিতে হয়, তাহা অনেকেই জানেন না বলিয়া অনেক স্থলে বিজ্ঞাপনদাতা ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হইয়া থাকেন। এই পুস্তকে সেই অভাব দূর  
কার জগৎ অভিনব উপায়ে লিখিত হইল। ইহার দ্বিতীয় অংশে কি করিয়া ক্যানভাস করিতে হয়, তাহা সাজ-সুসজ্জাম ও আদব-কায়দা  
হইয়াছে। মূল্য ১০ পিকা।

**A NEW TRADE SECRET**

*...book contains an American novel plan as how to earn money at home leisure hours with a small capital.  
...ription, receipts of formula, thoroughly a mode of mail order business with full instructions and speci  
...practical working. Sure to success money. Price after prosperity—Present lesson fee annas sixteen only.*

**প্রাপ্তিস্থান—**  
**শ্রীসন্তোষনাথ শেঠ**  
পোঃ—চন্দননগর      জেলা—হুগলী।

Again in newspapers like The Mussalman, in the years 1932 and 1933 advertisement that

<p style="text-align: center;">Progress of new business and bonus</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1929</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Rs. 28,31250</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1916</td> <td style="text-align: center;">71 per 1000</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1930</td> <td style="text-align: center;">" 31,32000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1921</td> <td style="text-align: center;">" "</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1931</td> <td style="text-align: center;">" 45,00000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1926</td> <td style="text-align: center;">221 "</td> </tr> </table> <p style="font-size: small;">You never have heard of any Indian Company denoting a bonus of 25% per 1000 after keeping apart a reserve of 60% of the valuation surplus. Firms like these will make history in Indian Insurance business.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Please apply for particulars to <b>Choudhury M. Hossain (Lal Mis)</b> Chief Agency Office 5 LEONA ROAD, CALCUTTA</p>	1929	Rs. 28,31250	1916	71 per 1000	1930	" 31,32000	1921	" "	1931	" 45,00000	1926	221 "	<h2 style="text-align: center;">ADVERTISE</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">IN</p> <h1 style="text-align: center;">"THE MUSSALMAN"</h1> <p style="text-align: center;">DAILY &amp; WEEKLY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">IT WILL PAY</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MOHAMED ALI</b></p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">A sketch of His Life : His writings &amp; Speeches [Illustrated]</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">A short life sketch and important writings and speeches of the patriot and the great exponent of Muslim cause in India. His historic speech at the Round Table Conference is also included.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Price Rs. 1/- The Mussalman Publishing Co., Ltd. CALCUTTA</p>
1929	Rs. 28,31250	1916	71 per 1000										
1930	" 31,32000	1921	" "										
1931	" 45,00000	1926	221 "										
<p style="text-align: center;">OLDEST OFFICE :: HIGHEST BONUS</p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">BOMBAY MUTUAL</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Life Assurance Society Ltd.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bombay Mutual (Est. 1871) 100% Indian.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">ITS WATCHWORDS ARE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTH :: SECURITY :: ECONOMY</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">LATEST BONUS PER RS. 1000 PER YEAR</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Rs. 21/- for Endowment for lives, Rs. 26/- for whole Life and Limited payments.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Agents' Commission Liberal and Hereditary</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: x-small;">100, OLIVE STREET, CALCUTTA.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">NOTES &amp; NEWS</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">An Man Director—A Remarkable message states—The aerodrome at Cawnpore being under biggest owing to heavy rain, the outward air mail did not leave yesterday morning and is expected to leave this morning.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">New Justice—The King has approved the appointment of Mr. H. K. Bhattacharya, I.C.S., to be a Judge of the Madras High Court in the place of Justice Sir E. H. Wilson, I. C. S., retiring from the 13th May.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">RURAL TRAINING CLASSES—A Fort meeting dated 30th Feb. stated—A rural training class, under the auspices of the Post District Board has been opened at Singapur in order to impart free primary education on village sanitation, agriculture and farm add and to cultivate a spirit of cooperation among the village folk.</p>												

consistently said, "ADVERTISE IN 'THE MUSSALMAN' DAILY AND WEEKLY, IT WILL PAY" came out along with other advertisements. The below advertisement is from The Mussalman, March 19, 1932.

Apart from this the rates to give advertisements in newspapers and periodicals came out in these newspapers and periodicals. I would like to argue that this urge to call out to the advertisers and learning new techniques was primarily because advertisements would generate revenue in a time of economic crisis while it will prove to be equally beneficial for the advertisers to keep their businesses growing and going during the depression years as is evident from the lines such as, 'It Will Pay' and '*Aajkal Byabsay Bigyapon Na Dilei Noy*' which translates into 'It has become Inevitable to Publish Advertisements These Days.' The ever increasing advertisements of Banks, Co-operatives and insurance companies during this time also bear testimony to this fact which I will be discussing in the latter part of this chapter.

As the saying goes that necessity is the mother of all inventions, it was not only the innovation in printing technology that brought forth the changes in advertising in colonial Bengal but the economic crisis also had a very important role to play in it which sped up this process and made advertising inevitable even during a time of growing nationalism where Mahatma Gandhi himself was opposed to advertisements in newspapers. His weeklies did not accept advertisements, "ninety-nine percent" of which he deemed "totally useless.... If there were no system of advertisements, we are surely to save at least half the price [of any article]." Gandhi declared that "the sole aim of journalism should be service." However economic Depression made the vernacular press realise that only advertisements could keep their journalism alive and vice versa. Thus even for propagating nationalism advertisements became a major tool, but they were advertisements nonetheless. This period was really the twilight era of intermediations between the pre-existing vernacular visual practices and the advent of corporate advertising during the first half of the 20th century. This period also coincided with the rise of nationally circulating newspapers and magazines addressed to



the fast-growing educated urban middle class, who were also the main clientele of the products marketed by advertising agencies.<sup>44</sup>

### **Advertising Agencies**

The beginning of the nineteenth century led to the birth of the advertising agencies. The agencies were initially one space broking businesses. In 1800, James White and Charles Lamb set up the first London agency which was comparatively creative in nature. In fact, Charles Lamb worked as a freelance copywriter on Government Lottery advertisements. This was followed another advertising agency, Reynell & Son of London in 1812. By the turn of the century the number of such agencies had grown and they started to focus their attention on the creative advertising for their clients. Probably the first agency with a reputation of creative work was Lord and Thomas, which was blessed by two talented and imaginative copywriters. John E. Kennedy and Claude Hopkins. Not surprisingly, the roots of the modern day agency can be traced to Volley B. Palmer of Philadelphia who was a space broker in 1812.

The situation changed in the late 19th century when N.W.Ayer & son established their agency, planned, created and executed a complete advertising campaign. By 1900, the advertising agencies became the focal point of creative planning and advertising. In India, the advertising agencies emerged on the same line as in the United Kingdom. Under the dominance of the British on the Indian economy, the then British companies established their advertising agencies in India and trained their Indian staff. During the nineteenth century most of the advertisers in India were British Business Houses, who were basically traders of the goods produced in Great Britain. However,

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<sup>44</sup> Arun Chaudhuri, History of Early Indian Advertising, Tata McGraw-Hill Education, pp.127

advertising agencies did not exist at that time.<sup>45</sup>Hence the advertising agencies in India in its initial years were all British owned Indian Advertising Agencies. There were two kinds of major advertisers at that time. First were the retailers, the large stores like Spencer's, Army & Navy and Whiteaway & Laidlaw, who mainly catered to the British. The other types were the brand sellers, which were mainly the sellers of 'patent medicines' and 'food items' with secret recipe formulae.<sup>46</sup>

Newspapers were not just the starting point for Indian creatives - as with the West again, Indian ad agencies themselves first started off as canvassing agents appointed by the newspapers to drum up business in return for a commission of around 10 percent.<sup>47</sup>It was only in the earlier part of the twentieth century, that the advertising agencies began to emerge. The first Indian agency was set up by B . Dattaram & Co. in 1905 at Bombay. This was followed by opening of Indian Advertising Agency in Bombay in 1907, and Calcutta Advertising Agency in Calcutta in 1909. Though some newspapers had also set up studios to help their advertisers in creating copy and illustrations. This was followed by others, notably TATA Publicity Corporation Limited incorporated on 13 June 1920. Their competitors then were largely foreign agencies.

This decade saw the first foreign owned ad agencies being set up. After World War I, some ex-British Army officers had set up an agency called Alliance Advertising, and other one was set up in association with Tata's, Tata Publicity. Neither were successful and soon folded up. L. A. Stronach, an artist and an entrepreneur, who got down at Bombay (now Mumbai), from a P&O liner, could

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<sup>45</sup> S. Banerjee (1981): "Advertising in India: Evolution and Technique". In: Mass Media in India. New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.

<sup>46</sup> Doctor, V. and Alikhan A. (1999)

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.,

establish a successful agency of that time. Later he opened an office in Britain too, mainly to facilitate British advertisers targeting the Indian market. D J Keymer was another successful example set up by a British engineering company with interests in India. One agency set up for American rather than British advertisers was National, established by a group of American importers in 1926. These importers later sold the agency to one Mr. Jagan Nath Jaini, whose descendents still manage the agency. But apart from National and Dattaram's, most of the other agencies of that era have folded up. L A Stronach's gave rise to today's Norvicsen Advertising, and D J Keymer gave rise to Ogilvy & Mather and Clarion.

This decade also witnessed the coming up of the first of the proper multinational agencies, J. Walter Thompson (JWT), opened office in 1929 to service the General Motors (GM) business. The opening of the office of J.W. Thompson in India in the year 1929, it is particularly significant, because the role that J.W. Thompson played in advertising in colonial India in the years following this would align with how they responded to the effects of the Great Depression. The website of J.W. Thompson that commemorates its 150 years anniversary and key moments in these years mentions, 'Not even a depression can stop the march of radio. Despite the harsh economic climate, the J. Walter Thompson Agency continued to pioneer the medium of radio with radio soap operas and other types of entertainment programming.'

The key phrase here is, 'not even a depression.' Even if this is meant for the greater global narrative it is evident that this was an agency that significantly played role to combat the crippling effects of the Depression. In the early 1920s, global business typically relied on advertisements drawn up in Europe or America without consideration of the values of Indian consumers. Some firms apparently had little ambition to sell their products beyond the ranks of European expatriates, others assumed that the prestige of foreign products was sufficient to attract middle-class buyers. The costs of

developing customised approaches to Indian consumers seemingly dissuaded global firms from making extensive investments in advertising.

Over the course of the 1920s, such marketing methods increasingly seemed inadequate to many. These firms turned to advertising specialists headquartered in India's larger cities, men and women stepped in the principles of advertising psychology and trained in the latest techniques of drawing advertisements and preparing them for print. Such specialists worked under three different kinds of arrangements. First, they could be members of advertising firms setting up offices in India, such as J. Walter Thompson which is an American company and came to India in 1929 initially to promote General Motors' automobiles, but soon took up a number of smaller accounts. By 1939, Thompson's operations on the subcontinent had become incorporated as an Indian company, and its clients included such firms as Elizabeth Arden, Firestone, Horlicks, Kellogg's, Kodak, Philips Electrical, Ponds and Smith Corona as well as Indian businesses that included Tata Oil Mills, Tata Sons Ltd. (Aviation) and Godrej and Boyce Manufacturing.<sup>48</sup>

Second, advertisers could work for agency firms that managed the distribution of the products manufactured by their clients. For instance, the makers of Ovaltine hired the firm of James Wright as their agent in India; this firm apparently designed and placed many thousands of advertisements in Indian newspapers during the interwar period. Finally, some professional advertisers worked as in-house specialists for the biggest businesses, such as Lever Brothers, which chose to conduct its own publicity during the 1930s. In 1939, Levers was spending Rs 9025,000 a year on advertising in India, an amount about triple the advertising budget of all of Thompson's clients in Bombay. Levers'

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<sup>48</sup> J. Walter Thompson Company Archives, Duke University, Treasurer's Office Records, July 1939.

heavy advertising expenditures were an indication that the company was willing to sacrifice profit in the short term in order to maintain and extend its position of dominance in the Indian market.

Professional advertisers of the time carried a faith in the universality of Western advertising practices. F.R. Eldredge, a representative of the American Manufacturers Export Association, wrote in 1930 : “American advertising methods are just as successful abroad as they are at home.... That the projection of these domestic methods has been an unqualified success is no longer in dispute....” The American paradigm stressed that advertising should be based upon market research into the character of demand and the nature of the available media for publishing ads; knowledge of technology , such as the methods for preparing print blocks of text and illustrations; and principles of advertising design, including the size of ads, their placement in newspapers, the use of different kinds of type, the techniques of advertising art and the writing of “copy.”

But while they applied principles they deemed to be universal, professional advertisers in South Asia also came to believe that it was essential to adjust their message to cultural conditions in the subcontinent. L.A. Stronach , who founded an advertising agency in Bombay around 1926, would later recall the prevailing approach to advertising, suggesting that he forged a very different path : “the main press advertisements which came from Britain or America , and were placed direct with newspapers , to my mind were quite useless at product-selling, because they were prepared by and for the European mentality, and there were only half a million Europeans , including service personnel in the whole of India.”

J. Walter Thompson informed its clients that advertising would not be simply translated , promising instead “copy written on the spot”; its Bombay officers stressed the importance of local knowledge when they wrote in 1936: “the sales record of clients is evidence of the ability of our staff to apply

the advanced advertising skill of America, adapting and modifying it as conditions and customs demand.”<sup>49</sup> Professional advertisers’ claims to appreciate local circumstances and cultural priorities were central to their ability to persuade European or American manufacturing firms , which rarely had a physical presence in India, that they could provide indispensable help in the marketing process. The fact that J. Walter Thompson took all these measures during the Great Depression, and the period following it is evidence that the Great Depression’s economic crisis made advertisements an even more indispensable tool for business than ever before. Thus advertisements needed to be given extra attention and new techniques were employed to make them more eye-catching than the previous decades.

Within the next couple of years, a few more multinational advertising agencies started establishing their outfits in India. Like, S. H. Benson in 1928 - a British agency, which later became Ogilvy Benson and Mather and then Ogilvy & Mather in 1980s, and now popularly known as O&M.

Lintas India Limited was founded in 1939. Lintas was initially the in-house advertising agency of Lever Brothers, now known as Unilevers. Lintas is the abbreviation for 'Lever International Advertising Service'. Later, Lever Brothers spun it off as a separate company. This was the decade, when Indian advertising industry began to take a structure. On the initiatives of 'Peter Fielden', the then chief executive of JWT, advertising agency's remuneration got fixed at the international standard of 15 percent of billings, rather than a variable rate of around 10 percent, which was what the space selling agents used to get. A few of the industry bodies like the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), which made independent estimates of publications' circulation and hence gave agencies a common and objective basis for media planning, also got established<sup>81</sup>. In 1934,

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<sup>49</sup> F.R. Elridge , Advertising and Selling Abroad, New York and London : Harper. And Brothers, 1930, pp. 29-31

Venkatrao Sista, opened Sista's Advertising and Publicity, as the first full service Indian agency, offering creative as well as selling space. Sista's created the famous 'Khatau' brand of voils.

By the beginning of the 1940s, a sea change would be seen in advertising the seeds of which had really been sown during the previous decade. In 1941, when Lux signed on Leela Chitnis as the first Indian film actress to endorse the product it can be said that this transition did not happen overnight.



There were illustrated pictures and imageries of women , a transition from the Western figure to the Indian figure (more in the next chapter) and finally an endorsement by an Indian film actress. If there was, however, to be one landmarked campaign of the era, it would have to be Dalda - the famous vegetable ghee from Unilevers (Hindustan Levers Limited). Launched in 1939, Dalda was the first major example of a brand and a marketing campaign specifically developed for India. The brand got established in the decade of forties.

The general consensus is that advertising went into a down turn during these two decades due to a combination of the economic recession and the difficulties of supply of imported products.



However from the lack of shortage of advertisements in newspapers and periodicals both in the English Language and the native language it is only evident that even during the time of a great economic recession businessmen turned to advertising to keep their business growing. The advertisement industry tried to compensate by coming together to contribute to the War effort. In Bombay, four leading agencies of the time, Keymer's, Adarts, JWT and Stronach's came together to form a consortium called K.A.T.S. As the first formal joint venture between leading ad agencies, the unexpectedly hep sounding K.A.T.S. is credited with being the forerunner of today's Advertising Agencies Association of India. As the War progressed, and as the government got increasingly nervous about the quit India agitation, it decided to move away from the metros to Shimla. K.A.T.S. also moved to Shimla to setup a Central Publicity Unit (CPU). As a further indication of how seriously the government took advertising, it also appointed an Advertising Consultant with a specialized staff to act as a liaison between the government and the CPU.

The establishment of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) in 1948 recognized the importance of advertising in determining the profitability of a newspaper. The Times of India, which had just passed into Indian hands through its purchase by Ramakrishna Dalmia in 1945, held the No. 1



certificate among the 62 organizations (41 publications, 13 advertisers and 8 advertising agencies) that set up a body to guarantee the validity of circulations.<sup>50</sup>

However there is a difficulty in acquiring information about advertising agencies for two reasons. One, there is a dearth of primary documents as advertising agency offices do not give direct access. To them mostly for the lack of them. Secondly, the advertisements themselves did not have any information about the advertising agencies that produced them, not even the initials of them. For example Dattaram's print ad for West End Watches, published in 1930, which is given below could be known to me that it was an advertisement created by B.Dattaram and Sons from an article available online.<sup>51</sup>

While when I found the published advertisement of the same company watch in The Statesman of 1930, nowhere was it mentioned that it was created by B.Duttaram and Sons.

