1.1 Introduction

Kids are consumers in a way and have their own purchasing power therefore they represent an important demographic segment to the marketers. As they influence their parent’s buying behavior as well as decision making so they represent the future adult consumers. Research has shown that children hold a certain power as consumers, and their influence on family purchases goes beyond the selection of toys, cereals, etc. “Whether a company wants to sell electronic gadgets, insurance policies or even cars they fall back on children” (Dewan and Thomson, 2010). “As these kids have the ability to nag their parents into purchasing items they may not otherwise buy. Much has been written and said about the children as being the future customers but due to the lack of a systematic research on the buying behavior of children and then the role or influence of parents, marketers may think that it is inappropriate to consider children as a market” (McNeal, 1999). Children like watching these TV advertisements and get easily attracted towards them and compel their parents to buy them. Such a gimmick causes a division among children because not all the parents can afford the demanded product which can influence the kids behavior as well. A young kid being praised by his teacher for his intelligence inspires the child who has been watching the advertisement related to drink or cereal and it becomes a good habit.

Indeed, “the role of children in household decision making is very considerable and great (Doff, 2004). They are not only influenced easily by advertising, but are skillful at encouraging parents to purchase these products. Because children have their own money to spend they have enjoyed enormous market potential”. “An 8 year old child has all the skills to perform as an independent consumer” (Hsieh et al, 2006). “Advertisers who target children have three main objectives: (1) searching directly for children as customers, (2) affecting parents indirectly through ‘pester power’ of children, (3) specifying of the younger generation with positive brand associations” (Paul, 2002). “Mass media and advertising can influence on cognitive and children’s social development in the consumers socialization and their ability for information processing. Information processing is related to both the consumer’s cognitive ability and the complication of information to be processed” (Schiffman& Kanuk, 2003). Consumer socialization refers to the “processes by which
individuals acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes related to their performance as consumers in the marketplace” (Mowen, 1993). “Primary researches about consumer socialization consistently revealed that three main socialization agents affect the children's consumer behavior. These agents include parents, peers and mass media - mainly television. Based on these primary studies parents play the prominent impressive role until the child reaches adolescence, when peers become the favorable source of information” (Dotson & Hyatt, 2005). Television is becoming an influential way of advertising for children. It is still an important part of media impact on children which is becoming less integrated and more fragmented. “As television targets more specialized segments, not the least important of which are the children” (Shimp, 2000). Since television is in the access of children in their homes and there is restricted control over the observed advertisements so it is considered as an invasive medium. “It has been found that most children spend three to four hours of a day to watch television” (Center for Media Education, 2002). “A considerable amount of children's lives is spent on watching advertising. Probably children don't always pay entire attention to the screen during advertisement breaks since they can turn away or leave the room, but practically the viewer enjoys the opportunity to observe all the advertisements related to any program he/she watches” (Gunter et al, 2005). Television is increasingly transforming into a primary source of information and amusement for the children as children obtain most examples for their favorite advertisements from the TV ads. “These advertisements may have little or no relevance to their own lives, but are admired because they are funny and well executed” (Duff, 2004). Overall, “television is a strong medium since it can influence the viewer’s perception of social reality” (Gunter et al, 2005).

However, there are number of studies about advertising to children, but it seems that there are limited researches about the relationship between children’s age, their understanding of advertising and how the advertisements targeting children influence their parent’s buying behavior.

1.2 Background

Starting with a brief history of advertising in India, and how the major changes are taking place in the advertising industry, the research concentrates to understand what it takes for an advertisement to be “attractive”, specifically the TV advertisements targeting kids.
As India is one of the fastest growing countries in the world, becoming a hub for the meeting of the east and the west. The rich heritage and culture places it as one of the forerunner in fields such as arts, sciences, entertainment and advertising as well. As our country India is a land of one billion people and a zillion opportunities! So the question arises that how does one communicate with this land - where dialects, culture, even cuisine changes at every 8-10 miles as one goes by? “Though numerous in number, there has been little research done on the TV ads targeting kids and how the pester power is leading to the change in the buying behavior of parents. Such research has traditionally been limited to the developed countries, close to the U.S.” (de Mooji, 1998).

Since today’s child is too much exposed to TV these days, so it is important for advertisers to know that how these TV ads effect the mindset of children leading to the pester power which is playing an important role in parents life. A research such as this will help relate the TV advertisements targeting kids in to the accepted standards of kid’s advertisement in India. The creation and production of effective advertising has long been a concern for both the advertisers as well as the advertising agencies. Since advertising began, there have been various rules of thumb for creating the effective advertisements. So, in order to understand this better a brief history of advertising in India is mentioned below.

“The history of Indian advertising can be traced back to the time with the hawkers calling out their wares, right from the days when cities and markets first began. The trend moved from shop front signage to street side sellers to the press ads. Than in the 18th century, concrete advertising began with classified advertising and this was also the time when advertisements appeared for the first time in print in Hickey's Bengal Gazette, which was India's first newspaper” (weekly) (Dagli, 2001).

