CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Advertising images remain as an important topic for marketing and advertising literature as research suggests that visual imagery provided by advertisements has a significant effect on the belief system of a given society. Indeed, advertising produces and reflects values, attitudes and behaviors of the social realm where it is embedded. Research related to female portrayals in advertising has been the focus of attention of many academic studies because mass media messages about women have often depicted them in a stereotypical manner such as: women are irrational, fragile, thin, beautiful, not Intelligent, submissive and subservient to men. In addition, these investigations have shown that these portrayals haven’t reflected changes in female roles in modern societies.

Researchers, feminist scholars, political activists, socially conscious consumers, have recognized the negative effects of female portrayals in advertising. But there is only scattered empirical evidence about the images of women in advertising. A brief survey of notable Indian and International works done in the field of women in advertising is presented in this chapter. Very few empirical studies have been conducted on images of women in advertising in India compared with the international studies.

The research work done by various researchers in the area of women in advertising is divided into three heads and are presented as follows:

2.2. Images of Women in Advertisements:

Advertisement is a powerful medium designed to sell products, aspirations and communicate concepts of acceptable behavior and gender roles. The question of women’s portrayal in advertisements has been a matter of debate for considerable time; women are often portrayed as housewives and too frequently as professionals. And the advertisers have introduced the attractive independent women.
Advertisements also portray women as a confident, independent career oriented. And advertisements of today Portray women much in sexual roles and also as decorative objects.

**Bard wick and Schumann (1967)** examined the portrayal of men and women in American television commercials taking into consideration various television advertisements. The images of men and women in television commercials were analyzed and they noted that to an amazing extent women were associated with dirt, her place was in the kitchen, the television woman [in commercials] was shown as housebound and she was hardly depicted in the roles out of home. Women were portrayed primarily as homebound or as housewives. And women were portrayed in an extremely narrow range of roles, with depictions concentrated on the traditional occupations of a housewife, a mother and a secretary.

**Courtney and Lockertz (1971)** analyzed the roles portrayed by women in magazine advertisements by reviewing 729 advertisements appearing in the April 18, 1970 issues of life, look, News week, The New Yorker, Saturday review, Time and U.S. News and World Report and the April 1970 issue of Reader's digest. They classified and analyzed the advertisements on the basis of male and female roles related to occupations, non-working activities, product categories and sex roles and came out with the findings that:

1. A woman's place is at home
2. Women do not make important decisions or do important things
3. Women were dependent and needed men's protection.
4. Men were not interested in women as people.
5. Women appeared primarily in decorative roles and relatively very few women appeared in occupational roles.

**Cantor (1972)** examined the tasks and roles of men and women in Commercials Aired by WRC-TV and found that women in television-commercials were mostly represented in domestic roles, while men were more likely to be portrayed in occupational roles or nondomestic roles. The findings indicate that
occupationally women were portrayed rarely in high held-status jobs in advertisements.

**Wagner and Banor (1973)** analyzed the roles portrayed by women in magazine advertisements by taking into consideration various advertisements from different magazines and found that women were hardly shown in out-of-home working roles especially as professionals, and they were never depicted as venturing far away from home by themselves or with other women. Rather they were represented as dependent on men’s protection. In addition women were primarily found in advertisements for cleaning products, drugs, clothing, and home appliances.

**Wagner and Banos (1973)** examined the roles portrayed by women in magazine advertisements to analyze the position of women and found that women were hardly ever shown in out-of-home working roles, especially as professionals, and they were never depicted as venturing far away from home by themselves or with other women. Rather, they were represented as dependent on men’s protection. Men were often shown as regarding women as sex objects or as domestic adjuncts. In addition, women were primarily found in advertisements for cleaning products, drugs, clothing, and home appliances, whereas men were shown in advertisements for cars, travel, alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, and banks.

**Sexton & Haberman,(1974)** Analyzed the images of women in magazine advertisements by taking into account advertisements of both general interest and women’s or men’s magazines, and the researchers came out with the findings that women were more likely than men to be depicted as sexual objects through their posture in magazine advertisements and there was an increasing trend in women being depicted as sexual objects than men in magazine advertisements.

**McArthur and Resko (1975)** studied the portrayal of men and women in American television commercials and claimed that women were most likely to be defined not by occupational or other types of roles, but in roles that defined them in terms of their relationships with others, i.e. as spouse, girlfriend, parent or friend. McArthur and Resko (1975) also found that women were depicted as product users in 86% of commercials and as product authorities in only 14% of the advertisements, whereas men were portrayed overwhelmingly as authorities.
Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) examined the role portrayals of women in print advertisements by conducting a comparative study of the roles portrayed by women in print advertisements in 1958, 1970, and 1972, by taking into consideration advertisements from various general interest magazines. And the researcher analyzed the contents of eight general interest magazines (i.e., Life, Look, Newsweek, The New Yorker, Time, Saturday Review, U.S. News and World Report, and Reader’s Digest). And they came out with the findings that advertisement in 1958 showed women mostly as housewives in decorative roles and idle situations or as low-income earners with limited purchasing power.

Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia (1977) examined the attitudes of men and women consumers towards advertising role portrayals by taking into consideration 400 persons as samples from the Metropolitan Dallas and Denver markets which consisted of 200 women and 200 men to whom questionnaires were mailed which contained a series of 17 attitudinal statements dealing with advertising role portrayals of women and men, the company image, firms using sexual role portrayal practices, intentions to buy from the aforesaid firms etc. The researchers came out with the findings that women held more critical attitudes towards sexual role portrayals than men. Women felt that the advertisements suggested that they do not do important things, portray women offensively and suggested that their place was at home. And women to some extent agreed that they were also portrayed as sex objects. Significant differences existed between males and females regarding the company image. Even though advertisements were perceived as offensive to men and women both group still continued purchasing the product.

Knill, Pesch, et.al (1981) examined the Sex role portrayals in television advertising to find out whether there had been any change in the stereotype image associated with women in the 70s. The researchers came out with the findings that woman were given authority as product representatives. However, these products were used in bathrooms or kitchens. This was the only recorded change. All the previous stereotypes, including women predominantly portrayed as housewives and mothers, submissive, dependent on men etc still existed.

Lyonski, (1983) studied the female and male portrayals in magazine advertisements by taking into consideration a variety of men's, women's, and general
interest magazines and came out with the findings that women were presented in various roles in advertisements such as housewife, decorative element, sex object, and dependent on men, housewife, concerned with physical attractiveness, sex object, career oriented, and neutral.

**Courtney and Whipple (1985)** examined the portrayal of women in television commercials and found significant differences between men and women. Women were over-represented in advertisements for cosmetics and were less likely to appear in advertisements for cars, trucks and related products. Seventy-five percent of all advertisements using women were for products found in the kitchen or bathroom, reinforcing the stereotype image that a woman's place is home. Women as compared to men were portrayed mostly in house settings rather than business settings. Women did not make important decisions and lastly women were depicted as dependent on men and were regarded primarily as sexual objects.

