CHAPTER – II
LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Portrayal of Women in Advertisements
2. Fight for Just Portrayal
3. Women in Advertising: Representations Repercussions and Responses
4. Image of Women in Advertising
5. The Female Athlete Image
6. Women’s Feelings about female images in advertising
7. Sex in Advertising
8. The Opposite Sex effect
9. Indecency in Advertising
10. How Advertisements Exploit Women
11. An Analysis of Roles portrayed in Magazine Advertisements
12. Women in Indian Television Commercials
13. Images of Women in online Advertisement of Global products
14. Future Trends
15. Ethical Issues of Advertising
16. Marketing Ethics and Social Responsibility
17. Case Studies of Specimen Complaints Regarding Portrayal of Women
CHAPTER – II
LITERATURE REVIEW

This Chapter presents review of literature mainly pertaining to the portrayal of women in advertisements and relevant ethical issues.

1. Portrayal of Women in Advertisements

Published literature, discussions indicate that there is a significant increase in the advertisements in recent times. Portrayal of women in these advertisements in various media such as print, TV, outdoor is a cause for concern. The commonly made observations are that the women are portrayed as glamorous objects, they are shown as dependant on men, are shown in traditional mundane roles as housewife, teacher, nurse, mother. They are rarely shown as decision makers or in positions of power or as accomplished women. Some advertisements are felt to be obscene or vulgar and degrade the dignity of women.

In order to control such advertisements The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has laid down a code of conduct. ASCI is a voluntary self-regulatory council of India. It was formed in 1985 with an intention to control the content of advertisements, not to hamper the sale of the products which may be found offensive by some people. It has adopted a Code for Self-Regulation in Advertising. It is a commitment to honest advertising and to fair competition in the market-place. It stands for the protection of the legitimate interests of consumers and all concerned with advertising - advertisers, media, advertising agencies and others who help in the creation or placement of advertisements.

ASCI has one major goal that is to maintain and enhance the public's confidence in advertising. ASCI seeks to ensure that advertisements conform to its Code for Self-Regulation which requires advertisements to be:

• Truthful and honest to consumers and competitors.
• Within the bounds of generally accepted standards of public decency and propriety.
• Not used indiscriminately for the promotion of products, hazardous or harmful to society or to individuals particularly minors, to a degree unacceptable to society at large.
• Fair in competition.
ASCI propagates its Code and a sense of responsibility for its observance amongst advertisers, advertising agencies and others connected with the creation of advertisements, and the media.

It encourages the public to complain against advertisements with which they may be unhappy for any reason. It ensures that each complaint receives a prompt and objective consideration by an impartial committee known as Consumer Complaints Council (CCC). The committee takes into account the viewpoint of the advertiser, and an appropriate decision is communicated to all concerned. It tries to achieve compliance with its decision through reasoned persuasion and the power of public opinion.

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner. The law relating to obscenity in India is codified in Sections 292, 293 and 294 of the Indian Penal Code. In spite of these provisions, there is growing body of indecent representation of women or references to women in publications, particularly advertisements, etc. which have the effect of denigrating women and are derogatory to women. Though there may be no specific intention, these advertisements, publications, etc. have an effect of depraving or corrupting persons. It is, therefore, felt necessary to have a separate legislation to effectively prohibit the indecent representation of women through advertisements, books, pamphlets, etc.

The salient features of the Bill are:

a. Indecent representation of women has been defined to mean the depiction in any manner of the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent or derogatory or denigrating to women or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals.

b. It is proposed to prohibit all advertisements, publications, etc. which contain indecent representation of women in any form.

c. It has also been proposed to prohibit selling, distribution, circulation of any books, pamphlets, etc. containing indecent representation of women.

d. Offences under the act are made punishable with imprisonment of wither description for a term extending to two years and fine extending to two
thousand rupees on first conviction. Second and subsequent convictions will attract a higher punishment.

This portrayal of women in advertisements has led to the National Commission for women (NCW) to recommend amendment in the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986. The NCW wants to include new technologies like MMS and electronic media and some which were left outside the ambit of the Act like posters and TV serials which perpetuate stereotypes of women.

2. Fight for Just Portrayal of Women

An organization called “Saheli Women’s Resource Center” has published an article titled “The Fight for a Just Portrayal” on their website. The article says “Over the past decade, women’s organizations have been agitating about the way their sex is portrayed in the media. Some of the things women have been fighting, for example, are advertisements encouraging parents to save for the daughter’s dowry, the equation of a ‘good’ woman with a housewife, equating a brand of vegetable oil with mother’s love”. The article further says that such campaigns by women’s organizations have little impact on advertisements which promote sexist stereotypes and pornographic images which have increased.

The said organization strongly objects to the use of women’s faces and bodies to sell products because such advertisements put women at par with the products and turn them into objects of display and sale. Advertisements create the myth that women are primarily sex objects for the consumption of men and every man has by right access to the bodies of all women, according to the article ‘The fight for just Portrayal’

Some basic observations on the representation of women in Indian perspectives have been made by Dr. Khokan Kumar Bag and Piyal Basu Roy in a paper published by them in 2010. According to the authors of the said paper, in the era of globalization, changes are prevalent everywhere, from infant to aged, from country to country, irrespective of sex, caste, religion, race and so on. But it is really controversial that how far these changes are improving environmental quality, whether it is physical or social.

There is no satisfactory answer regarding it and no one can deny that despite changes have brought some positive impact in the living standard among the people, these have resulted undesirable physical and social problems to the mankind. Among
those negative aspects, indecent representation of women is most shameful which is one of the emerging social issues at present. This representation does not only degrade the quality of them, but simultaneously encourages antisocial activities and crime related to women. Such type of disgraceful representation is prevalent in newspapers, cinemas, magazines, T.V. The result of this sort of representation has been increasing rape, or teasing and other forms of exploitation of women.