However, “the history of India cannot overlook the 200 year British rule over the country. Every aspect of Indian lifestyle, whether it is education, transportation, commerce or advertising and communications, was affected by the foreign invasion. But, it was in such a time period that typesetting shops, also called studios, emerged marking the beginning of advertising created in India (as opposed to imports from England). These studios were set up for bold type, ornate fonts, fancier and larger ads. These newspaper studios then trained the first generation of visualizes & illustrators. The earliest of ads that can be seen, appeared in newspapers, in the form of the latest merchandise from England around the early 1700s.
Other goods advertised then were patent medicines; the first brands as we know them today were a category of advertisers”.

So, Indian advertising has come a long way into the tech savvy world in the 21st century. Later on, “it saw the launch of independent advertising agencies, entrance of multinational companies, beginning of India’s only advertising school, MICA (Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad), and the birth of the most prestigious advertising awards in India, called the ABBY awards, by the Advertising Club of Bombay. With the Indian economy evolving by the day and the spending power of the Indians on an upswing, Television Advertising remains one of the most effective tools for many a consumer brand in India to reaching out to their target audiences glued to the TV sets and watching their favorite Channels. Television advertisement or television commercial is a span of television programming produced and paid for by an organization that conveys a message. Advertisement revenue provides a significant portion of the funding for most privately owned television networks. The vast majority of television advertisements today consist of brief advertising spots, ranging in length from a few seconds to several minutes (as well as program-length infomercials). Advertisements of this sort have been used to sell every product imaginable over the years, from goods and services to political campaigns. Children in middle-class India take important decisions in the home, thereby contributing majorly to household budget contours. From buying white goods and cars, to cell phones and grocery and even insurance policies, children under the age of 13 are deciding which brands their parents should or should not buy. Shift in target audience has happened on account of the fact that in middle and upper income families, television has come to occupy prime space. TV viewing has even replaced dinner table conversation. Nuclear families, working parents and latchkey kids in the metros mean that children get to spend very little time with either parent. Many spend their free time watching television or surfing the Internet. Driven by guilt, parents tend to lavish gifts on their children a little too often, and they give in to the demands of children more easily than they would have otherwise”.

In the absence of a family support system and also the reliable domestics, parents newer days find themselves unable to discipline their children due to which most children in today's upwardly mobile families find it difficult to take 'no' for an answer. Today, buying decisions often do not reflect the requirements of the family as they are based more on the whims and fancies of immature children who might grow up to be unreasonable adults.
As every day we all are exposed to the different kinds of media that are trying to sell products to us. “The society today gives the marketing communication business more than just TV and newspaper to communicate to the customer. Advertising has been a tool for companies for as far as the 17th century where Gillian Dyers (1982) found trace from the production of newsheets that worked as information source for the financial market (Giles 2003) who also argues that psychology and advertising have had a strong connection between them since the beginning, but he continues to say that academically, the two subjects have now gone separate ways. The key to success for an advertiser have been their ability to manipulate our decisions and impression” (Giles 2003). The different tools to manipulate the target market, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2001) are “advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. Each marketing communication tool has their own specific tool to use when the goal is to persuade the target market. For example advertising, that reach a high number of people through TV and print media or personal selling, that meet the target market face to face through sales presentation and trade shows. To reach the target market and communicate effectively a marketer has to understand how the communication process is working” (Kotler and Armstrong 2001). Figure 1.1 shows the different stages of the communication process.

![Communication Process Diagram](image)

**Figure 1.1: “Communication Process Source”: Adapted from Kotler and Armstrong p 518**

As the above figure shows the “communication process where basic process is ‘the sender’, which is the company that wants to pursue the target market by sending out a message where
depending on the interpretation of ‘the message’ by the receiver the result will either be a purchase or an ignorance which is shown as ‘feedback’ in the figure. The ‘noise’ shown in the figure, affects the whole communication process. It can be everything from a telephone calling when the company’s advertisement is shown on television or when there is a lack of time in the morning for reading the newspaper”. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001) “an effective message is when the sender’s encoding process catch or capture with the receiver’s decoding process. A message can consist of words or figures and depending on the sender’s experience and knowledge of the receiver the effectiveness of the message will be shown in feedback. Advertisement is one of the marketing communication tools that can be implemented in this communication process”. According to Jobber (2001) advertising is “any paid form of non-personal communication of ideas or products in the prime media, i.e. television, the press, posters, cinema and radio”. Wells, Burnett and Moriarty (2003) say “effective ads work on two levels. The first level is that the advertisement should satisfy customer’s objectives. The second level is achieving the advertiser’s objectives”. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001) “companies worldwide are spending $414 billion on advertisement annually”. Since advertisement is an often used tool Wells, Burnett and Moriarty (2003) point out “three dimensions characterizing effective advertisements. The first dimension is strategy; this is where the objectives are carefully examined and the target audience and message is created. Second is creativity; there is a large number of advertisement running, the message have to stick to the target audience’s memory. The last one is execution which is the details, the photography, setting and printing”. “One of the opportunities to reach out to the target market is advertising through broadcast media, it can either be through radio, television or internet (Wells, Burnett and Moriarty 2003). These media transmits sound and/or images electronically and gives the advertisement message a deeper feeling mainly because of the movement, sound and picture. Advertisement in the TV industry can be broadcast in the public television, cable/subscription television, and local television (Wells et al 2003). Depending on what type of broadcast that is used, there are different forms of television advertisement that can be implemented such as sponsorships, participation or spot announcement”. “Targeting children through TV can be seen as a successful strategy since they spend 24 hours per week in front of the TV” (Oser 2005). Baldes, Gunter and Oates (2004) says that “children have spending power, for example children in the United States from 12 years and younger spend $28 billion in 2000. They
further say that targeting children is a huge market and that the advertisement is often implemented through TV”.

