Chapter - 4

CHILDREN AS CONSUMERS

4.1 INTRODUCTION :

"Child is the Father of Man" Wordsworth has said. Whatever the interpretation we give to this famous quote, the undeniable fact is that today's child is tomorrow's adult citizen. If we want to ensure that the present generation grows-up equipped with the right qualities to become responsible and aware citizens, we have to start training and moulding them when they are young. What kind of society we want after 15-20 years from now onwards, will depend on what attitude we encourage to develop today's children. As a well-known Indian proverb puts it: "What one learns at the age of five will endure till fifty and what one fails to learn at five cannot be inculcated at fifty".

Advertisers are fully aware of these facts and are trying to improve the situation to their advantage. They catch the children at a tender age to convert them into permanent patrons and brand loyalists. The eager minds of the children, which are ready to absorb any message, can be moulded by the advertisers to demand their products. Children eat food, wear clothes and use various products. They are consumers today, but can be converted into buyers for tomorrow. They can provide a vast market, if the advertisers can sell them their brand name today. Heather Auton, a professor of advertising says: "If you get them when they
are young, then even if they lapse after few years, they will come back to you when they are in their thirties". Like any other group of consumers, the attack strategies for children are carefully researched, planned and created. Many researchers have called children 'Consumer trainees'.

4.2 IMPORTANCE OF ADVERTISING FOR CHILDREN:

It is recognised internationally that advertising has a power to influence the purchase decisions as well as influence social, moral and emotional state of the child. If we include all those under the age of fifteen as children, they make-up 32% or almost 1/3 of the current global population. Of this number, the developing countries account for nearly 82% and out of this, India has around 300 million. That is more than the entire population of USA, Canada and Australia put together.

Realising the tremendous potential in concentrating on children, advertisers take keen interest in them, even though they are difficult to handle-complex and sensitive. Children are targeted not just for what they buy themselves, but for what can persuade others to buy. That is why the amount of money on advertising and promotion on advertising for children is simply breathtaking. But the process of developing them into consumers is time consumption. If the advertisers expect to remain in the business for any length of time, then they are forced to condition the
minds of these millions of children to their advantage.

In many cases, children are used by the smart marketers, as first target to fire at the real targets — parents. There are many products and services where, if advertisers concentrate their marketing efforts on children instead of parents, chances of successful sales are higher by this method. They influence parent's casual marketing considerations of price, need, quality, utility, budget etc. If advertisers ignore them, a significant marketing opportunity is lost.

4.3 IMPACT OF TELEVISION ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN:

The potency of television in conditioning children and youngsters to be loyal enthusiasts of the product, even if they are not old enough to consume it, is tremendous. Todays children learn about life through advertisements. Several parents have confirmed that kids learn from the television at a young age. Even though they can barely walk, talk, read and write, yet a small screen hypnotises them. They can recognise jingles and tunes and actions which they proceed to imitate, and the proud parents connect all this to the child's intelligence level. By the age of three years, they are aware of brand names. Many children watching cable TV, start recognising the bird 'Kingfisher' even before they start recognising common birds such as crow and sparrow. They learn it through the Kingfisher Brand of Beer sponsoring the favourite programme 'Bay watch'. Similar stories can be narrated
about Kiwis, Elephants, Tigers, Lions etc.

Children are a living record of what they listen to and what we tell them day after day. They like to watch advertisements equally enthusiastically and eagerly wait to watch certain advertisements and they patiently absorb the messages as they await the regular programme.

When the informants of the primary data were asked about the children's ability to understand and absorb advertisements, 90.57% of the individuals felt that they did influence children. The detailed brake-up is given in the Table 4.1. Another important fact that becomes obvious, is that all the housewives felt that the children watch the advertisements very attentively and absorb the messages.

| Table : 4.1 |
| Children's Ability to Understand and Absorbs the Advertisements. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>&lt; Rs. 5000 Income</th>
<th>&gt; Rs. 5000 Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71 (86.59%)</td>
<td>70 (92.11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11 (11.34%)</td>
<td>6 (7.89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advertisements feature more children and popular comic characters like Superman, Batman, Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Advertisers know how to take advantage of this --- sad fact of life, so that, they do not walk away or change channels when advertisements interrupt the programs.

