CREATIVE EXECUTION OF HUMOUR IN INDIAN PRINT ADVERTISING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter analyses the various creative approaches involved in print advertisement which refers to adoption of certain advertising appeals used by the advertisers to attract the attention and interest of the consumers. The chapter also encompasses the practices, review and analysis of different elements used in advertising in the form of special or fictitious characters, cartoons and caricatures, brand mascots, trademarks which represents and gratify the visual appeal of the product and communicate about the brand and its offering to the consumers in various occasions. In addition, the chapter also focuses on the association of cartoons, caricatures and other imaginative characters with children in Indian advertising. The study also focuses on the case study of advertising strategies of Vodafone India and Perfetti Van Melle India for better understanding of the relevance of humour in Indian advertising.

The most basic role of an advertising message is to communicate information about the product, service or an idea. Advertising can create associations with the brands and create brand images to position the brand in consumer’s mind. The message is considered as a vital component in advertising communication process. While attempting to accomplish this, advertising does much more. The commercials that people watch on television, on radio, or see and read in newspapers and magazines can be a source of
information, entertainment, fantasy, motivation and sometimes a cause of monotony and irritation (Kazmi and Batra, 2008).

The first objective of advertising is to catch the attention of the reader. For print advertisement, this task is done by the headline, as it is the first element of the advertisement to catch attention. The next objective is to create interest in the reader’s mind about the product which is retained by about the key features of the product. The advertisement creates a situation for the prospective customer to enjoy benefits of the product. In print advertisements the copywriter stimulates interest by narrating a dramatic situation, citing a story with humourous appeal. The cartoons, caricatures and other pictorial images generate interest and retain the brand loyalty of the product. Apart from generating interest, advertising also creates desire for the prospective customers to enjoy the benefits of the product in a long run. In print advertisements, the copywriter fuel up the visualisation by using phrases and persuasive contents to appeal the consumers. The visual elements and appeal also differ from each other irrespective of the different types of advertising (Sharma and Singh, 2009).

3.1.1 Types of Advertisements

Every advertisement has the purpose to serve and this brings about the different types of advertisements to serve a particular job in a particular field. This is most important because the advertisement itself, its type and its appeal will have much influence on several other factors - the choice of media, the artwork, the reproduction process etc. Advertisements can broadly classify into two classes - display advertisements and classified advertisements. The
different kinds of display advertisements can be classified as Hard sell, Soft sell, Prestige, Reminder, and Humour (Rege, 1990).

The hard sell advertisement as its name suggests, is defined primarily to sell. This is the advertisement which sets out to achieve immediate results. The message is very direct and straightforward. The hard sell advertisement aims at encouraging an action on the part of the reader and offers a forceful and dynamic appeal. This type of advertisement usually introduces a new product. A soft sell advertisement on the other hand never tries to sell directly in contrast to the hard sell advertisement, which is usually descriptive and may contain a considerable amount of copy matter, perhaps with several illustrations.

However an well known product, and however large the share of the market it commands, the advertiser must continue to put his name in front of the consumer so that the later is constantly reminded of the product. The prestige advertisement is responsible to create and maintain a favourable confidence in the mind of the consumer about the advertiser, his goods and services. A prestige advertisement is designed to build prestige and good will, and so can also be called reputation advertisement. Like the soft sell advertisement, creation of a humour advertisement makes use of creative appeal with witty and funny proposition. The message in this type of advertisements is usually accepted and remembered. But these types of advertisements sometimes make the execution style more appealing and make the product less prominent. The idea is usually inspired, rather than contrived so the message is original, fresh and funny; otherwise it would have detrimental effect on the reputation of the product.
3.1.2 Creativity and its importance in advertising

Creativity is probably one of the most frequently used terms in advertising. It is the ability to come up with unconventional, fresh and unique ideas, appropriate and effective that can be used as a solution to the advertiser’s communication problems. The word ‘create’ denotes originating, or conceiving an idea or a thing that did not exist before. Though, typically creativity involves combining pre-occupied ideas or objects into new idiom. There is a general view that creativity emerges directly from human intuition, but the reality is that creativity can’t be learnt and used to generate original ideas (Kazmi and Batra, 2008).

Creativity refers to the “generation and presentation of noble ideas, differently, innovatively across the target audiences”. It refers to eye catching illustration that can create good recall value for the product. An advertising to be effective must have a big idea that captures the consumer’s attention, elicits a response and makes the advertiser’s product or service distinct from that of the competitors. The creative idea is effective when it is relevant to the target audience’s need, aspirations and desire. Creating a clear vision about the product to the audiences is an important job of advertising which builds brand awareness (Sharma and Singh, 2009).

Creativity is a fascinating and challenging area of advertising. The interpretation of an advertisement depends on the perception of the individual. While creating an advertisement, the objectives of advertising need to be evaluated which is just not to sell the product but also to create images in the mind of the prospective consumers. Planning the creative strategy is an
important factor in advertising. It is important to note that individual advertising situation is different in each case. Each individual advertisement or advertising campaign needs a totally different creative approach. Creativity in advertising also associates the visualisation technique, an important aspect of advertising. Visualisation is a skill to determine which elements an advertisement should contain and also how they should be featured. It is a process of creating ideas about overall construction and contents of the advertisement. It takes place before the copy is thought of and before preparing illustrations. It helps in converting abstract ideas into concrete forms or shape of layout of an advertisement.

### 3.1.3 Advertising Appeals

An advertising appeal is a statement designed to motivate a person to act. The appeals which the advertiser makes usually focus the buying motives of the customers. An advertising appeal must successfully tell what it wishes to convey. As far as possible, the message must be conveyed in a simple language. A good theme must be there to communicate with meaning of the advertisement. It should be distinctive and interesting. One of the most critical decisions about creative strategy in advertising involves the choice of an appropriate appeal. Creating advertising appeal for a good or service begins with identifying a reason for people to buy it. Advertisers build an advertising campaign around this appeal using different tricks and types of advertising appeals that influences the mind of people.

Advertising appeals are used to communicate and influence the purchase and consumption behaviour of the consumers. It refers to the
approaches used to attract the attention of consumers or to influence their feelings towards the product, service, or idea. Through the use of different kinds of appeals, advertising attempts to create positive image of the product for both the new as well as existing consumers. Some advertisements are designed with the intent of appealing the rational and logic aspects of the consumer’s buying process, and at the same time others attempt to stimulate consumers feeling, evoking some desired emotional responses. Advertising appeal can broadly be classified into three categories - rational, emotional and moral appeal (Gupta, 2012).

Rational appeals are usually informative and attempt to convince consumers about the suitability of the advertised product or service to satisfy their needs. They emphasises on the benefits of the product like quality, economy, convenience, comfort, and durability (Kazmi and Batra, 2008). For example, advertisements of consumer durable products such as television, refrigerators, car etc. highlights the quality and features of the product, emphasis on the brand’s popularity and special offers that induces rational reasons to buy the product (Plate 3.1).

Emotional appeal relates to customer’s social and psychological needs and stir up positive or negative emotions, that can motivate purchase of a product or service. The Emotional appeal can also influence the way consumers interpret their products usage experience. They may generate certain images, feelings, beliefs, and meanings about the product or the service. It can help differentiate a brand by making the consumption or use enjoyable. Emotional appeal includes both personal and social aspects. Some personal emotions that drive individuals to purchase products include safety,
fear, love, joy, stimulation, pride, self esteem, comfort, acceptance etc. Social factors cause people to make purchase and include aspects such as recognition, respect, affiliation, status and approval.

