CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION

Advertising, the creation of innovative and adept minds has emerged as the ubiquitous part of modernity. Etiologically, the word advertise has its roots in French word ‘advertir’ which means to make something known, to notify to all public attention. Advertising highlights desirable qualities so as to arouse a desire to buy or patronize. Advertisement is basically a motive generating media or a visual, aiming to penetrate our consciousness and influence our very mode of thinking. Advertising in any form has penetrated deep in minds, emotions and lives of human race. Traditionally, it was considered as a concept of what the advertisers do in order to influence their audience. It was considered as a stimulus that would trigger the response. In other words, advertising was considered to be ‘one way flow’ i.e the flow of stimulus to generate response.

The modern conceptual framework of advertising defines it as an institution that interprets the want-satisfying qualities of products, services and ideas in terms of the wants and needs of consumers.

Need for Advertising

Whatever be the terminology used, the fact remains that business and other enterprises, have an innate urge to communicate with their clients and advertising would prove to be the most effective mediator between the two. Lot of deliberation is being done and will continue regarding the effects of advertising, but it has been found that advertising in any form is instrumental in shaping the economic scenario of the nations and the organisations.

Advertising has been instrumental in expanding demand of the product which in turn determines the relative profitability of the organisations. The economic setup of any nation depends on the profitability of the industry. In any nation the prime function of economic system is to supply products and services, for the use of the consumers. A substantial thrust of our economic system is devoted to fulfill the wants and desires of the
people, wherein advertising is an integral part of this activity and one of the most visible components of any industry (Wurff and Bakker, 2008).

In simple terms, advertising is affected by and in turn affects the economic setup of a nation. Another visible advantage of advertising has been the development of new and innovative ways of communicating such as, database marketing, infomercials, home shopping and electronic computing. All these developments have emerged as the most cost effective ways to deliver the advertisers’ message and finally the goods to the customers. These new channels of distribution offer variety, convenience, flexibility and customisation as per customer requirements.

Advertising industry, like most of the other industries has been growing by leaps and bounds. Once it was considered to be a wasteful activity aimed at selling only those products that people were not ready to buy. Now it has transformed itself into one of the most robust tools that drive the profit graph of any organization. Advertising today has grown increasingly sophisticated, elaborative and personal by nature. The advertisers now have a huge arsenal of information and the technologies with which they can finetune a particular message and probe the human minds. A new generation of advertising advisers and consultants along with highly experienced professionals have formulated creative market research surveys through which the best trained minds find innovative ways to manipulate, exploit and control the mindset and subsequently the purchasing behaviour of the customers.

Advertising, as an important social phenomenon is to know as well as to stimulate the consumption pattern, life style and value system. Consumers blatantly being exposed to substantial dose of TV advertising have developed varied opinions about it. On one hand, TV advertising has been appreciated for stimulating the market demand, making consumers aware and sensible in their purchase behavior, whereas, on the other hand, consumers fear syncism, cluttering, sexism, behavioural manipulations and distortions of the value system.
As advertising is becoming more advanced and intricate, it is creating more complex forms of problems, some of these problems may be visible at once, whereas, others may persist and produce the cumulative unintended consequences.

**Attitudes Towards Advertising**

An attitude is a psychological construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person about a place, thing, or an event. These are the judgments that develop on the ABC model (Affect, Behaviour, and Cognition). The affective response is an emotional response that expresses an individual's degree of preference for an entity. The behavioural intention is a verbal indication or typical behavioural tendency of an individual. The cognitive response is a cognitive evaluation of the entity that constitutes an individual's beliefs about the object. TV advertising to a greater extent determines the manner in which an individual will respond positively or negatively towards a brand or a product, certain elements such as the message content, timing, environment, mood created through an advertisement, the feelings aroused, all determine the feelings for that advertisement which ultimately shapes their predispositions towards the product/brand.

Attitudes which are predictive for the future behaviour are easily influenced by the persuasive nature of the TV advertisements. They are not inherited or found in our genes, rather they are learned by an individual through the course of his life. The feelings of favourability or unfavourability towards an entity are either learned through the information provided by the advertisements or by directly using the product. These feelings when get reinforced over a period of time results in the permanent storage in the explicit or implicit memory of an individual. These feelings are then retrieved in the form of attitudes from the memory at the appropriate time of decision making.