**Ferrante, Kingsley, et al. (1988)** examined the image of women in television advertising and came out with the findings that women were no longer portrayed as housewives or in the home or domestic settings, instead they were portrayed in workplace as income earners, professionals and were also in business settings. Their findings also indicate that there was a change in the role portrayal of women in television advertising from mere housewife to business professionals.

**Bretl and Cantor (1988)** examined the male and female portrayals in U.S. television commercials since 1971 and also conducted a content analysis of television commercials in 1985. And their findings indicate several differences between the portrayal of men and women. Men and women appeared equally more often as central figures in prime time commercials. Women appeared in occupational roles and men were presented as parents and spouses, with no other apparent occupation. Women predominantly appeared in domestic settings advertising products used in the house and men were preferred as narrators in the advertising world over women.

**Sullivan and O’Connor (1988)** examined and compared print advertisements of 1983 to advertisements of the 1950s and 1970s. Their sample of advertisements was drawn from People, Saturday Evening Post, Life, Newsweek, The New Yorker, Reader’s Digest, Time, and U.S. News and World Report. These magazines were
chosen because of their broad appeal and their likelihood of depicting women in a wide variety of roles. They found that the 1983 advertisements reflected more accurately the true diversity of women’s social and occupational roles than did those of the earlier decades. There was an increase in women shown as employed and a higher percentage of women in positions that require meaningful decision making (in the workplace as well as in everyday situations). Women were more often shown as independent of men and as occupying equal social roles. However, the trend toward gender equality (i.e., men and women engaging in more similar activities and behaviors) was counteracted by an increase in women portrayed in purely decorative and sexualized roles.

Gilly (1988) analyzed the television advertising by comparing the television advertisements in Australia, Mexico, and the United States, and came out with the findings that there were no significant differences between men and women in terms of settings, voice-overs, marital status, employment status, occupation, and credibility and one important difference was found in the Australian commercials, where women by and large were likely to be younger and more dependent than men.

Ferguson, Kershel et.al (1990) studied the portrayal of women in the pages of Ms. Magazine. The advertising policy of Ms. Magazine states, "To preclude the acceptance of advertising for products that are harmful. Or advertisements that are insulting to women". Researchers conducted a content analysis of the magazine itself to assess the extent to which Ms. Magazine’s advertising over the first 15 years of its publication has carried out its policy. Ferguson, researcher’s findings suggest that Ms. advertising promoted products that were generally considered harmful and women were portrayed as subordinate to men or merely as a decorative item. In fact, it was found that over the years the magazine's advertising had increasingly portrayed women as alluring sex objects. One third of all advertisements in the sample promoted products that were generally perceived to be harmful.

Belknap & Leonard, (1991) examined the gender in advertisements by extending his study based on Goffman's study of gender advertisements and came out with the findings that women in advertisements were the central characters; they were portrayed as working outside the home, in nontraditional, progressive occupations. In contemporary advertisements, women were presented increasingly in professional
roles requiring decision making on items and topics other than household, hygiene or beauty products, and sometimes they were portrayed as autonomous and equal to their male counterparts.

Bellizzi & Milner, (1991) examined the Gender positioning of a male dominant product in advertisements and came out with the findings that women’s increased participation in the workforce has led women to become major purchasers of several products like automobiles, insurance, and financial services. Guns, cars, motorcycles, computer games and equipment, golf equipment, financial services, and many other once-masculine products designed and advertised with women in mind. Researchers have argued that changes have occurred in the way men and women are portrayed in advertisements.

Craig (1992), examined the effect of gender portrayals in television commercials and came out with the findings that advertisements aired in the afternoon, mostly targeted women, emphasized traditional stereotypes associated with housewives. Female characters were found to be more likely than male characters to represent household products (domestic products), whereas male characters were found to represent financial or technical products more than women (non-domestic products).

Chafetz, Lorence et.al (1993) examined the advertisements in six trade publications between 1960-1990 to assess whether there had been an impact on female participation in professional occupations and if an editorial staff with more women had helped reduce gender stereotyping of professional women. The researchers found that greater relative numbers of women in the occupation over time and an increased share of women in the editorial staff had resulted in portraying women as professionals, confident, independent and attractive. Gender composition of editorial staff had a consistent and a positive effect on how women were portrayed in advertising. However, women were still portrayed less favorably in male-oriented professional publications.

Furnham, A.,&Bitar, N. (1993) analyzed the stereotyped portrayal of men and women in British television advertisements and noted that men were shown in work settings, and women were shown in home settings in television commercials.
Women were found to be depicted as younger than men in television commercials. Men were more likely than women to appear in voice-overs. Moreover, women were more likely than men to be portrayed as dependent. Researchers have reported that women were likely to represent body or household products, whereas male characters were likely to represent automobile or service products.

**Hall and Crum (1994)** examined the images of women as sex objects and decoration by observing the number and type of body camera shots used in television beer commercials and came out with the findings that men appeared more often than women in beer advertisements; their bodily exposure was greater. The researchers stated that, of the smaller number of women who appeared in beer commercials the number of camera shots of their bodies were greater than those of men. According to Hall and Crum women were portrayed in the commercials through the shots of the chest, leg, and buttock. They also believed that such shots increased the stereotype that women were sex objects. In addition, they also found that most of the women in the commercials appeared in either leisurewear or swimwear, whereas the men were always dressed in work clothes. Hall and Crum suggest that such portrayal of women in commercials reinforces the stereotype that women are sex idols, while men work, make decisions and look after women who are not capable of looking after themselves.

**Umiker-Sebeok, (1996)** examined the depiction of women in magazine advertisements, where the categories introduced by Goffman were used and location (i.e., domestic versus public settings), movement (i.e., ability to move fast and far), and risk-taking (i.e., involvement in high-risk activities) were used as additional coding categories. The results of the analysis of the advertisements in 38 different magazines published between 1993 and 1994, randomly selected from a municipal recycling bin, revealed that some shift in the portrayal of women had taken place. However, the changes have been superficial and occurred more in terms of the type of stereotyping than in the amount of stereotyping. There were fewer depictions of women in the traditional housewife and mother roles for example. However, this shift seems of minor importance compared to the relatively stable ways of portraying women as unable to exhibit the same amount of control over their environment as men do (or can).
Allan and Coltrane (1996) analyzed the television commercials from 1950s to 1980s, in order to explore the changes, if any, which had occurred in gender images. Allan and Coltrane focused on gender display of main characters and the circumstances under which it varied. Their results indicated that there had been a change in the images of women, but not men. Allan and Coltrane recorded this change by considering the following categories. First, the voiceovers were still predominantly by males, hence recorded no change. Second, men still were preferred as central figures in most advertisements. However, Allan and Coltrane did find women as central figures and women were six times more likely to be pictured as working with 1980's than parenting. Additionally, when women were pictured in a work activity, they were 12 times more likely to be shown displaying stereotypically masculine traits. Women were also portrayed in managerial and professional occupations.

