

“PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN ADVERTISEMENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRINT, ELECTRONIC AND NEW MEDIA”

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ABSTRACT

Gender plays an important role in Advertisements. It describes not only the socially constructed disparity between men and women, but also the stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. In the beginning, advertisements were once shown to sell a product, however, later, advertisements begin to objectify women and use women as a way to sell products. The roles of women have greatly domesticated, objectified, and in some instances, insulted or degraded in advertisements. Women are usually portrayed as young, slim and beautiful. Her appearance is often seen in proactive images associated with sex objects in order to sell products. Women are shown in roles such as cooks, maids, babysitters, housewives, mother, teachers, salesgirl etc. Her role is limited to earn profit for the manufactures. The current paper "Portrayal of Women in Advertisements: A Comparative Study of Print, Electronic and New Media" will explore the current situation of role played and portrayed by women in media in Maharashtra state of India.

Keywords: - Media, Gender Bias, Women , Print, Electronic, and New media, Women Journalist, Advertisements, Discrimination, Maharashtra, India.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertisements are the most powerful means of social communication. It is an important tool used by the manufacturers, companies and organizations to promote their goods, services or ideas to the perspective customers. The job of advertising includes systematical planning, designing, organizing and managing all communicational activities of an organization with respect to pertinent receiver groups in order to contribute to the marketing objectives. Advertisement endorses secondary place of women and unpaid work done by her. As a result women tries molding herself to fit in this image. It affects her physical and mental health. If she fails to maintain this image,

she went into depression state. Advertisements keep women in cultural slavery and spreads message of gender inequality in society.

Advertisement and society are correlated to each other. It is hard to separate them from each other, especially in the age of Information and technology. Media is now not only remained as a mode of entertainment or leisure, but it has become an integral part of life. Stiff decline in rates and increased in reach, internet has now entered in almost every household in urban as well as rural India. This has resulted 24 hours access to media to the common men. Access for e-newspapers, news portals, online televisions and web series has increased. One need not have to sit in front of television, computer or laptop to watch news, movies or serials. But, it's been easily watched on android mobile phone. The prime source of revenue of these media's is ultimately an advertisement. Penetration of internet and internet based media has once again underlined importance of advertisements. The new media has changed the style of presentation of advertisements.

Indian society is a patriarchal society; patriarchy is established in everywhere and every aspects of life, and unfortunately media is not exception to that. In a typical patriarchal society, a woman has no room in advertisement to show dominance without coming off as masculine. Woman is shown in hanging around with instant noodles, detergent, cough syrup, talcum powder, condom's or deodorants. Cooking, cleaning and care-work – the trifecta of women's unpaid domestic labour - have been exalted in advertisements.

The Present research paper “Portrayal of Women in Advertisements: A Comparative Study of Print, Electronic and New Media” is aimed to find root cause, history, current situation and future of gender biases in advertisements. It suggest measures to bring it at the level of gender equality. The research will be noteworthy to formulate policies for improving the status and establishing equity for women in advertisements.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

The objectives of the research paper includes-

1. To analyze content of advertisements in print, electronics and new media.
2. To find out whether women have been objectified in advertisements.
3. To study whether advertisements glorifies unpaid work done by women,
4. To study how advertisements keep women in cultural slavery.
5. To investigate whether advertisement encourages superstition.
6. To study whether advertisements directly or indirectly promote gender bias or gender equality.

HYPOTHESIS

A research hypothesis is a statement created by researchers when they speculate upon the outcome of a research or experiment. Every true experimental design must have this statement at the core of its structure, as the ultimate aim of the experiment.

1. Women get secondary place in advertisements in terms of content as well as character.
2. Advertisements objectifies women to sell products
3. Advertisements endorse unpaid work.
4. Advertisements encourage gender inequality.
5. Advertisements keep women in cultural slavery.
6. Advertisements encourages superstition.

