PREFACE

Advertising as a process of communication between the brand and the target audience has undergone tremendous changes over the last decade in the country. India entered a new era with the announcement of economic reforms in the year 1991 and the country witnessed an altogether new market economy where Indian businesses were to compete with the technology savvy and cash rich global brands. Global brands brought in a fresh thinking to marketing and advertising strategies as they lured the consumer with choices and offers which made the consumer change his loyalties and age old preferences and buying habits. In this new wave of competition and brand proliferation, marketing communications became the face of a brand and the most innovative tool to strike a chord with the consumer. Sales promotion, advertising, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling became strategic ways and means of reaching out to the end user. Brands used these weapons to talk to the consumer on all consumer touch points and tried talking in the same language in order to establish brand identity and harmony in the minds of the consumers. Communication strategies got integrated with marketing goals which were derived from corporate objectives. “One touch one sound” became the mantra of success in brand communication and thus the age of “integrated marketing communication” was born.

Indian brands had to fight a tough battle due to the sudden transition from a protected economy to an open market economy. Global brands brought in a new thinking and established consumer as the uncrowned king in the market space. Thus, it was interesting to see how Indian brands survived, sustained and grew in this new market place which was shrewd. This thought gave birth to the research idea of doing a content analysis of television and print commercials in case of selected brands in the post liberalization era with a special reference to the changing competitive marketing environment. This study focuses on analyzing the content of advertisements in the last decade and the product category and competition in order to establish the forces that have shaped and reshaped the brand communication in the post liberalization era. Many researchers have used content analysis as a method to study the cross-cultural issues of advertising, portrayal of men and women, communication to kids and so on.
However, limited studies have used content analysis to study Indian brands and its advertising content.

This study is an attempt to find out as to what is responsible or what factors decide the advertising content in terms of portrayal of women, gender, socio-cultural issues. The research tries to establish a context by studying how marketing environment and the product category reference for the particular brand have changed in the last decade due to globalization and liberalization. The study of marketing environment and changes therein proved to be fascinating as economic reforms opened up a new horizon in terms of marketing tactics and strategies due to competition and clutter in the market place. Since the study is based on a qualitative research approach, triangulation has been achieved by in-depth interviews of advertising and brand professionals. The analysis is done in a hybrid fashion by adopting a mix of case study method of analysis along with inferences from the in-depth interviews of brand experts. Further, in order to study whether the ad is helping the target audience in making proper purchase decisions, Resnik and Stern’s tool of information cues has been used to determine the informativeness of print and television commercials.