Abstract:
The outdoor advertising the forerunner of modern advertising media is brimming with opportunities. There is a misconception in the minds of advertisers that outdoor advertising is subordinate to other major advertising media and thus is regarded as ‘reminder medium’ and they put forth the argument that outdoor advertising is indicated only for products in competitive stage and is of no use for products in pioneering stage. It is high time the advertisers treat the outdoor advertising on par with other advertising media.

Introduction:
When the first outdoor signs walked into the Indian advertising field, everyone thought that it would revolutionise the advertising world. Surprisingly, nothing of that sort happened. Even today, we have many people who hardly consider outdoor signs as good advertisements. We have not taken outdoor advertising seriously. The potential of outdoor advertising is not satisfactorily explored. The influence of outdoor advertising, if properly used, is immense. It acts as a stopper. It enables the passerby to pause for a while to have a look at the display. Outdoor sign can sell the advertiser’s message with telling effect.

Outdoor medium has an edge over other advertising media in that it commands vast potential audience. Since outdoor sign is mostly erected in public frequented places it has got the added
advantage of capturing the attention of both literates and illiterates and people of all age groups.

It is unwise to insist upon the traditional character of the outdoor advertising as only a ‘reminder’. There is a misconception in the minds of advertisers that outdoor advertising is subordinate to other major advertising media and thus is regarded as ‘reminder medium’ and they put forth the argument that outdoor advertising is indicated only for products in competitive stage and is of no use for products in pioneering stage. But outdoor advertising is something more than that. Poor taste and abuse have reduced the outdoor advertising to lose public credibility.

**Visual Impact to be Recognised**

The advertisers seem to have forgotten the visual impact of outdoor signs. Instead of illustrating their message they resort to detailed copy. A good outdoor advertisement permits short copy to back up illustration. Simplicity is the virtue of outdoor signs. The outdoor medium aptly suits the products of everyday use, particularly, soaps, cigarettes, food, etc., which usually require less explanation. Cigarette and soap manufacturers are the prolific users of outdoor advertising. They are closely followed by inns. Despite the fact that outdoor advertising permits the use of colour at low cost, we come across many colour advertisements which hardly attract. This can be attributed to the use of insignificant colours or overdoing the colours used.

The spread of housing colonies, shopping complexes and working places in far flung areas have made the outdoor advertising so widespread. Hence, there is heavy concentration
of posters, painted displays and electric spectaculars in urban centres. Despite the fact that outdoor advertising holds great fascination to rural folks, its display in rural areas, barring railway platforms, is inadequate. This visual medium can communicate effectively since the advertisements are bold, large and colourful. An outdoor sign of unusual size appeals enough to arouse public interest.

Electric spectaculars are more striking of all outdoor forms. Though expensive, these night displays are brilliant in getting the passerby to read their message. Using cartoons largely increases the scope of electric spectaculars, besides flashing electric or neon lights.

The high cost of electric displays compels the advertisers to resort to posters and painted displays. Their popularity is waning due to lack of creative ideas, innovative styles and designs. They are no longer attractive and interesting. In some places outdoor signs are so haphazardly erected that they cease to arrest public attention. Outdoor advertising can deliver the message effectively when it also enhances the beauty of the place surrounding it. The bad construction of cities and wrong laying of streets have negative influence on the use of outdoor signs.

Novelty can be introduced by changing the shape of the poster frame from the usual rectangle or square. The advertised product like clock, toothpaste or tyre can be built into the panel. Embellishing the exhibit can draw large audience. The bulletins and posters of unusual size and shape can also retain attention. Prominent display of the product facilitates identification. An element of humour in advertisements makes them more
interesting and fascinating. Repainting of worn out signs and changing the copy often can keep the advertisements fresh and attractive.

Yet a powerful selling idea is wanting in most of the outdoor advertisements in this country. Most of the posters and painted displays are crowded with too many selling ideas that result in confusion. Since the message has to be read quickly by a person who is preoccupied with shopping or who is usually in motion, it should be depicted vividly, lucidly and palatably.

Some of our outdoor signs make no sense. Recently, a huge outdoor panel appeared in Bangalore carrying just the telephone number and the headline ‘Ring Up’. On the pretext of arousing curiosity, the advertisers seem to be unaware of the automatic elimination of non-telephone audience, which serves little purpose. It amounts to blatant misuse of valuable space for a wrong cause.

**Brimming with Opportunities**

Transit or car card is one of the popular outdoor advertising. It is a great aid in fixing in the minds of people the package and the trademark. Since the travellers travel and retravel the same route every day, the travel cards permit to hammer home the message often and often. It is interesting to note that since these travel cards travel with the rider they give room for keen observation. These mobile cards offer endless opportunities to establish favourable attitudes towards the product. But most of these transit cards one comes across are
lousy in appearance. The cheap taste and abuse of car cards have given room for criticism.

In order to make car cards conspicuous, make their message simple, seldom crowd the copy with too many elements, and use colour tastefully. While displaying on the interior surfaces of the transport, fix the cards in such a position that a passenger can see from where he sits or stands. If used properly, mobile cards are the real eye-catchers and can evoke great interest.

The outdoor advertising is brimming with opportunities. It is high time the advertisers treat the outdoor advertising on par with other advertising media.