Chapter – 1

Framework of the Study

Introduction
Representation of women in media has remained a much discussed issue worldwide since illustrations and photographs started getting space in print media. Marketing of goods, services and ideas and the publications remained in a symbiotic situation since the beginning of Modern Mass media in the world. In the present age of Integrated Marketing Communication, not only the editorial matter of mass media has been turned into a commodity but the audience of mass media have also been become a commodity as marketing efforts try their best to attract the eye balls of media audience and then they sell this chunk of target audience to advertisers. Describing Critical Political Economic theory McQuail describes that “What commercial media sell to their clients is a certain more or less guaranteed number of potential customers according to a market relevant profile” (1). With advancements in printing technology and advent of color television, the portrayal of women turned more and more elaborate and explicit to attract the “male gaze” towards the product or service.

Women’s physical attraction has been used as a whole, or in parts, to market everything from brassieres, male undergarments to automobiles. One effect of such ads is to give women unrealistic notions of what they should look like. In addition to reinforcing sexist notions about ideal woman, ads exploit sexuality. Many products are pitched with explicit sexual imagery that borders on pornography. Not only do these ubiquitous images encourage us to think of sex as a commodity, but they often reinforce stereotypes of women as sex objects and may contribute to violence against women.

Is the woman the primary consumer or target audience of the product or service advertised or is she herself the product or service? This is the basic ambivalence that leads to the great, unending debate on the portrayal of women in advertising, mainly in media, especially in magazines and newspapers.

According to a United Nations research report (1975) on advertising and the portrayal of women, advertisers have been held responsible for projecting women in a derogatory light,
and as an inferior class of human beings (National advertising Review Board, 1975). Several studies which examine the images of women conveyed through advertising have been undertaken in the United States. However, according to Cooper-Chen, Cho, and Leung (1994), there is a dearth of media gender studies in Asian countries, many of which are currently experiencing a boom in the advertising industry. In her study on advertising and the changing work roles of women, Robinson Rutz (1981) (3) noted that the advertisers main concern was that their role was to sell their clients products and services not to report on social change. However, Desai and Patel (1990) (4) state that the images portrayed by advertisements have a definite impact on the thought patterns of society and various groups within society.

Ball (1985) (5) reports about the advertising industry in India, a country vast in its geographical and human resources proportions, and how it finally opened its doors to Western markets in the late 1980s. However, Tefft (1987) (6) states that along with the recent boom in advertising, there has been a growing concern among several Indian women’s groups that too many advertisers are portraying women as sex objects or as stereotypical happy housewives. Shrivastava’s (1992) (7) research on the Indian media has shown that the dominant negative stereotypes in connection to the portrayal of women are:

1. A woman's place is in the home.
2. The most important and valuable asset of a woman is physical beauty.
3. A woman’s energies and intellect must be directed toward finding the right man and in keeping him interested.
4. Women are dependent, coy, and submissive; they are masochistic in their response to indignities, humiliations and even to physical violence inflicted upon them.
5. The good woman is the traditional housewife long-suffering, pious and submissive; the modern woman who asserts herself and her independence is undesirable and can never bring happiness to anybody nor find happiness herself.
6. Women are women’s worst enemies.
7. The working woman is the undesirable exception who must be brought into the marriage fold and made to conform to traditional social norms.

Educated working women in India no longer fit the stereotypes outlined above. Sharma’s (1990) (8) research on the status of women in Indian society shows that within the male-
dominated patriarchal ideology of society, a sizeable number of Indian women are involved in the work force, and hold positions of prestige and power. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the emergence of women in the Indian work force, and the independence enjoyed by a small section of educated working women is a recent phenomenon in the cultural and gender-related history of the country. According to historians Jacobson and Wadley (1992),(9) for centuries, and up to as late as 1947 when India gained independence from British rule, the Indian woman always played a secondary role in relation to men. Maitra-Sinha (1993) (10) cites Manu, the first codifier of Hindu law, who wrote, From the cradle to the grave, a woman is dependent on a male in childhood on her father, in youth on her husband, and in old age on her son (p. v).

But despite increased opportunities for women today, there still exist certain deep-rooted social and cultural factors within society and the work world which hinder their overall progress. Shrivastava (1990) states that the stereotypical media portrayals, in turn, contribute to making the struggle for emancipation from debilitating social norms a very difficult process.

**Advertising**

"Advertising is the whip which hustles humanity up the road to the Better Mousetrap"

-E.S. Turner, in the Shocking History of Advertising, U.K. Penguine, 1965

If advertising merely sold products, it would cause less critical concern than it does. But it also sells images, dreams, ideals, ways of life; it sells, and then reinforces time and again values – those of consumerism; and it trades in stereotypes. On the credit side, advertising has speeded the introduction of useful inventions to a wide as distinct from a select circle of consumers; it has spread markets, reduced the price of goods, accelerated turnover and kept people in employment. But the relentless propaganda on behalf of goods in general as J.K. Galbraith puts it in The Affluent Society(U.K.: Hamish Hamilton, 1958), is considered by many a dangerous mode of brainwashing in that advertising's central function appears to be to create desires that previously did not exist, or rather anxieties which response to the ad (by going out and buying the advertised product or service) helps to assuage- but only temporarily. V. L. Leymore in The Hidden Myth(U.K.: Heinemann, 1975) argues that, like myth, advertising reinforces accepted modes of behavior and acts as an anxiety-reducing mechanism resolving contradictions in a complex and confusing
society; ‘To the constant nagging dilemmas of the human condition, advertising gives a simple solution.... Simultaneously provokes anxiety and resolves it’.