Kang (1997) examined the portrayal of women’s images in magazine advertisements. Advertisements that featured human subjects were collected between 1979 and 1991 women's popular magazines. Seven advertisements were randomly selected from each month's issues of three magazines from January to December in 1979 and 1991 respectively. Advertisements containing a picture of human being and covering at least one magazine page were selected randomly from each issue of the three magazines published in 1979 and 1991. Advertisements were randomly selected from the 1979 and 1991 issues of Vogue, Mademoiselle, and McCall's. These sources were selected to represent women's magazines. Goff man's five categories were used in the study for analysis. In addition to those five categories, the researcher introduced two more categories to analyze the gender displays in magazine advertisements. These categories are body display and independence self-assertiveness and the researcher concluded that some advertisers had begun to feature more powerful and independent women and women were not exclusively portrayed in the stereotypical mother and house wife roles any more they were more often portrayed as professionals. At the same time there was also a remarkable increase in sexualized images of women in advertisements.

Furnham and Skae (1997) examined the portrayals of men and women in British television advertisements and argued that there appeared a small but stable and detectable trends in gender role advertising and women were depicted less dependent
on men and were depicted in a domestic setting, which no doubt reflected global statistics on the increase in the number of women portrayed in work place.

Jan Kurtz (1997) examined that women appeared in advertisements alone, the stereotype of the female as domestic provider who did not make significant decisions, was dependent on men, and was essentially a sex idol, was often exemplified. Representations of women in advertising, over the years, have tended to highlight beauty (within narrow conventions), size/physique (again, within narrow conventions), sexuality (as expressed by the above), emotional (as opposed to intellectual) dealings, and relationships (as opposed to independence/freedom).

Munshi (1998) in his study examined the different ways in which the Indian housewives were portrayed in advertisements in India in the nineties and came out with the findings that the portrayals of women in Indian advertising had changed slightly over the period. She also found that the representation of the Indian women had been played around with but not changed in a structural way. She was still pictured in the roles she had played long ago. Research studies indicate that women were generally portrayed in advertisements as home makers dependent on men and sex objects.

Ford et. al (1998) examined the gender role portrayals in Japanese advertising by considering various magazine advertisements and came out with the findings that there was an increased participation of women in work force which led women to become a major purchaser of several products like automobile, insurance, and financial services. Further the researchers argued that products like Guns, motor cycle, computer games and equipment, golf equipment, financial services and many other once masculine products were now designed and advertised with women in mind.

Furnham and Mak (1999) examined the different ways of gender stereotype by taking into consideration various television advertisements and came out with the findings that women were more likely to be portrayed in dependent roles like that of a parent, wife or house wife and often in home or domestic settings. And as of age, females were younger than men in television advertisements. They were frequently associated with social approval or self enhancement and were used to promote more
traditional female products like home and body products. The researchers further argued that “women tended to be confined to the roles of sex objects and home maker”.

**Coltraine & Messineo, (2000)** examined the race and gender imagery in 1990s television advertising by taking into consideration various television advertising and came out with the findings that women in television advertisements were often portrayed as cleaning, cooking, caring for children, or catering to men. In addition, women were more frequently portrayed in a very sexual manner in advertisements.

**Acevedo Et All (2004)**, Analyzed the Female Portrayals in Advertising focusing on Perceptions towards advertising images and their negative social Effects. The researchers investigated how women interpreted female representations in advertising. The authors interviewed 60 Brazilian women and concluded that women perceived advertising images as “depreciated”, “idealized” and “modern”. Considering the depreciated images, interviewees reported that they Perceive that advertising and mass media depicted women in four manners, they are 1) “women as not intelligent or irrational” 2) “window-display”; 3) “body display”; and 4) as “housewives”. The other perception reported in the study is connected to the idea that portrayals in advertisements are idealized and hence very far from real world. The interviewees considered two dimensions of idealization in advertising: 1) “woman as physically perfect”, which is, always young, beautiful, skinny and always tidy; The third group was that advertising and publicity represented women in a modern way, that is, woman as 1) independent from man; and as 2) super woman - being able to be mother, professional, and wife concomitantly.

**Gorman, (2005)** examined the advertising images of women and came out with the findings that women were often stereotyped to fit certain myths of combinations of qualities that depict a traditional stereotype of femininity. The repeated observations of women in traditional roles or “working” at jobs of low socioeconomic status led audience to believe that these roles or jobs were typical of women. They could also affect women’s self-images and self-concepts negatively and limit their behavior.
Kwangok and Dennis (2005) analyzed the representation of gender roles in Korean television advertising and compared the results with previous studies conducted in other countries. A sample of 878 Korean television advertisements from the MBC network in 2001 was content analyzed. Findings indicate that women in Korean television advertising were portrayed as young (48.2%), as dependent (37.5%), and as nurturing the children (12.1%); they were often depicted in the home (37.2%). The researchers argued that these stereotypical images of women were found in television advertising in many countries. They also came out with the findings that Korean society had changed a great deal in recent decades, but the images they analyzed did not reflect the current situation.

Rosa Acevedo, Jouliana Jordan et. al (2006) examined the female roles portrayed by advertising and the messages that were given about women to the society through advertisement and also examined whether these portrayals had changed during the past decades through a systematic content analysis of Brazilian commercials from 1973 to 2000. The sample consisted of Brazilian commercials which got an award in international and national festivals. And the researchers came out with the findings that female images in advertising were depicted in three different ways: stereotyped, idealized and plural portrayals. The results revealed that some specific images had changed; however, they continued to be stereotyped and idealized.

2.3. Women portrayed as Sex Idols in Advertisements

Dispenza (1975) authored a book which enumerates the details of the images of American women in advertising. And the author suggests that women were primarily used by advertisers to sell products to both women and men on the basis of their sexual appeal to men. Viewing these advertisements men regarded women primarily as an object of sexual gratification.

Venkatesan and Losco (1975) examined the female role portrayals in magazine advertisements over the 13-year period from 1959 to 1971 and found that women were more frequently presented as sex objects and advertisements presented woman as physically beautiful. Although the overall portrayal of woman as sex-objects, declined, it was more evident in men's (53%) and general audience
magazines. The changes in female portrayal which occurred during the 13-year time span were mostly attributable to the shift of emphasis in women's magazines, where only 12% of the females in women's magazines advertisements were coded as sex-objects, the emphasis had shifted to "woman as physically beautiful", which accounted for 61% in the women's press.

**Pingree et al.(1976)** examined the work of sexism in advertising, by using a scale of sexism and came out with the findings that sexist portrayals had resulted in women (and men, to some extent) being objectified or used as one dimensional characters to sell projects. The findings also indicated that objectification presented itself through decorative portrayals, which means that female models had no functional relationship with the products advertised. Physical attractiveness, prominent displays of the body, and sexuality were often emphasized in decorative portrayals of women in advertising.

