

# WOMEN'S EVOLVING ROLES IN INDIAN ADVERTISING

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## Abstract

In various fields around the world, such as publishers, academics, politics, etc., women have changed their position over many years. Nowadays, 30% of software employees are women. They even stand out in various walks of life as professionals. But has women's media representation improved over time in media? Or does it affirm such conventional ideas concerning women and their position in society? This is the topic that we would like to discuss in this article. A review of gender role portrayals in publicity is given in the first section. The second section deals with the different theories of the analysis and its theoretical basis. In the third section the research methodology and a detailed outcomes review are discussed. The last segment involves general debate, study consequences, scope for analysis and conclusion.

Keywords: Women, Television, Advertisements, Society.

## INTRODUCTION

In various fields around the world, such as publishers, academics, politics, etc., women have changed their role over many years. Nowadays, 30% of software workers are women. They even stand out in various walks of life as professionals. But has women's media representation improved over time in media? Or does it affirm such conventional ideas concerning women and their position in society? This is the topic that we would like to discuss in this article.

Women portrayal has been a field of both academics (Das, 2000, Siu and Au, 1997) and practitioners' interest in advertising. In society over decades there has been a socio-cultural shift, which is evident from a rising number of women who have taken up their professions, the shifting nature of their family and the unfavourable actions of women in traditional sex roles.

Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) conducted the earliest study of female role portrayals. They analysed 112 advertisements in magazines. They noticed ads that is conventional roles like "the position of women in the kitchen, that women don't make important decisions or do important things, and that women need protection for men and dependent. (Pg 94) Prague:

Like Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), some reports assume that TV advertisement has for years been subject to sex-role stereotyping. (Siu and Au, 1997). 1997). 1997). World-wide sexuality is highly similar, but many studies focused on culture's effect on advertising have been conducted (Siu and Au, 1997, Milner & Collins, 2000).

The positions in publicity vary from the rest of the world in Asia (Cutler et al., 1995). In addition, Hofstede (1980) describes as substantially different cultural values in Asian countries from those in countries such as the United States, Canada or England. We may therefore claim that the position of women in Asia will differ as compared to the US or the UK.

In India, very few studies have been performed on women's position representation. Matthew (1990), Munshi (2000) and Das (2000) are the subjects of studies. The aim of all these studies was on print publicity. The segmentation of men and the favourite ads through different segments was discussed through Matthew (1990). The housewives' position in publicity was discussed by Munshi (2000). The scope of these two studies is small. In Indian magazines over three years 1987, 1990 and 1994, Das (2000) carried out however a research on the position of both men and women and compares these with advertising in other countries.

An analysis of literature review has helped to show that no research on the role of women in television advertisement has been performed in the Indian context. In this analysis, women's role in Indian Television is examined during the three decades since 1980.

Overview of the paper – This paper consists of 5 sections. The first segment explores the role of gender in ads. The second section deals with the different hypotheses of the analysis and its theoretical basis. In the third section the research methodology and a detailed outcomes review are discussed. The last segment involves general debate, study consequences, scope for analysis and conclusion.

## Literature Review

### 1.1 Role Portrayals in Advertisement

The position portrayals relating to individuals and goods are the most commonly discussed subjects about the representation of women in advertising. The topic under consideration is whether advertisement correctly represents the role of women or emphasises conventional roles for women in unique contexts or in innuendo (Kerin et al. 1979).

Wagner and Banos (1973) Women primarily played the role of housewoman / mother and the rate of jobs was slightly lower than men when they analysed nearly 1 000 prime-time television articles. The figures were 21% higher among women at work than women at work, Dominick and Rauch (1971). In their research on television advertising Silverstein and Silverstein (1974) concluded that

1. The attributed "voice of authority and confidence" typically implies that men are announcers.
2. Women have been seen more often in the home than men.
3. Men will advise women more possibly
4. The role of a woman was never apparent.
5. Women were 8-fold more likely to be subordinate to their relationship with men as a portrait.

McArthur and Resko (1975) also noticed that even in cases where they were not the key consumers of a product or service, the proportion of males used in television commercials was higher. The writers of the 1970s sex-portrait papers argued that women are mostly sex-specific but not autonomous individuals (Courtney and Whipple, 1974).

In the 1980s Courtney & Whipple(1983) discovered, although the difference was lower than that in 1970s, that women represented in the home setting, and men appeared in industry. In the magazine of ads between 1953 and 1983, Sullivan and Connor (1988) researched functions. 364 ads in 15 product categories were checked. The research findings were identical to Courtney's and Whipple 's report. They found also that, from the 1970s, the gap between men and women in role portrayals had decreased. They also reported that 52% of women are represented as working, 77% in non-employed occupations, and only 6.67% in the domestic setup.

### 1.2 Cultural Differences in Role Portrayals in Advertisement

A cross-cultural research between China and Singapore is performed in Siu and Au (1997). Study has found that male central characters in China and Singapore appear in both sexual products, whereas more central female characters appear in female products only. They also found that in voice overviews men's voices were used compared with women's voices. Women

were depicted as younger more frequently than men, and women were more likely than others to be seen in independent roles.

