

Pester Power : The Strategic Use Of The Child Model In Advertising

* *Srabani Roy Maiti*

"Successful Advertising Appeals Both To The Head And To The Heart, To Reason & Emotions."

INTRODUCTION

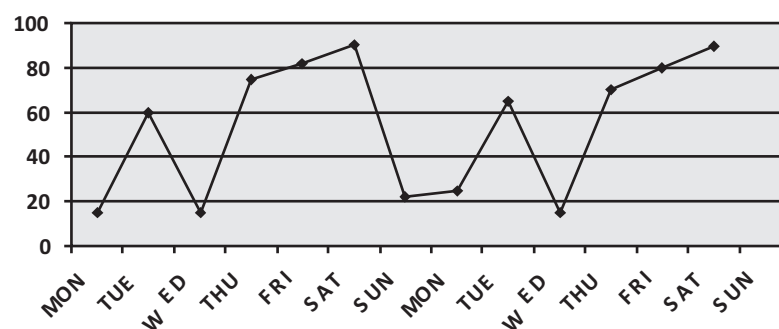
Advertising is not just a business expenditure undertaken in the hope of moving some merchandise off the store shelves, but is rather an integral part of modern culture. Its creations appropriate & transform a vast range of symbols & ideas, its unsurpassed communicative powers recycle cultural models and references back through the networks of social interactions. This venture is unified by the discourse through and about objects, which bounds together images of persons, products and well-being.

Modern advertising is more of a psychological process. It has become the most convenient route to reach the consumer's mind. Advertising is closely linked to consumer behaviour. So it affects the personality of the consumer, his concept of self, his attitudes, beliefs and opinions, his life-style and lifecycle, etc. Advertising appeals to our physiological and psychological motives. Thus, we can define advertising as, *"non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods & services) or ideas by identified sponsors through various media."* Thus, advertising as a means of mass communication has, therefore, made mass selling possible.

ADVERTISING & TELEVISION

Though TV came to India in 1959, it was only on January 1, 1976 that advertisements appeared for the 1st time on Doordarshan & since then, there was no looking back. Modern 'television advertising' in India is a highly competitive business. Today, with the increasing consumer awareness, no business can survive for long without advertising. Advertising in India reaches about 75 per cent of the population through television. Certain televised programs enjoy a viewership of more than 100 million. Thus, being an 'audio-visual medium', television offers the advertiser the most effective way of reaching the consumer's mind. Advertising has affected the fortunes of the media worldwide. It has specially courted television and has become the major foundation of revenue of television networks. Today, television 'without' advertising appears to be an unrealistic proposition. The pattern of advertising is something like the Figure 1 shows: a low starting point on Mondays and Tuesdays, while a quantum leap on Wednesday. Commercials slumped

Figure 1: The Weekly Pattern Of Advertising On Doordarshan For A Period Of 2 Weeks



* Lecturer, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Asutosh College, 92, S.P. Mukherjee Road, Kolkata- 700026, West Bengal. E-mail: rsrabani1@gmail.com.

again on Thursdays to a figure even lower than Mondays, but this represented the quiet before the storm, which broke loose on Fridays, and continued to build up over the weekend. The only difference was that whereas bulk of Fridays advertising was concentrated in the evening slot, the weekend fare was spread over the day, especially on Sundays.

THE CHILD MODEL IN ADVERTISING

Modern advertisements use children to give an emotional undertone to the products, suggesting the audience an element of familiarity. This trend is compatible with the changes occurring in the traditional family structure because of the forces of globalization. The modern family has become child-centric in its lifestyle. The colour of the car a family plans to buy is decided as per the wishes of the children in the family. This explains using children as models in ads promoting the products. The role of child models is in no way restricted to the ads promoting children-related products. Presence of child models in ads of telecommunication products is a case in point. *'When a child model explains the uniqueness of an LG television set to the perplexed adults of the family, this logic becomes very obvious'.* On screen, infants and young children appear bouncy at ease, full of verve and joy. However, let us now examine how many 'takes' are required before that look of complete joy - the perfect shot - is achieved?