Thus trying to figure out which advertisement is produced by which advertising agency proved to be a futile exercise due to limited resources. However it cannot be denied that it was the advertising agencies that played a major role in revolutionising the advertising scenario in India, apart from the innovations in the printing technology as these were the agencies that later went on to hire artists from the Government Art College to give advertisements its true commercial art character.

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<sup>50</sup> Advertising and Indian-Language Newspapers: How Capitalism Supports (Certain) Cultures and (Some) States, 1947-96 Author(s): Robin Jeffrey Source: Pacific Affairs, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), pp. 57-84 Published by: Pacific Affairs, University of British Columbia Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2761228> Accessed: 19-03-2019 12:26 UTC

<sup>51</sup> Naimish Keswani, Illustrations in Indian Advertising, <https://www.iiad.edu.in/blog/illustrations-indian-advertising/>

CUT DROSS, BANGLA BAZAR, DACCALUCKNOW.  
S. P. MISSEB, DINGHA ROAD, PATNA.  
CHUNILAL, GANPATRAI, BANSHI.



West End Watches enjoy an enviable reputation among all ranks of the army in India. The reason is not far to seek. Every West End Watch is made, not merely as an ornament, but to keep good time under severe conditions such as are met with by soldiers and others who lead a strenuous existence.

The "SILLIDAR" Watch, here illustrated, is, in particular, the outdoor man's watch—once bought, a reliable time-piece for life.

**"SILLIDAR"**  
Robust Keyless Lever Watch

Nickel Silver	Rs. 25
Sterling Silver	Rs. 30
Rolled Gold	Rs. 38

Ask for FREE Catalogue

*You know Sir! That's a good test for a wrist watch  
The repeated kick of a rifle.*

**West End Watch Co**  
BOMBAY AND CALCUTTA

THE STATESMAN, TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 1931



**WEST END WATCHES**  
ALWAYS DEPENDABLE  
STRONG & ACCURATE

West End Watches are now used by most all Indian Railways and H.M. Services in preference to all others.

Every Watch irrespective of price is severely tested before being sold, and none is able to withstand these tests are allowed for sale.

Catalogues free on application.

**WEST END WATCH CO**  
BOMBAY - CALCUTTA

Dattaram for West End, 1930

### Art in Industry

For example, in post-independence Calcutta, which would remain one of the main hubs of the country's advertising industry, we encounter the new nationalising thrust of the British-owned

firms.D.J.Keymar with its branches in Bombay, Madras, Lahore and Cawnpore,the new “Indian Language Service” of D.J.Keymar was highlighted in a publicity campaign that talked of how “One advertisement” became “Fourteen” as the firm took on the translation of their advertisements in 14 Indian languages to reach out to the proverbial common man across the nation.This firm was the one directly in the production and layout of Art in Industry, a Magazine published in the year 1946 with earlier folios of the forum published from 1942, to co-incide with the organisation of the first all-Indian commercial art exhibition in the city. Dedicated almost wholly to the art off advertising ,the magazine (the first fo its kind in India) carried specialised articles on the technique of layout, lettering and typography, on the new processes of colour printing and reproduction ,and on the designing of packages posters and street hoardings even as many of the pieces deliberated at length on the place of the “fine artist”in advertising and in the larger field of “industrial design.”<sup>52</sup>

In this magazine the credit for the art work in the early issues went to the creative team of Satyajit Ray,Makhan Datta Gupta,L.B. Dasgupta and Sivaram Das.The establishment of D.J.Keymar would stand central in the unfolding careers of several commercial artists in the city -not least of all, in the making of Satyajit Ray’s early career as illustrator, advertising artist and book and poster designer ,when,following his years at Kala Bhavan ,Santiniketan (1940-1943),he began his professional life as a visualiser and art director at this agency.

Surrounding Satyajit Ray were several of his predecessors and contemporaries in the advertising profession of far humbler backgrounds and far lesser fame ,man. Of whose careers were also made at D.J.Keymar, some of whom came to be featured in the pages of Art in Industry.One such figure was Annada Munshi (1905-1984) in the very first issue of the journal.The write-up portrays muni with all the characteristic qualities if the “restless,reckless,temperamental” artist, brimming with

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<sup>52</sup> For example,Alec Davis, “Advertising and the Fine Artist”, Art in Industry , Vol.1 No.3,1947, pp. 13-20.

ideas and creativity „turning to music for inspiration, even if the end result was only to “bring forth a campaign for cement or cigarettes or Someone’s Soups.”It shows the attempts to give full artistic credentials to the persona of the commercial artist. Munsi worked as illustrator in the advertising department of the Times of India offices in Bombay , before his appointment at D.J.Keymar,Calcutta in 1935.

His reputation as the topmost commercial artist of Calcutta’s advertising world was made over the 15years he worked in this firm.A remarkable photograph from the 1940s shows him and his creative team in the art room of D.J.Keymar ,a group of dhoti-clad Bengali men in a British advertising firm proudly announcing the Indianization of both the profession and its artistic vocabulary.<sup>53</sup>



Annada Munsi (extreme left) and his team in the art room of D.J.Keymer’s office, Calcutta, c.1940.

Artist’ family collection.Courtesy Visual Archives,CSSSC.

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<sup>53</sup> See, GuhaThakurata Tapati, City in the Archive accessed from CSSSC archives

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Great Depression of the 1930s was not the first watershed in the history of advertising in Bengal. However there were certain dynamics in the world of advertisement that came into play as a result of the Great Depression. The world of advertising and its evolution was embedded in the inherent logic of continuity and change. Although the world of advertising was not static in the preceding period there were changes initiating nonetheless because of the Great Depression and the economic crisis that it brought along with itself. These significant changes that we witness during the Great Depression years and the decade following that proves that there was a push to advertise products during this period more than ever before. Between the world wars, new kinds of global firms involved in manufacturing consumer goods entered the Indian market on a large scale, seeking to cultivate demand for their products among European expatriates and an emerging Indian middle class. These firms increasingly devoted resources to advertising their products in Indian print media, including both English language and vernacular newspapers. Douglas Haynes points out that by the 1930s, they came to rely on professional advertising men and women, often trained in the art and technology of advertisement outside the subcontinent, to decide attractive ads and place them in the papers. Douglas Haynes also points out that the emergence of a consumer-oriented, brand name capitalism during the interwar years was associated with a reorientation of the subcontinent's place in the larger international economy.<sup>54</sup> Thus it won't be wrong to conclude that this larger international economy also included the Great Depression which had a worldwide impact on several economic sectors. Moreover turning towards

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<sup>54</sup> See Douglas Haynes, *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, pp.67-89

more professionalisation in the 1930s and employing professionals trained in the art and technology of advertisements bears testimony to this fact.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **READING THE ADVERTISEMENTS OF 1930s**

The aim of this thesis is to find out if there were any changes at all in advertising in Bengal because of the Great Depression. This thesis also aims to find out how profound were the changes if there were any and ask to what extent was Bengal as a part of colonial India caught up in the vortex of the Great Depression? There are two sides to how the Great Depression's effects were seen-economic and social. In order to evaluate the economic effects of the Great Depression this chapter shall try to find out how the Great Depression affected the companies that would need to advertise the products to sell products that could not otherwise be sold because the purchasing power of the consumers was abysmally low. There were also various kinds of companies doing business in Bengal during this period-there were British and other foreign corporations as well as Swadeshi enterprises and this chapter shall talk about how these companies turned to advertising in order to create avenues whereby they could somehow create a way out of this bottleneck. This chapter shall also talk about the roles played by the advertising agencies during the Great Depression who themselves were business houses and how they were affected in Bengal during the Great Depression. While looking at how various sectors are affected by the Great Depression it is also important to look at how the middle class who were the main target audience were influenced by the Great Depression. While a rich print culture had emerged since the nineteenth century as shown in the previous chapter, what distinguishes this period is the emergence of the vernacular middle class as the burgeoning consumer, which shall also be one of the focal points of this chapter. Thus the Great Depression brought a lot of dynamics both in the economic and social lives along with it. Advertisements are the best tool to study it because it is where all kinds of capitalist interests and consumer culture is involved. Advertising does not function in a vacuum but in a market

environment where several forces like consumer needs, business interests and government regulations are at work. It is a powerful force in terms of its persuasiveness and functions a critical social role. Moreover because of its high visibility and pervasiveness, it generates criticism and controversy. Much of this controversy springs from the fact that advertising is used more as a persuasive communication tool thereby creating serious impact on the tastes, values and lifestyles of society .

### **Material Context of Advertisements**

The emergence of a consumer-oriented brand-name capitalism during the interwar years was associated with a reorientation of the subcontinent's place in the larger international economy. Douglas Haynes points out, Once World War I was over, manufacturers of consumer goods from outside the subcontinent entered the Indian economy aggressively seeking to develop markets for their products , including medical commodities, tobacco, soap, cocoa drinks, vegetable oils and even household electrical products.<sup>55</sup> Business experts from abroad envisioned India as a "\$600,000,000 market", with potential buyers not limited to the colonial expatriates.<sup>56</sup> It can be reasoned that The Great Depression that followed almost immediately after this meant if multinational corporations were to capture this market, Indian consumers would have to be persuaded to buy their products. These business organisations turned to advertisement as the obvious tool to realise this goal. However the process was not unilinear. The 1930s was a decade of many intermediaries. It was the decade immediately after the first World War, India was approaching

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<sup>55</sup> See, Douglas Haynes, "Brand-name Capitalism, the Rise of Professional Advertising and the Making of the Modern Conjugal in Western India, 1918-45", University of Washington Press

<sup>56</sup> Jeremy Schneider, "Discourses in Capitalism : Ovaltine Advertisements and Visions of Domesticity in the British Empire during the Interwar Period", undergraduate honours thesis, Dartmouth College, 2007, p.54. Schneider cites Darbara Singh Sodhi, "India, \$600,000,000 market", Advertising Abroad, Vol.I, No.1 (December 1928), p.5



towards independence which meant that nationalism was the key sentiment behind every action which also reflected in business and to add to it the striking of the Great Depression could only make things more complex.

Thus realisation of the goal of multinational corporations to capture the Indian market was no easy task. This was because during this time few of the things consumed by Indians, even educated Indians were branded commodities. City dwellers obtained most of their needs from hawkers and small shop local shopkeepers, and brand name was often not a significant consideration in their choices. Even when they purchased European goods, they often regarded the reputation of the manufacturing firm as less important than the price and the qualities they could either observe directly or that shopkeepers touted to them in making a sale. Buyers would also have to be induced to abandon pre-existing body practices and to adopt new, “modern” habits: taking baths with soap, relying on laundry soap for cleaning clothes at home rather than sending them out to a dhobi, using a toothbrush and toothpaste, drinking tea, cocoa or coffee on a daily basis, and even taking branded potions or using ointments to ensure sexual performance. In addition, small-scale vernacular capitalists, who made medical products, soaps, hair oils, skin lighteners and other commodities, were starting to enter the urban marketplace and to advertise their products in the papers. Competitions between global manufacturers and these local producers were inevitable. Finally, middle-class Indians were affected by nationalist campaign discouraging the purchase of foreign commodities and the conspicuous consumption of material goods. Thus this was a fascinating period when there were several contesting forces in the Indian business scenario. The advertisements that were the key tool in staying ahead in the market hence cannot be studied in a unilinear manner. For example one cannot study the advertisements of this period just as advertisements published in the vernacular print media in contrast with those published in the English newspapers and periodicals. It will also not be completely inclusive to study the

advertisements as advertisements produced by the multi national corporations, the global manufacturers as opposed to the ones given by local producers. Even studying the advertisements only on the basis of nationalist campaigns versus foreign commodities would not be all-encompassing either. Because, the advertisements during this period, were affected by not one or two but all of these factors and putting one category against the other would be an injustice to the fascinating milieu that happened during this period in the advertising industry as a result of economic conditions and socio-political factors and led to the production of several fascinating advertisements marking the transition period in the world of Indian advertising that lay the foundation of it for the coming decades. Thus this chapter is going to view the advertisements from majorly three perspectives- Who gave the advertisements, who were the target audience o the advertisements and thirdly what was the modes of image production via these advertisements.

## **Financial Sectors**

The Depression hit the bankers and money lenders hard. The Marwari moneylenders withdrew a large part of their capital and some of them even closed down their business on account of heavy loss. The failure of a number of indigenous banking firms was brought to the notice of the Banking Enquiry Committee. The landlord moneylenders in villages who had earned huge profits during times of famine and scarcity in the past found to their dismay that things were different now. The moneylenders controlled most of the credit in the rural economy. When they were hit hard by the Depression, they curtailed their lending activities. Consequently the flow of credit stopped. Co-operative organizations too were not immune to the disastrous consequences of the Depression. The cases of insolvency of cultivators increased during the Depression. Consequently, the bankers and moneylenders suspended their lending activities, which resulted in shrinkage of credit. The Co-

Operative Credit Societies also had to join other private lending agencies in recovering the overdue loans. The bankers scrutinized the loan applications more carefully than before and hence there was a decrease in the number of people coming forward to obtain loans. The demand for loans became

**সঞ্চয়**

“শোকের বরষা দিন এসেছে আঁধারি’  
ও ভাই গৃহস্থ চাখী ছেড়ে আর বাড়ী।  
ভিজিয়া নরম হ’ল শুক মনমন,  
এই বেলা শস্য তোর করে নে বপন।”  
—রবীন্দ্রনাথ

যে ব্যক্তি যত বেশী প্রস্তুত থাকবে,  
জীবন ও কর্মক্ষেত্রে সে তত বেশী  
সাফল্যের সহিত অগ্রসর হইতে  
পারিবে।

আপনার উপার্জনের একটা নির্দিষ্ট  
অংশ জমাইবার জয় নিয়মিত  
অভ্যাস করার চেয়ে, জীবনের বহু  
কর্তব্য সম্বাদনের জয় প্রস্তুত হওয়ার  
অধিকতর নিশ্চিত উপায় আর  
কিছু নাই।

এখন হইতেই আপনি শুরু করুন।  
প্রতি সপ্তাহে সামান্য যাঁ কিছু পারেন,  
তাহা নিয়মিত ভাবে যদি জমাইয়া  
যান, তবে বৎসরকাল মধ্যেই  
দেখিতে পাইবেন যে, বেশ ভাল  
রকম একটা মোটা টাকা আপনার  
জমিয়া গিয়াছে।

আপনার এই কার্য শুরু করিতে  
আমাদিগকে সাহায্য করিতে দিন।

**ব্যাঙ্ক অব্ কমার্স লিঃ**

হেড অফিস—১২নং ক্লাইভ স্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা।  
শাখা :—কলেজ স্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা, বালিগঞ্জ, খিদিরপুর,  
বর্ধমান, খুলনা, বাগেরহাট ও যশোহর।

**ADVERTISEMENT OF BANK OF COMMERCE  
LIMITED IN ARANI PATRIKA,1931**

less and large sums of money lay idle with the central banks.<sup>57</sup> Thus the banks consistently advertised since demands for loans was less while they had large sums of money at their disposition. In order for the banks to survive they realised that it was important to make people realise the importance and inevitability of them even during the times of the Great Depression.

The above advertisement of Bank of Commerce Limited was published in the Bengali periodical called Arani in 1931. This advertisement that did not appear once or twice but multiple times throughout this year is extremely important because of multiple reasons. Firstly, this advertisement begins with a four-line poem by Rabindranath Tagore, whose words will not only attract customers but whose name is enough to attract readers to the advertisement. Thus if a bank is relying on one of the most celebrated figures to endorse themselves it is understandable that there is an urgency to attract readers to the advertisement especially during a time when endorsements by celebrity figures in Bengal were not a regular occurrence. Secondly, the content of the four lines is even more relevant for it is Tagore who can express contemporary events and concerns so precisely in a way that appeals to all. Tagore writes,

‘শোকের বর্ষা দিনে এসেছে আঁধারি  
ও ভাই গৃহস্থ চাষী ছেড়ে আয় বাড়ী  
ভিজিয়ে নরম হল শুষ্ক মরুমন  
এই বেলা শস্য তোর করে না বপন।’

While it will be an attempt in vain to translate Tagore’s poem, the meaning can be very easily comprehended. What is conveyed through these lines is that it is the dark days which is equated

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<sup>57</sup> K.A. Manikumar, The Impact of the Great Depression on the Agricultural Sector of Tamil Nadu: 1929 - 1937, Source: Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 61, Part One: Millennium (2000- 2001), pp. 852-863

with the monsoons and Tagore is urging both the regular men and farmers to come out of their homes and make the most of what still can be made of the situation.

It is important to note that Tagore is urging not only the regular population, to make hay while the sun shines but the farmers along with them. Before the Depression, with rising crop prices and resultant increase in farm incomes, a substantial number of cultivators entered the land market. They borrowed at high rates of interest and invested the money in agriculture. Both creditors and debtors believed in the high value of land. The lender thought that he had his security and the debtor thought that he had a wide margin after paying the debt. With the Depression came disillusionment. The Depression was preceded by a good monsoon and the agricultural output was impressive. But marketing became difficult, due to the slump in prices. In the years 1928-1931, the prices of cash crops fell more steeply than the prices of rice. During this period the price of rice fell by 28 percent while the price of groundnut and cotton fell by 45 percent and 38 percent respectively. While unsold rice could be used for household consumption, groundnut and cotton were fully dependent on the market. This had a crippling effect on the peasants. As the farmers strove to counteract the fall in prices by increasing their produce the agricultural depression became more intense and lasting. The farmers found it difficult to market their produce even at such low prices, as they were handicapped by the heavy railway freight. The collapse of foreign markets and the fall in price resulted in a definite drop in the acreage under cultivation.<sup>58</sup> And what was the way to ensure that the best of the situation could be made? It was by investing in saving schemes with banks.