Basically an advertisement is an announcement to the public of a product, service or idea through a medium to which the public has access. The medium may be print, electronic, or any other. This is a form of persuasive communication with the public. The American Marketing Association defines advertising as “any paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods, and services by an identified sponsor.” Advertising has also been called “the most potent influence in adapting and changing habits and modes of life, affecting what we eat, what we wear and the work and play of the whole nation” (11) It has been compared with” such long-standing institutions as the school and the church in the magnitude of its social influence” because it “dominates the media, it has vast power in the shaping of popular standards, and it is really one of the very limited groups of institutions which exercise social control” (12) McLuhan, who has said that advertisement reflects our “collective daydreams, “also has commented that “ours is the first age in which many thousands of the best-trained minds have made it a full-time business to get inside the collective public mind... to get inside in order to manipulate, exploit and control” (13) Criticisms and concerns have been vented by psychologists, who view advertising as a source of learning or conditioning, with cognitive and affective results; by sociologists, who speak to the role modeling aspects and advertising’s impact on social behaviors; by anthropologists, who examine the rituals, symbols and cultural meanings involved; by educators, who question the influence on development; and by communications specialists, critics, and commentators, who often address the propagandistic role of advertising and fret over its influence on media content (14) The critics concur on one point. Advertising is its own force, an institution turned entity. Society has not put it on a pedestal—indeed, many consumers still scoff, claiming they are unaffected by ads—but the evidence more and more suggests that society; has elevated advertising to an invisible podium from which we learn and by which we are influenced.

**Trends in advertising**

The concept of advertising having undergone changes during the last 3-4 decades has become the most vital force which forms and changes opinions of millions of people in society. In both print and electronic media advertising is a primary tool to make or change
the concepts, beliefs, ideas or tastes of social classes. Symbolism is a major aspect of advertisement and in the Indian context it has witnessed a sea-change during a few of the last decades. Use of women and children to promote a concept or product is growing in the Indian print media. The ad makers have rightly noticed the growing importance of women in the process of buying decisions. Use of women as symbols to influence various classes of the buyers is made in multifold way. Women as ad symbols are often used to motivate or tempt right or wrong are still a matter of dispute and the debate continues endlessly. It is often charged that women are portrayed in an unflattering or unrealistic manner. In recent times advertising industry has taken positive steps to correct this portrayal. When the advertising companies create realistic advertising they are recognizing both their social and moral responsibility in the market place.

Besides the image/portrayal communicated in the advertising the women's history in India reveals different stages of rise and fall of the women. In the Vedic period the women had a very high status to enjoy life as a man's friend, co-worker and never as inferior to him. She enjoyed the property rights and access to the property of her father and her husband. After the Vedic period the position of women deteriorated gradually as the law givers made women entirely dependent on man by subjugating her as daughter, wife and mother to the authority of father, husband and son in the various stage of her life. This position and image of women continuing all through the Hindu period was reinforced during the Muslim period. The custom of child marriage, pardah system and Sati made the position of Hindu women most precarious in the society.

The British Raj at first followed a policy of non-interference in the social and religious life of the people of India. So the women went down imperceptibly in social status. With the spread of English Education, western culture, reformist policy of the government and reformist movements for upliftment and liberation of Indian women in the 19th century with the freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatama Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and many other, the cause of women got the thrust it needed. It was felt that no country could go ahead if the other half was not well educated or enlightened. Since Independence the planned economic development and legislative measures of the provisions for equality of opportunity to both the sexes have theoretically made the status of women equal to that of men in contemporary Indian society.

Therefore, the advertising world projects the changing scenario of women characterized by
the typicalities, historicity and socio-contexuality of their image. Advertising in the contemporary times has occupied space everywhere in human life and the symbol of women is freely used to enhance commercial interests as well as to communicate effective meanings. This situation of the communication prods a mind to thoroughly investigate the image of women in advertising in the mass media, particularly in the print media which has a history of sufficient length in Indian Society.

India is a patriarchal country- with almost everything centered on the Adult Indian Male - even communications. This is evident in Beauty crème ads, where there has to be a male to appreciate beauty. With the woman stepping out of the house and beyond, it wasn’t long before marketers started revamping their ad campaigns. In the earlier talcum powder ads, there used to be a woman coming out the shower and casually applying the talc. A woman now steps out of home on the street carrying the talc in her purse and using it whenever she feels like. This is just one of the changes that advertising has undergone.

To put it empathetically, stereotypes were prevalent in advertising. Women were featured in Nycil or Dettol ads taking care of children’s wounds and soothing them. This was true in other media vehicles as well. If you ever paid attention to radio ads there was always a lilting feminine voice endorsing a brand

Coming back to television, it is said that women view television for longer hours. Definitely! No wonder that cosmetics and grocery brands are heavily advertised during daytime. Based on this, we might as well assume that shaving creams ads are aired at nighttime. Wrong! Because it is the woman who purchases even toiletries for men.

Women make up over two-thirds of the adult viewing audience on weekday afternoons, the programme that traditionally includes soap operas. The only time of the week when men routinely form the largest proportion of the viewing audience is during sports telecasts on weekend afternoons. Prime time evening audiences are more evenly divided, but women viewers still out-number men.

