

The End of Innocence: Marketing war on 6 to 6

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Nature wants children to be children before they are adults, Rousseau, 1762

'One of the really notable achievements of the 20th Century has been to make the young old before their time.'

(Robertson Davies, Maclean's, February 22 1993)

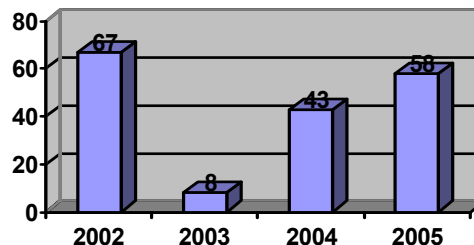
They are the future consumers whose tiny minds are to be imprinted by thousands of brand logos, they are the lifetime consumers who make brand preferences before they know what brands mean, they are the customer evangelists to be wooed and cajoled to the consumer culture before they learn to read brand names¹. Marketing to children is today a perfected art form, and the nascent market of India has been identified, along with China, in offering untapped riches to the global economy. The kids market in India today is worth more than Rs 20,000crore, distributed over different sectors. These industries are expected to grow at 25 per cent per annum. The very definition of how young a child should be before he is lured into the paradise of a consumerist economy is being debated today. Children as young as two are proved to identify brand logos, while the baby market is already under the slew of products from nutrition to brain development. Although very small proportions of the children (2%–6%) could recognize (seen before) or correctly identify (know what it means) the brand names in plain script, much larger proportions (14%–97%) correctly identified the brands in logo form. Interestingly, in logo form, in the case of every logo, more children said they had seen it before, than could correctly identify it. The logos were in their memory, even if not in their comprehension².

In research carried out in 1998 by Axel Dammler at Icon Kids and Youth in Germany, it was shown that pre-school children can recall brands just from viewing the logo. Whilst arguing that young children can recognize the brand, Icon argues that children do not have the cognitive ability to assign abstract brand values to a tangible product until they reach 8 or 9. Preschool children look at perceptual features of advertising, for example it may be that the ad has different characters, looks different from program, or that it is shorter than the program, rather than understanding its meaning, intent or reason (that it is to sell a product). This is quite in keeping with the perceptual boundness, which is a feature of pre operational children. They have no means as yet to evaluate the ads, there needs to be lot more ability to understand (what typically is attained when the child is around 8 years old³) and reason about advertising intent, and about such prevalent practices as celebrity endorsements or the use of humour in ads.

Consumers have been wooed to shift to branded baby products, be it food, shampoo, diapers etc and advertisers have realised the vital roles brand reliability and image play for this category⁴.

Trend of Baby care product advertising on TV from 2001-2005

% Growth in Baby care products advertising on TV



* Malayala Manorama, Kottayam

Children though, aren't a homogeneous whole; they constitute markets like the infant (where all of the decision making rests on the parent), preschooler (less than 6), pre tweens and teens. Each segment offers a different story reaching from common concerns of childhood obesity and materialistic value systems to specific issues of body image and substance abuse⁵. This paper looks at the first segment, 6mos-6years⁶.

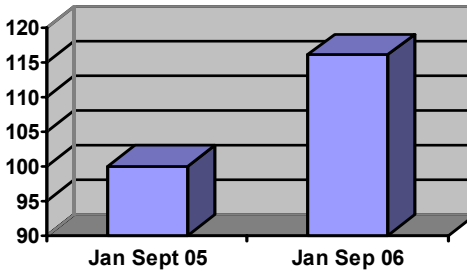
Why is this segment vitally important? Basically because that's when the indoctrination of brand process originates⁷, more importantly because even research tools employed doesn't elicit foolproof insights⁸, they aren't yet very verbal about their understanding, and they live in what in Piaget's view of child development is the pre operational stage, a unique mixture of egocentrism, where they think the world thinks in the same way as they do. And they do have a notion of artificialism, a unique perspective which they think is the absolute. It is also the stage in which the child begins to develop the use of symbols, but can't yet manipulate them. And it is only in the later stages of this stage that the child begins to have an understanding of reality and fantasy. All of these have profound impact on the effects of advertising on the child. While all advertising seeks to educate and to influence, to touch the emotional points and to exploit the sensibilities of its audience, for the younger child, the advertising touches their vulnerabilities⁹.