The text of the advertisement of this bank translates to, the person who is more prepared during times of crisis shall be more successful not only in his work but also in life. The bank is urging the

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<sup>58</sup> C.S. Subramanyam and N. Sundaram, "Moratorium Bill", *Indian Review*, Vol. XXXVIII, 1937, pp. 753-55

reader to invest a particular sum of money from their income on a weekly basis at the Bank of Commerce Bank and promises that it will result in the savings of a significant amount of money at the end of each year. The advertisement also asks the reader to help them in fulfilling this work. The tone of the advertisement is of particular importance because it is way less formal and more personal. The reason might be it is easier to communicate with a potential consumer if the tone of advertisement seems more personal and it can be argued that it was a conscious decision on behalf of the advertiser since at a time when economy was gravely affected by the Great Depression it had become imperative to communicate with a potential consumer in the best possible way that could be done. What is also significant in studying advertisements of banks is that the advertisements of the same banks could be seen both in the English and the vernacular newspaper like that of Nath Bank the advertisements of which are provided below. Nath Bank consistently advertised themselves both in Arani and The Statesman throughout the 1930s and even after that. While for products like a particular soap or powder, creams the market was quite specific, banks catered to a much larger group of people and it was probably why extensive advertisements were seen both in the vernacular and English newspapers.

Some more advertisements of banks during this period are given below.

This advertisement of the East India Commercial Bank reads, '*Dark and dismal might have been the day, Evil spirit may for time have its way; But to-day, this Holiday, we forge and forgive, And wish one and all best of life too live.*' While this was an advertisement of the East India Commercial Bank to greet people Bijoya which is the end of the Durga Puja festivities, words like Dark and dismal might have been the day in an advertisement of a bank compels one to read between the lines.

This one page advertisement of Darjeeling Bank Limited that came out in Prabasi in July 1932, gives financial data to attract customers.

**দি ত্ৰিপুৰা মডাৰ্ণ ব্যাংক লিমিটেড**

পৃষ্ঠপোষক  
ত্ৰিপুৰাধিপতি শ্ৰীশ্ৰীযুত মহাৰাজা মাণিক্য বাহাদুৰ কে, সি, এস, আই।

ৰেজিঃ অফিস—আখাউৰা ( ত্ৰিপুৰা ),      চীফ্ অফিস—আগৰতলা।  
কলিকাতা অফিস—৬, ক্লাইভ ষ্ট্ৰীট।

বৰ্তমান অনিশ্চয়তাৰ দিনে আপনাৰ অৰ্থ ব্যাংকে ৰাখাই  
সমীচীন ও সম্পূৰ্ণ নিৰাপদ। সুদৃঢ় আৰ্থিক ভিত্তিৰ  
উপৰ প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত এই ব্যাংকে আপনাৰ অৰ্থ  
গচ্ছিত ৰাখিয়া নিৰাপদ ও নিশ্চিত হউন।

নবদ্বীপ শাখা গত ১৮ই মে তাৰিখে খোলা হইয়াছে।  
বংলা ও আসামেৰ প্ৰধান প্ৰধান ব্যবসাকেন্দ্রে ব্ৰাঞ্চ ও সাবব্ৰাঞ্চ আছে।

শ্ৰীহৰিদাস ভট্টাচাৰ্য্য  
ম্যানেজিং ডিৰেক্টৰ।

**ADVERTISEMENT OF TRIPURA BANK LIMITED, ARANI, 1933**

Advertisement of The Tripura Modern Bank Limited provided above reads, ‘বৰ্তমান অনিশ্চয়তাৰ দিনে আপনাৰ অৰ্থ ব্যাংকে ৰাখাই সমীচীন ও সম্পূৰ্ণ নিৰাপদ। সুদৃঢ় আৰ্থিক ভিত্তিৰ উপৰ প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত এই ব্যাংকে

আপনার অর্থ গচ্ছিত রাখিয়া নিরাপদ ও নিশ্চিত হউন.' Which translates into, 'It is safe to keep your money in the banks in th present day scenario of uncertainties. This bank is established on a strong financial base and you will be safe and assured if you keep your money in this bank.'

It is significant that the bank uses words like 'Uncertainty of the present time,' 'be safe' and 'aware' in their advertisement which is indicative of the fact that there were economic uncertainties during that period and it was important for the banks to attract customers by promising them safety.

রাপান্তর  
দর্শনের  
এক  
জাপ-  
ভূমিকা  
গারাতি  
বর্তন

মত  
গান্তি-  
দেশ  
শান্ত  
না  
লি।  
লীন  
চরে  
করা  
কী  
নও  
জ-

**নাথ ব্যাঙ্ক লিমিটেড**  
হেড অফিস : কলিকাতা।  
ফোন : ক্যাল :—৩২৫৩ (৩ লাইন)  
শাখা সমূহ :  
কলিকাতা কেন্দ্র :—কলিকাতা, শ্রামবাজার,  
হারিসন রোড, ভবানীপুর, বালিগঞ্জ, হাওড়া।  
বাংলা কেন্দ্র :—ঢাকা, ময়মনসিংহ, চট্টগ্রাম,  
নোয়াখালী, চৌমুহনী, বক্সিরহাট।  
আসাম কেন্দ্র :—গৌহাটী, শিলং, ধুবড়ী,  
তেজপুর, নগাঁ।  
বিহার কেন্দ্র :—পাটনা, জামসেদপুর, শাক্তী,  
চাইবাসা।  
উত্তর ভারত কেন্দ্র :—কানপুর, লক্ষৌ, দিল্লী,  
এবং নয়াদিল্লী।  
বড়বাজার শাখা গত ৮ই ডিসেম্বর ২০১বি,  
হারিসন রোড (সদাস্থ কাটরাতে)  
খোলা হইয়াছে।

ADVERTISEMENT OF NATH BANK IN ARANI, 1933



# NATH BANK LIMITED.

Central Office:—27/2C, Strand Road, Calcutta:  
Head Office:—135, Canning Street, Calcutta.  
Phone—Cal: 3253 (3 Lines).

**RECORD OF PROGRESS :**

		Paid up Capital	Reserve Fund	Deposits
1941	—	Rs. 11,07,007	Rs. 1,10,400	Rs. 1,43,04,328
1942	—	Rs. 12,20,365	Rs. 1,30,400	Rs. 2,06,21,445
1943	—	Rs. 20,20,732	Rs. 2,96,950	Rs. 4,03,80,854
1944	—	Rs. 34,13,792	Rs. 6,33,360	Rs. 6,75,53,153
1945	—	Rs. 48,76,578	Rs. 14,98,360	Rs. 9,90,81,046

**ALL SORTS OF BANKING BUSINESS TRANSACTED.**

**K. N. DALAL,**

**ADVERTISEMENT OF NATH BANK IN THE STATESMAN IN THE 1940S**

The co-operative societies and insurance companies too turned to advertising to keep their business running. It is important to remember in this context that money lending and business related to the financial market has historically been a strong area for Indian merchants. We come across the following advertisement in Sangbad Purnochandradoy, which is an advertisement inserted in

**CALCUTTA LOAN OFFICE**  
No. 12, Amratolla, or Govindchund Dhur's Street.  
Money lent on deposits of Gold and Silver articles, Government Securities  
& c. on moderate interest. No commission charged.  
U.C.AUDDY & CO.

**ADVERTISEMENT IN SANGBAD PURNOCHANDRADOY, 1857**

English in a Bengali paper as early as 1857.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Chaudhuri Arun, Indian Advertising 1780-1950, Tata McGraw-Hill Education, pp.80

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K. N. DALAL,

ADVERTISEMENT OF NATH BANK IN THE STATESMAN IN THE 1940S

দার্জিলিং ব্যাংক লিমিটেড

—বেড অফিস—

৩১, আশুতোষ মুখার্জী রোড,  
কলিকাতা ১

অনুমোদিত মূলধন	৫০,০০,০০০	টাকা
বিক্রীত	৩,৭৫,৫২৫	টাকা
আদায়ী	১,৩১,২৮৫	টাকা
কার্যকরী মূলধন প্রায়	১৫,০০,০০০	টাকা

ঃ শাখাসমূহ ঃ

ক্লাইভ স্ট্রীট ( ৯এ, ডালহৌসি স্কোয়ার ইন্ড )  
পুরী, কটক, মঙ্গলাবাগ, কটক চৌধুরীবাজার, নাগপুর, তেজপুর,  
চারালী, ঢাকা, নারায়ণগঞ্জ, নিতাইগঞ্জ, রাঁচি ও গৌহাটী।  
ভাগলপুর, পুৰুলিয়া ও করমজা শাখা শীঘ্রই খোলা হইবে।

ম্যানেজিং ডিরেক্টর—বি, মুখার্জী, বি-এ।

ADVERTISEMENT OF DARJEELING BANK LIMITED IN PRABASI,  
1932

Publicity for life insurance companies was widespread well before 1930s. Indian families clearly devoted extensive resources to buying life insurance, though there has been little research on the ethos that informed their purchases. Early insurance advertisements typically delineated a set of statistics about the sponsoring company, such as the capital it controlled, the income it earned and the value of payments made to individuals. These statistics were important to buyers since they delineated the lability of the company and hence the likelihood that current purchases would be honoured in the form of payments to beneficiaries at the time of the insured man's death. By the 1930s, however the age of professional advertising had arrived in insurance as pointed out by Douglas Haynes.<sup>60</sup> A number of big Indian firms had mimed the field of insurance sales, and competition in the market had become intense. Insurance companies, some foreign but mostly Indian, clearly invest significant sums in advertising seeking now to induce more families to devote their funds to insurance policies and on a larger scale. They hired advertising agencies to run advertisements in a wide range of newspapers both in English and in the vernacular. If one studies the advertisements in both the English language and vernacular newspapers during this period one would notice that there were recurrent advertisements of banks, co-operatives and insurance companies. The vast majority of firms were based in India: usually Bombay, Lahore, Poona, and Calcutta. Many advertised their exact annual turnover figures to boast their great size and dependability so as to gain the confidence of the people at an economically crucial time such as during the Depression. Probably they tried to give out the message that the money of the people was safe in their hands when the economic power of the majority of the population was abysmally low.

The insurance advertisements during this time generated a hybrid appeal reflecting a conception of middle-class masculinity that was a product of both global conceptions of the family and

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<sup>60</sup> Douglas Haynes, *Towards a History of Consumption in South Asia*, Oxford University Press, pp. 189

specifically Indian concerns. The advertisement given below is extremely interesting in context of our research. The advertisement is of National Insurance Company based in Calcutta. The advertisement shows the figure of a presumably middle class Indian man or the 'bhadralok' as can be understood from the text that comes along with the advertisement working at an office. The text reads,

‘এই ভদ্রলোকের উপার্জনেই তার সংসার চলে. তার দীর্ঘ জীবন কে না চায়? কিন্তু যে দুঃসময় দেখা দিয়েছে, তার ফলে এই ভদ্রলোকটির যদি কোনো বিপদ আপদ হয়, তবে কি করে তার সংসার চলবে। ন্যাশনাল ইন্সুরেন্সে যদি তার জীবন বীমা করা থাকে তবে ন্যাশনালই নিশ্চয়ই সে ভার নিতে পারে।’

If we translate the above text it shall read, ‘This man’s entire household runs on his sole income. Who won’t wish for his long life? However if something happens to him in the grave times of today, how will his family survive? If his life insurance is done at the National Insurance, then National Insurance can take all responsibilities at a time of crisis.’

There are several important pointers in this advertisement. First and very evidently it talks about a time of crisis, which is again indicative of the fact that the Great Depression had brought along with it economic crisis and there was a desperate attempt to come out of that bottleneck. Secondly the advertisement of the life insurance is addressed to the common man, the office goer, the 'bhadralok,' and the middle-class man whose entire family is dependent on his income and if something happens to him it will be impossible for his family to survive because what he earns is not enough to save up after running a household hence he should invest in life insurances. It appeals to the middle-class bhadralok reader warning him about a crisis that he is already aware of, creating a sense or worry or what if in his mind and providing a friendly solution to come out of that



## এই ভদ্রলোকের

\* \* \* উপার্জনেই তাঁর সংসার চলে। তাঁর দীর্ঘ-  
জীবন কে না চায় ?

কিন্তু যে ছুঃসময় দেখা দিয়েছে, তার  
ফলে এই ভদ্রলোকটির যদি কোন বিপদ  
আপদ হয়, তবে কি করে তাঁর সংসার  
চলবে। ন্যাশনাল ইন্সিওরেন্সে যদি  
তাঁর জীবন বীমা করা থাকে তবে  
ন্যাশনালই নিশ্চয় সে ভার নিতে পারে

# ন্যাশনাল ইন্সিওরেন্স

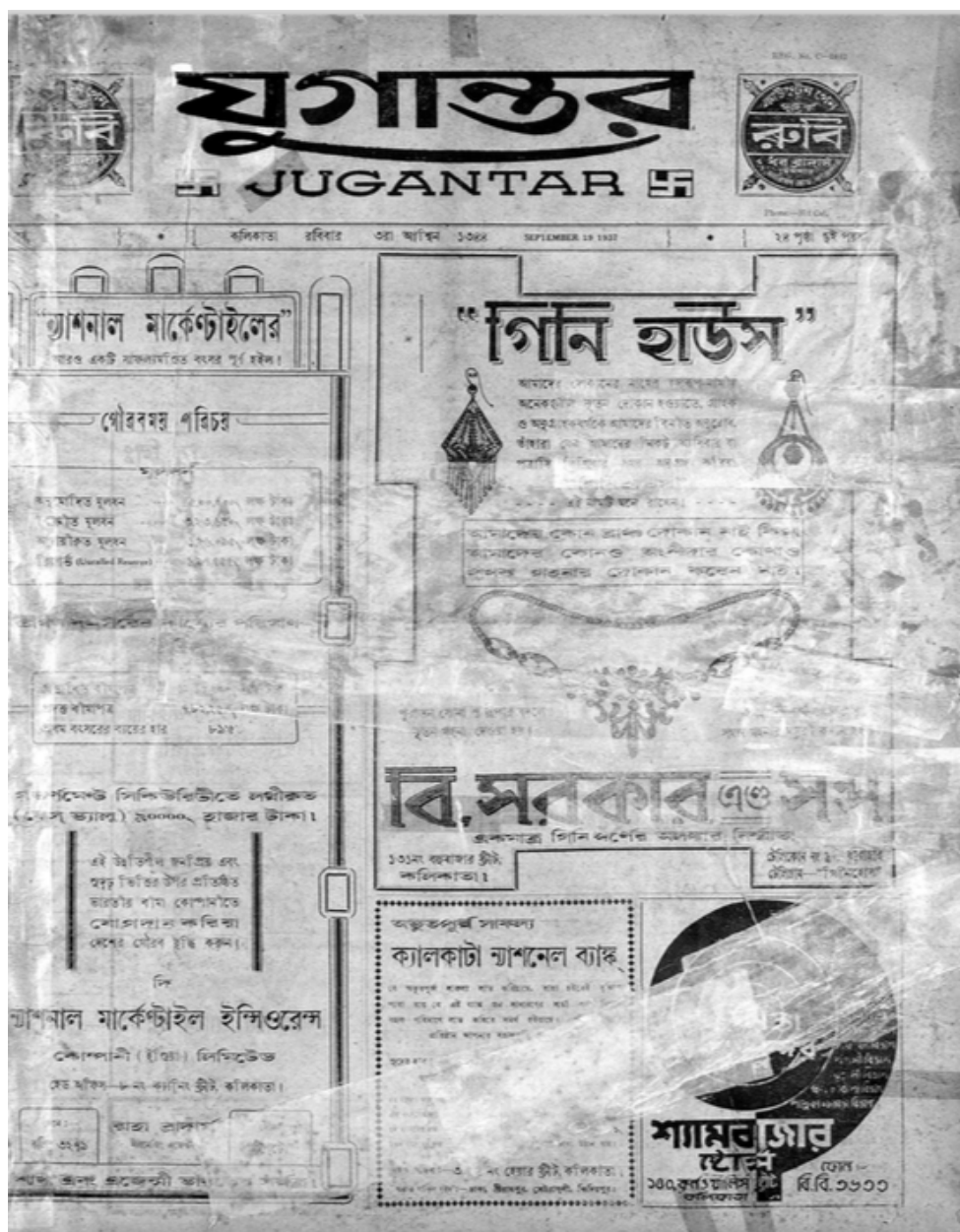
## কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

৭, কাউন্সিল হাউস ষ্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা।

ADVERTISEMENT OF NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY, ARANI, 1933

problem. It also carries with itself an image not just portrayed with the text but with the sketch of an actual figure. The play with words in the advertisement text, the figure are extremely clever and

indicative of the fact that advertisements of insurance companies during this time were not only well thought out in terms of who the readership or the target audience was or what promises it made but in reminding the target consumer about a crisis that they were already in as most of these advertisements evoked uncertainties about employment and professional advancement during the Great Depression. The following front page of Jugantar's September 1937 issue has five advertisements out of which three are of insurance companies and banks.