According to some ad filmmakers and creative directors, it's not easy to work with children (some of the simplest shot takes a whole day), yet it could be a lot of fun also. However, they admit the most difficult aspect of using children is to get them to rigidly follow a script:

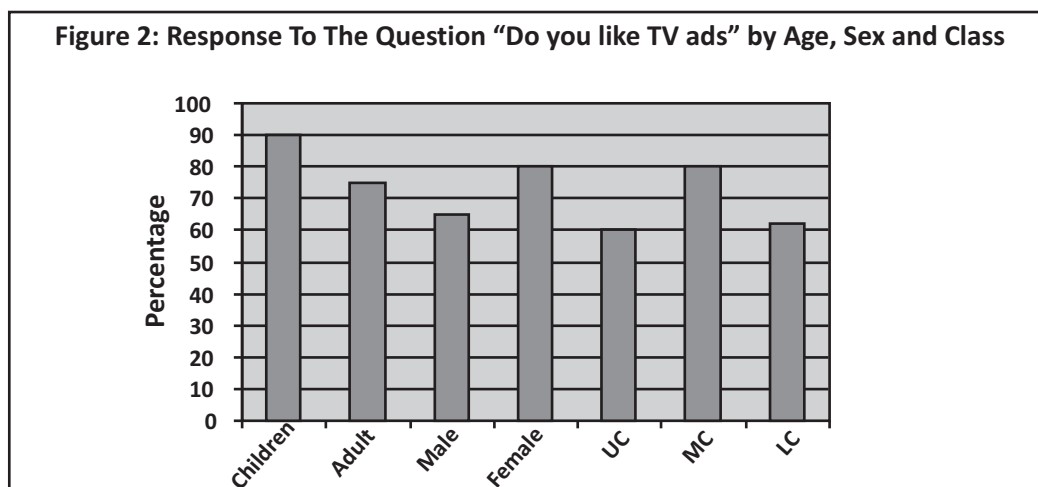
"There's certainly a high degree of sensitivity required in dealing with children. Some children simply will not parrot the words you want them to, and may even come up with a spontaneous variation which, because it is natural, sounds good."

Other filmmakers point out that when using children, it is better to let them be natural, comfortable in their environment, and not to let them feel as though they are being subjected to adult tyranny. A mother whose three-year old was requisitioned for an Ad said that hers had been a comparatively enjoyable experience. The filmmaker who approached them was gentle, kind and understanding and took pains to interact with the child long enough to win the little one's confidence, before unobtrusively sneaking some footage. No script. No tutoring. It worked out fine.

MODEL WATCH

Eight years old Naman Sachdeva is a known figure in TV ads today. He was one-year-old when he first shot for Crocin Pediatric Drops and Vanita Magazine. Dad Vijay and Mom Ritika got his profile done and managed to land it at O & M. And soon, Naman was in the media. His dad, Vijay, says, *"When Naman first shot for the Crocin ad, he had no idea of what was happening around him. And to make him smile during the shoots, Naman was shown toys."* This tiny Taurean does not like home cook food and only prefers ice cream, Pepsi and wafers. And music makes him move his limbs even when he is lying down. It is perhaps his form of dance, and if a good offer comes his way, he will soon be in the movies too.

Interestingly, television advertising has a very large viewership in India. The Figure 2 shows the response to the



question, 'Do you like TV ads' by age and sex and class. The response was that 75% of the combined sample said they like TV ads, among which 90% were children and 75% were adults. The figure also reveals that the affluent upper class people watch less television, whereas, the middle class watches TV the most. Both adults and children watch television as their favourite leisure activity. And the favourite commercials include those of Pepsi, Pepsodent, Colgate, Rasna, and Coca-Cola, etc. *'Interestingly, each of these brands have used children in their commercials at some time or the other.'* Children seem to be a particularly good medium for selling products, for justifying the expense on them, and for evoking certain responses from the audience. The context is that at home, children are important. Thus, we can see that the practice of using children in advertising is becoming a corner stone of modern advertising.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

1) PEPSODENT : Hindustan Unilever rolled out its new campaign for its flagship toothpaste Pepsodent, with Shah Rukh Khan, as it takes on the market leader, Colgate. Set inside a bathroom, the ad opens when a young boy asks his father, played by superstar Shah Rukh Khan, why he has to brush his teeth everyday. The father slips into a character, puts on a gruff voice, and explains to his son that if he doesn't brush his teeth, germs will attack the teeth and his white teeth will turn black. The campaign appeals to fathers to spend just 2 minutes with their kids to brush their teeth, which will help remove 95 percent of the germs, and in the longer-term, build a strong relationship with their children. With this campaign, Pepsodent attempts to make brushing, an otherwise mundane activity, into an interesting event, where fathers can spend quality time with their children and instill good habits, laying the foundation for stronger father-kid relationship. Srinandan Sundaram, Category Head - Oral Care, Hindustan Unilever Limited says: *"The parent-child relationship is increasingly a concern and currently, the focus for building better and healthy families. In this modern age, we see parents engrossed in work and missing out on engaging with their children. Through the Papa & Pappu campaign, Pepsodent attempts to put forth this issue and reach out to parents, encouraging them to spend quality time with their family, while instilling health habits in their children."*

✿ **The Strategy:** The pester power of children is well-acknowledged by marketers. Companies across categories like healthcare, personal care, newspapers and even computers have realized that the best way to enter homes is through children. Furthermore, it is the best way to hook a customer early in his life. The ad campaigns, such as those of Pepsodent, featuring the child model, are examples of excellent creative ideas. This product of Hindustan Lever Ltd., since its 3rd launch in 1993, has been using kids in all its campaigns. The kid factor has been seen as a key factor in Pepsodent's success.