**Culley and Bennett,(1976)** examined the exploitation of women as sex objects in advertising and came out with the findings that women had been exploited to the fuller extent by the advertisers and media people. The researchers suggest that although the exploitation of women as sexual objects seem to be receding in both magazine and television advertising the use of the female body for its sexual appeal is still a well established advertising practice, particularly in male-oriented advertising and media.

**Courtney & Whipple, (1983)** authored a book which enumerates the details of Sex stereotyping in advertising which presents the details about the different types of images of men and women in advertising where the scholars argue that women are often presented as subordinate to men, are viewed as sex objects, or decorative objects in advertisements. And they also argue that women are most likely to be seen as product users and less likely to be seen as the decision makers or authority figures and women are often portrayed as young and concerned with physical attractiveness.

**Lawrance and Kurzbard (1986)** analyzed the sexual content in magazine advertisements published during 1964 and 1984 by comparing different years and came out with the findings that the percentage of advertisements with sexual content had remained constant but the number of advertisements containing sexual elements
had increased. The sexual illustrations had become more overt and the female models were more likely to be portrayed as suggestively clad, partially clad or nude than male models.

**Kilbourne (1987)** examined the gender portrayal in advertising and media in her work "Gender and the media" and concluded that rape and objectification of women in advertising and media are closely related. By depicting women as thin beautiful and passive the idea that women are sex objects for the male gaze was reinforced. And the images of women in advertising and media are objectified.

**Sullivan and O'Connor (1988)**, analyzed and compared the print advertisements of 1983 and advertisements of the 1950s and 1970s where the sample of advertisements were drawn from People, Saturday Evening Post, Life, Newsweek, The New Yorker, Reader’s Digest, Time, and U.S. News and World Report. These magazines were chosen because of their broad appeal and their likelihood of depicting women in a wide variety of roles. In fact Sullivan and O’Connor (1988) found a 60% increase since 1970 in the portrayal of women in purely "decorative" roles, whereby the presence of a physically attractive and sexy woman was unrelated to the advertised product.

**Ford, La Tour, and Lundstrom (1991)** examined the attitudes women had towards female role portrayals in advertising. The survey was based on one survey made in 1977 by Lundstrom and Sciglimpaglia that measured women's general perceptions of their portrayals in advertisements. The results of the 1991 study 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 dependent on men and found the portrayal of women in advertising to be offensive.

**Rudman and Verdi (1993)** compared the sexual and violent imagery of females and males in advertising and came out with the findings that female models were more likely than male models to be placed in submissive, sexually exploitive, and violent positions. Approximately 80% of the advertisements contained, female models who were posed in sexually exploitive postures. In half of the advertisements studied, female models were “dismembered”(i.e., body parts were excluded or
obscured) by the camera angle or logo placement. Only 17% of men were portrayed in sexual roles compared to women in advertisements. Findings document that such patterns have been increasing over time.

**Klassen et al. (1993)** examined the images of men and women and their relationships in magazines and advertisements by comparing advertisements from different magazine genres, including *Ms*. Their analysis demonstrated that *Ms.* was less likely than other popular magazines to portray women as sexual objects. The results indicate that the percentage of women portrayed as sex objects in advertisements were greater in other popular magazines used in the study.

**Busby and Leichty (1993)** examined the Feminism and advertising in traditional and nontraditional women’s magazines from 1950s-1980s by taking into account advertisements from various women's magazine and found an increase in the number of decorative or alluring roles for women—from 54% in 1959 to 73% in 1989.

**Scott, J and Rallapalli et al (1994)** examined the differences between the role portrayals of women in advertisements in U.S, and Indian magazines by considering 2 magazines from US and one magazine from India. The findings revealed that Indian advertisements depicted women more in traditional roles of house wife or mother compared to US magazine advertisements. The US advertisements portrayed women as high level business executives or professionals compared with the Indian advertisements. The US advertisements portrayed women, more as sex objects compared to Indian advertisements. The findings also indicate that the majority of advertisements in both continuously presented women in a decorative or non active role, and were pictured primarily for aesthetic purposes.

**Griffin, Viswanath, & Schwartz, (1994)** analyzed the gender advertising in the U.S. and India by comparing the advertising images of women in weekly U.S. news magazines (Time and Life) to weekly Indian magazines (India Today and Illustrated Weekly of India) and found very similar portrayals of women in subordinate or accessory poses among the four magazines. The researchers concluded that many of the Western advertising conventions and poses of women were being transferred cross-culturally in conjunction with concepts like “professionalism” by
Western multinational advertising agencies. In certain areas, such as the portrayal of women in predominately housewife or domestic management settings, Indian magazines far outstripped their U.S. counterparts. While comparing the use of “sexual pursuit” as a theme in advertisements (men pursuing women in an overtly sexual way), however, U.S. magazines used these portrayals three times more often than Indian magazines.

La Tour and Henthorne (1995) examined the impact of female nudity in advertising by testing a hypothetical model and advertising responses outcomes, by collecting data from trained interviewers from a large regional mall located in the mid Gulf coast region where a focus group of adults from the age group of 21 to 50 were asked to select an advertisement from a group of advertisements which contained substantial erotic content and nudity and each respondent was given the advertisement followed by the questionnaire. The researchers came out with the findings that there was usage of erotic content in the advertisements. And the female nudity/erotic content in print advertisements was used to a greater extent. The results indicate that from the mid 1960s through the early and mid 1990s, there are significantly more overt portrayals of women as sex objects.

Plous and Neptune (1997) examined 10 years of fashion advertisements drawn from six magazines geared toward White women (Cosmopolitan, Glamour), Black women (Ebony, Essence), and White men (Esquire, GQ). Researchers found that body exposure of White women increased significantly over the 10 years, from approximately 34% in 1985-1986 to nearly 50% in 1993-1994. Advertisements displaying cleavage of White women nearly doubled, from 22.8% in 1985–1986 to 42.8% in 1993–1994. Breast exposure of Black women increased from 30% of advertisements in 1986-1988 to more than 40% by 1993–1994. When breast exposure was included with other types of body exposure, the percentage of 1993–1994 advertisements with body exposure raised to 52.9% for Black women and 61.6% for White women.

Cheng (1997) analyzed the gender role portrayals in Chinese and U.S. advertising and also studied the portrayals of women in Chinese advertising, by comparing the advertisements of both the countries and noted that women in Chinese television commercials were more “demure” and were in less sexually suggestive
clothing than did women in U.S. advertisements where as women in U.S. advertisements were highly sexual.

Lin (1997) examined the extent to which sexism was used in television advertising, focusing on male as well as female portrayals in television commercials and came out with the findings that both women and men were depicted largely in stereotypical “traditional”; roles, and women were more often shown in a state of undressing, and exhibited more “sexiness,” and were depicted as sexual objects (9.2% of men vs. 20.8% of women) compared to men.

