CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”

Zora Neale Hurston (American folklorist and Writer, 1903-1960)

3.1 Scheme of Chapter:
The highlight of the first chapter was introduction to the world of advertising and taking an account of how advertising evolved in the world as well as in India. This chapter would focus on the research methodology adopted for the study and tools used for analysis and interpretation.

Research design has been defined as a framework or blueprint for conducting the research. It specifies the details of the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure and/or solve the research problem or objective (Malhotra, 1999).

3.2 Research Approaches:
Research approaches can be classified as exploratory, descriptive and causal research depending on the nature of the problem, method of data collection and analysis. Exploratory research is when the researcher is seeking insights into the general nature of the problem and possible decision alternatives for which he uses highly flexible, unstructured, and qualitative methods (Aaker, Kumar and Day, 1995). Descriptive research is focused on providing an accurate snapshot of some aspect of the market environment and the findings may provide answers to the problem. Causal research is where one variable causes or determines the value of the other variables. While descriptive research shows whether the variable are related or not, causal research shows what kind of relationship the two variables share (Aaker, Kumar and Day, 1995).

Primary data can be collected using quantitative and/or qualitative research approach. Both are two different types of researches and have their own set of advantages and disadvantages. It depends on the research problem and the context as to which one will be the most appropriate to use as an approach to doing research. There are firm believers and proponents of both the types of research approaches.
3.2.1 Qualitative Research:
Till years after its birth, qualitative research was considered as a “poor cousin” of quantitative research. Due to small sample size and “soft” data and subjectivity of the moderator, qualitative research was mostly used as a pilot study for large scale quantitative research. The 1970s was the decade which saw a growth explosion in the qualitative market research industry. With its emphasis on individual skills and low capital investment, qualitative research work proved irresistible to firms and researchers (Gordon, Langmaid, 1988). As qualitative research proved it effectiveness as a methodology to study brands, consumer motivations and advertising campaigns, it started getting an independent status and recognition in the industry. Qualitative research has been defined as an unstructured, exploratory research methodology based on small samples that provide insights and understanding of the problem setting (Malhotra, 1999).

Quantitative research is mainly concerned with the degree in which phenomena possess certain properties, states and characters, and the similarities, differences and causal relations that exist within and between these. It is usually based on theoretical or empirical considerations and quantifying phenomena (Labuschagne, 2003). Qualitative research sometimes gives depth to the findings of quantitative research techniques like surveys by providing meaning to the numbers and statistics. Qualitative research is especially used when probing is required and respondents may not be able to answer direct questions. In case of sensitive issues or issues invading the privacy of the respondent, qualitative research may be the only option. Also when it is important to capture the emotions, feelings, values, ego, and other such responses, a qualitative research technique is better than straight survey type of quantitative method of research. Qualitative research is centrally concerned with understand the things rather than with measuring them (Gordon, Langmaid, 1988).

38 Soft data means data interpreted without numbers and statistical analysis.
Some of the methods in qualitative research that can be used singularly or in combination are observations, case study approach, group discussions, content analysis of documents, cognitive interviews, surveys and so on and so forth\textsuperscript{39}.

\textbf{3.2.2 Quantitative Research:}

Quantitative research is a methodology that seeks to quantify the data and typically, applies some form of statistical analysis (Malhotra, 1999). Qualitative research is mainly concerned with the properties, the state and the character (i.e., the nature, of phenomena). The word \textit{qualitative} implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are rigorously examined, but not measured in terms of quantity, amount or frequency. Qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases. Qualitative data provide depth and detail through direct quotation and careful description of situations, events, interactions and observed behaviours (Labuschagne, 2003).

The two approaches should be regarded as complementary and not competitive. Generating useful and credible qualitative evaluation data through observation, interviewing and content analysis requires discipline, knowledge, training, practice and hard work (Labuschagne, 2003).

3.2.3 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research:

While quantitative research deals in numbers, logic and the objective; qualitative research deals with words, associations, images, and the subjective (Davies, 2000). Quantitative research focuses on the left brain - objective, comfortable with logic, numbers, and unchanging static data and detailed, convergent reasoning rather than divergent reasoning. Qualitative research deals with the right brain - the hemisphere accountable for processing data as words, emotions, feelings, emotions, colour, and music (Davies, 2000). Since quantitative research is structured, the data collection and interpretation can be done by different set of people whereas in qualitative research since the data collection is unstructured and open ended and has to study verbal as well as non-verbal expressions of respondent, the data collected cannot be interpreted by some other party. The debate regarding the superiority and inferiority of both the approaches for research continues till date. The major themes that differentiate the two approaches have been given in a table\textsuperscript{40} form:

\textsuperscript{40} Data in the table has been collected and compiled from "Qualitative Market Research" by Gordon and Langmaid, "Marketing Research" by Naresh K. Malhotra, and James Neill's comments on www.wilderdom.com. The two quotes are from Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 40), Qualitative Data Analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative</th>
<th>Quantitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;All research ultimately has a qualitative grounding&quot; - Donald Campbell</td>
<td>&quot;There's no such thing as qualitative data. Everything is either 1 or 0&quot; - Fred Kerlinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sample</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain a qualitative understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations</td>
<td>Small number of non-representative cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Large number of representative cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is the recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research approaches that has brought about the new peace and indeed has triggered the development of hybrid methodologies which have been designed to maximize the strengths while overcoming the weaknesses of both approaches (Gordon and Langmaid, 1988).
3.3 Research Objectives:

1. To analyze the change in the advertising content of print and television advertisements, in the post liberalization era
   a. To compare and analyze the advertisement content over the years
   b. To study the use of advertising appeals and changes therein
   c. To study the informativeness of advertisements
   d. To recognize the forces shaping and reshaping the advertising message and content

3.3.1 Research Questions:

1. Has the duration of advertisements shortened over a period of time?
2. Has the message delivery shifted from background to interactive?
3. Has the emphasis shifted from copy to visuals in print advertisements?
4. Has there been a basic shift from idealism to realism in ads?
5. Has the level of informativeness changed over the years?

3.4 Rationale:
Advertising has always been seen as a mirror of change and a reflection of change in the society. In order to maintain relevance, advertisements have to be in sync with the changing times and mindsets of people. The marketing environment in India has drastically changed post globalization and liberalization. Businesses had to redefine and rejuvenate their identity and strategies for survival, sustenance and growth. Since advertising goes with what is established in the society and culture and also adapts to the evolving nature of economies and consumer, advertising in India has undergone a sea change over the last decade. Entry of foreign brands and the changing demographics of India in the past decade have resulted in tremendous changes in the consumer culture of the country.

Over the years the importance given to casting, copy, appeals, visuals, colours, music, and celebrities has been changing. From a client driven industry, advertising today has truly emerged as a consumer driven industry. So it is the need of the hour to understand the changes taking place in the market place and also analyze the manner in which brands are responding to these changes through communication i.e. advertising. Fifteen years have passed since we saw the economic reforms in the year

63
1991. It is essential therefore to study how has markets, categories, advertisements changed over the last decade or so. A content analysis of advertisements post liberalization with special reference to the changing marketing environment therefore is relevant and required.

3.5 Research Design:

3.5.1 The Approach
Qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases in depth and detail through direct quotation and careful description of situations, events, interactions and observed behaviours (Labuschagne, 2003). The major part of the study is qualitative in nature and has been augmented through a tool using quantitative analysis. Qualitative content analysis has been done using narrative analysis and in-depth interviews of brand/advertising experts. The secondary data pertaining to the marketing environment and changes therein have been used to set the context and understand the product category and establish a correlation between the marketing environment scenario and the changes in the content of advertisements. Quantitative content analysis has been done using Resnik & Stern's tool of fourteen information cues in order to find out the informativeness of advertisements. Frequency analysis has been done to find out the level of informativeness of advertisements over the last few years.

3.5.2 The Case Study Method
A case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" and "it relies on multiple sources of evidence" (Yin 1994, p.13). Case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context41. The focus is on in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Cavaye, 1996; Darke, Shanks and Broadbent, 1998). Case studies as a research methodology explain, explore or describe a

---

phenomenon of interest (Ellram and Lisa, 1996). Case studies focus on holistic situations in real life settings, and tend to have set boundaries of interest, such as an organization, a particular industry, or a particular type of operation (Ellram and Lisa, 1996). The use of qualitative research methods such as action research, case study research, and ethnography is seen where the focus is on understanding social phenomenon in their natural and cultural settings (Myers, 1998; Darke, Shanks, Broadbent, 1998). Although used widely in qualitative and quantitative research, case study method has been criticized as a method lacking rigour, difficulty in getting information, and accumulation of large amounts of data (Yin 1994).

Case study method has been used to understand the ten brands in this study. The television and print commercials of ten brands namely, Rasna, Moov, Lifebuoy, Sonata, Dhara, Fair and Lovely, Vodafone, Cadbury Dairymilk, Fevicol, Nirma have been selected for content analysis. It is essential to study these ten brands in terms of their inception, launch, history, evolution, competition, category growth and development and so on in order to establish a context. Thus, information has been gathered from primary and secondary sources about these ten brands and the information thus gathered has been organized and studied in the form of a case study. Hence, the case study method has been used in order to understand the brands with a deeper focus so as to set a context for the study.