The major area of contention across the world today is the issue of commercialisation of childhood. The child of today lives in a world that is replete with marketing techniques. Of special concern is the way advertising has gone beyond the traditional media platforms and is touching every point of life with below the line marketing techniques. Is the child ready to cope with the myriad onslaughts of messages, does the child understand why there is advertising and what advertising purports to do? How much does the child grab the intent of advertising? How much of meaning does he capture? And does he have any filters to apply to the advertising message? Is advertising going beyond its direct message of effecting a sale and making indirect impact of saying we need to buy to be happy. Is the innocence of childhood being corrupted by the creation of want in young minds, and are we in the process creating a consumerist society with no moral values? Are parents to be the only gatekeepers, do the marketing community have no roles beyond sales generation? Can parents effectively combat millions of dollars of advertising impact, more importantly do all of them have the power of discretion to do so?

Or are we looking at a natural evolution of social acclimatization that happens, as children become older younger. Does the child have media discipline and an understanding of what advertising is all about, even when he can't articulate or explain it? All the advertising in the world can't make a child eat something that he found distasteful the first time. So does this mean the child can use his power of discrimination? Ever since McNeal proposed his model of child markets¹⁰ the global economy has a lot riding on the child market. They have deployed an army of researchers, child psychologists and kids market specialists to glean critical child insights to make their marketing more effective. And an increasing number of products use pester power to reach the households.

The basic key questions that are to be answered to understand the impact of advertising and children are whether they can differentiate between advertising and programming, whether they understand the intent of advertising and whether they understand advertising issues objectively and do they have the problem solving capabilities to address them.

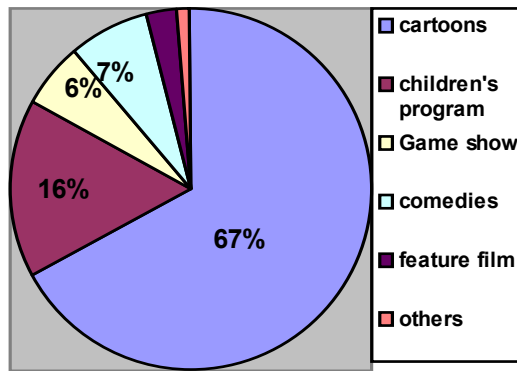
Analysing the various advertising routes that have an impact on the child, television advertising emerges at the forefront. Advertising on Indian television channels is witnessing a double digit growth, with a skew towards advertising on Hindi language channels. The afternoon time band has a peak in number of advertisements and this is a slot that is most viewed by preschoolers as most of the other children are still in school. Advertising is also skewed towards cartoons/animation programmes on kids channels, which is again age wise skewed towards the preschoolers.



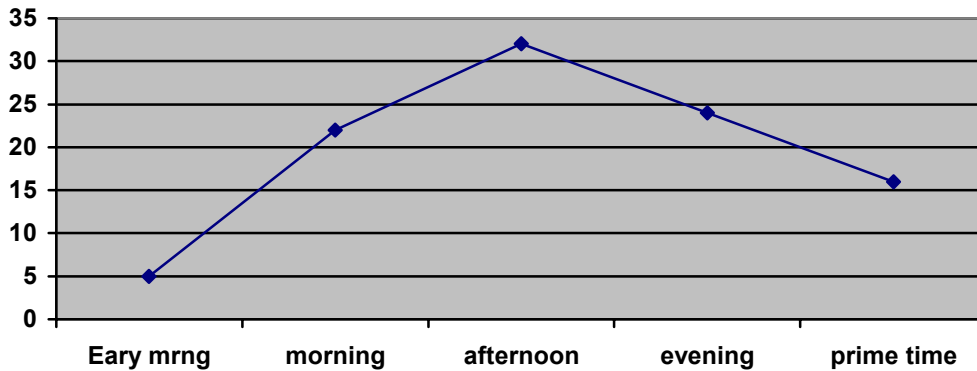
Source: Adex India Report on Kids Channels

Key Highlights of the Report:

- 16% growth on Kids Channels on TV from 2005 to 2006
 - Milk Beverages the top category in advertising Jan-Sep 06
- Cartoon Animation programs amass a huge advertising share in Kids genre Jan-Sep06



Share of day parts on Kids Channels on TV during Jan-Sept 06, Adex Report:



Children across the World spend a sizeable chunk of their time on TV as a medium. India has made the transition to specific kid programming with dedicated channels. Some of the shows are animation or dubbed international shows. There are also some Indian shows where larger than life heroes being created. The preschoolers watch advertisement with as much zest as the programming. For the child, the fast moving slick action packed commercial is as much part of his viewing experience as the program per se¹¹. There are some countries who have effected a ban on cartoon advertisements following or in the break of a cartoon program, as children have no way of distinguishing the two. A Barbie set advertised during a Barbie fantasy movie registers the same way that the movie does, and the child is incapable of knowing the cost of the purchase

or the sales message inherent in the ad¹². One of the other major concerns that we probably need to look at in detail is the trend to portray children in ads for children's products. Fair enough, the product usage is by the segment, so it has to be shown as it is used. But the young children in the age group think the children on TV are real, and not paid actors. They believe the characters and the plot to be real. Which makes it essential for us to monitor the content of such ads.

The Presence of celebrity endorsers in advertising is another major issue to be addressed. Again the marketing angle of an ad is missed entirely by the preschooler¹³. "[Young children] comprehend the information contained in television commercials uncritically, accepting most advertising claims and appeals as truthful, accurate and unbiased," a study on Media Usage among Among Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers concluded. For the little children, the lines between fantasy and reality are blurred. Clarke and Michael (2003) assert that children under the age of eight are exploited by advertising, and Young (1990) proposes that younger children are not as capable of protecting themselves from the pressure it exerts upon their emotional and rational drives.

Piaget's stages of cognitive development outlines that it is only at the later stage of the pre-operational age that the child learns to distinguish between fantasy and reality. And therefore, for the young child, when Sharukh Khan and a little boy eat a sunfeast biscuit and wander among clouds and chocolate castles, he believes implicitly that the product can deliver the same result¹⁴. Celebrities are used widely to promote products like chocolate, Amitabh Bachchan endorses brands like Cadbury's celebration and Dairy milk chocolates, Preita Zinta features in Cadbury's Perk, so does Trisha. Nesle Munch Products have their say with Rani Mukherjee and Cadbury's Bytes go with Harbhajan Singh. Verharen (1991) for example found that the use of celebrities and cartoons diminishes younger children's ability to distinguish advertising from programme material.

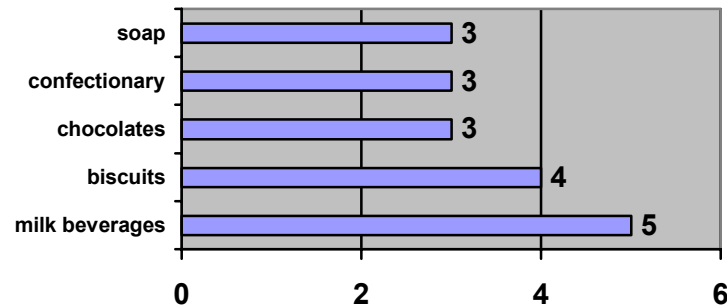
Also to be noted is the power of repetition in learning of the preschooler¹⁵. The Television affords the best medium for this with the same ads being repeated time and again, to register in the child. a national study carried out in Norway revealed that children, unlike adults, will not change channels or engage in another activity during a commercial break. This is true regardless of how often the children have already seen the advertisement. The repetitive nature of advertising can thus increase the impact made. Watching advertisements again and again is said to be part of the appeal for younger children.

The issue of toys created as part of the television series also creates want in the child, the Pokemon¹⁶ that he watches ardently is seen on a number of products for which he screams in the supermarket, and no middle class mother has been able to resist the clamour for beyblades as an offshoot of the popular series Toonami, even when the preschooler has been too young to use the beyblade. Another example of when we realise that no country is insular and that issues in child marketing across the globe has implications and repercussions in our immediate vicinity too. In 1984, when children's television was deregulated in the US and the prohibition on toy linked cartoon series was removed, it opened the floodgates for production of these toys. The He Man and the Masters of the Universe was the first in the series to be so produced (Kunkel, D et al, 1988), and each season brings its own favorites, to be coveted, owned and discarded in every short span of months.