It can be further studied under two broad categories – one is positive emotional appeal and another is negative emotional appeal (Gupta, 2012). Advertisers use positive emotional appeals such as humour, love, pride, and joy to influence the buying pattern of the consumers. For example the advertisement of Johnson’s baby products show a mother’s love for her baby, and the tender care that a Johnson’s baby product brand will provide with, just as a mother does (Plate 3.2 a). Negative emotional appeal such as fear, guilt, shame etc. is use by the advertisers to get the desired response. Fear appeal for instance is used in those cases or those products that are designed to protect a person from loss of life or property. For example, several print advertisements issued in public interest for the use seat belts, safe driving, prevention of AIDS, anti smoking etc. have focused on the fear of losing one’s life (Plate 3.2 b).

Moral appeal in messages are directed towards audience’s sense of what is right or wrong, good, proper or correct thing to do. Moral appeals may be used for the purpose of exhorting people to support social causes and issues. For example, advertisements of Help Age India invoke a moral responsibility where we ought to take care of the disadvantaged older people (Plate 3.3).

While portraying the product, the target audiences must understand that the product is exclusively meant to satisfy the needs and wants. The message
should not be complicated since any complicated message will mislead and confuse the target audiences. Humour has been one of the most accepted and utilised positive emotional appeals in advertising. It helps in putting across the message of the advertisements 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 image. It indicates the quality which produces or mediates the amusing, the comic, and the witty. It is defined as the capability to be laughing at things, the way in which everybody sees that some things are entertaining, or the value of being funny. Humour has a universal language 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 (Sharma and Singh, 2009).

Advertisers use several tricks to gain the attention of the customers and one such tactic is introducing humour in commercials. The adoption of humour in has long been a popular technique in advertising execution, as it makes the advertisements more interesting. Many advertisers tend to use humour as the basic approach when their major concern is to attract attention to the product or service.
Over a period of time humour has been proved to be one of the best visualisation techniques in advertising to keep the customer laughing and grab his attention with creative ideas, forcing the audience watch, laugh and most importantly is able to recall the brand easily. With innumerable sets of advertisements all around, it becomes difficult for a product to grab the attention of the audiences which does not catch audience’s attention, cannot be expected to achieve its result. Humourous advertisements, by attracting the attention of the audiences, make the job of the advertiser much easier. These advertisements can be created by using an interesting and entertaining story line (Paul, 1997).

In general, the factors that make the advertisements humourous 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, where funny commercials induce optimistic emotions in audiences and can help in positive brand building and can also lead to better brand recall.

Feelings evoked through the use of humour can also lead brand positive associations, as well as increasing the comprehension levels of the viewers. In advertising, humour is more than just making a bunch of people laugh. Some of the best brands in India have used humour to such an extent that the viewers look forward for newness in humour each time they see a new commercial from that brand. By making use of humour the message is long remembered. To illustrate, for example brands such as Sprite, (Plate 3.4) in its advertising campaigns have used humour so intelligently and subtly, that it got
imprinted in people’s minds forever with continuous new innovative ideas and concepts.

3.2 COMPONENTS OF PRINT ADVERTISEMENT

After determining the creative approach, type of appeal to be used, and the style of execution, the next step involves the creation of the actual advertisement. The design and production process involves a number of activities which includes writing copy, developing illustration, or other visual elements to be included to create an effective advertising message.

Advertising in print media constitutes a major part of any advertising campaign. It is usually backed up by television advertisements and serves mainly as a reminder to the customers. While TV advertisements are more unstable and more expensive at the same time, print advertisements are relatively less expensive and have a good reach. They can be designed keeping in mind the type of audience the magazine or newspaper is expected to be read by. The key format elements in print advertising are- headline, body copy, sub heads, slogan and logo, trademark and illustration/visuals.

a) Headline: The first and possibly the most important copy element in the headline. The first function of the headline is to attract the reader’s attention to the advertisement and stimulate his or her interest so as to make them read the advertisements. The headline may also put the story of the advertisement in one sentence (Gupta, 2012). The headline contains the words in the leading position of the advertisement. They are invariably set in larger, dark type and generally set apart from body copy to make them prominent in order to attract the reader’s attention, to get them interested in the message. In some print
advertisements the body copy is totally absent, and headline along with illustrations, communicate the message. The headlines are used with variations depending on the advertising strategy. Headlines can be classified according to the type of information the advertisement convey. The following are the types of headlines- direct headline, news oriented headline, question headline, command headline, humour, benefit, and provocative headline.

b) Body Copy: This is the second major category which constitutes the text of an advertisement. A ‘copy’ means a written matter in any advertisement which might consist only one word or many words. Advertising copy refers to the text of a print, radio, or television that aims at catching and holding the interest of the consumers to buy the product. Copywriting in print is the activity of putting words to paper, particularly those contained in the main body of the text. The body copy contains the complete sales story and in the logical continuation of the headline and subheads (Kazmi and Batra, 2008).

It covers the attributes, benefits and the utility of the product or service. The body copy must be long enough to accommodate the complete message and short enough to retain the reader’s interest. Like the headline, body copy also has different styles. The copy supports the illustration and contains description of the product’s merits, demerits, uses, services etc. The various types of advertising copies are - scientific, straight, narrative, dialogue, explanation, endorsement, humourous, topical, prestige, personality comparative, colloquial, reasoning, questioning, prestige and disruptive copy.

c) Sub Heads: Many advertisements have only one headline, but one or more secondary heads called the sub heads, are also common. A subhead is an
additional smaller headline that may appear above or below the headline (Kazmi and Batra, 2008). Subheads are usually set smaller than the headline but larger than the body copy, and may appear in boldface or italic type. They are often used to enhance the readability by highlighting key sales objectives. Subheads are longer than headline, more likely than a sentence. They are used to support or to complete the meaning of the main headline.

d) Slogan/Logo/Symbols/Trademark: A slogan may refer to the basic theme, or USP (Unique Selling Proposition) of the product, or something with which the target audience would relate the product. Slogans are equally important as the headline. A slogan should not only be catchy but also meaningful because good slogan can last for a long time. Slogan is a clever phrase that serves as a reminder of a brand, company, image or theme. It is a phrase or sentence used repeatedly by an advertiser; company to create certain kind of effect on the minds of the customers (Gupta, 2012).

The word ‘logo’ comes from the Greek word ‘logos’ meaning ‘simply the world’. Logo is the symbolic representation of the company or trademark which is also refers to as signature (Sarkar, 2008). It can be a picture, letter, combination of both. Logo and signatures are special designs of the advertiser’s company or the product name. It is an important tool in quick recognition and identification of the company and for creating familiarity for the audience. A symbol is materials object, either two or three dimensional, representing something which is immaterial. A trademark is a symbol, figure, word or mark adopted and used by a manufacturer to designate his goods.
e) **Visual Elements:** One of the most important features of an advertisement is the pictorial representation of the advertising message. Visuals or illustrations are the major component in print advertisements, which captures the reader’s attention, demonstrating use, differentiating the look of an advertisement. The visuals or illustrations in a print advertisement is often dominant and plays a critical role in determining its effectiveness. They capture a mood and evoke a feeling, a context for the consumer’s perception of the product or service and gain the attention of the viewers and show the product in actual use situation (Kazmi and Batra, 2008).

The visuals in the advertisements emphasises the brand’s uniqueness and arouse a legitimate prospect for the product. The elements coordinate with the headline and body copy to enhance the overall impact of the advertisement. The activity of illustrating is of crucial importance for many consumer non-durable products, where hand drawn pictures and photographs are used to convey a central idea.

