CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Chapter 8
8.1 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study scanned diverse variables (as mentioned previously) in order to reach the set objectives. Conclusions were drawn, based on the respective research findings. The implications thereof will be presented in this section. The study provides insightful findings regarding stereotyping of gender roles in Indian advertising and how they have changed over time. The discussion to follow is structured according to the research objectives.

Advertisements always play an important role in any society. By creating an advertisement properly the marketers can influence people’s beliefs and outlook. People have the propensity to classify information they receive by creating classification and thus making simple the messages they receive. Therefore, they create mental arrangements, which are definite representations of the authenticity showing its most characteristic and important elements and properties. These arrangements are accountable for describing the crux of our worldview and have a momentous impact on social understandings, expectations, conditions, and emotional control.

The findings suggest that advertisers take cognisance of the social changes in India, as female roles have changed from the traditional to a more modern outlook. Their role traits have shifted from conventional like being a housewife, caring for her looks, etc. to more contemporary traits which were earlier the domain of male gender, for example donning a suit and working in an office, or driving a car and when it get puncture changing the tyre, etc.
Traditionally men have been the bread earner of the family who is career-focused, confident and independent, while the female have been publicised as home makers; adoring wives and mothers, in charge for raising children and doing all works of the house.

Till 1970s the gender role depicted in Indian advertisements were traditional in nature. Both males and females were depicted stereotypically, but males inclined to be more stereotypical than females. Although there were still an excessively high number of advertisements that showed women in traditional roles, these depictions have been reducing in number since the early 1980s and more equality is seen in both gender roles portrayals. Women were still seen in more narrowly defined roles than men but to a lesser degree. Role portrayals in the Indian advertisements suggested that the stereotyping of women as objects of external beauty is prevalent in the Indian sample, as women were likely to be portrayed in roles that symbolise physical attractiveness.

Due to changing environment and India opening its doors for the foreign companies, the gender roles started changing due to factors like reach of education and communication, women getting financially independent, dual income family and the top most factor that the role of women in purchasing process shifting from initiator or influencer to decision maker (Ref. Table 6.1). The spending power of women has gone up. “Globally, total earnings of women are estimated to be around $13 trillion which will rise to $18 trillion. In India, the average monthly income of urban women was Rs. 4,492, which increased to Rs. 9,457 in 2010,” Globally, annual consumer spending controlled by women was $20 trillion in 2011, which was expected to rise to $28 trillion by 2016,” said Sanjay Chakraborty, Associate VP, Triton
All these changes made women step out of the house and beyond. It did not take much to the advertisers to comprehend the shifting trend in Indian gender roles. They started showing women, besides homemaker, also as a student, sports person, pilot, doctor, corporate manager, and so on. Conventional companies like LIC of India also have recognised the shift in roles and have started creating adverts exclusively for women. The world of the Indian woman is no longer limited to the four walls of her home and the Indian male has to chip in with household chores.

8.1.1 Marketing Implication of Objective One: To study the shift in the role of genders in advertising in marketing.

Indian society is predominantly patriarchal in nature with practically in entirety focussed on the male - even when we create communications. This was apparent in those advertisements too which were made for females. The advertisements made for the products related to women also have males who were present in the advertisements to appreciate the results of those products, be them beauty cream ads or detergent powder ads. (Pawlica, Widawska 2001)

Advertisements like Lalitaji of Surf. The ad showed Lalitaji as a housewife who makes purchases for her family and talks about how buying a little expensive detergent powder makes sense. Still at the end of the advertisement the voice over of a man was needed to reinforce the decision of Lalitaji for buying expensive product. On the one hand the LG ad showed a husband preparing dinner for his wife who returning from her business tour (Advert 55) on the other hand in the ad of IDEA
mobile service where the onus of preparing the breakfast for the husband and child lies on the housewife irrespective both are working professionals (Advert 53).

The increase in liberal advertisements is a positive sign, but there are a few grains of salt to be taken with the obvious benefits. India’s rapidly growing middle class has no doubt helped spur the development of higher levels of gender equality, with many of these progressive ads being targeted at that audience. Obviously even middle and upper class women still face numerous challenges, but the climate has shifted as far as what they can and cannot do, and these contemporary advertisements reflect that.

Therefore advertisers should design the content of the messages carefully keeping in mind the nature of product advertised for and more importantly the profile of the target audience to whom the messages are directed at. The study indicates that there are clear shifts in the current gender role portrayals in Indian advertisements from conventional gender traits base to contemporary gender traits and hence the multi-national companies and the small domestic marketers who are in process of entering Indian markets or is in the process of expanding their area of operations from regional to national should design different message and image strategies keeping in mind this change in gender roles.

8.1.2 Marketing Implication of Objective Two: To study the factors responsible for change in of this exemplar shift in the gender traits.

Out of all the factors responsible for the shift in gender roles in advertising, the factor urban growth and its effect of gender role had difference of opinion between male and female respondents. The small marketers/advertisers while creating advertising in marketing should keep in mind that basing the gender roles on urban growth
criterion should be taken into consideration depending upon who is the target, as males and females think differently for it. Regarding the rest of the factors as the point of view of the two genders being the same the advertisers could have general or a common approach for them while constructing an advertisement.

As the study showed that the first two of all the factors responsible for this exemplar shift in gender roles are women’s role from initiator to decision maker in purchasing process and financial independence of women, the advertisers can be more effective in creating the messages targeted toward women and visually showing them *foreground rather keeping them in the background.*

The factor ‘reach of communication’ also playing a pivotal role in this gender role shift. The broader the reach of communication, the more people get exposed to the message content and they in due course start adopting the newer traits. India is a vast country. The growth of communication plays very important role in overall development. The marketer, specially the MNCs coming in India and want to exploit the huge market potential can take advantage of this factor, reach of communication, to penetrate the Indian market.