The major concern that has been raised in relation to television advertising has been the content of advertising, which is primarily for junk food. Junk food with its unhealthy fat and increased sugar content on soft drinks has been cited as one of the major causes of childhood obesity. The WHO has initiated detailed studies on the impact of advertising to the use of Junk food¹⁷. There other areas of concern for tween and teens which go beyond the pale of this study.

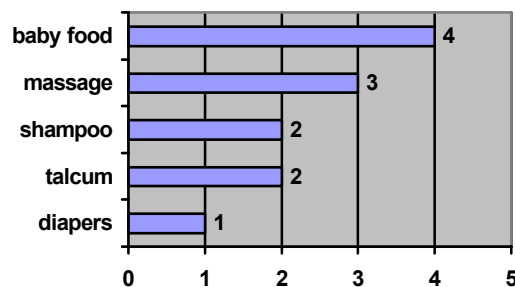
Top advertisers on Indian TV are no different, with food being the primary advertising category. The Adex report November 2006 shows:

Top Advertisers on kids genre, Jan-Sep 06: Adex Report



Chocolate advertising spends in TV grew by 31% in 2005 compared to 2004, according to Adex reports, while biscuit advertising rose by 60% during the same period. Baby foods registered the highest growth among baby products advertised on TV.

Based on Adex report, 2006 on segments which grew in the baby care market, baby food advertising grew by four times in 2005 as compared to 2004 on TV.



One of the major studies done in examining whether television advertising for food influence pre school children's food preference has concluded that even brief exposures to televised food commercials can influence it. They have cautioned parents to limit the preschooler's exposure to television advertisements, as well as made a case for public policy on this issue. One of the major victories for the votaries of limiting advertising to young children has been in case of a BBC decision in 2003. One of its major properties, teletubbies is targeted at the preschoolers, and even for a target audience of children as young as 12 months. This show is and was very popular among both children and parents. In 2003, a group of parents grew annoyed with the BBC for placing pictures of the adorable teletubbies on unhealthy food. Preschoolers see the pictures in shops, point to the packet and ask their moms for it, having no idea what is in the packet. They petitioned BBC to look into this. BBC immediately commissioned a study into the area and reviewed its food licensing policy. Since then, they have been at the 'forefront of policy development in the area, has committed not to license its children's properties for everyday treat foods like cakes and confectionary; not to promote its properties with fast food companies; to develop with its licensees a range of nutritionally balanced food; and to lower maximum levels for salt, sugar and fats in line with the Food Standard Agency recommendations'.

In contrast is the McLibel case, the longest civil case of its kind, which brings into spotlight the exploitation of the credulity of young children by the McDonalds chain¹⁸. The Ronald Mcdonald clown which is considered to be a mascot of children is used extensively to woo them into the restaurant. More significant is their advertising premise that to be happy you need to be at a McDonalds. The friendlessness of a strange new home is offset by the presence of a big arch¹⁹. Children are unable to understand the slick subtleties of these commercials and take them at face

value. Mr Justice Bell ruled that McDonald's "exploit children" with their advertising, falsely advertise their food as nutritious, risk the health of their most regular, long-term customers. He concluded that McDonald's marketing has '*pretended to a positive nutritional benefit which their food (high in fat & salt etc) did not match*' and - that McDonald's '*exploit children*' with their advertising strategy, '*using them, as more susceptible subjects of advertising, to pressurise their parents into going to McDonald's*'

Also of special interest are the toys that go with happy meal, encouraging the collector instinct in young children. The child insists on owning all the toys even when he is not particularly fond of McFood. The collector series is also touted by many child marketers and most of these toys are priced high. From the familiar stamp and coin collection that kids had in an earlier era, marketing has created the need to collect media characters. Pokemon for example created 150 characters, and then promote the collection instinct of children through a massive campaign, Gotta catch 'em all. The child insists on purchase to complete his set even when the product is of little or no consequence to him.