✿ **Market Share:** Pepsodent's market share went up from 10.96 per cent to 13.81 per cent in a matter of eight months. *"Dishoom Dishoom was a very powerful idea with which Pepsodent really managed to take on Colgate, which without doubt, straddles the entire category"*, says a brand consultant. Next, Hindustan Unilever came out with ads like *Bachche jhoot nahin bolte* (kids don't tell lies), where a non-Pepsodent user is forced to lie to his mother about his eating habits. The ad didn't strike the same chord with people. As a result, Hindustan Unilever's market share slipped 25 percentage points in the last one year. Aware of that, the company knew that something needed to be done. Having spoken to customers extensively, the company backtracked on its previous stand of using the mother and brought in the father. *"Everyone usually associates the mother with dental care, but we wanted to show the role of the father in grooming his kid"*, says Srinandan Sundaram, Hindustan Unilever's head for oral care. Asked why the brand promise has been changed so frequently, Sundaram says: *"We are not changing our positioning; we have always maintained that we are a germ-fighting brand; we're only executing it differently."*

2) SANTRO

✿ **The Campaign:** This ad shows Shah Rukh Khan driving children around in a Santro and dropping them home.

✿ **The Strategy:** Santro chose to focus on children because, in the car market at least, it would act as a unique differentiator. BVR Subbu, Vice President, Sales & Marketing, Hyundai Motors India, says, *"The decision to involve children is actually a part of an exercise aimed at projecting Hyundai as a warm & friendly company that wants to establish an "emotional connect" with the family."* It should be treated as a relationship-building initiative to tap the lifetime value of a customer, and hold him with the brand. In the long run, it is expected that the *"emotional connect"*

will help Hyundai to strike a long-term relationship with buyers. So that when in future they think of buying a car, Santro easily finds a place in their consideration set.

(3) MCDONALDS

✿ **The Campaign:** This ad shows a little boy being taken to a McDonalds restaurant by his father after a disappointing performance in a poetry competition at school, to cheer him up. Pleased with the ambience and the burger, the kid makes another attempt to recite the poetry and is applauded by everyone at the restaurant.

✿ **The Strategy :** The strategy behind the ad is that McDonalds has projected itself as a family restaurant all over the world & children are an integral part of a family. Moreover, kids are no longer passive members. They play an active role as far as any buying decisions are concerned, be it a television, a music system or even decisions such as which restaurant the family should visit over the weekend. This ad campaigns highlights that McDonalds is a constant companion & makes people feel special.

(4) VICKS

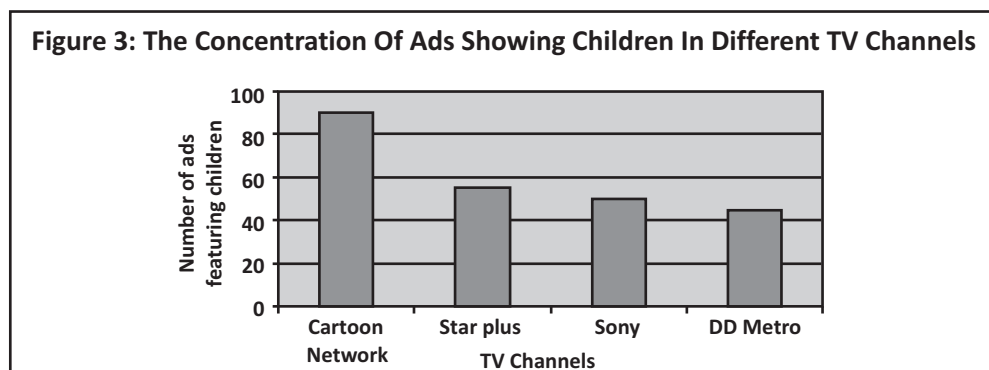
✿ **The Campaign:** The ad shows a boy having a severe cold and cough, is unable to sleep in the night. His mother comes and rubs Vicks Vapor Rub, and the boy gets completely cured by morning.

✿ **The Strategy:** Vicks Vapor Rub was uniquely positioned as a '*Rub for a child's cure*', as the existing balms produced a burning sensation that parents wished their children didn't have to suffer. Right since its launch, Vicks has used cute child models in almost every commercial it has launched. Actually, children are perceived as emotional focal points of Indian families. And by doing so, Vicks Vapor Rub has become an integral part of the urban family's '*medicinal dust*'. Few brands have penetrated India as deeply and effectively before as Vicks. On A & M's top brand survey in 2007, Vicks occupied the top slot, edging out Colgate, the perennial no.1. Vicks registration as an '*ayurvedic product*' has helped it to win the confidence of the mother and by doing so, it has succeeded in positioning the brand as the "*mother's medication*".