A & M magazine and IMBR conducts the survey on a regular basis for the best liked advertisements on television. Five hundred respondents from six cities (Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Delhi, Bangalore, Hydrabad) are asked to specify their three favourite advertisements. The finding of the survey of Feb, 1996 are given in Table 4.2. One noticeable factor which is obvious not only in this table, but also in such previous surveys is that advertisement featuring children are not only liked by children but also by adults. Of the ten popular advertisement, seven feature children and young adults.
Table: 4.2
Popularity Rating of Advertisements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of the Company</th>
<th>Popularity Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pepsi</td>
<td>* 12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Lux</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>BPL TV</td>
<td>* 8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Cadbury’s Dairy Milk</td>
<td>* 8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Le Sancy</td>
<td>* 6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Onida TV</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Horlicks</td>
<td>* 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Coca Cola</td>
<td>* 5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Complan</td>
<td>* 4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(SOURCE - A & M., Feb 1996)

In one another survey conducted by A & M in 1992, to assess the impact of cable television on students’ life-style, shows shocking results. To watch the programmes on cable television, now they have started sparing the time out of their sleep and studies - the two most important activities in the daily routine of the students. It has been noticed, that their exposure to media is highest among all classes of consumers and particularly they have keen interest in watching television and cable television. The results of the survey are given in the Table - 4.3.
Table : 4.3
Students Day Before and After Cable Television.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td>8 hrs. 42 min</td>
<td>8 hrs. 15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
<td>3 hrs. 22 min</td>
<td>2 hrs. 30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal work</td>
<td>2 hrs. 18 min</td>
<td>2 hrs. 20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>1 hrs. 04 min</td>
<td>1 hrs. 15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialising</td>
<td>1 hrs. 23 min</td>
<td>1 hrs. 43 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic work</td>
<td>3 hrs. 03. min</td>
<td>2 hrs. 39 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies</td>
<td>1 hrs. 23 min</td>
<td>1 hrs. 52 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to media</td>
<td>2 hrs. 45 min</td>
<td>3 hrs. 26 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source - A & M., May 1992)

4.4 INFLUENCE OF MARKETING STRATEGIES THAT AFFECT CHILDREN:

The problem of effects of advertising on children has two aspects: One is directly concerning the products and services that cater specifically to the needs of children. The other is indirect one, concerned with the effects of various goods and services for adults. The adults themselves may not be affected by it adversely, while effects of the same on children may be quite adverse.
Since most of the respondents of the survey were parents, they were asked about undesirable influence of advertisements on children. 80.19% of respondents agreed with the statement as shown in the table 4.3. But among the respondents females were more definite about their influence.

Table 4.4
Parents Response on the undesirable Influence of Advertisements on Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of Sample</th>
<th>&lt; Rs. 5000</th>
<th>&gt; Rs. 5000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71 (86.59%)</td>
<td>57 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11 (13.41%)</td>
<td>19 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex Response</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>140 (84.34%)</td>
<td>115 (75.66%)</td>
<td>255 (80.19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26 (15.66%)</td>
<td>37 (24.34%)</td>
<td>63 (19.81%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Bubble Gummers Contest**

**1st Prize**
Free trip for the winner and parents to Disneyland or Rs. 40,000 in cash.

**2nd Prize**
Free trip for the winner and parents to Singapore or Rs. 15,000 in cash.

**3rd Prize**
BSA-SLR Bicycles

**4th Prize**
Twelve Hot Shot Cameras

**500 Super Consolation Prizes**

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1. **Correctly Number The Bubble Gummers:**
   - Tick off (√) the right place.
   - Tim
   - Amy
   - Cat
   - Zoo
   - Forest
   - Park
   - Classroom

2. **Where Are The Bubble Gummers?**
   - Child's Name (Miss/Master) ____________________________
   - Age ____________________________
   - Address ____________________________

3. **Write A Catchy Line In English For The Blank Bubble**
   - (In not more than 5 words) ____________________________

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**So Easy To Win!**
Take a good look at this picture. See the BUBBLE GUMMERS having fun.
You can join the BUBBLE GUMMERS too! Just answer the questions above.