Complementary to the concept that television viewing is a gendered activity, is the advertisers' awareness that consumer behavior is also gendered. Men and women have been conditioned to purchase different products in different ways for different reasons. As a result, most advertisers carefully purchase time for their commercials during programmes watched by the particular "target" audience they consider most likely to buy. For example, during cricket matches and other sport events you would see ads of Kingfisher and Foster.
On the other hand, during a cookery show like Khana Khazana, you would see ads of Badshah Masalas or other groceries.

Coming to the question of change, the roles of men and women have changed. 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. Advertisers are taking notice of this metamorphosis: A father cleaning his child’s dirty t-shirt in the Ariel Ad or “the woman of substance” as portrayed by Femina Ads - independent and head on!

Ads have taken a step forward by identifying what women view as masculinity and vice-versa. This is what can be called “Gendered Advertising”- similar in some respects to customized advertising. Advertisers want viewers to enjoy their commercials and to associate the advertised products with a comfortable reinforcing picture of mainstream cultural values. As a result, commercials are designed to take optimal advantage of gender-specific fantasies, myths, and fears. The Raymond Man is almost a dream come true for a woman. The ad plays out her fantasies and becomes asp rational for men.

No longer do you see only Karen Lunel and Pooja Bedi sporting bikinis in ads, men too are baring it all. (Be it the Denim man who doesn’t “have to try too hard” or the next-door Brylcreem guy.) It is the Elle 18 girls who are daring to be different. Advertising to the genders has changed.

Gender perception in communication has evolved by introspecting the roles of men and women in society. These images in television commercials provide an especially intriguing field of study for consumer behavior. Advertisers on the other hand seem quite willing to manipulate these fantasies and exploit our anxieties about our identities, to sell products.

The status of women in India has raised many a controversy and headed many a movement. With the passage of time, the Indian woman’s role has metamorphosed from a domestic manager to a prime purchaser. She has now emerged as a potential consumer, ready to redefine her status in the worldwide economy, and her contribution to the society is no longer confined to being solely a progenitor.

Emergence of women as consumers

Traditionally, the role of wife and mother has been seen as a woman’s destiny and her only career choice. For years, she remained totally dependent on her husband financially and chose to remain unaware of the world outside her home. It was the man who was the consumer for the whole family and thus a target for marketers. However, in the last 40
years, the rapid strides in education and employment have paved the way for drastic changes in the status of women—the latter have become self-reliant and also share enhanced emotional bonds with their husbands. From the woman confined to the domestic sphere to the liberated woman of the 21st century, from the woman totally dependent on a man to the totally independent career woman of today, women have made their way through and have evolved as individuals in their own right. And as far as the notion of consumers is concerned, women have become the target market for products and services in India.

Indian society is full of diversified cultures, traditions and beliefs. Our mass media's role as a social constructor and representative of people has greater responsibility in binding these complexities of culture and processes with the people of the society.

According to P. Anbarasan (1995), in India as a whole the status of women is undergoing a perceptible change. Women entering the labour market are on the rise, there is increase in the number of educated women, and heightened awareness of their mobilization to fight discrimination.

The role of women in the family life has undergone significant changes. As an educated housewife or as a working woman she has acquired a respectable place in society. Today's women are increasingly aware. Magazines especially women's magazines carry a lot of information on social issues and personal family issues.

The relationship between the media and about 51% of our population is a two way traffic—the access of women to the media or the lack of it, and the cognizance by the media of women or the absence of it. The presence of women in media both in terms of numbers, whether absolute or in comparison with men, and their status in terms of the position they occupy is strongly influenced by the scene, not of their choice, but on account of the social and religious taboos which operated as legal sanctions, and even today operate as such, in many regions and communities, the constitution and laws notwithstanding. Even in those regions and communities where the social and religious taboos can no longer be enforced poverty, illiteracy, discrimination and male domination keep a vast majority of women away from the print media even as readers. As regards the electronic media, even where the community radio and television are available, either they are crowded out by the men, or on account of social inhibitions, women are unable to view or listen (Sawant ; 1998).
Media has therefore largely come to be confined to the women in the middle and the higher classes, whether in the rural or urban areas, and more particularly in the urban areas—whether as passive consumers or as active players.

Over the years, and especially during the last decade, India has developed a fairly extensive communication infrastructure. The subject of portrayal of women in Indian media has drawn the attention of media critiques in the present times. It arises especially when our society is going through a period of social change. Women have been portrayed as men would like to see them—beautiful creatures, submissive mothers of their children, efficient house keepers, but nothing else.

The positive sides of women's progress and their contribution for national development have not been adequately discussed in the media of communication. The emphasis on stories about women, about their struggle for recognition is only the surface trimming. The actual message to audience still is that society opposes the liberation of women.

R. Akhileshwari (1988) makes a scathing attack on the negative aspects of the portrayal of women in Indian mass media. Thus for instance, the image of the educated woman is typecast as arrogant, insensitive, self-centered, wily or the economically independent woman is shown as domineering, hard, ruthless and the cause of all the suffering around her. Perhaps the most damaging portrayal of women is in advertisements and commercials.

**Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are standardized mental pictures that Webster’s define as representing an oversimplified opinion or uncritical judgment. The crux of stereotype “theory” comes compliments of Walter Lippmann (15) who claims that the abbreviated communiqués offer an “economy of effort” because they “substitute order for great blooming, buzzing confusion of reality”. As such, they become “the core of our personal tradition, the defenses of our position in society”, which give “and ordered, consistent picture of the world to which our habits, tastes, capacities, comforts and hopes have adjusted themselves”

Stereotypes certainly can save interpretive effort. But others argue that stereotypes short-circuit or block the capacity for objective and analytic judgment in favor of well-worn, catchall reactions. This could lead to shortchanging. It also leads to the first connection to gender concerns: Advertising to women has consistently been filled with stereotypes. (16)
There is overwhelming evidence that advertisements present traditional, limited, and often demeaning stereotypes of women and men. It is recognized that this can serve a useful function by conveying and image quickly and clearly, and that there is nothing inherently wrong with using characterizations of roles that are easily identifiable. However, when these limited and demeaning stereotypes are as pervasive as those involved in advertising's portrayal of the sexes, it becomes important to question whether those stereotypes might result in negative and undesirable social consequences. (17)

In print advertising the results of more than a dozen studies have shown the messages of advertising to be astonishingly similar: Woman's place is in the home; women are dependent upon men; women do not make independent and important decisions; women are shown in few occupational roles; women view themselves and are viewed by others as sex objects.

Two past studies have been considered benchmark in advertising stereotype/role research. In the central study, the Consciousness Scale of Sexism, developed by Butler Paisley (18) and elaborated by Pingree et al (19) was applied to ads portraying women in Ms., Playboy, Times and Newsweek, coding 10 ads in each monthly issue for one year. The “scale” attempts to “measure” sexism by analyzing ad visuals via five levels in one of the first continuums used in content analyses:

- Level 1: Put her down (the sex object, dumb blonde, decorative object)
- Level 2: Keep her in her place (women shown mostly in traditional womanly roles or struggling with roles “beyond them”)
- Level 3: Give her two places (women can have an occupation as long as they are still primarily a wife/ mother ; the career may be something “extra”).
- Level 4: Acknowledge that she is fully equal (women in multiple roles without reminders that housework and mothering are women’s work)
- Level 5: Non-Stereotype (true individuals, not judged by sex)

In the 1973-74 studies, 75% of all ads were at the two lowest (most sexist) levels—48% at Level 2, considered by researchers to be the status quo, and 27% at Level 1 (sex objects).

The second study was conducted by sociologist Erving Goffman and has been popularized in his book Gender Advertisement (20) In this book Goffman concludes that women are weakened by advertising portrayals in these categories: relative size (shown smaller or
lower, relative to men); Feminine touch (Women constantly touching themselves); function ranking (occupational); family scenes; ritualization of subordination (proclivity for lying down at inappropriate times, using bashful knee bends, canting postures, puckish, expansive smiles); licensed withdrawal (women never quite a part of the scene, usually via blank, far off gazes). In essence, Goffman found that ads are highly ritualized versions of the parent-child relationship, with women treated largely as children and that this diminishment is damaging.

**Theoretical Perspective**

Advertising seems to be obsessed with gender and sexuality and continues to represent an arena in which gender display plays a major role. It has emerged as a world of ‘commercial realism’ in which we are given ‘realistic’ images of domestic life and male-female relationships which are not actually real but which provide us with a ‘stimulated slice of life’. As gender representation is such a dominant feature of modern-day advertising, it is often called the social resource ‘used most’ by advertisers. In turn, advertising provides an ideal place to examine the encoding of cultural norms and values in ritualized formats.

Bearing in mind that India has a very low literacy rate, the trend of magazines as an informative and entertaining medium has comparatively gained enormous popularity among the increasing urban population of India. Magazines in India are regarded as a strategic informational, educational and cultural institution as well as the fifth state of public inquest. They are read for gaining knowledge, for recreation and for equipping oneself with the latest information. Women’s magazines were introduced in the Indian market only after the women’s liberation movement. They now reach out to women in both urban and rural societies in India and cater to women in terms of their age, class and role. The market for women’s magazines is increasing at such a rapid pace that it is no more flooded only with domestic women’s magazines but also with global ones such as Cosmopolitan and Vogue which choose to cater to an elite audience. And the ad agencies that create the advertisements in these magazines strive to promote a sophisticated consumerist culture and encourage the readers to imitate the style, philosophy and format of western magazines and advertisements.

Female role portrayals in women’s magazines In recent years widespread attention has been drawn to the roles portrayed by women in advertisement. In certain cultures, the
mainstream media still reinforces the stereotyped image of a woman whose identity has been shaped by the limited roles she has to play in society and on screen. The media not only reflects social values, attitudes and behavior towards women very subtly but also at times distorts the images of women. A study in 1970 in Britain revealed that magazine advertisements presented the following clichés about women’s roles in the society:

(1) A woman’s place is in the home,
(2) women do not make important decisions,
(3) women are dependent and need men’s protection, and
(4) men regard women primarily as sexual objects; they’re not interested in women as people.

Assaulted by criticism from feminist leaders against this presentation of women in advertising, the National Advertising Review Board (NARB) established a panel to address charges that advertising was rampantly sexist in the 1970s. Women were often portrayed as housewives and too infrequently as professionals. Women were featured as sex objects to the exclusion of their individuality and portrayed often as dependent, requiring men to solve their problems. However, since 1988, advertisers have become increasingly sensitive to the issue of stereotyping—there is less stereotyping of women as physical objects, and a trend towards portrayals using either ‘family’ or ‘independent’ cues is visible.