(5) COMPLAN

✿ **The Campaign :** In this beautiful campaign, a boy is shown jumping to get hold of a mango from a tree. Unsuccessful, the boy asks his mother why he is not growing tall. Her anxious mother then gives him Complan after the doctor tells her about it. It is throughout a very emotional and touchy campaign. It reflects the bond to touch the feelings of every mother. It shows how Complan helps in the over-all development of a child. It makes them strong and intelligent. '*It is a complete planned food*', and the children too know that, as when the researcher asked a child while doing the survey as per why he drinks Complan, well his smart answer was, because it is a complete planned food.

✿ **The Strategy :** The child-centric strategy of Complan has indeed worked wonders for the company. This strategy has actually cashed on the anxiety parents feel for their children. All mothers are worried about the health of their children. Thus, Complan, which is a completely planned health drink, is successful in assuring the mothers that they don't have to worry about their children's health any more.



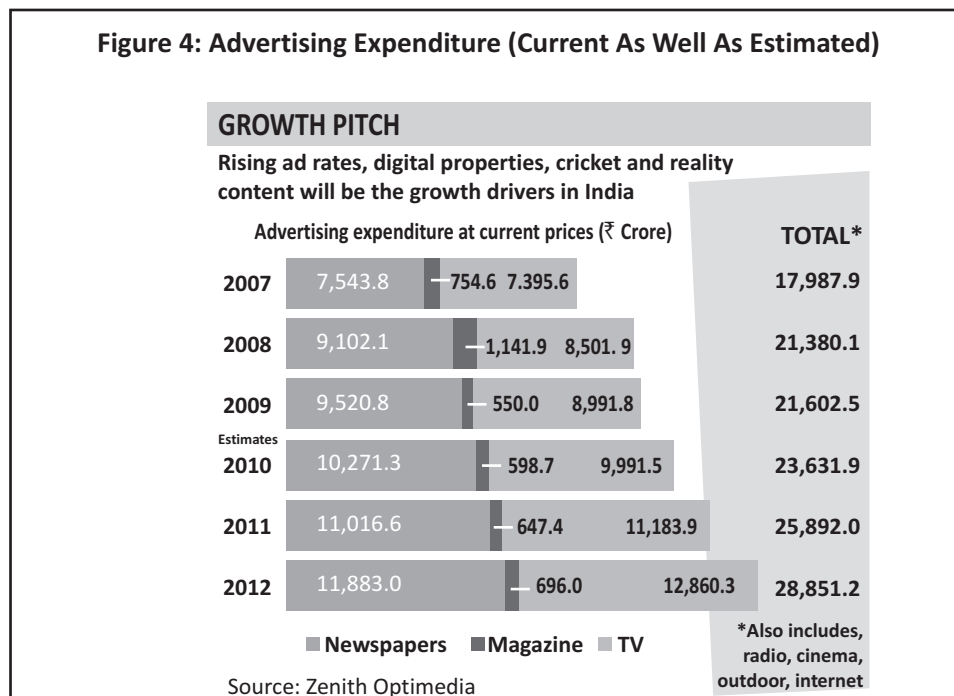
ADVERTISER'S POINT OF VIEW

The above ad campaigns are an example of a few of the many advertisements that use the child-centric strategy in promoting their products. While doing the survey, it was found that almost all television channels are telecasting the Ads featuring children. Topping that chart, of course, is the dedicated children's channel - the Cartoon Network. Almost 95% of its total advertisements show Ads featuring children. Whereas family entertainment channels like Sony, Star Plus and Doordarshan too telecast Ads featuring children. But these Ads vary in accordance with the serials or programmes that are broadcast. For example, ads that are directly related to the children, such as ads of toys, sweets, chocolates, ice creams, cold drinks, cycles and health products are shown during the programs that are for the children. During the family drama programs, the ads featuring children appear for products that are indirectly related to children like TV, Fridge, washing machine, motor cycles, car, credit cards, etc.

During the survey, it was found that while in Sony Entertainment Channel, the percentage of these ads were around 50 per cent, in Star Plus, it was around 55 per cent and in Doordarshan, little more than 45 per cent. The Figure 3 shows the concentration of the ads featuring children in these four channels that have been selected: Hollywood film *'The Godfather'* was immensely popular in India. Marlon Brando as the Godfather lived by the code - *'make him an offer he can't refuse'* - a code which advertisers understand only too well. Colossal sums of money are spent by the advertising industry all over the world on creating, packaging and presenting the most fantastic images of their products so that it (the product) sells.