**Get started! Go “Bubble Gumming” now!**

**So Easy To Enter!**
Now listen carefully. All you have to do is buy a pair of BUBBLE GUMMERS shoes from any Bata/BSC Store.

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Collect Your Entry Forms From Your Nearest Bata or BSC Store.

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Advertisers, taking full advantage of manipulability of child's mind and frame the marketing strategies so carefully, that they capture the attention of children with minimum efforts. The most common strategies used by the advertisers are - peer group pressure and the deliberate positioning of the product in such a way, that it is unlikely that children will not notice the product and absorb it to demand it on one day or the other.

One of the well-known shops in Bangalore, specialising in children's wear announced a promotional drive in 1988. It required children to memorise a jingle from TV spot for the shop and sing it in the shop. The gift were promised for those successful. Why should a child memorise an advertisement jingle sponsoring a particular shop ?. The aim was obvious to increase the sales. In 1985, the MRTPC had instituted an enquiry against Bata Shoe Company on the reports received from VOICE (Voluntary Organisation in the Interest Consumer Education), Society of Civil Rights, related to Bubble Gummer (Children's brand of shoes manufactured by BATA) contest, conducted by company for Sales Promotion. During the period of contest, only the costlier varities of footwear were made available and label for sale, so buyers were forced to purchase the more expensive varities in order to be able to enter the contest. It was also established, that Bata had raised the prices during that period. Contest was therefore declared an unfair trade practice.
4.5 USE OF CHILDREN IN ADVERTISEMENTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THEM:

Set a child to catch a child .........?. An advertisement for Life Insurance Corporation of India, shown on television depicted toddler dressed in dhoti and carrying an umbrella, not because the child watching it is going to take out a policy, but because it tugged at the heart-strings of the adults and added an emotional dimension to the sales pitch. Years after, Murphy company had been closed down, cute 'Murphy baby' has still not been wiped out from the consumer's memory. 'I love you Rasna' has resulted in sky-rocking sales of that brand. But in this glorifying sentence and a cute face, consumers have completely lost the sight of the fact that the soft-drink is entirely synthetic and cannot be substituted for fresh juices that aid children's growth and health.

From this point of view, consumption patterns of children relishing, cold - coffee, implying that it is all right for ten years olds to drink coffee. It has been proved that caffeine has adverse effects on health of children below the age of eighteen, as caffeine causes insomnia and other adverse effects. It certainly helps the instant coffee manufacturer who approved the advertisement. But does it help children's welfare?

Advertisement of 'Maggi' brand of instant noodles is sharply recorded in our brains with two children saying that they are
hungry and then being served with Maggi noodles by the mother. In fact, many mothers patronise the product for its '2 minutes' appeal. But in 1989, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had instructed 'Doordarshan' not to show advertisements with children promoting food products containing monosodium glutamate, due to its deleterious effects. The ingredients listed on Maggi packet include sodium and potassium salts. Ad-agency was cautioned to redo the advertisement. However, Maggi still continues to advertise its noodles on television using children and 'the two minute' appeal.

4.2 I Love you Rasna.

(Source - CERC)
Likewise an advertisement for Esselworld amusement park, which said: "My daddy is better than your daddy (because he takes me to Esselworld)" was withdrawn following lots of protests from parents. Another shocking case Chancellor Cigarettes used in their advertisement a teenage swimmer who had crossed English channel. Promoting tobacco product that carries a statutory health warning, through a young achiever leads to the association of high achievement with tobacco and is therefore unethical as well as misleading.