3.5.3 Content Analysis

Content analysis (also called: textual analysis) is a standard methodology in the social sciences on the subject of communication content. Earl Babbie defines it as "the study of recorded human communications, such as books, web sites, paintings and laws". Harold Lasswell formulated the core questions of content analysis: "Who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect?" Ole Holsti (1969) offers a broad definition of content analysis as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p. 14). Content analysis is one of the most important research techniques in social sciences which seek to understand data not as a collection of physical events but as symbolic phenomena and to approach their analysis unobtrusively (Krippendorff, 1980).
The term content analysis is about 50 years old. Webster’s Dictionary of the English language has listed it only since 1961. But its intellectual roots go far back in history, to the beginning of man’s conscious use of symbols and language. However ancient these roots might be, their existence, if not persistence, should not distract from the fact that modern pursuits are significantly different in aim and in method. We see three marks of distinction. Firstly, the pursuit of content analysis is fundamentally empirical in orientation, exploratory, concerned with real phenomena, and predictive in intent. Secondly, content analysis transcends conventional notions of content as an object of concern and is intricately linked to more recent conceptions of symbolic phenomena. This is because of the four revolutions concerning the concept of communication i.e. the idea of message, the idea of channels, the idea of communication and the idea of systems. Thirdly, content analysis is developing a methodology of its own that enables the researcher to plan, to communicate, and to critically evaluate a research design independently of its results (Krippendorff, 1980).

Content analysis was used tremendously for analysis of content of newspapers. The first analysis of its kind, published in 1893, asked the rhetorical question, “Do newspapers Now Give the News?” (Speed, 1893). The author showed how religious, scientific, and literary matters had dropped out of leading New York newspapers between 1881 and 1893 in favor of gossip, sports, and scandals. A similar study attempted to reveal the overwhelming space devoted to “demoralizing”, “unwholesome”, and “trivial” matters as opposed to “worthwhile” news items (Mathews, 1910).

In social science, the value of content analysis was recognized early in the 20th century by such scholars as Max Weber and Harold Lasswell (Harry, Charles, Judd, 2000). During the 1940s and 1950s, major figures, including Berelson, Lazarsfeld, Osgood, Pool, and R.K.White, introduced many of the conventions of content analysis used in contemporary communications research (Holsti, 1969). Three factors namely growth of electronic media, emergence of socio-political problems and emergence of empirical methods of inquiry in social sciences contributed to the growth of content analysis. For e.g. sociology started making use of survey methods and polling. The experiences gained in analyzing public opinion gave rise to the first serious consideration of methodological problems of content analysis by Woodward (1934) entitled, “Quantitative Newspaper Analysis as a Technique of Opinion Research.”
From writings about public opinion, interest in social “stereotypes” (Lippman, 1922) entered the analysis of communication in various forms. Questions such as how negroes were presented in the Philadelphia press (Simpson, 1934), how the US described her wars in her history textbooks as compared to those published by her former enemies (Walworth, 1938), or how nationalism was expressed in American, British, and other European children’s books (Martin, 1936) now assumed importance (Krippendorff, 1980).

Content analysis is an appropriate method when the phenomenon to be observed is communication, rather than behaviour or physical objects (Malhotra, 1999). It can be used to observe and analyze words, characters, themes, space and time measures, or topics (Malhotra, 1999). Researchers have used content analysis to study visual text, such as photographs, paintings, statues, buildings, clothing and videos and films. Visual text is difficult to analyze because it communicates messages or emotional content indirectly through images, symbols and metaphors. Moreover, visual images often contain mixed messages at multiple levels of meaning. To conduct content analysis on visuals, the researcher must “read” the meanings within the visual text (Neuman, 2006).

This research study uses content analysis to understand the informativeness of advertisements and changes in the content of communication in the post liberalization era for the ten brands selected for study. The context has been provided by an in-depth study of the changes in the marketing environment affecting the product category and the target audience of the brand.

3.5.4 Tools
For qualitative content analysis the researcher has used descriptive narrative analysis as a tool. The commercials were viewed time and again and after each viewing notes/comments were made and analysis was done. The ads have been described and analyzed in-depth and changes over the years have been identified and analyzed. Interview protocol has been used for in-depth interviews of advertising/marketing professionals. However, the researcher in some cases added/deleted questions from the protocol based on the discussion and maturity of interaction between researcher and respondent. The transcripts have been analyzed to set a context and correlation.
with the qualitative content analysis of ads. Case study approach has been used for the study of brands, and in-depth interviews of professionals have established the context for the changes in content of ads over the last ten years.

Resnik & Stern's tool of fourteen information cues published in 1977 has been used to understand the informativeness of advertisements in case of the selected brands. The founders of the tool operationally defined an ad as being informative if it helps the consumer in the purchase process (Resnik & Stern, 1977). The fourteen cues developed to check the level of informativeness are price, quality, performance, components, availability, special offers, taste, packaging or shape, guarantee or warranty, safety, nutrition, independent research, company sponsored research and new ideas. The tool is very popular till date for content analysis of ads. Frequency analysis would be done in order to ascertain the informativeness of advertisements.