Siu and Au (1997) It has also been determined that there was a difference between two cultures and that women have been more represented at home and men represented in outdoor publicity in Singapore. Women have been considered more frequently as speakers in Singapore, but not in publicity in China. Women are typically represented as purchasers of products and men in Chinese advertising.

Das (2000) has argued that the Indians magazine's representation of women differs from other nations when it comes to men's and women 's position in the Indian advertising. There were two important differences in the position of women;

1. In India, the normal stereo portrays seem less common; women have been depicted as sex objects in indian ads in neutral and unexpected ways. They were also shown to be less reliant than advertising in the UK. Indian publicity findings were consistent with Japanese and Korean publicity.

2. In India the pattern of presenting women has been uncommon and the changes in Indian society can be attributed to this.

The literature review above shows that over the decades the role of women in print ads and television advertising has changed around the world. In addition, the depiction of women vary from other countries in India. No research of women's representation in ads has yet studied in India over the decades. The purpose of this analysis is therefore

- (1) Investigate the role of women in Indian TV ads.

- (2) Study the woman in TV ads as well as the manner in which she has evolved over the years by comparing ads in three periods: 1980-1990, 1990 2000 and 2000-2010.

- (3) Consider whether gender portrayals vary across categories of products

## 2 THEORITICAL FOUNDATIONS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

In their study conducted in the United Kingdom, Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) and Sullivan & O' Connor (1988) concluded that the publicity portrays women as dependent, men's security, housekeeping, sexual objects, etc. Other worldwide studies such as Japan (Ford et. al., 1998), Korea, Hong Kong (Cutler et. al., 1995), and Sengupta (1992) have also documented similar findings.

In particular, the prevalence of women's stereotypes in other countries and the fact that Asian marketers are not susceptible to gender stereotypes like Western nations (Cutler et al., 1995). Therefore, it's believed

H1: Women in Indian television advertising (i.e. stereotypical feminine roles) are depicted in conventional, stereotypical forms more often than neutralised and secular forms for three decades.

Previous research indicates that portrayals of gender roles are influenced by types of goods. Women are traditionally found in home-group ads, infant goods, cosmetics and foodstuffs, and in non-lasting goods as well as sustainable products (Cutler et al . 1995, Fowles, 1996). The portrayal of the gender position also depends on the product category. In TV, clothing and cosmetics, for example, women are generally stereotyped, but historically portrayed in ads on tobacco, tourism, nutrition and finance (Mitchell and Taylor 1989).

The gender-related stereotypes of women may be associated with the purchase of female Das (2000) products, which means that advertisements for these items are likely to be typically portrayed by women. Consequently , the second hypothesis is

H2 – The nature of women in TV advertisements would not differ according to the type of product marketed over the three decades.

The way women are represented in advertising has changed. An rise in women's participation in the workforce has led women to become big consumers of numerous goods, including cars, insurance and financial services. (Das, 2000) 2000)

The number and level of education of employees in India has increased (Das, 2000). Similar patterns can be expected in India. In addition, women's exposure to the West has increased as a result of their liberalisation of the Indian economy (Jacob, 1992). Based on this literature, it can be concluded that

H3: Women's gender portrayals have decades of being less stereotypical. This can be expressed in the form of ads and product types used by women. Women will be more representative of stereotypes in television ads than women in 2010.

### 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the study, content analyses were used. It is the most used method for gender role analysis in advertising. In Courtney and Whipple (1983), it is claimed that content analysis was the primary means of evaluating gender stereotyping in publicity. (Das, 2000, Siu and Au, 1998)

#### 3.1 Sample

For the years 1980-1990, 1990-2000 and 2000-2010, TV commercials have been analysed. Twenty-five ads were employed for the period 1980-1990, 35 for the period 1990-2000, 45 for the period 2000-2010. were employed. The cause of unequal ads in any decade is the lack of ads supply in the previous decades. The first TV commercial in India was only shown in 1978, and colour TV was launched in 1982 only. So very little coverage existed in the 1980-1990 era. The first satellite channel to be transmitted in India in 1991, Zee TV, and the number of announcements rose in the 1990-2000 decade. The marketing industry has been evolving with technology, growing the number of advertisements and thus the total number of ads for 2000-2010.

Only advertising that displayed a camera presence of at least 3 seconds or at least one dialogue line for the female characters in the commercial were used.

#### 3.2 Coding

Studies of contents analysis are challenging as complex data information is recorded. High-level categorization gives coders more complexity than the standard number. Only if Coders share the information required to understand encoded categories can they derive meaning from publicity and connect meaning to categories., have the same opinion on such classifications. (Callow & Lerman, 2004). The reliability of intervention shall be high, provided that the researcher has invented and properly qualified the judges' categories of coding (Kassarjian 1977)

To evaluate disparities in female representations, nine variables were examined. Table 1 includes variables and organisational descriptions. The coders produced a majority of these codes in the study, which were in line with the codes of Ford et al. (1998), Siu and Au (1997). Each ad has been evaluated by the coders and with a value of 1 or 0 they indicated that any characteristic is shown in the ad. Another coder coded the advertisements in addition to the author. Both the author and the coder are Indian Management Institute research students. A judge who is a senior researcher in the same institute addressed any inconsistencies in the coding.