Reichert et al. (1999) examined how sexual explicitness in advertising continued to increase by comparing various magazine advertisements from 1983 and 1993, and found that in 1993 both female and male models were more likely to be dressed in a sexually explicit manner; and in both years, female models were three times as likely as males to be dressed in a sexually explicit manner, with 40% of female models in 1993 dressed provocatively. And the researchers came out with the findings that there was an increasing trend in female models being dressed in a sexually explicit manner in advertisements.

Bordo (1999) compared underwear advertisements, in which men in their underwear were shown with their pants around their ankles in one advertisement; and women were similarly depicted in another advertisement, and argued that the trend towards portraying men as sexual objects should be understood in a different context than the sexual objectification of women. Although the research has examined different types of magazines, different time periods, and used different methodologies, the common conclusion is that women were more likely than men to be sexualized in magazine advertisements and presented in demeaning ways.

Krassas et al., (2001) examined the sexual objectification of women in magazine advertisements by comparing Cosmopolitan and Playboy magazines which demonstrated that the sexual objectification of women through the reinforcement of the male gaze was clearly the dominant rhetoric in both magazines, even though one was a pornographic magazine and the other was not. Each magazine had at least one section that contained fairly graphic descriptions of sexual encounters, and each
magazine included sexually suggestive photos of women. Women in these magazines were often scantily clad.

**Esther Kuntjara (2001)** Analyzed the different types of images of women portrayed in advertisements by taking into consideration a few advertisements from some famous women magazine such as Femina, Kartini, or Metropolitan where most the advertisements were directed towards women and came out with the findings that the images of women portrayed in advertisements usually created artificiality that established an impossible standard of physical perfection for women. And women in advertisements were depicted as an object chosen by men for their sexual gratification. Women were often portrayed as sexual object and the images of women in advertisements gave the message that those women who had qualities of intelligence, cheerfulness, and who were young, sexy, rich educated and lovable were considered as ideal women.

**Tom Reichert (2003)** examined the usage of sexual imagery by the advertisers to appeal to youth by comparing 2863 advertisements in magazines read by young and mature adults where the visual sexual content was assessed with 2 variables i.e. dresses and interaction. The results indicated that 27.7 percent of models in advertisements for younger adults were dressed sexually compared to 23.9 percent in advertisements for mature adults and twice as many advertisements appeared in young adults compared to mature adult magazines which contributed to the opportunity for younger adults to see more sexual images. And the couples engaged in sexual behavior were significantly more evident in young adult advertisements. Women were more often dressed sexually than men who confirmed that women were 3.7 times more likely to be portrayed suggestively dressed, partially clad or nude than men. And compared to general interest magazines (and men's magazines) women's magazines had 1.57 times the proportion of models dressed sexually.

**Krassas, Joan et al (2003)** analyzed the sexual rhetoric in editorial photographs in 2001 issues of Maxim and Stuff magazines. Goffman’s (1979) classifications of gender in advertisements were used to examine how the new generation of “lad” magazines used images to provide readers with cues about sexuality and sexual practice. The findings revealed that both magazines constructed sexuality in similar ways. However, the overall messages about sexuality in the
photos were different for men than for women. Women were more likely than men to be portrayed as sex objects, such as the common practices of photographing them in contort or demeaning positions. Both magazines portrayed white people as sexier than other races.

Frith & Mueller, (2003) found that the attractive female bodies and sexual stimuli had been historically used in the U.S advertisements to attract the attention of the viewers and to make an attempt to create interest in a product or service. The attractive female bodies were used as an object of sale in advertisements regardless to their talent, and intelligence.

Lindner (2004) examined the images of Women in magazines of General Interest and Fashion magazine advertisements from 1955 to 2002, by comparing the advertisements in general interest magazines, and fashion magazines from 1955 to 2002 and came out with the findings that women were portrayed more in decorative roles and decorative portrayals of women had increased significantly in both magazines of general interest and fashion magazine advertisements.

Katherine, Frith et al (2004) analyzed the similarities and differences between the ways in which Asian and Western models were presented in beauty advertisements by examining three popular women’s magazines of the USA, Singapore and Taiwan where three issues of each magazine were chosen at random. A total of 1,130 advertisements from women’s fashion and beauty magazines were selected and the researchers came out with the findings that the advertisers across cultures, presented western models as more sexually liberal than Asians. They also concluded that Western women were used as sex objects in advertising across cultures than Asian women.

Reichert and Carpenter (2004) analyzed the use of sexual appeals in magazine advertisements between 1983 to 2003 and found that women were suggestively dressed, partially clad, or were nude about half the time in advertisements in women’s magazines (e.g., Redbook) published in 2003, almost four out of five women (78%) were depicted in sexual manner in advertisements in men’s magazines (e.g., Esquire). Analyses of photographs from Maxim and Stuff (two
popular men’s magazines) revealed that 80.5% of the women were depicted as sex objects.

Toland and Hong et al (2004) analyzed the similarities and differences between the ways in which Asian and Western models were used in beauty advertisements by examining popular women's magazines of the U.S.A, Singapore and Taiwan where three issues of each magazine which were chosen at random from within the 12 month period from March 2001 to March 2002 and a total of 1130 advertisements from the nine women's fashion and beauty magazines were selected. The findings revealed that the sensual/sexy beauty type category was used more often with Western than Asian models and advertisers across cultures, presented Western models as more sexually liberal than Asians. Based on this finding the researcher concluded that Western women were used as sex objects in advertising the cute/girl-next-door type appeared more frequently with Asian than with Western models. Because of the Western cultural background Western models looked directly into the camera while Asian models avoided prompted by their own cultural background.

Christina N Baker (2005) analyzed the sexual images of women in black and white oriented women's and men's magazines where a content analysis of images of women in advertisements from 8 different popular magazines was performed and over 600 images of women were analyzed based on seven dimensions. The findings indicate that the images in white oriented media and the images of white women were conformed to the traditional image of sexuality which was submissive and dependent on men. The white women were objectified more than black women and more importance was placed on the physical attractiveness of white women. The images of women as sex objects were more blatant in men’s magazines. The findings were true for both black and white oriented magazines. Women in black men’s magazines were objectified more than women in black women’s magazines. However, the findings also indicate that white women were objectified in advertisements more than the black women regardless of the magazines audience.

Sanchez, Gamble et. al (2005) compared and analyzed women in advertisements of the mainstream, Black-oriented, and Latin magazines and their study revealed that, 42% of advertisements in Cosmopolitan were found to contain suggestive body exposure, compared with 13% of suggestive body exposure in
Ebony, 32% of suggestive body exposure in Essence, 0% in Filipinas, and 21% in Latin Girl. According to the researchers these patterns persisted over time.