The purpose of the visual elements in advertisements is to:

- Capture the reader’s attention.
- Identify the subject of the advertisement.
- Convince the reader’s about the copy claims.
- Emphasis the brand’s unique features.
- Create a positive impression of the brand.
- Show the product in actual use situation.

In addition to the above components, few miscellaneous elements are also used in print advertisements such as – caption, blurb, and boxes and panels.
f) **Layout:** A layout is an orderly physical arrangement of headline, subheads, body copy, slogan, logotype and the visual elements into finished advertisements. It is a sketched plan of a proposed advertisement showing the size, positions and colour weight values of the different elements that makes up the complete advertisement. It shows where each component of the advertisement will be placed. It gives an overall idea of the advertisement irrespective of the copy space, size of the visuals with other elements. While designing an advertisement, the final development undergoes four stages such as thumbnail sketch, rough layout, dummies and comprehensive layout. A good layout comprises of the following features- balance, movement, gaze motion, structural motion, proportion, white space, unity, clarity, simplicity, and emphasis. For example (Plate 3.5) shows the various elements of a typical print advertisement.

### 3.3 CREATIVE APPROACHES IN PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS

The effect of a message is governed by not only *what* is said, but also by *how* it is said. To break through the confusion and make an impression on the target audiences, an advertisement must be unique and entertaining in its approaches. A major determinant of whether a commercial will be successful in changing brand preferences is its likeliness, appeal or the viewer’s overall reaction. Print advertisements that are well designed and executed, generates emotional responses and creates positive feelings that are transferred to the product or service being advertised. Creative advertising needs to be imaginative, intelligent, sharp and extremely catchy. It should focus the attention of the people on the product to create positive impact on the consumer through visual appeal (Paul, 1997). Advertising is said to be creative
if it contains some powerful idea, theme, visually impressive on central theme. Advertising creativity is the ability to generate fresh, unique, noble and appropriate ideas that can be used as solution to communication problems. To be appropriate and effective, a creative idea must be relevant to the target audiences that can push the advertising message into the viewer’s mind.

Effective visualisation is the devices adopted to make advertising more persuasive and interesting to the consumers, to give it distinction and make it memorable. Advertising execution deals with the way the appeal is presented. Straight talk, demonstration, comparison, testimonial, animation, fantasy, dramatisation, humour and personality symbol are some of the commonly used advertising execution styles. The study focuses on the various aspects of visual elements and appeal in print advertisements. In addition, some other creative strategy of advertising is also considered to support the objective of the study where jingles, in television and radio commercials also seems to be quite effective in conveying the message that evokes a sense of humour and fun in advertising (Paul, 1997).

Every advertisement had a purpose to serve and this brings about the different types of appeals to serve a particular job. A foremost requisite to review and understand the effectiveness of humour in advertising involves the acceptability of variety of creative and visual elements, characters that involves the adoption of various visual images and pictorial presentation in the form of drawings, unusual illustrations, photographs, cartoons, caricatures, fictitious and animated characters such as brand mascots, puppets, trademarks, imaginative portrayal of person or animals, unusual punch lines and advertising jingles which stands for a product or a company, indicating the quality that
produces or mediates the amusing, comic, laughable, ludicrous and witty part of conveying the message. After determining the specific advertising appeal that will form the basis for the message, the foremost task of the creative team is to work on the execution style. Creative execution deals with the physical form of an advertisement—story, script, copy, art, music, words and phrases, colour style, tone, reproduction. Creative execution is the way an advertising appeal is used in an advertising message. What is to be communicated through the message and how it is executed is very important to draw out the desired response of the consumers (Kazmi and Batra, 2008).

The following are some of the execution styles commonly used in an advertisement to attract the attention of the consumers—straight sell or factual message, testimonial, scientific or technical advice, demonstration, comparison, lifestyle, fantasy, animation, humour, jingles or musical commercials, slice of life and pictorial dramatisation. After determining the creative approach, types of appeal, and the execution style, the next step is to create the actual advertisement. The design and production process involves a number of activities, including writing copy, developing the appropriate illustration, or the visual elements to be used.

### 3.3.1 Illustration: Unusual pictorial dramatisation

Illustration means the use of pictures and photographs including visual contents, colour, art work, and identification marks-company logo, trademark etc, are usually the most important visual element in any print advertisement. An illustration in advertising enhances the headline and body copy to attract the attention of the target audience. It is used in the advertisement to convey
visually the idea or message of the advertisement. They communicate a relevant idea quickly and effectively which is often difficult to convey verbally. The activity of illustrating is of crucial importance for many consumer non-durable products, where photographs and pictures are used to convey a central idea, and there is little need for long explanation. A good illustration must support and compliment the copy theme having harmony in colour combination, simple to convey, suggestive in design and construction, creating a lasting impression about the product (Gupta, 2012).

Every element that goes into making an advertisement contains an idea of some kind, designed for a specific purpose. The advertisement that contains an uncommonly interesting picture or storyline depicted in an unusual style which is adopted in consciously and used constantly is one of the many types of advertising ideas. It is not just an interesting arrangement of pictures or phrase, but has a definite function to perform.

Cartoons, puppet characters, demonstrations using both hand drawn illustrations and computer generated images, are some of the techniques used to communicate some implicit advertising messages, where a physical character of an object is exaggerated to reach certain specific target groups, such as children. Animated pictures of pain, cold cough, and personal hygiene, simplify the understanding about the subject and it becomes relatively easy to catch the attention of the viewers with such animated characters which is difficult to explain verbally or with actual photographs, that comes alive with visual effects and is remembered better due to their humourous approach, specially to attract the attention of the children. For example, in the print advertisement campaign of *Lifebuoy* (Plate 3.6), the visual metaphor illustrates
the underlying problems with unusual illustrations, which cannot be expressed by mere headline and body text.

### 3.3.2 Fictitious Characters: Brand Mascots

Cartoons and caricatures have been used in advertisements as the most powerful and versatile marketing tool. Advertising mascots are the fictitious characters which stand for a product or a company or both, have immense advertising value. When a product is ‘humanised’ by giving it a face, arms and legs, it comes alive and is remembered better.

Mascots refer to any imaginative character, person or animal used to represent a brand and communicate about the brand and its offerings to the consumers. It is a fictional character which is used in advertising to promote the brand. Once the mascot is associated with a product or service, it becomes the symbol of that particular brand. It helps in brand recalling, making the users recognize the brand name as soon as they see the mascot (Gupta, 2012).

Mascot advertising literally turns a two dimensional logo into a three dimensional one when the mascot is made to walk in any promotional events. It gives life to the brand, since it is visually appealing and promptly noticed. It also attracts people of all age groups and is the easiest way to register the brand name in the minds of the audience. Mascot advertising gets more attention than the conventional advertising. When people see a mascot, they take time to listen or observe what it has to say. A good mascot increases brand awareness.
Mascot advertising is considered to be friendly, since they are fun to be with. They are entertaining to watch and an attractive character can establish an instant connection with your potential customers. It can be a brand ambassador for a product. There are instances where people love to take photographs with their favourite mascots and post it in social networks. Thus, mascot advertising creates a mass appeal. A successful mascot can improve business, paving way to create merchandises like clothes, key chains, caps, toys, etc. which increases profit as well as spreads awareness. Mascot advertising is one of the cost-effective, creative and money-spinning advertising solutions. They are used as communication channels between the consumer and the product which provides a creative, sustainable, low cost model for communicating a brand’s values and personifying the company’s desired image. Mascots bring instant identity in a charming, gracious, humourous, identifiable feel-good manner. In the age of expensive brand ambassadors, mascots provides a creative, sustainable low cost model for communicating a brand’s values and personifies the company’s desired image by creating an association of the consumers with the brands. They provide a fun, light-hearted way to get an organisation or company noticed in an effective manner. A mascot provides a personal touch to marketing campaigns and it goes into a long way in ensuring public acceptance of a brand. But overuse of mascot may result in an inability to communicate the core message or identity of what a brand stands for (Paul, 1997).

