

STUDY AND IMPACT OF ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO EATING HABITS IN INDIA

***Naresh Kr. Sharma, ** Dr. Ramesh Agarwal**

**Professor, IIMT, Gr. Noida (also Res. Scholar, MB Univ. Solan HP)*

***Director, JRE Group of Institutions, Gr. Noida*

ABSTRACT

Advertisement is integral part of the industry which wants its product to be reached to the customer, and thereby converting them into consumers. Advertising is sole of everyone's' lifestyle, and the degree of impact of adverting on children is becoming devastating day by day. Advertisements showcase the 'must haves' for a kid making them a consumer even before they have reached the age of 3. on the contrary, advertisement are educating, updating and motivating the children to learn good thing as well. Thus the objectives of this research paper are to explore both the beneficial and harmful effects of media on children's food habits, and to identify how the advertising industry can be regulated by formulating unified laws to prevent the over-exposure of children to the ad world. I am also emphasizing on directing children's towards imbibing healthy food habits in them by suggesting parents to be more aware & regulating the advertisement targeted on children. This research paper also take a review on what kind of regulations are implemented in some parts of world regarding advertisements targeting children's & what kind of steps are being taken in India in this direction. Using 'On the Spot' sampling method 100 children between 5-15 yrs age group and 50 parents are interviewed with the help of interview schedule and data collected is presented in the form of pie chart. The research paper concludes that advertising severely affect the eating habits of present generation children. The role of parents and legal system plays crucial role in preventing the anti-health ads influencing the children's eating habits.

Keywords: Advertising, Habits, Impact, Children, Legal, System

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century we all are aware of the development of science and technology and of the progress made by mankind. Science has always given us a lot and one of the gifts of science is mass media which includes television, radio etc. Television is having a great impact on our minds and as a result we learn word to word utterances of the persons acting before us. This is true whether they are in serials or in advertisements. Advertisement has become a media for making a product popular in a short period of time and this is one of the important reasons for the impact of new products in the mind of children. Advertising is sole of everyone's' lifestyle. Not only adults but children are also getting influenced by these advertisements. The degree of impact of advertising on adults may be problematic but the outcome is devastating for children. Advertisers of children's television used to appeal to the parents earlier but now they appeal directly to children who do not have the emotional or cognitive tools to evaluate what's being sold to them. Television is no more just a source of entertainment for children. They showcase the

must have for a kid making them a consumer even before they have reached the age of 3. Small kids even below 3 years of age are found dominating the purchase decision, which is again the result of increasing influence of advertisements.

Today, when parents go to market with their children the latter ask for those products which have not even reached the market. Inclusion of children in TV advertisements is not new to the world of advertisement, but if you refer the ads 10 to 15 years back, children could be seen in those product ads which are directly used by them, for example, Biscuit ads, chocolate ads, Rasna Ad...etc Today the scenario is totally different. We can see children in the insurance advertisement, vehicle advertisement and even in home appliances advertisement. The reason is quite interesting – the role of current generation children in family related matters is very active as against that of passive 10-15 years before. Children in current families invariably 1 or 2 in number as against 3-5 in old days, dominate the family purchase decisions and one of the major reasons of this change is advertisement. It will not be an exaggeration if I say that advertisements are shaping the mentality and value system of children by making them demanding constantly for variety and thrill.

Thus the influence of the media on the psychosocial development of children is profound. Not only mental health, but ads are also impacting the physical health of the children. And here lies the objective of this research paper. It is found that 65% of the eating and drinking preferences of children are the result of advertisements. This includes all category of food items, right from biscuits, chocolates to pizza, fruit juice and even health drinks. On one side the advertisements are motivating the children to try health drinks like Boost, Horlicks, on the other side Advertisings are also diluting their food habits by compelling them to consume Maggy, pizza, and coke drinks. Thus the objectives of this research paper are to explore both the beneficial and harmful effects of media on children's food habits, and to identify how the advertising industry can be regulated by formulating unified laws to prevent the over exposure of children to the ad world. I am also emphasizing on directing children's towards imbibing healthy food habits in them by suggesting parents to be more aware & regulating the advertisement targeted on children. I also have taken a review on what kind of regulations are implemented in some parts of world regarding advertisements targeting children's & what kind of steps are being taken in India in this direction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With the help of advertisements, companies are attracting the so called new segment in the market. i.e. children segment. My research project deals with various studies about the nature of the children, their likes & dislikes, parent's role in the decision making & the influence of advertising on the buying habits seen by the kids. The data collection was done using on the spot sampling in the form of personal interview. I used various secondary sources for gathering data related to the research report. Analysis of data has been done using quantitative methods such as Arithmetic mean.

