

Power of Animated Characters: A study on how pictures of animated characters on packages of packaged food & beverages influence the product liking and preferences of children and perception of parents

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Abstract- India is the world's second largest producer of food next to China and has potential of being the biggest with food and agriculture sector. The Food Processing industry is the 5th largest industry in India in terms of production, consumption, export and expected growth. Among the various sectors of Food Processing industry, packaged food industry is growing at the fastest pace of 16 % p.a. There are nearly 100 international, national and local players already operating in industry and equal numbers of players are likely to enter in the market in coming years due to its huge growth potential. Packaged food products being product of low involvement category, a little differentiation exists among the products produced by various players of the industry so to differentiate their products companies make use of various marketing tools. One of the most prominent tools used in the industry is packaging. The companies make use of various packaging elements to differentiate their products. This study is undertaken to analyze the impact of animated characters provided on the packages of packaged food & beverage products on the product liking & preferences of children and on perceptions of parents. To attain the aim of study, a sample of 300 respondents was taken. The research paper is structured into five sections. The first section focuses on the introductory part of the paper. It highlights the international, national and local scenario of Food processing industry. The second section focuses on the aspects like definition of packaged food, segments of packaged food product category, importance and role of packaging in the category and main objectives of the study. The third section discusses the previous studies parallel to the current study. It also highlights how the current study is different from the previous studies. The fourth section reveals how the research has been undertaken. The last section i.e. fifth section narrates the findings of the paper, limitations of the study, policy recommendations and concluding remarks.

Index Terms- Packaged Food Products Rajkot, Animated Characters, Processed Food Industry Rajkot, Food Marketing, Children Preferences Rajkot

I. INTRODUCTION

1 International, National And Local Scenario Of Food Processing Industry:-

1.1 Global processed food industry:-

According to Food Agricultural Organization (FAO), Food processing can be defined as the process that encompasses all the steps that food goes through from the time it is harvested to the time it arrives on consumer's plate. The size of global processed food industry is estimated to be valued around at US \$ 3.6 trillion and accounts for three-fourth of the global food sales.¹ Despite its large size, only 6% of processed foods are traded across borders compared to 16% of major bulk agricultural commodities. United States of America (USA) is the single largest consumer of processed food and accounts for 31% of the global sales. This is because as countries develop, high quality and value-added processed food such as convenience food is preferred over staples, which are prevalent in less developed economies. Over 60% of total retail processed food sales in the world are accounted by U.S.A, European Union and Japan taken together. Japan is the largest food processing market in the Asian region, though India and China are catching up fast and are likely to grow more rapidly. One of the most technically advanced food-processing industries globally is Australia as the products produced are of international standards and at comparatively lower prices. The share of India in global Food processed industry stands at around 1.6 %. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has stated in its Vision 2015 that it aims to increase India's share from current level to 3% of world processed food trade.

1.2 Indian processed food industry:-

India has the second largest arable land of 161 million hectares and has the highest acreage under irrigation. Next to China, India is the second largest food producer in the world and has potential to immerge the biggest with food and agriculture sector. The size of food industry in India is estimated to be of Rs. 13, 20,000 crores (US \$ 220 billion) by 2015 and that of processed food industry is estimated to be of Rs.6, 60,000 crores (US \$110 billion) by 2015. The food processing industry is the 5th largest industry in India in terms of production, consumption, export and expected growth. The food processing accounts for about 14% of manufacturing GDP, nearly 13% of India's exports and 6% of total industrial investment and employs about 13 million people directly and 35 million people indirectly

The main sectors of the food processing industry are given in the following table:-

Table :1 Main sectors of the Food Processing Industry

Sectors	Products
Diary	Whole Milk Powder,, Condensed milk, Ice cream, Butter, Ghee & Cheese.
Fruits & Vegetables	Beverages, Juices, Concentrates, Pulp, Slices, Frozen & Dehydrated products, Potato Wafers/
Grains & Cereals	Flour, Bakery products, Starch Glucose, Comflakes, Malted foods, Beer and Malt extracts, Vermicelli, Grain based alcohol.
Fisheries	Frozen & Canned products mainly in fresh form.
Meat & Poultry	Frozen and packed – mainly in fresh form, Egg powder.
Consumer Foods	Snacks, Namkeens, Biscuits, Alcoholic and Non alcoholic beverages.