The consumer attitude towards advertising is a major determinant of brand preference and purchase intentions (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989). Thus in consumer research, favourable attitudes towards advertising are positive precursors of brand choice. Advertising is an integral part of modern life and consumers are exposed to a large number of advertisements on a regular basis. Generating attention in this crowded
environment is not always assured. Marketers know that personal attitudes towards advertising are likely to influence consumers’ exposure and attention.

Bauer and Greyser (1968) conceptualised two basic forms of attitudes towards advertising, viz; economic and social. The economic dimension focuses on the positive aspect of attitudes as being important in their ability for disseminating information and raising standards of living.

The social dimension focuses on the negative consequences of advertising. Pollay and Mittal (1994) criticised that advertising promotes materialism, sexism, violence and other undesirable values in the juvenile minds of children.

**Children as Consumers/Consumer Socialization**

Children constitute a distinct and valuable consumer segment that the marketers have been trying to reach out. Advertising has proved to be the most prominent linkage that has connected the children with the commercial world. Children emerge as mature customers through the process of consumer socialisation. Ward (1974) has defined consumer socialisation as the process by which people acquire attitudes relevant to their functioning as consumers in the market place. Child consumerism depends to a large extent on the family communication and consumption patterns, further the parents directly influence the socialization process of children because the basic market place skills and knowledge are imparted at specific time and place during the early life of the child through them. Child consumerism that is based on socialization is an adult initiated process through which developing and potential child consumers acquire the knowledge of buying through insight, training, imitation and acquisition. The behaviour of the child as a consumer is congruent to the values of the family in particular and society in general.

Family communication pattern is instrumental in deciding the way children influence the family decision making in the present and determines the way they would behave as future customers. The two most important communication patterns are the socio communication and the concept communication orientations. The socio-communication orientation is intended to result in child obedience at all fronts and maintenance of
harmonious aura in the family environment. Such a communication pattern is based on monitoring and controlling the behaviour of the child that would be acceptable in the society. Children are encouraged to take the decisions in a manner that would be widely accepted and liked by the society as a whole. They are motivated to avoid confrontations and arguments with the elders and maintain respect at all times. Contrary to this concept-communication orientation is based on encouraging the children to develop their own thinking process and weigh the alternatives before taking any decision. Such parents may deliberately expose children to the controversies and observe how they evaluate the given information while taking the decisions. Parents who believe in concept communication pattern often indulge in open discussions and help children in developing their own thought process.

The world over, a variety of factors influence and shape the consumer habits among children. Among other factors (peer, family), the media appears to have the greatest impact on the consumer socialisation of children and their decision making habits. Amongst media, TV has emerged as the most powerful tool that influences the discretionary purchase among children. Initially the children who were considered to be the extensions of the parental decision making and with minimal influencing powers have developed as the important market segment. It is the media exposure and especially the TV media that has made children an important target market for the business (Pecora, 1995). Commercialisation through TV advertisements has aimed at increasing the demand among young consumers. Children are no longer the passive spectators but are active participants in the family decision making process. They not only have their own money but have extensive influence in how their parents buy. Shrinking family size, increased disposable income and above all the exposure explosion through media in general and television in particular, has spurred up the consumer socialisation among children.

In the Indian context, on an average, child consumerism is limited to an extent that the purchasing power of the Indian kids depends on the money that they have with them in the form of pocket money which is quite petty and limited to a small section of the society. The attitudinal and behavioural impact that is being generated by the
advertisements targeted at Indian children is changing the role that children play in purchasing behaviour of parents.

**Television Advertising and Children**

Children are the main target in any form of advertising and their role in advertising is increasing day by day. Numerous studies have been carried out, to find out the extent to which children are capable of comprehending the purpose of TV advertisements. The impact these commercials have on the attitude and the purchase requests of the children, has also drawn considerable attention (Rossiter and Robertson, 1974).