**Jessica, Stephenson et al (2006)** examined whether it was ethical to use sexual appeals in advertising, and as to when and where the sexual appeals could be used, and as to the use of men and women in advertisements of a sexual nature and came out with the findings that physical features were identified as the main characteristic among all the characteristics used in advertisements as sexy and sexual appeals do not always lead to brand remembrance and women were the primary focus in sexual appeals, who were considered as sex objects and men were also targeted as sexual objects.

**Gill (2007)** examined the different kinds of sexiest advertisements and came out with the findings that midriffs were also a form of sexual objectification of women in advertisements. And it was a cynical exercise dreamt up by the advertising industry in order to use continually using women’s bodies as sexual objects, while evading legitimate charges of sexism. It represented a more advanced or harmful form of exploitation compared to earlier generation of objectifying images. Based on the findings the researcher suggested that women were not only objectified as they were before, but through sexual subjectification in midriff advertising they must understand that their own sexual objectification as pleasurable and self chosen.

**Ma Lin (2008)** examined the representation of the orient in western women perfume advertisements where the images of women were the focal point and were fully exploited. By undertaking the semiotic method of analysis the researcher used three types of advertisements that combined both race and the gender. In the first type of advertisement oriental women figures were the focal images and in the second type of advertisement oriental sceneries and objects were used as the major signifiers. The last type of advertisement used western figures that were given the oriental qualities. All three types of advertisements were different, and they represented some gendered stereotypes within western patriarchal societies. The researcher came out with the findings that the orient in the perfume advertisements were portrayed as exotic, mysterious, and submissive where these characteristics correlated to women's famine sexuality, domestic role and subordination to men in western societies. The representation of the orient in western women perfume advertisements were generally
masculine, and objectifying of both eastern and western women as the visual and sexual target to white men.

**Julie and Rosselli (2008)** analyzed the extent to which women were presented as sex objects and as victims in print advertisements by considering 58 magazines where a total of 4136 full page advertisements were examined and these advertisements were drawn from men's, women's, news and business, entertainment, teen and special interest magazines. The findings indicate that one in two advertisements that featured women portrayed them as sex objects and sexual objectification varied greatly by magazine type where men's, women's fashion, and adolescent girls magazines showed the highest rates of objectification and special interest, entertainment, and news and business magazines showed the lowest rates of objectification. And the percentage of advertisements that portrayed women as sex objects was significantly higher in men's magazines than in any other magazine categories. The victimization of women in advertisements was not as prevalent as women's sexual objectification.

**Zimmerman and Dahlberg (2008)** examined the sexual objectification of women in advertising by measuring the attitudes of young women to sexually objectified advertising. The survey combined the elements of two previous studies (Ford, LaTour, and Lundstrom, 1991; Mittal and Lassar, 2000) where a questionnaire was administered to 94 female undergraduates. The results showed significant change in the attitudes of young, educated women. The researchers found that the respondents were of the opinion that females were portrayed as sex objects in advertisements, but were less offended by these portrayals than female respondents in 1991.

**Elizabeth, Wren et al (2008)** analyzed the portrayal of male and female advertising characters to determine whether sexual appeals were used to sell products where 287 advertisements were content analyzed into 4 categories like gender of the actor, product type, whether or not sex was used to sell product, and what kind of sexuality if used was shown. The researchers came out with the findings that three basic ways of sexual appeals were used in advertising i.e. objectifying, alluring behavior, provocative clothing. And female advertising characters were used more often than male characters in advertisements that used sexual appeal to sell a product. 51percent of such advertisements used women actors compared to only 13 percent for
men. The vast majority of advertisements that used sexual appeals to sell a product had a female somewhere in the advertisements. The results indicate that the male audiences were more likely to be gazing at objectified advertising characters compared to gender-neutral or female audiences. When sexual appeal was used to sell a product, female advertising characters appeared more than male advertising characters. The vast majority of 85 percent of advertisements that used sexual appeal to sell products included the female image. Thus the researchers concluded that it was primarily the male audiences who observed objectified female advertising characters.

2.4. Consequences of sexual portrayal of women in advertisements

Brown miller, (1975) examined the consequences of sexual portrayal of women in advertising and media and concluded that sexually degrading advertising and media depictions of women promote rape-supportive attitudes and beliefs which causes a very bad impact on the society.

Richmond and Hartman (1982) examined the use of Sexual appeal in advertising considering various advertisements and came out with the findings that women were presented in sexual roles than men. The use of sexual appeals in advertising had increased compared to earlier years. Women in advertisements were portrayed in sexual roles to such an extent that they were used as sexual objects in advertising for decades, most often they were seen as mere parts and not as a whole, and their bodies were chopped into parts, packaged and was sold.

Silverstein & Kelly, (1986) examined the role of the mass media in promoting a thin standard of bodily attractiveness for women and came out with the findings that an average person is bombarded by 400 to 600 advertisements per day in magazines, on billboards, on television, and in newspapers. Such repeated exposure to the thin ideal where women are presented as sex idols within various applications of media may lead to the internalization of this ideal and making these images seem achievable and real. However, this ideal body type is often unattainable and many women thus suffer from body dissatisfaction; this has caused the relentless pursuit of thinness to become a normative behavior among women.
Kilbourne, (1987) in her film “Still Killing Us Softly” suggests that rape and the objectification of women in advertising and media are closely related. By depicting women as thin, beautiful and passive the idea that women are sex objects for the male gaze is reinforced. Also, many advertisements tend to normalize violence towards women by objectifying them through submissive positions and subtle body languages. This submissive image that advertisers use to portray women is then viewed by the male as a norm concept.

Feingold, (1990) examined the Gender differences in the effects of physical attractiveness on romantic attraction and came out with the findings that current advertising and media images of ideal female beauty are narrowly defined, exaggerated, and emphasize thinness, exposure to these advertising and media images may make salient the discrepancy between a female perceiver's conception of her own weight and the standard accepted by society. The researcher argued that Females’ social outcomes depend critically on their attractiveness, and accordingly a perceived discrepancy was likely to be quite threatening, perhaps leading to increased concern with body weight.

Michael S. La Tour (1990) analyzed female nudity employed in print advertisements and differences between men and women compared through self reported dimensions of arousal and impression of advertisements employing female nudity through an experiment in which arousal was manipulated through three treatments of a print advertisement with varying degrees of female nudity with a sample of 202 business majors from a Southern university who were exposed to different advertisements with varying degrees of nudity and questionnaires were administered after each advertisement exposure. The findings revealed that men were more energized by female nudity, while women were tensed and fatigued. Men had positive feelings associated with the nude model advertisement where as women had negative feelings towards such portrayals. The researcher came out with the findings that women develop negative attitude towards those advertisements which employ female nudity.