1.3 Problem Discussion

According to Dotson and Hyatt (2005) “the level of media exposure within households has changed dramatically in the past years and ultimately as media usage is increasing it consequently becomes a dominant influence on children’s consumer socialization”. “When vulnerable populations such as young children are involved, marketing decisions become even more complicated (Hogan 2005). Any corporation looking to target children has to face a major challenge in creating advertisements which are appealing to children but also do not offend or upset the parents”.

However, “advertising to children is a controversial subject matter which generates a number of concerns for marketers as well as the recipients. Various questions and concerns such as it is morally accepted to aim advertisement towards children who are unable to fully grasp the intent of the advertisers? Secondly, is television an effective way to market products to children? Thirdly, is it appropriate that children learn to be effective consumers from an early age? Fourthly, encouraging children to buy products lead them to pester their parents and cause family disputes? Does television advertising present an accurate or misleading image of the world to children? Lastly, should advertising aimed at children be regulated? If so, how strict should that regulation be and, in a global market place, should regulators draw up common guidelines across different countries and the cultures” (Blades, Gunter and Oates 2005).

One of the reports highlighted the fact that – ‘Is the media taking over your child's life’? There was a nationwide survey conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation “which experts are calling them the M2 Generation - today's highly technological children whose lives seem to revolve around the media. And with the constant exposure that children have to television, computers, music, mobile devices, and video games, it seems there is no limit to the amount of time children spend with media devices. According to the survey, in just five years, media use has increased from 6 ½ to nearly 7 ½ hours a day in children between the ages of 8 and 18. Even more alarming - children have become master multitaskers, often using two or more media devices at the same time. Counting each device separately, these kids have found a way to cram in a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes of media content into those 7 ½ hours”.

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These findings epitomize the definition of the phrase ‘media saturation’. As we all know that “children now spend more time with the media than they do with their family, in school or sleeping. Media saturation appears to have an adverse effect on a child's performance in school. Almost half of the children in the survey who were considered heavy media users had grades of mostly Cs or lower, compared to fewer than 25 percent of children considered light media users. In addition, kids who spend more time with media devices reportedly have a lower level of personal contentment, and have a tendency to get in trouble more often. They also reported feeling more sad or bored than their non-media-obsessed counterparts. Nearly every aspect of children’s lives has been adversely affected by recent trends in advertising and marketing. Research links advertising to increased violence, obesity, and eating disorders in children, as well as family stress and negative values. Children are especially vulnerable to persuasive messages. Advertisers of children's television used to appeal to the parents but now they appeal directly to children - who do not have the emotional or cognitive tools to evaluate what's being sold to them. They are a showcase for "must have" items that parents are expected to buy, teaching our children to become consumers before they've even reached the age of three. Marketing race to put the brand on the top of the mind, creating brand equity, maintaining the brand loyalty has extended to influence the children to a extent that it has lost its path and walking on the unethical grounds, leaving our children’s in a vulnerable conditions. Of all marketing weapons, advertising has the leading impact as its exposure is more, and is the most attractive media for children. The need is to establish certain standards to restrict advertising aimed at children. As advertising to children is a sensitive and emotionally-charged issue because children’s are easily influenced and like to experiment with new things. The proliferation of products, advertising, promotions and media targeted to children is of concern to lawmakers, the industry and the general public. Children's advertising is under attack because it is perceived as making kids want what they don't need and puts pressure on parents to respond to those needs. But at present, advertising is accused of being a factor in causing children's obesity. While there are more regulations in effect than ever before, there is a public outcry for even more. There are various pieces of advice given to parents about ways in which they can counter advertising strategies. These include educating children to understand that the main goal of advertising is to make them buy things, often things they do not need and did not know they wanted until they have seen advertisements and encouraging children to challenge advertiser’s claims about their products".
1.3.1 Television & Viewers