Various theories have been propounded to study the effects of TV advertisements on children and the most accepted theory is the Attribution Theory. This theory specifies that the predispositions of the children towards the TV advertisements are the outcome of how they interpret the subjective environment to which they are exposed. Children who lack this ability to distinguish reality from myths create a faulty image in their mindsets and hence show distorted attitude towards the products advertised through TV commercials (Kelly et al, 2011).

Further the impact of TV advertising on the children could be measured by the degree to which the children get motivated in pursuing their parents to buy the advertised products. Children who have limited financial resources and hence the purchasing power have to pressurise and influence their parents to make the desired purchases for them. Studies reveal that TV advertising affects children in three possible ways: cognitive, affective and behavioural. Cognitive effect indicates the ability of the children to distinguish between the TV programme and commercial intentions of the advertisers. Young children are most vulnerable and susceptible to advertising influence (Goldberg et al; 1978, Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2003). The congnitive abilities of the children improves with age. The affective component refers to the liking and the trust that the children develop after seeing the advertisements. Behavioural components highlights the change in the behaviour of the children. This change may include the persuasive behaviour of the children to make purchase requests to their parents or direct purchase themselves.
Impact of TV Advertising on Social and Cultural Values

Advertising has been viewed as a threat to the value system and the cultural setup of the society. Researchers advocate that TV advertisements bring alien ethical values and deform the lifestyle pattern of the masses. According to the research carried out by Olson (1995), prolonged and repetitive exposure to the advertisements result in some of the undesirable effects that include the prevalence of materialism in the society and creation of undesirable and new needs among the customer base. TV advertising might encourage irrational social behaviour such as instant gratification, shortsightedness, and warding off the responsibilities amongst individuals. Advertising in any form create feelings of power, possession and unrealistic confidence. Incomplete and deceptive information provided through advertisements prove to be detrimental, as this form of information always lead to faulty decision making. Another important finding was that advertising uses bad taste and objectionable morals that could cause emotional and physical disturbances among individuals. Fear appeals usually portrayed in the TV advertisements induce a feeling of incompleteness, anxiety and terror in mind of the viewers. Similarly, advertisers use children for all those purposes that would undermine and denigrate the role of children in the society. Surrogate advertisements and advertisements of all those products that have been otherwise banned or have proved to be detrimental to health, have a profound and negative impact on the children.

Exposure to TV advertising has direct and indirect effects on children. The direct effects include increased purchase requests/pestering parents to buy the products. Kunkel et al., (2004) observed that the impact of TV advertising on preschool and elementary school children occurs at multiple levels. The immediate impact was the product persuasion effect in which the purchase requests are made to the parents, whereas the continuous exposure to the persuasive advertisements results in long term effect on the personality of the children.

The increased exposure to TV advertisements also leads to possible family conflicts as children come up with frequent purchase requests to their parents, who most of the times refuse to honor the same. Rejection of the requests further enhances chances of family conflicts between parents and children (Atkin,1978; Kunkel et al., 2004). The indirect and
prolonged effects include increased materialism, aggression, violence and eccentricity etc.

Today, product trials are initiated by children. Modern advertising era has very well recognized the emotional hook that is associated with children. Simply, it is an easy way to melt the hearts of the people when there are children involved in the bargain. Children certainly have a pull towards family decision making (Ward and Wackman, 1972). They can influence - even veto - their parents’ purchases of everything from cars to toys to groceries as well, determine television and entertainment choices of their households. Market researchers who work with children must address to the fact that children respond to the cues that are different than the cues that trigger adults. Entertaining children with novelty and fun is a relatively simple proposition. However, touching minds, sparking deep-seeded feelings and developing products and advertisements that reach them is ultimately a more rewarding challenge to be met. In order to effectively appeal to a child, a marketer needs to probe deep into the process of child development that shapes his/her attitudes, preferences and behaviours. The most prominent factor is the increasing role of the children in advertising that is responsible for bringing a sea change in the socio-economic structure of a typical urban family (Geuens and Pelsmacker, 2003). Hence, marketers are shifting their marketing strategies and focus on the children.

Children are and will be important but controversial target of advertising. Television has long been the predominant medium that advertisers have chosen for marketing products to children. It has been reported that in US advertisers spent millions of dollars on children advertising (Crowe, 1998).