An article by Prachi Srivastava, published in May 2011, titled “Is Indecent Representation of Women in advertising justified?” states the following:

Women, play a very significant role in advertising today both as consumers and as influencers. The depiction of women in Indian advertising has been a topic of debate for a while now. The experts against the indecent representation of women in advertising strongly believe that the woman's moral and social status is mainly determined on the basis of the degree of exposure of her physical form to public view. Some advertisements portray features of women as things that are separate and more important than the true image of a woman. They push perfection to a great extent that there seems to be no scope for inner beauty. Women advertising redefine women attractiveness as something that is away from natural.

Is woman today, the primary consumer of the product/service advertised? Or is she herself the product or service? There are advertisements where the females are shown in bad light. They are clad in skimpy clothes even when their presence in the advertisements has no relevance with the brand. There have been advertising campaigns where there has been a very decent portrayal of women and they have been very successful too like Titan, Raymonds, Jewellery advertisements, cosmetic advertisements like L’oreal etc.

On the other hand, few advertising gurus believe that in some of the brands the so called indecent representation of women plays an important role in brand recognition. For example, condom ads, innerwear ads have more impact on the audience when such representation is done as it is provocative.

Talking about indecent representation of women in advertising, Alyque Padamsee, advertisement guru and theatre personality says, “I think its stupid advertising. It attracts attention to the commercial, not to the brand so it is silly. In India where there is democracy, everything is legal and we don’t want that these blue nose people say that you can’t do this and you can’t show a girl in a bikini on the
cover of the magazine but why not? You want to show, show it. But I think, it doesn’t do anything good for the brand”.

On the same issue, Sam Balsara, Chairman and MD, Madison World, says, “I think cases of indecent representation of women in advertising are few and far between. There are now only very isolated examples where women are used out of context or skin is exposed unreasonably. Advertising in India has done far more for emancipation of women, making them appear as role models, making them confident, outgoing and independent- than we are given credit for. That advertising exploits women is an old stereotype that hangs over and is not based on current reality”.

According to Alan Collaco, Secretary General, ASCI, “The complaints against Indecent Representation of women have gone down from about 4-5 a year to only one last year. Advertisers are more sensitive nowadays. The products against which complaints have been received are deodorants, condoms and innerwear. There has been a case of clothes ware where the Ad headline ”You’ll melt once inside” read in conjunction with the visual depiction of a woman in a provocative pose was considered indecent as it was likely to cause grave and widespread offence. It should always be remembered that any indecent representation of women doesn’t help”.

The bold representation of women in advertisements can be done only if it is associated with the brand and is relevant to it. Mostly such advertisements don’t contribute much to the sale of the product and are restricted to brand recognition and recall.

3. Women in Advertising: Representations Repercussions and Responses

In a paper entitled “Women in Advertising: Representations Repercussions and Responses” published in November 2009, the authors Maurice Patterson, Lisa O’Malley and Vicky Story have said that the representation of women in advertising has been the subject of discussion and debate for over four decades with advertisers standing accused of utilizing inappropriate and degrading stereotypes. According to IAPI (Institute of Advertising Practitioners in Ireland) it makes no commercial sense for advertisers to promote negative images of women.

In a recent study to measure the attitudes of young women to sexually objectified advertising comparison was made with similar surveys carried out in 1991 and 2000. Respondents agreed that females were portrayed as sex objects in advertisement, but, were less offended by these portrayals than female respondents in
1991. The same study further states that in advertisement sex has become more explicit, more models have appeared in the nude. From the mid 1960, there were significantly more over portrayals of women as sex objects (Henthorne and LaTour 1995, Mayne 2000, Reichert et al, 1999, Soley and Kurzbard 1986).

Results of the study in 1991 showed that women were still critical of the way in which they were portrayed in advertising. Women still thought that advertisements treated them mainly as sex objects, showed them as fundamentally dependant on men and found the portrayal of women in advertising to be offensive. According to this sample of women, an offensive advertising campaign would have a negative effect on company image and purchase intention. (Ford, LaTour and Lundstorm 1991).

4. Images of Women in Advertising

In an article titled ‘Images of women in Advertising: Dynamics and Consumer Perceptions, the author Elera Pruvli says that, the history of images of women in advertising goes back to the end of 19th and beginning of 20th century. Products advertised with the images of women were like cosmetics (talcum powder and soap) or sweets and drinks (tea, coffee, chocolate). The perfect housewife was one of the key figures in advertising though the goods promoted may not necessarily be household goods. The image of female as a sexual figure is more recent. It is also necessary to note that all over the world women in the advertisements during the period 1920 to 1990 have become progressively thinner. The female models in the advertisements have been extraordinarily attractive and unrealistically thin, as per the same article stated above.

“Thin” Images and Perceptions among College-Age Women

Usually, women possess more flesh than men. This is connected with their motherhood function. “For much of human history, this characteristic was admired, sought after, and celebrated in the arts” (Jacobson and Mazur 1995). Currently, women with any fat struggle to fit the waif-model image which has pervaded the media. The most well known research on the influence of the “thin ideal” upon the attitudes and behaviors of young women was published ten years ago in the “Journal of Communication.” The study by Myers and Biocca in the year 1992 states: “The research indicates that both media messages and the target audience of younger females place a high value on physical attractiveness”. They are constantly
comparing themselves to the unattainable images of the super models. However, as later researchers showed eating disorders and body image are still the main preoccupation among young girls in the Western world.

“A generation ago, according to Naomi Wolf, a typical model weighed 8 percent less than the average woman; more recently she weighs 23 percent less. Most models are now thinner than 95 percent of the female population” (Jacobson and Mazur 1995).

One very general conclusion from US-based research is quite sad: idealized body images have a negative impact on attitudes, perception and behaviors among young women. “The use of women’s bodies in ads is essentially a cheap trick that marketers use instead of making more thoughtful arguments on behalf of their products” (Jacobson and Mazur 1995). Many women find these ads degrading and insulting to their being.

Self-comparison with the extraordinarily thin models produces dissatisfaction with one’s own body image, increases anger and depression, and decreases self-esteem. In most cases these investigators used a direct stimulus-response model (short-term or natural exposure to advertisements containing thin models, Fang Wan and Wells 2002).

