ABSTRACT

The role of advertising in promotional communication has gathered considerable interest in the expansionary phase of Indian socio-economic milieu after 1992. New creative forms of advertising have emerged to serve specific marketing and communication functions. Amongst the popular forms of advertising, teaser advertising has shown a steady growth in use and application by the advertising source (advertisers and authors) over the last three decades. Teaser advertising may have started as an experiment in films but is now part of advertising strategies across products, seeking a stable space in the advertising creative mix. Besides, increasing number of products, shift in power from producer to the consumer has also led to increasing use of teaser advertising. It works on the premise of attention and interest as the most important functions of persuasive communication in the era of active audiences with specific needs, interests and motives.

The study was undertaken with objectives of critical examination of teaser advertising; its nature, role and functions. Both content analysis and survey method were applied. While the content analysis examined variables such as type of teaser campaigns, elements, message execution formats, teaser device, use of the media vehicle, communication objectives, branding functions and composition the survey was instrumental in providing detailed insight into recall, use and effectiveness of teaser campaigns. Findings established the need and efficacy of creative executions in general and teaser advertising in particular. Classic teaser campaigns were seen to be more popular with Indian advertising industry. The advertising agencies are working on the dual maxim of guess the next ad and guess the brand in the same campaign. Regardless of the medium, the innovative nature of teaser advertising is deeply embedded in creating a heightened sense of curiosity to be satiated only in the end like a suspense thriller. Use of visual and verbal devices to link all the ads in the campaign in print as well as television advertising as connectors is profound. The study established that the focal point of the campaign is teaser ads and not the final revealer. Creatively, it suggested that the big idea must be furtively woven into the strategy via copy elements to
increase the brand interest and make the audience stop, look, read and listen. Since teasers catch the audience attention, it is important to establish thematic and conceptual unity amongst them. The teasers must also show principles of unity and harmony in design through same layout patterns and use of background and foreground colours. Significant to note were the media planning and scheduling strategies of teaser campaigns in India. There existed a direct relationship between repetition of teaser ads and total campaign duration, more in television and significantly in print media. Besides, audiences found various uses of teaser advertising as a creative execution strategy in product promotion. The findings are similar to the existing studies on teaser ads in US and Korea where it has been studied in relation to curiosity cues and knowledge gap about the product in the past. Perspectives from the qualified professionals showed the direction in which teaser campaigns must progress. The specific objectives can be summed up in the acronym AEEIPR (Attention – Engagement – Entertainment – Information –Preference –Recall) clearly indicating a paradigm shift from mere persuasion to advertainment in product promotion. Importantly, the consumer gets motivated towards product trial after repeated exposures to teaser ad campaigns. It was established beyond doubt that teaser advertising is not merely a fad. It is a well deliberated strategy, spreading its base both amongst the advertisers and the audiences equally. It is evident that clients with product(s) at the launch and growth stage are adopting teaser advertising on a large scale. In addition to it, advertisers are spend generously on innovations especially to revive a dying brand or a product category. This study encompasses all creative and media aspects of teaser advertising through above the line media: print and television. This work acts a signpost for academic and industry research initiatives on not only ‘how’ advertising works but also ‘what’ works in advertising. It can serve a credible intermediate in academic conversation on socio-economic impact of advertising executions and the relationship between advertisers, agencies and audiences.