Glindia (Glaxo), British multinational which could not try unfair trade practice in their own country, tried them in India and

4.3 You want your child to top the list?
Give him a Complan. (Source - CERC)
Growing children need Complan

Only Complan has 23 vital foods they need everyday.

Growing children have special needs. COMPLAN gives them the best proteins plus 22 other vital foods they need in their growing years. Remember, COMPLAN is the planned food most recommended by doctors.

COMPLAN comes in delicious Chocolate, Cardamom-Saffron and Strawberry flavours—also Plain.

Complan— the complete planned food

FREE 32-PAGE BOOKLET
"The Complete Family Nourishment Guide"
Please write, enclosing a 50 p stamp, to
Post Bag No. 19119,
(Comp.) Bombay-400 025.

4.3 (Source - Indian Society of Advertisers)
received a notice from MRTPC in 1990 December. They advertised that 'Complan' drink can secure top positions in the examination. The advertisement had used photographs of six top-ranking students of H.S.C. and claimed 'Complan tops the list', where as there can be no straight correlation between drinking the product and good performance in the examination. The advertisement exploited the ignorance and vulnerability of students preparing for examination and plays on the anxiety of the parents. To popularise complan among children, they issued another advertisement which claimed that 'Complan is the planned food most recommended by doctors'; the claim, which they failed to substantiate when asked for.

Children as consumers of education service are particularly susceptible to tall claims and misleading advertisements because
of the enormous pressure on today's generation of students to do well, in order to be able to survive in the rat race, for admission to college and universities and later on to secure jobs. There are number of complaints upheld by Advertising Standards Council of India. There are so many ways in which advertisers try to mislead children and youth. In one such case in Gujarat, one computer institute advertised itself as Indian Institute of Computer Management to mislead and suggest that they had an association with the prestigious institute of such name. The Consumer's Redressal Commission forced them to change their name to Indian Academy of Computer Management, and directed the institute to refund 5% of the amount collected from students as well as to issue corrective advertisements.

Influencing children in dangerous ways was shown in a television advertisement for Kelvinator refrigerators in which a child was shown swinging on the door of the fridge. It is obviously a gimmick to attract and hold young viewers attention. Similar theme is advertised by BPL India, in their 'Home theatre' advertisement based on a movie 'Home alone'. In advertisement, they have shown a young boy playing and using all electric appliances, which can be highly dangerous in real life. One another advertisement on television of 'Action Shoes' showing a man stopping a car with his foot, to show how strong are the 'Action Shoes'. If a child does it, he will not think of it as an exaggeration and the imitation will result in painful consequences. The danger in such advertisements is that, children get carried away by power of suggestion in a manner that the average adult does not think. Those who
A boy lost his life on Tuesday while he was trying to copy the feat accomplished in a TV advertisement for a soft drink.

Six-year-old Rinku, a student of La Martiniere Boys' College, tried to emulate the feat he had seen on television. He jumped head down first, from the second floor of his Field Hostel residence on Tuesday night and died instantly.

"We did not take Rinku seriously when he said he wanted to accomplish what the ad guy performed on the screen. None of us had any idea that the little one really meant it," said his grief-stricken father Sarmad Farooqui.

After watching the advertisement a number of times, Rinku was apparently convinced that he could jump from any height without getting hurt, Mr Farooqui felt.

Mr Farooqui and his wife were getting ready for a birthday party in their flat while Rinku was playing with his friends on the balcony. Perhaps trying to impress his friends, he scaled the railing and in a split second, buried himself down.

It was all over before Rinku's playmates could yell for help or the people living downstairs could scurry out of their premises. Hearing the commotion, Rinku's parents rushed out to their balcony and saw the child lying in a pool of blood on the ground.