Media critics argue and research supports that women are consistently portrayed in narrowly defined roles that overemphasize physical beauty and sexuality while deemphasizing intellect ability and occupational reality. (Lazier a Kandrick, 1993).

Advertisements can be called a measure of social opinion as if expressed the needs of the society but at the same time it also forms it.

5. The Female Athlete Image

The female athlete image appeared in Europe and in the USA since 1996. These advertisements have portrayed images of women who are strong, positive, capable and confident. These advertisements present women with self esteem. Increasing feminist movement and popularity of athletics among women have been the two reasons for appearance of such image in the west (Caftery and Hunter 2001). However, the use of such image is not widely seen yet in India.
6. **Women’s feelings about female images in advertising**

A qualitative study was undertaken in Brazil by three researchers at Universiade Novo de Julho Brazil to find out how women interpret female portrayals in advertising. The findings are as follows:

i. The images in the advertisements devaluate or idealise women and portray them in a modern way.

ii. Women compare themselves with endorsers, i.e., the models appearing in advertisements.

iii. Advertising imagery affects them in a negative way as their psychological health is affected by making them feel depressed and anxious.

(Study by Claudia Rosa Acevedo, Jouliana Jordon Notava and Ana Laura Arruda)

Prof. Gad Saad of Concordia University has published a paper titled “Applying Evolutionary Psychology in Understanding the Representation of Women in Advertisements” in which it is quoted thus:

“Advertisers are in the business of reaching an audience. Hence, they will use whichever means necessary to convey their messages, including the use of sexual imagery.”

7. **Sex in Advertising**

Sex appeal and the use of erotic stimuli have been at the forefront of the advertising industry from its earliest conception. Both men and women find the sexual innuendoes of female bodies to be emotionally appealing according to a research paper by John Alan Cohan who has stated the following about the role of sex in advertising:

In society it is commonplace to use sex appeal in our daily lives in order to get ahead or to attract the attention of others. Sex as, an emphasis in advertising, some say, makes for amusing, entertaining, titillating content. In fact, it does capture everyone's attention, which is what a skillful advertising campaign wants to happen.

Community standards regarding sex are in a constant state of flux. Many think that exposing more flesh, using younger or more alluring models does no more than keep up with sexual progress in society, which is more open and less constrained on matters of sexual conduct today. Some advertisements would have been regarded as pornographic or obscene a few years ago. It is no longer considered shameless to
observe something likely to erotically arouse you or to focus on sexually salacious features of images presented in the media. Sexually suggestive ads are so common that it becomes a complicated matter to argue that they are "wrong," or in what way they are "wrong," or whether they are better spoken of as vulgar or tasteless, thus offending the rational sensibilities of some people – or whether they are nothing more than something of a hype which ordinary audiences readily see for what they are.

While discussing the specific ethical issues in women’s advertising the same author has observed that women believe in the advertised “looks” and feel that such looks will make them appealing to men. Many advertisements tend to impress upon the women that the men desire sexy women and in turn sexy women are vulnerable, weak, submissive, mindless and needy. The ideal women shown in advertisements are attractive even to the point of unattainable beauty, thinness and youth.

Many commentators of this topic think that depicting women as sex objects fuels a climate that tolerates violence against women.

8. The opposite sex effect

The opposite-sex effect has been a very ubiquitous finding. Providing sexual images of women is more effective when targeting men (Jones, Stanaland and Gelb, 1998; LaTour & Henthorne, 1993; LaTour, Pitts, & Snook-Luther, 1990; Smith, Haugtvedt, Jadrich, & Anton, 1995). On the other hand, the display of sexual images of men is more effective when targeting women (Reidenbach & McCleary, 1983; Simpson, Horton, & Brown, 1996).

The manner in which men and women are depicted in sexual ads has been mainly explored via the use of content analyses. In some instances, the content analysis is limited to a single culture and a single time period. For example, Lin (1998) found that women were more often depicted as sex objects, and that men were depicted as heavier and not quite as attractive. In other instances, the content analysis is longitudinal; for example, Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, and Zavoina (1999) found that women were three times more likely than men to be portrayed in a sexually explicit manner, and this ratio remained consistent for 1983 and 1993. Fergusson, Kreshel, and Tinkham (1990), in a content analysis of Ms. Magazine over a 15-year period, demonstrated an increase in the portrayal of women as sexual objects. A third type of content analysis introduces a cross-cultural component, wherein the depiction of men and/or women is contrasted cross culturally. Recent
studies have included content analyses from such varied countries as Malaysia, Singapore, Japan the United States, and the Hispanic American culture (Ford, Voli, Honeycutt & Casey, 1998; Fullerton & Kendrick, 2000; Maynard & Taylor, 1999; Wee, Choong, & Tambyah, 1995). Several consistent patterns have emerged from these studies. Sex-role stereotypes are found in all cultures, albeit to varying degrees. For example, in the Fullerton and Kendrick (2000) study of Hispanic ads, only 3 of 92 advertisements contained a sex reversal of stereotypical roles. Not surprisingly, cultures with more egalitarian attitudes toward the sexes have typically yielded fewer incidences of such stereotypes. Furthermore, women’s reactions to the manner in which they are portrayed is a function of their cultures; for example, Ford, LaTour, Honeycutt, and Joseph (1994) found that women from New Zealand were more critical of their portrayals as compared to their Thai counterparts.

In an investigation spanning 37 cultures, Buss (1989, 1994) has shown that there are universal preferences held by men and women in terms of the characteristics they seek in their ideal mates. The cultures studied were exceptionally heterogeneous along economic, political, racial, ethnic, and religious lines. Two consistent patterns emerged: Men value beauty and youth more so than women, while women value social status more so than men.

9. Indecency in Advertising

An article titled “Indecency in Advertising” says that “In today’s media-propelled, fast-moving age, advertisements sell beyond products. They sell lifestyles, dreams, images, ideas, even principles and ethics (H.Thiel 2003). And a lot of advertisers play on our most basic, primitive instincts by associating their products with sex.