Table 1: Variables used in content analysis

Variables which are coded for the advertisements and the characters	Operational definition of the variables
Product Category	What is marketed for the product category? Food and drink, snacks , drinks, kitchen items, vehicles, appliances, foods , drinks, home cleaning agents, clothes and more ... drinks.
Location of ad Setting	What's the setting for the ad? House / home; store; business environment; leisure time; sport (participatory / active); use of transport; religious environment; outdoor; other; unknown;
Age	How old are the woman characters in the ads? Baby, young adult (ages 18-35); mid adult (aged 35-50); older adult 50, indeterminate.
Credibility	If there is some of the women in the ads, the consumer or presenter; the authority of the product.
Product user	Who is mostly used for the advertised product? Women, men, children or anything.
Role	What role has the portraying mother, wife, girlfriend, housewife, professional, daughter, professional and housewife, decorative, equal to men, executive of men or role of men that can not be applied?
Presence	When the woman's presence is implicit or explicit
Attire	If the women's model is traditional or new in the advertising
Protagonist	If the woman is the main character in the mail ad or not, the woman affects the product 's buying option.

### 3.3 RESULTS

The findings show substantial changes in women's representations from the 1980s to 2010. Women were depicted as home makers or professionals in the 1980s and 1990s. In the year 2000, it did not happen. In 2000, 13,34% of ads represented women as professionals as well as home manufacturers. In TV ads over the decades several of these improvements occur. However, certain factors, such as the portrait of women as a product consumer or presenter, have not changed over the years.

#### 3.3.1 Portrayal of Woman

To test Hypothesis 1, three groups, i.e. traditional, neutrals and non-traditional, were combined. The typical category includes women, daughters, mothers, home-builders and decorators. The neutral category comprises the "Others" category and the neutral category composed of professionals, professionals and householders, girlfriends, men's or fair women. This is in line with Das's (2000) research

Table 2: Modified Female Role Categories by Decades

Role Portrayals	1980s	1990s	2000s
Traditional	67.6	62.5	54.1
Neutral	-	15.01	14.34
Non Traditional	32.4	22.49	31.56

The table above indicates that, while the percentage of women in non-traditional positions grew from the 1980s-2000, the traditional stereo style of women in television ads dominated and reinforced our initial assumption.

#### 3.3.2 Product Users

To test the second hypothesization, the ads have been categorised on the basis of the consumers of the advertised goods. Four categories have been established: women-only goods; male-only products; male / female products; kids-only products and female / male / children products.

Table 3: Product User Categories by decades- correct

Product User	1980s	1990s	2000
Female	9	21.85	14.4
Male	15	3.86	2.2
Both	21	26.71	41.2
Child	0	0	3.22
All	55	47.58	39

Table 3 indicates that women were mainly used in publicity for widely used items such as sweets, chocolates, bevers etc. Women were used in ads for both men and children with low levels of use. It was found that on average 2.2 percent of the advertisements on port are used by men and children.

### 3.3.3 Product Categories

Three kinds of products have been separated to test our third hypothesis. Household or female dominants, neutral products and male dominated products.. The dominant items in the household / woman will include cleaning products, foodstuffs, home appliances. Snacks, foods, apparel, pharmacy and other products are included in Neutral products. Travel, vehicles, banks, and alcoholic drinks will constitute the male dominant items.

Table 4 Modified Product Categorization over the decades

Product Category	1980s	1990s	2000
Woman Dominant products	38	64.70	32.42
Neutral Products	54	35.3	57.76
Male Dominant products	8	0	9.82

In the table above, only 8% of the ads featuring women in a male dominated product were released in the 1980s but 9.82% of the commercials showed women in a male dominant product in the 2000s. Over the decades , the number has increased. The most recent decade has seen the

proportion of ads featuring women in the neutral product (58,86%). In the current decade, women in the dominant women's goods account for just 32.42% of ads compared to 38% in 1980 and 65% in 1990.

This shows that over the decades, female role depictions have become less traditional and the same is seen in the above-mentioned table. There is also proof that our three hypotheses need not be dismissed.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Over the decades the findings show that women have changed their position in television advertisement. While women in India are depicted over decades as conventional and stereo art, there is a difference in the categories of products advertised. In the year 2000, marketers in male dominated ads were able to represent women in contrast to the 1990s marketers. The results of the analysis are complementary to Munshi's (2000) results. He says that, but only slightly, women's portrayals shift

The research has attempted to research the changing representation of women in TV ads in India as many advertisements as possible. It has not, however, covered all advertising, and so future researchers will cover more advertising. In addition, the shift in men's images could be analysed and a comparative review could give the research more perspective. The publications by other countries may help the multinational organisations make a comparative study.

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