CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Recommendations

8.2 Model Recommended For Neutralizing the Adverse Effects of Advertising on Children

8.3 Conclusion
8.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

After doing detailed analysis of the research data collected from 1500 respondents of different socioeconomic backgrounds, different ages, different gender etc. I had come on the conclusion that the audiovisual advertising had remarkable impact on children in various aspects such as it not only affects on their values and attitudes but also affects on their behavioral, emotional, physical and psychological development.

There are lots of factors why this happens and how it happens such as the increased penetration of televisions, increased number of television channels, increased duration of television watching, changing family structure, increased disposable income, small family sizes, and easy access to information due to various technological advancements and unfastened regulation related to television advertising.

Thus to minimize or reduce the effect of impact television advertising had on children following recommendations may help. The recommendations are listed below.

1. Improving Role of Parents

Parents are the major role models for children. They play an important role in shaping children’s life. There are various ways through which parents may mitigate the potentially adverse effects of exposure to television advertising. Because it depends on parents how they handle their children’s exposure to advertising and their requests for products. Because it is influential in shaping
the way their children respond to advertised products and how advertising affects children’s developmental outcomes. Therefore the recommendations given for parents are as follows:

- It is recommended that unlike in other countries parents should use commercials to teach children about good citizenship and bad products to avoid.

- Parents must educate children to be responsible and informed consumers. A variety of resources should be developed to help parents so that they can teach children that commercials are designed to sell products. These resources should be made available to parents through schools, libraries, and pediatricians’ offices. Parents, interested groups, committees of the Academy (nationally and locally).

- Also it is important that parents should monitor their child’s exposure to media and should provide guidance on age-appropriate use of all media, including television, radio, music, video games and the Internet.

- Parents can talk to their children about what they view on television. Parents can watch television with their children and answer questions about items their children are interested in, and help them to see through the marketing hype behind many products. Even young children can be taught to see beyond the camera trickery that often leads them to desire many of the products that are let-downs when they get their hands on them.

- Another strategy for parents is to limit the amount of time that children watch the television each day. They can
provide other sources of entertainment and more family outings that take them away from areas where television and other type of advertising are available. Other activities such as visit to the park, involvement in sports, exercise, yoga, other extracurricular activities like dance, music, instrument playing after school; should be embedded which will eliminate stress and bring parents and children closer together, and lessen the exposure to television.

- Also the most importantly parents should make children understand the importance and benefits of reading books. And habit of regular reading of different kinds of good books should be inculcated among the children so that they will develop interest in reading which now a day’s vanishing amongst the children.

- Another strategy for parents is to get involved in the removal of television advertisements that they feel are not suitable for children. Parents concerned with particular advertisements messages, their content, length and/or duration should contact the concern authorities.

- In other parts of the world, there exist voluntary groups like the ‘Adbusters’ and Mothers groups that watch and pressure governments to clamp down on aggressive and intrusive advertising. Similarly such groups can be formed in India as well.

- Parents can help the concern authorities to better enforce the rules of the 1990 Children’s Television Act by serving as a watchdog over the television stations in their viewing area. They can write to their representatives at the local, state and national level and ask for legislation to help protect children
from deceptive or overly aggressive advertisers. And they can monitor the free advertisement materials that educators give to their children, and explain possible negative/positive connotations.

- Most importantly parents should give more emphasis on directing children’s towards imbibing healthy food habits in them by suggesting them the advantages of healthy food and disadvantages of fast food. For this parents need to be more aware & regulate the advertisements targeted to children.

Thus parents can be involved in their children’s television viewing in three ways. In co viewing, parents simply watch programs with their children without discussing content; in active mediation also called instructive guidance in which parents discuss the program with their children to help them understand the content or the intent of advertisements; and in restrictive mediation, parents control the amount or kind of content that their children view. Thus parents need to be observant of what they are watching on television, spend time with them watching television, limit their viewing time, get them out of the house more often on family outings, and get involved in making television better entertainment for children.