Unnerved by the sight, they went downstairs and rushed the child to the medical college, where he was declared brought dead.

"Do we bother to understand what children are thinking?"

(Source : News Item from TIMES OF INDIA
Dated : 10th April, 1996.)
4.6 ADVERTISERS DEFEENCES FOR MARKETING CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS TO CHILDREN:

The question which remains always unanswered or is not satisfactorily answered is; is it really necessary to panic so much ? Is advertising really so bad for children ?. This line of thinking is based on certain criticism that exist about advertising for children. This criticism is as follows :-

1. The first criticism is that, the product advertised for children are by nature bad and harmful.

This criticism of product fails to distinguish between safety and desirability. If the product is unsafe or harmful, then not only it should not be advertised, but its production should be stopped. But desirability is connected with subjectivity. It can best be determined by a consumer acceptance in a free and competitive market. When products are not desired by society, the market gets rid of them quickly and painlessly. If the consumers fail to locate meaningful benefits in the product, then it dies a natural death, according to advertisers.
2. Secondly, the market advertisers to children only as a surrogate salesmen to induce actually the parents, to purchase products:

It is assumed that advertisers are merely using the children to get at the parents. The sole reason of advertising for children is to take advantage of children's proximity to parent and the parent's reluctance to disappoint the child.

When respondents were asked whether they have seen children forcing their parents to buy a specific product as an effect of advertisement, which results into indirect approach to the parents for purchasing. 76.73% agreed. The detailed results are in the Table 4.5.

Table: 4.5
Indirect Approach to Parents for Purchasing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of Sample</th>
<th>&lt; Rs. 5000</th>
<th>&gt; Rs. 5000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>55 (67.07%)</td>
<td>66 (86.84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27 (32.93%)</td>
<td>10 (13.16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fact is that the life of young children is dependent on their parents for nearly all their needs. It is undeniable that the parent is the purchaser and child is the requester. But isn't it a natural part of family life? - a natural part of parenting --- a phenomenon quite independent of advertising?.

Children routinely attempt to influence parents in every product category. The child developmentalists observe that children seek to participate actively in family life and its decision making process. This child's attempt to influence does not only depend on advertising, but only on exposure, awareness, interests, peer pressure and information they receive from books, teachers etc. Advertising is only one of the sources of information to express preferences between alternatives.

But children are complicated and change very rapidly during short period of developments. Their needs and preferences change as well. No one particular product can fit the needs and preferences of most children, for each child is unique. Parents can sort out through alternatives and guess which product
fits their own child's unique tastes and interests. But it is an imperfect choice. The one who can best assess how well a product fits his individual tastes and preferences is the child himself. For years, long before the development of television, parents encouraged their children to write letters to Santa Clause at Christmas, all over the world. One of the reasons, why parents perpetuate this myth is that parents want to known from the child, the present that will make the child happy.

According to advertisers, the purpose of advertising to the child is, to show the product features and explain its benefits in understandable terms, so that the child can assess and choose within the context of his own interests. Such advertising is a major source of information for the child. Critics often complain that advertising does not provide sufficient data. An advertisement which describes the colour and flavour of the drink or how a toy works, may not look information-heavy to an adult. But it is informing the child, in his areas of interests, providing a relevant material with which a child can assess whether or not he would like to try the product. Loaded with 'hard-data' the advertisement may become confusion and so it will neither communicate nor inform. The assumption therefore, that the child is solely used as a surrogate salesman, is a distortion of a healthy natural development process of a child. Advertising children's product to children is a recognition of their individuality. Infact, expression of interests and preferences by a child, will avoid parents wasteful purchases and will satisfy the child in better way. Both the parents and child are well served and not really victimised by children's advertising.
Thirdly, advertising for children is inherently unfair, because children are helpless and are unable to cope with the advertisements.

