

# Home Shopping: Perception of Viewers on Believability of Teleshopping Infomercials

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Teleshopping is another name for Direct Response Television (DRTV) shopping, a concept originated in the US in the mid-1980s and flourishing across the world then after. Tele shopping is also known, as home shopping is a addition to the form of Direct Marketing strategy. The process is simple in which the marketers 'air' the products for consumers to watch on TV channels. The consumer if interested in the product phones up / email/mail the marketer or his franchiser and buys his/her requirements. The goods are delivered at home. Tele shopping offers a variety of benefits to customers, manufacturers and Tele shopping network and TV Channels. With the current economic condition there is a "wait and watch" or "postpone" behavior attitude amongst consumers. But, this is the time for innovative virtual retail. "Direct to customer" model has been doing phenomenally well in these times as it had been able to deliver value to them. It had been able to pass the benefit of no middlemen, directly to customers. There is a dilemma in thinking process of customer / viewer to go with the claims promised by these Tele shopping companies so it become vital to know that whether Tele shopping or home shopping viewer gives any thought on believability of these claims or it becomes waste for these companies by spending so much on air time without grabbing any attention of the viewer. The study encompasses the results of viewer perception on the Tele shopping infomercials and provides the insight of customer perception for these Tele shopping companies.

**Keywords:** tele-shopping, marketing strategy, infomercials

*"The basic concept of telemarketing is that you should be offering what is not available in the retail market. Why would anybody buy from us, if we were offering what is available in the traditional marketplace? We have to keep coming out with exclusive products practically every second month or so." - Mahesh Panna, Country Manager, Telebrands, in September 2002.*

## TV as a powerful medium

While producing a TV commercial, three important dimensions have to be considered - time, budget and idea. Of these, time is the most inflexible, budget the most oppressive and idea the most challenging. Broadcast television has grown faster than any medium in the industry. The advertisers can control the broadcasting of their messages because of instantaneous transmission method. This helps the advertiser to tie up their messages to news events and other schedule programme at different time of the day. Added to this television has the distinctiveness of providing the warmth of the human voice. The unique factor in television broadcasting is that its ability to demonstrate visually the advertised item along with speech. Television (and radio) can be more personal.

The **medium of television** is available to advertisers in two ways.

1. Broadcasting
2. Cable television network

Television can cover wider viewer ship and provide services through network. It also provides market selectivity and may be used for promotion, campaign, product launch, appeals etc.

## Coverage and effectiveness of Television Commercial

In view of its attractiveness and its unique characteristics, TV has made a remarkable impact on the advertisers and the viewers as well. It provides a unique opportunity to the advertisers to 'air' their messages to the audience using audio and visual characteristics. With its limited time span when compared to the print medium the effectiveness is immense and long lasting. The growth of television stations in recent times itself is an indicator for increased viewership throughout the world. Sighting an example, US have more than 1100 commercial TV stations and General Motors have spent more than 527.8 million dollars on TV ad expenses. Television has been the biggest factor in opening up rural market for consumer products creating higher level of aspirations among the rural folks.

## TV Commercials

TV Commercials simply refer to the

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advertisements on television. Three important factors are normally reckoned for production of TV Commercials. These are time, which is the most inflexible, budget – the most oppressive, and idea – the most challenging. Of course, the effectiveness of the commercials depends primarily on optimum mix of number of determinants such as background music, photography, artists, functional and esteemed values of the product and such others. TV Commercials can be humors, factual, Fiction, informative, emotional and factual. The commercials have one or more appeal of the above category.

### TV Commercials in India

In India the first TV Commercial appeared on January 1st 1976 from New Delhi TV station. Commercials on National network started only during the Asian games. Since then the DD has never looked back in covering the wider areas. Presently it is telecasting programmes from all state capitals and major cities. To-day the coverage is more than 80 percent of the geographical area. This only signifies the capabilities of the TV Commercials in reaching the target audience. The cable TV and Close Circuit Television (CCTV) have their own role to play in telecasting the commercials. The cable TV started functioning from Bombay during 1988 and the commercials started appearing from 1990-91 onwards.