2. Role of Experts like Teachers, Psychologist, Sociologist and Pediatricians

Another important category of people which plays an important role in shaping the future and values, attitudes and behaviour of children is the different experts associated with children in different ways. There are various ways through which these people can help to minimize the negative effects of advertising on children. For that
it is recommended that they should follow the directions given below:

- As a result of the study it is recommended that consumer education and media literacy programs for children should be encouraged at school level. Teachers should make children aware of the selling intent of advertising.
- It is recommended that psychologists who are knowledgeable about the effects of advertising on children and youth should be encouraged to communicate with parents and professionals who work with children and youth.
- Pediatricians should monitor local television broadcasts to ensure adherence to existing limits on commercial time.

3. Redefining The Advertising Regulations Directed At Children

In India, there are no specific advertising laws that relate to children and food-related advertisements in particular. A host of laws and Acts like the Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Food Act deal with children-related advertising in a vague way. There are also no specific rules for sponsorship of children’s TV programmes. Also it is observed that monitoring of the content of advertisements and marketing of products on television still remains very poor. Therefore following measures should be taken care of so as to minimize the effect television advertising has on children.

- Broadcasters in India display unprecedented unity when it comes to resisting any effort at regulating the television
industry. However, many countries such as Canada, USA, Britain, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Greece, Portugal, Hungary, France, Germany and Pakistan have laws to regulate the broadcast sector. Broadcasters in these countries do not see this as a violation of their freedom of expression, but merely as a necessary way of maintaining some ethical and professional standards. Therefore there is a necessity that broadcaster in India should also co-operate to strengthen the self regulation among the industry.

- It is recommended to encourage More Rigorous Industry Self-Regulation by the self regulatory authorities in India such as Advertising standards council of India (ASCI), Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) etc.

- Some very important self-regulatory ethics like; no advertising, marketing, or market research in schools; no targeting of advertising and marketing at children under the age of 8; and a stop on product placement in movies and media programs targeted at children and adolescents among other important points should put into practice.

- There is urgent need for voluntary and government pressure groups to seriously take note of the situation. The government needs to draft and implement laws that do not deal with advertising in general but are specific and relate to every aspect of advertising, especially those that target young children and pertain to food.

- The researcher recommends that television advertising should be restricted during programming directed to or seen by audiences primarily composed of children 8 years of age and under.
• The number of junk food ads during children’s programming should be reduced. All food advertisements should be made to adhere to dietary recommendations for children.
• Portrayal and targeting of children below a certain age should be restricted.
• Advertisements of those products which are not meant for children such as the birth control products like condoms, pills as well as products like sanitary napkins should be aired after 10 p.m. only so as to avoid the embarrassing situations for parents and in the family as well.

4. Role of Marketers and Advertisers

In recent years Children are viewed as a primary market of consumers because they influence the family’s spending patterns and constitute a future market for all goods and services if cultivated at early childhood it will provide a steady stream of new customers when they reach market when they become adult. But through the research the researcher recommends that marketers and advertisers should follow strict regulations laid by the regulatory bodies while advertising various products. Following regulations should be followed by the marketers and advertisers.

• Health messages in advertisements and on packaging need to be monitored to eliminate misleading promotion.
• Health messages should be made mandatory for advertisements promoting junk food.
• There should also be warnings for parents stating that fast food is addictive and can harm their children’s health, causing problems like high-cholesterol and obesity.

• It is recommended for the advertisers and marketers that celebrities and sports stars will not be allowed to promote food and drink products aimed at children from now on unless the advertisement is part of a “public health or education campaign”. Because in a country like India where cricket and bollywood is considered as a religion, marketers strategically making use of celebrity endorsers and thus persuade their target segment to make purchases.
8.2 MODEL RECOMMENDED FOR NEUTRALIZING THE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN

As discussed in earlier chapter we have seen that children are exposed to advertising on a daily basis through the use of different media such as, television, radio, magazines, newspapers and the Internet. Television, however remains the most commonly used medium for children’s advertising as it provides a much greater reach to this target market and because children spend much of their free time in front of the television on a daily basis. And the second reason is television reaches the children at much early age than any other media as they have not developed the reading skills at early childhood. Therefore children are vulnerable and susceptible to the effects of advertising as they have not developed the cognitive skills and they are not able to understand the selling intent of advertising.