JUGANTAR, SEPTEMBER 1937

Such insurance company advertisements along with co-operatives and banks increased so much during this time that in a periodical like Arani, which previously had advertisements of both jewellery companies, banks ,co-operatives , in 1932, the whole front page advertisements were

**মেট্রোল ক্যালকিউ**  
স্বাক্ষর ক্রিপ্ত

১৯৪১ সালে লক্ষ্যক্রম  
৭১০ হারে ডিভিডেন্ড  
দেওয়া হইয়াছে।

সুদের হার :-  
আরী আমানত ৩.৫% হইতে ৪.৫%  
সেকিৎস :- ২%  
কারেন্ট :- ৪%+

শাখাসমূহ :-  
কলিকাতা, কামাখ্যা, কংপুর, হিলি, ফিনিক্সপুর, ঠাকুরাটী, ডাউনটাউন, বেঙ্গালুরু, মিলিটারি, টাংকালি (উড়িষ্যা), মুম্বাই (বীরভূম) ও মিলিটারি (কংপুর)।

সর্বকার ব্যক্তি কার্য  
করা হয়।  
হেড অফিস :-  
ক্রাইভ স্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা।  
ফোন :- কলি :- ২১২৫ ও ৩৫৮-৩

**দি ত্রিপুরা মডার্ণ**

পুঁঠপোদক  
ত্রিপুরাখিণ্ডি শ্রীশ্রীমত মহারাজা মালিকা বাহাদুর কে. সি. এস. আই।

রোজি অফিস—আখাউরা (ত্রিপুরা),  
কলিকাতা অফিস—৩, ক্রাইভ স্ট্রীট।

বর্তমান অবিস্তারতার দিনে আপনাব অর্থ ব্যাকে রাখাই  
সমীচীন ও সফূর্ণ নিরাপদ। অদ্য আর্থিক ভিত্তির  
উপর ভিত্তিত এই ব্যাকে আপনাব অর্থ  
গচ্ছিত রাখিয়া নিরাপদ ও নিশ্চিত হউন।

নবদ্বীপ শাখা গত ১৮ই মে তারিখে খোলা হইয়াছে।  
বাংলা ও আসামের প্রধান প্রধান ব্যবসাকেন্দ্রে ব্রাক ও সাবব্রাক আছে।

শ্রীহরিদাস ভট্টাচার্য  
ম্যানেজিং ডিরেক্টর।

**হিন্দুস্থান**

রক্ষার হুজুর্ অীবন-বীমা। পূর্ষ আতীর অীবনের গেরটকন  
অনন, পুখিবীর আশা-করসার স্থল। পূর্ষকে বাচাইয়া রাখিবাব  
যাবার সার্থকতা আছে, তাহার গুণাবণ অপরিণীম। বে  
র অতিপালন করে, সেই ত সঙ্গাবের প্রধান আঙ্গর। তাহারি  
হিকে পূর্ষ-নীত রচিত হয়। তাহার অভাবে পূর্ষ-সঙ্গাব বিলম্ব  
কির হইয়া পড়ে—পারিবারিক বন্ধনও শিথিল হইয়া আসে।  
সই অতিপালকের স্থানে অীবন-বীমা সঙ্গাব অতিপালনের হুজুর্  
হণ করে, পূর্ষ-সঙ্গাব কসের হাত হইতে রক্ষা পায়—আতীর  
র শক্তি অব্যাহত থাকে।”

নুতন বীমাব পরিমাণ	প্রায় ৩ কোটি টাকা
মোট চলতি বীমা	১৮ কোটি ১৬ লক্ষ টাকার উপর
বীমা ভহবিল	৩ " ৫৭ " " "
মোট সম্পত্তির পরিমাণ	৪ " ৫ " " "
বীমী শোধ (১৯২৭-৪০)	২ " ২৫ " " "

র প্রয়োজন অনুযায়ী সম্পূর্ণ  
বাণ্য বীমাপত্র দিতে পারে—

**হিন্দুস্থান**  
রোটিং ইন্সিওরেন্স সোসাইটি, লিমিটেড,  
হিন্দুস্থান বিল্ডিংস্, কলিকাতা।  
আই, মাদ্রাজ, হিলি, লাহোর, লক্ষ্ণৌ, নাগপুর,  
ঢাকা ও ভারতের সর্বত্র এজেন্সী আছে।

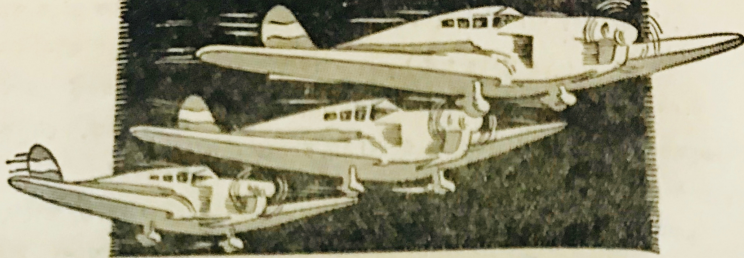
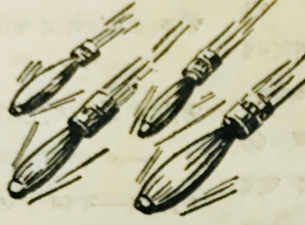
**এন্সায়ার অব্ ইণ্ডিয়া লাইফ**  
এসিওরেন্স কোম্পানী লিমিটেড  
স্থাপিত—১৮৩৭ সাল

সম্পত্তি	...	৫,৬০,০০,০০০-
চলতি বীমা	...	১৪,৬৫,০০,০০০-

ডি, এম, দাস এণ্ড সন্স লিঃ  
ঢাক এজেন্টস্  
বাংলা, বিহার, উড়িষ্যা ও আসাম  
১৮ ভারতেরি কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

ARANI, JULY, 1932

comprised only of them, a transition which is indeed quite remarkable.

আপনারই সর্বনাশ  
করা এদের একান্ত  
উদ্দেশ্য না হ'তেও  
পারে - - - - -

...তা হলেও ভাগ্য যদি বিমুখ হয়  
—ঘটনাচক্রে আপনি সর্বনাশের  
হাত থেকে রক্ষা নাও পেতে পারেন,  
কিন্তু জীবন বীমার দ্বারা আপনার  
আত্মীয়দের এবং প্রিয়জনদের দুঃখ  
স্ববিধাজনক সর্বের জন্ত ও সর্বনাশের হাত থেকে খুব সহজেই  
লিখুন :— রক্ষা কর্তে পারেন।

**ন্যাশন্যাল ইন্সিওরেন্স কোং লিঃ**  
৭নং কাউন্সিল হাউস স্ট্রীট, কলিকাতা।  
ফোন : ক্যাল ৫৭২৬ (৩ লাইন)

ADVERTISEMENT OF NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY  
PUBLISHED IN PRABASI, 1941

The theme of war was also seen in advertisements of this decade and should not be seen as as isolated from the Great Depression. The Great Depression brought along with it economic crisis in the interwar years and the War that followed after it only contributed to the crisis. The insurance advertisements that talked about the War were illustrated with descriptive texts in an attempt to



create a visual imagery of how an insurance can save one from the ensuing crisis of the War like the one in the following advertisement.

The advertisement that was published in Prabasi has pictures of air missiles and fighter planes and the text reads, ‘আপনারই সর্বনাশ করা এদের একান্ত উদ্দেশ্য না হতেও পারে।..তা হলেও ভাগ্য যদি বিমুখ হয় ঘটনাচক্রে আপনি সর্বনাশের হাত থেকে রক্ষা নাও পেতে পারেন, কিন্তু জীবন বীমার দ্বারা আপনার আত্মীয়দের . এবং প্রিয়জনদের দুঃখ্য ও সর্বনাশের হাত থেকে খুব সহজেই রক্ষা করতে পারেন।’

The advertisement implies that war may not directly affect the person who is reading the advertisement but if fortune doesn't favour the person he/she might end up facing consequences like war. A life insurance can save one from such unforeseen consequences. Another advertisement of the same insurance company (given below) resonates similar thought.

Another advertisement of Dominion insurance company also brought in the context of war in their advertisement and so did Hindusthan Co-Operative (both of which advertisements are given below). Hindusthan co-operatives advertisement itself is titled , ‘যুদ্ধ ও জীবন বীমা ‘ or ‘War and Life Insurance’ and the text that follows explains that War is inevitable and also temporary. The market rises and falls during the same however the benefits of Life insurances are immense that can protect one during the times of financial crisis. It also goes on to give details of their achievements in that year.

*Jugantar* carried the advertisement of Hindusthan co-operative who after the Great Depression in their advertisement gave detailed description of the profits that they cumulatively provided in the year 1935-36, to attract customers while during war they brought in the rhetoric of war in their advertisement. What is also significant in the advertisement of Hindusthan co-operative that along

# হিন্দুস্থান কো-অপারেটিভ

## ইঞ্জিওরেন্স সোসাইটি লিমিটেড

বাঙলার ও বাঙালীর নিজস্ব  
সম্পূর্ণ স্বদেশী আদর্শে পরিচালিত  
সর্ব স্বহং বীমা প্রতিষ্ঠান

### —নূতন বীমার পরিমাণ—

(১৯৩৬-৩৭)

২ কোটি ৮৩ লক্ষের উপর

—নো না স—

প্রতি বৎসর } মেয়াদী বীমায়—২৩  
প্রতি হাজারে } আজীবন বীমায়—২০

১৯৩৫-৩৬

চলতি বীমা	...	১২	কোটি	টাকার	উপর
বীমা তহবিল	...	১	..	৯৮	লক্ষ টাকার উপর
মোট সংস্থান	...	২	"	২১	" " "
দাবী শোধ	...	১	"	২৫	" " "
প্রিমিয়ামের আয়	...	"	৫২	"	" "

হেড অফিস

## হিন্দুস্থান বিল্ডিংস্

কলিকাতা

ব্রাঞ্চ—বোম্বাই, মাদ্রাজ, দিল্লী, লাহোর, লক্ষ্ণৌ, পাটনা, নাথপুত্র, ঢাকা।

এজেন্ট—চারণের সর্বত্র, ব্রিঃ ইস্ট ইন্ডিয়া কোম্পানী, মালয়, ইরাক, বঙ্গদেশ।

ADVERTISEMENT OF HINDUSTHAN CO-OPERATIVE IN 1937, JUGANTAR

with the dynamics of the economic crisis of the Great Depression and War they are also a Swadeshi enterprise. The advertisement reads,

## মনীষী বেকন বলেন—

“চিন্তাজগতে যে ব্যক্তি স্বল্পায় নিশ্চয়তাবোধ বৃদ্ধি দ্বারা পরিচালিত হয়, পরিণামে তাহার জীবন সংশয় ও সন্দেহে আচ্ছন্ন হইয়া পড়ে; অপর পক্ষে আরম্ভে যে ব্যক্তি সংশয় ও সন্দেহের দ্বারা পরিচালিত হয় সেই শুধু পরিণামে নিশ্চয়তার আশ্রয় লাভ করে।”

বর্তমান যুগে পুঁথি হইতে ধার-করা নীতিবাক্য বা আধুনিক পেশাদারের অর্ধস্থান বাণীবক্তারের যুগ বলিলে অত্যাক্তি করা হয় না। লাগসই একটি সাংক্ষিপ্ত বচন, কুঃ একটী বা ব্যর্থবোধক বেয়ালী আভ্যুত্থান প্রোতাহন বন হরণ করিতে বিলম্ব হয় না, ভ্রান্তি ভ্রান্তিতেও অধিক বিলম্ব হয় না, কিন্তু তখন পশ্চাত্তাপনার সার হয়। সুতরাং মনীষী বেকনের কথাটিং উচ্চতর জ্ঞানপর্ক উপদেশ গ্রহণ করিয়া হুনিয়াকে কিকিৎ সন্দেহের চক্ষে দেখিলেও জীবন আরও কল্যাণময় হইতে পারিবে এই কথা ভাবিয়া দেখিবার সময় আসিয়াছে।

ঐহারা অর্ধের মালিক ঐহারা বনে করেন ঐহাদের টাকা বাটাইবার পক্ষে ঐহাদের নির্দোষ পথই সর্বোত্তম, আপন আপন দীর্ঘায়ু, স্বাস্থ্য-সম্পদ এবং অসুস্থ উপার্জনের ক্ষমতা সম্বন্ধে ঐহাদের অন্তঃসাহা। কিন্তু অল্প ঘটনা বিবরণ নছে যে, বহু বুদ্ধিমান ও বিজ্ঞলোক টাকা বাটাইতে যাইয়া বুদ্ধির দোষে সূক্ষ্ম ভোগ করিয়াছেন, কেহ বা অকাল মৃত্যুর গ্রাসে পতিত হইয়াছেন, কেহ বা কর্মক্ষমতা হারািয়া বেকার অবস্থার পতিত হইয়াছেন। সময় থাকিতে আপন আপন অস্বাস্থ্য বুদ্ধিতে কিকিৎ সন্দেহান হইয়া যদি ঐহারা যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে জীবন বীমা করিতেন তাহা হইলে দুঃখের বোকা কিকিৎ লঘু হইত সন্দেহ নাই। আনবা তাই সন্মোহের প্রত্যেক নরনারীর নিকট নিবেদন করি যে, যতদূর টাকা বাটাইবার পূর্বে যেন ঐহারা সম্যকরূপে বিবেচনা করিয়া অগ্রসর হন এবং নিজ নিজ স্বাস্থ্য এবং উপার্জন শক্তি সম্বন্ধে যেন ঐহারা অথবা উচ্চ বা অস্বাস্থ্য বাহবা পোষণ করিয়া নিজে ও পোষকবর্ধের পরিণামকে কষ্টকাকর্ষ করিয়া না তুলেন।

যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে এবং যথাসময়ে জীবন বীমা করিয়া ঐহারা নিজের এবং পরিবারের ভবিষ্যৎ নিরাপদ করুন, ইহাই ঐহাদের নিকট আমাদের সাহসের অনুরোধ।

নিম্নলিখিত স্থান সমূহে “ভারত”-এর শাখা কার্যালয় আছে। ইহার যে কোন স্থানে পত্র প্রেরণ করিলেই সহর সহস্রর পাইবেন এবং সুব্যবস্থা হইবে।

আজমীর	করাচী	পাটনা	অমৃতসর
সমুদ্র	রেন্দুন	বাঙ্গালোর	শিয়ালকোট
রাওয়ালপিণ্ডি	বোম্বাই	লক্ষ্ণৌ	কারওয়ান
কলিকাতা	মাদ্রাস	রাজমহেন্দ্রী	কলম্বো
মাদ্রাস	জলপাইগুড়ি	দিল্লী	আসামসোল
কটক	ঢাকা	মৌছাটী	হারদ্বার (দক্ষিণাভা)
শিলং	মুলতান	মাজিরাবাব	এন্দ্রা
মাগপুর	বরিশাল	এলাহাবাদ	মাইরোবা (দি-ই-এ)
	পুণা	সেকান্দ্রাবাদ (দক্ষিণাভা)	সুরাট

## দি ভারত ইন্সিওরেন্স কোম্পানী লিঃ

হেড অফিস  
লাহোর

কলিকাতা অফিস  
“ভারত-ভবন”—চিহ্নরঞ্জন এভিনিউ

পাটনা অফিস  
ফ্রেজার রোড

জেনারেল ম্যানেজার—  
পি. ডি. খোসলা, এম-এ

ব্রাঞ্চ ম্যানেজার—  
অশোক চট্টাচার্যী, বি-এ  
(ক্যাডাব)

ব্রাঞ্চ সেক্রেটারী—  
এফ. পি. সিংহ

‘বাংলার ও বাঙালির নিজস্ব সম্পূর্ণ স্বদেশী আদর্শে পরিচালিত সর্ব বৃহৎ বীমা প্রতিষ্ঠান’

It talks about the principles of Bengali and Swadeshi and that the insurance company is guided by these principles. Hindusthan Co-operative Insurance Society was a public company incorporated in the year 1919 and the fact that they incorporated contemporary events in their advertisements to keep their business running is indicative of the fact of how advertisements were becoming the

important tool to keep businesses afloat. Again as seen previously in the chapter, the Bank of Commerce private limited used Rabindranath Tagores’ quotations to promote their business, Insurance companies too used the names and quotations of eminent personalities to gain reliability like the following advertisement of The Bharat Insurance Company Limited that uses the name of Francis Bacon (picture already provided in page 68) even though the advertisement was in the vernacular. This advertisement too appeals to the bread earner of the family to invest in Life insurances to secure the finances and security of his family. While smaller insurance companies like.