TATA Sky Active -puppet, Canara HSBC Bank mascot -Manager Sahab, Nerolac Paints mascot, Goody-the tiger, ICICI Prudential mascot - Chintamani, Lijjat Papad mascot -Bunny, and ITC mascot - Sunny (Plate 3.7 a,b,c,d,e,f) are
some of the popular Indian mascots, which represents the true soul and identity of the brand that is embedded in popular acceptance as humourous characters with creative flexibility and execution. These mascots gained immense recognition and popularity with their individual characters, which had heightened the personality of the brand and had created a positive consumer’s association through various advertising campaigns.

To understand the effective use of cartoons and caricatures in advertising, we must discuss the success stories of two important mascots of Indian advertising of all time- the Amul Girl of Amul India and Air India’s Maharaja.

One of the longest running mascots in the history of Indian advertising is the Amul Girl, the chubby butter girl who put Amul brand on India’s breakfast table. It all began in 1966 when Sylvester DaCunha, the managing director of the advertising agency, Advertising and Sales Promotion Co, clinched the account for Amul Butter (Gupta, 2012). Sylvester DaCunha and Eustace Fernandez, Art Director of Advertising and Sales Promotion Co, decided that they need a girl who could win over her way into the Indian housewife’s heart.

This chubby little girl, usually dressed in polka-dotted frock has found a place for herself in the Guinness Book of Records for featuring in Amul, as a longest running advertising campaign in the world. Her success story starts way back in 1967. Since then, her sharp wit, timely sense of humour and her unique style to add a light tone of humour to current affairs and politics has been a subject of fascination. Week after week, she had managed to entertain and bring smiles to millions across the country with the topical hoardings.
The *Amul Butter* campaign tells the stories of India, a hoarding at a time. The hoardings are the markers to the popular history of India and have been followed by fans for decades. Seemingly ageless, this longest running campaign has captivated the Indian consumers across all ages. Outdoor campaign was built up around the cute mischievous girl, where hoardings had captured the spirit of India, with the tagline ‘*Utterly Butterly Delicious Amul*’, commenting on with the striking events.

The first display presented the missy praying by her bedside, ‘*Give us this day our daily bread: with Amul Butter*’, made a positive response. Gradually, subjects on current events like frequent ‘*hartals*’ in Calcutta in 1960s, the ‘*Hare Krishna Movement*’, and many others began to appear in the Amul advertisements regularly. But the approach of topical advertisement poses a challenge to the advertisers, as they need to appear immediately after the issue breaks out. The humourous approach of the Amul campaign also made few controversy in some of its advertisements, for instance, the controversial decision of the London airport authorities on virginity tests on Indian women was the subject of the first billboard and elicited furious protests from women’s right groups.

Tracing Amul’s journey through the decades, there are many historic events that were documented in the advertisements, placed at different vantage points throughout India. For example, between the 1970s to the mid 1980s, the emergency years is referred to the mass sterilisation campaign, shows the unique ability of Amul to take a controversial subject and turn it into a humourous appeal. The other subjects and issues like Jimmy Carter 1978 visit, Lata Mangeshkar’s honorary doctorate, the first test tube baby, Gavaskar’s
double centuries etc. were accepted by Indian consumers as a national picture. The subjects covered in the mid 1980s indicated some interesting shifts. The period between 1985 and mid- 1990 went through dramatic changes in the Amul hoardings. The Amul hoardings cover the beginning of liberalisation, international affairs and the change in the political discourse. The other big changes were the growing importance of popular culture, with many references about cinema and television. Various other topical hoardings covered and explored the humourous elements with subjects like Bollywood films, political happenings, Indian culture etc (Plate 3.8).

The post 1991 showcased the portrayal of politicians as villains, began to emerge with reference to series of political scandals and controversies. Caricatures on topics such as Lalu Prasad Yadav’s fodder scam, Narasimha Rao’s alleged entanglement with the pickle baron made a humourous gesture in the form of a lucid visualisation. The hoardings in this period also earmarked the coming of satellite television in India.

After 2000, the movement towards the popular culture became increasingly pronounced, which made a significant contribution with messages drawn from Bollywood and television world. For instance, symbolic expression in several messages includes Amitabh Bachchan’s wax figure at Tussaud, the visit of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie to India, drifted the message from substantive topical advertisements to promotional materials for celebrities and films. The phenomenon of star endorsing has also been the subject of many Amul hoardings.
The power of the *Amul Girl* as a mascot has been distinctive and original and most of all, consistent. She has remained mostly unchanged and underscores another important value constituency and quality. The unequivocal face of the brand, the *Amul Girl* had made a perfect personification of the brand with simple, uncomplicated style, has set the basic *Amul* values of purity and innocence. The mascot has personified the Amul Butter as a brand and today she has become an icon for practically all Amul products, that had made the little adorable girl visible undoubtedly through the tagline- ‘*Amul – the Taste of India*’.

Prior to the *Amul Girl*, the success stories of Indian mascot date back to 1946, when Air India’s Bobby Kooka along with JWT’s Umesh Rao created the hospitable ‘*Maharaja*’. The ‘*Maharaja*’ was a polished and courteous man in oversized moustaches, in red imperial clothes, a striped turban and pointed shoes, exuding affection and generosity. The caricature became the face of the public sector aviation giant, Air India, for many years, until Air India and Indian Airlines were merged and the ‘*Maharaja*’ faded away (Gupta ,2012).

A pioneer to the Amul Girl, the Air India campaign came up with topical slogans related to current happenings every week, using a similar creative strategy as we see in the Amul campaign much later. But somehow, the Air India hoardings always seemed to lack the Indian topicality that *Amul* had in its advertising campaigns. The mascot grew up from an in flight memo to various impressive posters, hoardings and other promotional materials like coasters, post cards, stationery items, brochure, match boxes etc, putting the message to millions of travelers across the world.
The mascot is seen in different outfit and poses from the early 1950s onwards in various witty and humourous Air India advertisements. He is depicted in an unmatched restrained mood in various occasions around different part of the world in different advertising campaign of Air India. For example, the Air India’s poster of the 1950s and 1960s were minor artworks that made witty, often mischievous, statement about their destinations. Maharaja is seen around in different attire, sometimes appears as a monk in Bangkok, and sometime even seen flirting around with beautiful woman in Sydney (Plate 3.9).

Air India mascot ‘Maharaja’ with his inimitable style, charm, and wit had reached out as a friend with warmth and hospitality, even to the farthest corner of the world. It has been pointed out, that there were interesting parallels between Air India’s advertising, centered on the Maharaja, and Doyle Dane Bernbach’s famous Volkswagen’s Beetle advertising. They both built a brand personality with a similar mix of wit, charm, cheekiness and a self deprecating humour (Halve and Sarkar, 2011).

3.3.3 Exaggeration of the Product

In order to catch the attention of the consumers, certain characteristics of the products are shown in magnified form or in a manner which is out of proportion that evokes a feeling of humour and fun. The products are often associated with certain unmatched elements of the real happenings or practical life or condition, where some unexpected situations were overstated to attract the consumers that enhance the process of persuasion. For example the campaign for Fevicol, the adhesive from Pidilite brand have used humour to
create and convey the message to the audience in a very light and humourous way. This particular type of humour deals with the ridiculous and exaggerated form of presentation and creates situation where the humourous aspect of visualisation strikes the viewers face directly, which is not subtle and appropriate.