Television has a very wide viewership ranging from 2 year olds to 90 year olds. Most people are not really interested in the advertisements which are aired in the breaks in the middle of a program. They either change the channel or take a break themselves. It is the kids who love the advertisements and sit glued to the television sets through the advertisements without batting an eyelid. Hence absolute discretion has to be observed regarding the quality of language and the content of the advertisement. It has been found that television is the main source of entertainment for the working woman when she returns home at the end of a heavy day where as a stay at home mom loves catching up with her favorite serial when the family is off for the day. Along with the kids, mothers are also the target audiences for the advertisers as mothers spend more time with kids and are aware of their kids preferences and also able to influence their child for consuming the products being advertised and vice versa. Hence the promotions which focus on families, children, interiors and savings are of utmost interest to her or it can be said they catch her eye. The health drink advertisements or the instant energy ones target her. Most importantly the ones that offer a genuine discount are of interest to the mother as in these tough times of high costs and lower incomes, it is the woman who manages the tight family budget. At this stage, it is imperative to note that very few people can be fooled by false promotions. It is not so easy to convince a consumer to loosen his purse strings just by uttering a few clever phrases. Knowing this, advertising companies use celebrities like film stars and sports personalities to endorse their products. So you can see a cricketer selling a health drink or a film star selling hair oils. The general idea is that the public is a bit more convinced that when a popular personality promotes a product it has more credibility. The target is the vulnerable consumer who wants to believe that what is good for Mr. A and B is very good for himself. But advertisements are totally essential otherwise the consumer will be unaware of what is available in the market. From foods and beverages to electronics to furniture to housekeeping products to toiletries to pet products to finance and banking services to medical care, every one of these industries need advertising and marketing for their products. When the various brands of a product advertise, the consumer benefits as he gets a chance to make a choice. It would be unfair to say that advertisements don’t make an impact on the consumer. Many important buying decisions are made based on advertisements only. Hence the costs incurred by the company in producing and airing it are justified. The television channels thrive on these advertisements only, so the
channels and the companies need each other. So this raises the question that are the unhappy kids more likely to watch more of television or does watching more television make the kids unhappy? Although the Kaiser Foundation stresses that no relationship between media use and grades and the personal contentment could be established, it is still important to point out that the statistics show a strong pattern.

Another alarming issue is the link between television time and the childhood obesity. It has been found that a child who spends more than four hours a day watching television is more likely to be overweight than one who watches less than two hours.

1.3.2 Marketing to children

It was unusual for children to be targeted by the marketers as well as the advertisers until television became commonplace in homes during the 20th century. Today, as more people have added subscription television to their entertainment fare, more opportunities have been created to market the products to children on channels, such as Pogo, Hungama, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, etc., which deliver the children-specific programming.

“Marketing to children is a planned process which starts at early age and continue till he/she become loyal customer or drop the product as a result of his analytical ability to understand the message and content of product and advertising. Normally child get exposed to the advertising at early age of 2 years (there are circumstances where in age is even less than 2 years), when the child starts recognizing shapes and images. Advertising gradually build the strong relationship between brand and the child. Over a period of time child will become the consumer and then the loyal consumer”.
Figure 1.2: Marketing process and development of child as an consumer “Marketing goal and advertising tools used to attract the attention of the child”

“Children represent three different markets. In addition to the direct money that children spend and the money they influence, children also represent a third major market and perhaps the most significant and that is the future market. Advertisers recognize that brand loyalties and consumer habits formed when children are young and vulnerable will be carried through to adulthood. Retailers and marketers also aware of the fact that those who switch are less likely to be loyal than those who are nurtured from childhood. Looking at the wide market opportunities throne by this segment, marketer tries all the techniques and tools that are available to pursue the children”. Some of them are listed below:

1.3.2.1 Entertainment

Before 4 - 5 years old, “children view advertising as simply a source of entertainment. As per a qualitative research, children actively enjoy TV advertising as it entertains them and is a part of the pleasure they derive from watching television. It is also part of a shared culture with family as well as the friends. At early age ‘feel good’ advertisements associate child memory with the brands which will be nourished by a series of advertisement messages in years to come”.

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1.3.2.2 Bright colors, cartoon characters and celebrity endorsement

Children between 4 and 7 years of age, “these children are able to distinguish advertising from programs. Younger children remain relatively unengaged by the message content but may still be persuaded by the status of its celebrity source or the intensity of the message (color, sound). Consequently advertisers may appeal to younger children through the use of bright colors, lively music and the involvement of cartoon characters or celebrities and take the advantage of the affection children feel for those characters”.