**ADVERTISEMENT OF BONGESHWARI INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED, JUGANTAR, 1934**

‘Bangeshwari Insurance Company Limited’ wrote phrases like-‘ ‘আপনার আয় যতই অল্প হউক না কেন তবু দুর্দিনের জন্য আপনাকে কিছু সংস্থান করতেই হবে.’ These advertisements talk about earnings

## যুদ্ধ ও জীবন-বীমা

যুদ্ধ এবং তন্মুখিত আর্থিক-সঙ্কট কোনো অসাধারণ ঘটনা নহে। মানুষের ইতিহাসে তাহা এক স্বাভাবিক অধ্যায় মাত্র। এই আর্থিক সঙ্কটে বাজারে উঠা-নামা হয় সত্য, কিন্তু তাহাতে জীবন-বীমার কোনো ক্ষতি-বৃদ্ধি হয় না, কারণ জীবন-বীমার মূল্য স্থায়ী, যে কোনো সময় নগদ টাকায় তাহা ভান্ডান যায়, বন্ধক রাখিয়া ধার করা যায়; সর্বদা আয়ের সম্ভাবনা থাকে, সর্বোপরি সম্পত্তি হিসাবে ইহার নিশ্চিত মূল্য বিচার করিলে জীবন-বীমা বর্তমান যুদ্ধের সময় সকল প্রকার লম্বীর মধ্যে শ্রেষ্ঠ

### আর্থিক পরিচয়

মৃত্যু বীমা	প্রায় ৩ কোটি টাকা
মোট চলতি বীমা	১৮ কোটি ১৬ লক্ষ টাকার উপর
মোট সম্পত্তি	৪ " ৫ " " "
বীমা তহবিল	৩ " ৫৭ " " "
ধারী শোধ (১৯০৭-৪০) ২	" ২৫ " " "

হিন্দুস্থানে বীমা করিয়া নিজের ও পরিবারের ভবিষ্যৎ  
আর্থিক সংস্থান সুদৃঢ় করুন



## হিন্দুস্থান কো-অপারেটিভ

### ইন্সিওরেন্স সোসাইটি, লিমিটেড

হিন্দুস্থান বিল্ডিংস, কলিকাতা

ব্রাঞ্চ : বোম্বাই, মাদ্রাজ, দিল্লী, লাহোর, লঙ্কো, নাগপুর, পাটনা, ঢাকা।

এজেন্সি : ভারতের সর্বত্র ও ভারতের বাহিরে।

ADVERTISEMENT OF HINDUSTHAN CO-OPERATIVE , DURING THE WAR,  
JUGANTAR,1939

being less during the Great Depression Years and promised to provide solutions to come out of it to be more secured financially in a distant future.

While there were 'poetic' advertisements like these, there were also 'in-your-face' crude advertisements such as this one that eliminated the man from the happy picture of his family and

আপনি যখন এই সুখী পরিবারে আর থাকবেন না—



তখন এঁদের কার তত্ত্বাবধানে বেঁচে যাবেন। আপনি কি জানেন যে, আপনার অবর্তমানেও এঁরা এমনি সুখী, এমনি হাসি-খুসী, এমনি বাহীন থাকুন? কিংবা তা' কেমন ক'বে সম্ভব? এর উত্তর হচ্ছে, ন্যাশনাল ইন্ডিয়ান ইন্সিওরেন্সের মত একটি লভ-প্রতিষ্ঠ এবং নির্ভরযোগ্য কোম্পানীর বীমাগত গ্রহণ করা। এই ন্যাশনাল ইন্ডিয়ান লাইফ ইন্সিওরেন্স কোং লিমিটেডই এঁদের রক্ষা করবে, এমন কি আপনার আর অস্তিত্ব সাধারণ হ'লেও আপনার পরিবার-বর্গকে অর্থ সাহায্যের ব্যবস্থা করবে।

**ন্যাশনাল ইন্ডিয়ান লাইফ ইন্সিওরেন্স কোং লিঃ**

ম্যানেজিং এজেন্টস্—মার্টিন এণ্ড কোং, ১২, মিশন রো, কলিকাতা।  
ভারতের সর্বত্র এজেন্সী ও শাখা অফিস সর্বত্র ব্যক্তিগত। MN 086.

ADVERTISEMENT OF NATIONAL INDIAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED, JUGANTAR, AUGUST 1933

directly implied the consequences that his family would be facing if not invested in a life insurance.

Last but not the least this advertisement that was published in the first page of The Mussalman, February 23, 1932 states, 'Mere Hugeness is Not Greatness.' The advertisement of The United India Limited which too was a life insurance company that had put in details of their progress of their

new business till the year 1931 in their advertisement..The term ‘progress’ that is used here is a key term because at a time when economy had crashed the message that it tried to convey was, a

**MERE HUGENESS IS NOT GREATNESS**  
**THE UNITED INDIA LIMITED**  
**IS GREAT BECAUSE IT IS PERFECT**

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**To quote Mr. G. S. Marathey**  
**M.A.A.I.A., Actuary :—**

*"Yours has been a Company which is unique among life insurance companies in certain respects ..... The successive valuation reports showed a strength relative to its standing and volume of business which could be envied by almost any other company.....Such progress will set an example to other companies and give a great impetus to the efforts of patriotic Indians for the financial uplift of the Indian Nation."*

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**Progress of new business and bonus**

1929	Rs. 28,31250		1916	7½ per 1000
1930	" 31,32000		1921	15 " "
1931	" 45,00000		1926	22½ " "

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*You never have heard of any Indian Company declaring a bonus of 22/8 per 1000 after keeping apart reserve of 62% of the valuation surplus. Facts like these will make history in Indian Insurance business.*

*Please apply for particulars to*  
**Choudhury M. Hossein (Lal Mia)**  
*Chief Agency Office:*  
**2 LYONS RANGE, CALCUTTA**

**ADVERTISEMENT OF THE UNITED INDIA LIMITED, THE MUSSALMAN, FEBRUARY 23, 1932**

company that may not have been huge still showed progress in the trying times.

Many insurance companies in the 1930s were insolvent due to a decline in the market value of their large equity investments.<sup>61</sup> A lot of these insurance companies desperately tried to show increase in profits even during the Great Depression both in advertisements in English and the Vernacular (as shown in the following pages) it seems like a plausible conclusion that those who managed to survive did so by constantly advertising in order to make a way out of the bottleneck created by the

<sup>61</sup> Lawrence Kryzanowski Gordon S. Robert, Capital Forbearance: Depression-era Experience of Life Insurance Companies, Wiley Online Library, pp.1

Great Depression and in a lot of cases advertising agencies that were became more and more prominent during this time, helped them to do so.

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**PROGRESS  
1931-32**

DISCLOSES  
In INCREASE of  
**50%**  
OF COMPLETED BUSINESS  
OVER  
**1930-1931**

Influential Muslim gentlemen are specially invited  
to take up our agency.  
For details, please apply to

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**ASSURANCE COMPANY, LTD.**  
**10, CANNING STREET,**  
CALCUTTA

ADVERTISEMENT OF UNIQUE ASSURANCE COMPANY, THE MUSSALMAN, 1932



**লক্ষ্মীর বিজয়-বাত্তা**

১৯৩৬-৩৭ কার্য পরিমাণ

এক কোটি একাত্ত লক্ষ টাকা

—বোনাস্—

প্রতি বৎসর আজীবন বীমায়—  
হাজার করা—২০৯

প্রতি বৎসর মেয়াদি বীমায়—  
হাজার করা ১৬

সম্ভ্রান্ত ও বিচক্ষণ কর্মী আবশ্যিক।

ত্রিশতীন বাগাচী—  
ব্রাহ্ম সেক্রেটারী।

দি

**লক্ষ্মী ইন্সিওর্যান্স কোং লিমিটেড্**

হেড্ অফিস্—  
“লক্ষ্মী নিল্ডিৎ” বনোহোর।

বলিকাগ ব্রাঞ্চঃ—  
“লক্ষ্মী নিল্ডিৎ” ৭, এন্সামানেড্ ইস্ট্।

ADVERTISEMENT OF LAKSHMI INSURANCE COMPANY,  
JUGANTAR, 1937

### Advertising Agencies During the Great Depression

As discussed in the previous chapter there were several advertising agencies both foreign and Indian that were in existence during this period. Although there is a scarcity of sources, the roles that these

advertising agencies played during this time are extremely significant because these were the agencies that were helping businesses stay afloat in the market at a time of an economic depression while they themselves were business companies that needed to bring in new innovations in the world of advertisement to keep their business running. One such company was the J. Water Thompson of the USA which opened shop in Bombay in 1929 to serve General Motors. This company as Arun Chaudhuri writes was destined to shape Indian advertising, more than any other organisation for almost 80 years, leading all the way till the end of the 1990s.<sup>62</sup> Conclusions can be drawn from the fact that the J. Walter Thompson (JWT) advertising agency, based in New York, which was a pioneer in international advertising, and in the late 1920s and early 1930s opened thirty-four branch offices in Europe, the Middle East, South Africa, India, Australia, and South America,<sup>63</sup> writes in their website, '*Despite the harsh economic climate during the Great Depression, the J. Walter Thompson Agency continued to pioneer the medium of radio with radio soap operas and other types of entertainment programming.*' An American company, advertising agency that was facing the Great Depression first hand would definitely take significant innovative measures in advertising to ensure that their clients business ran smoothly during the economic crisis brought in by the Great Depression. Jeff Merron writes, despite a significant Depression-related economic downturn, JWT did well during the Depression-especially compared to other businesses and ad agencies.<sup>64</sup> "In 1932, at the depths of the depression, JWT overseas operations still managed to show a modest profit. The company's fourteen remaining offices (including two fast-growing ones in Canada) served 248 accounts. International billings in 1932 amounted to \$6,000,000."

Although JWT formed strong relationships with many other firms overseas in the 1920s and 1930s, the General Motors account supported a hastily-planned, swift and aggressive expansion that forced

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<sup>62</sup> Arun Chaudhuri, Tata McGraw-Hill Education, History of Early Indian Advertising, pp.208

<sup>63</sup> Jeff Merron Putting Foreign Consumers on the Map: J. Walter Thompson's Struggle with General Motors' International Advertising Account in the 1920s, Source: The Business History Review, Vol. 73, No. 3 (Autumn, 1999), pp. 467

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*

JWT to maintain its presence abroad through the Depression. JWT was, at the time, obsessed with survey research methods. The company was determined to provide market investigations for clients. What is most striking about the results of JWT's research and its application to international campaigns is that, despite its awareness of the subtle differences between cultures, the company by 1929 seemed to have settled into the use of "pattern" copy and illustrations that could be adapted for any country. This material would largely be generated from a New York-based international department, whose primary mission would be to standardize GM advertising world-wide. This was not a novel idea, as it was widely discussed and hotly debated among international advertisers throughout the 1920s. The decision to use "pattern advertising" had both economic and philosophical underpinnings. The use of a standardized portfolio cut down on the amount of creative work each individual office had to do, saving precious time and money and reducing the risk for mistakes. The international branches could spend more time on financially rewarding labors, like soliciting new clients. Philosophically, JWT men sought to create an international image for each GM line, an image that would eventually become recognizable to all who cared about automobiles. An ad placed in Indian magazines in June 1931, exemplifies this philosophy. "The World's Smart Thoroughfares know the quiet purr of its motor" refers to no single individual as a driver of the Chevrolet, but the car is portrayed as "accepted" by prominent, wealthy, and classy individuals. These people are linked together despite geographic distance: as the ads photograph of a Chevy in Buenos Aires indicates, upper-class Indians could be part of a world culture of upper-class people, and the Chevy could serve as a visible link.<sup>65</sup> In India, Thompson targeted the literate strata in cities which its reports estimated at about 13 percent of the urban population.

J.Walter Thompson &Co. also helped Lever Brothers launch the famous "B.O" (Body Odour) campaign for Lifebuoy in 1930. The ads for Lifebuoy Soap illustrate the evolution of a campaign

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

that ultimately came to focus on the upbringing of children and a medicalised approach to a family health. Lifebuoy was one among many Lever Brother soaps, but unlike Lux and Sunlight initially found only limited demand among Indians. Lifebuoy's distinguishing characteristic was that it was a "Carbolic soap"-made with carbolic acid, an organic compound with disinfectant, bacteria-killing qualities. Having already achieved a significant market for Lifebuoy in Europe during the 1920s, Levers launched that famous "B.O" (Body Odour) campaign in 1930. This campaign, first devised by J.Walter Thompson &Co.(its agent before the company developed its own advertising) , highlighted the product's ability to inhibit body smells.These ads, according to Julianne Sivulka , suggested a series of social disasters resulting from B.O., including damaged friendships, lost businesses and failed romances.<sup>66</sup> The appeal of the product apparently carried over to expatriates coming to India, but advertising on the subcontinent remained limited.

By the mid-1930s , however, Levers executives were starting to believe that significant demand could be developed among Indians for soaps that could be marketed on the basis of their health appeal , especially soaps without use of animal fats.By 1937, Levers had begun to devote significant effort into advertising Lifebuoy, although the ads both in English and vernacular papers featured European adult male figures or European children taking a bath after playing in the dirt.The B.O. theme was not mentioned at all at this stage. Then in 1938, Levers launched an extensive appeal in 14 different Indian languages as well as in English. European figures largely disappeared from these ads, clearly reflecting a strategic decision to address directly an Indian middle-class audience.By 1941, Lever Brothers was spending 130,000 rupees a year on advertising the product in the hope of getting returns in the following years.Spending 130,000 rupees on advertising campaigns during that time was a huge deal and it is evident that a company like Lever brothers realised the growing

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<sup>66</sup> Julianne Sivulka, *Stronger than Dirt*, (Amherst, New York: Humanity Books), pp.186



**ADVERTISEMENT FOR LIFEBUOY SOAP, CHILD IN DANGER, THE TIMES OF INDIA MAY 9 1939, PP. 15**

importance of advertisements in order to sell their products in the years following the Great Depression.

There were two different strategic prongs in the campaign. The first involved emphasizing the importance of preserving the health of children from the danger posed by germs. The ads pictured various creatures about to attack children, ranging from snakes and tigers to fantastic monsters. One ad read, "If germs looked like this, you'd rush in to protect your child from them, but unfortunately they don't, you can't see them at all. Doctors testify that germs are the cause of disease and illness—and you can't even see them! But they are there just the same and you can defeat them! They breed in ordinary dust and dirt and you can wash that away with Lifebuoy." The ads addressed the middle-

class consumer as a parent fully committed to the principles of scientific medicine but insufficiently cognisant of the threat that germs posed to the family and unaware of the body practices (that is irregular washing with Lifebuoy ) that could overcome them. It is also to be remembered that there were a number of deaths happening in Bengal during this period from epidemics, which might also be the reason for Lifebuoy advertisements to shift their focus towards germs that spread diseases.

The second prong involved the introduction of the B.O. concept into India. Clearly, much effort was made. To adapt the theme to the imagined cultural priorities of the Indian audience. Themes of romance courtship and marital relationships were absent. Instead Lever's entered its campaign around the uncertainties posed by the middle-class couple's entry into new, modern forms of public sociality. Typically these ads pictured a crowd men and women from different communities in public places for instance in a bus in. A cricket match or outside a cinema hall. The ads stressed the danger that body odour presented to public respectability in these contexts. The logic in these ads ran parallel to that used in the health danger campaign, suggesting that Lifebuoy addressed invisible threats : "Many people have been failures in their public and private life because of Body Odour-for its so easy to offend without knowing. We never notice Body Odour in ourselves! And though our friends notice it, particularly in crowded places , they rarely have the courage to tell us." The person with a truly modern sensibility , this form of advertising implied, needed to recognise, that body odour could make proper functioning in the new society impossible.

There is significant evidence that the B.O. campaign did not resonate strongly among the middle class. Prakash Tandon insisted to his boss that the B.O. theme had little chance of working in India, since the obsession with body smells was absent. By contrast, the campaign stressing the threat of germs to children lived on though in a somewhat less sensational form. The monstrous creatures disappeared and the ads pictured the individual children engaging in play that led to encounters with

dirt and germs. The key theme now became dirt danger and the promotion of the Lifebuoy habit. The pedagogical tone continued with ads warning parents about the risks of children exposing themselves to unsanitary conditions and reminding them of the “Antiseptic” character of Lifebuoy. In addition the main image a smaller picture of a mother was sometimes inserted clearly indicating the specific family member the ad hoped to influence. The figures now in the ads were clearly Indian, even in newspapers with a high European readership like *The Time of India* or *The Statesman*. By stressing the importance of the Lifebuoy habit advertisers ought to inculcate a long-term commitment to the project of securing the health of children through the sustained use of a specific brand-name product. In effect the ad campaign was brought in line with hygiene discourses associated with the middle class family. The carbolic soap’s sales pitch was clearly altered in response to a shift in Walter Thompson’s understanding of the priorities of its Indian customers.

J. Walter Thompson introduced a product that was already popular in the European market, in the Indian market during the Great Depression. Although there are no concrete evidence but the fact that J. Walter Thompson promoted the Lifebuoy soap in India immediately after the market crash in the Great Depression era is evidence that a product like Lifebuoy that is hugely popular in the European market and hence presumably widely produced needed the colonial market to sell itself during the Great Depression years. To add to it, the fact that the agency was constantly re-evaluating the market through research and statistics and modified their advertisements according to understanding of the priorities of its Indian customers proves that this was a time when special attention needed to be given to the colonial market in order to sell products that were surplus in the Western market.

It also proves the growing inevitability of advertising agencies. It won’t be an exaggeration to say that J. Walter Thompson brought in professionalism in the Indian advertisement scenario. Advertising agencies like D.J. Keymar which commenced operation in Calcutta in 1928 later

he's learned  
the LIFEBOUY  
habit too!

He is learning a lot just now, but nothing that will stand him in better stead than the daily habit of using Lifebuoy Soap. His mother can be proud and happy that her lessons have given him protection against "dirt-danger"—danger which is everywhere ready to attack the unguarded.

