

Who cares!



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Where's our 'Secret'?

Innerwear is a category, which is a mega market – each one of us has a dozen of them in our wardrobes – yet is the most neglected

The inspiration for the topic this time is Mr Kishore Biyani's tweet last month: "Been to Haridwar. Understood why we don't sell swimwear, we urgently need our own hosiery brand." That set my train of thought on the clutter in communication in the men's innerwear category and the lack of it in women's. There is quite similarity in both men's innerwear category and the deodorant. It seems as if women need neither as there are hardly or just a couple of brands advertised targeted at women. Do the two exist merely to seduce women?

The credit to instigate female fantasies cannot be given to Amul Macho. In fact, it was VIP Frenchie, decades ago. However, my rant is the nonsensical positioning each one of the men's innerwear brand has taken.

When every category is moving to create an emotional positioning, this category is getting coarser in its communication by the day, which is not on merit but on absurdity, such as 'Apna luck pehan kar chaliye' and 'Jo Rupa Frontline pehnete hain, wo aage rehte hain'. To my mind, Rupa's earlier communication – *Peheniye Rupa ki baniyan* – was to the point and still better. This tagline of course had that crude joke running around, that if you wear Rupa's *baniyan*, what will 'Rupa' wear? But since then, even 'Rupa' too has upgraded to lingerie from a *baniyan*, and I often wonder, why lingerie isn't advertised as prominently as men's innerwear, barring a few ads in regional print. The last TVC for women's innerwear, I can think of is Lux, featuring Tabassum and Reema Lagoo, and was downright atrocious. More recently, I saw a TVC for Enamor.

While most of the ads for men's innerwear target the SEC B & C, I wonder about the little or no branded options available for women in this SEC. It is equally true that at the same time, women have a high-end choice of the likes of Triumph, which have their exclusive stores. There is no dearth, of course, of brands in the luxury space. But there's little advertising about

them too. So how do women get brand awareness about these products? Is it a secret, which only women know, like the Victoria's Secret (which only Rajnikant knows). As for choices in the luxury space, men have none. The most they can get into is the premium (not luxury) with brands like Calvin Klein or Levi's or for that matter FCUK.

And I often wonder, why have marketers forgotten or neglected the needs of women, when particularly there's a dire need to bring awareness about the options – not only in brands but designs too – available and particularly an area where a little bit of education too is needed, i.e. getting the size right.

While marketers have taken a bold step in educating women about the need of sanitary napkins and even for that matter contraceptives, why shy away from educating about the need of wearing the right fit. Having said that, all the men's innerwear brands have brand ambassadors starting from Govinda, to Sunny Deol, Akshay Kumar, Hrithik Roshan, Saif Ali Khan... Mowgli (He blossomed in a *chaddi*, remember?) and Superman were the first to start the trend. I wonder again, why no brand catering to women has approached any female star to talk about the need and right to comfort, women are entitled to. If there are any, and I or you cannot recall them, it is as good as not advertised.

This is a category, which is a mega market – each one of us has a dozen of them in our wardrobes – yet is the most neglected by marketers. It is time for brands like Pantaloon, Big Bazaar, Madura Garments too leverage the category to the fullest, take charge and correct the communication too. On the lighter note, in return, if Amul and VIP have been fuelling female fantasies, it wouldn't harm the marketers much if they could ignite some male fantasies too. ■

The views expressed here are of the author alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Pitch.