REVIEW LITERATURE

Advertising is a powerful tool used by the marketers to persuade, manipulate and shape behavior of the consumers. It is an attempt to persuade a consumer into a preference for a brand or a product over another brand or product. (Narendra, 2007, p.86). Kotler and Keller (2009) have defined advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor.

The oldest known written advertisement is a 3000-year-old Babylonian tablet requesting the return of a slave (Narasimhamurthy, 2014). People in Egypt used papyrus to make sale messages and wall posters. Sometimes criers would entice buyers with flowery descriptions of the cargoes from newly arrived ships, which included rugs, spices, etc. (Bovee et al., 1995, p.17)

The origin of commercial advertising in India is a recent story. 'B. Dattaram and Co.' was the first advertising agency promoted in the country in 1905. Besides this advertising agencies, like Ogilvy and Mather and Hindustan Thompson Associate agencies were formed in the early 1920s and in 1939 started entering foreign owned advertisement agencies. (Sharma & Singh, 2009, p.364).

Print media comprised of mostly the newspapers and magazines. Newspapers mainly target the generalized audiences within a local geographic area (Folkerts & Lacy, 2004, p. 144) and most accessible to the wider range of advertisers (O'Guinn, 2006, p. 534). The electronic media that transmit sounds or images electronically comprises of radio, television, and internet based media. Radio advertising is a low cost option for a local firm. (Sharma & Singh, 2009, p.364).

The television industry is the most powerful and successful medium ever as it can reach more people more quickly than any other medium (Bovee et al., 1995, p. 20). Television is often called the king of the advertising media (Anwar, 2012). With the advent of technology and wide use of internet, Online advertising is gradually gaining popularity. Internet advertisements are very convenient as it is delivered 24 hours a day and across seven days of the week (O'Guinn, Allen & Semenick, 2006, pp. 571-575).

Advertising is often accused of perpetuating stereotypes through its portrayal of women, ethnic minority and other group. Women are portrayed either preoccupied with the household jobs, like cooking or health & hygiene of the family and beauty or as the decorative or sex objects in advertisements (Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia 1970). Sometimes the women also have to represent the product to which they are not at all related with. Even body parts of women are objectified to sell the products starting from alcohol to automobiles (Manusi 1998). After examining the role of Indian women in T.V. advertisements found that gender stereotype in Indian advertisements is prevalent (Das 2011).

According to Goffman (1979, p. 8) gender representations in advertising reflect "fundamental features of the social structure," such as values, beliefs, or norms. Advertisements are the reflection of the gender equation of a particular society. Bardwick and Schumann (1967), in one of the earliest studies on gender role portrayals in television advertisements find that women (compared to men) appeared more often as home bound and as housewives in television advertisements.

Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977) conducted a survey and explored the same pattern that women were portrayed mostly as sex objects, physically beautiful and subordinate to men, in TV advertisements.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design is a blue print of or plan specifically created to answer the research questions and to control variance. Answering the research questions is testing the hypothesis is the central purpose of all the researches. The Present research titled as "Portrayal of Women in Advertisements: A Comparative Study of Print, Electronics and New Media" will be completed by using Descriptive Research methodology.

According to Bernard, H. R., & Bernard, descriptive research is research used to "describe" a situation, subject, behavior, or phenomenon. It is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way. Burt in Research in education says, descriptive method is used to answer questions of who, what, when, where, and how associated with a particular research question or problem. It attempts to gather quantifiable information that can be used to statistically analyze a target audience or a particular subject. This type of research is conclusive in nature, rather than exploratory.

Kim & Lory said that, Advertisements in order to attract customers, portrays women as center of attraction in advertisements. Since the introduction of advertising, women have been objectified, and in some instances, insulted

or degraded. The situation is same across the world. Hence, the study is of great importance especially in today's age of information technology.