**Parental Concerns about Advertising to Children**

Amidst all these developments, the parental concern about advertising to which the children are being exposed directly or indirectly is increasing day by day. Parents today, are concerned with the immediate and the long term impact the advertisements would have on the overall development of their children. Parents are the ones who bear the burnt of the advertising influences. They experience conflict in case they do not heed to the
ever increasing purchase requests of their children. Nonetheless, if they observe any undesirable personality trait like aggression, fear, nagging tendencies, eccentric nature in their children, they find themselves in emotional trouble.

The consumption pattern of the children is another concern for the parents who advocate that this pattern is being heightened and ignited through TV advertising that involves a phenomenal use of children in their advertisements. Research has shown that parents develop two forms of approaches towards their children’s consumption patterns (Pollak, 1988).

- **The child perspective approach**: This approach puts the child in the centre with the child's need for development and protection being of prime importance.

- **The consumer critical approach**: This approach advocates that children are immature consumers and are highly vulnerable to the exposure that they are being subjected to.

Parents are not necessarily negative towards their children’s consumption, and in some fields they are willing to spend more than what the children expect or want. In many situations parents will stretch beyond the children's expectations if they see the consumption as useful (Rose, 1998).

Parents also show varied responses towards the role of children in the decision-making process. Parents advocate that at times children use various influencing tactics to persuade them to comply with their requests. Further parents’ responses vary from outright rejection to total acceptance.

The Primary basis of parental concerns about advertising to children is the communication pattern adopted by the parents and the level of mediation that they show towards controlling the TV viewing habits of the children. The family communication patterns concept refers to the frequency, type and quality of communication that take place among family members (Moore and Moschis, 1979). Developed by McLeod and Chaffee (1972), the construct examined the degree to which families encouraged the
expression of autonomous opinions and the degree to which families stressed relational objectives.

Moschis (1985) developed four basic topologies of communication patterns which included

a) Laissezfaire: It reflects the parental approach of non-interfering communication patterns towards the children, there is actually no or negligible communication between parents and the children.

b) Protective: Such parents are highly restrictive in their approach, while communicating with their children. They follow the socio family communication pattern.

c) Pluralistic: Parents who follow this approach follow the concept family communication pattern where by the children are encouraged to take their own decisions and discuss the issues without the fear of punishment.

d) Consensual: It is the combination of the restrictive and the socio family communication orientation.

Parental Mediation

The growing concern regarding TV advertising to children has made it imperative for the parents to think seriously and undertake certain concrete measures to try and limit advertising influence on children. Some parents are of the opinion that it is the responsibility of the government to enforce strict regulations and control over TV advertising directed at children.

On the other hand, some researchers consider that it is the responsibility of the parents to mediate the impact of television themselves (Nathanson et al., 2002). Parents who are the primary source of the consumer socialization serve as gatekeepers filtering the television content by taking control over children’s viewing time and content.

The parental mediation of TV viewing in children also depends on the attitude of the parents themselves. In Indian context, it is observed that mothers hold a positive attitude
towards TV advertising to children as they consider advertisements to be a rich source of information for children that enhance their creativity and knowledge base. However these attitudes were not positive in case of the Amercian and Japanese mothers (Mukherji, 2005).

Parents generally stand divided as to who would be responsible for mediating the TV viewing contents of the children. According to Valkenburg et al., (1999), and Warren et al., (2002) there are three distinguishing styles of parental mediation: social co-viewing, instructive guidance (also known as active mediation), and restrictive guidance. Social co-viewing refers to parents simply watching television with their children without discussing its content. A more active form of mediation is instructive guidance, where parents discuss television content with their children in order to help them understand the meaning of television programmes or the commercial intent of advertising. Restrictive guidance pertains to imposing restrictions on the child’s amount of viewing and/or on the material to be watched. Van den Bulck and Van den Bergh (2000) are of the view that this type of guidance can reduce the amount of time children spend watching television, increase children’s understanding of advertising, and diminish purchase requests.