As seen earlier advertising affects in various ways on children such as on their emotional, behavioral, physical and psychological development. Therefore it is very important for everyone those are associated with children to look into the matter as it is a very serious concern for the betterment of children and in turn for the betterment of the nation.

Earlier some of the researchers like Harker in 1998 and S.B. Cassim & D. Bexiga in 2007 had designed a model for acceptable advertising to children. By considering it as guideline I had tried to develop a model in concern with my research topic which will help everyone to reduce the adverse effect of television advertising on children.
As seen in the chapter 3 there are certain Regulatory systems and structures that deal with various aspects of advertising. Different regulatory framework exists in every country which look after the various laws related to children's advertising. Some of the self regulatory bodies also exist in most of the countries. Similarly in India also statutory regulation combined with industry led self-regulation exists to ensure acceptability of advertising.

The model develops a framework of acceptable advertising to Children that ensures acceptability of advertising to this special consumer group. The proposed model can be used as the basis for the design of a framework to assess the regulation of advertising to children. The existing framework needs to be modified to meet the requirements necessary to analyse the regulation of advertising to children. The modifications should have a specific focus on the critical aspects that are important in the regulation of advertising to children. These aspects are those that had impact upon acceptable advertising to children.

Acceptable advertising is ‘advertising that does not fall foul of either the legal or the advertising self-regulatory system in place in that society’ (Harker, 1998:102). Acceptable advertising to children may be described as advertising that is not harmful to their physical, mental or moral health.

Therefore I had tried to design a model which will result into the acceptable advertising for children. It means it will give rise to those advertisements which will not harm children in any ways. The diagrammatic representation of the model is given as below.
Acceptable Advertising to Children by control Mechanism

Country/State Regulation-
Specific clauses on Advertising to Children

Involvement of Psychologists, Sociologists, Pediatricians & other help Groups

Self- Regulation- by Industry Players
Specific guidelines for Advertising to Children

Involvement of Schools and Teachers

Involvement of Parents
The control of advertising generally occurs in two main forms. First is the regulation that is statutory in nature and controlled by the state or central government. Statutory regulation refers to those rules/statutes that are enforced by the government for the purpose of providing consumers protection against harmful advertising. The second form of controlling the advertising is self-regulation by the industry. This is the most commonly used method of advertising control as it encourages marketers to produce non-deceptive advertising messages. Self-regulation is ‘control exercised by an advertiser’s peers, including those in the agencies and media used’

The proposed model can be used for the analysis of the regulation of advertising to children. Five main variables are defined as important elements of the said model.

- **First Is Statutory Regulation:** This refers to the laws governing advertising to children specifically. The regulation of advertising to children can be state regulated. A country’s legal regulatory framework needs to be identified and an assessment of the laws and regulations that exist for the protection of children need examination on regular intervals because of changes that occur in technology, increasing number of households, increasing number of channels, increased disposable income levels, changing family structure etc.

- **Second Is Self- Regulation:** Self-regulation is ‘control exercised by an advertiser’s peers, including those in the agencies and media used’ . Where there is self-regulation,
the self regulatory framework should be identified. In case of India Self Regulatory body such as ASCI that is Advertising Standards Council of India is present. The Advertising Standards Council of India has made provision for community involvement in the form of the Consumer Complaints Council. The Consumer Complaints Council is an independent unit that deals with and evaluates consumer complaints against advertisements (Boddewyn, 1992). The Consumer Complaints Council is made up of twenty-one members of whom 12 are from the public. This is a strong representation of the public in the consumer handling process. Still it is needed to be improved by involvement of specific group of people concerned with children.