Richins (1991) examined the idealized Images of women in advertising and came out with the findings that sexually attractive images of women in advertisements had unintentional effects. Short-term influences included devaluations of one's— and
one's partners—attractiveness attitudes supportive of aggressiveness toward women, triggering of gender stereotyping and gender role expectations and distorted body image.

**Paxton, Wertheim, et. al (1991)** examined body image satisfaction, dieting beliefs, and weight loss behaviors among adolescent girls and boys considering various magazine advertisements and concluded that magazine advertisements were the most important form of media that can lead women to total dissatisfaction about their perceived body image. In the study female high school students reported that magazines were their primary source of information regarding ideal body images, dieting, and health two-thirds of the girls in this study reported that being thinner would have a positive impact on their lives. The girls reported a higher level of body dissatisfaction than boys did on a variety of measures of this construct viewing the magazine advertisements.

**De Young & Crane, (1992)** analyzed the females' attitudes toward the portrayal of women in advertising and they came out with the findings that the sexually explicit portrayal of women in advertisements had increased and such widespread overt depictions of women as sex objects in advertisements can be expected to have an impact on general beliefs and attitudes. The researchers noted an important finding that women held very negative attitudes toward such advertisement portrayals of women.

**Dolan, (1994)** assessed the demands placed on bodies by contemporary societies through magazine advertising and concluded that magazines were filled with advertisements and images that present an ideal female body type and many women experience pressure to conform to this ideal and are dissatisfied with their own body which leads to dieting and eating disorders.

**Kyra and Covell (1995)** assessed the influence of advertisement portrayals of women and came out with the findings that the media portrayals of women can influence sexual attitudes and beliefs. And in the study, males who saw print media advertisements in which women were presented as sex objects were most likely to evidence increased sex role stereotypic and rape myth beliefs, and were likely to be
more accepting of interpersonal violence (primarily against women), than were males exposed to other types of advertisements.

**Fredrickson and Roberts (1997)** examined how sexual objectification applies to all women and how sexual objectification factors into the lines of diverse subgroups of women by focusing almost exclusively on white middle class girls and women and came out with the findings that women’s bodies were looked at, evaluated and was always, potentially objectified, objectified women internalized an observer’s perspective on physical self. Shames, anxiety, depression, women’s sexual dysfunctions, eating disorders were some of the consequences of objectification as well as sexual objectification.

**Natalie J and covell (1997)** examined the impact of women in advertisements and the impact of seeing sexual images and progressive advertisements on attitudes towards feminism and the women’s movement by considering a sample of 50 female and 46 male white middle class undergraduate students and came out with the findings that the presentation of women in advertisements as objects for sexual gratification encourages attitudes supportive of sexual aggression among young adults. And the exposure to such advertisements affects the acceptance of feminism and the women’s movement. And the findings also indicate that the continuous exposure to such advertisements among young adults are expected to hinder women’s efforts of obtaining true equality with freedom from sexual aggression.

**Garner, (1997)** conducted the 1997 Body Image Survey and reported that the media facilitates feeds women’s desires to become slimmer and fit as a result of constant images portrayed in advertisements and articles. The study revealed the fact that, 43 percent of women were dissatisfied with their bodies’ and they compared themselves with models in fashion magazine advertisements, and 49 percent stated that very thin models made them feel insecure about themselves.

**Goetzle, (1999)** analyzed the advertising images of women by taking into consideration 566 female respondents to whom a questionnaire was circulated and concluded that advertisements impacting society include depictions of women’s narrow roles in society, Examples of these roles include women being depicted as a mother, homemaker or object of beauty. According to Goetzle 55% of his 566 female
participants said that they constantly saw advertisements that made them feel as though they should take up diet and 64% of the respondents thought there was too much sexual element in advertisements. Since there were so many advertisements about weight and women as sex objects, the researcher suggested that it was no wonder many girls and young women developed eating disorders among other things.

Howard, and Sweeney et. al (1999) examined the question as to whether exposure to TV advertisements that portray women as sex objects caused increased body dissatisfaction among women and men. The participants were exposed to 15 sexist and 5 nonsexist advertisements, 20 nonsexist advertisements, or a no advertisement control condition. The results revealed that women exposed to sexist advertisements judged that their current body size as larger and revealed a larger discrepancy between their actual and ideal body sizes (preferring a thinner body) than women exposed to the nonsexist or no advertisement condition. Men exposed to the sexist advertisements judged their current body size as thinner, revealed a larger discrepancy between their actual and ideal body size (preferring a larger body), and revealed a larger discrepancy between their own ideal body size and their perceptions of others’ male body size preferences (believing that others preferred a larger ideal) than men exposed to the nonsexist or no advertisement condition.

Lavine et al., (1999) examined the depiction women as sex objects in television advertising and its effects on body dissatisfaction by analyzing various television advertisements and came out with the findings that advertisements depicting scantily clad women posing as decorative objects may activate the beliefs that women are seductive and frivolous sex objects, whereas advertisements depicting women as home makers may activate the belief that women are nurturing, communal, and domestically-minded.

Jean Kilbourne (1999) edited a book on how advertising changes the way we think and feel. The work was widely acknowledged by the American media as a significant contribution to the enrichment of the consequences of sexual objectification of women in advertising where she states that advertising often turns people into objects. Women’s bodies and men’s bodies too these days, are dismembered, packaged, and used to sell everything from chain saws to chewing gum. The author also states that many people do not fully realize the terrible
consequences when people become things. Self-image is deeply affected. The self-esteem of girls plummets as they reach adolescence partly because they cannot possibly escape the message that their bodies are objects, and imperfect objects.

Killourne (2000) examined “the objectification and dismemberment of women in media” and concluded that dismemberment of women (where advertisements focus was on one part of the body, e.g. women's legs) was a monstrous problem in advertising. Sexual advertisements as well as dismemberment advertisements employ female body parts for the purpose of selling a product. Dismemberment advertisements promote the idea of separate entity. Watching these advertisements girls and women from very young age will be conditioned to view their body as “work-in-progress” or something in constant need of alteration.

Cohan, and Alan (2001) examined a new paradigm in the ethics of women's advertising by taking into consideration the opinion of both men and women and came out with the findings that men who saw the print media advertisements in which women were presented as sex objects were more likely to evidence increased sex role stereotypic and rape myth beliefs and were likely to accept interpersonal violence (primarily against women), than men exposed to other types of advertisements.

Hargreaves and Tiggemann (2002) examined the effect of television commercials on mood and body dissatisfaction by considering various television commercials and came out with the findings that exposure to thin ideal images did not affect boys’ own body satisfaction. The latter results were not surprising that, the images of female attractiveness provided a relevant source of social comparison and self-evaluation for women and girls.

Kuczynski, (2002) in his study examined the sexually objectified portrayals of women in advertisements and suggested that sexually objectified portrayals of women in advertisements can also affect views of sex and sexual behavior to a greater extent. Sexual element becomes commercial, recreational, and result in exploitation which is very much harmful to the society as a whole.