**8.1.3 Marketing Implication of Objective Three: To study how the two genders comprehend the advertisements as marketing messages targeted towards them.**

Using humans, male or female and the roles they play in the advertisement does not always serve the purpose of making advertisement attractive to grab the attention of the audience. As the study showed both males and females of expert-respondents did not agree to the null hypothesis that ‘there is no significance difference between
males and females’ opinions regarding the statement that using humans in advertisements make them more attractive. (Ref. Table 6.23) For using humans in the visuals of the advertisements the marketer should consider doing a research as to who the advertisement is targeted, whether to males and females, as the two gender comprehends the messaged different in these regards. Females consider that using human figure attracts the attention effectively than not using human visuals and vice-versa.

In contrast the study revealed that the two genders together agreed that proper gender portrayal do make the advertisements interesting. For example LIC advertisement (Ref. Advert No. 58) targeted solely towards women. The advertisement showed women in different roles so that they can all relate with the product. Using the right gender matching the product’s profile is also crucial for a marketer/advertisers. Products those are targeted to males and to females should have respective gender reinforcement.

An important finding in the study is that there is a significant difference between males and females of audience-respondents opinions regarding the statement that the females are breaking and coming out of their conventional gender roles and vice-versa. This is very important to the advertiser while creating the message. The advertiser should be very clear in choosing the right category of gender role for the respective gender. Depending on the nature of product and whom the product is targeted at, the category of the gender role should be chosen. (Ref. Chart 6.48)
8.1.4 Marketing Implication of Objective Four: To study the comparative approach between the male and the female genders reacting to the advertisements.

This is the core of the whole study as to how the two genders react to these contemporary advertisements. Both genders of audience-respondents agreed to the effectiveness of contemporary gender roles over conventional roles. Marketers and advertisers now have to take into account the veracity of today’s contemporary woman. As a career individual, considerable time of hers is taken up by work. As such, her career is probably a large part of her world, and if advertisers want to connect with the career woman’s circumstances, they will need to portray this important facet. The advertisers should design their advertising messages keeping this changing social aspect. Career women will identify more easily with portrayals that reflect their real-life circumstances. This enables the female audience to relate better to the product, enhancing identification with the brand and the brand equity.

8.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Every research has certain limitations and therefore it is necessary to incorporate them in the thesis to achieve a true perspective of the research topic. Accurate, up-to-date information acquired by marketing research is of colossal value to researcher in gaining and/or maintaining its competitive edge. Nevertheless there are a number of reasons why, in reality, these probable benefits may not be realised due to multipleconstraints. Data quality can be compromised via a number of potential routes, e.g., leading questions, unrepresentative samples, biased interviewers etc.
Veal (1997) denotes that individuals differ in their inclinations to respond depending on their background, attitudes, culture, social desirability, willingness of subjects to tell us the researcher what he or she wants to know etc. Furthermore, the individuals can be aware of the research being conducted about them and are not therefore purely passive subjects; they can react to the results of research and change their behaviour accordingly. Due to time restrictions of the study it can only focus on a small target audience. Therefore, this study is restricted in several ways.

The following are a few limitations of this research study:

1. As the research is based on survey method, the limitations of the survey method may influence the results of the study.

2. The research subject size used in this research is being selected from limited geographical areas and does not in any way stand for the generously proportioned geography of India. To enhance the authenticity of the study, the sample can be enlarged by spreading over wider urban and rural geographical areas.

3. One of the limiting factor, in collecting the primary data, was the time factors. The expert audience used to initially agree to give enough time to talk but when went to them, they actually, due to their busy schedule they gave limited time.

4. Content analysis is a purely descriptive method. It describes what is there, but may not reveal the underlying motives for the observed pattern 'what' but not 'why'.
5. Though a broad spectrum of factors have been considered whilst conducting this study, the respondents were conscious to reveal their true attitudinal perceptions especially to an unknown person. But at times it’s said that the respondents do not say what they want to say, rather they say what the interviewer wants to hear (Denzin and Linclon, 2002). Hence the respondents’ views may be influenced by others, resulting in inaccurate data findings.

8.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study provides some new insights into the factors responsible for the changing of gender roles in Indian advertising and the effect of these changing gender roles on advertising in marketing. However there are still lots of scope for further researches on this subject. Social structure of a society keeps changing with the influence of ever changing external environments. There might be an advantage to continue examining such phenomena over frequent intervals rather than at one or two points in time.

The roles played by different genders changes overtime. For example 1990 seems to be an unusually ‘modern’ year in Indian advertising. The trends in 1990 seemed to have reversed themselves to some degree by 1994. Therefore keeping in mind the dynamic trends of gender-roles, continuous studies should be undertaken.

Gender research in India should go further than sex-role stereotype. Alternative contexts to the study of gender in advertising can be established by methodically probing the conjectural thoughts articulated in different disciplines. Disciplines that can deliver valued fundamentals on which the future gender studies in marketing can be undertaken.
As India is a very vast country with so much cultural diversity, there is ample scope of future researches on gender roles and its influence in marketing strategies. The expectations from genders of each culture unit is different thus enabling marketer to extend scope of the study of gender roles substantially.

This study has exemplified how difficult it is to compare the findings when sample of advertisements and their themes are so diverse. Therefore, there is further scope for researchers here as they should define certain common gender issues and research methods, e.g. sampling, coding, etc., enabling the findings of different researches comparable.

Many personal interviews had to be conducted to pull out the replies as it was experienced that the respondents answered the questionnaires superficially. The suggestions for the future researches should be considered, taking into account the limitations of the study.