(Source:- Ministry of food processing India, Annual Report 2013)

1.3 Food processing industry in Rajkot:-

Since 2000's and more recently the food processing sector has witnessed corporatization in big way. Rajkot is the fourth largest city in the state of Gujarat (India) after Ahmedabad, Surat and vadodara.² It is world's 22nd fastest growing city. With the amalgamation of vast rural areas Rajkot has become the 23rd largest urban agglomeration in India with population of more than 3 million as of 2012. Due to this a huge demand especially of food products has emerged. To meet the demand supply gap, there is a big rise in private food processing units. Some of the prominent private players of packaged food industry operating at national level from Rajkot include Balaji wafers (p). Ltd, Gopal Namkeen, Radhe Namkeen, Atop Namkeen etc. Besides above there are nearly 300 small and micro units already operating at the district level. Among these, Balaji wafers is competing with international players with turnover of more than Rs. 500 crores p.a.

II. SECTION II

2.1 Definition of Packaged food and its various segments:-

Packaged foods can be defined as those foods that are wrapped or stored in container and could be shipped to another place without any damage or destruction. They can be eaten immediately or after adding water or other product, heating or thawing. They are usually partially prepared or completely prepared. Packaged foods are also known as convenience foods because of ease of consumption. Packaged food is wide term that encompasses the various products across the different sectors of food processing industry. In broader terms, the packaged food / convenience food could be basically classified into two categories:-

Shelf stable convenience foods are further classified as:-

- Ready to cook foods – e.g. instant mixes like cake mixes, gulab-jamun mix, falooda mix, ice cream mix etc., pasta products like noodles, macaroni, vermicelli etc.
- Ready to eat foods – e.g. breads, biscuits, buns, ice cream, chips, namkeens etc

Besides above the other general items that come under shelf stable convenience foods include milk, Atta, corn flakes, vegetable and edible oils.

Frozen convenience food include fruits & vegetables in frozen form, yogurt etc

Packaged food market is expected to be of Rs.91, 000 crores by 2015. Main types of Packaged food products include (1) Milk based products like cheese, butter, ice-cream (2) Bakery products like biscuits, cakes, buns, breads etc (3) Fruit based products like fruit juices, jams, fruit drinks etc (4) Snakes, namkeens, Potato chips, sauces etc. (5) Confectionary items like sweets, jellies, chewing gums etc.

Main factors responsible for fastest growth of packaged food products include increase in urbanization, breaking up of the traditional joint family system, desire for quality, rise in per capita income , increasing number of working women, increasing health awareness, changing lifestyles and increased level of affluence in the middle income group.

2.2 Packaging and its importance for packaged food industry:

The package is defined as a container which holds, protects and identifies the product throughout its distribution channel (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). It has been found from the recent research that approximately 73% of the products are sold on the self service bases at the point of sale (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). This shows that important cues need to be provided to the consumers at the point of sale so that companies could differentiate their products from the competitors on one hand and could attract and persuade the consumers to buy their products on the other hand. Under these circumstances the packaging would be the most useful tool that may be available for attracting the consumers' attention. This because unlike other forms of communication which tend to be fleeting, packaging plays a crucial role not only at the point of sale, but also after the actual purchase of the product. The first moment of truth is about obtaining the customers attention and communicating the benefits of the offer. The second moment of truth is about providing the tools the customer needs to experience the benefits when using the product. The packaging is even more important for packaged and ready to eat food products this is because they belong to low involvement category. Low involvement products

are basically low priced products with little importance. E.g. impulse purchase categories like namkeens and ice-creams. In these categories, consumers tend to be driven by in-store factors and extrinsic cues (e.g. brand name, packaging etc) to help them to make their decisions as they have neither the desire nor the need to comprehensively investigate and assess all the offerings available to them. Hence to take advantage of the situation companies often make innovative use of various packaging elements like shape, size, color, labels, position of visual and verbal elements etc to differentiate their products from competitors and to attract consumers to their products. One of the most prominent technique used by companies to sell their products, like biscuits, wafers, ice-cream, chocolates etc, especially targeted to children is use of animated characters on their product packages so as to attract the children to their products since the presence of these figures helps children identify and remember the associated product (Connor, 2006).