In film placements are another major strategic tool currently employed by marketers. Movies intended for younger audiences, are being funded by many sponsors who are interested in this target group. Here, the onus is on blending products or services seamlessly into the plot of the stories that it doesn't stand out on a jarring note. So the involvement is beyond placement of the product within the movie, sponsors have a say in plot development and writing of the dialogues, to ensure that the product is blended into the main thread of the tale. The use of the child-oriented movie *Krish* by Bournvita is a fine illustration of the practice. The movie featured the hero drinking Bournvita and dishing out advice that to be a hero you need to just drink the same. The stated objective of the placement was to make an impact by communicating the product's value proposition of greater stamina, better concentration leading to winning confidence. The major insight of the placement was to ride on the increasing influence of Superheroes among kids. The entire placement tried to portray the product as integral to the larger than life strength, fitness and intellectual prowess of *Krish*²⁰. The scene shows the first shot of an adult *Krish* racing against a horse. Consider the exaggeration even in the movie, but then it happens to be in the genre of movies. The hero's child friend is then advised by the hero about his secret for strength by claiming that to be like him you need to drink Bournvita. In other shots, the hero's grandmother prepares him the drink before going to school, hence establishing how crucial the product is for academic achievement. The permanence of the product in the house is established through various pack shots across the movie. The agency claims that the promotion has increased brand favorability by 15% and intention to use by 9% in a dipstick study.

For hundreds of children this was *Krish* or *Rithik* spelling out a truth and not a placement²¹. The diffused lines of marketing and story make it plausible to the tiny tot. The *Krish* mask also triggered a wave of marketing efforts with children clamoring for *Brittania* dip trix to *Lifebouy* packs. We need to really evaluate if these promotional tactics need to be in place in the children's market.

As marketers realise that new media options that offer brand engagement are relevant to the TG, adver gaming is also taking off in a big way. Integrating movie placement and association with superheroes to reach out to kids better, dip trix created a game which allowed kids to put on the *Krish* mantle and play against its brand mascot, the silly rabbit. That means the little child encounters the brand promotion across media, relentlessly.

Kids' clubs are another apparently innocent concept to gain vital information about a child. Most of them elicit detailed information about media and marketing habits, in return for a t shirt or a birthday card. There is no or little information on how this information is shared, sold or used.

In school advertising is probably the last bastion for the marketers to infiltrate. Often in the guise of promoting talent, the brand make their pitches in schools, the events ranging from painting and essay contests with the marketers sending in sachets and samples with children who have no knowledge of what is in there. Many parents are worried over these attempts to reach them in

places where they consider the child to be protected and safe. In a major agitation against an in school promotion of calcium sandoz in Ahmedabad, the CERC has demanded the company for withdrawing this stealth marketing. These are but curtain raisers events to the mass inroads that marketers will make to these places which are logically the best congregation of their TG. Sometimes the brand connections are as innocuous looking as sponsorship of an essay contest on earth day, sometimes they are full fledged youth events like the Horlicks wizzkids. Recently, to enhance brand recall, Sunfeast signed up with Sania Mirza and Mahesh Bhupati in connection with the promotion for the Sunfeast Open to visit schools. The school promotion ran for two months and reached over 70 thousand students, and it took the route of designing a trophy for the event. Mattel runs scrabble contests as experience is the best marketing tool according to this leading company in the category. Henko went on its pester power campaign with the cleanest kid in school championship, where the cleanest student in each school was awarded gift education bond worth Rs.5 lakhs.

World over, the practice is gaining, with food companies being at the forefront. This includes direct signage, and indirect associations like sponsorship of study material. In more developed countries, in school marketing takes on many forms:

- Sponsored Educational Material: A reading kit related to nutrition by a fast food giant, environment protection program by an petroleum company etc.
- In fact most food companies have reading and counting books branded by them
- Exclusive deals for Food and Drink within the school.
- Advertising on school bus, and other locations within school in return for technology like computers, incentive programs or contest prizes which are coupons for their products.
- Sponsoring school events like Annual functions and drama week.

The legal framework in some of the European markets is stringent with a ban on advertising to children below 12 effected in Denmark, Austria bans all advertising to children, In italy no advertising can interrupt a cartoon program, In Norway and Sweden too advertising cannot interrupt children's programmes. In India, the legal framework offers little protection to children.