The punch line ‘Fevicol aisa jod lagaye, achche se achche na tod paye’ is well depicted in all its advertisements by creating an unexpected impact on the consumer’s mind about the product. One such example shows the exaggerated visualisation of the attraction of the two similar magnetic poles, bonded tightly due to the ultimate bonding quality of Fevicol. Similar exaggerated claim is also attributed by another print advertisement, shows a very witty image of the messenger of death, Yama, seems unable to drag the soul out of the man body, wearing a shirt with a logo of Fevicol adhesive (Plate 3.10). These inflated advertisements portray the strong binding quality of the adhesive brand Fevicol that can bond, hold and fix almost everything in a very creative and humourous gesture. Brands such as Itch guard, in its print advertisement campaign, as shown in (Plate 3.11) had exaggerated the message beyond real life situation with caricatures and had truly enhanced the essence of visual gratification as well as consumer’s attractions towards the product through humourous appeal to evoke the feeling of relieve from the ailment.

3.3.4 Anthropomorphic Animal Mascot

Anthropomorphism is the process of assigning real or imagined human characteristics, motivations, or emotions to non-human objects. People have
imbued creatures from natural world with human traits and motivations. Advertisers have capitalised on this tendency by creating a variety of anthropomorphic animal mascot for various brands, services, ideas and packaging materials (Paul, 1997). The concept of portrayal of anthropomorphic animal is well evident in different occasions in Indian mythology, where non anthropomorphic forms were fused with anthropomorphic forms to present a divine image with a human experience. For example the depiction of Lord Ganesha in Indian mythology is a fused imagery with the head of an elephant and the body of human being. Many other animals such as elephant, tortoise, bull, fish etc. also played different interesting role in Indian mythology.

This response toward portrayal of such anthropomorphic animals along with human characteristics also plays an important role in advertising, because people tend to draw toward things and objects that are similar to themselves. The physical similarities of the animals with that of humans associate the product, service or idea to create and enhance positive image about the product.

Animal mascots as trade symbol have been an important element used in Indian advertising along with other pictorial representations such as logo, symbols, and trademark etc. In the preceding sub topic, it is apparent that a mascot plays an important role in advertising that had created some of the popular mascots in the history of Indian advertising which is more human in their approaches and formation.

The association of animal imagery in Indian advertising represents an integral aspect of consumer behaviour with various images taken from Indian
mythology, legends, and epics, which also directly associate them with religious embodiment and national symbols. For example the caricature of *Shera*, the mascot of the XIX Commonwealth Games 2010, is taken from the *Hindi* word ‘*Sher*’ (means ‘Tiger’ in English), embody the power and courage associated with Goddess *Durga*, who acts as a powerful vehicle, that the goddess rode in her epic and victorious battle against ‘*Mahisasura*’, a dreaded demon with the body of a buffalo in Indian mythology. The image of the tiger which is also the national animal of India in the caricature form of *Shera* as the mascot reflects the power, charisma, intelligence and graceful attitude of the majestic Royal Bengal tiger. His athletic proficiency, courage and speed in well evident with the human like portrayal with jersey, boot and most interestingly the folded hand, commemorating Indian hospitality (Plate 3.12 a).

Another majestic animal, elephant is also associated with Indian mythology that had accredited the anthropomorphic representation of animals in Indian advertising. The mascot of Indian Railways - *Bholu the Guard Elephant* (Plate 3.12 b) represents the embodiment of the caricature of an elephant in the attire of a railway guard holding a signal lamp with green light in one hand symbolising safety of a running train and the well being of the passengers.

Such physical similarity to humans is indeed an important determinant of how people react to such visual representation with caricatures to stimulate positive humourous appeal. Several other animal mascots for companies like *ShareKhan Ltd, Britannia Tiger Biscuits*, (Plate 3.13 a,b) appeared in the various print advertisements, packaging design etc. to cater the taste and need of Indian consumers with witty anthropomorphic image that resembles human characteristics.
3.3.5 Personification of the Brand/Product

Inanimate objects assuming human characteristics and inherent humour also personify the quality and desirability of the brand, which is often used to highlight the brand image in order to persuade the consumers. This inanimate object deals with exaggerated situations where the humourous aspect of advertising, far from being subtle, strikes the mind of the consumer immediately. One such example is Pepsi’s ‘Oye Bubbly’ campaign in which various objects such as car stereo, garage etc. are shown coveting the Pepsi bottle. The associations of these non living objects within the conscience of human activity make the product easily accessible with immediate attention and recall. An example to support and personify the usability of the brand is highlighted in the print advertising campaigns of Mentos Marbles (Plate 3.14), which recalls immediate attention through an absurd and exaggerated set of visualisation of the appearances of a person in a state of utter pain and agony due to the intolerable sour taste of the candy. The visuals personify the human face with screaming human figures, dangling within the face, crippled in nails, needle barbed wire and every other sort of elements suggesting physical and mental pain (Sharma and Singh, 2009).

Another important aspect of such act of personification is also evident with the depiction of religious and mythological imagery in advertising, which personifies the product. Associations of caricatures and cartoon characters in the advertisements with the Indian mythological and epic characters, legendary images representations, endorse the product and build confident among the consumers through humourous appeal. For example the print advertising campaign of Nirma Sudh Salt with the tagline ‘the ones that kills the heat’ had
personified the brand and is been compared to great gods in Hindu mythology who killed evil forces for the common good. Three different tastes - sour, bitter and heat is personified in the print advertisements with three different stories - like Lord Rama killing Ravana, Lord Narsimha slaying Hiranyakashipa and Lord Vishnu killing Asura (Plate 3.15). Similar attribute is also evident with another product ENO, an antacid brand in one of its advertising campaign had also associated the act of personification of the state of indigestion with that of slaying evil force with the image of a demon, attributing quick relief from indigestion with ENO. The two print advertisements display a unique set of visual representations with evil characters taken from Indian mythology to associate the USP of the product as humourous proposition (Plate 3.16).

Apart from the visual representations, the advertising jingles (a jingle is a memorable slogan, mainly broadcast on radio and television commercials) and slogans used in the advertisements are also quite effective in creating humour by unusual sound pattern which leaves an impression in the mind of the consumer and secures brand recall by personifying the product. For instance, Close-Up toothpaste’s jingle “Kya aap Close Up karte hain, ya duniya se darte hain” is quite interestingly used in the advertisement with piercing voice in the background.

There has been a gradual evolution in the use of humour in Indian advertising which in due course of time has increasingly trying and had immensely succeeded to grab the attention of the customers with funny creative and emotional tactics. The case studies of two assorted brands and their products using humour in various advertising campaigns with elements like cartoon characters, caricatures, unusual illustrations had gained immense
popularity on account of their special features, likeliness of their appearance, special characters and appeal, is discussed here to understand the creative approaches, style of execution, changing concept of visualisation and selling proposition of the product.

3.4 CASE STUDY OF VODAFONE INDIA

The case study examines the advertising strategy of Vodafone Essar Limited, the India based subsidiary of the global cellular network operator, Vodafone. It focuses on the depiction of the small dog-pug going around with a girl and a boy, using various illustrative representation of cartoon characters, print advertisements and the brand mascot called ‘Zoozoos’ in television commercials, that highlighted the different value added service offered by the company.