This argument is based on thinking, that it is improper to advertise for children, as children are not capable of dealing with advertisements. It is alleged that children can be manipulated into requesting the product they do not really need or want or should not have. Setting aside the issues of children's individuality, and right to express preferences, the question is: Whether children are too susceptible and lacking in critical faculties?

Of course, there is a point beyond which a child does not understand what he sees on television, be it advertising or programmes. Since he does not understand, however, it is unlikely that he can be an effective proponent within the family, or have much influence on family purchases.

Are the children helpless naive receivers of information, accepting at face value, all they hear and see? Or do they process what they take in, testing bits of information against others and adapting them to their benefits and interests? Authorities in the field feel, that even a three years old child has an ability to process and manipulate his experiences and his environment.
But critics allege that children cannot discriminate between advertisements and programmes. However research on this issue to date is inconclusive and not yet adequate for determining public policy.

4. Fourthly, Industry fails to control its own practices through responsible regulation:

Critics believe that those involved in children's advertising do not provide sufficient self-regulation. There are two questions, the need for discussion while creating advertising. The fact is: What to show and say, and what message to leave in the minds of the viewers?. Second is, what to express in that message, self-discipline and self-interest. Standards and guidelines independently established by non-advertiser bodies provide the constraints and limits within which he must work.

73.27% of respondents of the primary data expressed the need for control of advertisements directed at or related to the children, as shown in the Table 4.6. The housewives come out more strongly in favour of control.
Table 4.6
Need for Control of Advertisements
Directed or Related to Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of Sample Responses</th>
<th>&lt; Rs. 5000</th>
<th>&gt; Rs. 5000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>57 (69.51%)</td>
<td>55 (72.37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25 (30.49%)</td>
<td>21 (27.63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex Response</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>124 (74.7%)</td>
<td>109 (71.71%)</td>
<td>233 (73.27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42 (25.3%)</td>
<td>43 (28.29%)</td>
<td>85 (26.73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However it would be misleading to conclude that self-regulation system is perfect. The existing procedures of self-regulation are tedious and time consuming.
4.7 BENEFITS OF ADVERTISING CHILDREN'S PRODUCT TO CHILDREN FROM ADVERTISERS POINT OF VIEW:

By advertising children's products to children, advertiser markets his product directly to those who consume them. It provides important and benefits to the child as well as to parents.

4.7.1 BENEFITS TO CHILDREN:

1. Improved product fulfilment and consumer satisfaction:

Perhaps the single most important benefit of advertising to children is that, it provides information to the child himself, information which advertisers try to gear to the child's interests and communicate at an appropriate level of understanding. This allows the child to learn what products are available, to know their differences and to begin to discuss about them on his or her own personal wants and preferences. Indication of interests (or lack of interests) assists parents in making purchase decisions and helps to ensure that the product will be used and enjoyed by the child as intended.

2. Diversity of product selection:

Possibility of directly approaching the children as consumers,
acts as a motivator for manufacturers and marketers. It leads to constant search for product improvement and innovation. This can also work as an incentive to discover new products for children. All this works to the child's direct advantage.

3 Socialisation of children:

Advertising can help children to prepare them for later adult roles in our society, a society based on individual choices and individual responsibilities. Advertising exposes children to different products, competing appeal and through parental guidance and trial and error, help to teach them how to make decisions. Advertising for children does this on a level suitable to their ability and in an environment where any subsequent indication on their part can be tempered and guided by parental discretion. This is an important learning process and apart of the child's socialisation.

4.7.2 BENEFITS TO PARENTS:

What benefits the child is also of value to the parents, as they are the two sides of the same coin. There are though additional benefits to the parents which the current system of advertising provides. They are:


1. **Purchase confidence**: 

Children's letters to Santa Claus are important in guiding, what to buy as a gift. But their need does not end with Christmas. Purchase decisions are made much more frequently. Clothes, food items, toys etc. and children struggle to exert their influence on each of these decisions. Parents do not always assent to these influences, though everyday they decide to modify, veto or ignore requests that their children make. But input is still valuable and subsequent purchases are more likely to be received with joy. The fact that the parents do not slavishly accept their children's requests is an important one and is supported by research. Similar studies confirm that parent's selection do take into account the input by children.