Nation	Law ²²
Greece	Advertising of toys between 7 AM and 11 PM is prohibited, advertising of war toys is completely banned, advertisements during cartoons are banned.
Italy	Using cartoon characters in ads which precede or follow programmes in which they are featured are banned.
Finland	Cartoon characters or figures that appear in children's programmes are banned
UK	Personalities in Children's programmes are banned from appearing in ads before 9 PM; Merchandise based on TV programmes are not to be telecast 2 hours preceding or following the telecast of the programme
Norway	
Sweden	Complete ban on advertising to children under the age of 12
Austria	No advertising during children's programming
Belgium	No advertising 5 minutes before or after children's program
Denmark	No advertising breaks within programs

In India, all that the Cable Act provides for is protection for the child from adult programs, and from showing children in denigrating roles. As far as advertising is concerned the only recourse is a complaint that can be made to the Advertising Standards council. Recently an ad for a health drink had to be withdrawn after it equated itself with exam success. There is a ban on advertising for infant food and milk. There is no ban on advertising in schools and many brands enter schools under the guise of sponsorships. There is no legal regulation for the use of child models in advertising.

Many of the social acclimatization theories expound on the need to create the consumerist focus in the child, as a means of preparing his for realities around him. One of the uses of advertising

by children is to learn the tools of social interaction that will facilitate self-expression and social conformity, both for themselves and their family, and also to find out about the social significance of brands, (Bocker 1986, Cullingford 1984, Belk, Meyer and Driscoll (1984).). At the same time, it has been stated that Younger children, Piaget's pre-operational group aged 2 to 7 years, may have considerable product or brand information, but they have not learned to use that information to help them make judgements about products and brands (Solley, 1966; Bahn, 1986). The American researcher, Deborah Roedder John, made an important summary of studies during the past 25 years regarding children and consumption (Roedder John 2002). As already mentioned, the major part of the studies are based on stage theories, i.e. 1) the perceptual stage (ages 3-7); 2) the analytical stage (ages 7-11); and 3) the reflective stage (ages 11-16). Roedder John explains this in the following way: Children in the perceptual stage (ages 3-7) focus on perceptual features, but without abstract reasoning that connects these features to prices. They do not have any concept of the functional features, or make preference based on that, nor is cost a consideration.

Many marketers and also some researchers leave the onus of responsibility for filtering the advertising message on the parents. This role as a gatekeeper is one that parents wonder if they are competent to handle, in the face of tireless marketing messages hitting the young minds. Many parents still aren't aware of the major issues with advertising either and they use the television as a substitute baby sitter. With the market just opening up, the issues of pester power hasn't become as volatile as it is currently in the west.

Media in India is happier with a self-regulatory mechanism. They chaff at all regulatory bodies as interfering with their creativity and freedom of expression. But then how infallible are the media gods when Nestle shows a Maggie ad with the young mother who is slicing green vegetables pushing it aside to cook a two minute Maggie wonder or when a consumer durable behemoth like LG creates ads which shows a child watching TV before a store instead of returning home on time and blackmailing the mother into buying him an LG TV. Who should be vigilant at this exploiting of the credulity of young minds, or their parents?

There is a call for an international consensus on advertising to children, but this has been opposed on the ground of cultural nuances. While some countries have effected a total ban, it takes consumer bodies in India to take FMCG marketers to court before even a single ad can be withdrawn.

There is a serious need here for research to offer unique insights into marketing and children, not marketing to children. There is need to ensure that at least in the 6 to 6 age group of preschoolers marketing information to be made under strict parental supervision. There also need to re-evaluate celebrity endorsements and a complete ban of marketers in vulnerable domains like schools.

Reference

'The children demonstrated high logo recognition. Recognition rates increased with age. Fischer PM, Shwartz MP, Goldstein AO, Rojas TH; Department of Family Medicine, Medical College of Georgia, Augusta 30912; Brand logo recognition by children aged 3 to 6 years, Mickey Mouse and Old Joe the Camel.

Learning brands. Young children and brand recognition, Robert G. Wyckham and Colleen Collins-Dodd, Simon Fraser University, Canada

children, media and consumption; Birgitte Tufte, Copenhagen Business School

Adex Report, Baby care advertising, 16 May 2006

Richard Tomkins, in an excellent article entitled 'An Advertising Folly' (The Financial Times November 27 2002) writes: 'Now, as the Christmas shopping season moves into top gear, we are reminded that the commercialization of childhood is almost complete. Children are targeted for marketing from the age of two; billions of dollars are spent annually on selling them toys, sweets, fast food, soft drinks. Licensed merchandise and other branded products; and youth marketing agencies employ

market researchers and child psychologists to study the most effective ways of penetrating their tiny minds.'

6A The Chartered Institute of Marketing estimates that the pre-school market alone is now worth around 4.3 billion a year (2002).