In general, India had a ₹ 23,631.9 crore advertising industry in 2010, an estimated 1 per cent increase over the previous year because of the global economic downturn. However, the recovery has been swift, and India's advertising market will outperform most other markets in the coming years. Thanks not only to the changing economic environment, but also to the rapidly expanding media options, manufacturers are looking at the enormous domestic markets - both urban and rural - still waiting to be tapped. Millions of Indians have money to spend and every producer of goods, and services would like them to spend their money on his / her products. Even by conservative estimates, the market segment targeted by the consumer industry today would be several times the population of a country like France.

Figure 4: Advertising Expenditure (Current As Well As Estimated)



IMPACT OF THESE ADVERTISEMENTS ON CONSUMERS (SAMPLE SURVEY)

The sample size taken for this study was 100 consumers, which again were divided into two segments:

1. School going children of 6-14 years of age.
2. Their parents (affluent middle class).

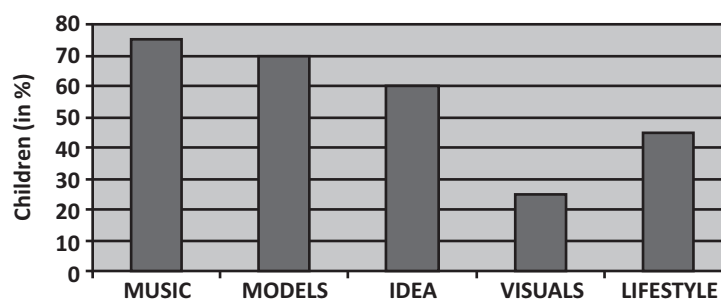
✿ **Impact On Children :** It was discovered that the impact of the TV commercials (featuring child models) on the minds of the children was fabulous. Today, the modern family has become child centric in its lifestyle, and kids have a lot of say in the buying decision of the parents. Ten-year-old Sourav is hooked onto Candico's Big Bubble Gum after he had seen the 'Candico's Loco Poco' ad on television a few months ago. Now, he asks retailers only for the Big Bubble Gum. The reason: *"It is a unique example of how loyalty from numerous such children has enabled 'Candico' to become 'India's number one bubble gum company.'*

✿ While doing the survey through the questionnaire, one thing was very clear that children love to watch TV commercials, especially those featuring child models and those with humour.

✿ More than 90 percent of the children surveyed liked to watch TV ads, even more than their parents. When asked for the reason, one child said, *"Ads are full of thrill and are full of excitement. I feel excited when I see children of my age doing some exciting things in the ads."* The reasons behind such an attraction are also very interesting to note. Studies point out that auditory features other than dialogue, such as lively music, sound effects, peculiar voices, non-speech vocalizations and frequent changes of a speaker attract and hold children's attention. High levels of physical activity or action elicit and maintain children's attention. Thirdly, changes in scene, characters, themes or auditory events are especially useful for eliciting attention, though they are less important for maintaining it once the child is looking.

✿ **Reasons For Such An Attraction :** Advertising's use of these features is designed to attract a child's attention. Through repetition, advertising ensures that its messages are internalized. Advertising in television incorporates many different elements. Like - Music, Idea, Visuals, Models and Lifestyle. When children were asked what aspect of advertising appealed to them, the all-time winner was music. Over 75% of them said they loved the music in ads. In the second place, not much behind were 'models'. Over 70% said that they like the child models that are so similar to them. About 60% of the respondents said that they like the concept or idea of the advertisements. It was found that most of the children liked the concept of the Pepsodent ad, which they say was very educative.

Figure 5: Shows The Percentage Of Children Who Like The Elements Of The Ads In Sequential Order



✿ **Impact on the Parents (Affluent Middle Class) :** Let us now examine what impact these ads featuring children create on the minds of the parents who are actually the real buyers of these products. Judging from the questionnaires that were collected from the parents, one thing was clear that they too are influenced by the TV commercials. The most popular ad among the parents was the Pepsodent ad. It seems that the super star along with the child model in the ad has been successful in drawing the attention of the children as well as their parents.