The same article claims that the blatantly offensive advertisements help to sexualize our culture and also denigrates and objectifies our women. Advertisers are increasingly daring to ruffle feathers all in the name of making a material impact, while the creators of these advertisements describe the whole exercise as creative lightheartedness and freedom of expression unfortunately, these eminent creatives forget that with this cherished freedom goes responsibility. (E Smith 2004)

The author of the said article has sounded a note of caution that if advertisers do not exercise restraint, they might risk a boycott, someday, by consumers.
10. How Advertisements Exploit Women

An article by Shoma Chatterjee published in December 2005, titled “How Advertisements Exploit Women” quotes a paper by Deepa Dhanraj, a Bangalore based activist and documentary film maker, thus,

"In Indian advertising, women are used as models in sexist ads for diverse products from tyres to ceiling fans. Apart from this, a stereotyped notion of gender roles is explicit in the casting for ads. Primary roles for men as demonstrators, experts are used and their physical presence is made strongly felt as the authoritarian 'Voice of God' in commentaries. Women, by contrast, are cast either in auxiliary roles or as feather-headed clients who have to be convinced at length to purchase X product, in pseudo-scientific terminology. These images bear no relationship whatsoever to the reality of Indian women or their on-going struggles to achieve economic and political autonomy."

In a survey on the same topic, Penny Azarcon writes “The concept of male reward or male approval is alive and well and sickening. The most guilty culprits are the toiletries and the cosmetic ads, as if to sell the idea that the be-all and end-all of a woman's existence is the attentive male. Its not comforting to note that even when using the successful woman image, the prized catch remains a man. Its alright to go out and conquer the world, the ads seem to say, as long as one defers to a man at the end of a regular office day. It is disgusting that the so-called, accomplished women portrayed by the ads would have to rely on their boyfriend's or husband's say-so to validate their most routine purchases."

A feminist group in Delhi formed by Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin called “The Committee of Portrayal of Women in the Media” rightly claims that it is not only the physical exposure of women that is derogatory but also the reinforcements of other stereotypes that are more damaging to the image and the dignity of womanhood. Television ads go on harping about good mothers who feed their children with health drinks and instant noodles, ideal wives who care about their husbands’ shirts and cholesterols, mothers who wash their babies with soft soaps to ensure soft bottoms and little girls who say they choose a certain soap so that it makes them as beautiful as their mother.

These are damaging, insulting and humiliating to the woman-image and takes all talks of women's progress, education, political participation, several steps backwards, going back to where we began. These, in fact, are more derogatory to the
status and position of women than the ad which shows a famous film star seducing you to buy a particular brand of soap she has been using for years. The reason is that these ads are reinforcing a lifestyle, an attitude of sexist bias in housework which confines the woman to housework and the man to being her master.

On the exploitation of women in advertisements, the author, Shoma Chatterji has this to say, “by presenting only the more extreme stereotypes, ads tend to underscore and reinforce the already negative feelings many women have about themselves, thanks to the male-centric society we live and work in. Exaggerations only add to the guilt, confusion and shame these women might be trying to overcome. By institutionalising one-dimensional images of women through the media, ads make it harder for women to break out of sexist modes that cage them. In fact, women models in advertisements are unwittingly lending themselves to become both the seller and the sold. By pitching in for particular products that mainly exploit their being pretty and attractive, passive and docile, women may be selling their own goods and services that, in turn, perpetuate an image and a lifestyle oppressive to other women. Stretching the same logic a bit further, one might also deduce that the woman-model could actually be selling a culture which, in its glossy perfection, is an unattainable fantasy and would lead to greater frustration to an already-disadvantaged segment. By pitting women against women, the advertising world has succeeded in making a woman more an enemy of her own creed than she was before advertising began to use her the way it has”.

Shoma Chatterji has also presented the findings of a study of 21 women’s magazines which tried to find out how women linked their weight to the gendered messages on magazine covers. This study was conducted by Amy R Malkin and states that

i. Popular magazines for men focus on offering entertainment and suggestions on Improving one’s life by expanding knowledge, hobbies and activities.

ii. Women’s magazines seem to focus on improving one’s life by changing one’s appearance, especially by losing weight.

iii. Women’s magazines constantly imply, both through visuals and text that being thin means being happier, sexier and more lovable.

iv. The consequences of striving for these unrealistic ideals results in a large number of women taking to aggressive means to control and reduce their weight.
11. An Analysis of Roles Portrayed in Magazine Advertisements

Alice E Courtney and Sarah Wernick Lockeretz have published a research note titled “A Woman’s Place: An analysis of the roles portrayed by women in Magazine Advertisements” have observed that the print advertisements rarely showed women in working roles. In the advertisements studied by them women rarely ventured far from home by themselves or with other women. They did smoke, drink, travel, drive in cars and use banks, but primarily in the company of men. In about half of the exceptional advertisements that did show women without men in the male world, the women were portrayed as decorations, as in one advertisement where an attractive and elaborately dressed woman was used to display an automobile. The advertisements reflected a number of stereotypes such as,

- A woman’s place is in the home
- Women do not make important decisions or do important things

The distribution of occupational and nonworking roles in the advertisements reinforces the feminists’ impression that women are rarely shown engaged in important activities outside the home. In-fact, in the advertisements examined, women were limited even in household decision making.

They appeared to operate independently only for relatively inexpensive purchases, such as, food, cosmetics and cleaning products. For more expensive household purchases, men were brought into the advertisements, presumably because they share in buying decisions. The indications from such advertisements were that

- Women are dependant and need men’s protection
- Men regard women primarily as sexual objects, they are not interested in women as people

Prof. Amanda B Bower of university of South Carolina has published an interesting paper in the “Journal of Advertising”. The paper is titled “Highly Attractive models in Advertising and the Women who Loathe Them : The Implications of Negative Affect for Spokesperson Effectiveness”. The introduction of the paper states that “Marketers targeting their product towards women often include highly attractive models in their advertisements in the hope of increasing the advertisement’s effectiveness. There is sufficient literature with evidence of the positive effects of using an attractive person in advertising on both advertisement and product evaluations. However, the assumed advantages of highly attractive models
have not always been supported. (e.g. Bower and Landreth 2001; Caballero Lumpkin and Madden 1989, Caballero and Solomon 1984). The above said author’s contention is that the practice of including highly attractive models may be effective from a marketing standpoint, physical attractiveness and the thin ideal is a very sensitive issue for many women.