2. **Lowers the prices and broadens convenient distribution**: 

Advertising for children has to some extent helped in reducing the prices and attaining mass distribution. Economists have also arrived at the same conclusion.

3. **Development of good habits**: 

The development of positive health, safety and other pro-social habits among children can certainly benefit the children themselves and helps the parents as well. Any source of encouragement and training towards these ends is a welcome assistance to the parent. Though the advertisers feel that they are helping parents, some of the research on these lines fail to support this benefit.
4. **Positive interaction**:  

Children's requests for a given product sometimes becomes an irritant to busy parents. But most parents turn these requests to their own use, whether consciously or unconsciously. Part of parenting is helping children to mature and develop the ability to make decisions on their own. Raising the children to young adulthood is a process of steadily shifting more and more control from parents to the child. Today's toy user will be tomorrow's car buyer. What better way is there to train the future adult consumers than by letting the children becoming involved in purchase decision for the products in which they have direct interest?

4.8 **POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN**:  

Some critics say that any advertisement aimed or directed at children should be banned. This sounds to be a nice simple solution. But really a difficult one to carry through — How do you prevent a child from seeing a poster? How to define the advertisement aimed at children? and many more questions will arise. But the main question is, would it do any good in the long-run? Will we gain for making better society? Will it help in bringing-up children in healthier environment?
Some critics maintain that children are specially vulnerable to the appeals in advertising. So any advertising directed to them should be closely controlled or regulated strictly. There are two aspects of the problem. They are:

1. The effect of advertising on the purchasing behaviour of the children and their parents.

2. The effect on their living patterns.

Like most of the other questions regarding the social effects of advertising, this one has no easy answer. It is true that children see more advertising on television than any other medium. So some critics assume that children will react to advertising in much the same way as their parents, except that they are more vulnerable. But there is no evidence to prove this.

Several studies have been conducted to assess the effects of advertising on children all over the world. Some of the conclusions of these studies are:

1. Children falling in the age group of 6 to 8, not only begin to discriminate between programmes and advertisements, but also begin to understand the intentions of advertisements.

2. Children above 8, have relatively developed attitudes towards advertisement.
3. Children do form positive or negative attitude towards advertisement.

4. Adolescents acquire consumer attitudes and skill from advertising.

Inspite of considerable research, little is known about the specific effects of advertising on children. Many blame advertising for provoking parent child conflicts, for developing confused assessment of product in the minds of children, for modeling child behaviour hazardously, for promoting selfishness and promoting self-centered attitude etc. But this has led to many considerations regarding rules made by the different organisations all over the world.

4.9 NEED AND EXISTENCE OF RULES AND REGULATIONS RESTRICTING ADVERTISING FOR CHILDREN:

Advertising for children should be considered more than just an opportunity to sell products. The target for such advertising is children. The age group which is, by its nature, very vulnerable. This concern is reflected in the rules and regulations made in each country in the world, which governs the advertising directed to children. The very existence of rules all over the world shows the universal acceptance and concern that children are special as target. Companies that advertise for children aim to trigger off those emotions in their minds, that it makes them want or demand whatever is being shown in advertisements. The advertisements
ofcourse, are meant not only to trigger fantasies, but to convince the young audience that particular object shown in the advertisement will satisfy the needs.

Manipulation of children's mind in the field of religion or politics would touch off parental storm of protests. But in the world of commercial propaganda, children are fair game and legitimate prey. But the critics, who have objections are emotionally charged. They think, that advertising is harmful to children, who are regarded as naive and totally gullible. Some critics are furthering the time honoured view, that advertising for children will create a society of passive consumers, enslaved by corporate dictates. But everyone is concerned about children's mind being affected by over commercialisation and by developing the desire for the products, which their parents may not afford to buy.