The Complan ad is also very popular, especially among the mothers. All mothers are very conscious about the health of their children. Thus, Mrs. Sengupta was asked as to why she gives Complan to her son, she promptly replied, *"My son is very moody and selective about food. He does not like vegetables, either. After seeing the Complan ad on TV, I thought of giving it to my son too. Since it is a complete planned food, I don't have to worry about the insufficient intake*

of Calcium, Minerals and Vitamins of my son anymore, just like the mother shown in the commercial. ”

What comes out of the interview is that these ads are not only influencing the parents, but it is also giving a kind of 'ego satisfaction' after purchasing the product. *'Since other mothers are giving Complan to their kids, so I also give the same'* - this kind of sentiment certainly benefits the advertisers while they plan on the ad campaign. These kinds of feelings also show that how modern advertising has become a psychological process. *“Actually, the energetic and cute models that are shown in the advertisements leave a very strange feeling in my mind”*, admitted Mrs. Swapna Ghosh frankly, when asked, how she feels while watching the child models in the commercials. She further said that they actually identified these child models with their children, and get a great mental satisfaction after buying that product for their children.

THE ADVERTISER'S STRATEGY

The practice of using children in advertising is a corner stone of international advertising today. According to the ad agencies, Children are routinely employed because of the emotional appeal they lend and their potential for attracting adult attention. Shown together with their parents and siblings, they reinforce the concept of the happy, well-knit nuclear family.

Advertisers say that children have a certain appeal & a charm. They attract more attention. Besides, advertising is now directed to a household or a family. The children evoke pure feelings - innocence, goodness, freshness, and nurturing, caring, impulsiveness. The parent - child bond is used to convey the bond between the product & the user. Vance Packard, the celebrated author of *“The Hidden Persuaders”* describes a number of psychoanalytical techniques used by the advertisers to influence the consumer's mind. Among these is what he terms the 'life-style' approach to selling or psychographics, developed by psychologists to investigate the lifestyle variables of consumers. Describing this technique, the British advertising trade journal, *'Campaign'* quoted:

Psychographics tries to classify consumers and segment markets in terms of psychological dimensions. Instead of looking at demographic attributes like age, sex and social class, it looks at the motivation, needs and attitudes of consumers.

For example, the ad campaign of Maggi Noodles, which is believed to have played on the 'needs or desire' of the mother. When children return from school, hungry and tired, most mothers would like to give them something 'hot, steaming and fresh to eat', which could be prepared very easily and quickly. Thus, the '2-minute noodles' was the solution for the mother, and also attracted the children by presenting the snack as a 'fun' food, easy to make and great to eat. Consequently, Maggi was successful in understanding the psychology of the mothers who were looking for something that was easy & quick to prepare. And through the advertisements featuring child models, it targeted to attract children, who were the real consumers. The advertisement, as we know, has worked wonders for the Nestle Company.

Similar is the case of other ads that were taken in this paper. The kid factor has been seen as a key factor in the success of these ads. Like Pepsodent has always directly addressed the children and by doing so, they have gained a significant share in the oral care market. Similarly, McDonalds too has projected itself as a family restaurant all over the world. *“Children are special to us and our communication reflects the same”*, says Amit Jain, Managing Director, Hard Castle Restaurants Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai.

With its kid centric Campaign, Complan too has become a ₹ 400 crores brand today. The researches found that although the brand is established and popular among its users, the brand is not growing because it failed to attract new users.

This can be dangerous because a brand can sustain only if it is able to attract new users to its fold. Hence, Complan changed its promotional strategy from targeting the existing users to attracting new users. The baseline was changed to *“extra growing power”* and ads were mainly targeting the non users of the product. No doubt that the magic formula has worked wonders for the companies (advertisers), as their sales figures are depicting so. Modern day advertising is more of a scientific process, with the advertisers constantly thinking of new innovative techniques to attract new consumers, and to grab more share in the ever-increasing consumer market. Today, children are playing a central role in the marketing function. Certainly, with markets growing steadily, it is easy for marketers to treat children as a touchstone of sorts, even for products that aren't directly connected with them, but as this thinking grows increasingly popular, there is the danger of over using the strategy. Thus, to maximize their child centric strategy, the advertiser has

to consider the rationale for this category of campaigns. They operate at two levels. One, like any other child-centric campaign, the children are used as the emotional levers to influence adult purchase decision. Second, they are also important future consumers, and the idea is to build brand equity with them early on. Thus, the challenge for advertisers is to blend and balance the two requirements.

THE ETHICAL ASPECT

It is true that child models used in advertisements lend an emotional appeal to the minds of the viewers, and the paper has demonstrated that how effective it is to use child models in advertising, from the sales point of view. However, time has come to *“judge the rationale of using children to plug products they are never likely to use”*. For example- detergents, washing machines and cooking oil, etc. Advertisers argue that their ads impart information about the product they advertise, but in reality, it has been seen that television advertisements do not always highlight product benefits and seldom reveal prices. It has been seen that many TV ads using children and targeting child viewers use persuasive techniques that have little to do with either the product, or with the consumer's need for it. This brings us to the fact that how ethical these ads are, and what social relevance they have. No doubt advertising today is riding on the immense potential of *'Pester Power'*. Children have become one of the biggest sections of buyers. And their number is increasing with every new advertisement. *“Over the last decade, advertising has become sophisticated, aimed at the young brigade”*, says Sugata Guha of Inner Circle advertising. *“Rival advertising agencies are out doing one another in their bid to retain children's interest. As a result, children are soaked in various advertising gimmicks.”* . But how ethical is it, remains to be answered.