3.5.5 Sampling

Literature on studies (Turley, Kelley, Scott, 1997; Hahmann, Bruce, Brotherton, Timothy, 1997) conducted using content analysis show sampling being done based on the most circulated magazines or highly watched television channel/show, a particular genre of magazine/television show and so on and so forth. There are studies (Graham, John, Kamins, Michael, 1993) that have used the most recent issues of magazines to arrive at a sample of advertisements. Many researchers (Resnik and Stern, 1977; Lawrence and Gary, 1986) have used multi stage random sampling procedure to select the commercials.

The research deals with content analysis of advertisements of ten selected brands. Brands that had to face challenging time post liberalization have been short listed for the study as the focus of the research is on post liberalization era. Therefore, Judgement Sampling method has been used to arrive at a sample. Ten commercials were randomly collected for each brand for content analysis and therefore the total number of ads collected was hundred. The commercials were drawn from the last ten to twelve year period. The respondents for the in-depth interview were selected based on the number of years of experience with the selected brand. Involvement of two to three years with the respective brand was treated as ideal for selection. One
respondent per brand was selected either from the client side or the agency side and therefore the total number of people interviewed were ten.

3.5.6 Triangulation
Surveyors and sailors measure distances between objects by making observations from multiple positions. By observing something from different angles or viewpoints, they get a fix on its true location. This process called triangulation is applied to look at the same thing from several angles (Neuman, 2006). Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But, acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen (Flick, 1992). Validity, in qualitative research, relates to whether the findings of your study are true and certain. "True" in the sense of your findings accurately reflecting the real situation. “Certain” means that there are no good grounds for doubting the results; i.e. the weight of evidence supports your conclusions. The term, triangulation, comes from the practice by which sailors and surveyors determine location by studying the intersection of three points (Chenail, 1997).

Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies (Guion, 2002). Triangulation in research terms (Denzin, 1978) usually means that researchers use different sets of data, different types of analyses, different researchers, different environments, different methodologies and/or different theoretical perspectives to study one particular phenomenon (Chenail, 1997). Thus triangulation can be of data, evaluators, methodology, disciplines and/or analysis of data. If triangulation leads to common results and evaluation, then it can be said that validity has been established in the qualitative research study. Many researchers are of the view that role of triangulation is not limited to validation of results but it helps in deepening the understanding of the researcher (Olsen, 2004).

The research deals with content analysis of advertisements post liberalization and aims at reading the changes in the content with specific reference to the changes in the marketing environment context of the selected brands. The content analysis has been done by the researcher using the qualitative research approach. In order to establish
validity, triangulation has been done. Triangulation has been done through the use of quantitative analysis. Resnik & Stern’s tool has been used to analyze informativeness of advertisements through frequency analysis.

3.6 Scope of the Study
The research relates to analysis of the content of advertisements across last ten years. This would give and idea as to how the strategies have changed in terms of brand communication. In order to delve deeper, the context for each brand selected i.e. the marketing environment and category changes would be studied which will lead to insights regarding the category in general and the position of the brand in specific. The research will give cues as to how the marketing environment has changed post liberalization and how have brands sustained throughout. The research will try and relate the content changes with the competitive marketing environment and provide a holistic view about the impact of changing marketing environment and the responses from the brands in terms of the changing advertising appeals, content, tone and so on and so forth. The analysis of ads, marketing environment and the views of marketing managers and advertising professionals will give an interesting interpretation to the brand communication and the efforts undertaken by firms to stay relevant and top of the mind for the target audience.

The study provides an understanding into the advertising content of last ten years period in relationship with the competitive environment and therefore would be a benchmark to predict future trends in advertising of the concerned brands.

3.7 Limitations of the Study
The study is based on ten brands with focus on the communication of these brands post liberalization. The research does not provide insights into the pre-liberalization era and the advertising strategies of these brands. The brands have been selected by the researcher and therefore there are chances that some other important brands have been left out. The advertisements have been selected randomly from the last ten to twelve year period and only ten ads per brand have been short listed for analysis. So a study done with more number of ads may yield different results.
The brands selected represent ten different product categories. While it gives an idea about the communication and category context of ten brands, it does not provide a holistic view of the communication content of ten brands in a single product category. A single product category focus would have yielded better results in terms of the communication content and its relationship with the target audience and category evolution.

Major part of the study is qualitative in nature and therefore analysis may lack in terms of statistical interpretations and quantitative analysis. While it does provide depth of information, the study suffers from lack of numerical calculations and conclusions.
Chapter Bibliography:


