Chapter 4

Analysing Advertising Discourse: An Unconcealment

In this chapter, an analysis of product advertisements selected from English magazines available in India such as *Cosmopolitan, Inside Outside, Femina, Stardust, India Today* and *Outlook* is attempted. It is generally assumed that the readership of the magazines that have serious content is essentially male and the magazines that carry frivolous content on glamour world will have female readership. The readership, for example, in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan, Stardust, Inside Outside* which carry general content on glamour world, and decoration of homes, etc. includes both men and women; women generally are assumed to prefer magazines such as *Femina* that carries write-ups on relationship tips, housekeeping and beauty; men generally are assumed to prefer magazines such as *India Today* and *Outlook* which carry content on current affairs, politics, economy, etc. For this reason, it becomes a calculated strategy for advertisers to have their advertisements in specific magazines depending on the readership. It cannot be denied, however, that all these calculations are based on socio-cultural preferences which in turn are based on socio-cultural ideologies naturalised in society.

The advertisements selected for detailed analysis are from magazines in the last ten years or more. These advertisements have been randomly picked up though care has been taken that these advertisements represent both the worlds – the female and the male and also the reasons why they are persuaded to consume certain products. Again, it is important to investigate advertisements which are visual heavy and verbal light or vice versa and how the visual heavy texts affect the reader and the ways verbal heavy texts affect the person who feels interpellated. Guy Cook in his *The Discourse of Advertising* (3) considers both pictorial and verbal elements as essential and equally meaningful parts of advertising discourse in the print medium. Corresponding to Cook’s model, Freitas states:

> In fact, to privilege textual analysis over visual matter (or vice versa) would result in a severely unbalanced reading of the corpus, since the conveyance of meanings in print ads takes place by means of a process of convergence and reiteration of the same message via every channel available. (96)

Equally important for analysis is the effect advertisements have on the readers and how they succeed in altering the human behaviour from that of a non-consumerist to that of a consumerist. Another aspect that may be worth investigating is whether the language used for
the purpose of persuasion serves the interests of state i.e. to reproduce the structured social inequalities and at the same time achieve some kind of consented control or what Gramsci terms as hegemony. Therefore, it may be said that the analysis not only critically reveals the meaning of the selected advertisements but also traces the ideological changes in the society and the ideological stagnation which is reflected through advertisements and how the advertisements can be understood as a prologue on the contemporary society and the social practices. As CDA stems from a critical theory of language, it perceives social practices as the base for the use of language in society. Social practices are bound to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested for the purpose of serving the interests of different people or groups.

This chapter investigates some advertisements in detail and some have been just referred to in order to substantiate certain points. As discussed earlier, the advertisements have been analysed from the critical point of view i.e. critical discourse analysis. Fairclough in Discourse and Social Change observes, echoing the same thought, that critical approaches are different from non-critical approaches “in not just describing discursive practices, but in showing how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief” (12).

In the discourse of advertising, the ideology of the advertiser appeals to the different ideological frames of the readers either by sustaining the relations of power or by seeking to transform them or through both. To achieve this purpose, advertisements alter the needs of the consumers by first making them feel inadequate about themselves as discussed in detail in Chapter 1. Advertising attack on prospective consumers is in stages which include making the prospective consumer slightly dissatisfied with their lifestyle and the way things are going in their life; constructing a rich and appealing lifestyle through words and images in their ads; appending a product to such a lifestyle; suggesting in subtle or overt ways that they buy what is being offered to improve their life and thereafter, selling the product as an attachment. The attack is so constructed that it is difficult for the consumer to resist the temptation to buy the product and the consumer gets pleasure of possession on succumbing to the temptation rather than feel the loss of capital. Berger says:

    Publicity persuades us of such a transformation by showing us people who have apparently been transformed and are, as a result enviable. The state of being envied is what constitutes glamour. And publicity is the process of manufacturing glamour (456).
An ideology free portrayal of women is important in advertisements because a dominant ideology backs up the cultural hegemony by building social expectations of the dominant social group. Advertisements continue to project women in stereotypes of housewives and motherhood as doing away with the ideological blinds will not help them to achieve their aim of selling their products since showing men and women in roles other than the ones determined by society may have an adverse effect on the sale.

The present chapter focuses on ideological analysis of language and discourse of advertisements. This chapter looks at 5 advertisements from the Indian print media for analysis. To begin with, it may be said that advertisements in general are speech acts of persuasion, promise, threat, argument or even a warning. However, speech act values cannot be decided merely on the basis of the linguistic features of an utterance. Values should be assigned only after taking into account the textual context –both anaphoric and cataphoric; the situational as also the intertextual context, background knowledge, etc. (as discussed in Chapter 3). Additionally, the analysis also refers to Halliday’s functions of language for description and the analytical discussion. Therefore the analysis is an eclectic interpretation and explanation of advertisements, the aim of which is to reveal the ideological quotient inherent in the advertisement. The ideological analysis aims at uncovering the social inequalities and ideologically implicit realities which may be apparently invisible but are very much present in discourse especially the advertising discourse. Teun van Dijk observes:

The presupposition of such analyses is that ideologies of speakers or writers may be uncovered by close reading, understanding or systematic analysis, if language users explicitly or unwittingly express their ideologies through language and communication. (Ideological Discourse Analysis 135)

The analysis, primarily, investigates the interplay between the verbal and the non-verbal/visual as the verbal and the visual features completely cover the advertisement. Everything that needs to be analysed falls in the purview of either the verbal or the visual and are the most important features on which an analysis can be done.

While doing the analysis the following questions that offer the essence of CDA have been kept in view though not necessarily in the same order.

i. How is the text positioned or positioning?

ii. Are the interests of some individual or group being served by this positioning? If so, whose?

iii. Are the interests of some individual or group being negated? If so, whose?

iv. Are there any consequences of this positioning? If so, what?
However, this chapter primarily relates the visual and the verbal to the ideology that advertising permeates while also trying to answer the questions above. The analysis attempts at revealing how the discourse of advertising positions women as inferior to men, and promotes gender disparity and biases; objectification of women; asymmetrical power relations, hegemony. It also shows how advertisements work towards maintaining the existing biases and disparities in society through carefully chosen discourse.

4.1 Advertisement 1
Excalibur (shirts): The King Arthur Collection
Year: 2002
Magazine: Outlook

4.1.1. Description

The advertisement appeared in a magazine Outlook and is essentially addressed to educated office goers (who would understand the myth of King Arthur and who need to wear formals at place of work). The product being advertised is a full sleeved dark coloured formal shirt to be worn on formal occasions. As the advertisement appeared in a magazine which has articles on current affairs, it is expected, though ideologically, that such magazines are generally read more by men. Therefore, it is assumed that the advertisement hails male readers more than female readers because it is the male readers who are direct consumers of the product. In the analysis of the advertisement, therefore, the pronoun ‘he’ will be used for the reader or the person interpellated in the advertisement.

4.1.1.1. The Visual

The advertisement shows a handsome man wearing a rich navy blue Excalibur shirt from the King Arthur collection, a pink tie and a golden watch. He is sitting with crossed but completely relaxed hands. The picture shows only the lower half. The upper half of the man’s face (including eyes and the head) is not shown which is conspicuous by its absence. The brand name EXCALIBUR has a navy blue background which is in sync with the product – the shirt. A sword has also been placed between the four words ‘The King Arthur Collection’ in capitals.
4.1.1.2. The Verbal

The verbal text in the advertisement is:

*Perfectly suitable for days. And Knights*

*A cut above

EXCALIBUR

*The King Arthur Collection

WRINKLE FREE/ CROSS DYES/MYSTIC SOLIDS/MICROCHEKS/FIL-A-FIL

To describe it in graphic terms, the verbal text ‘Perfectly suitable for days. And Knights’ is at the top of the page and has centre alignment. It is followed by a phrase (again centralized) ‘A cut above’ in a smaller font followed by the brand name ‘EXCALIBUR’ in capitals. On the bottom of the page, we see the phrase ‘THE KING ARTHUR’ in narrow capitals in the centre. Immediately below this is the word ‘COLLECTION’ in wide capitals. The two are separated by a long double edged sword. The next line informs the readers about different types of shirts available in this brand. The categories given in wide capitals are WRINKLE FREE/ CROSS DYES/MYSTIC SOLIDS /MICROCHEKS /FIL-A-FIL’.

4.1.1.3. Analysis of the Interplay of the Visual and the Verbal

The advertisement is a mix of the verbal and the non-verbal. The advertisement attempts to create a double edged impact (attack) on the reader through the verbal and the visual stating that Excalibur is a leading brand of shirts. The blend of verbal and the matching visual in this advertisement succeeds in making this advertisement a brilliant document. To begin with the visual, it may be observed that the visual plays a very important role in the advertisement.

The reader sees only the lower face of the model. The advertisement does not show the head and the fingers of the man. This has been done probably to give closest view of the full shirt – from collars to cuffs. The missing head and the eyes on the face indicate that it is the clothes that make a man and not his intelligent mind, discerning eyes and the diligent fingers, giving to the reader a message about its unquestionable quality. The centralized position of the text ‘Excalibur’ on top of the advertisement (where the head of the man should ideally be) forces the reader to read the longish text. It suggests to the readers that owning an ‘Excalibur’ shirt is a matter of pride as the man who wears it has the knightly qualities. The metaphor of knighthood with the use of all positive words about the product
such as ‘impeccable’ and ‘immaculate’ makes a common man interested in the product. It makes the readers accept that while buying the shirt, he does not need to think (he has not been given a head) but to act. He does not need to think of anything else but about the shirt. The metaphor of the knight used for the man suggests to the reader that he just needs to buy the shirt to assume the stature of a knight. All else is insignificant; the only significant thing being the Excalibur shirt.

It may be said that showing the complete face with the head of the man has the possibility that the readers relate the model to a common man’s image. The readers may not associate him with the legendary King Arthur. If the advertisers want the readers to make meanings as suggested by the verbal and the visual, showing the full face of the model might not have helped. It is the facelessness of the man in the picture, which helps the readers to give the model a stature of King Arthur and a desire to be like him. In the process of their desire to be like the man in the picture who has assumed the hyperreal status of King Arthur, they might see themselves in that hyperreal world and identify with the model. The advertisement seems to persuade the readers to follow their desire to become legends like the Excalibur and King Arthur. The positioning of the brand name Excalibur where the head of the model should have been indicates that

i. he has Excalibur in his mind

ii. Excalibur (the shirt) is like a crown on the head.

It is also supported by the graphics of larger capital ‘E’ on the left and the sellers’ mark TM on the right at the same height and the other letters that are smaller give the impression of a crown. It sends subliminal suggestions to the readers that possessing an Excalibur is equal to possessing a crown.

In addition to this, ‘Excalibur’ is placed in a rich purple box which gives it a touch of royalty and dignity. The rich navy blue colour of the shirt along with the golden watch and the pink tie, give an expression of a rich taste and elitist lifestyle lead by the royals or knights that most readers would secretly aspire for. The white sword at the centre bottom of the advertisement (which obviously refers to the Excalibur – King Arthur’s sword) against the black background and between ‘THE KING ARTHUR’ and ‘COLLECTION’ clearly refers to King Arthur’s treasure and his sword Excalibur. Through this, the obvious connection between King Arthur and Excalibur gets reinforced to suggest that association with Excalibur (the shirt) would make them feel like a king.

Moreover, a common man who desires higher status feels hailed at by the advertisement. Buying a shirt fit for kings and knights would be the easiest way for a
common man for rising to the stature of ‘THE KING ARTHUR’. For this suggestion to make meaning in the minds of the readers, advertisers try yet another strategy. As may be seen in the interplay of the nonverbal and the verbal, the word ‘COLLECTION’ in ‘THE KING ARTHUR COLLECTION’, occupies as much space as do the three words ‘THE KING ARTHUR’. The first letter of all the three words is bigger than the other letters. It gives near equal importance to all the words in capitals but more to the word ‘COLLECTION’ that occupies more space signifying its importance and suggesting availability of a good variety or a large collection.

As mentioned earlier, the pink tie in the picture is significant as it manages to arrest the attention of the readers through an eye-catching contrast and highlights its good looks besides quality. The pink tie serves the purpose of garnishing a delicious recipe (the shirt) offered to the reader.

The advertisement suggests that wearing an Excalibur would position a common person on a higher pedestal and would give him confidence of being among the élites. This confidence is visible in his relaxed hands. Lewis in his book Body Language also writes:

Relaxed hands send non-verbal messages of a person’s confidence, acceptance and wellbeing. (104)

The following verbal text in the advertisement is very carefully chosen.

Perfectly suitable for days.
And Knights.
A cut above.
Excalibur
THE KING ARTHUR COLLECTION
WRINKLE FREE │ CROSS DYES│ MYSTIC SOLIDS│ MICROCHEKS │ FIL-À-FIL

The text seems to be as double edged as the Excalibur – the sword of King Arthur. The shirt is perfectly suitable to be worn at all times. ‘Perfectly’ connotes that the shirt can be worn on formal occasions such as a business meeting and also on informal ones as a day out. The word ‘perfectly’ also implies comfort or the state of the person who wears it. The lexical density in terms of adjectives used for the product not only adds to the meaning of the text but also to its cohesion as a text. Words such as ‘impeccable’ ‘immaculate’ and ‘wrinkle free’ add to the perfection of the shirt in terms of the cut, the texture and the appearance. The use of the word ‘perfect’ lends universality or global acceptance to the product.
The phrase, ‘And Knights’ is very significant semantically. It significance as it suggests two meanings to the phrase. First, it is suitable for wearing at nights and secondly, it is suitable for ‘Knights’ or people who are important in the social hierarchy. The ellipsis in the phrase serves a hermeneutic function of discovering the invisible meaning. The readers get a message that to desire a certain position in life; to feel important like the knights or King Arthur, they should possess (purchase) a sword (product i.e. a shirt) like the Excalibur from King Arthur’s Collection. The adjectives used i.e. ‘impeccable’, ‘immaculate’ and ‘infinite’ are superlative in essence and significantly enhance the impact created by the word ‘perfect’ in terms of readers’ confidence in the product. The style (the impeccable cut), quality (immaculate cottons) and variety (infinite choice) – the three features a consumer would want in a product – are the high points of the product. Another indication of the superiority of the product is the information that the product is ‘Available in leading garment stores’, which also makes it a leading product.

In the advertisement, the visual displays the style and helps in perceiving the quality of the product but the range or the variety, which could not be displayed or presented by the visual finds support in the verbal text – ‘WRINKLE FREE/CROSS DYES/MYSTIC SOLIDS/MICROCHEKS/ FIL-Å-FIL and ‘Available in all the leading garment stores’.

To add to the impact created by the verbal and the visual is the rich intertextuality. The product, the King Arthur Collections evokes the image of King Arthur and his legendary knights. The myth of King Arthur and his sword Excalibur has been very effectively used. It was King Arthur who could use the magic sword Excalibur and after his death the sword was thrown in the middle of the lake from where it had come. With this intertextual reference, the advertisement tempts the readers with the suggestion that an Excalibur from the King Arthur Collection would ensure a legendary place for the one who wears it. Addressing the readers, the intertextuality in the advertisement helps to interpellate readers collectively and suggest to them individually that they (he) only have (has) the right to wear (as it was only King Arthur who could use the Excalibur) and they can exercise this right by making the purchase. The advertisement succeeds in making different propositions to the reader.

i. King Arthur was a brave knight – a legend. Buy the shirt, be like King Arthur, be a legend!

ii. King Arthur was impeccable, immaculate with an infinite potential. Buy the shirt and be impeccable, immaculate with an infinite potential like King Arthur.

iii. For this magic to happen the reader needs something magical like Excalibur. The reader can buy Excalibur the shirt and buy that magic.
These propositions made are based on the presupposition that the consumer is just a common man. A common man can be tempted into making a purchase by making such propositions.

Another intertextual element in the advertisement is the use of the word ‘king’. In the world of advertising, the word ‘King’ has immense significance in promoting consumerism. The slogan that ‘the customer/consumer is the king’ often used by the advertisers. The word is loaded with semantic possibilities and easily becomes an effective vehicle of transferring the ideology of the producer to the consumer. The advertisement weaves a mythical world for the consumer, which he can become a member of and adopt the royal lifestyle of kings and knights on buying the product advertised.

The advertisement also uses a lot of stylistic devices. The first line, ‘Perfectly suitable for days’ lacks the subject and the main verb (though the readers understand it and can recover it (‘it is’/‘the shirt is’) from the context. The normal construction, ‘The shirt is perfectly suitable for days’ would not have such an effect. The word ‘perfectly’ would have been lost in the syntactic maze but with the ellipsis, ‘perfectly’ is suitably foregrounded and has become the qualitative yardstick for the shirt. The next line ‘And knights’ is again an incomplete sentence used to highlight the word ‘knights’ to increase the effect of the advertisement. The lack of any syntactic environment (the line has no words preceding or succeeding the expression) and its centralised position also make it foregrounded and the presence of ‘k’ before ‘nights’ becomes more visible, giving it a deliberate ambiguity. The word ‘Knights’ has phonological equivalence with the word ‘nights’ (minus the K) that contrasts with ‘days’ and enhances its meaning potential. Secondly, ‘Knights’, as mentioned above, gives it an intertextual dimension. Phonologically, both the words have the same sound but are different in their semantic interpretation. With the use of one word, the advertisement makes a dual impact on the readers. It suggests:

i. It is also suitable for wearing at nights.
ii. It is suitable for ‘knights’ or people of noble class and taste.

This ambiguity makes the meaning clearer and also gives the advertisement a touch of tradition and mystery. The word ‘Knights’ creates an aura so grand that the reader may feel tempted to buy and wear the shirt in order to be part of the same aura.

Additionally, the phrase (without the verb), begins with an additive conjunction ‘And’, to suggest its semantic relation to the first phrase. The first word being a conjunction, the second word ‘Knights’ (which is also the only content word) automatically becomes significant and stands out. The three phrases – ‘impeccable cut’ ‘immaculate cottons’ ‘infinite
choice’ are instances of syntactic equivalence with the structure – adjective + noun. These two-word phrases make the language crisp and recallable, besides becoming the focus of readers’ attention. The five noun phrases ‘WRINKLE FREE/ CROSS DYES/MYSTIC SOLIDS/MICROCHEKS/ FIL-À-FIL in capitals and spread across the page also indicate the variety available. The tagline says – ‘A cut above’ indicates the quality of the Excalibur range. Such additional information serves to acquaint the reader and subsequently attract his attention towards all that is Excalibur or related to it and work towards promoting consumption.

This advertisement seems to be a very effective ideological tool in spite of the fact that advertisers are soft selling the product. They are presenting the product without using verbs/ words that may overtly suggest to the reader to act or to buy. The product is merely presented well. The onus of making a purchase remains on the reader. It gives him a false illusion that he is making an informed choice. However, it needs to be stated that the information is incomplete as it says only the positive points of the product. The readers do not have all the information required to make an intelligent and an informed choice. It is in this and in the fact that the readers are controlled by discourse for buying a particular product, that the advertisement becomes ideological. The positives in the advertisement make the reader decide in favour of the product. It may not be immediate but the reader will surely remember the name Excalibur and the associated qualities (impeccable, immaculate, infinite) when he plans to buy a shirt. The analysis also succeeds in bringing to light the US/THEM polarisation which covertly exists in the advertisement. It may be observed that the readers interpellated or hailed would receive the message of the advertisement and act accordingly i.e. they buy product and become consumers. Their consumer status would make them a part of the ingroup – happy people who own the product. The images of King Arthur and the Excalibur stand for nobility and show the consumers a hyperreal world of nobility and royalty of which they can be a part by making the purchase. These images also have a role to play in how the advertisers’ ideology stealthily influences readers who are looked upon as prospective consumers. They are being offered King Arthur style at a price with a presupposition that they lack that style and are dissatisfied with their present and with the promise of improvement in future if they buy the product. Those who feel interpellated and act accordingly come into the fold of the ‘US’ group and the others in the ‘THEM’ group.

This hypothesis gets a ground in carrying out the transitivity analysis of the verbal text. The verbal text used to describe the product does not have any verbs though the verbs can be recovered in the phrases and this mental exercise that the readers do helps to make positive
meanings from the text. It may be observed that all the verbal processes in the advertisement are relational in nature:

1. [It is] Perfectly suitable for days.
2. And [it is suitable for] Knights.
3. [It is] A cut above.
4. [It is] Excalibur
5. [It has] Impeccable cut. [They have] Immaculate Cottons. [It has] Infinite Choice.
6. [It is] The King Arthur Collection
7. [It is] Wrinkle Free │ Cross Dyes │ Mystic Solids │ Microchecks │ Fil-a-Fil
8. [It is] available at all leading garment stores.

As can be seen, all the verbal processes (recovered in Square brackets) above are relational in nature. The first three phrases are relational ‘attributing’ i.e. they indicate the quality of the product. Phrase 4 is relational ‘identifying’ and it identifies the product i.e. Excalibur. All the three phrases in 5 are relational ‘possessing’, which again suggest the quality and the range of the product. The phrase 6 is relational ‘identifying’. It identifies the product and defines it with all the qualities mentioned in the advertisement. Phrase 7 is an extension of phrase 6 in that it suggests that ‘The King Arthur Collection’ is a quality brand with the attributes mentioned and that the collection has immense variety. Phrase 8 comments on its availability. The ellipses in the sentences above serve the purpose of foregrounding the words and expressions and to sufficiently highlight the features as intended by the advertisers. The transitivity analysis indicates how the advertisers control people’s actions through discourse and how these advertisements attack the subconscious desires of people with promises that are not true. But most people find themselves tempted into buying the product without realizing how they have been conned into feeling dissatisfied with themselves; appreciating the product as it offers to give them what they do not have. As this advertisement encourages people to buy the product to become members of noble class, taste and intentions or be relegated to the ‘THEM’ group. The divide between the noble and the base; class and the mass; rich and not-so-rich/poor is ideologically pointed through the analysis of this advertisement. It points at how advertisements work towards marinating the divide between the ingroup and the outgroup. Thus it can be seen that all the non-verbal signs with their signified messages converge to supplement the verbal message and ensure an ideological divide which leads to consumption.
4.2. Advertisement 2

Year: 2006

Product: AMERICAN EXPRESS CREDIT CARD

Magazine: Cosmopolitan

4.2.1. Description

This advertisement has been taken from the Indian version of Cosmopolitan, a magazine that is meant for women though also read by men. It is an advertisement for the American Express Credit Card; which is targeted at educated people who aspire for a luxurious lifestyle. It promises to support such people who would like to indulge themselves in shopping at high level outlets or in buying expensive designer clothes whether they can afford such luxury or not. The American Express Credit Card advertisement claims that they make things convenient for people and that acquiring luxury does not remain a question of affordability but of their attitude.

4.2.1.1. The Visual

The visual in the advertisement has black and white background which gives a sharp contrast to the product i.e. the credit card that is green in colour. Its logo is blue in colour with AMERICAN EXPRESS embossed in white on it. The visual shows a woman trying out a long tissue dress and a male designer trying to take the measurements that might be best for the dress she is wearing. Her face is not shown directly but through the reflection in the mirror. The man in black t-shirt and a pair of trousers is on his knees. In a corner there is a headless mannequin of a woman. On the left of the mannequin are some flowers and on the right, there are some dresses on hangers.

4.2.1.2. The Verbal

The verbal text written under the visual in white against the black background is equally significant. The slogan of the advertisement is in a slightly bigger font than the rest of the text on the right at the bottom. It comprises two sentences which are elliptical – they are incomplete.

*Personalised attention, round the clock. Small things to make you feel special.*
The sentences below immediately follow the given slogan to explain the same.

When you call 24 hour card member, helpline, you are connected to one of our friendly executives eager to help. So you will find a solution that fits your needs without having to go through an endless prerecorded menu. Do call us. We’d be delighted to tell you more.

To apply call 9622096220

4.2.1.3. Analysis of the Interplay of the Visual and the Verbal

The advertisement, as stated earlier, is aimed at people who desire an affluent lifestyle and the American express card promises this style and sophistication for them. It must be noted that the advertisement is not selling clothes, as it appears in the visual. It first sells a lifestyle difficult to afford and attacks the readers psychologically by offering to pay for what they cannot afford. A speech act of promise, it undertakes to solve the problem by offering a solution – a credit card, the American Express card with promises to afford this lifestyle and sophistication for them. This advertisement is an excellent example of an ideologically explicit and self-explanatory visual that gets reinforced with the verbal.

The visual shows a young woman looking at her reflection in the mirror and a well-groomed, handsome man looking into the details of her dress. He has a measuring tape hung over his shoulders that translates into his profession i.e. either a tailor or a fashion designer. The well-groomed look of the man, his good clothes and shoes, the texture of the fabric he is handling, his workplace and the mannequin – all indicate that he is a qualified professional designer. His kneel-down posture also suggests his professionalism in his work and a shade of humility. The woman in the advertisement stands like a queen being attended to by a pageboy. The image seems to be more real than the reality of how queens would behave in such a situation. It is a perfect simulation of reality. The expensive fabric she is supporting, her style and sophistication are signifiers of the élite class that the woman represents.

The black and white picture may symbolize the dream of a common man which can be realized only through the AMERICAN EXPRESS CREDIT CARD (in colour). Hence the card gets appended to the lifestyle sold to the potential customers. Through a desire for high lifestyle in people, advertisers promote consumerism, which brings people face to face with the realization of unaffordability and therefore a need for a credit card. The realization of unaffordability comes across as a problem and the credit card is presented as the solution to the problem. Making the target audience aware of their economic shortcomings achieves the
purpose of making them think of themselves in low esteem. Selling the card, thereafter, as a means to realize their dreams, becomes easier.

The black and white visual suggests many things at the same time:

i. an encounter between the past and the present wherein the credit card represents the present.

ii. the time of the day cannot be determined, which indicates 24 hours service

iii. the generation that the advertisement belongs to cannot be determined, therefore giving it a universal appeal.

iv. blurs the difference between the past and the present and between different generations to suggest that the card is suitable for everyone

The male model and the measuring tape over his shoulders is a metaphor of the American Express Credit Card that fits the needs of everyone. In addition, the strength of his muscular body and his good looks get transferred to the card with the implication that it is the best credit card backed by the strong American economy and holds attractive offers and such service to card members as gives attention to details and with all humility. The advertisement emphasises qualities of the card with the coloured American Express logo, which is colourful without actually de-emphasizing the black and white visual. In fact, both the visuals mutually underscore each other because of their contrastive colour scheme.

The advertisement hopes to alter the ideology of the people in favour of using credit cards. The background also indirectly suggests to people to leave the black and white world and step into the world of colour; to renounce the old and embrace whatever is modern; to give up the thick fabric, full-sleeved traditional blouse and adopt the modern sleeveless, transparently thin and shimmering dress. In reality, it works towards fast forwarding the old world ideology to that of the latest and of the modern world. Everything in the advertisement interpellates people reading the magazine and suggests a switchover from the old order to a modern world and advocates the use of plastic money in place of currency notes. It is important to mention that ‘Cosmopolitan’, in which the advertisement appears, is a magazine, which is, generally, read by women with modern outlook. Such people are adaptable and therefore open to switching over to anything modern. Therefore altering their way of thinking to adopt modern ways is not much difficult.

With this brief suggestion of switching over to plastic money, the next suggestion that comes from the advertisement is to switch over to the American Express Credit Card. This gets reinforced by the blue logo of the Bank positioned right next to the card. In fact it is placed over the card and therefore manages to attract attention of the audience on one hand
and steers the audience towards AMERICAN EXPRESS cards on the other. The visual also gets support of the verbal text to make a covert suggestion to the reader to switch over to the American Express cards. The verbal rationalizes the suggestion with the clearly voiced advantages of switching over to the American Express Credit Card. Though the verbal text in the advertisement occupies very less space and is written using the small font, it stands out due to its contrasting background.

The verbal text comprises seven sentences in all. It begins with two incomplete sentences where the main verb is missing.

*Personalised attention, round the clock. Small things to make you feel special.*

In the above, there are two utterances.

i. *Personalised attention, round the clock.*

ii. *Small things to make you feel special.*

Both the utterances are speech acts of promise used by the advertisers. The advertisement makes use of speech acts of promise to persuade the customers to buy the product or switch over to it as it may have better features than other cards. These utterances use grammatical deviation to attract the attention of the readers.

The grammatical deviation helps to foreground the phrases ‘*Personalised attention*’, occurring in the beginning of the sentence and ‘round the clock’ which comes immediately after. Highlighting the features of the American Express Bank Credit Card, the verbal text suggests.

i. You get personalised attention/ We give you personalised attention

ii. You get personalised attention round the clock/ We give you personalised attention round the clock

With the ellipsis of ‘You get’ or ‘we give you in the first sentence, or the absence of the verb in both the phrases that come together *personalised attention, round the clock* separated by a comma gives both the phrases an equal importance and helps in making the expression a speech act denoting promise and underscoring features of the credit card. The visual of the designer kneeling to check the dress hints at the personalized attention promised by the bank. This act of promise is further reinforced with the use of words and expressions such as ‘*our friendly executives*’, ‘eager to help’, ‘*find a solution*’, ‘*We’d be delighted*’ and ‘*tell you more*’. They promise to do this ‘*round the clock*’ by the phrase’s juxtaposition with ‘*personalized attention*’. The convergence of the positive features of the card such as ‘*24-hour card member helpline*’, ‘*find a solution that fits your needs*’, ‘*without having to go through an endless pre-recorded menu*’, ‘*Do call us*’ add to the meaning.
The use of second person ‘you’ and contractions ‘we’d’ are important markers that fit the spoken informal discourse. The second person has been used 6 times and the elliptic phrase ‘[You get] Personalised attention’ gets completed also through the second person. The first person has been used three times and once it can be recovered from the elliptic phrase ‘[we do] Small things to make you feel special’. The use of the first and the second person pronouns make the conversation very personal. Although this talk is being done by the bank through the advertisement, it makes the readers believe that they are part of the conversation which is actually not there. The conversation is an instance of hyperreality. It is a one way communication but the readers believe that they are participants in the conversation. Further, the readers are made to believe that they are making a choice and voluntarily buying the product while the reality is that the bank is selling the product through hegemony. A case of person deixis, with the use of second person pronoun, the advertisement succeeds in pointing out the proposition that the reader/prospective consumer will be able to get all the benefits that the card promises. Additionally, the use of second person more than the first person also gives the impression that the advertisers are giving more importance to ‘you – the customer’ and less to themselves. Besides lending coherence and cohesion to the advertising text, the use of ‘you’ can also be taken as a strategy to overplay the role of the customer and underplay their own role. The use of material verb processes for customers such as ‘call’, ‘go’, ‘apply’ also proves this.

The second utterance in the text ‘Small things to make you feel special’ is yet another promise being made to the consumer which can be realized only if the felicity condition of making a purchase is met. The context, here, is the advertising situation in which a credit card is being sold. The role of participants is to buy and the bank’s role is to fulfil the promises, if the purchase is made. If the action of buying is completed by the customer, the bank needs to have the right intentions of fulfilling their promise of doing –

[We do] small things to make you feel special.

The phrase ‘small things’ has connotative meanings. ‘Small things’ are done in addition to other important things that credit cards generally do. By ‘small things’ they mean that they give attention to details. Therefore, in saying that they do small things, they are saying opposite of what they mean. They are deliberately ambiguous which results in implicature of manner. Having said that, it is important to say that they want the readers to understand that these small things not only are big but also important and it gets corroborated by the visual of the man on his knees inspecting the perfect dress. The meaning that gets foregrounded is that they do everything is possible to please the customers (which obviously other banks do not).
Therefore ‘small things’ [that we do] ‘to make you feel special’ has a semantic significance and it is further explicated in the sentences that follow. Also, this phrase is based on a presupposition that for customers, these small things are important and therefore they should not be forgotten or considered insignificant. Secondly, there is another implicature (quantity) as the advertisers do not say enough about the things they do and do not even mention other banks but the discourse used compels the readers to compare American Express Credit Card with other cards. The meaning that emerges out of the implicature is that the other banks are not as meticulous as them. Additionally, the prospective customers are also made to presuppose that the ‘small things’ that the advertisement mentions without elaborating them must be important and to know the details, they must make a call to the given number. The phrase ‘small things’ makes the readers recognize that American Express Credit Card is serious about after sale service. Therefore the use of the adjective ‘small’ has a big role in the semantic implications of the advertisement.

With this, the advertisers play up their own positive image and make a comparison with other credit cards where the audience might have to listen to automated pre-recorded messages. The absence of human element in pre-recorded messages points towards an absence of personal touch and perfunctoriness in relationships with customers in the other credit cards while the American Express Bank gives ‘personalised attention’.

The use of such language shows comparison between American Express Bank and the other banks, constructs the ideological ‘us’ and ‘them’ stance as the verbal text of the advertisement highlights the positive points of American Express and hints at the negative points of the other cards in the same breath without overtly mentioning the credit cards from other banks. They simply convey what they do is special, customer friendly and different and the readers are compelled to make comparisons mentally. The use of first person pronouns also contributes towards presenting the positive-self and the negative-other image.

These two sentences (discussed above) define the American Express Credit Card. They are immediately followed by a more persuasive discourse, which enhances the effect of the slogan discussed above. It manages to suggest the following to the readers:

i. We have a 24 hour helpline for people who are card members.
ii. You can call our helpline whenever you want.
iii. If you call our help line, you will get connected to one of the friendly executives.
iv. We have many executives.
v. Our executives are always eager to help.
vi. They are all friendly.
vii. With their help you will find a solution to your problems.
viii. Our solution will be most appropriate to your needs.
ix. We will personally look after your needs.
x. Because you will be talking to a human being who can think. They will do their best to keep your needs in mind before issuing you a card.
xi. Please call us on the given number.
xii. We will be happy to tell you what you want to know more about the card.

It needs to be mentioned here that the bank seems to be directly talking to the customer. For this purpose, the choice of spoken informal language has been made for enhanced effect. It is a chatty one-sided conversation by the bank (we) addressed to the readers (you) wherein the bank encourages the readers to call them if they want more information. This has been dealt with psychologically as it is always easier to convince the prospective consumer who initiates the procedure rather than when the bank’s call centre makes the first call to sell the product.

Further analysis of the visual reveals that the credit card boasts of a wide reach without mentioning it in the verbal. The card has the picture of ‘Alexander the Great’, a great conqueror, a leader and a great warrior. Alexander’s empire stretched from one corner of the world to the other. These qualities get passed on to the card as well. The card is seen as the conqueror due to its worldwide reach and accessibility anywhere in the world and this is projected to be an asset. Just as Alexander conquered territories, American Express Credit Card also has its conquests in terms of being patronized by a large number of people around the world.

This advertisement is also an example of visual metaphor and portrays the visual very aptly to match with what the verbal conveys. The man stands for the ‘personalized attention’ looking into the smallest details; and the woman stands for the customer who should feel special. Since the time of the day cannot be ascertained in the advertisement, one can assume that the black may stand for the night and the white for the day. Therefore the expression ‘round the clock’ also gets visualized. Further, the verbal ‘solution that fits your needs’ may be understood as tailor made solution that fits the needs of all customers and the same gets support from the explicit visual. For readers, therefore, subscription to the AMERICAN EXPRESS CREDIT CARD means subscription to style sophistication and style ‘round the clock’.
The analysis also reveals how lexical convergence is used to convey different meanings to get the readers’ acceptance without coercion. The analysis of the adjectives, verbs and adverbs used in the advertisement would also help the readers to think that the company will be eager and delighted to help and find a solution to the customer’s problem personally. The use of the word ‘apply’ suggests that the company invites the reader ‘to apply’ for something very special and not possible to buy easily. Using the word ‘apply’ positions the readers lower than the bank in terms of power relations and the implication is that the company reserves the rights to reject or to grant approval. It is deliberately put across in a manner that the readers should miss the implication. The lexical choices made in the advertisement make the verbal text ideological and hegemony appears to be at work. Through the verbal readers are encouraged to opt for the American Express Credit Card while surreptitiously keeping the reins in their own hands so that the terms and conditions of the purchase are adhered to by the prospective consumer once s/he becomes interested in getting the card.

The advertisement succeeds in altering the ideology of the customer to a certain extent if not in completely changing it. It makes the customer think from their point of view and may also keep these features of the card in mind before deciding to subscribe to a credit card. The advertisers present their intent using the speech act of promise. They promise to give the customer personal care and then go on to explain how they will ensure personalized attention for the customer.

The advertisement also makes use of presuppositions. It expects the readers to interpret the presuppositions in order to compel them to think about the positive points of the product helping them to buy the product. This advertisement works on the following presuppositions to bring the readers to think positively about the American Express Credit Card:

i. People want to adopt modernity.
ii. Modernity also includes having an affluent lifestyle.
iii. Affluent lifestyle is a matter of affordability.
iv. Affordability comes from using credit cards.
v. Using Credit cards is useful.
vi. People need to be made aware of usefulness of credit cards.

vii. Most people have positive attitudes about using credit cards.

These presuppositions puts certain ideas in the minds of the people which get converted into beliefs and make them think positively about the product. The presuppositions
make people believe that they deserve a more affluent and a covetous lifestyle and that is possible if they have American Express credit card.

The advertisement discusses not only affordability in terms of things that the customers can buy with it but also the comfort with which they can apply for the card or to seek more information. It promotes taking credit if buying a product does not fit in their means. It does not mention at all that people will have to pay back the credit also. It does not mention how to pay back the credit and how much time they will get to repay the money they have raised using the card. They do not say anything about the penalties of the late payments and the heavy interests that will be levied in case of not being able to pay the amount in the time given after the purchase. Most vital information is hidden as is their hidden agenda. In short, the advertisement promises to reduce the gap between the rich and not-so-rich by promoting their credit card while also maintaining that the gap exists and by buying the card they will be able to crossover to the other side. The advertisers understand that people are to be convinced that American Express cards are the best as they are tailor made to the needs of people. They best fit the needs of the people. If they go for the American Express Credit Card, they will be able to afford a lifestyle they desire. Therefore, American Express Credit cards are projected as the means to afford a covetous lifestyle.

4.3. Advertisement 3

Product: Blum Kitchen
Year: October 2007
Magazine: Inside Outside

4.3.1. Description

The advertisement appeared in an English magazine called Inside Outside. The product being advertised is Hafele range of ‘Blum Kitchens’. Though the model in the advertisement does not have the Indian looks, it is actually addressed to educated Indian women who spend a lot of their time in the kitchen. The woman in the picture occupies a prominent space in the advertisement and is making an eye contact with the readers. Further, it is very clear through the verbal that the advertisement is talking to women. In general, the advertisement appears to narrate a story about the woman in the picture who apparently has bought a wrong kitchen and is frustrated about it.
4.3.1.1. The Visual

The layout of the advertisement has three parts. The main portion of the advertisement occupies the first two parts and the third part has the information about where the product can be bought i.e. the dealers and the manufacturers. It is interesting to note that about half the advertisement space has been taken by the visual without any mention of ‘Blum’. The kitchen that the couple is sitting in is very hazy and blurred. It is a kitchen which seems to have been constructed with a traditional concept. The utensils placed in the shelves with opaque glass are also traditional. The second half of the advertisement provides the real information about the product – something that the prospective consumer would be interested in is in the fine print. The reason for this can only be presumed. The font size gets smaller as the advertisement goes down. The advertisers’ aim is to get the reader engrossed in the advertisement so that he spends some time on it. For this reason, the advertisement begins with suggestive language combined with equally suggestive visuals. The visuals of the kitchen being advertised are very clearly compared to the visual of the kitchen shown.

4.3.1.2. The Verbal

The advertisement is verbal heavy and the verbal text appears to be talking to the readers through the visual. The verbal text in the advertisement is:

HAFELE FINDING BETTER WAYS

Often, by the time you realize your dissatisfaction, the act is over.
The act of constructing your kitchen that is.
Experience shows that once done, most women keep their kitchens for about 20 years; perhaps much longer than some would keep their hubbies. So it pays to plan your kitchen carefully. An ideal kitchen should be like your dream man – a perfect blend of fascinating looks that suit your taste, and features that fulfils all your desires.
Blum provides a complete range of solutions to help build your dream kitchen from Drawer Systems that make everything stored in them easily visible and accessible, to ORGA-LINE that lets you organize your utensils, plates, bottles and cutlery in the most efficient manner possible to Tandem Boxes that help you store your durable consumables neatly within minimum space. To just about everything that will make you cherish your kitchen for life. Besides, Blum provides what most men today shy away from – commitment of lifetime. Come, fall in love with your kitchen to be.
4.3.1.3. Analysis of the Interplay of the Visual and the Verbal

The advertisement is a blend of the visual and the verbal. In the graphic terms, it may be observed that on the top right, we find the name of the product line HAFELE in capitals, immediately followed by the USP (unique selling proposition)’ FINDING BETTER WAYS. Then there is an image of a man and woman with western looks. The man is standing in the background against the kitchen slab. The woman is sitting on the kitchen slab with her knees close to her chin. After the image, the verbal text, ‘Often, by the time you realize your dissatisfaction, the act is over. The act of constructing your kitchen that is.’ can be seen with central alignment in a big font. The rest of the text is in very small font supported by small images of the kitchen drawers.

The name of the range from Blum HAFELE and the USP FINDING BETTER WAYS is in capitals and it foregrounds the product and its effort to help women in ‘finding better ways’ of living. The word ‘better’ presupposes a scope for improvement on the current models of readymade kitchens available in the market, which the woman has had in her home and has not been happy about it. There is also a presupposition that the kitchen gives problems that HAFELE promises to solve. The readers may or may not know about the problems but the use of the word ‘better’ ensures that the readers would look at the product in positive light and other kitchens in a negative one (including the one shown in the advertisement).

With this, the advertisement points at a problem with an implication that it is ‘your’ problem and promises to solve the problem with a suggestion that there are better ways of dealing with it. The juxtaposition of the verbal with the visual of a semi-clad man in the background and a woman with a frustrated look on her face (looking in the direction away from the man) in the foreground appeals to the reader for some solution to her problem. Her looks, facial expressions, eyes, her closed body language depicts a kind of frustration. This combination of the visual with the verbal ‘finding better ways’ compels the reader to give a second look (read) to the advertisement. Right below the picture, the reader encounters the co-text that reports the problem of the woman in the picture in particular and perhaps women in general. It says:

"Often, by the time you realize your dissatisfaction, the act is over. The act of constructing your kitchen that is."
The visual along with the verbal has sexual undertones. The frustrated look of the woman in the foreground endorses the same with the juxtaposition of the words ‘dissatisfaction’ and ‘act’ in the verbal. The phrase ‘the act is over’ has been made significant by putting it in a separate line. The repetition of the ‘the act’ provides cohesion to the text although the ‘act’ in the first sentence is connotative and has sexual implications that normally, it is women who experience dissatisfaction in sexual relationships while the ‘act of constructing’ the kitchen in the second sentence is denotative in nature apparently because she has chosen a wrong kitchen. The link between the two acts also hints at taking a prompt action as it implies that the choice of a bad kitchen can be as frustrating as the choice of a wrong partner.

Another cohesive device in this text is the use of the second person pronouns, ‘you’ and ‘your’. The syntagmatic relations in ‘your dissatisfaction’ in the first and ‘your kitchen’ in the second again lend cohesion to these semantically different sentences and they appear to be connected and we can see a transition from the abstract ‘dissatisfaction’ to a concrete ‘kitchen’. The word ‘you’ in conjunction with ‘your dissatisfaction’ and ‘The act of constructing your kitchen that is’, has a deictic function of pointing out the problem of the hailed readers and suggests them to take action. The advertisement directly hails Indian women although the models used are western-looking. It makes a suggestion to buy the product advertised before it is too late. At the semantic level, it is here that the reader is introduced to the actual problem i.e. dissatisfaction in women with the way their kitchen is constructed. Here, it is important to mention that these sentences not only raise a problem or a complicating situation but the woman is also challenged to find a solution. The woman here comes face to face with two problems if the sexual undercurrents are analysed. However, the advertisement gives solution to only one of the problems i.e. the problem of making a wrong choice of kitchen. The mention of this problem may also be taken as a face threatening act (FTA) and a natural response to an FTA is to act in a way which mitigates the effect of the FTA. To mitigate the effect, the receiver agrees to the proposition made and acts according to the solution provided. It is a strategy that the advertising agencies use to ensure consumption. It is a deliberate strategy to talk about two problems and give solution to one. The other problem remains a problem throughout. The solution works to placate the reader mentally who feels positive towards the solution because at least one of the problems is being solved.

The fine print in the advertisement is also worth taking a look at. The first sentence of the second part of the text has an outlandish comparison between ‘kitchens’ and ‘hubbies’:
Experience shows that once done, most women keep their kitchens for about 20 years; perhaps much longer than some would keep their hubbies.

It is an extension of the first sentence and describes the problem more overtly. The unusual, and to some extent deviant, comparison between a kitchen and husbands (in that order only) suggests the importance for a woman to choose her kitchen carefully rather than her husband with an implicature (quality) about the possibility of not keeping the marriage but they will have the same kitchen for at least 20 years. There is also a case of contrast between the ‘most’ and ‘some’ both used for women (ellipsis after ‘some’). The comparison and the contrast connect the two clauses cohesively and also keep the readers’ (also the prospective buyer) interest alive especially as it is addressed to the Indian women, where the institution of marriage still holds ground. The next sentence reaffirms the suggestion given in the advertisement that it is more important to plan ‘your’ kitchen:

So it pays to plan your kitchen carefully.

The discourse marker ‘so’ acts to naturalize the context of the previous sentence which is the reason why it is important to ‘plan your kitchen [more] carefully’ than marriage. ‘So’ also functions to remind the readers that the woman made a wrong choice. If she had planned her kitchen, she would not be frustrated as she is currently. In fact ‘so’ has an implication of a logical progression from what has gone before. It is a powerful cue that sounds like a logical argument, which does not allow any response other than agreement and therefore hegemonic in essence. To continue the discussion, it is usual, nowadays, for the advertisers to associate product advertisements with some research to authenticate their claims that it is important to plan a kitchen. The word, ‘experience’ as the first word in the previous sentence validates the claims made. ‘Experience’ may also refer to perfection and that is the schema that the advertisers want the readers to visualize. The next sentence is followed by a simile comparing an ‘ideal kitchen’ and the ‘dream man’

An ideal kitchen should be like your dream man – a perfect blend of fascinating looks that suit your taste, and features that fulfils all your desires.

The adjectives, ‘ideal’, ‘perfect’, ‘fascinating’ ‘taste[ful]’ (synonymy) are part of the simile and therefore common to both the dream man and the kitchen. At the semantic level, choosing a kitchen is given equal importance as choosing a ‘dream man’. But the context in which the simile occurs reinforces that choosing a kitchen is more important than the ‘dream man’ because the kitchen can do what even a man can’t. The suggestion is that women may or may not get their ‘dream men’ who would ‘fulfil all their desires’ but they can at least buy a kitchen that would. The use of the word ‘desires’, however, reaffirms the sexual
undercurrents in the advertisement. Normally, the kitchen is associated with being functional i.e. being able to fulfil all the requirements rather than ‘desires’ that has connotations associated with things other than the kitchen. Further, the use of the modal ‘should’ connects this sentence with the previous sentence and emphasises the importance of being ‘careful’ in choosing the ideal kitchen with fascinating looks and the capability of fulfilling ‘all her desires’.

As may be seen, this is an introductory paragraph to the information about the product. Here, we find the repetition of the word ‘kitchen’ three times (their kitchen, your kitchen, ideal kitchen) which binds it to the same cohesive thread as the last paragraph where the last content word was ‘kitchen’. Similarly, the pronoun ‘your’ again gets repeated four times in this paragraph connecting it to ‘your kitchen’ of the previous text. In this, we have, ‘your kitchen’, ‘your dream man’, ‘your taste’, and ‘your desires’ which adds to the cohesion of the text in the advertisement. This repetition of ‘your’ also gets highlighted because of the repetition of structure, that is, possessive second person pronoun + noun. In addition to this, the pronoun ‘their’ has also been used twice in reference to women’s ‘kitchen’ and ‘hubbies’. In the second and the third paragraphs too, the repetition of ‘your’ continues. Here, ‘your’ has been used with the words ‘dream kitchen’, ‘utensils, plates, bottles and cutlery’, ‘durable consumables’, ‘kitchen’, and ‘kitchen’. The lexical repetition (15 times) of the pronouns ‘you’ and ‘your’ addressed to women and the use of ‘their’ also addressed to women sustains the prevalent social practice regarding the domain of a woman i.e. the kitchen. The use of ‘you’ and ‘your’ interpellates the woman reader.

The use of the second person pronoun ‘you’ with its co-text and context in itself is quite significant. The first time it is used with a verb ‘realise’ which suggests her failing to realise her own dissatisfaction; the second time it is used with the verb ‘organise’, the third time with ‘store’, and the fourth time with ‘cherish’. It implies woman’s obligation to organise her kitchen which she cannot do on her own and she needs assistance from the Blum Kitchen as evident in the use of words ‘lets’, and ‘help’ and ‘makes’ just before the pronoun ‘you’. It implies that Blum would be a solution for her problem.

The second paragraph seems to be the solution to the problem raised in the first part of the advertisement. It mainly talks about the product i.e. Blum kitchen which is projected to be the solution of all problems – as they are ‘dream kitchens’. The small pictures (visuals) of the ‘tandem box’, ‘under sink drawer’ and the ‘Orga-line’ are also in sync with the ‘verbal’ text of the advertisement. The use of words, ‘organise’, ‘efficient’, ‘utilise’, and ‘neatly’, apparently in reference to the kitchen entails the need for efficiency in women in keeping
their kitchens neat and organized. It also entails that women need to assimilate these features in their personality. It forces women to see themselves and live in accordance with the meaning ascribed to them in their socio-cultural context.

The concluding paragraph presents a contrast between ‘most men’ and the ‘kitchens-to-be’ implying a non-permanent man-woman relationship because men ‘shy away from a commitment of lifetime’. In contrast Blum kitchens offer a life time commitment along with the use of phrases ‘20 years’ in the first paragraph and ‘to store your durable consumables’ in the second which also suggest the durability of the product in contrast with the unstable man-woman relationship projected in the advertisement. Therefore it is better to fall in love with a kitchen rather than a man. An instance of intertextuality in the expression ‘kitchen-to-be’ may be noticed as normally ‘to-be’ is used with animate words such as ‘bride’ and ‘groom’. This gives the act of choosing a kitchen the same importance as to the act of choosing a groom or a bride. This sentence also has the use of an imperative ‘come’, which invites (persuades) women to ‘come’ (to have a look) and ‘fall in love’ (at the first sight) with their ‘kitchen-to-be’.

An interesting feature of the visuals in the advertisement is the use of the red colour in ‘A’ of HAFELE (the top right), the trademark (the bottom left) and the logo ‘blum’ (the bottom right). The red colour attracts the attention of the reader especially against the hazy background making the logo and the brand name stand out which is a clever strategy for selling the product as it is important that the readers identify the logo and remember the name when they see it in the stores even if they are not immediately planning to buy the product.

Analysing the advertisement from the ideological point of view, we notice that the visual is hegemonic in nature. The man in the picture apparently has no role to play except being part of the deliberate sexual imagery which would evidently make the reader question his presence in the picture. Apparently, the advertisers would like the readers to draw parallels between the man and the wrong choice of the kitchen by the woman. But in the patriarchal society wherein all discourse is defined by the socio-cultural constructs, this parallel will not be made by the majority of people. Therefore, saying that his presence has some hidden ideological agenda will not be out of place. The more obvious interpretation would be that the woman seeks satisfaction from him and it is for this man that she needs to select the right kind of kitchen. Therefore, the man though positioned in the background, still manages to wield power over her.

This advertisement aims to alter the needs of women buyers and manufacture their consent by suggesting that buying a Blum kitchen would liberate them. Apparently, it is the
woman who is being hailed at to buy the kitchen with a presupposition that women will use
the kitchen. It also conveys that men have nothing to do with kitchen; it is the women’s
domain. The advertisers with clever choice of words seem to give a false impression of
empowering her by suggesting that she is the one making the decisions but a careful
interpretation of the advertisement exposes the hidden agenda of sustaining the prevalent
social practices as it should not be forgotten that it is not just the choice, it is also about who
works in the kitchen and for whom. Though the advertisement projects the idea of freedom to
make her own choice, it also encages her in a stereotype of domesticated women. We may
even question the either/or choice available to her as she gets satisfaction from only two
sources – her man and cooking for him. Another important question to raise is, ‘What does
she gain from this purchase?’ The only answer that one can think of is: A twenty year
sentence in the kitchen of her choice.

4.4. Advertisement 4
Year: 2007
Product: LAZBOY Recliner
Magazine: Inside Outside

4.4.1. Description

This advertisement has been taken from a magazine called Inside Outside – a
magazine that generally has advertisements of products that are useful in making a house or
decorating it. Again it can be easily assumed that the advertisement is addressed to its male
readers but it is also read by the female readers. The advertisement features a recliner chair
and invites a man to rest on it and watch TV.

At the outset, it may be observed that the advertisement features a big comfortable red
colour recliner called ‘LAZBOY’ (The pronunciation is lazy boy, as ‘z’ can also be
pronounced as ‘zee’). It is a case of neologism of two words ‘Lazy’ and ‘boy’ suggesting
that the recliner is for boys/men to laze about.

4.4.1.1. The Visual

The visual includes a red recliner occupying two thirds of the left side of the page
against a grey background. On the right hand side, the co-text is presented in a font that is not
only small but also narrow (Arial narrow) when compared to the rest of the co-text (except
the contact details of the authorized vendors in the fine print). This font is the same as that of information given just below the red recliner on the left side of the page. On the right side of the page, the brand name Lazboy is written in capitals and just below the brand name, there is some product information that tells the readers about the genuineness of the product that dates back to its beginning in 1929. Below this, there are four different recliners placed at different angles.

4.4.1.2. The Verbal

The verbal in the advertisement uses the genre of a narrative, a short story which makes the advertisement intertextual. This intertextuality stands out in many ways in the advertisement. The verbal text in the advertisement says:

*I was sitting there, comfortable, feeling like I was in heaven. Brushing the hair off her forehead she whispered “Ask me anything & I’ll do it for you. I looked into her sensual eyes and said, “You are blocking the TV, the ad break is over!”

*just comfort

*nothing else, nothing less

As can be seen, the narrative/story genre is used for genre of advertising, which makes it an example of what Cook calls ‘parasite discourse’. Guy Cook says that advertisements draw on material which might be used for some other purpose and that “they find a place in the time and space of other discourse, and are seldom alone (magazines and programmes consisting only of ads are both rare and unsuccessful)” *(Discourse of Advertising* 39). Cook also points out that ads borrow quite a few features from a variety of other genres due to which they may lose the identity of their own. Yet, as already said, being a parasite discourse is not necessarily a negative quality, nor is it unique to advertising alone. It is that advertising is an extreme example of a tendency apparent in all discourse. He asserts that “ads exist through other genres and culturally significant artefacts, either by attaching themselves to them (sometimes quite literally), by co-occurring with them, or by imitation” (39).
4.4.1.3. Analysis of the Interplay of the Visual and the Verbal

This advertisement is also a blend of the verbal and the visual. The visual is a red recliner – a piece of furniture projected to be the ultimate in comfort through the accompanying verbal. The story in this advertisement is narrated by one of the participants of the advertisement. It appears that the male narrator is sharing with the readers an experience he had while sitting in the recliner. The first sentence depicts the situation which is, in the words of the narrator, ‘I was sitting there, comfortable, feeling like I was in heaven’. This sentence represents the speaker’s frame of mind because he was sitting in the comfortable recliner. He was

i. Sitting in the recliner.

ii. He was feeling comfortable.

iii. He was feeling as if he was in heaven.

The word ‘there’ corresponds with the word ‘heaven’ in this sentence and the recliner becomes a synonym of ‘heaven’ that provides the highest kind of comfort and also a unique confidence to the person sitting on it.

The second sentence, ‘Brushing the hair off her forehead she whispered “Ask me anything & I’ll do it for you.”’ becomes the complicating action for the man as he had to react to that situation which might entail leaving the comfort of the recliner. The man was reluctant to do that as is obvious from the contexts. For him, nothing seemed more blissful than sitting on a comfortable recliner and watching TV. The narrator takes the reader to a typical ‘What happened next?’ situation where the reader becomes inquisitive and curious about what happened thereafter. The speaker then narrates that he rejected the come hither proposition made by the woman with ‘sensual eyes’. He told her off by saying “You are blocking the TV, the ad break is over.” This remark has been made in the direct speech (see double quotes), using the conversation style with the readers, another feature of the narrative genre which the story at times turns into.

This second sentence has a very vivid sexual imagery. The use of the word ‘whispered’ and the description of the body language used by the woman, who brushes her hair off her forehead to whisper to the man is sexually provocative which becomes more so in conjunction with the verbal in direct form ‘Ask me anything & I’ll do it for you.’

The last sentence of the narrative, ‘I looked into her sensual eyes and said, “You are blocking the TV, the ad break is over”’ is a reflection of the naturalised power that men assume. This sentence is a clear case of FTA performed on the woman who is ready to do
anything for the man. In real-life conversation, an FTA would generally be followed by a response. However, there is no response from the woman’s side to mitigate the effect of FTA. The advertisers who are part of the society that creates such discourses clearly presuppose that they can make a joke at the cost of a woman and there will be no protest. This is exactly what can be observed in the advertisement. Though it has been used to be taken in a lighter vein but the discourse reveals the gender biases that exist in the social-cultural milieu and how power is exerted by the dominant group in the patriarchal society and through the verbal and the visual, this advertisement appears to be maintaining that power. The advertisement implies that men will have this kind of power over women if they possess a Lazboy recliner. This interplay of the verbal and the visual in the advertisement is a clear example of how the discursive practices are related to the social reality. Further, it must be noticed that the owner of the recliner is a man as the name of the product suggests. It is a product made for boys/men to laze around and not for women which is why the narrator is the man reinforcing that once at home men need to have rest and should watch TV and for that they need a comfortable recliner.

The advertisement suggests that with ownership of the recliner they can treat everything at their convenience. The man prefers watching TV sitting in the recliner to the company of the woman. It is suggested that making the purchase of the recliner will be very profitable for them as it comes with an added advantage of women drooling over them, ready to do anything for them. It not only affords power to men to reject the woman and her proposition but also such a thought process might get ingrained in their mind and show up in their attitude towards women; and they may believe in the different roles that men and women are cast in as natural. It also suggests that the place of the woman for men is as short a while as the commercial break. The use of the direct speech in both the sentences is very important as the narrator tells the readers the exact conversation that took place which lends authenticity to the story and the reader might accept it as true. This may increases the chances of more people buying the product.

Immediately, after this story, the tag line of the advertisement is presented as the moral of the story. It says, ‘just comfort nothing else, nothing less’, suggesting that men who possess a LAZBOY recliner will feel heavenly comfort. The advertisement suggests that comfort should be their top priority (and we see it written in the top font size possible-72 bold), and that they would settle for ‘nothing else, nothing less’ (font size-20 bold) than the comfort of LAZBOY. The advertisement promises ‘heavenly comfort’. What is worth noticing here is the use of the word ‘heavenly’ with comfort and it goes very well with the
The word is subjective and therefore also ideological. The verbal text is based on the presupposition that men need comfort (after a hard day’s work?) and the recliner is a perfect answer to the need created by the presupposition.

The phrase ‘nothing else, nothing less’ appears to be very catchy and innocent. The truth is that it surely is catchy but not innocent. Here the hermeneutic function of language is at play. It may be interpreted that ‘nothing’, which is repeated twice, ‘else’ and ‘less’— all directly or indirectly make a comparison between the recliner and the woman. The woman’s proposition is not given enough value when compared to the comfort that the recliner offers. Hence the recliner becomes more important than the woman. The words ‘else’ and ‘less’ together with ‘nothing’ reduce the position of women and make them unimportant compared to the recliner’s comfort and also compared to the TV programme.

The process of ‘othering’ that Teun van Dijk talks about may also be noticed in this advertisement. It also suggests to men that they have the power to buy as they are the ones earning for the family and this power also gives them the right to be comfortably seated while watching TV and power to reject the proposition made by the woman if they so desire. Additionally, those who make the purchase form a part of the ingroup and those who do not are part of the outgroup. Since the recliner is custom made for ‘boys’, it immediately ‘others’ all women who do not need to have the product and thereby relegate ‘them’ to the outgroup, the lesser group – the group that does not need the recliner because of how society positions them vis-à-vis men.

The advertisement, like all other advertisements, shows the good features of the recliner both through the verbal and the visual. The verbal states that the recliner has patented mechanism, 18 reclining angles, 3 footrest positions and are available in different sizes. They are very popular; as many as 15000 recliners get sold every day; and they come with 10 years warranty. The visual of an attractive, comfortable, red recliner with the verbal that list the qualities of the product attract the customer. In addition, the visual of the recliner in 4 different angles is a strategy to convince the prospective consumer with its versatility.

The next sentence, ‘the original recliner, since 1929’ is again a strategy to convince people that it is the company that has experience of about 80 years of making the recliners, so, in buying the product, the consumers cannot go wrong. The word ‘original’ touches the chord in human desires that crave for the best. It builds up the brand image, which appeals to the mind of people who like to go for things that have proved their quality. But at the same time, it may also be said that they are also trying to restructure the social realities of 1929 or perpetrate the ideology of 1929 when as a rule men worked outside the house and were
considered the bread winners of the family and women looked after the home and the comfort of their husbands and children. The advertisement is a combination of the soft sell and the hard sell. The use of narrative without giving any suggestion of consumption is a soft sell tool but the expressions, ‘*patented mechanism*’, ‘*18 reclining angles*’, ‘*3 footrest positions*’, ‘*also in 2 & 3 seaters*’, ‘*100 million recliners sold 15000 a day*’ are instances of the hard sell apparatus.

To sum up, the advertisement discussed above sustains the existing power relations. As pointed out earlier, it is ideological because it is based on the presupposition that men need comfort. And what is worrying is the fact that women will not even register the inequality being meted out to them because it is common sense; because it is natural. The masculine perspective in this advertisement is the norm and everything else a deviation. As we see that the woman subjugates herself before the man; is ready to do everything for him but the man treats her. It works towards reproducing the socio-cultural reality and tries to re-establish that man has the right to relax and be comfortable and women have the duty to give him comfort and pleasure. After trying to reestablish the male superiority, the advertisement goes on to make a statement that the recliner being advertised is just right to fit into this need of men, which the advertisers expect to be readily accepted by most men. It also is clear that the advertisers in order to sell the product do not think about how the advertisement will affect the society and the position of women with such subliminal messages that stay in the minds of people for a long time.

**4.5. Advertisement 5**

**Year 2008**

**Product: IFB Range of House Products**

**Magazine: Femina**

**4.5.1. Description**

The advertisement for the IFB range of products has been taken from *Femina* (July, 2008), which is an English magazine that is read essentially by educated Indian women interested in latest style, fashion and glamour.
4.5.1.1. The Visual

The advertisement shows a well-dressed young woman reading an English newspaper in a modern café. She is sitting at the coffee table in a chair. She is having tea or coffee as indicated by a white cup placed in the saucer on a table along with a basket of croissant and white napkins. The whiteness of the cup and napkins and light coloured croissants contrasted with black furniture attracts the attention of the reader. The woman is dressed in a formal western outfit which is a dark navy striped skirt suit, and a pair of black stockings. She is wearing a white shirt to go with her dark business suit. We also see a black laptop bag lying on the floor close to her. She sports a stylish look that gets further enhanced with a string of white pearls around her neck. Her hair is neatly tied up in a bun. Her body language and the style of her attire show that she is a well accomplished person who has achieved something in life. On the whole, the woman seems oozing with confidence and appears to be a high level professional. In the advertisement, the woman appears to be out for a business meeting with a client in a cafe. The contrast of dark and light shades gives a not-to-be missed visibility to different objects in the picture and makes them significant symbols to the meaning that can be derived from the picture. We can see a visual representation of the problem that is the household chores such as washing the clothes that she is thinking about which is indicated by the clutter of things on the left hand side as we can see some raw vegetables, some dirty clothes in the laundry basket and some dirty dishes. We can also notice a visual representation of the solution as we see alongside, at the bottom of the page, a range of IFB products such as a clothes-dryer, a front loader and a top loader washing machine, a dishwasher and a microwave oven.

4.5.1.2. The Verbal

At the top of the advertisement is a caption which has been placed at the level of the head of the woman that reads ‘housework on your mind?’ Different font sizes and styles have been used for the verbal text. For example caption is font 22 (Arial rounded MT); and ‘IFB’ is 40 (Stencil bold) and the text ‘set yourself free with IFB’ is 18 (Arial rounded MT). The verbal that gives a list of IFB Products i.e. the IFB products which are –100% Clothes Dryer, Front Loader, Top Loader, Dishwasher, Microwave Oven is in small font size. The verbal
text ‘set yourself free’ is cleverly juxtaposed with the IFB brand name. It may be seen that the verbal text is very much in sync with the visual.

The verbal includes:

i. ‘housework on your mind?’

ii. ‘set yourself free with IFB’

iii. 100% Clothes Dryer, Front Loader, Top Loader, Dishwasher, Microwave Oven

And telephone numbers, email and website address as ready reference for people who may be interested to know more about the products are also there.

4.5.3. Analysis of the Interplay of the Visual and the Verbal

The advertisement is a blend of the visual and the verbal which ensures interest in the advertisement by the readers who are perhaps planning to buy a machine for doing household chores. The picture of a woman along with the verbal text becomes a commentary on how working women who are multitasking nowadays get stressed and surely machines come to their rescue and that it is an intelligent woman who would make a right choice from the options available. Typically, like so many other advertisements, this advertisement presents a problem solution pattern. The analysis traces the visual and the verbal elements to analyse it in terms of problem solution pattern; and thereafter probes the deeper levels to reveal the ideological function of the advertisement that helps not only to maintain the existing order but also to strengthen it.

The caption in the verbal suggests the problem of most working women who not only have to do well professionally but also have to singlehandedly shoulder responsibilities of the home. The woman in the advertisement has her mind preoccupied with the workload of the household chores. In spite of being placed well professionally, household chores continue to weigh on her mind. Using IFB products is her only gateway to freedom as is suggested ‘set yourself free with IFB’. The advertisement very prominently presupposes with the verbal text ‘set yourself free with IFB’ that women are not free in the patriarchal society and they have to look after the housework even though they are working professionals. On one hand, the advertisers assert that housework is a woman’s job, on the other hand, they suggest that a woman needs freedom from housework through consumption. They suggest that if women desire freedom from ‘housework’, they can do it with IFB. Ideologically, the presupposition also implies that women can get freedom from the housework only if they buy the product or
else they stay imprisoned as the ‘natural’ social realities reiterate that the real domain of women is their home and the real work for her is the ‘housework’.

This advertisement is yet another and a very strong case of the problem solution information structure, which is usually found in journalism texts. Such advertisements are designed to appeal to the intelligence of the consumers and are argumentative in nature. They make a rational case for consumers to buy the advertised product as the only way out of a problem they may be facing. Such advertisements lead the consumers to accept that there are problem situations in their lives. To counter the problem, advertisements present a solution in the form of a product. To analyse the problem solution pattern in this advertisement, typically in the way suggested by Michael Hoey in the first chapter, it may be said that

1. There is a woman who works outside her home (situation).
2. She considers doing household chores her responsibility but is not able to find time to do them and therefore they weigh upon her mind even at work (problem).
3. She has a choice to use the IFB range of products (kitchen appliances) which are answers to all her problems (solution).
4. She uses the products; she is able to set herself free from the clutches of the problems (positive result).

The working woman in the advertisement reading an English newspaper appears to be an intelligent person who is expected to take certain decisions in her life and can surely decide to buy some products if consumption makes her life simpler and happier when compared to the life before consumption. The problem of household chores, whether the woman does them herself or gets them done by hiring a help, remains the headache of the woman. And to solve this problem, the advertisement suggests that she buy IFB products which will make her life free from such worries and she will be able to concentrate more on her job. Such suggestions create the “necessary illusions” (Chomsky 31) for the person who feels interpellated by the advertisement, and ‘manufacture consent’ (a term coined by Herman and Chomsky) for accepting the ideological incline of the advertisers as common sense which also enhance the probability of consumption.

Critically speaking, the advertisement and the images shown in the advertisement are aimed at women in general, especially those who work outside the confines of their homes. To analyse the visual discourse it may be said that the clutter of dishes, clothes, food waiting to be cooked in her home represent how her mind is cluttered with the thoughts of the unfinished household chores. These thoughts of unfinished work weigh on her mind even though she is out on a business meeting. The advertisement suggests that the woman has
‘housework on [her] mind’ even at the place of her work. Her preoccupation with these thoughts does not let her be free of the burdensome work that is waiting for her back home. The preoccupation with the problems mentioned in the advertisement, that is, finishing her household chores for which perhaps she does not have time being a working professional, has been foregrounded as the background in the image is hazy and unclear.

Ideally, she should have been presented as preparing for her business meeting but her laptop is lying ignored near her feet and instead of going through her business notes she is reading a newspaper. It may be contested that she is ready with everything and has a relaxed attitude because of her readiness. But her readiness is not visible with her laptop closed in the bag which is on the floor rather than on the table. The table shows a cup which indicates that she has started having her coffee without waiting for the client to show up as if this is the only time available to her when she can relax in between work. At the same time it is also shown that though she is trying to relax, she cannot because of the work waiting for her at home. This is important as a man would not have been presented in this manner. Visualizing the same situation with a male model would have a different scenario. Perhaps the newspaper will be replaced with the open laptop, making it a more serious affair.

The montage of images and the verbal makes the audience to build their own image of the woman in advertisement which would conform to the cultural constructs where a woman would be doing all the household chores suggested by the advertisement. This process will build the consumer through covert messages as the working women professionals will identify with the woman and will start thinking positively about the IFB products being advertised.

The advertisement under scanner also projects the gender stereotypes but quite overtly. In doing so, it makes use of the following presuppositions:

i. Washing, cleaning, chopping and doing dishes is their job
ii. It is their business to worry about such household chores.
iii. It is natural for them to worry about it.

Women may be placed well professionally but it is their job to look after the house. They may not do it themselves and may hire services of housemaids to do these things but getting these household chores done is definitely her domain. It has an added implicature that men do not have anything to do with it. Another implication at work here is that the household chores like washing clothes and utensils will keep women ‘imprisoned’ and that the purchase of the products will enable women to achieve their freedom. IFB dish washer or clothes dryer can set them free from these tasks. It suggests that women can off burden themselves from
performing the household chores by using the IFB range. It will meet the needs of women who often are expected to do multitasking and to solve problems. In fact, it is often said that women are better at multitasking, which again is an ideological stance of society in the present day scenario as it is expected of women to work both outside and inside the house and be good at both.

The analysis strives to prove how educated Indian women become ideological subjects who, being interpellated in this advertisement, are subjected to the ideology of consumption and at the same time become targets of ideology that involves people to think and behave within a given society in particular ways which are not questioned in a given social setup as they are natural ways of doing things. It would not be an exaggeration to come to such an analysis by merely analysing the visuals since visuals have more to state than words. In modern societies, visual texts may be taken as whole texts which are endowed with a discourse of their own especially in the field of advertising, visual texts succeed in getting across effectively by associating the visual aspect of language with its verbal form.

The next chapter is an extension of the analysis. The focus of analysis in the chapter will again be to reveal the gender inequalities rampant in society. The main attention of analysis would be to establish how as a result of invasive intervention of media discourse, gender inequalities stop getting noticed. The analysis focuses on the investigation of texts, interplay between the verbal and the non-verbal and the visual to reveal stereotypical representations of men and women in society. The chapter also includes transitivity as one of the analytical tools to reveal that the discourse of advertisements has the power to construct and deconstruct the socio-cultural, economic or political ideologies existing in society because of its capacity of reaching the masses through different media.