ABSTRACT

Advertising is the integral part of our daily life. It is a pervasive method of marketing in society which encourages people to purchase goods and services. Advertising contributes to bring about all round development of the economy by increasing demand and by encouraging economic activities which in turn improves the income. It motivated people to consume more material and thereby improves their standard of living. Effective advertising generates demand for goods and services and calls for more production which requires more physical and human resources, thus creating employment opportunities. A picture is worth a thousand words, but a cartoon is worth a thousand pictures, for it has an immense power of communication and mass appeal than any other communication tool. Humour doesn't require any preface. The word itself brings a smile on everybody's face. It has a universal language, which has been utilised by writers, politicians, filmmakers, and advertisers to communicate various ideas. It is capable of catching everyone's attention immediately and it is the only influential device that can be used to make people laugh and also send across a message in a subtle way simultaneously. No doubt, this is why advertising experts are competing with each other in infusing humour efficiently to sell their products and services. They are conscious that brand building and sales promotion are the two key goals that their advertisements should accomplish. Innovative and creative advertisers can develop ideas that are absolutely on par with the contemporary styles and can succeed in this area.
Each stage in the development of an advertisement is an exciting experience for the marketers. Advertisers use several tricks to gain the attention of the customers and one such tactic is introducing humour in advertising. When introducing humour in advertisements, marketers keeps in mind the target customers and the advertising message that they want to convey. Even though humour is considered a very effective strategy in gaining the attention of the customers, it is a hard task to design an advertisement that has the right quantity and quality of humour and completely goes with the product and instantly strikes a chord with the viewers. If the humour is directly related to the product that is being endorsed, attention towards the product increases manifold, thus improving the advertising efficiency.

In general, the factors that make the advertisements humorous are circumstances, characters, dialog and the backdrop against which the advertisement is presented. A minor alteration of a phrase, a single facial expression or even a voice modulation helps to attract attention to a commercial. The portrayal of humour in advertisements could acquire any shape. Advertisers believe that funny commercials induce optimistic emotions in audiences and can help in positive brand building and can also lead to better brand recall. What actually matters is how the advertisers are able to knock down the communication obstacles and change the mindset of audiences by making the advertisements exclusive and vigourous.

Humour has been one of the most accepted and utilised appeals in advertising that helps in putting across the message of the advertisement without frustrating the viewers because of the fun factor present in it. It enhances attention and liking, help diminishing the chances of counter
arguments because it distracts the audience from making cognitive responses. It has the power to have an effect on information processing for making purchase decision by way of attracting attention, generating pleasant mood, improving the brand name. Since humour generates feeling of pleasure and amusement, it has the potential for the feelings to become associated with the brand and may influence consumer attitudes towards the brand and probably the image. There are numerous fields that make use of illustration, and one among those fields is advertising, where visual images play a very important role in capturing the attention of the public, which promotes selling of a product. Illustrations are included in advertising in order to put a message to the audience. It persuades the target audience to have a look at the advertisement.

But sometimes illustrations can back fire, because the advertiser concentrates more on illustrations than the message. If the advertiser concentrates more on the illustration, then the purpose of advertising will be lost. Despite humour being an effective mechanism for drawing attention, it is crucial for advertisers to find the appropriate type of humour for the appropriate product in order to ensure success. Attention is enhanced if the type of humour used is directly related to the product that is being promoted, therefore increasing advertising effectiveness.

With this background, the present study has been undertaken to thrive the power of cartoons and caricatures as printed image in advertising rather than only to act as a mode of entertainment subjected to leisurely reading materials for children. Although humour is commonly used in advertising campaign today and due to the complexities involved in its measurement, the
actual effectiveness of humour as communications tool is still a subject of much debate. On one hand, humour can enhance positive attitudes towards the product being promoted but on the other, the use of humour may be regarded as unsuitable for the product that is being promoted. If humour draws attention away from the product or message that the advertiser is trying to communicate, then what is the real effectiveness of it as a tool of communication and why do advertisers still use it? The study focused on the changing approach of practices and applications of caricatures and cartoons in Indian print advertisements for various commercial purposes, political happenings where the metaphoric discourses and complex concepts can be simplified and transmitted with a single cartoon or a caricature, though film strips and animation had the flexible character in terms of disseminating the information for both visual gratification and social responsibility as a medium of communication.