1.3.2.3 Witty and stylish imagery message

“The majority children have generally grasped the intention to persuade by the age of eight, while after eleven or twelve years they can articulate a critical understanding of advertising. Tweens (age group 9-12) and teens are more likely to pay attention to the content of the message, and be persuaded because they attend to, and engage with, the arguments put forward for a proposition or product. Hence advertisements for tweens/teenagers are more likely appeal through witty or stylish imagery and subtle messages. Celebrities as role models are likely to continue to have an influence”. There are several issues associated with television advertising and its impact on child such as,

- Diet habits
- Mental stress for not owning the product of his choice,
- Physical health of child
- Violent behavior,
- Consumption of alcoholic drink, and
- Smoking
- Family stress (as a result of influence on family spending)

However, the ‘Internet’ has also provided more opportunity through websites which feature content aimed at children. As “marketing on the internet employs a variety of techniques to appeal including advertorials, competitions, video links, product discounts and
‘advergames’. Advergames are advertiser-sponsored video games which embed brand messages in colorful, fun, fast-paced adventures which are created by companies for the explicit purpose of promoting their brands. Indeed, advertising has effectively broadened to include a comprehensive range of activities - television advertising, marketing on the internet, product placement in television programs, films and DVDs, computer and videogames, peer-to-peer or viral marketing, supermarket sales promotions, cross promotions between films and television programs, use of licensed characters and spokes-characters, celebrity endorsements, marketing in children’s magazines, outdoor advertising, print marketing, sponsorship of school and sporting activities, marketing on mobile phones and branding on toys and clothing and so on”.

1.3.3 Strategies adopted by marketers targeting kids

Marketing activities have exploded over time. As in 2008, “companies spend nearly $17 billion annually marketing to kids. This value is more than double than it was in 1992” (Lagorio, 2007). “Parents today are willing to buy more for their kids because trends such as smaller family size, dual incomes and postponing children until later in life mean that families have more disposable income. As well, guilt can play a role in spending decisions as time-stressed parents substitute material goods for time spent with their kids. Children represent an important demographic to marketers because they have their own purchasing power, they influence their parents' buying decisions and they're the adult consumers of the future. Marketer tries to draw children’s attention through various means like TV, Magazines, Stickers, etc. Young children, in particular, have difficulty in distinguishing between advertising and reality in ads, and ads can distort their view of the world. Additionally children are unable to evaluate advertising claims. Obviously attracted children by the marketing practices; get adversely affected most of the time. Childhood overweight and physical inactivity have reached epidemic levels taking a terrible toll on health. Skyrocketing obesity rates are a symptom of current community norms shaped by a market driven economy that promotes overeating and sedentary behavior. Both children and adults are targets of intensive marketing campaigns promoting soda, fast foods, and high-calories snacks, along with passive leisure-time activities, including TV, movies, and video games. High calories foods are more readily available in schools and communities than are healthy eating options, and physical education and walking, and other exercise opportunities are lacking in many
neighborhoods”. Here are some of the strategies marketers employ to target children as well as the teens:

1.3.3.1 Pester Power

Today the kids have more autonomy and decision-making power within the family than it was in previous generations, so it follows that kids are vocal about what they want their parents to buy. Pester power refers to the “children's ability to nag their parents into purchasing items they may not otherwise buy. Marketing to children is all about creating pester power, because advertisers know what a powerful force it can be”.

Pestering or nagging is further divided into the two categories—"persistence" and "importance". “Persistence nagging (a plea that is repeated over and over again) is not as effective as the more sophisticated importance nagging. This latter method appeals to parent’s desire to provide the best for their children, and plays on any guilt they may have about not having enough time for their kids”.

Once “McDonald's advised its employees to specifically target the children in a campaign titled ‘Kid's are the Star’, where employees were encouraged to pay special attention to the children in the restaurant, and make sure they have a positive experience while they are eating at McDonald's. The reason for this, naturally, was not because the McDonald's corporation cares deeply about the well-being of children everywhere, but that the pester-power that children have is extraordinarily effective at bringing parents back”.

The way that advertisers target children is simple that is, by using - big, bright lights, happy people and animated characters which are needed to encourage children into thinking a certain product is something they want because children are so naïve that they genuinely believe what an advertiser tells them about the place they are selling. They can’t even realize that Ronald McDonald is just a guy in a costume and make-up, and that out the back of every McDonald's are a bunch of kids working in uncomfortable conditions for the low pay.

"We're relying on the kid to pester the mom to buy the product, rather than going straight to the mom."

Barbara A. Martino,  
(Advertising Executive  
Grey Advertising Inc. 18 & Under division)
According to the American Centre for Science in the Public Interest “pestering strategies undermine parental authority. Parents are forced to choose between being ‘the bad guy’ by saying no to junk food or giving in to incessant demands. This conflict in negotiation between parents and children has been recognized as common, with ‘co-shopping’ described by parents as stressful because of the purchase demands made by children”.

However, “the marketing websites promotes pester power as a passport to growth for companies. They advise advertisers ‘to develop a strategy, which target the kids and influence them totally, so that next time they are out with their parents, they get what they want’.