Even though the developing nations have directed increasingly sharp criticism at the mass media for the so-called stereotyped portrayals of women in traditional wife and mother roles, women are still not seen as individuals in their own right. Today in India, women are entrepreneurs in their own right, but the press coverage of their efforts is minimal. And even if a woman is projected as a professional, she is first viewed as somebody’s daughter or wife.

Until very recently, Indian magazine advertisements continued to portray women in their stereotypical images. A woman was either shown in the kitchen cooking food, washing a bucketful of clothes, bandaging wounds or feeding her husband and children. Therefore, the picture that emerged was that of a woman who never produced knowledge or wealth but always consumed and remained a sort of hanger-on to her male. In addition to this, advertising was blatantly anti-woman, treating her as a sex symbol.
Studies in the past on the projection of women in advertisements have shown that whether she was used for advertising cosmetics, fabrics, jewellery, domestic gadgets, suitcases, scooters or stationery, a woman was mostly projected as glamorous or enticing. Another trend in advertisements of men's clothes was the invariable use of admiring women by the side of men, which created an impression that, all a woman desired was a man dressed in sophisticated garments. However, in the post-feministic 1990s and subsequently, advertisers have been attempting to construct multiple possible identities for women in an effort to change their stereotypical image and enhance their spending power. In India, nowhere is this trend reflected more clearly than in advertising imagery, where the image of the 'new Indian woman' is expressed explicitly. Today in India, women appear less frequently dependent upon men while men are less likely to be depicted in themes of sex appeal, dominance over women and as authority figures.

Advertisements have also started portraying women more frequently as career-oriented and in non-traditional activities and are constructing the persona of the 'new Indian woman'. Bearing in mind the importance of the 'new Indian woman' as a consumer, advertisers have targeted this profile in a systematic manner. With the increase in urban population, the trend is of booming consumerism. Based on extensive market research, advertisements for goods and services are now addressed to the growing class of urban middle-class woman with either independent salaries or who have an increasing control in purchase decisions. Even with the entry of global products as well as advertising, the role played by the Indian woman in advertising is still very much Indian—in the sense that strategies of advertising representation are careful to avoid a 'westernized' image of her. Hence, media producers attempt to construct a cognate, pan-Indian identity for this 'new woman', cutting across regional, linguistic, caste and other differences. In this way India, with its own social and cultural imperatives, has managed to keep its distinctive cultural baggage even in the face of an increasingly open market system.

The Different roles that a woman portrays in an advertisement are:

**Decorative role portrayal** : Decorative models are passive and non-functional and their primary activity is to adorn the product/service as a sexual or attractive stimulus. They are like mannequins with the least lifelike of roles. 'She' is in an artificial world, often obviously so in the way she stands and looks (dummy poses and catalogue expressions). She is on exhibition in competition with others. She is aloof, haughty, and ostensibly
sufficient unto herself, while relying on others to reinforce her self-image. Her outdoor image tends to be exotic and her indoor one non-domestic.

**Recreational role portrayal:** The recreational portrayal is of models in a non-working activity of leisure (reading, watching television) or of sports (hiking, jogging, swimming, and boating). The importance of these ads is that women are not shown in passive poses, a pattern portrayal that every study on gender roles has shown to be prevalent. In the past, the Indian woman was seen as someone very sensitive and delicate. Recreational activities mentioned earlier were, therefore, not connected with women but with men.

**Independent career role portrayal:** The independent career woman is the only woman involved in something that does not have to do with social success, home and family, or even her own femininity. She has stability and a substantial nature. She is portrayed infrequently. Women in India are rapidly advancing towards becoming financially independent individuals by seeking higher education and opting for a career rather than remaining housewives for the rest of their lives.

**Self-involved role portrayal:** The self-involved female is the woman who is literally and metaphorically wrapped up in herself. Even when being seductive, she is aware of her femininity and sensuality rather than the presence of any potential lover. She may be portrayed in a haze of romance, perhaps with a man, and is more bound up with aspirations and dreams of her own than with the actuality of the man. The ubiquitous diamond engagement ring advertisements are almost perfect examples e.g. De Beers. Here, attention is focused on the woman’s feelings about herself where she has a typically soft expression and directs her attention and tactility towards herself. She is alone with herself, involved with her body, thoughts and beauty.

**Carefree role portrayal:** The carefree woman is always a girl or a woman with a girlish look, which gives one a sense of a short spell of deceptive freedom. She is like a fluttering butterfly, which has not yet decided where to settle. She is having fun while she’s young. The carefreeness or friendliness is social in nature to some extent and outgoing as well. Yet, the exuberance and cheeriness are rarely directed towards anyone or anything in particular and are only held in the minds of the actor, for example in the Tamp ax ads. It must be noted that since the ‘carefree girl’ is very much into herself and looking for some excitement in her life, she is mostly shown on her own and very rarely with a man or a child.
**Family role portrayal:** The family or domestic management role is described in ads in which women are shown performing household chores, taking care of children, or supervising home furnishing or maintenance. An example would be in the home environment where the house, its furnishings, its decoration, and the food served in it are marks of a woman’s sophistication, fashion awareness, sense of good taste and status. She is proud of this world, which is her creation, but cannot possibly escape from it. A comparative study on gender displays in US and Indian advertisements by Griffin et al (1994) showed that over three times as many images of women as domestic managers appeared in ads in The Illustrated Weekly of India than in Life. India Today had about twice as many domestic management portrayals as Newsweek. More than three times as many images of body display appeared in Life as The Illustrated Weekly of India. Therefore, one can say that Indian advertisements do portray women in their traditional roles till today, although because of the influence of western society, this trend is changing—more and more advertisements portray women as career-oriented and persons who are not just expected to remain in the confines of their homes but are outgoing and enjoy an active social life.

