CHAPTER 7
FINDINGS, CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS
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7.1 INTRODUCTION

A study of this nature was not an easy task. To look into the mind set of children and parents and to gather their opinion was rather difficult. But this study helped to solve the research problem.

7.2 FINDINGS

Since this study is a comparative analysis between urban and rural children the findings also focus on this aspect. It first takes a look at children’s interest in T.V advertisements and their T.V viewing behaviour. From the analysis undertaken it can be seen that children of all age groups, sexes and from all areas and districts like to watch television. They also like to view advertisements.

But it has been found that children in rural areas watch television for more number of hours on school days as well as holidays as compared to urban children. Similarly children in rural areas watch advertisements with lot of interest. Boys were found to watch advertisements more than girls and also remember them. Children in urban area remember more of food and clothing advertisements while children in rural areas remember more of toys advertisements. Overall children were found to watch television more with their siblings than their parents. But in rural areas children were found to watch television more with their parents, friends and neighbours as compared to children in urban areas who preferably watched with their siblings. Parents in urban area” often “discuss about the intent of ads with their children while parents in rural areas discussed only” sometimes “. Similarly it was found that children in urban and rural areas were fond of music, brand, colour, celebrity and presentation in advertisements. Overall frequency of children’s T.V viewing has been found to be moderate in the state of Goa.

As more and more parents have started working they find less time to accompany their children in T.V watching. With the development of nuclear families children
are left all alone at home with lot of T.V viewing time. As a result there is need to keep a control on what children view and also undertake discussion on the intent of advertising so that they do not develop interest to demand what they see on television.

The second part of the study deals with the impact of advertising and the changing food preferences of children. It has been found that branded eatables and branded drinks are highly preferred by children in urban areas while ordinary drinks and branded drinks are preferred by those in rural areas. Boys (males) were fond of branded eatables and ordinary as well as branded drinks while girls preferred branded drinks. Children preferred to eat chocolates and ice creams the most, followed by biscuits, noodles, wafers and soft drinks. Children either purchased these products with their pocket money or it was parents themselves who purchased it for them. It has been found that children in rural areas get less pocket money as compared to children in urban areas. Similarly children in urban areas like to eat while watching T.V.

Further analysis reveals that products like Domino’s pizza and KFC have more demand in urban areas while Domino’s burgers have more demand in rural areas. Kissan jam has more demand in urban area while Kissan sauce has more demand in rural areas. Among noodles Maggie is the most popular and is widely consumed by children in urban as well as rural areas. Among biscuits Cadbury Oreo has maximum demand with high preference by children in urban areas. Among chocolates Cadbury is in the forefront with maximum demand in the rural areas. Taking a look at health drinks Boost is the leader of the market with maximum demand in urban areas. Amul is the leader of the market as far as butter, cheese and ice creams are concerned with maximum demand in urban areas as compared to rural areas. A study of the soft drink market revealed soft drinks are demanded more in rural areas than urban areas. Slice, Pepsi, Limca, Kissan squash, Tang and Rasna have maximum demand in the rural areas while Coca cola has high demand in urban areas. The same can be said about wafers and chips. The demand for Kurkure, Lays and Balaji is high in rural areas while Uncle Chips has high demand in urban areas.
This gives us an understanding that rural children are no way behind as far as consumption of advertised products are concerned. With all types of products available in rural areas accompanied by intense advertising by marketers and improvement in standard of living it can be said that rural children have overtaken urban children in consumption of advertised products.

The type of food given by parents and elder siblings to small children have a high influence on preference and eating patterns in childhood (Culen et al 2000, Jenvey and Jenvey 2004), so if parents buy the so called snack food and junk food for their children then it will be readily available in their homes. In other words advertising messages reinforce preference of young children to consume food that is already present in their homes.

The frequency of consumption of advertised products is an important factor which needs to be considered. If they are regularly consumed they could unknowingly lead to health problems. Soft drinks which are sugary drinks could increase the body sugar level leading to diabetes. They would also be causing dental cavities. Constant consumption of soft drinks would replace other nutritious drinks and even water which is a matter of serious concern. Similarly eating of burgers, pizzas, French fries regularly could increase the body salt level and cholesterol level. Most of the advertisements directed towards children try to promote fatty and sugary food. Borzekowski and Robinson (2001) show a direct connection between children’s memorability of food advertisements and the number of food like soft drinks, snacks and wafers that they eat.

The cheap availability of these products is one of the reasons for such blind consumption. Therefore parents need to keep a strict vigil on the frequency of consumption. They also need to restrict the amount of pocket money given to children.