The importance of physical attractiveness prompts many women to compare themselves with the images of physical perfection, thinness and beauty found in advertising. Researchers already have established that some women compare themselves with the idealized images in advertising and that some women who compare themselves with these highly attractive models may experience negative feelings as a result (e.g. cash, cash and butters 1983, Irving 1990, Martin and Gentry 1997, Martin and Kennedy 1993, Richins 1991). Such negative feeling may lead to frustration and anxiety. As a result of the comparison, some women may experience negative affect and further may also be critical of the attractive models and the advertisements in which they appear. Kellog received letters with complaints about the use of unrealistic models. Outdoor advertisements in which Kate Moss appeared as an ultra thin model wearing Calrin Klein jeans were vandalized.

Amada B. Bower has listed the influence of negative affect as follows:

- Social Comparison Jealousy
- Social Comparison Jealousy and Derogation
- The Derogation of beautiful others

12. Women in Indian Television Commercials

Findings of a survey of Indian Television commercials on Representation of Women.

There was a short survey posted on the website about effects of television advertising few weeks back, as some of you may recall.

Seven advertisements that had women representation in them were identified for the survey. The ads identified were Amul Macho, The Axe Effect, Amul Manthan Story, Virgin mobile, J.K. Super Cement, Slice, Parle Hidden Seek.

The survey was broken into two parts, Part A consisted of 8 close ended questions and part B had a rating system of popular TVCs in order of relevance,
likeness, requirement of use of women and storyline on a scale of 1 to 10 wherein 1 denoted least likable and 10, most likable.

Survey Analysis Part A

i. Do you find the presence of skimpily clad women in commercials for products like invertors/cement etc relevant?
   19% said Yes, 81% said No.

ii. Have you ever bought a beauty product after watching its commercial on TV?
   64% said Yes, 21% said No, 15% said Maybe.

iii. Have you ever felt insecure about your body while watching a commercial on TV?
    42% said Yes, 58% said No.

iv. Do you think there is an influx of commercials containing sexual content in the last 5 years?
   86% said Yes, 8% said No, 6% said Maybe.

v. Have you ever felt a major impact on yourself by an advertisement?
   33% said Yes, 56% said No, 11% said Maybe.

vi. Do you think that indecent representation of women in Indian advertisements may have led to increase in crime against women?
   25% said Yes, 40% said No, 35% said Maybe.

vii. Do you feel uncomfortable with modern protection/anti-pregnancy pills and sanitary products advertisements?
    31% said Yes, 65% said No, 4% said Maybe.

viii. TVCs for modern protection and sanitary products etc. raised sexual awareness or vulgarity.
     52% said Sexual Awareness, 35% said Vulgarity, 4% said Neither.
Survey Analysis Part B

Part B of the questionnaire was calculated by finding Arithmetic Mean i.e. more commonly known as average.

The overall ratings given to each of the 7 advertisements are:-

- Amul Macho: 2.75
- The Axe Effect: 5.15
- Amul Manthan Story: 5.42
- Virgin mobile: 3.87
- J.K. Super Cement: 3.47
- Slice: 3.59
- Parle Hide n Seek: 4.40

It can be seen from the average ratings that television viewers look for content in television commercials, not blind use of women just to add oomph or glamour factor.

13. Images of Women in online Advertisements of Global Products

Four Researchers in Greece Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki, Kalliopi Mathioudaki, Pavlos Dimitratos and Yorgos Zotus, have published a paper in “Journal of Business Ethics” in the year 2008 which says that research on female stereotypes in online advertisements is particularly scant and thus there is a lack of sufficient evidence on whether women are depicted in derogatory stereotype terms on the internet or not. Hence, the said team of researchers defined the objectives of their study as (1) to provide evidence on female role portrayals in online advertisements of global products, and (2) to explore female role portrayals across web pages for different audience types. The results indicate that women are generally portrayed in a stereotypical way, supporting the notion that sexism is prevalent in online advertisements worldwide. Portrayal of women across web pages varies considerably, with female-audience web pages embracing “decorative” female images; male-audience web pages promoting polarizing depictions of women in “dependent” or “non-traditional” roles; and general audience web pages using portrayals of women as housewives or equal to men. Overall, the findings suggest that “traditional” or “decorative” stereotypes are largely evident in all three audience types, although some “nontraditional” roles may occur. Implications and future research directions are discussed.
The use of electronic media such as internet is growing very fast. Such online advertisements offer worldwide coverage to millions of individuals at several locations all over the world, simultaneously. The portrayal varies depending upon the intended audience, i.e., male, female and mixed or general. However, evidence suggests that, in general the online advertising appears to emphasize decorative roles of women and promote an unattainable ideal of beauty, according to the same study. This stereotypical portrayal of women in online advertisements and particularly in female audience web pages could negatively affect the self-confidence of women and hence limit their future aspirations and expectations for equity in compensation. According to Kilbourne (1991), decorative images of women in advertising have affected females with a range of problems including low self-esteem, eating disorders, and binging which arise from an attempt of women to adapt to a false self to become more “Feminine”.

The study referred in the above-said paragraphs has also suggested to explore how sexist depiction of women in advertising may have adverse effect on the image of the firms that choose such an approach to promote their products and consequently sales. The present thesis has included research on these lines also.

A study by Ford et al, 1991, 1997 indicates that 63% of the respondents expressed their intent to discontinue using a product associated with demeaning sexual stereotypes. This same study illustrates that women are alert to female role portrayals in advertising and this attitude influences their purchasing decisions.