**Nudity:** Today, there is a related phenomenon that may possess even more long-term significance both for marketing managers and society in general. This trend is towards increasing eroticism and nudity in advertisements. Nudity, even if not blatant as currently portrayed, has been common in women’s advertisements for some years. Nakedness is a feature of advertisements for products of the feminine sort and is private, isolated and a source of wonder, pleasure, and satisfaction to the subject. Moreover, the body is considered to be an object to admire or even revere in a quasi-religious way. According to Wiles et al (1994), the use of erotic or sexual appeal is hardly new. What is new is the intensity of such appeal and the increasing number and variety of products being marketed with sexual overtones. Now not only are nude models used to advertise well-known consumer products such as cosmetics, ski equipment, and wearing apparel, but industrial companies also use them. No longer is nudity employed solely as a shock device or attention-creating ploy. It is increasingly being used in a more sophisticated and aesthetic sense in a functional communication role. Sexuality has been linked directly with advertisements because it is usual for young women to compare themselves to models in advertisements — thus; advertisers feel they can be persuaded to buy the product. For
women, and to a lesser extent for men, the ‘sexual revolution’ has meant a positive increase in the amount of their sexual freedom. It has also meant an increase in their ‘use’ as sexual objects. The use of dramatic, isolating shadows, mysterious darkness and the ethereal mistiness of focus are common techniques of transporting the female into a personal world of reverie and self-contemplation. Conclusion Urban India is slowly transforming into a western society. The West, through the various media, is increasingly influencing this sector of the Indian economy, especially in terms of its fashion—and nowhere is this trend more prominent than in Indian women’s fashion magazines. This shows that even though Indian advertisements have Indian models with traditional dresses, they are being increasingly replaced with models in western outfits or have other western aspects to them. It is only in the last 20 years that India has opened up to western culture. With the advent of privatization and the liberalization of the economy, India has seen a surge of multinationals invade her consumer market. And the new revolution in advertising is also a true revelation of the changed consumer scenario. The presence of an increasing number of women’s magazines, as well as advertising in these magazines portraying the different roles of women, clearly reveal the changing perception of women in today’s society. As marketers, unlike before, are investing large sums of money and time, investigating and collecting data solely on women’s psychographics—attitudes, habits, preferences—to meet their needs and wants, it is obvious that women today are no longer cocooned in their traditions but have imbibed

**Feminism**

After the advent of women’s movement, the sex roles stereotypes in media started to be recognized by communication scholars. The necessity and viability of feminist approach to the media is being acknowledged. In the field of cultural studies also feminist concerns have gained more ground. Many innovating studies about women’s genres such as soap operas, romance, novels and women’s magazines have been conducted (e.g. Hobson 1982, Modleski 1982, Radaway 1984, Winship 1987)

Betty Frieden’s research about the construction of the American cultural ideal of ‘the happy housewife heroine’ in women’s magazines and advertisements is a typical example of feminist academic venture related to media. The book ‘The Feminine Mystique’ (1963) was a best seller and gave rise to a revival of women’s movement which had been dormant
since the successful struggle for women’s suffrage. Betty Frieden also headed one of the first ‘second wave’ feminist group ‘National Organization of Women’ which declared the media to be one of the major fields of struggle for women’s rights. The group demanded better placement of women in media, child care centre, and journals by women. A research project was launched in entire US to monitor TV networks and local stations for sexist content. By the beginning of eighties much feminist research appeared, Tuchman raised the questions for the content change in media and freedom of women from the tyranny of media message limiting their lives to hearth and home in her volume about women and media.

Feminist media studies can be classified into three broad categories

Sex role stereotypes, prescription of sex appropriate behaviors, appearance, interest, skills and self perceptions are at the core of liberal feminist media analysis. A number of content analyses have shown that women are depicted in mass media as wife, mother, and daughter, girlfriend; as working in traditionally female fobs like secretary, nurse, and receptionist or as sex objects.

Moreover they are usually young and beautiful, but not very well educated. Experimental research done in the tradition of cognitive psychology tends to support the hypotheses that media act as socialization agent- along with the family- teaching children in particular their appropriate sex roles and symbolically rewarding them for appropriate behavior(Busby 1975, Gallagher, 1980). It is considered that media perpetuate sex role stereotypes because they reflect dominant social values and also because male media producers are influenced by these stereotypes.

Liberal feminism also provides the solution. It suggests that women should acquire greater equality in society and power by entering in male dominated fields. It suggests media to contribute to change by portraying more women and men in nontraditional roles and by using non sexist language.