Parents feel the need for mediating the television viewing habits of their children because of their growing concern with respect to television advertising and limitations concerning children as television audience (Tidhar and Levinsohn, 1997). A well-developed body of research documents that children, due to their incomplete cognitive and emotional development, differ from adults in their interpretation of television content. Singer and Singer, (1983) noted that children failed to distinguish between fantasy and reality whereas Corder-Boltz (1980) viewed that parental mediation of their children’s television viewing can enhance comprehension, learning and skill acquisition from television programmes.

Most of the parents are concerned about the impact of TV advertisements on eating habits of the children. In recent years, the food and beverage industry has viewed children as a major market force. As a result, children are now the target of intense and specialized food marketing and advertising efforts. Food marketers are interested in children as consumers because of their purchasing influence, and as future adult consumers. Multiple
techniques and channels are used to reach them, the most prominent being the TV. Heavy marketing directed towards children, appears to be driven largely by the desire to develop and build brand awareness/recognition, brand preference and brand loyalty. Marketers believe that brand preference begins before purchase behaviour does McNeal, (1999). Brand preference in children appears to be related to two major factors: 1) Children's positive experiences with a brand 2) Parents liking that brand. Thus marketers are intensifying their efforts to develop brand relationships with young consumers, beginning when they are toddlers. Marketers know that toddlers and pre-school children have considerable purchase influence and can successfully negotiate purchases through what marketers term the "nag factor" or "pester power".

Parents usually hold negative views about food advertising in general. Really concerned about the nutritional requirements of the children, parents consider that food advertisements have a negative impact on their children. Parents have often questioned about the authenticity and truthfulness of the advertisements specially the claims made in the food advertisements. Some of the parents are also of the view that food advertisements are making it hard for them to provide healthy diet for their children (Preston, 2005).

Harrison (2005) was of the view that exposure to food advertisements promoted higher consumption among children. The children who watched more of the TV advertisements had a tendency to eat more. Although the exact link between food advertising, eating habits and obesity could not be identified. Concern remains regarding the amount of advertisements promoting (unhealthy) food products, and the way it could be blurring the line between diet and nutrition.

It has been observed that the TV advertising generally promotes those processed food stuff that is rich in fat, sugar and other additives. These advertisements spurce up the unnecessary purchases amongst the parents, who are influenced by their children for the same. This not only increases the financial burden on the parents but also guides them to eat nutritionally deficient food.
Apart from the food advertisements, another important issue that needs to be addressed to is the advertising of the adult products on the TV and the impact these advertisements have on the children.

In the Indian context due to the absence of well defined rules and regulations pertaining to TV advertising, marketers are finding it easy to woo the children who have the power to influence their parents towards the purchase decisions, hence marketers have an easy hand and an opportunity to show whatever is possible to generate loyalty among the young customers.

Certain suggestive guidelines have been formulated by The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), according to which responsible food marketing to children should address following issues.

- Be supportive in parental efforts to serve as the gatekeepers of sound nutrition for their children and not undermine parental authority.

- Marketers should discourage children to nag their parents to buy low-nutrition foods.

- Depict and package/serve food in reasonable portion sizes and not encourage overeating directly or indirectly.

- Develop innovative and nutritionally balanced diet that help children eat healthfully.

- Reformulate products to improve their nutritional quality, including adding more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and reducing portion sizes, calories, sodium, refined sugars.

- Expand efforts to promote healthy eating habits consistent with the dietary guidelines and to promote healthful products, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains etc.

- Nutritionally poor food choices to be avoided during television shows:
1) With more than 15 per cent of the audience under age twelve.

2) For which children are identified as the target audience by the television.

- Not to use product or brand placements for low-nutrition foods in media aimed at children, such as movies, television shows, video games, websites, books, and textbooks.

- To encourage healthy eating by offering premiums and incentives (such as toys, trading cards, apparel, club memberships, products for points, contests, reduced-price specials, or coupons) with foods, meals, and brands that meet the nutrition criteria.

- Allow licensing agreements or cross-promotions (such as with movies, television programs, or video games) or use cartoon/fictional characters or celebrities from television, movies, music, or sports to market to children only those foods that meet the prescribed nutrition criteria.