14. Future Trends

Three researchers viz, Roger A Kerin, William J. Lundstrom and Donald Sciglimpaglia have also done research on the use and reaction to women in advertisements for the purpose of projection future trends. Specifically, trends in sex role differentiation and sex in advertising have been examined and discussed. Their conclusion is that sex in advertising is expected to become more explicit, but, use of women as sex objects will decline. Simultaneously, these researchers also conclude that in future the advertisements will exhibit a larger proportion of women in work related settings in parity occupations with men.

Considerable amount of research has been done on the topic of portrayal of women in advertisements as a result of increasing number of women pursuing careers,
changing family role structure and unfavorable female attitudes towards traditional sex role stereotypes.

The same study by Roger A. Kerin et al, has first discussed the limited role portrayal of women and then the topic related to the use of women in advertisements concerns the use of sex appeal, sexy illustrations and sexual expressions in advertising. The idea of women as sex objects arises from the use of a woman as an attention getting stratagem when her presence adds little but decoration to the product being advertised.

A survey by R H Bruskin Associates noted in 1969 that about one half of the respondents recalled seeing a great deal of sex in advertising and fewer than one half said they were offended by sex in advertisements. A subsequent study in 1977 by Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia found that about 42% of the women responding felt that women were treated as sex objects in advertisements with younger and more educated women espousing this view than their older and less educated counterparts.

Two studies have examined the effect of sexual overtones in advertisements on consumer brand recognition and recall. In 1969, Steadman sought to determine whether male consumer brand recall rates were influenced by (a) the presence or absence of sexual illustrations, (b) an observer’s perception of erotic content in an advertisement, and (c) an observer’s attitude toward the use of sexual illustrations in advertising. It was found that:

i. In general, sexual illustrations were less effective than nonsexual illustrations in producing brand name recall.

ii. An observer’s perception of erotic content in an advertisement had little effect on recall effectiveness.

iii. Observers with favorable attitudes toward the use of sex in advertising recalled more correct brand names than those with unfavorable attitudes.

The degree of sexual expression in advertisements is the use of nude female models. Two studies have examined the effect of nudity in advertisements. Morrison and Sherman examined male and female perceptions of selected advertisements and reported that suggestiveness of ad copy was perceived more often by females than males. Moreover, males had a tendency to perceive little nudity in advertisements in comparison with women. The authors concluded that the perception of sexual overtones in advertisements is a complex question and varies dramatically not only between sexes but also within sexes as did the degree of sexual arousal produced by
advertisements. Peterson and Kerin sought to determine the interaction effect between type of female model (demure, seductive, nudes) and product type (masculine vs. feminine) on the dimensions of product type (masculine vs. feminine) on the dimensions of product quality, company reputation, and advertisements’ appeal ratings by males and females. Their results indicated that the advertisement containing a nude model was consistently perceived as the least appealing, while the associated product and producing company were perceived, respectively, as possessing the lowest quality and being the least reputable. Alternatively, the advertisement with a seductive model and a feminine product was rated as having the highest advertising appeal, suggesting the highest product quality, and produced by the most reputable company.

These two studies on nudity indicate that the suggestiveness of the model rather than the nudity factor offers the most promising consumer response. The research by Peterson and Kerin further points out the importance of matching the product with the type of female depiction in an advertisement. The key concept appears to be one of product-model congruency where the sexual expressiveness of the advertisement should be consistent with the nature.

15. **Ethical Issues of Advertising**

Advertising is first of all a sales pitch.

Advertising has an informative component which in itself, advertising is neither morally good nor bad. The ethics of advertising has to do with an evaluation of the content and techniques deployed in given bits of advertising.

There are several general ethical concerns stated by John Alan Cohan in his paper titled “Towards a New Paradigm in the Ethics of Women’s Advertising” have been discussed in the literature over the years.

i. One general ethical concern is that advertising tends to ratchet up the quest for material gain, leading consumers to believe that happiness depends on attaining a high material standard of living, and acquiring more and more things. Very little advertising gives emphasis on spiritual goals, on the big picture of what matters in life, or transcendental concerns (such as problems of the poor in faraway reaches of the globe). Advertising often fosters the philosophy that human happiness depends on the possession or prestige value of material things.
ii. Another complaint is advertising often generates its own values, artificial or false as they may be, as to what is "good" for the consumer. The attitude isn't whether consumers need or want a particular product. Advertising strives to portray a product as something so appealing that you "ought" to desire this thing, that you need it, and that you should buy it. Many think that the advertising industry is too dominant in setting societal values.

iii. A further complaint is that advertising often plays on our physical appetites, the body, the pursuit of pleasure, and the avoidance of pain. Preoccupation with the body in advertising affects men and women alike by making them more susceptible to persuasion. As Plato observed, "The body intrudes into our investigations, interrupting, disturbing, distracting, and preventing us from getting a glimpse of the truth."

iv. Next is the general ethical compliant that advertising strives to bypass rational thinking. A successful advertising campaign can persuade people to do all sorts of things — to consume products harmful to themselves such as tobacco, junk food, colas or alcoholic drinks - or products that are relatively useless - such as cosmetics. Advertising is today's counterpart, I think, to the Sophists of ancient Greece, who were criticized because they used illogical methods of persuasion and gave their students more of illusion than truth. Advertising is like that.

v. Advertising is also a kind of entertainment, often with artistically superb photography, special effects, clever slogans, acting and music. But these entertainment techniques, otherwise which often are truly an art form, are deployed to attract and keep the attention of viewers and make them more susceptible to persuasion.

vi. Truth in advertising, laws say that advertisers have the moral duty to "tell the truth" about the product or service advertised. But often something quite indirect is the subject of an advertisement. Claims are often subjected such as being "the best," the "most desirable" from among other cars on the market, for instance.

Small exaggerations about the excellence of one's produce or service ("puffery") seems morally permissible, since the average person takes this into account as part of the norm, the context, the culture of advertising.
16. Marketing Ethics and Social Responsibility

Attempt has been made to consider some common criticism of marketing and more particularly advertising as it influences consumers, businesses and society in general. It is possible that the companies will benefit, if on their own, they follow ethical and socially responsible practices.