Several ads have evoked the ire of the consumer groups for e.g. - if we take the beautiful Maggi Noodles ad, the Ahmedabad - based Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC) has argued that the ad (from Nestle) is *'unethical'* from the medical standpoint. Maggi, they say, uses monosodium glutamate, which, research has shown, can result in brain damage and obesity. The advertising for toothpastes containing fluoride (which, with prolonged use, can lead to a crippling disease), the sale of gripe water as a *'tonic'* to keep babies healthy (when gripe water is nearly aniseed water), the Complian ad which consumer groups have argued, exploits the anxiety of parents. These ads have been attacked for their potential to mislead the public or (in the case of gripe water) for imparting misinformation (it has been pointed out that many illiterate parents might be greatly influenced by these ads to the detriment of their children's development).

Thus, we see that the use of minors in advertisements is a very delicate territory. The *“My dad's a member”* campaign, an ad for a Calcutta sporting and family club, offends, feels Mr. Arpan Roy, of Euro RSCG Calcutta, *“because it inculcates in children habits we don't want”*.

A child does have tremendous influence on his parents, but how *'effectively'* and *'ethically'* this influence is used in advertisements is entirely dependent on marketers as well as ad makers. Children should not be urged to ask parents or others to buy products. Thus *'self-regulation'* is very important for the advertisers, to ensure that advertising to children by using child models is decent, honest and truthful. Self-regulation is the advertiser's way to ensure that advertising is credible & deserves the trust & confidence of consumers. According to the advertising code adopted by The Advertising Standards Council of India, under Article 2 (u) of its Articles of Association at the first meeting of the Board of Governors held on 20 November 1985, it was said that the purpose of the Code is to control the content of advertisements, not to hamper the sale of products, which may be found offensive, for whatever reason, by some people. Provided, therefore, that advertisements for such products are not themselves offensive, there will normally be no ground for objection to them in terms of this section of the Code.

CONCLUSION

Children have a certain appeal and charm. They attract more attention, especially of the adults. They lend special feelings of love, innocence, purity, freshness, caring and impulsiveness. And modern trends of advertising are all set to cash in on such feelings and emotions of the consumer. In this paper, after all the research work and findings, a conclusion can be drawn that - Modern advertising is more of a psychological process. Advertisers and creative directors have understood the concept of *'Pester Power'* in today's nuclear family system. Kids play a very crucial role in the buying decisions of their parents. Thus, by using kids in the advertisements of their (advertisers) products, they can easily attract the attention of the adults (who actually does the buying part).

Since advertising creates and sustains an ideology of consumption, it has become a social force. It is said that consumerism encourages a cult of individualism by focusing on the needs - real or artificial - of the consumer. By persuading the consumer to concentrate on the goal of attaining personal satisfaction through material purchase, consumerism focuses more and more attention on the products itself. Socially, it encourages the development of a new and different culture to uphold the changing needs of producers, who must sell their wares. That is, the value system required by consumerism may need to push aside those values that do not fit the cut of its cloth. For example, we once considered the stem of the neem tree to be the best toothbrush, and then advertisers had to alter that perception and devalue the traditional stick in order to sell their array of toothpastes and toothbrushes.

Here comes the question of ethics. How ethically are the advertisers using this modern technique of persuasion and emotional appeal in the advertisements of their products? The advertisers say that the decision to involve children is to build an emotional connect with the family. In advertising, the tools and technique is the creative idea with which the commercials are made. And successful advertising is that in which the creative idea sells. Therefore, there is nothing unethical when you use the children as a device to influence the buying decision of the parents. However, one should not force the parents to buy something and also, if the advertisers believe that children can be successfully used only to propagate consumerism, they are wrong. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no harm in using the child-centric strategy in advertising, unless and until it doesn't harm the consumer's sentiment. In today's market driven economy, competition is the key word. And to remain in the competition, advertisers have to come up with new ideas and strategies almost every day and this idea of using children in advertising is indeed very effective. Actually, by using children, the advertisers are building a relationship with them. It is called "*Long-term relationship marketing*". By using children in the ads, take for example the ad of the Maruti 800 car; the advertiser is actually trying to influence both the children and their parents. Children may not buy the car immediately, but when they grow up and decide to do so, Maruti will easily find the first place in their consideration set. This is also known as "*Brand Positioning*".