Bissell, (2002) analyzed the impact of advertising and mass-mediated messages about body image and concluded that these message have particularly harmful effects on girls and young women. And he also argued that girls develop
eating disorders because advertising and mass media images of beauty and sexual desirability cannot be obtained through healthy eating.

Kilbourne (2002) examined advantages and disadvantages of objectifying women in advertising in her work "beauty and the beast of advertising" and concluded that people who were exposed to two thousand advertisements each day which was one of the most powerful sources of education in the society. Seeing the advertisements in the media women feel pressured to conform to the beauty standards of the culture and are willing to go to any length to manipulate and change their faces and bodies. Kilbourne suggests that women are conditioned to view their faces as masks and their bodies as objects. Through the mass media, women discover that their bodies and faces are in need of alteration, augmentation, and disguise. In addition, women are taught to internalize an observer's perspective of their own bodies.

Campbell (2003) examined the objectification of women in advertising and came out with the findings that the respondents with high levels of exposure to fashion magazine advertisements exhibited significantly higher degrees of liking for ultra thin fashion models than did those respondents with low levels of exposure to fashion magazine exposure. They found that the visual images depicted, had an impact on women's emotional status, when their bodies did not match the ideal type shown in the images. This led to the development of eating disorders.

Muren, Amolak et.al (2003) examined the reactions of grade school children towards the objectified images of women and men in advertising and media and came out with the findings that sexualized portrayal of women in advertising and media had significantly negative outcomes. These negative outcomes not only affected the adult women but also the young girls. The study also found out that the females were buying cosmetics and beauty products at increasingly younger ages and girls as young as seven showed the signs of disordered eating and self surveillance due to the impact of advertising and media.

Andrea Beetles (2004) examined the attitude of male and female consumers towards nudity in advertising. In order to explore and describe attitudes towards nudity in advertising the researcher used a focus group approach of collecting data and came out with the findings that men were prepared more to accept female nudity
in advertising than women. Based on the findings the researcher suggested that consumers were more ready to accept female nudity in advertising when they saw a clear link between the product and the body. Nudity, specifically total nudity was not approved of as the attitudes towards nudity were not very liberal in the UK. And at some level consumers were turned off by female nudity which led to a complete contradiction of the common notion that sex sells.

Dittmar, (2004) analyzed the Impact of Model’s Body Size portrayed in advertisements on Women’s Body-Focused Anxiety and came out with the findings that objectification of women in advertisements was a dangerous problem. And the research found that young women and girls, on average, felt worse after seeing advertisements showing thin female models. Advertisements portray images of unattainable goals, For example women who were extremely thin, seeing these images women started thinking that those images were real and desirable and tried to achieve those media standards by dieting which leads to eating disorders. And according to the researchers there was a growing concern for the advertising and media’s obsession with thinness and how it affected women, both mentally and physically, which appeared to be extremely harmful. The controversy of this particular topic had resulted in many public debates, which tried to expose how advertisements were actually detrimental to women.

Steve Lysonski (2005) examined the consequences of sexism in advertisements on viewers and whether the sales of those products were impaired by such depictions and also made an analysis about an advertisement that was regarded as sexy Vs sexist. The sexy advertisements displayed men and women enjoying themselves and with each other while the sexist advertisements referred to women as powerless objects used by and for the gratification of men. The findings revealed that the sexist portrayals were socializing agents that encouraged modeling by women, especially young women, and sexist sexual imagery encouraged harassment. Nearly 70percent of women and 50percent of men felt that sexist advertisements promoted sexual harassment to some extent. And about 11percent of women and 7percent of men said that sexual element in advertising frequently or always directly affected their purchase decisions.
Bushman (2005) analyzed whether violence and sex in television programs sell products in advertisements and came out with the findings that participants exposed to programming featuring sexual commercials where women were portrayed as sex idols were less likely to remember the advertised brands and expressed less interest in buying those brands than participants who had seen advertisements with no sexual content. Results also indicate that young women and adult women were frequently, consistently, and increasingly presented in sexualized ways in advertising, creating an environment in which to be a woman becomes nearly synonymous with being a sexual object.

Kamala Raj (2008) analyzed the responses of the adolescents regarding the image of women in advertisements on television and came out with the findings that 60% of girls felt that advertisements persuaded them to be like beautiful models 35.5% of boys stated that whenever they saw beautiful models in the advertisement it stayed in their minds for longer periods. The dressing style of the model in the advertisements also left an impact on 20% of girls as it affected their fashion statement. 17.7% of girls stated that they tried to initiate the character shown in the advertisement and 28.8% girls said that various advertisements of fairness cream and beauty soaps enhanced and inferiority complex in them there by affecting their self esteem. 68.8% girls and 73.3% boys felt that advertisements were not representing the personality of Indian women as women in advertisements were attired in western clothes and were not depicting the Indian culture.

Elza Ibroscheva (2009) examined the portrayals of women and their sexuality in advertising and other media by systematic examination and documentation of the presence of sexualized images of women in popular media, and specifically in advertising and came out with the finding that the transformation of the portrayal of Bulgarian women into over – sexual was exploitive in nature and hyper – famine bodies were interpreted as producing a feeling of empowerment. And the findings indicated alarmingly noticeable trends towards the presentation of female models in TV advertising in more sexually provocative roles and portrayals when compared to those of male models and the researchers concluded that these types of advertisements could create an environment ripe for trafficking and sexual exploitation.
Tamar, Quinn et al (2010) examined the impact of objectification on women’s behavior in social interactions by taking into account 207 undergraduates and came out with the findings that a woman narrows her presence in the interaction by spending less time talking when she believes that a man is focusing on her body. Based on the findings the researchers suggested that recognizing female bodies as the target of visual inspection in advertising and media may also affect women’s mental health, particularly the relationship between self-silencing and women’s risk of depression.

2.5. Summary

Women have been the advertiser’s main target since the beginning of advertising. Advertisers often emphasize sexuality and the importance of physical attractiveness in an attempt to sell products in advertisements. In today’s advertising, women are looked upon as a tool that can help in selecting a product. Women and sexual appeals are often a great combination in selling a product to the customers, but researchers are concerned that this places undue pressure on women and men to focus on their appearances which in turn leads to quite a large number of problems.

The first part of the chapter deals with studies conducted on portrayal of women in advertisements which includes the different types of images of women in advertisements such as housewives, professionals, and as decorative as well as sex idols. The second part deals with studies conducted in support of the fact that women in advertisements have been portrayed much in sexual roles and also as decorative objects. The last part of the chapter deals with the consequences of sexual portrayal of women in advertisements on issues such as dieting, depression, self-silencing etc. Quite a large number of studies have been conducted on the portrayal of women in advertising. But no studies have been conducted to show how physical attractiveness of women in advertising is successful in attracting and inducing a consumer to purchase a product which is advertised, and that is the focal point of the present study.