2.3 objectives of the study:-

The main objectives of the research study are as under:-

- 1) To investigate whether pictures of video game characters on food packaging influences young children's preferences of food products
- 2) To examine whether the pictures of licensed media spokes characters on beverage packaging affects young children's liking for the beverage
- 3) To examine the perceptions of parents regarding the influence of animated characters on children's food choices and behavior.
- 4) To determine the attitude of parents towards the food products which are being targeted to children and having the pictures of animated characters on their packages.

III. SECTION III

3.1 Literature review:-

Food marketing to children is wide spread phenomenon. Various researches have been undertaken from time to time to analyze the success of various strategies that companies had already employed for selling their products to children and for finding still new strategies that could be developed and employed so as to attract still more number of children. Some of the researches that served as source of inspiration for the current study are given below:-

(Stutts & Hunnicutt, 1987) suggests focusing on children of two to seven years of age. The reason is that during this period, they become increasingly controlled by images and symbolic processes, including those from advertising, and begin to make judgments about the various products they might use in the future.

(Valkenburg & Buijzen, 2003) found from his research that brand characters are very appealing to young children because of their limited cognitive abilities. According to them, preschoolers are not able to evaluate stimuli on more than one or two dimensions and focus only on the most salient attributes. Because these young children do not understand abstract or multileveled stimuli and messages, they make their decisions based on perceptual attributes, which could be the appearance of the

product or its package. As a result, young children may simply dislike a product with strange shape or ugly picture or color and like a product because it has nice picture on the package.

(Robinson et.al, 2007) conducted an experiment to analyze the effects of fast food branding on young children's taste preferences. In study the children were asked to taste 5 pairs of identical foods and beverages in packaging from McDonald's and matched but unbranded packaging. The children were then asked to indicate if both foods tasted the same or if one tasted better. The results of the study indicated that children preferred the tastes of those foods and drinks that were packaged in packaging of McDonalds rather than those that were packed in unidentifiable or unbranded packaging. This indicated brand identity can influence young children (3-5years old) tastes perceptions.

(Philpson et.al, 2008) undertook a study to evaluate the impact of various food marketing techniques, employed by various companies, on the children in Australia. They found from the study that most popular techniques adopted by companies to sell their products were use of spokes characters, celebrity and creatures on the product packages, toy giveaways and prices for winning in contests organized by company. Among the various techniques, the most influential was use of cartoon characters on the product package. The companies were able to sell more amount products which contained pictures of cartoon characters on their packages as compared to products whose packages did not incorporate any cartoon characters.

(Roberto, Baik, Harris and Brownell, 2010) evaluated the influence of licensed characters on children's taste and snack preferences. For conducting the study forty 4-6 year old children were selected. Three food products namely graham crackers, gummy fruit snacks and carrots were selected. For each food product two packages, one with cartoon character and one without cartoon character, were presented to children and they were asked to express their preferences. The results of the study showed that children significantly preferred the taste of foods that had popular cartoon characters on the packaging, compared with the same foods without cartoon characters. The majority of the children selected food sample with licensed character on it for their snack, but the effects were weaker for carrots than for gummy fruit snacks and graham crackers.

A Study was conducted by (Lapierre, Vala & Linebarger, 2011) to investigate the impact of licensed media spokes characters on food packaging and nutrition cues effect on young children's tastes assessments of products especially cereals. Children who saw a popular media character on the box reported liking the cereal more than those who viewed a box with no character on it. Those who were told the cereal was named Healthy bites liked the taste more than children who were told it was named Sugar Bites. Character presence was particularly influential on taste assessments for participants who were told that cereal was named Sugar Bites.