Advertisers are actually instilling '*Brand Loyalty*' in the minds of young children. They are preparing children to become dutiful consumers in a society riddled not just with economic problems, but also with social and cultural patterns that defy the entry of modern gadgets such as washing machines. Market research organizations in India have studied the '*dynamics of child behaviour as a consumer*' and defined it both in terms of the child and the environment. According to the study:

Information is the key to availing wider choices and, perhaps, more rational decision-making ... given the spate of information flow, the child has opportunities to receive a wide range of information on products or brands, in some of which, as it appears in the advertisements, the child is seemingly playing a key role in decision-making.

The growth in the market share of their products reveals that how successful the advertisers are by using this technique of '*pester power*'. Pepsodent's market share has grown to 16.4%. By learning its lesson from Pepsodent, even Colgate, which had always targeted the housewife while using the family unit in all creative ("*the Colgate Ring Of Confidence*"), retaliated with ads, which highlighted the child's voice ("*Mera Colgate, Meri big suraksha*"). In fact, one of the key directional changes, which have led to the recent success and recovery of Colgate, has been the increasing importance given to the child in the communication.

It seems that children are actually becoming the '*Surrogate Salesman*'. Through these child-centric advertising, the advertisers are using the children to sell their products. And they are proving to be effective too, since the market share of the product is increasing. However, for such communication to work, the creative must respect the balance between the heart appeal through children and the mind appeal through adults.

The point that the researcher wanted to prove in this paper is that the use of child models in modern advertising has indeed become a very effective tool to influence the consumers as well as to sell the products. A child does have tremendous influence on his/her parents, but how effectively and ethically this '*Pester Power*' is used in advertisements is entirely dependent on the marketers as well as the ad makers. And if used properly, the technique can work wonders for the advertisers.

REFERENCES

1. Barrie Gunter, Oats Caroline & Mark Blades (2005), *Advertising To Children On TV: Content, Impact And Regulation*, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. pp. 154-174.
2. Anderson, R. (1995). *Consumer Culture and T.V. Programming*, Boulder: Colorado Westview. pp. 55-75.
3. Arens F. Williams (1998), *Contemporary Advertising*, McGraw-Hills Companies, USA. Chapter-1, pp. 4-21.

4. Barrie Gunter and Jill McAlleer (1997), *Children And Television*, Routledge, London.
5. Belson, W. (1978), *Televisions Violence and the Adolescent Boy*, Hampshire, England, Saxon House. pp. 124-135.
6. Bierley Sean (1995), *The Advertising Handbook*, Routledge, London.
7. Borzekowski DL, Robinson T.N. (2001), *The 30-second Effect: An Experiment Revealing The Impact Of Television Commercials On Food Preferences Of Preschoolers*. J Am Diet Assoc.: pp. 42 - 46.
8. Chunawalia & Sethia (2009), *Foundation of Advertising Theory and Practice*, Himalaya Publishing House, India. pp. 46-76.
9. Donnerstein E (2002) The Internet. In: Strasburger VC, Wilson BJ, eds., *Children, Adolescents, and the Media*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pp. 301 - 321.
10. Jefkins Frank (1982), *Advertising Made Simple*, Heinemann Ltd. UK.
11. Karin M. Ekstrom & Birgitte Tufte. Sweden Children, eds. 2007, *Media And Consumption On The Front Edge* : Nordicom (Yearbook 2007).
12. Kunkel D, Gantz W., (1991), *Television Advertising to Children: Message Content in 1990 - Report to the Children's Advertising Review Unit of the National Advertising Division, Council of Better Business Bureaus*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University; USA.
13. Kunkel D. (2001), *Children And Television Advertising*. Singer DG, Singer JL, eds. Handbook of Children and the Media. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pp. 375- 393.
14. Lee Monle, Johnson Carla (2007), *Principles Of Advertising- A Global Perspective*, Viva books private limited, New Delhi. pp. 107-123.
15. Macklin MC, Carlson L, and eds (1999), *Advertising To Children: Concepts And Controversies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. USA.
16. Mathur Navin, (1986), *Advertising & Consumer Reaction*, DK Publishers Distributers, India. pp. 47-56.
17. Strasburger VC, (2001) *Children And TV Advertising: Nowhere To Run, Nowhere To Hide*. J Dev Behav Pediatr.; pp. 185 - 187.
18. Unnikrishnan Namita & Bajpai Shailaja (1996), *The Impact Of Television Advertising On Children*, Sage Publications India. Chapter 3, 6, 12.
19. Victor C. Strasburger & Barbara J. Wilson (2002), *Children Adolescents & The Media*, Thousand Oaks, London & New Delhi: SAGE, pp. 165-174.
20. Walter Dill Scott (2009), *The Psychology Of Advertising In Theory & Practice*, General Books, USA. pp. 57-64.