Marketing strategy is a key part of overall corporate strategy which is concerned with developing plans for finding out what customers want and then effectively meeting their requirements. The cellular company’s marketing aim is to attain market leadership with its competitors, network quality and maximise the customer satisfaction. The objective of the case study is to understand the advertising strategies adopted by Vodafone Essar in India and to study the effectiveness of the advertising campaign of Vodafone with humourous elements of advertising for brand recall.

Vodafone was welcomed in India after successfully rebranding ‘Hutch’ as ‘Vodafone’ with the “Hutch is now Vodafone” campaign. The company used almost all media channels to advertise its services. It not only advertised in television, but also appeared in print and outdoor media (Gupta, 2012).
The popular and attractive brand *Hutch* was transitioned to Vodafone across India that marked a significant chapter in the evolution of Vodafone as a dynamic and ever growing brand in field of cellular network service. When Vodafone took over Hutch, its advertisements did a good job in creating awareness that ‘*Hutch is now Vodafone*’. The story was told by Hutch’s brand ambassador- Pug, the cute adorable dog. The advertisement opened with the famous ‘Hutch’ pug resting in a pink (Hutch brand colour) kennel. He leaves for a stroll. He comes back and finds a bigger red kennel instead of his pink one and the message that pops up is ‘*Change is Good*’.

Vodafone’s new advertising campaign strategy starts with the same and familiar character of the dog, the brand ambassador of Hutch. ‘*Wherever you go, our network follows*’ was the previous slogan with the pug following the child wherever he or she goes. The network was personified as the adorable dog follows the owner. The advertising campaign had a simple message that was communicated through the amusing and humourous gesture of the dog (Plate 3.17) with the backdrop of a beautiful jingle ‘*You and I in this beautiful world*’.

The print advertisements also were working in their way, in various languages and in various dailies with a variety of occasions, events, places, religious happenings etc around India. The print advertisements were made simple with witty characters. The same creative was used on the outdoor media also as well. For example one of the series of campaigns used by Vodafone reflects the life of an average Indian in all occasions. The campaign shows everyday characters to communicate the benefits of all the products that Vodafone had to offer. To bring out the stories, a distinct visual language of
*paper-art* was used to make the storyline more appealing. It is probably one of the new categories of its kind. The advertisement makes humourous appeal with the fun and candid paper made characters having the tagline *Power to You*, also appeals to the craft loving psyche of Indian culture. The application of rich colours celebrates the vibrancy of Indian way of life (Plate 3.18).

Another set of print advertising campaign in tune of the above also explains the various plans and offers of Vodafone with humourous and amusing caricatures of people from different part of India, makes easy identifiable for the brand within the Indian lifestyle, culture and demography. The vibrancy of the different culture and clothing that distinguish the individual regional flavour, is well depicted in bright flat colours with the tagline *Make the most of Now* (Plate 3.19).

The vivacity of Indian heritage and culture is also reflected in many other print advertisements of Vodafone. One such occasion marks the celebration of *Dusshera*. One of the oldest Indian festivals, which are celebrated across India, marks the victory of Lord *Rama* over the demon *Ravana*. To mark this occasion, a fair called *Dusshera Mela* is organised in Kota in Rajasthan. The print advertising campaign personifies the epic characters- *Rama, Hanuman* and *Ravana* with their caricatures to promote the fair in a simple lucid form of expression (Plate 3.20).

The advertising elements used in the various campaigns of Vodafone also made experimentation with different materials which made the advertising message visually acceptable to the consumers, creating humourous appeal. Traditional paper puppets, inflated balloons and paper cut materials were used.
to commemorate the Indian craft tradition. For example, the advertising campaign on *Suraj Kund Mela*, displays the confluence of different art forms and craftsmen from different parts of the country, together to celebrate the craft tradition of India with caricature and humourous execution of visual design (Plate 3.21).

Another set of advertising campaign- ‘Vodafone celebrate Bandra’, represents amusing characters using caricatures of balloon figures. Each image informs its audience what they can expect if they attend the festival. The advertising campaign shows the typical people living in Bandra (a locality of Mumbai). They were used as installations as well as printed formats such as hoardings and press advertisements (Plate 3.22).

Along with the living animal characters like the dog pug- the brand ambassador of Hutch, Vodafone India also explored the illustrative aspect of non human characters like animal and birds in the print advertisements. A variety of animal and birds can be seen in different advertising campaigns of Vodafone which resembles the actual life like representation of animal images. These adorable illustrations of the animals and birds with subtle background epitomise the advertising message with witty and funny gesture as they move around in the natural habitat informing the customers about the offers (Plate 3.23).

Vodafone had also initiated innovative humourous ideas and had come up with new advertisements that took the brand to new heights. There cannot be more profound example of such innovative ideas when Vodafone, with the launch of the second season of *Indian Premier League* (IPL), had
conceptualised the egg shaped, rusty speaking voice and hysterically laughing little white creatures called the *Zoozoos*, the new brand ambassador of Vodafone. They were launched to add comic sense in order to attract the attention of the consumers. The main reason of the advertisement to succeed was that it was launched in a planned manner during the IPL, which captured the attention with amusing appeal of all those people who watches the matches. *Zoozoos* are not animated characters. They are human beings who were made to wear body suits (Plate 3.24). The figure is divided into two individual parts—the body and the head. The body parts of the suit were stuffed with foams while the head is attached separately. The thin limbs, contrasted with big bellies and a bulbous head, added a new genre of hilarious characteristics to the advertisements (Gupta, 2012). Furthermore, simple sets and backdrops were created and spray painted with neutral grey.

Every advertising media - print, TVC, outdoor advertising etc, featured hilarious situations, where the need for a particular Vodafone service was brought to the forefront. The ‘*Zoozoos*’ stuck in the public’s mind with witty responses which made the brand easy memorable. *Zoozoos* advertising campaigns in print or TVC, covered a diverse set of themes and situations including Vodafone M-Shop, cricket alert, IPL commentary, beauty alerts, phone backup, free caller tunes, live games, musical greetings, group SMS, Internet plans etc. and many more to endorse the value added service of the product (Plate 3.25).

The success of the *Zoozoos* with simplicity, witty appeal and innovative execution has taken Vodafone to an unprecedented scale of success, competing with other cellular services. It caught the attention and believes of
the consumers, aroused curiosity about the brand by telling stories of everyday situations where ‘Zoozoos’ as a mascot is a classic example to justify the acceptance of humour in advertising.

3.5 CASE STUDY OF PERFETTI VAN MELE INDIA

Perfetti Van Melle India Private Ltd is a renowned manufacturer of various quality sugar confectionery products. The company has a diverse portfolio of brands of chewing gums, candies such as Alpenliebe, Big Babol, Chlormint, Happydent White, Happydent Wave, Lollipop, Center Fresh, Center Shock, Center Fruit, Mangolfilz, Marbels and Mentos and snacks segment named Stop Not Goltz.

The case study covers the advertising campaign strategy involved in promoting the products. Perfetti Van Melle India has executed several innovative advertising campaigns in print media and television commercial, which is funny, exaggerated and immensely memorable, used to highlight the USP (Unique Selling Proposition) of the products. All the confectionery products and snacks had a mix of both contemporary and traditional flavours keeping in mind the diversified set of consumers with diversified Indian tastes. Out of the sixteen brands, the case study focuses on the print advertising campaign of Mentos Sour Marbels, Happydent White, Chlormint and Alpenliebe.