3.2 What distinguishes this study from earlier studies:-

The previous studies undertaken have shown that colorful picture of animated characters on the front panel of the packages of food products like as cereals, junk foods, fruits etc can be successful in increasing the young children's attention, recognition and liking for these food products as well as in stimulating them to consume more of these products. But there was hardly any research that evaluated the impact of using the pictures of animated characters on the packages of food & beverage products like energy /fruit drink and chocolate eggs on the young children's product liking & preferences. Moreover this study will be first of its kind that evaluated the perceptions of parents as well as children at the same time. Furthermore in the previous studies conducted by other prominent researchers the participants were required to taste 2 items simultaneously (1 with familiar character packaging and 1 in blank packaging) and select the one with better liking. But however in our study children were exposed to 1 item only at a time and as result of this experimental condition the results obtained from the study would be far more accurate ones and would add confidence to the general conclusion that children prefer products with appealing characters even in the absence of forced choice situation between familiar and novel products. Besides this as per the knowledge of researchers various previous studies have been undertaken in the foreign context. This study is likely to be the first one to evaluate the impact in Indian and especially in Gujarat context.

Section IV

IV. 4.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:-

- **Target population:-** Children and parents of Rajkot
- **Type of Research:-** Descriptive research. Since the aim of the study is to examine and analyze the perceptions, preferences and buying behavior of children and parents of Rajkot especially with respect to ready to eat food products.
- **Research Hypothesis:-** The hypothesis tested using the study are:-
 - **H_{null 1}:-**Young children (4-7 years old) would rate the energy /fruit drink more favorably if picture of licensed cartoon character (Chhota Bheem) was displayed on the package as compared with energy /fruit drink with no characters on its package.
 - **H_{null 2}:-** Young children (4-7 years old) would elicit more liking for those chocolate eggs whose package contained the pictures of angry birds as compared to chocolate eggs without pictures of angry birds on their package.
 - **H_{null 3} :-** Amount spent by parents to buy the packaged food & beverage items like fruit drinks and chocolate eggs with animated characters on the package is independent of the gender of parents.
- **Sampling Plan**
 - **Samples and their size :-**

- **Parents:-** 100 parents who had children of 4-7 years of age were considered for study.
- **Children:-** 200 (4- 7 years old) school going children of Rajkot were considered for the study.
- **Products selected for Study:-** Fruit / energy drinks with and without cartoon characters on their package, chocolate eggs with and without animated characters on the package.
- **Sampling Method:** - Probability random sampling method was used for study.
- **Sources of Data:-** The research study employed both secondary and primary sources of data. The details are as under:-
 - **Primary sources of Data:-** Personal Interview, Mall Intercept, Observation
 - **Secondary sources of Data:-** Rajkot related websites, Leading Magazines and Newspapers, Company Reports, Research papers, books.

4.2 Experiment / study procedure:-

For conducting the study mainly two products were selected. They were energy / fruit drinks and chocolate eggs. The main reason for selecting these products was that for these products, the packages with animated characters and without animated characters was directly available in the market. Both energy / fruit drinks and chocolate eggs selected for study were of very superior quality and were being manufactured by the giant and leading FMCG companies of India. Before the experiment took place, parents consent was taken. Once parents consent was obtained then the children were interviewed individually. First, children were asked for their name and age. Then the interviewer asked them what they did last weekend to make them feel more at ease. During the introduction, the interviewer emphasized that there were no right or wrong answers and that their own opinion was valued the most. A smiley board, depicting five faces that displayed increasing amounts of positive affect (1, deep frown: hate it; 5, big smile: love it), was used to help children respond to the questions. The child was asked two practice questions orally, which were designed to create diverse responses (i.e. how much he or she liked going to school or cleaning his or her room). Once it was apparent that the child understood the scale, and then the experiment was conducted formally for both the products as follows. For fruit drinks and chocolate eggs product liking and preferences were analyzed. In each experiment 100 children were considered. Out of this, 50 were exposed to product packages which had no picture of animated characters on it. The responses were noted using 5 point rating scale consisting of Smiley faces. Another 50 children were asked to rate the products whose packages had picture of animated characters on it. Again the responses were noted and results were analyzed using appropriate statistical test.