It is generally believed that the heavy advertising and sales promotion costs will have an effect such as pushing the prices up. Marketers do not deny this but justify by saying that the advertising communicates valuable information and merits about the brand to customers. Branding gives customers an assurance of consistency in quality. Companies justify heavy advertising and promotion to withstand the competition.

Businesses are also accused of overselling private goods at the expense of public goods. Consider the example of increase in sales of cars and two wheelers like scooters and motorcycles which requires more roads, highways, parking areas, and traffic control by police services. Increase in sale of private goods like cars and scooters and motorcycles requires government to spend more on roads, parking facilities which are public goods.

Advertisers are also accused of cultural pollution, i.e. interruption by commercials in serious or entertaining TV programs or advertisements in magazines or outdoor hoardings which adversely impact the beautiful scenery. However, the advertisers claim that they help TV channels and radio station to bring down the programs free to viewers and listeners and the prices of newspapers and magazines become very reasonable.

17. Case Studies of Complaints Regarding Portrayal of Women

The review of literature will be enriched and relevant to the study with the inclusion of the following cases selected only as representative of the type of complaints dealt with ASCI and their response and reaction or compliance by the advertisers in respect of portrayal of women which is considered indecent by the complainants

Sample cases of complaints **UPHELD** by ASCI in the recent past:
• Though this case dates back to the year 1995 this was considered as grossly indecent and evoked widespread outcry. An advertisement of Tuff Shoes showed models Madhu Sapre and Milind Soman absolutely nude with a python draped around their body. Both the models wore Tuff shoes. There were loud protests about the advertisement and it was banned immediately and withdrawn. Yet the models and the product is still remembered and talked about today.

• A newspaper (Times of India and Delhi Times) announced an award to promote their sales. The advertisement offered “Best Bottom Pincher” award, thus encouraging the act of bottom pinching and also observing it and reporting it in order to get an award.

ASCI upheld the complaint as the advertisement encouraged the act of bottom pinching which is a sexual offence and yet the advertisement labeled it as fun. The advertisement was considered as derogatory to womanhood. The advertisers withdraw the advertisement.

• In the year 2007, Lux Cozy undergarments released a television commercial in which a man clad only in his Lux Cozy underwear was shown chasing a dog who pulled away his towel. Then the advertisement shows a scantily dressed woman coming up to him and giving him a peck on his cheek for finding her dog and gives him a naughty look and walks away. The man is considered lucky and the advertisement ended with the tagline ‘Apna luck pehen ke chalo’.

Ministry of information and Broadcasting banned the transmission of the advertisement as it was considered indecent, vulgar and suggestive. The advertisement was withdrawn.

• During the year 2008, Benetton, a leading company in the business of clothing introduced their winter clothing collection through an advertisement which showed a female in a provocative and seductive position and the advertisement had a caption ‘you will melt, once inside’. The complaints received by ASCI were taken up with the advertiser to which their justification was that the advertisement was on the same lines as international release by Benetton. However, after receipt of the complaint the advertisement was withdrawn.
ASCI upheld the complaint and concluded that the print advertisement was likely to cause grave or widespread offence and therefore needed to be withdrawn. This just shows that the advertiser has to be sensitive to the local culture. What may be acceptable in one society may not necessarily be acceptable everywhere.

- Hindustan Unilever, in their advertisement for Axe Dark Temptation deodorant showed a girl licking and biting the body of a boy who had spread the deodorant of chocolate fragrance on himself and as shown as a chocolate boy. An act of a girl biting the boy’s backside was considered to be highly objectionable by the complainant. The advertiser claimed that a product like deodorant which is an aspirational product needed to be marketed in this manner. ASCI upheld the complaint stating that the visual of the girl licking the chocolate boy and girl biting the rear was indecent and likely to cause grave or widespread offence. Subsequently the advertisement was modified by the advertiser.

- On similar lines advertisement of a perfume which showed greater popularity with the opposite sex by using the said perfume was found to be vulgar and considered to give rise to widespread offence particularly amongst women. The complaint was upheld by ASCI and the Advertiser modified the advertisement.

- ING Vysya Life Insurance encountered a controversy in response to their advertisement which claimed that the ‘Education of a girl child is burden’. The complainant also objected to the tag line “Dikhne me to pyaari, yeh khushiyan thodi bhari hai”, implying that girl child/female is good looking but financially a burden. Father of the child sinking on realizing the heavy burden of his daughter’s education was also not liked by the complainants. ASCI upheld the complaint as it was likely to cause grave or widespread offence on account of inequality towards female gender. Advertisement was modified by ING Vysya.

- In June 2009, Elder Healthcare Ltd. aired a television commercial for their product ‘Fuel Deodorant’. The commercial showed a girl at a fuel pump for filling
gas. There a charming man applied fuel body spray on himself. The girl gets aroused, invites him and he starts seducing her. She in turn opens her shirt.

The complainants claimed that this was a vulgar advertisement showing women in worst light, that they would fall for smell of a perfume. ASCI upheld the complaint as it would have given rise to widespread offence, particularly amongst women.

The advertiser modified the commercial.

- Mankind Pharma Ltd. released television commercials for their product ‘Manforce Condoms’ in July 2009. There were complaints saying that there were bad and vulgar scenes in the TV commercial which cannot be seen in the presence of small children. ASCI upheld the complaint on the grounds that the prevailing standards of decency were violated by the TV commercial. The time of airing the advertisement were not suitable for viewing by children and minors.

The TV commercial was modified by the advertiser.

- Levis Strauss India Ltd. released press advertisements in May 2009 which showed a bare bodied young man with his jeans unbuttoned and revealed partly his innerwear and said “My girl friend’s sister turns me on”. Advertisement also stated “Bare what’s inside”, “Live unbuttoned”. Complaints said that the advertisement was suggestive and in what way an innerware correlated with someone being turned on or turned off? ASCI upheld the complaint as “Bare what’s inside” was considered indecent. Further, the statement “My girlfriend’s sister turns me on” was considered as not culture sensitive. The manufacturer withdrew the advertisement.