The brands have put humour, emotion and bizarre in all of its advertising campaign to create a different situation in the mind of the consumers with amusing and interesting taglines such as ‘Zubaan pe rakhe lagaam’ for Center Fresh, ‘Dobara mat puchna’ for Chlormint and ‘Dimaag ki Batti jala De’ for
Mentos with various storylines. The innovative ideas made easy access for the brands to persuade the consumers. For example the print advertising campaign of *Mentos Sour Marbels* stressed upon the sour factor of the candy in contrast to the usual sweetness of a candy with the tagline ‘Really Sour’, had exaggerated the sour effect. Three different situations were explored to bring out the effectiveness of the campaign with humorous visualisation.

In 2009, Perfetti Van Melle India launched the print advertising campaign featuring a cave man, diver, and a tourist, spitting out of the multiple set of creatures -dinosaur, lion, shark, whale, and crocodile in a chain owing to the sourness of the candy, exaggerated the unbearable state of the sour taste along with their food chain. The caricatures grasp the uniqueness of the character of the candy with memorable illustrations, along with witty and entertaining situations (Plate 3.26).

Three more print advertisements in tune of the above were launched with the tagline ‘Unbearably Sour’, on the same sour situations, where objects like grenade, snake, train, guillotine, knife, a bottle of cyanide and pistol were seen to be used by a caricature (Plate 3.27). The campaign highlights the selling proposition of the product with effective and funny representation of the intolerable situation which is unbearably sour and the only way one can escape it by had resorted to multiple suicidal acts.

The campaign had exaggerated the product beyond life like situations to set the immediacy of the taste of the candy. With innovative idea and execution style of creating humorous appeal, the conventional taste of sweetness of a candy was challenged with the sour taste.
Few other confectionery products from Perfetti Van Melle India such as Alpenliebe, Chlormint and Happydent also shared the same advertising strategy, that focuses on the humour appeal, positioning the health related USP of the brands in term of keeping teeth naturally white, freshness of the gum and the alluring taste of the candies. The hilarious appeal attracted the attention of the consumers to watch, laugh and remember the campaign with witty, humourous and exaggerated advertisements. The print advertising campaign of Happydent White, for example got attention with the caricatures of the portraiture of three most influential people- Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela in the world history to spread smile among people (Plate 3.28).

The creative strategy that stresses upon promoting sparkling and strong teeth is also evident in another set of promotional aids, featuring on packaging design of Happydent chewing gum, focuses on healthy smile of the Indian consumers of all age, sex and community, effectively conveyed the message with humourous illustrations. The visual expresses a vibrant street-art style with popular Indian archetype with colourful caricatures (Plate 3.29).

The bizarreness of the advertising strategy of using humour in advertising is also evident with the product- Chlormint, which in its print advertising campaigns for a breath freshener, had exaggerated the message of relieving oneself from common breath problem. The campaign features three different situations, with a similar stylisation of the visuals. The elongated neck of a wife who is talking to her husband, a barber attending his customer and a dentist with his patient, seems to react to the bad breath, focuses on oral hygiene. The message is communicated in a manner that is not restrained, but
humourous, creating an exaggeration of the function of healthy and strong teeth along with usual enjoyment of chewing a gum (Plate 3.30).

The application of humour appeal as a selling proposition is also evident with Perfetti Van Melle India confectionery product, Alpenliebe, a rich milk caramel toffee, had played upon the irresistible factor of the delicacy of the product in contrast to the sour taste which we have seen in the other segment of candy and gum. In a series of print advertising campaigns, the irresistible and delicious flavour of the toffee is well depicted through a set of portaitures. In all the portraits, the tongue was made to dangle out to signify extreme greed, inspired by Alpenliebe. The tongue was made to fuse itself with the character of the portraits. The baseline “Laalch aha laplap” is a popular Hindi phrase that is colloquially used in India to indicate greed so uncontrollable that it makes one’s tongue fall out or drape around (Plate 3.31).

Along with print advertising campaigns, a considerable number humourous television commercials was also created by Perfetti Van Melle India with various effective taglines such as ‘Tera Dil Roshan Tera Mann Roshan’ for Happydent White, ‘Dattoon Tale Diya Jale’ for Happydent Wave, ‘Zabaan pe Rakhe Lagaam’ for Center Fresh, ‘Dobara mat Pochna’ for Chlormint, and ‘Dimag ki Batti Jala de’ for Mentos. The taglines and visuals carried a more profound and challenging sense of humour in depicting the advertising appeal with intense Indian taste and visual vocabulary.

Perfetti Van Melle India has established high recall value for its diversified segments of confectionery brand with a strong sense of humour. The strategy involved in various advertising campaigns had explored the
everyday life and culture of India, emphasising on humourous appeal. The application of cartoons and caricatures as visual elements had undoubtedly relished the advertising message.

3.6 ASSOCIATION OF CARTOONS WITH CHILDREN IN ADVERTISING

The formulation of an advertising strategy starts with the identification of the consumer or prospective and desired audience. The character of the target audience has a direct bearing on the overall advertising strategy, especially the creative strategy. Advertisers feature cartoon or other fictitious characters to imply that those characters endorse their products. It is generally understood in today’s world that, children forms a major segment of the customers. They have a greatest purchasing power both in terms of self assessment and their ability to convince their parents to make a purchase for them. As a consequence, a large number of advertisements are aimed at children and focus on the parent- child relationship. Because they lack the analytical abilities and judgment of adults, advertisements directed to children raises special concerns (Sharma and Singh, 2009).

Cartoons and caricatures play an important role in advertising when the involvement of children as a potential consumer, rests upon the factors of entertainment and credibility. Children develop different attitudes towards different brands or products and their advertisements, which can be both educative and persuasive in nature to nurture a prospect consumerism. These fictitious character, are the highly acceptable marketing strategy when it comes to children, particularly the kids, who can accentuate and endorse the process of advertising with certain imaginative and friendly characters.
They formulate a powerful bond with the brands they are aimed to with various characters from television, story books, comic characters and cartoon strips. The imaginative and fictitious characters creates a sense of likeliness and emotional attachment with the kids in terms of design, colour, form, shape, which connects and creates an image about the product and makes children an important unit in advertising as a consumer.

Children are being considered as potential consumers, since they can influence the consumption act of the family and also can persuade to buy new products. Advertisers features cartoon and other characters in advertising, known as ‘host selling’, which is often associated with certain characteristic features of an object to justify the contents of advertising through fun and playful gesture.

The involvement of cartoon characters with children in advertising depends upon various factors such as graphical presentation of the brand, packaging elements of the product, colour and visual reliability. It is the visual element and its idea of execution which retain more easily in the mind of the children which makes them the prospect buyer.

The concept of brand mascots which was discussed earlier, finds an important place to justify the use of cartoons and caricature in advertising for children. It catches the attention of the children and creates an emotional connection with kids and engages them in the brand that results in acceptance of these fictitious characters to become child’s best friend. Visual depiction of various animal figures in their anthropomorphic forms (Anthropomorphism is the process of assigning real or imagined human characteristics, intentions,
motivations, or emotions to non-human objects) which are often used as mascots for different brands, also associate a positive response between the children and the concerned brand. A child may be delighted by the way a mascot dances or any funny physical action the mascot does.

Animal mascots hold a strong mental image for most people that come in contact with. But their impact on children is much stronger and profound than with any other age group. Children often react with fondness to various cartoon characters that display positive characteristics. They educate the children about the image of an animal and at the same time create a positive brand image which promotes the concept of environmental awareness and conservation of certain species of animals among the children. For example, global animal mascots such as Tony-the Tiger, Kellogg’s Rooster, Kellogg’s Chocos Bear, Kellogg’s Honey Pops are some of the variety of anthropomorphic animal mascots used on the packaging designs of the breakfast brand to attract the children (Plate 3.32). Children may be persistent in ensuring that their parents purchase the latest cereals or health drinks because a fictitious character said it was good.

