ABSTRACT

With technological advances and consumers' capability to evade marketing messages, marketers have turned to a variety of communication channels to reach consumers. One of the communication channels which marketers have exploited more frequently in recent years is the practice of **Product Placement**. Product placements are commercial insertions within media programs. These insertions are not meant to be commercial breakups, but form an integral part of the media program. Though product placement practice is most popular in movies and TV serials, it is also prevalent in other media like print, videogames, online, books, radio and recorded music. Product placement has become a multi-million dollar business, with huge amounts being paid to include brands within media programs. Considering the rising importance of product placement, Indian viewers' attitudes towards product placement in Hindi movies and TV serials is studied in this doctoral thesis. Primary data was collected for the purpose of this research through a quantitative survey conducted in three prominent cities of Gujarat state in India using questionnaire containing attitude-scale items.

The findings revealed an overall positive attitude from viewers towards product placement. Viewers exhibited high level of awareness about the product placement practice and its commercial intent. The product placement practice was acceptable as long as it was not excessive or forced, and preferable over traditional TV commercials. Brands appearing in movies and TV serials were generally noticed, generated interest but failed to influence viewers in any way. Viewers' attitudes varied with age, gender, income, media habits, brand consciousness and general liking for TV commercials. Movies emerged as a more influential medium as compared to TV, though brands in TV serials generated greater level of interest. The implications of this research could enable marketers to evaluate the communication tool of product placement in the promotional strategy.