*Lifebuoy is more than a good soap — it's a good habit*

LIFEBOUY SOAP

L. 77-169 LEVER BROTHERS (INDIA) LIMITED

**LIFEBOUY HABIT IN THE STATESMAN, 1934**

opening a branch office in Delhi , B.Dattaram & company also created remarkable campaign for advertisers during this period of time. B.Dattaram & company created some eye-catching illustrated advertisements for west end watch and company consistently published in the statesman like the following.



DJ Keymar (Now, Ogilvy and Mather ) formulated this 1930 coloured advertisement for KC Das,

**DEPENDABILITY**  
"Plus"

**T**HE quality of Dependability covers most of the essentials of a good watch. It connotes accurate time-keeping, strength and long life, all of which are bound up with the name "West End".

Appearance is also, however, a factor of importance. A good-looking watch is a joy to behold and a proud possession. West End watches keep pace with the best and latest in case design and every watch is not only thoroughly dependable but also attractive.

Due to overwhelming demands and inadequate arrivals, we cannot guarantee to supply from stock every watch advertised, but we do our best in every case.

**NEW MATCHLESS (Top)**  
Nickel Silver, with Plain Dial No. 50

**NEW SILLIDAR (Bottom)**  
Nickel Silver, Radium Dial No. 56

Catalogue FREE on request.

**WEST END WATCH CO.**  
BOMBAY CALCUTTA

**ADVERTISEMENT OF WEST END WATCH AND COMPANY, CREATED BY B.DATTARAM &CO. PUBLISHED IN THE STATESMAN, 1933**

which pushes its canned rasgulla and was indeed a marketing innovation then.<sup>67</sup>

Whether they were in-house specialists or external agencies, whether they worked for foreign firms or for South Asian businesses, advertisers increasingly made a concerted effort to *Indianize*, that is to cease, merely reproducing European advertisements and to develop appeals that they believed

<sup>67</sup> The Economic Times article titles, The most iconic campaigns in Indian advertising, December 2011, Sourced from the Internet : <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/slideshows/advertising-marketing/the-most-iconic-campaigns-in-indian-advertising/slideshow/10979340.cms>



**COLOURED ADVERTISEMENT OF K.C.DAS RASGULLA,THE TIMES OF INDIA,1939**

would capture the imagination of local consumers.L.A.Stronach, who founded an advertising firm in Bombay during the 1920s, would later write: ‘the main press advertisements which came from Britain or America, and were placed direct with newspapers , to my mind were quite useless at product-selling,because they were prepared by and for the European mentality, and there were only half a million Europeans, including service personnel ,in the whole of India.’ Stronach developed campaigns for his clients around themes he felt would appeal to the preferences of the urban middle class.The American firm J.Walter Thompson Company let its clients all over the world know that

advertising would not be simply translated , promising instead ‘copy written on the spot’ by people familiar with local preferences. According to one internal letter, ‘the sales record of our clients is evidence of the ability of our staff to apply the advanced advertising skill of America, adapting and modifying it as conditions and customs demand.’ As they accumulated knowledge about prospective markets and sought to Indianize their appeal, professional advertisers collectively came to centre their advertising pitches around certain images and values. There are certain questions that will occur in anyone’s mind who sees this advertisement that why did the figures in the advertisement look the way they looked? What were they trying to convey? What are the kind of images that these advertisements are trying to construct and to whom? These questions bring us to the next section of this chapter.

### **Politics of Representation and Modes of Image Production**

The multinational corporations realised that if they were to capture this market, Indian consumers would have to be persuaded to buy their products. Archival research combined with an analysis of advertisement suggests that professional advertisers conceived of the Indian market in three broad segments. First there were the European expatriates and wealthy Indian consumers, who may have been small in number but who had high disposable incomes and high expectations of comfort and luxury. Advertisements targeting these buyers were primarily printed in the English-language press such as *The Statesman* like the above advertisement of Horlicks targeted at the sahibs and the memsahibs who ruled pre-independence India.

Second, there were the middle-class consumers’ much larger category of people , but with more modest earnings and significant anxieties about liberal spending on commodities. They could be reached through vernacular newspapers and English -language papers with nationalist reputations, as well as through a variety of other media, including billboards and cinema ads. Finally, there were



**ADVERTISEMENT OF HORLICKS, THE STATESMAN, 1937**

thermal population and the urban underclasses. Global firms for the most part regarded this last market segment as too poor and illiterate to be affected by advertising.<sup>68</sup> Moreover it is important to remember that advertisements barely reached beyond India's urban communities. Hence it is only natural that the advertisements published in the newspapers and periodicals of this time had a more urban character.<sup>69</sup> An exception was Lever Brothers, which by the 1930s was using a system of travelling lorries to demonstrate and distribute its good in the Indian countryside.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Douglas Haynes, *Brand-name Advertising and the Making of the modern conjugal family*, Marg publishers, pp.88

<sup>69</sup> Trivedi Lisa, *Visually Mapping the "Nation": Swadeshi Politics in Nationalist India, 1920-1930*, Source: *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Feb., 2003), pp. 11-41

<sup>70</sup> "Report on Visit to United Traders, India conducted by Mr. Budget-Meakin and Mr. Knox in January 1934", p.20

Advertisement for Indian and global companies expanded and changed its character between the two world wars with special thrust during the Great Depression. Before the Great Depression advertisements that were submitted by local businesses were formulated consisting mostly of long verbal messages and very simple drawings in order to market their goods. European firms did advertise during the period as well, though their notices usually reflected limited investment and often involved straightforward replication of appeals drawn up in the metropole, ones relying on European images and captions. During the Great Depression, global and Indian consumer-oriented companies began to devote significantly more resources to advertising. Sometimes they managed their own marketing efforts on the subcontinent by hiring advertising specialists directly. In other cases, they employed professional advertising agencies to do the job.

There was a common goal that all of these advertisers tried to achieve, the goal of creating an image that resonates with their target audience so that they can be persuaded to buy the product that is being advertised. These images that advertising creates makes it a commercial tool, a social language, a genre of spectator/reader experience, a technique of persuasion. It transforms advertising into almost a world in its own right with its own languages customs and history and one that sets the tone and pace for large parts of people's lives.<sup>71</sup> The definitive role of advertising as industry, ideology and form of popular culture will remain debatable for the foreseeable future. However what can be asserted with some degree of certainty is advertising is at the forefront of keeping global economy afloat during the Great Depression even in Bengal. Beyond its purported, yet contentious role in stimulating consumption, advertising has been identified as

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<sup>71</sup> Steven J. Jackson, David L. Andrews edited, Sport, Culture and Advertising, Identities, Commodities and the Politics of Representation, 1st Edition, Routledge Publishers, pp.14

playing a key ideological role with respect not only to the legitimation of capitalism and consumer culture but also within the politics of representation and identity formation.<sup>72</sup>Theoretically, perspectives on advertisements have tended to fall into two contradictory positions. One approach has seen advertisers as figures able to engineer novel forms of consciousness that encourage radically new kinds of expenditures . In purest form, this perspective renders consumers into passive recipients of advertising messages, as persons whose minds are easily moulded. An alternative new has been to suggest that advertisers typically tap into powerful ideas and values already circulating in society. A sophisticated version of this approach is associated with scholars such as Timothy Burke, who has insisted that, to be successful, an advertisement needs to locate itself in ‘prior meanings’ understood by consumers.<sup>73</sup>

This section of this chapter shall look at the kinds of images that the advertisers wanted to create in the reader’s mind in the Great Depression years in Bengal under the broad themes of making of a modern conjugal family or the burgeoning middle class, constructions of masculinity and femininity and nationalism. Thus this section shall argue that advertisers neither created wholly new values conducive to unbridled consumption nor did they simply take advantage of a stable and fully triumphant set of values. Rather they became participants in existing processes through which different images were reconstructed and values reconfigures. This section shall do that by focusing on advertising in Bengal during the Great Depression for different kinds of consumer goods to illustrate the argument. through this examination , this section shall aim to explore the intersection of capitalism, the emergence of middle-class ideals, construction of gender relations such as notions of masculinity and femininity, nationalism and the dichotomy between the foreign and the indigenus, and consumption in colonial Bengal during the Great Depression.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Timothy Burke , *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe*. Duke University Press, 1996

As is evident from what have been discussed this far, during this period, many businesses in Bengal began to formulate more sophisticated advertisements geared towards generating a consumer base among the educated employees of the colonial administration and private companies. A lot of these efforts were directed towards men, who were generally believed to be the key decision makers determining how family resources were allocated. Central to a wide range of sales pitches was a common set of themes. Increasingly, advertisers drew upon notions of male responsibility as fathers and husbands within conjugal families, and evoked uncertainties among men about their ability to fulfil these responsibilities thus attempting to create new notions of masculinity.

As discussed previously in this chapter, messages for a wide range of insurance companies coalesced around a single theme: the husband's responsibility to secure the future of the nuclear family. In most cases advertisements took on a didactic tone, instructing the male reader on the necessity of obtaining insurance and the dire consequences of failure to provide for his wives or children as we have already discussed with illustrations previously. The nuclear family headed by a comfortable bourgeois householder -was visualised centrally in many advertisements. These advertisements constantly asked whether if the male reader were to die, the family would still have all those little comforts they have learnt to expect under his care or will the family be able to survive at all? Often advertisements turned away from pleasant images to more ominous ones meant to raise fears about the survival of the family and its status as middle class so as to imply that it was the male responsibility for the middle-class *bhadralok* to ensure that the bourgeoning conjugal family ran safely.

Ads for Horlicks too ultimately appealed mainly to male roles in the conjugal relationship. Horlicks is a "malted milk" powder consumed after being dissolved in milk; it was one of the most

commonly advertised commodities in India during the late 1930s. Early advertisements for the product were directed to an expatriate audience and stressed such themes as the nourishment needed to withstand hot weather. Around 1929, J. Walter Thompson took over the account and intensified the effort put into formulating ads. Under Thompson, Horlicks at first entered its campaign around two issues : the health of children and recovery after illness. According to one Thompson report these two target audiences “were undoubtedly good specific markets since Indians really will spend money for their children and there are always a convalescent group who are immediate buyers.”<sup>74</sup>

**YOUNG Bank Clerk Promoted**  
when he got rid of **NIGHT STARVATION**

**AT THE DOCTOR**

Tired when you wake up, no energy all day — looks like a case of NIGHT STARVATION. ENERGY IS STILL USED UP DURING SLEEP. YOU MUST REPLACE IT. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND HORLICKS REGULARLY LAST THING AT NIGHT.

**GUARD AGAINST**  
"NIGHT STARVATION"  
(Savarni Kamjori)

**take HORLICKS**  
— you sleep soundly — wake refreshed —  
and have extra energy all day

**Special Reduced Offer!**  
Horlicks makes best when made in the Horlicks Mixture. Just send the tin from top of any Horlicks pack with An. 10/- (for the large tins) or An. 6/- (for the small tin) to P. O. Box 2229, Calcutta.

ADVERTISEMENT OF HORLICKS IN THE TIMES OF INDIA, 1938

By 1936 however, Horlicks ads turned to the middle-class male, and to anxieties associated with the new economy of urban India. The new Horlicks advertising drew from a set of several

<sup>74</sup> Thompson Archives, “Notes on Indian Advertising”, pp. 4-5



intersecting concerns. First, the advertisements grounded themselves in the familiar colonial stereotypes of the educated Indian male as “weak” and “effeminate”-stereotypes that were now brought into the context of employment. Second, they drew upon the related medical theories of enervation, which characterised Indian males as prone to “weakness” for reasons of the climate, lack of exercise, moral shortcomings and exposure to various illness. The ads were also steeped in the ideology of the middle-class householders and his responsibilities in the medicalised conception of the nuclear family. The ads in these campaigns utilised the language of the “night starvation” (as well as comic-strip mode of presentation) drawn from Horlick’s international advertisements, but they translated this concept, even in English-language ads into a vernacular phrase that actually meant “morning weakness,” thus alluding to the middle-class male fears of incapacity. In vernacular ads, the term “night starvation” was not mentioned, only “morning-weakness.”

Most of the ads, which were repeatedly run in Indian papers from 1937 to 1939, followed a similar narrative in their sequence. In each, the main figure is a male who is failing at work and whose boss sometimes European, scolds him for poor performance. After advice from some third party, he seeks out a doctor, who diagnoses him as suffering from “night starvation” and urges him to take

Horlicks daily. In the last frame, reinvigorated, he has achieved success and has won his promotion or has avoided being sacked. Horlicks advertisements also promised to guard the Indian middle class man against fatigue from overwork. Ads featured government workers, shipping clerks, railway officials, police inspectors, lawyers, salesmen and even film directors. Horlicks advertisers on the subcontinent hoped that the theme of anxiety around masculine performance in the workplace would resonate widely among the middle-class men throughout India. In some cases, the potential workplace failure was tied explicitly to the danger that a father might be unable to afford his son’s education or even to have the energy needed to play with his children. These ads contrasted with the Horlicks ads directed towards expatriates, which stressed the products’ value in helping a European

wife to endure the stresses of India's climate or to have the energy needed to charm her husband's business clients in parties. And which avoided the subject of endangered masculinity or the insecurity of employment. Thus the formulaic aspects of Horlick's international campaign with the slogan of "night starvation" were adjusted considerably in an Indian context. In particular the ads built upon deeply entrenched perceptions of the male, middle-class body as weak, enervated and lacking vitality, but stretched these perceptions from the realms of military activity and politics into the office and the household. And these themes are not exclusive to just Horlicks. The advertisement of Dalda Vanaspati ( picture in the next page) also embarked similar idea. Dalda is a product that is consumed by everybody in the family. However in the advertisement that came out in The Statesman, there is a middle class Indian male wearing a half-shirt playing energetically with his two kids. The neighbour asks the wife, 'After his Day's work how can he be so energetic?' And the wife replies, 'Because all our food is cooked with energy giving Dalda.' So even though the woman says that their food (collectively) is cooked using Vanaspati, the advertisement highlights the energetic behaviour of the man of the family thus invoking a notion of masculinity playing into the rhetoric of how a man should be energetic all the time even at the end of the day. What is also interesting to observe is that, the advertisement does not take into consideration the wife's day's work,

AFTER HIS DAY'S WORK HOW CAN HE BE SO ENERGETIC?

BECAUSE ALL OUR FOOD IS COOKED WITH ENERGY-GIVING DALDA!

There is extra energy in a Dalda meal. This pure vitamin-containing cooking medium is an essential part of a nourishing balanced diet. Give your family food prepared with Dalda — full of flavour, readily digestible — and Dalda will give them all extra energy.

**Cook with DALDA**  
— the Energy food

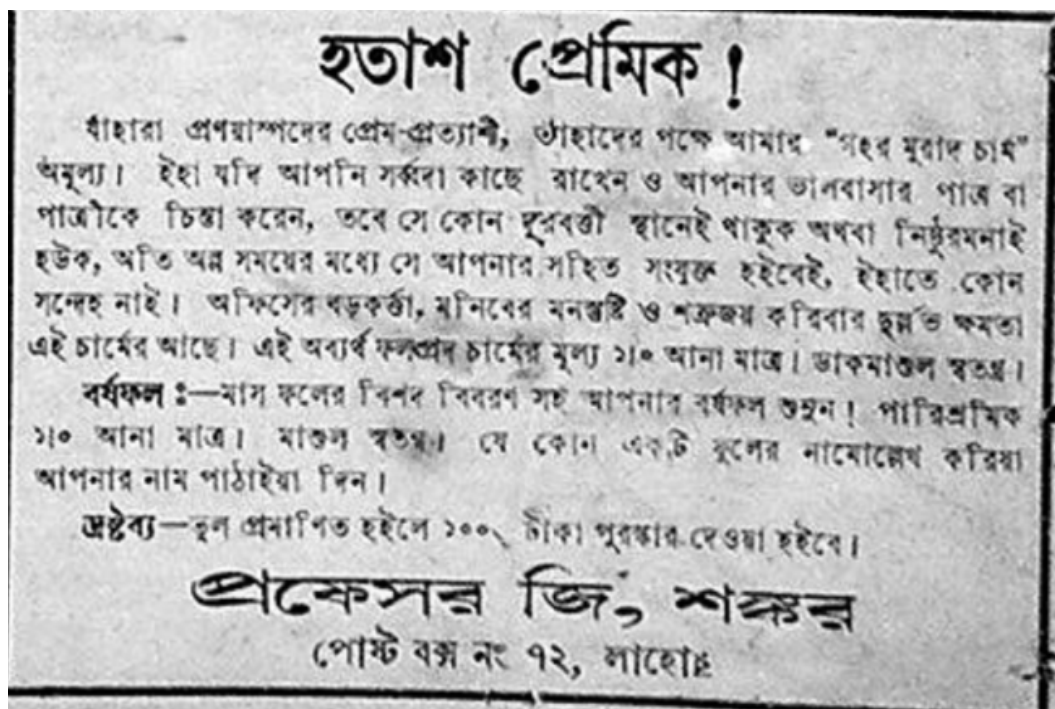
THE HINDUSTHAN VANASPATHI MANUFACTURING CO. LTD.

ADVERTISEMENT OF DALDA/VANASPATHI OF HINDUSTHAN VANASPATHI MANUFACTURING CO.LTD. PUBLISHED IN THE STATESMAN, 1933

which indicates that not many middle class Indian women worked outside during those times but

also the fact that household work was not considered work due to which one's energy needed to be replenished at the end of the day. Thus not only men but women too participated in constructing this new idea of masculinity during these time, through the advertisements which shall be discussed later in the chapter.