The introduction of old melodies of yester years in the ads, using well-known cine artists, sports personalities, Persons of high social standing and other opinion leaders as brand ambassadors in the ads: the photography : outdoor shooting with natural atmosphere, : the presentation of products pairing the real life partners as models: Fantasies like Onida ads whose catch words 'neighbor's envy , Owners pride' , Use of cartons in ads, the ever fading jingles ('Washing powder Nirma'), are some of the means adopted by the advertisers to create impact on the target audience. Further emotional ads ('Hamara Bajaj'), have succeeded in creating a long lasting memories in the minds of the target audience due to the basic nature of our society.

Companies have been sponsoring TV serials, dramas, sports, Music concerts and the like. They are compensated by providing time for advertising. It may be remembered here that at the time of telecast of mega serials such as Ramayana,

Mahabharata, Sword of Tippu, Chanakaya, 30-40 commercials have been telecast at a stretch taking away most of the prime time making viewers to pay for a free and fair entertainment. Commercials using appeals like humor, emotional, fiction, factual, narrative are common for Indian advertisers.

Concluding we can say that it is unequivocal that TV Commercials have become the integral part of promotional strategy of the corporate society. These commercials help the companies to promote their products, to create awareness about the product and services.

### Tele-Shopping

Tele shopping also known, as home shopping is a recent addition to the existing types of Direct Marketing. The process is simple. The marketers 'air' the products for consumers to watch on TV. The consumer if interested in the product calls up the marketer or his franchiser and buys his requirements and goods are delivered at home. Tele shopping offers a variety of benefits to customers, manufacturers and Tele shopping net work and TV Channels.

Teleshopping is another name for Direct Response Television (DRTV) shopping, a concept that originated in US in the mid-1980s. It is one of the direct response marketing techniques. Other major direct response marketing techniques included catalog and direct mail retailing, and interactive/online home shopping.

### Research Methodology

The viewers watching the programs may or may not believe the advertisements during the purchase process. It is considered necessary to know what is the reason of doubt & believability in mind when they think about Tele-shopping programs. 200 Respondents under two parameters: Age & Gender are considered for the study and structured interview is administered to record the answers of respondents.

#### Objective:

1. To find out the level of Believability and Doubt of viewers on Tele shopping Infomercials.
2. To find out the perception of viewers on Tele shopping Infomercials.

## STUDY & FINDINGS:

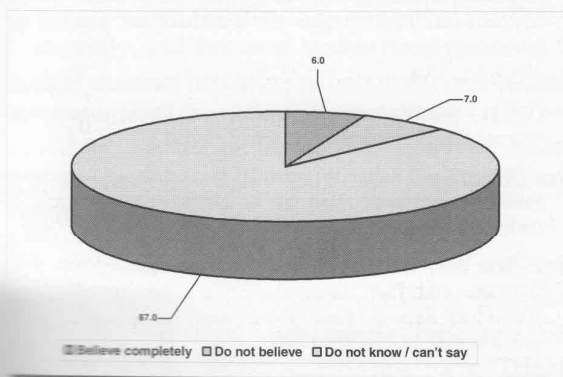
**Table No 1:**  
Believability about Tele-Shopping Programms claims by all the Respondents

Sl.No.	Believability	Total	%
1.	Believe completely	12	6.0
2.	Do not believe	14	7.0
3.	Do not know / can't say	174	87.0

Tele-shopping programmes project the products to claims certain advantages that the products can provide. The respondents may or may not believe in the claims made by the programmes. The data collected is tabulated as above. Accordingly, 87 percent of the total respondents are not able to say whether they believe the claims are not. 7 percent of the respondents agree that they don't believe in the claims made. Only 6 percent of the respondents say they believe completely the claims made.

Most of the respondents are not able to clearly mention whether they believe in the claims made or not. A mere 6 percent of the respondents who said they believe indicates that the claims made are not authentic.

**Graph No 1 – Believability about Tele-Shopping Programms claims by all the Respondents**



The believability factor as regards to products / services may differ with the age of the respondents. To know the variations in percentage data collected is tabulated as shown.