V. SECTION V

5.1 Findings of the study:-

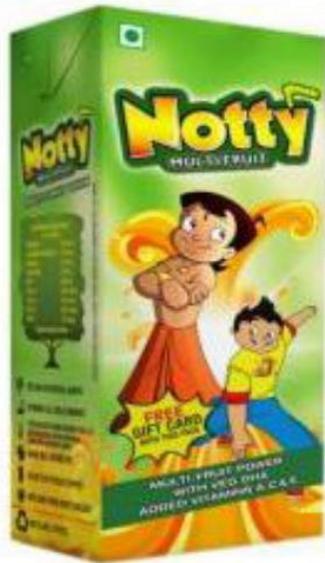
The study was undertaken in 3 phases. In 1st phase, impact of cartoon characters on children's product liking was analyzed. In 2nd phase, impact of video game characters on children's product preferences was analyzed & finally in 3rd phase the perceptions of parents were investigated. All the 3 phases have been discussed as under

Phase: 1 Analysis of how pictures of cartoon characters provided on packages of beverages influence the product preferences of children.

- For carrying out the above analysis, a sample of 100 children was taken. The products considered for study were fruit /energy drinks.
- Before starting the experiment, the age, gender and class of study of each child was noted down. It was found from the noting that out of 100 children, 59 were boys and 41 were girls. About 24 % of children were of 4 years age, 36 % of children were 5 years old, 30 % of children were 6 years old & 10 % of children were 7 years old. Nearly 56 % of children were studying in class 1, 16 % were studying in class 2 and 28 % were studying higher K.G. This information revealed that most of the children were old enough who can understand the simple questions and could respond to it easily.
- After noting the age, gender and class of study, the first formal question that was asked to children was that whether they watch television and movies or not. To this 100 % of the children replied that they watch television and movies. Then it was asked whether they watch cartoons and cartoon based movies on TV channels or not. Again 100 % of the children replied that they watch cartoons and cartoon based movies on Television
- In next step, it was asked to children that which cartoon channels they usually watch. 63 % of children replied

that they watch Cartoon Network, Pogo, Hungama. 23% replied that they also watch Disney and Nick while 14 % revealed that they watch all above channels as well as Discovery Kids. This shows that most popular channels among the kids were Cartoon Network, Pogo & Hungama.

- After gathering data about the cartoon channels, next thing that was asked to children was that which cartoons they usually watch on Cartoon channels. It was an open ended question. The aim of the question was to identify those cartoons which were popular among children and of which they are aware of. The most popular cartoons among the children were Ninja Haatori, Chhota Bheem and Mighty Raju, Tom & Jerry, Popeye, Doremon, Micky Mouse Clubhouse
- Next thing that was analyzed in Phase 1 was influence of pictures of cartoon characters, which appear on the packages of fruit / energy drinks on children's product preferences. For fulfilling the purpose, fruit /energy drinks with mix fruit flavor were selected. The cartoon character whose impact was analyzed was
- Chhota Bheem. The reason for this selection of character and product was that in supermarkets the fruit /energy drinks with and without pictures of Chhota Bheem were readily available. So direct comparison could be done easily. Now out of 100 children, 50 children were exposed to fruit /energy drink containing the picture of Chhota Bheem. It was asked to each child asked "How much did you like this fruit drink?" The responses were down using 5 point smiley based likert scale. The other 50 children were exposed to similar type of fruit / energy drink whose package had no picture of Chhota Bheem on it. Again the responses were noted down using 5 point smiley based likert scale. In each case the children rated the products just on the basis of visual imaginary of fruit drink packages they did not taste the fruit drinks at all. The pictures of fruit drinks are shown below in figure 1.