As a result a new stereotype of ‘superwoman’ has been created, which is the response of commercial culture to the demand of liberal feminism. Woman’s magazines and advertisements portray her as an independent and assertive career woman, a successful wife and mother who is still beautiful and has kept the body she had as a girl in perfect shape. Real women trying to live up to this image end up suffering from serious burn-out symptoms.
In radical feminist discourse, there is a social system ‘patriarchy’ in which all men are supposed to dominate all women. Issues formerly considered as private like sexual violence, wife battering, incest, pornography; sex tourism and trafficking have been exposed by Radical feminists.

According to Radical feminist media assumptions mass media are in the hands of male owners and producers, so they will operate to the benefit of a patriarchal society. In radical feminist media analyses the power of media to affect men’s behavior towards woman and women’s perception of themselves is beyond discussion.

Researchers may have been unable to prove a direct connection between any particular instance of media and any particular act, but there can be no doubt that media and abuse of women.

In Socialist Feminism women’s position is not determined exclusively by gender rather it considers the analysis of class and economic condition of women. ‘The reproduction of labour’ and ‘the economic value of domestic labour’ are the concepts central to socialist feminism. For the maintenance of capitalism, the nurturing, moral, educational and domestic chore done by the women should be recognized. Socialist feminism resembles liberal feminism as both emphasize on the requirement for women to take up paid labour.

Recently socialist feminism has attempted to incorporate other social aspects along the lines of ethnicity, sexual preference, age, physical ability. The work of Althusser, stating the relative autonomy of ideological apparatuses like family, school, church and media vis-à-vis economic conditions and the work of Gramsci analyzing how dominant ideology takes on the form of common sense (hegemony) have been influential in socialist feminism.

The socialist feminist communication model adheres to radical models in which media are perceived to be ideological instruments presenting the capitalist and patriarchal society as the natural order. Most of the researches in socialist feminism consist of ideological analysis of media texts, using the analytic instrument provided by structuralism and semiology.
Review of Literature

The dominant paradigm model of mass communication emphasized the powerful nature of the mass media in bringing the people of the third world countries out of their traditional systems of society and putting them on the path of development. Harold D. Lasswell (1948) (21) came up with an innovative conceptualization of mass media effects during this period. His verbal model of communication approach suggested the following question: who says what, in which channel, to whom and with what effect? He interpreted the theory to mean that human behavior was essentially irrational and was susceptible to the powerful effects of mass media. The Bullet Theory (Schramm, 1964) (22) and the Hypodermic Needle Theory (Berlo, 1960) were the terms used to describe this concept of powerful mass media. But this theory faced serious contradictions in the following years. Lazarsfiled, Berelson and Gaudet (1948) analyzed the effects of mass media on voting behavior. The major finding of these voter studies was to suggest the weakness of the mass media in directly influencing the personal decisions of individuals. Hovland et.al.(1949, 1953); Klapper (1960) in their works further undermined the great power of the mass media in bringing about direct and lasting effects on the audience. The studies brought out that people defended themselves against persuasive messages in three ways: selective exposure, selective against persuasive messages in the three ways: selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention. Klapper (1960) found a tendency for individuals to expose themselves and to perceive those items of communication that were consonant with their beliefs ideas, values, attitudes and other factors. Allport and Postman (1947), Jones and Kohler (1958), Lavine and Murphy (1958) showed that even recall of information was influenced by factors such as an individual’s needs, wants, moods, perception, etc.

Perhaps the more valuable longer-term contribution of research on persuasive communication has been in locating the conditions under which effects can occur and in specifying the mediating factors which are involved. A few findings in this sphere can be frequently the form of a reinforcement of existing attitudes and opinions (Klapper, 1960); secondly, it is clear that effects vary according to the prestige evaluations attached to the communication source (Hovland, 1954); thirdly, the more complete the monopoly of mass communication, the more likely it is that opinion change in the desired direction will be achieved (Klapper, 1960); fourthly, communication can be effective in producing a shift on
unfamiliar, lightly felt, peripheral issues—those that do not effect much or are not tied to audience predisposition (Berelson and Steiner, 1964); fifthly, the selection and interpretation of contents by the audience is influenced by existing opinions and interests and by group norms (Riley 1951, Katz 1955) and finally, it has become clear that the structure of interpersonal relations in audience mediates the flow of communication content and limits and determines whatever effects occur (Katz 1955).

Mass communication comprises the institutions and techniques by which a specialized social group employs technological devices to disseminate symbolic content to large heterogeneous and widely spread audiences (Janowitz 1980: 41). Communication research in India started since late 1970s. At the outset this was limited to rural areas. In the early 1960s all studies were conducted either in the name of the mass media and social development or the mass media and social change except Damdey's study of Harikatha. The early pioneers in India were S.C. Dube, M.S.A. Rao, Yogesh Atal, L.R. Nair and Myron Weiner. These studies which entered on the radio forum, literacy forum or extension agencies did not take into account the simultaneous operation of other channels of communication in Indian society. Since the establishment of Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, in 1965 by the Govt. of India various researches have been undertaken on different dimensions of communication such as communication and family planning, media habits and information needs, communication and elections, communication for tribal development in North-East Region, response to visuals in posters, role of daily newspapers during elections and effectiveness of puppetry and Films (Gupta 1985).