- Hindustan Unilever released a television advertisement for their product Lux soap in cartoon format in the early part of 2008. However, there were complaints that the contents, portrayal and background audio was of adult content. As telecast on the cartoon network channel was watched by children in the age group of 3-10, the advertisement had several images of sexual nature which was likely to create negative impact on the young minds, as per the complaints.
ASCI upheld the complaint as the advertisement was considered offensive to generally accepted standards of public decency.
The advertiser discontinued the TV commercial.

- Triveni Media Ltd. released an advertisement in a Hindi News Channel and Economic Times showing picture of a lady doing exercise. Complaints were received saying that the advertisement was offensive, in bad taste and hurt the sensibility of common viewers and readers. The advertisement had no connection with whatever they were trying to sell or provide. The advertisement was labeled as disgusting, obscene and inappropriate for readers’ taste.
ASCI upheld the complaint as it was considered as repulsive and likely to cause grave or widespread offence.
The advertiser withdrew the advertisement.

Sample cases of complaints **NOT UPHELD** by ASCI in the past three years:

- During the year 2007 a leading garment manufacturer, Levis Strauss advertised their cling fit jeans. The advertisement showed a semi nude woman lying over a man wearing only jeans. A number of complaints received by ASCI said that the advertisement was vulgar. The advertiser’s response was that the product was “skinny fit” jeans which stick to the body and enhances the figure of the person wearing it. The company claimed that it is the stickiness of the product that was visually depicted in the advertisement with a creative expression ‘stuck on you’ and a man and woman were shown to be clinging to one another. The advertiser further justified the depiction by stating that no potentially sensitive parts of the human anatomy were revealed.
The complaint was not upheld by ASCI as the CCC felt that it was not indecent and not likely to cause grave or widespread offence.

- An advertisement for Amul Macho hosiery by J. G. Hosiery Pvt. Ltd. showed a dialogue in a bus between a girl and a boy. The girl said “Jaise ki ghar me koi baap, bhai nahin hain”. ( It seems there is no male member like father or brother in your house ). This was considered to be cheap and vulgar and projected women in poor light according to the complainant. The complaint was not upheld as it was not likely to cause grave or widespread offence.
• An advertisement for close-up toothpaste by Hindustan Unilever in May 2010 showed a couple trying to kiss each other. Advertisement said that the freshness, fragrance of the toothpaste would provoke one to kiss. (Kiss karne ko ji chahe). Complainants felt that the advertisement was vulgar and not suitable for viewing by children. ASCI did not uphold the complaint as it was considered not indecent and would not cause grave or widespread offence.

• A complaint was received in June 2010 about Denver Deodorant marketed by Vanesa Inc. The TV commercial showed a lady in skimpy bikini trying to expose more. The complainant claimed that the portrayal of lady model was indecent and her obscene gesture was more was objectionable. ASCI did not uphold the complaint as it was considered not offensive to generally accepted standards of decency and the TV commercial not likely to cause grave or widespread offence.

• In May 2010, Nivea India Pvt. Ltd. aired a TV commercial for Nivea Coor Kick Deodorant which showed a bedroom scene. A complainant felt that it was obscene and not suitable for family viewing. However, the complaint was not upheld by ASCI as the scene depicted was considered as not likely to cause grave or widespread offence.

• An advertisement by Mankind Pharma for Manforce chocolate condoms showed seducing a man using a chocolate flavored condom. A number of complaints were received by ASCI claiming that the language and depiction of the advertisement was not suitable for viewing in the presence of small children. ASCI did not consider the advertisement as likely to cause grave or widespread offence but considered it as not suitable for family viewing. Advertiser was advised to air the commercial after family viewing hours, i.e, only between 11 pm and 6 pm.

• Yet another advertisement for the above-stated product and marketer showed a woman saying “I was mesmerized, as he had cast a spell on me. I was enjoying obeying his orders. I was a slave by choice.” Complainant felt that the
advertisement was vulgar and offensive to women, it was masochist and promoted female enslavement.

The complaint was not upheld by ASCI considering that “slave by choice” did not connote female enslavement. The advertisement, as per ASCI, was not likely to cause grave or widespread offence.

• In the middle of the year 2010 an advertisement for Fiona Lovable Fashion Lingerie showed a woman in her undergarments which according to a complainant was indecent.

ASCI's view was that in view of the product advertised, the advertisement was not indecent. Hence the complaint was not upheld.

• Somany Ceramics Ltd. released a press advertisement for their product Strata Wall Tiles in which a woman was shown hiding her nudity behind a wall tile.

A complainant felt that the visual was unrelated to the product promoted and the advertisement was indecent.

ASCI did not uphold the complaint by taking a view that the advertisement was not indecent and not likely to give rise to grave or widespread offence, as no sensitive parts of the human anatomy were exposed by the woman in the advertisement.

• In April 2008, there was a complaint against an advertisement of Frenchie x undergarment released by Maxwell Industries Ltd.

The visual showed a male coming out of the bathroom with just a frenchie on his private parts oozing out. A young girl sees him, gets excited and closes the door. The complaint said that the commercial was vulgar and was embarrassing while viewing with family. ASCI’s view was that the advertisement was not likely to cause grave or widespread offence.

The advertiser was advised to show the advertisement outside family viewing hours.
• Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. put up hoardings in 2008 showing a girl in various seductive poses, with a lot of body exposure. Complaint was that advertisement breaks all norms of decency. ASCI did not uphold the complaint with a view that visuals were not indecent so as to cause grave or widespread offence.

• In October 2010 Virgin Mobile made an offer promoting their service through a TV advertisement. The advertisement portrayed sexuality of a nurse as a gimmick to sell the product. Complainant felt that the TV advertisement encourages patients in similar medically intimate situations to view nurses and other ancillary staff in terms of their body parts rather than as professionals worthy of their respect and gratitude. The complaint was not upheld. It was ASCI’s view that the advertisement was not likely to cause grave or widespread offence.