- **The Third Variable Is Parent Involvement:** Voluntary groups of parents can be formed who will watch and pressure governments to clamp down on aggressive and intrusive advertising. Parents can help the concern authorities to better enforce the rules of the 1990 Children's Television Act by serving as a watchdog over the television stations in their viewing area. They can write to their representatives at the local, state and national level and ask for legislation to help protect children from deceptive or overly aggressive advertisers.

- **The Fourth Variable is School and Teacher’s Involvement:** Schools and teachers should have active participation by arranging various consumer education and media literacy programs for children in schools. Teachers should make children aware of the selling intent of
advertising. Also children should be educated and informed about the advantages of healthy dietary habits, and disadvantages of the high sugar, high salt, and high fat and low nutritional products. Advertising in all forms should be restricted in school environment which is possible only with the involvement of school authorities and teachers. Also parent-teachers associations should be formed to look after the issue of commercialization of school environment due to unfairness in targeting advertising and marketing to the younger school audiences.

- **The Fifth Variable is involvement of other people such as Psychologists, Sociologist and Pediatricians:** An advertising self-regulatory system can achieve representation of community standards by involving the people such as psychologists, sociologists and pediatricians in the advertising self-regulatory system. This involvement can occur through participation in the complaints handling process, training programs, group discussions etc. Involvement of these people will help to strengthen the trust in a self-regulatory process. Also as psychologists are knowledgeable about the effects of advertising on children and youth they should be encouraged to communicate with parents and professionals who work with children and youth. Psychologists should be uniquely positioned to help educate children, their families, and other professionals who work with children concerning the importance of recognizing and addressing the impact of advertising on the lives of children. Because psychologists work in a variety of child-service
settings such as schools, clinics, hospitals and are also sought out by community groups supporting children. Therefore they should be involved actively.

- **Finally the control Mechanism:**
  The control mechanism refers to the mechanisms in place to ensure that the systems of regulation are observed. These controls are generally affected through the monitoring bodies in charge of implementing the system and through an examination of the systems to ensure industry compliance. Industry compliance refers to compliance to the system of advertising self-regulation, in particular to the self regulatory codes and guidelines. The enforcement may be achieved through sanctions, which are disciplinary measures and fines, or rewards and acknowledgements for compliance. The methods generally used by the industry as a measure of compliance are prescreening and monitoring of the advertisements produced.

  Therefore there should be a control mechanism which will look after the various issues related to the advertising targeted for children. And all the elements of the above model should get involved in solving the issues to reduce the impact advertising has on the children and will result into an acceptable advertising for children.
8.3 CONCLUSION

Advertising to children has always provoked strong feelings and contradictory opinions. Some advocates of child-directed advertising believe that advertising has no or negligible negative effect on children (Miller & Busch, 1979), and that the consequences of advertising are rarely lasting (Caron & Ward, 1975; Malrain, 1985). They argue that children are critical consumers who are capable of defending themselves against the possible harmful effects of advertising (Caron & Ward, 1975; Hite & Eck, 1987; Sheikh, Prasad, & Rao, 1974; Ward, 1984). According to other advocates, advertising provides children with valuable product information, so that they learn how to become consumers (Hite & Eck, 1987; Miller & Busch, 1979).

Many opponents of child-directed advertising, however, believe that commercials aimed at young children can have a profound impact on their beliefs, values, and moral norms (Gardner & Sheppard, 1989). Critics fear that children, more than adults, are susceptible to the seductive influences of commercials because they do not have the necessary cognitive skills to protect themselves against the attractive and cleverly put advertising messages (Adler, 1980; Caron & Ward, 1975). According to these authors, advertising to children can (a) create materialistic attitudes (Goldberg & Gorn, 1978; Hite & Eck, 1987); (b) result in conflicts in the family (Isler, Popper, & Ward, 1987; Robertson, Ward, Gatignon, & Klees, 1979; Ward & Wackman, 1972); and (c) encourage bad eating habits (Dawson, Jeffrey, & Walsh, 1988; Donohue, 1975; Galst, 1980; Galst & White, 1976; Goldberg, Gorn, & Gibson, 1978; Miller & Busch, 1979; Peterson & Lewis, 1988;
Ross, Campbell, Huston-Stein, & Wright, 1981). Finally, opponents argue that advertising can make young children dissatisfied and unhappy because they are less able than adults to resist the temptations in advertisements (Feldman & Wolf, 1974; Goldberg & Gorn, 1978; Martin & Gentry, 1997; Miller & Busch, 1979; Richins, 1991; Sheikh & Moleski, 1977).