- Should not put logos, brand names, spokes-characters, product names, or other marketing for low-nutrition foods/brands on baby bottles, children’s apparel, books, toys, dishware, or other merchandise made specifically for children.

- Should not exploit children’s natural tendency to play by building entertainment value into low-nutrition foods (for example, products such as mechanical lollipops, food shaped like cartoon characters, or sugary drink mixes that turn to surprise colors).

The fact that advertising generates certain undesirable outcomes on the children has been established, however, the impending concern is, what can be done to nullify or reduce them (Young and Webley, 1996). The answer to this question is by constructing the two-tier approach, wherein government as well as parents can play an important role. Strict regulations need to be formulated that would discourage airing of all such advertisements. Parents on the other hand need to play an important role that may be in the form of:
• Limiting child’s use of TV to not more than 1 or 2 hours per day.

• Planning child’s TV viewing habits.

• Encouraging co-viewing in which parents watch TV with the children and talk about what is seen; very young children may not be able to tell the difference between a show, a commercial, a cartoon, or real life.

• Provide explanations: Young children may worry that what they see could happen to them or their family. Talking to them later about what they watched can alleviate their concerns and help them in becoming better personalities.

• Helping child to resist TV commercials for toys, candies, snacks, cereals and drinks. When children ask for products advertised on TV they need to be explained the purposes of commercials which make people want things they may not need.

• Apart from watching television, children if provided with other options to keep themselves occupied can prove to be of great help.

Legal Framework for Advertising

Several countries have formulated regulations of varying degree pertaining to TV advertising directed at children. Countries like Sweden has banned all the TV advertisements for children below 12 years. In Greece, TV advertisements for toys have been banned from 7am to 10 pm. Norway, Finland and Denmark do not allow any kind of sponsorships for children programmes. In Spain the constitution believes that children can easily become subjected to manipulation in the world of advertising and marketing. In order to prevent this danger, the Spanish constitution clearly states that the right to personal and family privacy and the right to freedom from injury of reputation, honour or feelings are guaranteed. Within this framework, children are also protected. They have the right to receive information as long as it does not affect their rights of honour, privacy and image. According to the Legal Protection of Minors Act, the distribution of information and images to minors when it is contrary to their interest is prohibited even if
it is with the consent of the minor. The Act establishes that advertisers must be careful to observe means of communication directed at minors. Moral standards of equality, solidarity and respect for the community has to be protected. Any form of violence and exploitation in personal relationships, or images reflecting degrading or sexist treatment must be avoided (Gerhard W. Volz, Felipe, 2005).

Similarly, the Italian advertising regulators tend to consider minors (all those aged under 18) as the most vulnerable consumers, requiring special protection against any potential attempt to harm their physical and psychological well-being through aggressive marketing techniques. The Italian legal system does not contain a consolidated act or special code with a harmonised framework encompassing advertising targeted at children. Such provisions are usually set by statutory law as well as by industry self-regulation and codes of ethics dealing with the regulation of specific sectors of marketing and advertising. Self-regulation is administered by the Institute for Advertising Self-Regulation, a non-profit organisation, to which most advertising agencies, advertisers, advertising practitioners, media companies and their branch associations adhere. The IAP aims to ensure that all advertising is honest, truthful and directed at providing consumers with commercial information in compliance with the guidelines and prescriptions established by the Code of Advertising Self-Regulation.

In developed countries such as America where advertising is monitored through a more comprehensive system where there is a strong government control and scrutiny. The Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU), which is a division of the Council of Better Business, has a prime responsibility to review and evaluate advertising to children under 12 years of age. All those advertisements which do not comply with CARU’s well-established self-regulatory principles and guidelines are thoroughly analysed and appropriate remedial action is formulated. The CARU principles which apply to all forms of advertising, including print, Television, radio and internet, are as follows:

- Advertisers are required to assess the level of knowledge, sophistication and maturity of the audience.
Advertisers in no way should design the advertisements that would exploit unfairly the imaginative quality of children.

TV advertisements directed at children should not generate unreasonable expectations of product quality or performance.

Advertisers should communicate information in a truthful and accurate manner and in language understandable to young children with full recognition that the child may learn practices from advertising which may affect his or her health and well-being.