A survey in 1990 by Advertising Age magazine indicates that 62% Americans want children's advertisements taken off entirely. American Academy of Pediatricians want a ban on children's food advertisements. A naive belief, that television advertising is key to changing our society beliefs and behaviour have forced the Americans to Children's Television Act. Consumers Union in U.S.A. has published a pamphlet called "Selling American's Kid's". Its time we say 'enough' to advertisements is the theme of the pamphlet. The FTC has been concerned about depiction and unfairness in television advertisements addressed to children. As Thomas Barry has pointed out, "Children should be viewed as a special market, because of their lack of experience and cognitive
abilities. For example, advertisements that exploit children's trust in hero characters like Superman, Batman etc. can be considered to be depictive. FTC is particularly concerned about advertising directed to children under eight years of age and products which are likely to cause tooth decay. They are concerned about portraying children's products in an unrealistic situation.

There are legalistic standards putting restriction on advertising for children, well supported by self-regulation in many countries in the world, for instance - New Zealand, Australia, England, Ireland, Singapore, Malaysia, South Africa, U.S.A. But one cannot ignore that vast majority of nations allow advertising to target children without restrictions. But there are other extremes also. The most for reaching decision in this context has been in the province of Quebec, Canada.

On 20th April 1980, a law was passed prohibiting the use of commercial advertising directed at children below the age of thirteen. In Norway, Sweden and Finland, no children can appear on television advertisements. In Netherlands, Candy advertisements must display a tooth-brush. The provisions and extent of the International Chamber of Commerce's, International Code of Advertising practices is almost universally accepted in thirty countries including India. The code includes two articles (article 12 and 13) and guidelines 1 to 7 specifically for children.

The various restrictions introduced for advertising for children in several main categories are:
1. Restrictions on the subject matter in advertising directed at children.

2. Restrictions on directing advertisements to children for products that may be inappropriate for them. These products range from tobacco and alcoholic beverages to candies and war toys.


4. Restrictions on time and frequency at which children's advertising may be shown.

5. Restrictions as to the total share of children's viewing time and number of advertising restrictions represented by advertising to children.

6. The requirement of additional health and social reinforcement messages.

Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has drawn up a self regulatory code for advertisers which has two specific classes relating to children as consumers. One is that, advertisements addressed to children shall not contain anything whether in illustration or otherwise which might result in their physical, mental or moral harm or which exploits their vulnerability. The other clause referring to children is that, no advertisement shall be permitted which represents criminlity as desirable or directly or indirectly encourages
people — particularly children — to emulate or convey the modus operandi of any crime. But much space is left open to advertisers to attack children, as compared to many other countries. So inspite of these guidelines, there are many instances violating guidelines in trying to woo children, who account for Rs. 1000 crores of sales in the throbbing consumer market.

4.10 CONCLUSION:

The advertisers have tried to defend their stand convincingly. But considering the kind of advertising which is aimed at the consumers, every rational person will agree that some kind of regulation or the other is a must for advertising for children. There is no point in thinking in terms of complete ban of advertising for children, because there is no advertising to which children have no access.

The problem is more sensitive and complicated with reference to India. The children of India's, increasingly ambitions and acquisitive middle-class have become a new target, as they have begun to crucially influence decisions of purchases. The nuclear families in urban India have positioned children in a very special spot, as parents want to buy for their children, the very best, whether it's clothes, toys or other consumer goods. It makes perfect sense to woo these little buyers. They are targeted from tooth-pastes, fruit, jams to television sets, vaccum cleaners, two-in-ones, washing machines, home computers as well.
Considering this indiscriminate use of children to sell various products by advertisers, social scientists are worried that ad-agencies may use the children in the same way as they have used women to promote virtually every product. But this attack has a very dangerous impact on the tender minds of children.

REFERENCES

3. Ibid., Page 33.