Advertisements of certain 'charms' in vernacular newspapers also resonated the idea of masculinity.



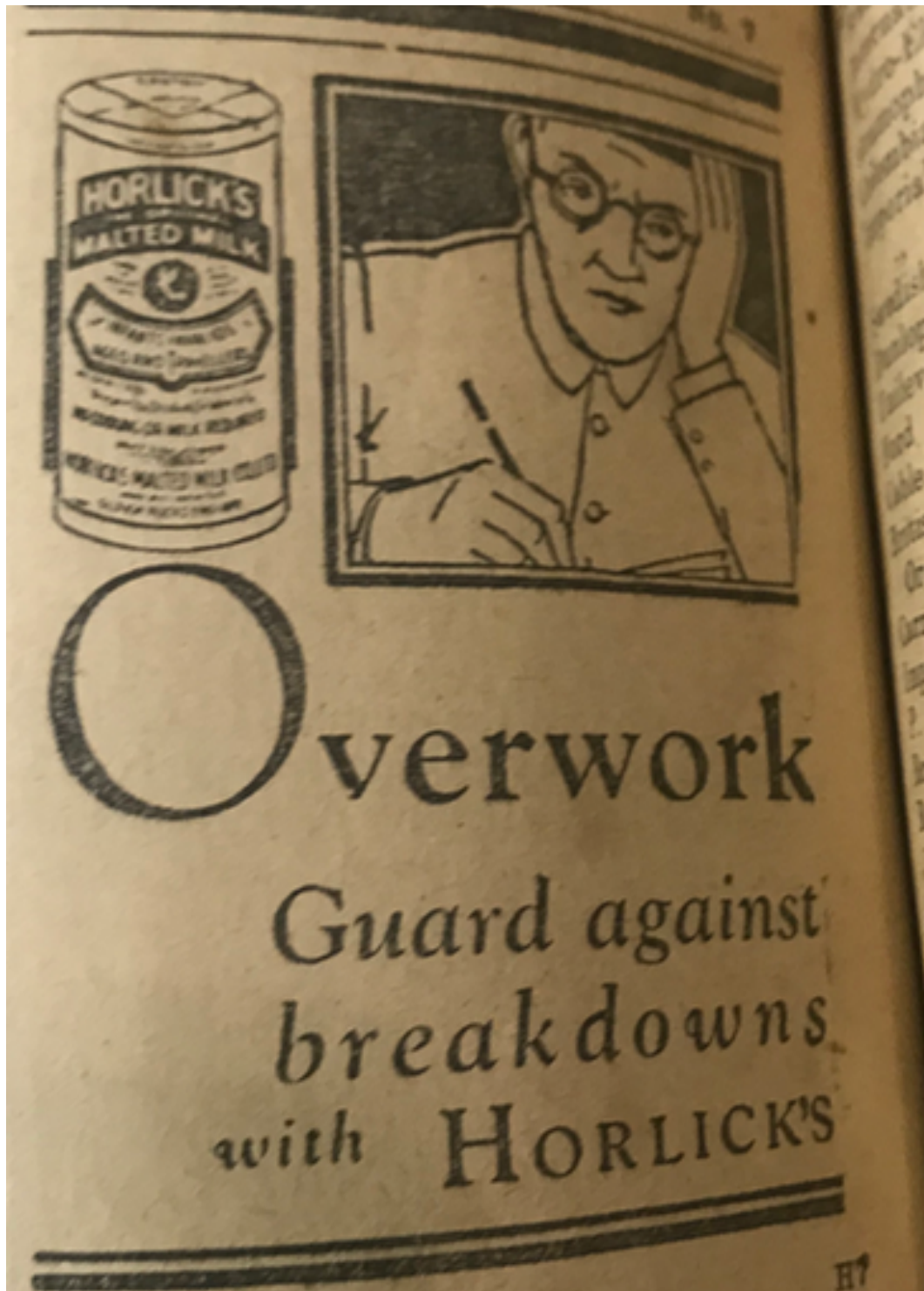
**ADVERTISEMENT OF CHARMS PUBLISHED IN JUGANTAR**

The above advertisement published in Jugantar , promised a magical solution to problems in conjugal lifeline the office, and even to combat enemies.

These advertisements embarked upon the idea that anxieties around masculine performance at workplace and home would resonate with the middle class male in the subcontinent.

The new Horlicks advertisements or that of Dalda, or even charms in the Great Depression years thus drew from a set of several overlapping ideas. First, the advertisements grounded themselves in the familiar colonial stereotypes of the educated male as weak and effeminate, stereotypes that were

now brought into the context of employment. Second, they drew upon related medical theories of enervation, which characterised Indian males as prone to 'weakness' for reasons of the climate, lack of exercise, moral shortcomings and exposure to various illness and like in the case of



HORLICKS ADVERTISEMENT, THE STATESMAN, 1937

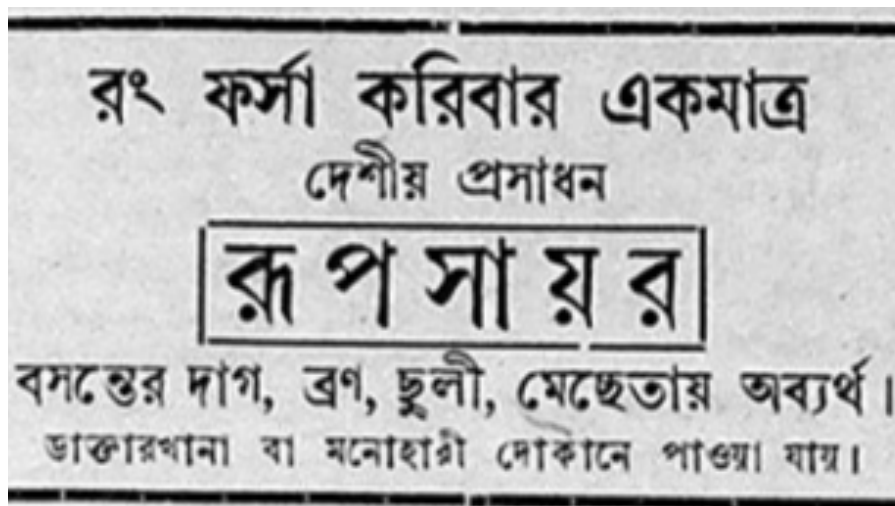
advertisements of insurance companies they also evoked uncertainties about employment and professional advancement during the Great Depression.

Tonics were perhaps the most common product line present in newspaper advertising between the wars. Tonic advertising had long addressed concepts of male weakness, concepts that had roots in colonial stereotypes about high-caste educated men. But by the 1930s, this kind of appeal often became integrated with a message that propagated notions of sexuality specifically associated with the conjugal family.

As much as the advertisements meant for the men wanted to construct these new notions of masculinity in the middle class family, how women were portrayed in the advertisements participated in constructing the new masculinity as well. The role of the housewife was no doubt central in many advertisements targeted at the female consumer. It is important to scrutinise how during the Great Depression, advertisers were trying to attract the female consumers and what images they were creating.

Ads for the women's tonic, Feluna, for instance, stressed female responsibilities, mentioning the importance of coping with childbirth, fulfilling domestic expectations and being more attractive for one's husband. First developed in 1908 by Graham Remedies, a South African company, Feluna was sold initially to white women residing in the settler colonies of Africa. In South Africa, ads for Feluna often focused on young women who sought to participate in forms of white sociality—parties, dances, athletic activities, etc.—where young men would also be present, and they evoked anxieties about failing to carry off this participation successfully. The figures in these ads had short hair and wore clothing and hats that reflected modern, glamorous styles. In the 1920s, Graham

Remedies began to conduct a vast campaign for Feluna in India. At first, the ads developed in South Africa were probably exported to India where they would be published without modification in English-language newspapers or translated in the local vernacular without much adjustment. Often the original European figures would be maintained, and the ads sometimes retained themes of expatriate culture such as the need of single women to impress men in attendance at parties. But by the end of the decade, Feluna advertisers, whose identity we do not know, were developing more targeted campaigns that distinguished expatriate and Indian consumers. Ads addressed mainly to a European audience continued the emphasis on extra-familial sociality, while ads intended to reach Indians often stressed the specific travails of the modern Indian housewife. The ads regularly portrayed women's bodies as possessing special vulnerabilities that could render them incapable of carrying out their conjugal responsibilities. A woman's life was portrayed as one of pain, especially pain associated with childbirth and menstruation. Some ads listed a host of specifically female health concerns, including womanly distress, "nerves", lowered vitality, anaemia, and digestive upset.



ADVERTISEMENT OF RUPSAYAR PROMISING FAIRNESS  
PUBLISHED IN JUGANTAR, 1934

Some of these ads were addressed to the husband, presumed to be the person obligated to serve as a guardian his wife's health . Often the husband was pictured as insufficiently cognisant of his wife's problems. "Your wife-is she suffering?" Ran one ad, "It is your duty to give her Feluna-made specially to combat weakness in women and to build up a sound healthy feminine constitution."

Another aspect of advertisements directed towards women during this time was beauty. There were a lot of advertisements for beauty products and hair oils seen extensively across newspapers during this time. Along with big brands like Lux and Pond's there were also indigenous brands harping on notions of fairness during this time.(picture in the previous page).

*A lovely outcast*

Pleasant company always passed her by. But she never crossed the reason. She didn't know that wonderful teeth are essential to attract, authorize and attract. Bacterial-Mouth the cause of stain, tartar and decay. We'll have it, and only our dental cream will remove it...JUST KOLYNOS.

**This new method quickly makes  
TEETH DAZZLING WHITE**

**THERE** is only one correct way to clean and whiten teeth quickly. That is the method long advocated by dentists and perfected by Kolynos... called the Dry-Brush Technique.

But switch to Kolynos and judge for yourself. Use a half-inch on a dry brush twice daily.

You'll quickly discover that teeth marred by stain, tartar and decay, and decayed at their necks by receding gums, are tell-tale signs of carelessness. Teeth will look whiter—fully 3 shades in 3 days. Gums will look firmer and plumper. Your mouth will tingle with a delightful, sweet taste.

There's nothing like Kolynos. When it enters the mouth it becomes a pleasant tasting antiseptic foam that cleans every crevice like no toothpaste you have ever used.

Dangerous germs that cause Bacterial-Mouth are killed and acid neutralized. No ordinary toothpaste can match its effectiveness.

**KOLYNOS  
DENTAL CREAM** EL

ADVERTISEMBT OF KOLYNOS DENTAL CREAM,THE SATESMAN, 1934



When  
He  
Come  
Home

**W**ILL You meet him with a tired face, dulled and wrinkled with heat and worry and the day's troubles, or will you come to him fresh as a flower, your skin refreshed, soft, beautiful and fragrant from the use of OATINE ?

**THE LOVING WIFE** desires to be ever beautiful in the eyes of her husband. **THE WISE WIFE** knows the way to the fulfilment of that desire. That is why she regards OATINE as indispensable.

**EVERY WOMAN** owes it to herself to keep the youthful charm of her skin unimpaired as long as possible.

**MASSAGING** for five minutes nightly with OATINE CREAM cleanses the pores, prevents wrinkles and maintains the delicate smoothness of skin which is the loveliest attribute of youth.

OATINE preparations contain no animal matter, and are untouched by air and in the process of manufacture and packing.

**OATINE CREAM—**  
For nightly Massage, Cleansing, Softening, Nourishing.

**OATINE SNOW—**  
The Daylight Cleansing Cream, Cooling, Soothing and Protective.

**OBTAINABLE OF ALL STORES**

**ADVERTISEMENT OF OATINE CREAM, THE MUSSALMAN, 1934**

The previous advertisement of a Dental Cream from the brand Kolynos is quite interesting. This advertisement depicts a woman enviously looking at a couple thus implying that use of this specific dental cream shall give the woman conjugal happiness and attract a man.

The best way of what message the beauty products wanted to convey to its consumers can be seen from the following advertisement. This is an advertisement of Oatine Cream and Snow that shows

the picture of a couple and reads 'When He Comes Home.' There are two parts to this

**HUSBANDS!**  
guard the health  
of your wives!

Your wife may never complain of illness, but when you notice that she is pale, easily tired out, and listless, it is a warning that she needs "FELUNA". "FELUNA" is a medicine made specially for women; its valuable properties overcome those ailments common to the female sex—Irregular Menstruation, Anaemia, Hip and Waist Pains, Maternity Weakness and the scores of other complaints that unfit women for duty as wives. It is in your own interest to give your wife "FELUNA" and in the interest of your future children, whose health and strength at birth depend upon their mother.

**Here's Direct Evidence!**

"I shall never forget the benefit my wife derived from using "FELUNA PILLS." From the moment she commenced using same she began to feel a different person, and I have pleasure in stating that she has this time given birth to a fine healthy baby."  
(Letter No. 766.)

"I declare that for a long time I suffered from female weakness, headache and backache. I was advised to take Feluna Pills, and I have used two bottles and feel quite another person. My complexion is good, and I will never forget to talk about "FELUNA PILLS." (Letter No. 949.)

**Feluna**  
FOR FEMALES ONLY.

FELUNA PILLS are untouched by hand in manufacture. Sold throughout India, Burma and Ceylon by all chemists, and stores at Rs. 2/4 a bottle.

*For the health of your womenfolk!*

ADVERTISEMENT OF FELUNA, THE TIMES OF INDIA, 1937

advertisement. First the text and second the illustration and why it is important. First let's talk about the text. The text reads, 'When He Comes Home, will you meet him with a tired face dulled and

wrinkled with heat and worry and the day's troubles or will you come to him fresh as a flower, your skin refreshed beautiful and fragrant from the use of Oatine? The Loving Wife desires to be ever beautiful in the eyes of her husband. The Wide Wife knows the way to the fulfilment of that desire.'

This advertisement very conveniently declares the desire of a 'loving wife' not even taking into consideration the agency of the woman as an individual but as a 'wife' and completely overlooks the fact that a woman's desire might just not be to be 'beautiful in the eye of her husband' and thus doesn't need to be fulfilled either.

The second and more important point in this advertisement in the context of our research is that this advertisement was published in *The Mussalman* in the year 1933. During this period advertisements in *The Mussalman* hardly featured women except for a few exceptions like this one. The couple is clearly seen dressed like how a conventional Muslim couple dressed during this time. But why is this a point of interest? It is a point of interest because, this is a brand that is taking into consideration the readership of the newspaper while advertising its products. Thus during the time of the Great Depression brands are being more mindful about their customer base and who they want to appeal to, a trait not seen earlier. This mindfulness is definitely in an attempt to market their products during the Great Depression in the best way that could be done.

The need to talk about advertisements in *The Mussalman* specifically, arises because of the communalism between Hindus and Muslims that was increasingly prevalent in colonial India during this period. There was of course the nationalist allegation that communalism is the product of the colonial policy of divide and rule through which the natural brotherhood of Hindus and Muslims was destroyed by antagonistic vested interests. This is a story that has sometimes blended

in with the economic one articulated mainly by orthodox Marxists and occasionally by colonial administrators. The former advances the idea of a mixed mode of production that combines capitalism with semi-feudal remnants, which creates a structural latency that allows those seeking to preserve their privileges to manipulate class conflict through communal disorder. Sharing an analogous framework is the community oriented approach. The economic variant of this is provided by Sugata Bose who concentrates on specifying macro-level economic dislocations. He argues that communal conflicts were a mediated consequence of the Great Depression which surrendered the symbiotic bonds between Muslim peasants and Hindu moneylenders. The former acted as Muslims because they were tied by religious bonds.<sup>75</sup> In the context of the thesis it is interesting that publishers and advertisers found it necessary to target specific newspapers and illustrate advertisements keeping in mind consumers from a particular religion, thus playing into the notions of existing communalism.

Most of the beauty products even hygiene products and even tonics as seen in the case of Feluna during this time thus instigated women to use them so that they can attract men thus helping in constructing new masculinity as well. (picture in the following page) The new masculinity that was not only about weak men finding energy, and staying ahead in the game but also about women and how they were meant to cater to male needs and how each product that she used had only one goal- to attract a man.

Another product that needs to be talked about is Tea. The advertisements of tea which went on to become the 'national drink' of India shall give us a clear picture of how nationalist or Swadeshi

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<sup>75</sup> Pradip Kumar Datta, *Carving Blocs Communal Ideology in Early Twentieth-Century Bengal*, Oxford university Press, pp.7

products were fighting against foreign products and how foreign products too tried to stay afloat in the market during times such as the Great Depression.

If, in the nineteenth century, tea became the "national drink" of the British, then, in the twentieth century, interestingly, various efforts were being made to make tea the national drink of India. The Tea Boards and Associations were using the trope of nationalism to expand their market in India. Though in their rhetoric, no trace of anti-colonialism was expressed, the attempts of the Indians, in imbibing the practice of tea nationally, ultimately fostered an anti-colonial attitude. Parallels can be easily drawn between the British and the Indian "national culture" of tea drinking that were being promoted. At the centre of this national culture remained the home. The domestic environment, congealed around the 'virtuous' wives, who had the duty of upholding this great national tradition of tea drinking in both metropole and in the colony.