The third part of the study deals with the factors that bring about consumption of advertised products. It has been found that out of the various factors it is availability of fast food outlets around school, availability of pocket money and product characteristics which play a very important role in purchasing advertised products. Children get pocket money which they utilise to buy various products back home.
The presence of fast food outlets around the school vicinity has added to their convenience. In addition the taste, variety and attractive layout is what attracts children towards fast food. Taking a look at urban and rural children we find that working parents, taste, product characteristics, pocket money, convenience, casual attitude for home-made food, attractive promotion are the factors that have an influence on rural children to consume advertised food while it is outing with parents, availability near school, cheapness of fast food and preference for branded products that have an influence on urban children to consume advertised food. Among all these factors product characteristics, convenience and casual attitude for home-made food show a significant difference between urban and rural areas.

School managements should first take a firm decision about school run canteens. They should check the menu and see that fast food items, other advertised products and soft drinks should be replaced by reasonably priced nutritious food items and drinks that would improve the health of children. Similarly they should also not allow fast food stores to crop up near school vicinity. The impact of these factors were found to be more in rural areas than urban areas as rural children are very much attracted and carried away by the persuasive advertisements. As a result it is the responsibility of the parents to create awareness among children. They should discuss with them the good and bad effects of advertising and create in them the ability to judge the right type of ads and also make the intent of ad clear to them.

The last part of the study deals with parents attitude towards advertising, T.V viewing and consumption of advertised products. It has been found that urban parents watch television and advertisements more than rural parents. Rural parents often accompany their children in watching television and often make the intent of ad clear to them. Similarly parents in rural areas ‘often’ exercise control on children’s T.V viewing. It has been found that T.V watching has affected studies of rural children, have developed lack of initiative and also made them more demanding while urban children have developed reduced physical activity.

It has also been found that parents attitude towards advertisements, children’s
capacity to understand ads, regulation of advertising to children, parental restrictive mediation, conflict, food advertising and parental restrictive mediation shows greater impact in rural areas while influence of advertising, parental concern with child nutrition and children’s behaviour regarding advertisements show greater impact in urban areas.

It is the duty of the parents to check what their child is watching and also control the number of hours of T.V watching. They should be motivated to do other things than watching television. It has also been found that boys create family conflict if their demand for products were not satisfied especially in rural areas. This could be because rural parents cannot afford to buy whatever is demanded by children as their earnings are limited. As a result they need to make their child understand to live within means and not to be carried by advertisements. Further analysis on rural and urban areas show that Chaffee, Ward, Tipton (1970), Sheikh, Prasad and Rao (1974) have indicated that children put pressure on parents to buy certain products many times causing conflicts among them and children... Sheikh and Moleski (1977) found that commercials have a growing effect inducing children to request for purchases to their parents. Children are not ready to accept refusal of items they ask from their parents and often react aggressively when there is a conflict.

From the above discussion and the results drawn from preceding chapters we can conclude that parents in urban and rural areas have moderate attitude towards advertising, T.V viewing and consumption of advertised products.

Though India has adopted liberalisation and globalisation in 1990 there are no legal guidelines and no specific restrictions as far as advertising to children are concerned. No specific laws are framed related to advertisements of food that are targeted to children and its time of relay.

Though ASCI (Advertising Standards Council of India) was set up to assure safe delivery it has been found that there is no separate code for advertising. India too requires better control systems like that of developed countries. Although ASCI have allowed public participation, the complaint process is different in India and other developed countries.
We find that MRTP Act has the power to take suo motto action which is not prevalent in Consumer Protection Act. There is an ardent need to give more powers to Consumer Courts to take up cases of false advertisements. There is a need to start more Consumer Clubs. If consumers feel that advertising is not undertaken truly or correctly they should be able to write to ASCI. With stronger approach controversies like that of Maggi noodles would be unfurled that would disclose not only the bad contents in food but also the bad effects of advertising on children.

Though there are a number of laws, there is absence of specific laws exclusively directed at children’s food items. This is where changes have to be undertaken by the Government.

7.3 CONCLUSION
From this study the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. All children like to watch television. They also like to watch advertisements. They prefer to watch television in their own homes.
2. Children watch television for 2 hours on school days and more than 3 hours on holidays.
3. Children watch advertisements with lot of interest. They remember food and toy advertisements the most.
4. Children prefer to watch television with their siblings than with their parents. Parents undertook discussion about ads with their children ‘sometimes’ or ‘only if asked ‘by them.
5. Children’s frequency of T.V viewing was found to be moderate in the state of Goa.
6. T.V viewing has an impact on consumption of food and beverages in the state of Goa.
7. There is high demand for branded products and beverages in urban areas and ordinary eatables and beverages in rural areas. Boys prefer branded eatables and drinks while girls have high preference for soft drinks. Girls get more pocket money than boys.
8. Availability of fast food outlets around school, availability of pocket money and product characteristics are the prominent factors that have the highest impact on purchase of fast food. As age advances children have more desire to consume branded products.