1.3.3.2 The marriage of psychology and marketing

For effectively marketing to children “advertisers need to know what makes kids tick. So, with the help of well-paid researchers as well as psychologists, advertisers now have the access to in-depth knowledge about the children's developmental, emotional and social needs at different age levels. Using research that analyzes children's behavior, fantasy lives, art work, even their dreams, companies are able to craft sophisticated marketing strategies to reach young people”.

Although “the issue of using child psychologists to help marketers target kids is gaining widespread public attention. It brings up a real moral dilemma for those who make the advertising decisions, or at least it should. While manipulating children into believing lies, especially encouraging them to eat unhealthy foods, is obviously bad, the money that can potentially be made is just so good. How do you say no to an opportunity to have such a wide audience of children, who act as advertisers themselves when they encourage other children and their parents to use a certain product”?

1.3.3.3 Building brand name loyalty

Canadian author Naomi Klein tracks the birth of "brand" marketing in her 2000 book “No Logo”. According to Klein “the mid-1980s saw the birth of a new kind of corporation—Nike, Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, to name a few, which changed their primary corporate focus from producing products to creating an image for their brand name. By moving their manufacturing operations to countries with cheap labour, they freed up money to create their powerful marketing messages. It has been a tremendously profitable formula, and has led to
the creation of some of the wealthiest and powerful multi-national corporations the world has seen.

“Marketers plant the seeds of brand recognition in very young children, in the hopes that the seeds will grow into lifetime relationships. According to the Center for a New American Dream, babies as young as six months of age can form mental images of corporate logos and mascots. Brand loyalties can be established as early as age two, and by the time children head off to school most can recognize hundreds of brand logos. While fast food, toy and clothing companies have been cultivating brand recognition in children for years, adult-oriented businesses such as banks and automakers are now getting in on the act. Magazines such as Time, Sports Illustrated and People have all launched kid and teen editions—which boast ads for adult related products such as minivans, hotels and airlines”.

1.3.3.4 Buzz or street marketing

The challenge for marketers is to cut through the intense advertising clutter in young people's lives. So, many companies are using ‘buzz marketing’ – “a new twist on the tried-and-true ‘word of mouth’ method. The idea is to find the coolest kids in a community and have them use or wear your product in order to create a buzz around it. Buzz, or ‘street marketing’ as it's also called, can help a company to successfully connect with the savvy and elusive teen market by using trendsetters to give their products ‘cool’ status. Buzz marketing is particularly well-suited to the Internet, where young ‘Net promoters’ use newsgroups, chat rooms and blogs to spread the word about music, clothes and other products among unsuspecting users”.

“Advertisers not only feature cartoon or other characters from children's television programmes to gain their endorsement for their products (known as host selling) but they sometimes even place those advertisements in the breaks of the television programmes about those characters, thus blurring the distinction between programming and advertising and taking advantage of the affection children feel for those characters. Television advertising makes up about 70% of the total amount spent on advertising to children in the US but total advertising expenditure makes up only about 15% of the total amount of money spent on marketing to children. In fact much marketing to children now consists of sales promotions such as direct coupons, free gifts and samples, contests and sweepstakes, and public relations such as using celebrities and licensed characters which visit shopping centers and schools.
New technologies have also provided new opportunities such as the Internet and telephone services that enable ‘new, personalized promotions’ aimed at children. Marketing in schools is also a rapidly growing arena”.

“Kids clubs, organized by retailers, producers and media outlets, have proliferated in recent times. They offer an opportunity to develop a more personal relationship with each child, get information about the children for marketing purposes that can be used for mailing lists and databases, and to promote products to children of particular age groups and geographical locations. When companies want to sell insurance policies, power inverters, aircons and even cars, they fall back on children. But earlier the little ones were only the target of chocolate, ice-cream and toy-makers. Marketers and ad-makers are increasingly getting convinced about the kid being a compelling force in the family as they are watching TV, maturing faster and is willing to assert himself. When it's time for the family to take a decision to buy something, the children are playing a bigger role”. Example:

- Maruti Esteem car (my dad’s big car)
- Complain (mummy ko kaho complain pilaye)
- Maruti Suzuki 800 - That's why chotte's car never runs out of petrol. Even after it drives over a chappati, under the dog's tail, through a fish bowl, over the sleeping guard's bald head. The cute little boy in the year 2008, Petrol Khatam Hi Nahin Haunda ad may not have been able to afford the car himself, but he managed to reinforce the message in the mind of their target audience.
- If we talk about a girl child watching the magical Barbie commercial introducing its latest collection of dolls. The punch line is “collect them all”, luring the young TV viewer to pester Mama to buy them all.
- Surf Excel (ganda hai to acha hai)

So there are various ads on television channels like this for toys, drinks, soaps, stationery, confectionery, biscuits, etc. It is an endless list. “Most of the advertising today is either aimed at children directly or even if the product advertised is not kids stuff a child definitely figures somewhere to lend a warmer, more congenial touch to the advertisement. It is almost as if the advertisers have a ready formula in a child to boost sales. Since cable television has invaded,
almost every home kid’s are bombarded with such advertising most of their waking hours. It is little wonder then that they have emerged as the biggest consumers of our millennium”.