Those analyzed facts & findings are presented in different forms for ease of understanding by use of pie charts and bar charts. This research report just does not concentrate on the findings but also suggests corrective measures to be taken up to minimize the after effects of the advertising world which will be always on the upsurge. This impact of advertising on children is exponential and will rapidly grow in

the coming future. Therefore considering the severity of the possible problems this report aims at taking precautionary steps in the government's front, ethical front of the advertisers and of course on the parental & children's front.

DATA COLLECTION

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data is collected from the respondents with the help of interview schedule. It was mainly directed towards investigation of the various impacts the advertising has on the children's' minds & how advertisement decides their buying and eating habit. The survey had to be done at the point of purchase. So it was carried out in food malls where the brands are sold & places like McDonalds & places like schools where we could actually meet the parents.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Non Probability Sampling Technique was used & in that on the spot sampling was done. The responses were collected from 100 Children and 50 parents, who were interviewed with the interview schedule at different places of purchase. Hence a on the spot sampling technique was decided, which would enable using personal judgment to conveniently approach the parents and children and save time also.

SECONDARY DATA

The secondary data is collected from previous research reports on the related issues. Apart from the secondary data is also collected from internet for getting the data about the various statutory rules and regulations on advertising. The data is also collected from the websites of food chains like McDonalds, Pizza hut, Dominos...etc.

SUGGESTIONS TO REGULATE THE IMPACT OF ADS ON CHILDREN EATING HABITS

1) Parent involvement and Education

Studies show that parents play an important role in their children's social learning, but if a parent's views are not discussed explicitly with children, the medium may teach and influence by default Parents should be educated with respect to what should be healthy food as per proper nutritional intake for their children. Parents should continuously assess their children's eating habit and its impact on their health. If child is found getting into wrong eating habit especially due to ads, it is the prime responsibility of the parents to explain them the damage out of it. Apart from these, parents should educate their children about the advantages of eating healthy food and disadvantages of unhealthy food.

2] Statutory Warning

The intake of junk food & carbonated drinks causes numerous diseases such as obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), gall bladder ailments, cancer, psycho- social problems, breathlessness, sleep disorders, asthma, arthritis, weak bones and reproductive hormone abnormalities. So it should

come with statutory warnings as in the case of cigarettes (Smoking is injurious for health and milk powder such as “Intake of this food more than twice a week is not good for health.”

3] Legal Implications

In India, there are no specific advertising laws that relate to children and food-related advertisements in particular. A host of laws and Acts like the 'Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995' and the 'Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Food Act' deal with children related advertising in a vague way. Not only are there advertisements that are targeted at children but a host of them that feature young children, even babies. In most parts of the world, there are few or no specific rules concerning food advertising to children beyond the rules which must apply to all advertising. In India, even general rules pertaining to advertising are very lax. Also, there are no regulatory bodies that monitor TV advertisements. Apart from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting that decides to intervene when it wants to, there are only voluntary groups like the 'Advertising Agencies Association of India', and the 'Advertising Standards Council of India', both of which are business organizations and can only put moral pressure on advertisers and companies to withdraw objectionable advertisements. There is urgent need for voluntary and government pressure groups to seriously take note of the situation.

The government needs to draft and implement laws that do not deal with advertising in general but are specific and relate to every aspect of advertising, especially those that target young children and pertain to food. In other parts of the world, there exist voluntary groups like the 'Adbusters' and 'Mothers groups' that watch and pressure governments to clamp down on aggressive and intrusive advertising. At present there are various laws implemented by government under various ministries.

4] Advertisement

Code to be monitored by an organization which will take care of the following:

A] Before any AD is aired on television, the most sought medium by children some code of conduct should be followed. Any food ADs should be scrutinized with regards to the claims they are making & the food ingredients should meet some standards laid down by recognized organization like WHO.

B] The stipulated time limit for advertisement is followed by the companies or not. TV Channels generally do not follow any rules regarding advertising air time. Doordarshan poses a limit on advertising time which is a maximum of 7.5 minutes of advertisements in a 30 minute programme. Private TV channels are free to air as many advertisements they like.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of primary data and secondary data it is concluded that advertising severely affect the eating habits of present generation children. The role of parents and legal system plays crucial role in preventing the anti health ads influencing the children's eating habits.

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