The ripple effect of the Great Depression decisively changed the picture, however. International tea prices dropped sharply in the early 1930s. The prospect of a nearby market of '350 million thirsty throats only awaiting initiation' seemed more appealing. In 1935 the Tea Cess Committee was reorganized as the 'Indian Tea Market Expansion Board' (ITMEB) and it began the largest marketing campaign in Indian history. But many hinderances came from figures like Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy and M.K. Gandhi, who disregarded the claims of the campaigns and regarded tea drinking as a national disaster. There were various advertisements found in vernacular as well as English periodicals. As the habit and custom of tea drinking was not common amongst the Indian population of the first half of the twentieth century, the advertisements focused on the creation of a culture of 'proper' tea preparation and 'correct' consumption. Not only did the middle-class woman and her family feature centrally in these advertisements; aristocratic and working women as well as

*"I want the best," you say to your agent. You want the best possible equipment for your new plant and you are prepared to pay for it. As a wise investor, you have realised that money 'saved' on inferior plant will inevitably mean the total loss of your capital investment.*



When you are buying tea, exactly the same theory holds good. You naturally want the tea with the finest flavour—so you buy Lipton's. You find that, in addition to quality, you have a tea that lasts much longer—gives you many more cups to the pound. You have discovered true economy.

**RED LABEL**  
A Quality blend for strength and satisfaction, full-flavoured and pleasing.

**YELLOW LABEL**  
A rich blend of the choicest Indian Teas combining fine flavour, colour, and strength. Famous throughout the world.

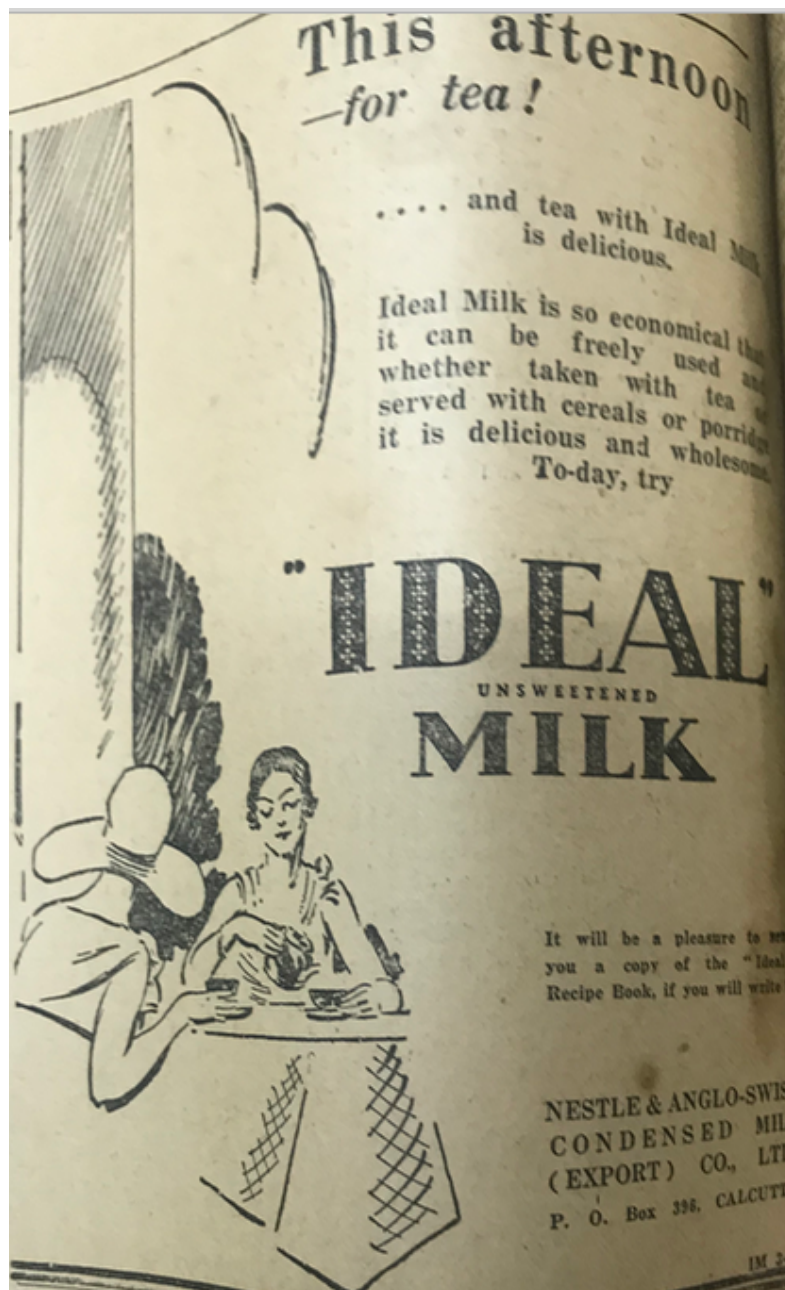
**GREEN LABEL**  
(Finest Darjeeling)  
The very best Quality Darjeeling with the exquisite aroma and flavour exclusive to hill-grown tea.



**LIPTON LTD**

LP 306

ADVERTISEMENT OF LIPTON LTD., THE STATESMAN, 1938



**ADVERTISEMENT OF IDEAL MILK, THE STATESMAN, 1938**

movie actresses were all associated with the beverage drunk to reenergize. While the advertisements addressed middle-class society and consciousness, they did so by also drawing on, and not distancing from, diverse class, caste, and professional contexts.

These advertisements evoked the idea of Indian tea as a national beverage and part of modern Indian culture. Tea advertisements thus shaped middle-class female and familial identities without

breaking the links to other segments of Indian society. Tea was promoted so much during this time that even milk was advertised in the context of tea like in the advertisement as shown in the following page.

The advertisements aimed at creating a culture of tea consumption through women by focusing on the woman who was either consuming tea herself or preparing it for her family (including children) and friends. The role of the creator and promoter of the tradition of tea drinking was given to the Indian woman. The Indian woman of the tea advertisements was no longer dark-skinned, possibly tribal, and located at the producing end. She came in a number of embodiments of the modern Indian woman who herself consumed tea, 'making it a good habit' and 'an essential and obligatory routine' and projecting the beverage as 'the only family drink' that was consumed 'for familial gratification'. While tea drinking was not solely considered a female pastime, the advertisements for Indian tea clearly centred on the Indian woman.

Moreover tea soon didn't remain merely for personal enjoyment. It implies a social and national responsibility. Advertisements of Lipton tea a very popular British tea brand conceived in the United Kingdom can illustrate this fact. While Lipton previously published the following advertisement that shows two British plant owners talking to their apparently Marwari agent wanting the best. They are the capital owners, so they shouldn't lose out on profit made from their investments. This idea is said to be similar when buying tea, so Lipton should be bought because it is of the best quality. More importantly this advertisement published in the year 1932, also talks about why Lipton is value for money and with Lipton one has discovered true economy. This was during the years of Great Depression and this constant reminder of why a product is worthy of true economy is seen even in the advertisements of British owned products. It is interesting to see that





**LIPTON ADVERTISEMENT, THE STATESMAN, 1939**

Lipton advertisements after 4 years started writing 'First among Indian Tea' in their advertisement thus reaffirming the nationalisation of tea that was going on during this period.

During the 1930s, the Swadeshi enterprises not only in tea but in other sectors too were advertising fiercely to promote indigenous goods and a clear dichotomy was seen between products that resonated nationalism and foreign goods. For example, the advertisement of White Horse whiskey



**ADVERTISEMENT OF WILL'S BERKELEY CIGARETTES, THE STATESMAN, MARCH 1935**

that claims to be the equal of a fine liquor where distinctively two White men are conversing about how they could blindly recognise when a liquor is fine can be seen in the advertisement. What is interesting in these advertisements is that, the products that were targeted towards the colonial rulers always maintained the image of them having fine taste and being elite . Another example can be seen in the advertisement of Will's Berkeley cigarettes that that helped one to 'stand out from the rest.'(picture in page 106).

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**SUPPORT  
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INDUSTRIES**

**ROSA  
RUM**

**CAREW & CO., LTD.,**  
ROSA, U. P., KATNI, C. P., ASANSOL, BENGAL,  
AND AT  
5, COUNCIL HOUSE STREET, CALCUTTA.

ADVERTISEMENT OF ROSA RUM,,THE STATESMAN, MARCH, 1935



"You're picking winners well today—  
see if you can tell this whisky."

"It's White Horse, of course—  
I could tell it blindfold."

The rare and subtle character of White Horse sets it apart from any other whisky. You can tell it by its exquisite bouquet alone. But it is the perfect blending of fragrance with mellowness and smoothness which makes White Horse Whisky the equal of a fine liqueur. *The millions of gallons of finest Scotch whisky matured and maturing ensure that the quality of White Horse never varies.*

# WHITE HORSE WHISKY

*Sole Agents*

Phipson & Co. Ltd., Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi, Delhi and Rawalpindi.

ADVERTISEMENT OF WHITE HORSE WHISKEY, THE STATESMAN,  
MARCH, 1935

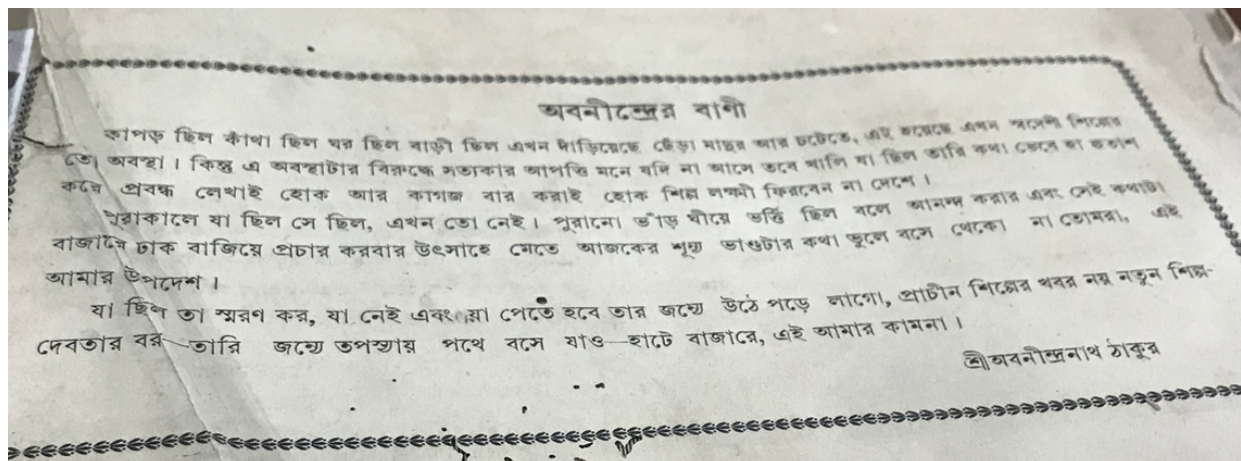
What is even more interesting is that, in the same issue of The Statesman where the advertisement of White Horse Whiskey was published another advertisement of Rosa Rum was published that just

said three words-‘Support Indian Industries.’ This brings us to the context of how Swadeshi enterprises marketed themselves during the Great Depression.

While such advertisements were seen in English newspapers , a greater number of advertisements promoting swadeshi enterprises were seen in the vernacular. It is important to remember that the Swadeshi enterprises were economically much weaker than the products of the foreign British owned companies. But the fact that they still managed to advertise during the Great Depression years proves that there was an urgency , a need to advertise to come out of the dire situation that was created by the Great Depression. It can be even more clearly explained by these words by

Abanindranath Tagore (picture in the following page) that was published in the year 1931 in Swadeshi Bazar Patrika, a magazine specifically aimed at promoting Swadeshi goods.

It says,once Bengal had everything, however one shouldn't bask in the past glory anymore but fight with renewed vigour and create new industries and fight in the market for the same.This is important because Abanindranath not only talks about Swadeshi good in the light of just them being indigenous products but brings in the context of the market in it as well.



STATEMENT OF ABANINDRANATH TAGORE, SWADESHI BAJAR PATRIKA,1931

While Mahalaxmi cotton mills constantly reminded one of the Swadeshi agenda through their advertisements, smaller mills like 'Basanti cotton Mills' also did the same.



ADVERTISEMENT OF BASANTI COTTON MILLS,JUGANTAR,1934

In the context of our research it is significant that such small advertisements of Swadeshi enterprises published during the Great Depression years constantly reminded the customer that their products were cheap but of good quality.

# 1857



## THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

What so-called history presents as the Sepoy Mutiny was, in reality, an Indian revolt which grew, as it expanded, into a war of independence—the first of its kind that had been seen on an all-India scale. Whatever supplied the spark that made the conflagration, the root cause was the emergence of a spirit of patriotic self-assertion which had been working its way silently in the Indian hearts through all the years of subservience since 1757, the black date of Plassey. The conflagration of 1857 subsided, but the desire for freedom from foreign yoke kept ever burning, seeking out newer channels of expression for its final consummation which is yet to come.

ISSUED BY

# MAHALAXMI COTTON MILLS LTD

Managing Agents: H. DATTA & SONS LTD, Head Office: 15, Clive Street, Calcutta

ENLSM 1/545

ADVERTISEMENT OF MAHALAXMI COTTON MILLS, THE STATESMAN, 1934

## **By Way of Conclusion**

The examples of all these advertisements clearly reflect the efforts advertising professionals were making to accommodate themselves to the demands of the time during the Great Depression. It also implies how it manipulates the values of the emerging Indian middle class, the emerging Swadeshi ventures and how the existing foreign companies battled to sustain themselves during this time as well. These advertisements departed from the kinds of appeals global firms in India had been making in the 1920s, appeals that had largely reflected the transplantation of ads originally created in Europe. Professional advertisers also clearly distinguished their campaigns from ones that their counterparts were using elsewhere in the world and ones that they themselves used in addressing an expatriate audience. Increasingly, as they sought to reach educated Indian consumers, advertising for a wide variety of commodities tended to converge around the ideals of conjugal responsibility, ideals that were acquiring salience in middle-class culture at that time. We have little way of measuring the actual impact of these advertisements on members of the middle class. By the standards of contemporary advertising, many of their efforts appear simplistic and sometimes comical. No doubt, middle-class individuals continued to buy large amounts of unbranded products in local bazaars; any conversion of the consumer into a well-disciplined purchaser and user of brands, global products was a very partial one. Rural dwellers and the underclass remained aloof from the project of brand-name capitalism. But at the same time, new forms of global business had come to recognise that they could not simply impose a Western set of ideas in India, and that they would have to accommodate themselves to preferences that were culturally constructed. Professional advertisers remained optimistic however that the Indian consumer would ultimately embrace not just their specific products but the larger mission of brand-name capitalism.



As they accumulated knowledge about prospective markets and sought to customise their appeal to members of the Indian middle class, professional advertisers collectively came to centre their advertising pitches around conceptions of the modern family, which was becoming central to the self-definition of the middle class. Advertisers seem to have calculated the evocation of anxieties about the achievement of responsible conjugality constituted the best strategic approach for prompting families to break with pre-existing patterns of expenditure and to buy branded products. Advertisers were thus playing in the vulnerabilities of the consumer. In some cases, they arrived at conjugal themes only after significant experimentation with other possible appeals, including themes adopted in international campaigns for the same products. But by the later 1930s, advertisements for many different products tended to converge around notions of familial obligations: as wives and husbands and as mothers and fathers. Advertisements stressed various dimensions of this appeal.

Thus there were not one but several converging themes that contributed towards how advertisements reformulated itself during this period. One of the main reasons for all these efforts were companies ultimately wanting to desperately to make their way out of the bottleneck created by the Great Depression in the economy thus marking this period a watershed in the history of advertising in colonial Bengal.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed at tracing the impact of the Great Depression on advertising in newspapers and periodicals in colonial Bengal between the period 1929-1930. In an attempt to do so, this thesis had taken up a deeper critical attitude and related it to a wide critic of capitalism, which is the way in which the late nineteenth century turn in capitalism created a worldwide market and the crucial roles that advertisements played in influencing people's minds as a means to create a class of consumers for the market in consumer goods. This thesis has extensively talked about the global impact of the Great Depression and its local ramifications in the colonial Indian society and economy specifically Bengal. As this thesis is mainly concerned with advertisements, this thesis has sought to see the advertising scenario in Bengal as a continuously evolving process and has talked about the various tools of disseminating advertisements, innovations and skills as well as the agencies responsible for manufacturing the advertisements. Finally this thesis has deconstructed the visual and textual representations in advertisements published in Bengal, in the newspapers and periodicals both in English and Bengali, during the Great Depression years. This has been done in order to fathom the modes of image production and the politics of representation in advertisements, thereby creating consumers and manufacturing consent in the target consumer to buy a product at a time such as the Great Depression when the purchasing power of most of the people were abysmally low due to the financial crisis which also led to serious unemployment.

This thesis has argued that an occurrence of such an extraordinary magnitude such as the Great Depression could not have left the world of advertisement unaltered in colonial Bengal. This is because advertisement is intrinsically related to the economy as it is the tool through which manufacturers create a demand for their products in the market and also because Bengal as part of colonial India during the 1930s was linked to the global economy. The thesis has linked Depression

with the world of advertisements within India and Bengal in particular to help situate the impact of the great depression on advertising within its appropriate historic context. This thesis has argued that advertisement in Bengal during the Great Depression should not and cannot be seen in isolation as there was indeed a boom in advertising in the 1920s. However, in conclusion it can be said that the Great Depression emerged as a major crisis that jolted world capitalist economy and colonial India definitely felt the impact of it in more ways than one. Advertisements were used by the business houses both small and big, foreign and indigenous, as a multifaceted tool to come out of this bottle-neck created by the Great Depression in the Indian economy thus resulting in innovations and newer techniques thus marking a watershed in the history of advertising in Bengal.

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