*Energy Drink with picture of
Chhota Bheem*



*Energy Drink without picture
of Chhota Bheem*

Figure 1:- Packets of fruit drinks with and without pictures of cartoon characters
(Source: - Company websites)

- Related to children's product preferences for beverages following hypothesis was developed and tested
 - **H_{null 1}** :- Young children (4-7 years old) would rate the energy /fruit drink more favorably if picture of licensed cartoon character (Chhota Bheem) was displayed on the package as compared with energy /fruit drink with no characters on its package .
 - **H_{alter 1}** :- Young children (4-7 years old) would rate the energy /fruit drink less favorably if picture of licensed cartoon character (Chhota Bheem) was displayed on the package as compared with energy /fruit drink with no characters on its package .
 - The responses of children were served as data for testing the above hypothesis. The resultant data was analyzed using the z-test of independent samples. The value of alpha was assumed to be 0.01. The analysis showed that young children of Rajkot preferred the those fruit / energy drinks whose packages contained the pictures of Chhota Bheem. Thus this showed cartoon characters had significant influence on children's product preferences especially for beverages like fruit / energy drinks.
 - Next thing that was asked to children was that whether they would think of buying this product next time when they visit to the market. In case of fruit drinks with pictures of Chhota Bheem on the package nearly 93 % of children replied that they would definitely buy these fruit drink when they will to go the market next time. In case of fruit drinks without pictures of Chhota Bheem on the package nearly 28 % of children replied that they would like to buy this fruit drink when they would go to the market next time.
 - Finally among the children who agreed to buy these specific fruit drinks, it was asked to them that how they would buy this product. To this nearly 68 % of children replied that they would go to the store with their parents and would buy this product. 23% of children replied they alone would go to store for buying these biscuits. Only 9 % of children replied that they would request to their parents to bring in the desired product.
- Phase: 2** Analysis of how pictures of animated characters of games provided on packages of ready to eat food products influences the product liking of children.
- For carrying out the above analysis, again sample of another 100 children was taken. The products selected for study were chocolate eggs.
 - Again before starting the experiment formally the age, gender and class of study of children were determined. Once the above mentioned preliminary information was obtained then it was asked to children whether they play games on TV or Computer or even on Mobiles. To this question nearly 73 % of the children replied that they play majority of games only on Mobile. About 17 % of children replied that they play games on both computer and mobile. While 10 % of children agreed that they play games on all the three media. This analysis revealed that since majority of the children play games on mobile so they would be definitely aware about the

various mobile based games as well as the specific characters of those games.

- In next step it was asked to children which games they usually play. It was an open ended question. The most popular games that usually play and like were Super Mario, Candy Crush, Battle city, GT Racing, Angry Birds, Subway Surfers & Temple Run.



Chocolate eggs without picture of angry birds

- Next thing that was analyzed in phase 2 was influence of pictures of animated characters of games that appear on packages of ready to eat food products on children's product liking. For satisfying this purpose, chocolate eggs were selected. The animated characters whose impact was analyzed were angry birds. The pictures of Chocolate eggs are shown below in figure 2



Chocolate eggs with picture of angry birds

**Figure 2:- Packets of chocolate eggs with and without pictures of video game characters
(Source: - Company websites)**

- Now out of 100 children, 50 children were asked to rate the chocolate eggs whose package had no picture of angry birds. The children rated product just on the basis of visual imaginary of packages of chocolate eggs they did not taste the chocolate at all. The responses were noted down using 5 point smiley based likert scale. The other 50 children were exposed to similar type of chocolate egg whose package had no picture of angry birds on it.. Again their responses were noted down using 5 point smiley based likert scale. Related to children's product liking following hypothesis was developed and tested.
 - $H_{null 2}$:- Young children (4-7 years old) would elicit more liking for those chocolate eggs whose package contained the pictures of angry birds as compared to chocolate eggs without pictures of angry birds on their package.
 - $H_{alter 2}$:- Young Young children (4-7 years old) would elicit less liking for those chocolate eggs whose package contained the pictures of angry birds as compared to chocolate eggs without pictures of angry birds on their package.
- The above hypothesis was tested using z test of independent samples. The value of alpha was assumed to be 0.01. The analysis showed that young children of Rajkot significantly liked those chocolate eggs whose

package contained picture of angry birds. Hence one can conclude that pictures of animated characters of games on packages of ready to eat food products like chocolates had significant influence on children's overall liking for a product.