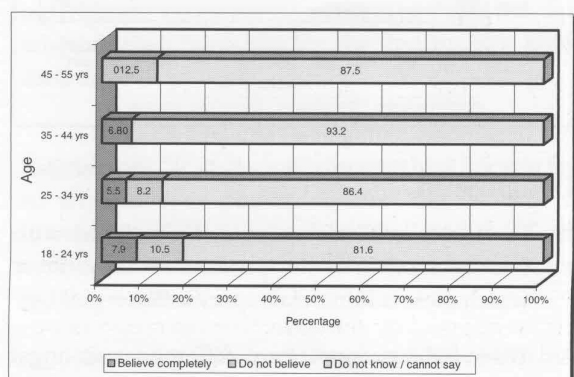
From the table, it is observed that 7.9 percent of the respondents belonging to group 18 - 24 yrs, believe in programmes completely, followed by 6.8 percent belonging to 35 - 44 yrs of age group and 5.5 percent of age group 25 - 34 yrs. None of the respondents of the age group between 45 - 55 yrs believe the programme completely.

Only 12.5 percent of the age group 45 - 55 yrs do not believe in the claims. 8.2 percent belonging to age group 25 - 34 yrs do not believe in the claims. None of the respondents belonging to age 35 - 44 yrs, believe in the claims.

The respondents who could not say anything regarding the claims, varies between 81.6 percent to 93.2 percent taking in consideration all the age groups.

It is therefore inferred that higher age groups i.e., 45 - 55 yrs do not believe the claims completely. More than 80 percent of the respondents do not know / could not say anything on the believability.

**Graph No 2 – Believability about Tele-Shopping Programms claims – Age Wise**



**Table No 2:**  
Believability about Tele-Shopping Programms claims – Age Wise

Sl. No.	Believability	A=38		B=110		C=44		D=8		Total	%
		A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%		
1	Believe completely	3	7.9	6	5.5	3	6.8	0	0	12	6.0
2	Do not believe	4	10.5	9	8.2	0	0	1	12.5	14	7.0
3	Do not know / cannot say	31	81.6	95	86.4	41	93.2	7	87.5	174	87.0

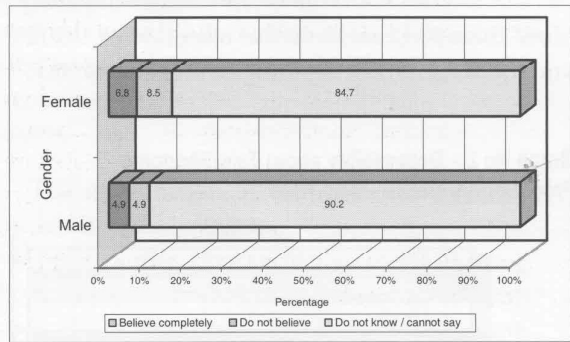
**Table No 3 – Believability about Tele-Shopping Programmes claims – Gender Wise**  
**Base : Male = 82 Respondents ; Female = 118 Respondents**

Sl. No.	Believability	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
1.	Believe completely	4	4.9	8	6.8	12	6.0
2.	Do not believe	4	4.9	10	8.5	14	7.0
3.	Do not know / cannot say	74	90.2	100	84.7	174	87.0

The data collected regarding their perception is tabulated. From the table, it is noticed that 90.2 percent of the male respondents cannot comment either way followed by female respondents representing 84.7 percent.

Only 6.8 percent of female respondents believe completely followed 4.9 percent of male respondents. 8.5 percent of the female respondents say that they do not believe in the claims made in Tele-shopping programmes followed by 4.9 percent of the male respondents. It is therefore inferred that 84 - 90 percent of the respondents cannot say anything about the believability of the programmes. It is noticed that more percentage of female do not believe when compared to male respondents.

**Graph No 3 – Believability about Tele-Shopping Programmes claims – Gender Wise**



**Conclusion**

1. The majority of viewers are not satisfied with the description of the product so they never watch these infomercials specifically.
2. There exist no significant differences amongst the profile of the respondents, be it age, and gender , the perception of the tele shopping is one of being skeptical and cynicism.
3. The Tele-shopping visuals are short being a live demo, short of an appealing or appeasing, thematic, associative, advertisement. The personal touch is missing and the consumer is not enthused to identify himself / herself with

the theme, story and characters of the advertisement in tele shopping. According to the study Tele shopping is proved to be an empty promotional vehicle.

4. The study indicates that 87.0 percent of the respondents are not very clear about credibility / authenticity of claims made in the programmes. This is more so with age group of 45 - 55 years. Considering the gender, male believe more than female.

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