The positive feelings that mascots and cartoon characters elicit from children are often associated with what a mascot does, as it is not just a product itself. Advertising as a tool of marketing also helps children to develop a positive practice for one’s personal hygiene and health. For example Pepsodent tooth paste advertisement with the tagline ‘Dhichum Dhichum’ along with the creative illustrations helps children to develop the habit of brushing twice a day to get rid of tooth related problems, both in amusing mood.
and fear appeal of tooth decay with the caricature of the imaginative picture of germs.

The educative nature of advertising is also prominent with various products that make use of cartoons and caricatures as visual entity. To educate and instill interest among children by providing a generalised idea of various subjects around, advertisers have utilised the elements of events and facts to recall and appraise children’s aptitude for learning in an entertaining mood. In a series of advertising campaign of the Parle confectionery products, for example, the advertisers had instilled a new domain for learning to generate interest among children. Through simple pictorial illustrations of various events and facts taken from different subjects like science, history, general knowledge etc, had definitely created a new mode of learning apart from conventional classroom (Plate 3.33).

The association of cartoons and caricatures with children also initiated the inclusion of comic characters from different comic strips and animated movies, plays an important role in advertising to attract the attention of the children. The action is associated with lucid graphical representations and brilliant colour scheme for easy understanding among the children. The central theme relates the product with the comic characters creates a mood of endorsement for the product and acts as a role model for children. Several brands in their advertisements had integrated various cartoon characters, superheroes to endorse and associate the product with the children through comic strips (Plate 3.34).
The most promising Indian animation character series ‘Chota Bheem’ in recent time has made an undeniable entry into the children’s entertainment world, which directly influences the buying patterns of the children with various advertising materials. ‘Chota Bheem’ along with other animated characters is been utilised as marketing tool by various advertisers from a diversified set of various kids products such like toys, wardrobe items, drawing materials, school bags, game console, energy drink, snacks and confectionery items to attract the attention of the children (Plate 3.35).

A variety of Indian mythological characters such as Lord Hanuman and Lord Ganesha, were also perceived as superheroes by children in India. These characters were also utilised by entertainment and media houses to grab the attention of the children, set a new mode of entertainment away from the conventional comic book readings. A subtle category of visual entertainment in the form of animated films and 3D movie in recent time, had re-invented the great epics in a new set of visual culture to arouse interest among the children. The promotional posters of the films display the action and courage of these mythological characters that approve the divine power and portray the heroic deeds (Plate 3.36).

Suitability of humourous elements such as cartoons and fictitious characters on social media platforms soft sell the products, which in turn synchronises the consumer’s mind and psychology to virtual reliability. For example Flipkart, in one of its advertising campaigns had targeted a selected audience for conveying the popularity of the service. It had instigated a new world for brands not to just communicate, but to interact. The humourous approach of the message uses the buying approach of the superheroes as the
customers to attract the children, delivered the message with an element of fun and excitement (Plate 3.37). Another set of TVC of Flipkart displays the unique shopping attributes of the adults with innocence of the kids with witty visualisation and voice modulation for humourous proposition, which indirectly targets the adult audiences (Plate 3.38).

Children have become much more interested in cartoons and caricatures over many years and it has become a primary action of their lifestyle. It is been observed that typically a children associate themselves with cartoon characters at an early age of two or three and assort to enthusiastic television viewers, watching cartoon films. The growing culture of viewing television channels loaded with cartoon films had changed the behavioural pattern of a child. They have become addicted to violent and abusive comments used with many such cartoon characters unknowingly. Therefore it is important for us to choose a healthy environment for a child to grow and inculcate proper habit and culture.

Since cartoons and caricatures will always intervene with the emotional appeal of a child, it is important for us to design a character that promote positive image. It is immensely important for parents in particular to decide with the buying pattern on behalf of children. It is the parent who is able to discern if a product or image that a cartoon character is portraying is worthless. Advertisers should also hold responsibilities to create positive impact on the children’s impressionable mind about the content of the message in the advertisements and create a positive image about the product.
3.7 CONCLUSION

Following the study of different advertising campaigns, irrespective of the appeal and execution style, the chapter establishes the fact that humour as an element in advertising makes effective communication for easy recall and attention. It creates a positive image about the product for a longer time and indicates some quality which produces or mediates the amusing, comic, and witty part of our conscience. It is evident from the study that the cartoon characters and humourous elements can ensures high recall value and provides a personal touch to the marketing strategies that goes a long way in enduring public acceptance of a brand in contrast to the celebrity endorsement. Consistent usage of fictitious characters as we have seen in the case of Amul Butter, Air India, Fevicol etc. has definitely helped the business and created a special identity for the products in the minds of the consumers. The study has observed that the advertisers had explored the Indian sensibility through the various humourous advertisements that had accumulated the Indian culture, mythology, tradition, socio-political happenings with new attribute for advertising responses.

But it is also evident that excess use of humour in advertisement makes the product unnoticed by the consumer which makes the product less useful that result in less prospect buyers. It is been observed that certain amount of humourous elements that is perceived from different central characters and comic situations, results in easy recall about the product which associate and stimulate the visual idea. But again it is also pertinent to the study that such caricatures are sometimes insulting for a particular situation which may took place unintentionally or sometime intentionally when used to
make humourous appeal as we have seen in the advertisements of *Chlormint*. Another important aspect of visualisation is also relevant in the process of rendering the visual elements for humourous appeal. It is observed that hand drawn illustrations sometimes disagree with the realistic approach of real facts about the acceptance and identification of the physical characteristics of the product with the consumers. The bizarre representations of images for humourous appeal sometimes reject the product and confuse the consumers about the product.

The personification of an object, no doubt creates brand awareness, but it is been pragmatic that such effort remains noticed within a definite target audience and remain less important in general. Therefore humour can be successful in advertising, if used carefully, otherwise it could be fatal because whatever message is conveyed lightly might be forgotten and would be in vain, when the objective is to sell the product. The parallel execution style of using real photographs with that of humourous illustrations had made a positive realm with the response of the consumers. The study also exemplifies the importance of different fictitious characters used in the advertising campaign to personify the characters as in the case of *Amul Girl*, *Maharaja* and *Zoozoos*. The two case studies also established the relevance of cartoons and caricatures in advertising with a scope of creative flexibility for humourous proposition in advertising.
Plate 3.1: Consumer durable product showing rational appeal

Plate 3.2 (a): Baby product brand showing positive emotional appeal
Plate 3.2 (b): Public health poster featuring negative emotional appeal

Plate 3.3: A HelpAge poster featuring moral appeal
Plate 3.4: A typical soft drink brand featuring humour appeal

Plate 3.5: A typical print advertisement with various elements
Plate 3.6: Print advertising campaign of *Lifebuoy*
Plate 3.7 (a): *TATA Sky Active* puppet

Plate 3.7 (b): Canara HSBC mascot, *Manager Sahab*
Plate 3.7 (c) : Nerolac Paints mascot, Goody- the Tiger

Plate 3.7 (d) : ICICI Prudential mascot, Chintamani
Plate 3.7 (e) : Lijjat Papad mascot, *Bunny*

Plate 3.7 (f) : ITC brand ambassador, *Sunny*
Plate 3.8: Topical advertising campaign of Amul Butter
Plate 3.9: Poster advertisements of Air India
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