Be it in the form of protagonists or as their audience, companies today have envisaged a definite role for children – “as influencers or brand advocates”. “With their impressionable psyches, and the strong emotional connect that they share with parents or adults, kids are being counted upon to act as push factors in most homes and pester power is being seen in a whole new light. So even though a product may be adult oriented, grabbing the child's attention has become critical for marketers, irrespective of what they are selling. The simplest technique has been to create situations that children relate to the most popular setting being a school environment, a child handing over a report card, enjoying with family or dealing with peer pressure. Images which are floral, happy and colorful are known to create a deep impact on the child's brain. The child then begins to visualize himself in the frame and wants to recreate the same setting at home. For example, the Nerolac paints ad in the ‘90s’, followed this paradigm, when it presented the jingle “Jab Ghar Ki Raunak Badhani Ho” alongside happy scenes of children prancing around while the walls were being painted in bright yellows and reds. For Maruti Suzuki, the aim has been to base their content on the natural feelings of the child. The depiction is important. For example, children are curious, competitive, desire to travel in comfortable cars and want to be popular. These elements make such ads talking points among children. Research shows that younger children (between the ages of 7-11) go for brands that they can identify with, adolescents are known to respond better to images that show them how they can transform themselves effectively into adults, be it boys or girls”.

However “apart from high involvement goods like televisions, refrigerators and mobile services, children have been more effectively used in relatively less involvement categories like ‘life insurance and paints’. While insurance is generally adult oriented, many insurance ads including those of HDFC Standard Life and MetLife and paints like Dulux also work around kids, their playful pranks and their aspirations. The critical difference is that in the current breed of such children-based communication there is a tendency to integrate the product with the activities they are associated with. For example in the Kotak ad they actually linked it to their child policy while the Dulux ad actually communicated dirt resistance based on the child's pranks. So the advertisements are incomplete without kids. And why not, kids have become an essential element in most frontline advertisements. Known for their alacrity,
kids play a significant role in promoting brand image. Realizing this potential the marketers today know that if they are able to target kids it’s a battle half won. Kids represent an important demographic to marketers because they have their own purchasing power, they influence their parents' buying decisions and they're the adult consumers of the future. Children represent a great target for advertisers and marketers across the world. Not only are they easily swayed by advertising, they are great at encouraging parents to buy these products. If a child wants something in their kid's locker, they will prod and annoy their parents until their decorative shelving has what they want. Anyone who has seen a kid pester their parents knows the lengths kids can go to, and all it takes is a little suggestion from a single advertisement to send them on their way”.

Although, today parents are willing to buy more for their kids because trends such as smaller family size, dual incomes and postponing children until later in life mean that families have more disposable income. Also, guilt can play a role in spending decisions as time-stressed parents today substitute the material goods for time spent with their kids.

As a result “there is now a whole segment of the marketing industry devoted to figuring out how to sell things to kids. Children were first identified as a target market in the 1960s, and the concept has continued to increase in popularity, as shown by the recent explosion of books with titles like What Kids Buy and Why: The Psychology of Marketing to Kids; Brand Child: Remarkable Insights into the Minds of Today's Global Kids and Their Relationships with Brands; and Kidfluence: The Marketer's Guide to Understanding and Reaching Generation Y Kids, Tweens, and Teens”.

### 1.3.4 The ages and stages of advertising

In India “an average child watches about two hours of television per day and sees more than 20,000 commercials per year. So the marketers have become increasingly sophisticated, using research into developmental psychology to exploit the children's age-specific vulnerabilities and make their messages that much more powerful”. The table below shows the child’s understanding of advertising intentions:-

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Understanding of Advertising</th>
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<td>Upto five years (0-5)</td>
<td>“Advertisements are seen as an entertainment, most of the children in this age-group don't understand that there is a difference between entertainment and advertising. They watch the commercials and television</td>
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programs with equal attention. Commercials aimed at this age-group often associate the products or brands with fun and happiness, rather than talking about the actual product facts”.

♦ Five to seven years (5-7): “The children in this age-group believe that advertisements provide information, children don't develop a concept of other people's beliefs, desires and motives, known as ‘theory of mind’, until they are at least six years of age. It's difficult for children younger than seven or eight years old to understand that the intent of advertising is to get them to buy the things. They also tend to take the advertised claims about a product literally”.

♦ Tweens, age eight to 12 years: “children in this group understand the purpose of ads but are still vulnerable to them. These children are starting to develop their sense of identity. ‘Aspirational’ marketing targets their desire to be slightly older and seem more sophisticated than they are”.