Penetration of internet even at remote areas has opened doors for new media's like news portal's and internet televisions. News portal's projecting issues of small towns and villages are launched by youngsters across the India. Online serials called as web series are all set to set roots on the digital platform. All newspapers and news channels have moved to e-papers and online newspapers. In such situation, their main source of revenue is nothing but advertisements. There is no censorship on content played on digital platform. Hence, current research work holds much significance in such situation.

SAMPLE COLLECTION

Advertisements published, telecast and posted in Print, Electronics and New Media respectively during a period of 12 months. Total 1100 advertisements published during June 2015 to May 2016 were analyzed for this research paper. It included 600 advertisements from print media, 400 from electronic media and 100 advertisements new media. Content analysis is presented in tabular form.

For sample, advertisements published in highest circulated newspapers, magazines, television, radio channels and websites in Marathi and Hindi are collected. It included, Dainik Lokmat (Marathi) and Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) in newspapers category, Marathi weekly - Saptahik Chitralakha and Hindi weekly - India Today in magazine category.

In electronic media category, Marathi general entertainment channel Zee Marathi and Hindi general entertainment channel Sony Entertainment Channel is selected on the basis of TRP ratings. Advertisements on various websites are randomly selected for new media category.

For sample collection for advertisements on FM radio stations, Radio Mirchi and All India Radio, Aurangabad were selected.

Number of samples collected for the present research is huge number. It is tedious job to monitor each and every advertisement published during the prescribed period in all three media segments. More complicated is to analyze the outcomes of research. However, the descriptive research methodology make this job simple. The data collected from this research was quantitative as well as qualitative or both.

Content analysis of advertisements was done in six categories viz. content of advertisement promoting women as object, promotion of unpaid work, cultural slavery, promoting superstition, gender bias and gender equality.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Classification of gender bias advertisements in Print, Electronic and New media
Total Advertisements- 1100 Duration – June 2015 to May 2016

Media	Total Advertisements referred	Women as object %	Unpaid Work %	Cultural Slavery %	Promoting Superstition %	Promoting Gender bias %	Promoting gender equality %
Print	600	230 38.33 %	149 24.83 %	114 19.00 %	00 00 %	102 17 %	05 0.83 %

Electronic	400	72 18 %	83 20.75 %	10 2.5 %	00 00 %	30 7.5 %	19 4.75 %
New Media	100	32 32 %	9 9 %	9 9 %	00 00 %	10 10 %	40 40 %

Table -1 reveals that print media has published highest number of advertisements in all six parameters prescribed for this study, followed by electronic and least in new media. Detailed analysis of advertisements in all three media in six parameters is as below -

-Out of 600 advertisements analyzed in print media, 230 i.e. 38.33 % promotes women as object. Out of 400 advertisements in electronics media, only 72 i.e. 18 % highlighted women as object while out of 100 advertisements published in new media only 32 i.e. 32 % portrayed women as object.

It was observed that the special women related magazines publishes more content that promotes women as product or object. These advertisements included content of looking beautiful, slim trim, fair skin, long hairs, hair oil, shampoo, contraceptive pills etc. Women in these advertisements are mostly shown in bathtub or wearing towel and drying long hairs. The advertisements of condoms also showcase women in lead role and wanting pleasure from her partner. Even in the advertisements of men's related products like shaving creams, razor, blades, deodorant, bikes image of women is portrayed as object.

-Out of 600 advertisements analyzed in print media, 149 i.e. 24.83 % glorifies women's work as unpaid work. Out of 400 advertisements in electronics media, only 83 i.e. 20.75% highlighted women as product while out of 100 advertisements published in new media only 9 i.e. 9 % glorifies work done by women at home as unpaid work.

While analyzing these advertisements, it was observed that women while working or housewife, it was hammered through advertisements that it was her responsibility to take care of home, children, husband and to respect In-laws, to keep home clean and germs free, garden work, health care are unavoidable part of her responsibilities. These all are unpaid works. Even in the age of high end technology, advertisements portrays her image in such a way that she tries to become supermom and without complaining, without caring her health, use her efforts to complete these tasks.