Advertisements should not show discrimination of caste, colour or creed hence care should be taken to incorporate minority and other groups in advertisements in order to present positive and pro-social roles and role models wherever possible.

Social stereotyping and appeals to prejudice should be avoided.

Advertisers should contribute to parent–child relationship in a constructive manner.

India is lacking far behind other nations when it comes to devising and implementing the rules and regulation about advertising. Currently, tobacco and liquor advertisements have been banned. India follows the advertising standards laid down by the ASCI (Advertising Standards Council of India). Established in 1985, it is a non-profit organization having 16 members from advertisers, advertising agencies and allied professions. The code of self-regulation is based on the following principles

- To ensure the truthfulness and honesty of representation.
- To ensure that the claims, made by the advertisers are not misleading.
- To ensure that the advertisements are not offensive to generally accepted standards of public decency.
• To safeguard the public against the promotion of all those products that may prove to be hazardous to the society.

• To ensure that fairness in competition is maintained at all times.

• To ensure that the consumers are provided with the right kind of information that is not misleading.

The organization has constituted 21 members Consumer Complaint Committee (CCC) that examines the complaints of any kind related to the advertisements and provides the optimum solution. The ministry of Information and Broadcasting has adopted the ASCI’s self regulatory code for television advertising.

Coming to TV advertising directed at children, there are a few laws which deal with child related advertising issues in India, although these are by no means comprehensive. In practice, television channels often flout even the existing vague laws with great impunity. Also there is no specific legal framework for sponsorship of children’s programmes on television, so advertising to children in this way is unregulated. However, advertising law has increased awareness of the issues concerning advertising to children.

There are no specific guidelines about acceptable advertisements aimed at children in India. However, if there is a complaint about an advertisement, it may be withdrawn after consideration by the Advertising Standards Council of India. The Cable Act provides guidelines for programmes and advertisements on Television. All programmes must adhere to the codes before being transmitted. The codes of the Cable Act include the following provisions relating to children:

• Programmes on cable television should not denigrate children.

• Programmes meant for children should not contain any bad language or explicit scenes of violence.

• Programmes for adults should normally be aired after 11 pm and before 6 am.

• Programmes unsuitable for children must not be shown at times when the largest numbers of children are viewing.
• ‘Unhealthy practices’ showing children begging or acting in an undignified or indecent way are prohibited.

Another issue that needs to be taken up is the sensitization of the people through self regulatory mechanism over different issues related to advertising to children. Self regulations are the moral codes/ethical standards of advertising that industry follows voluntarily. International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) develops series of codes of practice that set out ethical standards for marketing to children. TV advertising is governed by ICC code of advertising. Self-regulation is considered to be a better option in order to avoid stricter governmental regulations. Individual firms are found to pledge against marketing to young children. They restraint from promoting their products in schools or avoid interest marketing. In reality these pledges are usually evaded and implemented selectively.

In the Indian context, there are a few laws which deal with child related advertising issues. In reality, the Indian government is far behind in formulating certain strict measures that protect the children for invasive advertisers. Different TV channels often flout even the existing vague laws with a view to get to the most influential target audience that is the children. India lacks in any type of legal framework for sponsorship of children’s programmes on television and the role that the children would be playing in such TV advertisements. So it would be right to say that advertising to children in this way is unregulated as compared to other countries that have implemented certain stringent measures to lessen the impact of TV advertising on children.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The subject of advertising and its impact on children is of growing interest. Advertising directed towards children is a controversial topic that has generated significant debate. Most of the studies related to advertising have been carried out in developed nations, viz., America and United Kingdom. India is still far behind while formulating and maintenance of the standards for advertising. It was in the year 1983 that television advertising got introduced in India. The Indian advertising industry is still juvenile regarding the spending done. Various management thinkers have been advocating views
both, for and against the advertising to children. The reality that children who become consumers at the age less than 8 years and prove to be the major contributors to the family decision making are being targeted in all possible ways to generate sales. Today’s advertising is more inclined towards the children in order to tap this potential market. Research in different forms has been carried out to find the effects of advertising on the children and their purchase behaviour. Children below the age of 14 years, which constitute about 38 per cent of the total population continue to be the target of the marketers who consider children to be the future customers for any organisation.