♦ “Teenagers are trying to differentiate themselves from their parents and fit in with their peer group. Marketing aimed at teenagers may focus on teen’s insecurities, or it may take positive qualities such as their activism and desire to challenge the conformity and repackage them in the form of cool, counter-culture brands”.

<table>
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<th>Table 1.1: A child’s understanding of advertising intentions</th>
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### 1.3.5 Advertisements & Commercialization in education

Earlier, schools were used to be a place where children were protected from the advertising and consumer messages that permeated their world, but not anymore. Budget shortfalls are forcing the school boards to allow corporation’s access to students in exchange for badly needed cash, computers and educational materials. Today, corporations realize the power of the school environment for promoting their name as well as the products. A school setting delivers a captive young audience and implies the endorsement of teachers as well as the educational system. Marketers are eagerly exploiting this medium in a number of ways, including:
1. Advertising posted in the classrooms, school buses, on computers, etc. in exchange for the funds.

2. Supplying schools with the technology in exchange for high company visibility.

3. Sponsored educational materials: for example, Maggie setting up stalls in schools, Britannia calls students for factory visit and then come the freebees etc. for example HLL has been going to school and taking to girl students on the menstrual cycles and health care after which they promote their sanitary napkins and tell the girls on how it is the best along with which they give free samples. They are targeting young girls in the age group of 9 to 11 and capturing a young market very well.

4. Contests and incentive programs: for example, the Pizza Hut reading incentives program in which children receive the certificates for free pizza if they achieve a monthly reading goal, or Campbell's Labels for the education project in which Campbell provides educational resources for schools in exchange for soup labels collected by students.

5. Sponsoring the school events.

6. Exclusive deals with fast food or soft drink companies to offer their products in a school or district.

1.3.6 Marketing entertainment to kids

All the kid's channels offering various interesting programmes are in the league to have a share for the kids. Various reality shows targeted to children are doing extremely well with the target group.

1. By applying the above tactics not only have the sale of the nutritional products like Complan, Horlicks and Bournvita have gone up, but they have also pulled in lots of customers for the brands that are targeted at higher age group like automobiles, electronics and food outlet chains like McDonalds, Baskin Robbins, Café Coffee Day and even consumer durable products.

2. Automobile companies like Maruti Suzuki and Volkswagen which engaged kids have done huge business by portraying the simplicity with high standards.
3. The advertisement sent the message that wars and barriers will come to an end with the help of the communication. Kids have made their mark in almost all the frontline television commercials.

4. Mobile service provider like Vodafone had roped in a little girl and the pug that followed her everywhere she went. This indicated reliable network connection of Vodafone and the ad was a huge success. Even its competitor service provider Airtel had roped in kids to promote the brand. The idea of the brand was correlated with the game of football.

5. Media buying experts believe that most brands which use kids have certainly helped in the success of brands. There are quite a few commercials with kids and have achieved success, right from automobiles and detergent to insurance products. Products that are not meant for kids have also achieved immense success.

6. Even banks and insurance companies have roped in kids in their advertisements to send a positive message to their target audience by showing a strong bond between father and son or father and daughter.

7. Advertising and marketing experts believes that if a child has a role in an ad then obviously it helps the brand. For instance, if a child is explaining the features of a television set to his father and how to operate it, then it makes sense. Max New York campaign series are the best example of this. In India, kids play an important role in influencing the decision of buyers? Automobiles and electronic goods have also achieved a great deal of success because of kids being part of the brand advertisement.

1.4 Purpose and Objectives of the Research

Based on the problem discussion above, the purpose of this research work is to present a better understanding of how the television advertising affects the young children resulting in influencing the parents buying behavior. In order to reach this purpose, the following research objectives are mentioned below:

1. To examine parent’s perception towards the TV ads targeting kids.
2. To study the role of “pester power” on the buying behavior of parents thereby leading to parent-child conflict.

3. To identify and examine the category of products where kids are mostly influenced by the advertisements showing kids/cartoons as compared to the non-cartoon/other ads thereby influencing parents buying behavior.

4. To evaluate the parent’s perception towards child understanding of TV ads and do these ads provide them good information thereby making them a good buyer.

5. To study the role of “peer influence” in the child behavior by watching the TV ads targeting kids.

6. To analyze the category of products as well as their satisfaction level whenever they involved their children while making a buying decision.

7. To understand the parent’s as well as the child behavior towards the TV ads advertising the products with gift offers or discounts.

8. To study the role of TV ads and how it affects the child's eating habit.

9. To what extent the parent’s consider their children’s choice while purchasing products for them.

10. Do parent’s are affected by the good TV ads with bad quality products which in turn lose their trust in the TV ads.

11. To study significant difference among the age groups of children (6-8, 8-10 & 10-12 years) on the parent’s buying behavior.

12. Does the parent’s perception towards the TV ads targeting kids differ on the basis of their education level?

13. Does the parent’s gender affect their perception towards the TV ads targeting kids?