Advertising has an omnipresent influence in the lives of children. Children are exposed to a number of advertisements on a daily basis, be it on television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, internet and a range of other media. It is well established that television commercials are effective at accomplishing their intended goal of influencing children’s attitudes and behaviors toward advertised products, as well as contributing to such unintended effects as parent–child conflict, unhealthy eating habits, and more positive attitudes toward sensitive products such as tobacco and alcohol. The rise of products, promotions and advertising that has been targeted to children is of serious concern. Advertising to children has been particularly effective since advertisers are basically making use of child psychology in designing advertisements, promotion and media mix. Advertisers analyze children’s behavior, motives, lifestyle, and leisure activities at various ages and develop effective marketing strategies and advertisements that can catch and hold their attention.

From the analysis of primary data and secondary data it is concluded that advertising severely affect the behavioral, physical, psychological and emotional development of present generation children. The role of parents and legal system plays crucial role in preventing the anti health ads influencing the children’s eating habits. It is observed from analysis that the foods advertisements
are mostly show products contain high level of fat and sugar. It is also observed that children insist their parents to buy the advertised product. Also it is observed that food advertisements effect on eating habits of the teenagers and evoke their desire to eat fatty and high value sugar contain products.

The researcher came to the conclusion that there is a need to be observant of what children are watching on television, parent’s should spend time with them watching television, parent’s should limit their viewing time and get them out of the house more often on family outings, sports, exercise, extracurricular activities such as music, dance, yoga, reading good books etc. and get involved in making television better entertainment for children. Because of the outcomes of television advertising society feels to alleviate the influence of advertising on children. One such effort is an attempt to inoculate children against advertising effects through the use of media literacy interventions. It seems that media literacy training can play a significant role in alleviating concern about the fairness of advertising to children.

Thus, it is obvious that the media and advertising done through it have a great influence on knowledge gained by children which is essential in consumer socialization. As young children usually may not understand the persuasive intent of advertising, they thus tend to be easy targets for advertisers. Hence, it is important that parents educate their children about advertising so as to prevent the negative influence which advertising can have on children in terms of eating habits, extreme buying habits etc. It is also the responsibility of the government to develop effective laws in terms of do’s and don’ts of advertising and strict action needs to be taken. Marketers should realize that children of today are
completely different from children years ago. They are much more knowledgeable due to the easy access of vast information and the rising disposable incomes of families. It is important for marketers to understand how children grow up as consumers and the impact of family, society and culture on their purchasing decisions. To successfully market their products to its young target segment, marketers need to come out with new innovative and creative strategies beyond the usual tactics such as celebrity endorsers, attractive product design and packaging, freebies, branded entertainment, repetition etc. They need to give a lot of thought into designing promotional content, distribution strategy and different media that could be used to target the technology savvy young children.

Last but not least; the proposed model which suggest the active involvement of the different elements of advertising such as the statutory regulations by government, self regulation by industry players, involvement of parents, teachers, schools and other important people such as psychologists, sociologists by a mechanism of control will definitely result into an acceptable advertising for children which will definitely reduce the adverse effects television advertising had on children leading to a healthy childhood and in turn healthy future of the nation.

The thesis seeks to end with the words of Leo Burnett, who says,

"Let's gear our advertising to sell goods, but let's recognize also that advertising has a broad social responsibility."