

## Marketing Magic

Whoever said that retail sale is all about location, wasn't quite right. I think it's also got to do a lot with bullseye marketing. Pull a leaf out of the daily on-goings in our Thakur Village.

If you thought that only D Mart tossed up alluring FMCG deals, think again. For starters, the beauty biz in our area mirrors slick wheedle-deals, folks. The salons here are consistently reinventing themselves aggressively, akin to special, economically viable international travel packages. (Given that one is as good as the other) A salon here offers super saver deals, with sometimes, believe it or not, a bumper lucky draw thrown in for good measure. (Yes, an electric nostril hair clipper is often one of the prizes, and well yes, the frequency of these packages increases around festival time) It's a curious matrix, a kind of wholesome Mc combo meal.

You can get both your whiskers pulled and eyebrows tweaked for free if you shell out a cool Rs 500 or so. Of course, you gotta go the whole hog. Get half your legs waxed (peculiar concept, that) and be the guinea piggie for an 'advanced' haircut (layers et al). And yippee! win free hair consultation too. The tutored girls at the parlours rattle off the concessional rates with remarkable ease (considering that you'll probably see new faces at each visit). Some salons have got the mechanics worked out to the last strand. There are actual membership cards, to catalogue the frequency and the moolah quotient of your visits. When you graduate to gold class, you win a free pedicure or whatever. And yeah, you can book now and pay as and when you visit, in easy instalments. Never mind if the tools they use to saw your talons and graze your heels look about 20 years old. (As do some of our aircrafts, for that matter). But never mind, the price is the determining factor that drives in the janta.

Then perceive the floating (irrespective of Terrible Tuesday) population of bhajiwallahs. Kicked off their bakhras time and again, with their booty by the BMC men, they take roots easily within 24 hours at another location just a hop away. You've got to admire their resilience and ingenuity. They all have cellphones (RIM zindabad) and delivery boys akin to kirana stores, to take orders for fruits, veggies and eggs, whichever part of the Village they are located in at that moment. So you'll get your morning nariyal paani whether the BMC strikes or not. And taazi bhaji at your doorstep, with the masala, and Rs 5 discount. Cool or what? Actually the cramped quarters of many eateries here lead them to offer 20% discount on home delivery orders. So you can savage the tandoori chicken at home while catching your late night movie on TV. Even the paanwalla outside Thakur cinema delivers betel delights and puff sticks till 2 am. It doesn't get any better.

Okay, so we Villagers are a garrulous, fun and food-loving, market savvy lot. We burst spontaneously into songs at MDCs, cheer lustily when Ganapati Bappa comes every year and know a good deal when we see one. I say that's what adds to Thakur Village's special share of the realty pie.