The psyche of the children regarding advertising has been totally different due to environment which Indian children were exposed to. Indian children who were more or less cocooned in the family traditions, dependent decision making, limited disposable income and buying process have experienced a tremendous exposure in the form of child consumerism. The shackles that have been holding them back have started withering away. These vibrant consumers of the future are bound to assume a varied form of role playing as initiator, influencer and the decision makers. Children need to be viewed as the special audience who are psychologically not mature enough while judging and evaluating the glut of information and exposure they are getting through required TV advertising.

Related to all these issues is another vital concern that highlights the attitude that the parents hold about the advertising in general and particularly towards advertising targeted at children. Parents today are concerned with the immediate and the long term impact the advertisements would have on the overall development of their children.

Consumption pattern of the children is another concern for the parents who advocate that this pattern is being ignited through advertising that involves a phenomenal use of children in their advertisements.

Keeping all these facts into consideration, there is a need to conduct a study with respect to attitude of parents towards children directed advertising. Hence the present study will be an effort in that direction. This study would emphasize the attitude that the Indian parents show towards advertising to children and the fast growing correlation amongst
Indian children, TV advertisements and the ever increasing concern of the parents towards this type of setup. The study would try to correlate Indian children, advertisers and the parents and would be of use to the society as a whole. It would also try to find out the role that the parents and the government can play towards combating this form of consumerism through the formulation of the regulatory framework for advertising specially advertising to children.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The specific objectives of the study are as under:

1. To examine the attitude of parents towards TV advertising directed at children in general.

2. To investigate the role of parents in mediating the TV viewing habits of children.

3. To find out the attitude of parents regarding the impact of TV advertising on social and cultural values of children.

4. To study parental perception towards role of government, advertisers and parents in controlling and restricting TV advertising directed at children.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study has been divided into eight chapters. The first chapter, that is, the present one is introductory in nature. This chapter introduces the area of study, concepts related to advertising, its need and the attitude in general towards advertising. It further addresses the issues related to children and TV advertising, its impact, parental views and some of the ethical issues related to the TV advertising directed at children. It discusses the legal framework governing the TV advertising and the levels of mediation associated with TV advertising to children. It also explains the need and the objectives of the study.

The second chapter reviews the available literature related to the topic under study. It includes the contributions of the researchers in the varied fields that are directly or
indirectly related to the topic. All such studies have been reviewed in the chronological order.

The third chapter highlights the research methodology that has been employed in the present study. It briefly describes the universe of the study, sampling design, tools of data collection, methods for data analysis and limitations of the study. Chapters four to seven are devoted to data analysis, interpretation and the findings of the study.

Chapter four highlights the attitude of parents towards TV advertising directed at children. This chapter has been divided into two sections. The first section represents responses of the parents about the knowledge that they have regarding TV viewing pattern, understanding, likeability and the reaction of children towards the TV advertisements. The second section deals with the factor analysis to find out the factor structure of the variables that determine the attitude of mothers towards TV advertising directed at children.

The fifth chapter examines the parental mediation of the TV advertising directed at children. This chapter has been divided in two sections. The first section highlights the level of family interaction, child behavior after being exposed to TV advertisements and the type of mediation that the parents prefer. The second section focuses on the identification of the factor structure that determines the attitude of mothers towards role they can play in mediation of the TV viewing and advertising directed at children.

In the sixth chapter an effort has been made to analyse the attitude of the mothers regarding the impact of TV advertising on the social and cultural values of the children.

The attitude of the mothers towards various issues related to control and restriction of TV advertising directed at children have been taken up in the seventh chapter. Again this chapter has been divided into two sections. The first section analyses the responses of mothers about the basic knowledge that they have regarding parental involvement, mediation, TV advertising restriction and the responsibility fixing. Factor analytical approach has been used in the second section to identify the factor structure of the variables that determine the attitude of mothers towards issues related to control and restriction of TV advertising directed at children.
The final chapter presents a summary of findings and conclusions. It culminates with suggestions for the product manufactures, the advertisers and the regulators of TV advertisements, specially the government and parents in particular.