-Out of 600 advertisements analyzed in print media, 114 i.e. 19 % promotes thought of cultural slavery. While out of 400 advertisements in electronics media, only 10 i.e. 2.5% promoted this thought. While out of 100 advertisements published in new media only 9 i.e. 9 % gives message of cultural slavery.

India is a land of cultural beliefs and traditions. A women is expected to follow these tradition at all fronts. Keeping fast to complete rituals of Chathpooja, Navratri or Karva Chauth is depicted as responsibility of women. After these rituals, she accepts gifts from husbands. In big purchasing like car or new home, women's role remained limited up to doing Aartee or Pooja of brand new product or doing Gruha Pravesh. Women never purchases car, policies, home loan, new home. She happily prepares food, confectionaries or Mithai's on festivals. Her image was portrayed as happy women by only participating in the happiness of family.

-Out of 600 advertisements analyzed in print media, 400 in electronics media and 100 advertisements published in new media, surprisingly not a single advertisement found spreading message of superstition in women.

-Out of 600 advertisements analyzed in print media, 102 i.e. 17 % promotes the thought of gender bias. Out of 400 advertisements in electronics media, only 30 i.e. 7.5 % highlighted this thought. While out of 100 advertisements published in new media only 10 i.e. 10 % advertisements gives thought of gender bias.

It was observed that advertisements strongly spread message of gender biases. It was because that the men is only earning member in family. So naturally, he was shown as strong, smart and decision maker. Whenever some big money transactions shown, it was only men who leads it. Like purchasing home, car, foreign tours, policy and gold and diamond jewellery, men is shown as prominent figure. While women are shown in advertisements of washing powder, detergents, floor cleaners. Even working women and superstars like Madhuri Dixit, Priyanka Chopra and Sakshi Tanwar promotes utensils cleaning jells and soaps. Men are shown in the advertisements of soft drinks and bikes. These advertisements relates men with masculinity. Despite her high education, rank and social status, she is portrayed as a women with less intellectual level.

-Out of 600 advertisements analyzed in print media, 5 i.e. 0.83 % promotes gender equality. Out of 400 advertisements in electronics media, only 19 i.e. 4.75 % gives message of gender equality. Out of 100 advertisements published in new media only 40 i.e. 40 % promoted gender equality through its content.

New media is more liberal in portraying women in gender equal role. Advertisements on this platform shows women in lead role as leader, as decision maker, family head or as a boss. Though this figure is quite less, it could be seen as a wave of transformation in changing thought process of society. These types of advertisements promoting gender equality is need of day to increase. In rest two media platforms, it was observed that they spread less message of gender equality, but strongly promotes male dominance at home, office or in society.

CONCLUSIONS

The research paper concludes that women is objectified in advertisements and used as a mode to sell products in print, electronics and new media. She got secondary place in advertisements in terms of content as well as character. Most of the advertisements glorifies and endorse unpaid work done by women, whether she is housewife or a working women. Women uses her extreme efforts to fit into image of supermom or super women. Sometime, it worst affect her physical and mental health and took her into state of depression. At the same time advertisements keep women in cultural slavery. She was shown dependent on family even for small decisions. Even a highly educated women, a boss, a teacher or an engineer is portrayed as taking responsibilities of family. Her education, status makes no difference in her family. The most satisfactory part of advertisement's are they does not encourages superstition. But they directly or indirectly promote gender biases.

The research will provide ready statistics obtained through content analysis to draft policy to control objectification of women as a way to sell products in advertisements. It could also be used as a base work for the educationalists, to develop and execute the media literacy programmes. The work will provide a rich data set that will often bring to light new knowledge or awareness that may have otherwise gone unnoticed or encountered. Results of this work will be noteworthy for the policy makers to formulate policies for improving the status and establishing equity for women in advertisements which will be applicable across the globe.

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