Phase:3 Analysis of perceptions and attitude of parents regarding the influence of pictures of animated characters that appear on the packages of packaged food and beverages on children's food choices, preferences and behavior.

- For conducting the study a sample of 100 parents, who had children of 4-6 years age, was chosen. Out of 100 parents selected 46 were male and 54 were female
- First thing that was asked to parents was whether they allow their children to watch cartoons on Television and play games on TV, mobile or computer. To this 100 % of parents replied that they allow their children to watch cartoons and play video games, if they wish.
- Next thing that was asked to parents was that whether their children's food choices were influenced by animated characters of TV or video games or not. The responses were noted using 5 point likert scale. About 58 % of parents replied that their children's food choices were significantly influenced by animated characters of TV or games. 22 % of parents replied that influence was relatively high. While 14 % replied that

influence was moderate and about 6 % replied that animated characters had no influence on their children’s food choices.

- Then it was asked to parents to describe the behavior that child exhibits for buying his / her desired food item with picture of spokes character. Nearly 36 % of parents replied that the child starts pleading over and over for buying the desired product. 22 % of parents replied that their child starts to count and pronounce the names of his/ her friends/ siblings who had bought the same product and there by starts making the requests for the same. 22 % of parents said that their child starts listing the benefits of the product and thereby makes requests for the same. 30 % parents replied that their child starts crying for buying the desired food item.
- After determining the child’s behavior it was asked to parents that how do they respond to their child’s purchase request for food item. To this 35% of parents replied that they usually allow the child to buy the desired food item. 20 % of parents said that they stop the child from buying the food item by saying that it would be unhealthy or costly. 14 % of parents said that they would say straight forward no to their child’s purchase request. 12 % of parents said that they would promise the child to buy the food item another day. While 19 % of parents said that they usually suggest alternative item in response to their child’s request.
- Next thing that was asked to parents was that why do they allow their child to buy the desired food item. To this 34% of parents said they satisfy their child’s request so as to make him /her happy.. 24 % of parents said that they satisfy their child’s request for food item so as to stop him/ her from becoming angry. 27 % said they do

so for avoiding any conflict with the child While 16 % said that they do so for preventing the child from crying.

- Next thing that was analyzed was the amount that parents would be willing to pay to buy the food item with animated characters pictures and which child requests to buy. Out of 100, 14 parents were such that who agreed to buy the food item only if its price lies within Rs. 10. 19 parents were such that who agreed to buy the food item even if its price falls within the range of Rs. 11 to 20. Nearly 15 parents were such that who agreed to buy the food item even if its price falls between Rs. 21- 30. About 12 parents agreed to buy the food item even if its price lies within the range of Rs.31 -40 while 40 parents were such that who agreed to buy the food item even if its price lies above Rs.40. Here price above 40 was considered as parents would buy the food item irrespective of price of the item.
- In relation to amount that parents would be ready to spend for buying the item that child requests the following hypothesis was developed and tested.
 - $H_{null\ 3}$:- Amount spent by parents to buy the packaged food & beverage items like fruit drinks and chocolate eggs with animated characters on the package is independent of the gender of parents.
 - $H_{alter\ 3}$:- Amount spent by parents to buy the packaged food & beverage items like fruit drinks and chocolate eggs with animated characters on the package is not independent of the gender of parents.
- The above hypothesis was tested using chi – square goodness of fit test with following contingency table. The alpha was assumed to be 0.01.