Although very small proportions of the children (2%–6%) could recognize (seen before) or correctly identify (know what it means) the brand names in plain script, much larger proportions (14%–97%) correctly identified the brands in logo form. Interestingly, in logo form, in the case of every logo, more children said they had seen it before, than could correctly identify it. The logos were in their memory, even if not in their comprehension. Wyckham, Robert G. and Collins-Dodd, Colleen, Simon Fraser University, Canada. Learning brands. Young children and brand recognition

Even so, there are still major variations in the meaning attached to the expression 'understanding TV advertising' from one study to another. Some studies require only that children should understand that the purpose of commercials is 'to sell', whereas in others they must say that the people who produce the commercials pay the TV companies to transmit them (Wartella 1980; Macklin 1987).

Younger children, Piaget's pre-operational group aged 2 to 7 years, may have considerable product or brand information, but they have not learned to use that information to help them make judgements about products and brands (Solley, 1966; Bahn, 1986).

A survey by AC Nielsen, UTV's research partner, showed that an average child watches TV for about three hours on weekdays and 3.7 hours on weekends, the time spent in front of television goes up with age, and the preferred language of viewing is Hindi across all age groups. Apart from the programmes, the children also view a lot of the advertisements.

According to the Canadian Toy Testing Council the biggest area of concern with toy ads in Canada is exaggeration. Young children often think a toy actually can do a lot more than it can because of the way toys are portrayed in advertisements.

Many critics of advertising and many researchers have maintained that the boundaries between advertising and programmes on television and the content conveyed by other media (such as music videos) have become more and more diffuse and unclear in recent decades (see Bjurström 1991; Goldman 1992; Bjurström & Liljestam 1993; Lee 1993).

"[Young children] comprehend the information contained in television commercials uncritically, accepting most advertising claims and appeals as truthful, accurate and unbiased," the study concluded. Anand, Sowmya; Ohio State University & Krosnick, Jon A. The, Stanford University. Demographic Predictors of Media Use, Among Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

Verharen (1991) for example found that the use of celebrities and cartoons diminishes younger children's ability to distinguish advertising from programme material

However, many researchers argue that the ability of TV advertising to attract children's attention does not change

or take a serious form - until a commercial has been **repeated** several times. Some of these researchers also maintain that younger children (up to five years old) perceive the **repetition** as enjoyable and meaningful in its own right - more or less in the same way as they like to hear the same story or see the same film time after time (Winick & Winick 1979 p 157 **et seq**; De Bens and Vandenbrouaene 1992 p 22 **et seq**).

The marketing strategy behind the Pokémon was simple and lucrative—create 150 Pokémon characters, then launch a marketing campaign called "Gotta Catch 'Em All," to encourage children to collect all 150 of the cheaply made, over priced figures. CSPINET

In 2002, a Joint World Health Organization/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (WHO/FAO) Expert Consultation concluded that the heavy marketing of fast food and energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods and beverages is a "probable" causal factor in weight gain and obesity. Hawkes, Corinna. Marketing Food to Children: the Global Regulatory Environment

In the UK too there has been widespread criticism about marketing to children. In the 90's, the long drawn out 'McLibel' trial was finally brought to a conclusion with Mr Justice Rodger Bell dubbing McDonald's as an 'exploiter' of children.

Mr Justice Bell ruled that: - McDonald's marketing has 'pretended to a positive nutritional benefit which their food (high in fat & salt etc) did not match' - that McDonald's 'exploit children' with their advertising strategy, 'using them, as more susceptible subjects of advertising, to pressurise their parents into going to McDonald's'

Impact 30 oct to 5 nov, 06., movie talk, marketing brands through movies, pg 22

One significant result of this research is that children, especially young children, literally believe what advertisements say about products.” about products. For example, in a laboratory experiment children in the 4-7 year age range were shown a commercial for Cocoa Pebbles breakfast cereal in which the cartoon figures Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble declared that the cereal ‘tastes chocolatey enough to make you smile’. When the children subsequently explained why they wanted to eat Cocoa Pebbles cereal, two-thirds of them said it was because of the taste of chocolate, three-fifths said it was because it would make them smile, and more than half because Fred and Barney liked them. (Lowery & DeFleur 1988 p 411).

Advertising and children, broadcasting commission of Ireland, December 2002