9. The overall preference for advertised food and beverage is low among children in Goa.

10. Parents in rural areas exercised greater control on T.V viewing behaviour of their children as compared to urban areas. Parental control was more on male children than females.

11. It has been found that working parents, taste, product characteristics, availability of pocket money, convenience, outing with parents, availability of fast food outlets around school, casual attitude for home-made food, cheapness of fast food, attractive promotion and preference for branded products are the factors that influence children to consume fast food.

12. Parent’s from urban and rural areas were regular T.V viewers. They also watched advertisements.

13. Parents in rural areas exercised greater control on T.V viewing behaviour of their children as compared to urban areas. Parental control was more on male children than females.

14. Parents in rural areas often accompanied their children in watching television and often spoke about the intent of advertising while those in urban areas occasionally accompanied their children and occasionally spoke about the intent of advertising.

15. T.V viewing has not only affected children’s studies but has also brought about reduced physical activity and made them demanding. Parents are of the opinion that children could be encouraged in indulging in outdoor activities like playing than sitting in front of the television. Similarly they control the programmes watched by their children.
16. Parents are worried about conflicts that develop between parent and child due to desire to purchase advertised products. They are of the opinion that if proper guidance is given to children about the intent of advertising then a lot of unwanted purchase can be reduced. They keep a check on what their child watches.

17. Parents agree with the fact that though advertisements are a valuable source of information, they do not always tell the truth. They encourage children to buy unwanted products. They are of the opinion that T.V advertising to children less than 12 years should be restricted. They also limit the amount of T.V watching of their child in one sitting and keep a check on what they are watching.

18. Parent’s agree that food advertisements influence children’s eating habits. They are very much concerned about their children’s health and eating habits. Parents agree that consumption of food in front of television has brought about unhealthy food habits and the excessive intake of it results into obesity and other health related problems. They do not allow T.V to be on during meal time and also do not allow their child to watch any T.V programme that they choose.


**7.4 SUGGESTIONS**

Following are some suggestions that can be looked upon to sort out many of the problems analysed and found in this study.

1) Establishment of an agency which continuously verifies the content of advertisements before sending them to be shown on television.
2) Promotion of children’s rights for protecting them against negative effects of advertisements.

3) There should be more interactions between parent and child to avoid conflicts. Constant discussion between parent and child is necessary to protect children from adverse effects of T.V advertisements.

4) Mothers are the main persons who act as mediators therefore they should very strongly act to prevent negative influence of television.

5) Children should be better informed so that they develop the ability to make critical comparisons between favourable and unfavourable advertisements.

6) As child spends majority of their time in school, teachers should take the responsibility to appraise the children about possible negative influence of T.V viewing and consumption of snacks and fast food.

7) There should be meetings between principal- parent-pupil to promote healthy food consumption so as to counteract negative effects of advertisements.

8) Consumption of soft drinks can be reduced by not making it available at home and replacing it with more nutritive drinks.

9) Nutritive food and drinks should be made available in school canteens at discounted prices.

10) Children should not be directly motivated to buy what is shown in advertisements.

11) All types of advertisements that are directed to small children who are not able to understand the true intent of advertising should be considered as exploitative.

12) Food ads should not be shown when children are most likely to watch television.

13) In order to decrease the risk factors, parent’s right from the beginning should control the T.V viewing time and dissuade children from eating and drinking in front of television.

14) Banning advertisements will not solve the purpose as children would watch ads elsewhere.

15) School authorities should take decision not to allow setting up of shops selling fast food in its vicinity.
16) Primary teachers could be trained to teach small children the importance of good eating. Subjects on ‘proper nutrition’ could be started to teach children about healthy and safe eating.

17) Parents should keep control and check on amount of pocket money given and how it is utilised by children.

18) Parents should exercise greater control on T.V viewing behaviour of their children. They should try to accompany children in their T.V viewing so that they can discuss about the good and bad effects of advertisements.

19) Public announcements should also be made on television about the importance of eating healthy.

20) Parents should also find time to prepare tasty food for their children and tell them the benefits of eating home cooked food.

7.5 SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

The area of advertising has vast scope for research study. The current study undertaken is only the tip of this large ice berg. It is confined to the small state of Goa.

Future research in similar area can be undertaken by considering a bigger state or region.

Similarly other types of products and their influence on children’s buying behaviour can be studied. The sample can consist of school students as well as higher secondary students.

Similarly the impact of big fast food restaurants and small way side restaurants on children’s food purchase behaviour can also be looked into.

Children are a big market today. They attract not only producers and advertisers but also movie makers, serial makers and channel producers. The implications of this fast growing entertainment sector and its impact can also be studied. Laws, regulations and restrictive policies imposed by government on various industries, media and advertisers so as to maintain certain standards for advertising can also be studied. The list is endless but a thoughtful mind can unearth many new topics.