Table 2 : Contingency table for hypothesis testing

		Amount spent by parents for purchasing the food item that child requests				
		Rs. 0-10	Rs. 11 -20	Rs. 21 -30	Rs.31 -40	> Rs. 40
Gender of Parents (No. of persons)	Father	6	8	6	5	21
	Mother	8	11	9	7	19

5.2 Limitations of the study& scope of future research:-

(a)The study evaluated the impact of licensed spokes characters for two products only namely fruit drinks and chocolate eggs. But the same impact could also be evaluated for other products like cheese, corn flakes, biscuits, wafers etc whose packages also incorporate other spokes characters. (b)The select group of products spokes characters and ages sampled limit the degree to which these findings can be generalized. (c) The product-characters combinations considered in the study were readily available in the market hence any previous food or character association bias might have influenced the results obtained. (d) The characters considered in the study were popular characters but it may happen that they may not be the favorite characters of children and hence this inconsistency may have affected the

responses for products taste assessment and product liking. (e) The study evaluated the impact of only one packaging cue namely use of spokes characters but however the impact of other packaging cues like color, shape etc often used for selling products targeted to children could also be evaluated and assessed. Regardless of the above mentioned limitations the study is likely to be the first one in Indian and especially in Gujarat context to document the findings on impact of using spokes characters for selling the food products mainly targeted to children.

5.3 Policy Recommendation and Concluding remarks:-

- The study revealed that most popular cartoon channels among children were Cartoon Network, Pogo & Hungama This information suggests that if advertisers

of products targeted to children make use of these channels for advertising their products then they are likely to get their desired impact and appropriate reach for the money spent.

- The study suggests that most popular cartoons among the children were Tom & Jerry, Doremon, Chhota Bheem, Ninja Hatori, Mighty Raju and Micky Mouse. This information could work as a gem for marketers of various products. The marketers could make use of these characters for selling their products. They could use pictures of these familiar characters on the packages of their products, could provide free toys of these popular characters with their products or could launch contests and games using these familiar cartoon characters. Another advantage of this information is that marketers could advertise their products during these popular cartoon shows timings. Thus this information would provide double benefits to the marketers.
- The findings suggest that children get significantly influenced by pictures of Chhota Bheem on package of fruit drinks. This suggests that Chhota Bheem is influential character for children. So one can make use of this character selling products other than fruit drinks. The influence could be very high in case of food items.
- The majority of children revealed that they would like to buy the product along with their parents so this information suggests that companies should not try to sell the low quality and unhealthy products just by making use of attractive packaging with pictures of animated characters as there is a high probability this marketing gimmick of companies could easily get caught by the parents of the children who are going to buy the product for the children. Besides above, this information also suggests that companies should appropriately depict the product related information as that might be read by parents before buying the food products for their children.
- The analysis of study reveals that majority of children play games on mobile. Hence companies can make use of characters of those mobile games which are popular among the children for selling their products. The most classic example of such type of character is that of angry birds. The children are so much influenced by these angry birds characters that they even evaluated the entire product as best one just on seeing the picture of angry birds on the package of chocolates. The same strategy could be extended further for other products and product lines.
- The analysis revealed that amount spent by parents for buying the food item that child requests to purchase and the gender of parent are completely independent variables. This information suggests two things. First is that, one cannot presume that father would be more lenient in spending and thereby allowing the child to buy the product readily irrespective of price of the item and on the other hand one cannot also presume that mothers would be much stricter and hence less lenient in spending and thereby not allowing the child to buy the food product he /she likes. This finding is peculiar

because it contradicts the general belief that mothers would be stricter in certain spending than fathers. It may be because of mall culture or changing urban lifestyle. The two variables are completely independent. Under those circumstances the influential variables could be the nutritional healthiness of product, situation under which child is making the purchase request, no. of children accompanying the parents in the shopping trip or making purchase requests for the products etc. The second thing this information suggests that since parent's gender and amount spent for buying the item are completely independent variables so if companies make use of strategy of depicting specifically father-child or mother-child combination in the advertisement and thereby urging the children to requests the product specifically from the father or mother then that strategy may not become fruitful as both parents are equal at level in terms of spending the amount for buying the desired food item of the child.

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