Though there is unity in diversity in India in terms of language, religion, climate, people and culture, the women seldom enjoyed equality with men for a longer period. The ancient law givers like Manu and Kautilya assigned a low status to women so much so that women were often grouped with dogs and chandals. Our civilization, customs and laws have been made by men who have taken good care to keep themselves in a superior position to treat women as the chattel and play thing to be exploited for his own advantage and amusement. The women in India have to free themselves from the tyranny of manmade customs and laws. They will have to carry on the second struggle (along with their participation in the first struggle for freedom) by themselves, for man is not likely to help them. A significant section of social scientists and media researches is engaged in studies related to women in
mass media. These studies cover all continents and show how the media have been biased against women. The International Association for Mass Communication Research has a separate working group to deal with this area of research. The first meeting of this working group was held in Paris in 1992.

The ongoing communication revolution has opened up new possibilities for accelerated development especially for upliftment of women and children. Worldwide feminist movement of women has pointed out that the employment of women in media is low and particularly so in decision making levels. Reviewing the world scene the Mac Bride Commission said that in general inadequate attention is paid in the media to issues of specific importance to women, to the activities of the women's movement, or the social contribution made by independent and gifted women. Women appear in magazine fiction and in television drama and comedy as self deprecating and dependent, irrational, superstitious and overemotional. In advertising women are shown either as the housewives whose interests are limited to domestic needs or as in the sexually allowing background by association of which makes consumer goods more attractive. A number of studies indicate the over effect of the portrayal of women's images. According to Butler L and Paisley the analysis of radio content shows that neither sex has the corner on goodness, badness or weakness. Attention needs to be drawn to certain other fundamental aspects which have not received as much publicity as to the question of glamorization by the media of women as a sex object in a growingly market and consumerism oriented developing society like India. The exploitation of the women's image for commercial purposes has been noted and criticized very widely.

Changes during the decade of the nineties included a growing awareness of women's expanding roles in societies. More women are participating in the labour force than ever before. Society has begun to re-examine the value of women's contributions. Several studies have attempted to provide evidence supporting or refuting charges of stereotypical female portrayal in television commercials. Women were portrayed more often than men in decorative roles and at home. Schneider and Schneider (1976) reported trends of the male and female roles portrayed in television commercials between 1971 and 1976. On the basis of their findings the author concluded that marketers and society have begun to accept the changing roles of women. Schneider and Schneider (1979) found a trend from 1971 to 1976 in respect of young (18-35) females in television commercials. They noted
that this trend signified a movement towards utilization of female character more in line with the actual ages of women in the population.

The absence of change in women's family role portrayal between 1977 and 1980 is best interpreted when placed in the broader context of an entire decade. According to Domich and Rauch (1971) 28% of female characters assumed the role of housewife/mother. In 1976 (Schneider and Schneider) this figure increased to 41% and now it is 51%. Domich and Rauch (1971) 28% of female characters assumed the role of housewife/mother. In 1976 (Schneider and Schneider) this figure increased to 41% and now it is 51%. In 1972 Domich and Rauch observed that 22% of the female characters were employee. By 1976 the percentage declined to 18% and in 1979 it continued dropping up to 10% in their study (Schneider and Schneider). In 1972 Domich and Rauch found the most frequently recorded role the females were appearing in was that of sex object. The use of male announcers for commercials may constitute the biggest violation of women's status in advertising. In 1992, according to Domich and Rauch, a male voice was heard on 87% of the observed advertisements. The proportion dropped to 84% in 1994 (Culley and Bennett) but it rose again to 92% in another study.

The power of mass media and magazines in particular to create, select and convey particular image about women is recently focused. In the women studies conference held in Bombay in 1981 the feminist media group blamed the media for perpetuating middle class stereotypes. Participants agreed that by confirming women's problems to separate programmes or separate pages of the newspaper the media have isolated them from mainstream problems and thus assigned them a low social value. It has also recommended that media training programmes include a course on women and communications.

Through most of the history of mass communication print was the only readily accessible means of storing information and retrieving it at will. Advertisers benefit from the selective targeting in print media as well. For an advertiser trying to target college students, print is preferable because it utilizes a very structured information processing style. People tend to trust print more than broadcast and absorb it more carefully. In a study in 1986 sponsored by Audits and Surveys, both men and women indicated a higher attention level score for magazines than for television. Reasons given revolved around the
fact that reading requires a more intensive involvement whereas television can be taken more passively. In another study Jacoby, Hoyer and Zimer found that print was better comprehended than either television or audio presentations of the same material. Print advertising continues to be important and it still serves as foundation in that its techniques are the easiest to understand and analyze serves as foundation in that its techniques are the easiest to understand and analyze.

Therefore, in the era of accelerated market forces increased gender consciousness among the women it is pertinent to investigate the question: **What image of women is emerging in the advertising in mass media, especially print mass media in India?** The question is yet to be attempted holistically and it has the relevance in the context of the last one decade of globalization of economy and market expansion in the wake of the ongoing technological revolution. The holistic context including the newly emerging one offers a fresh and significant ground for understanding image of the women in advertising.

Mass Communication research primarily concentrates on the study of its effects on the society.

For long years, countless women have been outraged at the portrayal of women in Indian advertising in a way that leaves a lot to be desired. But the lone woman who has done painstaking research on the advertising industry's blatant attempt to reinforce gender stereotypes such as a girl child being a prospective mother, a woman as a sex object or an eye catcher, a woman as a homemaker, etc is Sharada J. Schaffter.(23) In her book, *Privileging the Privileged - Gender in Indian Advertising*, she attacks not only the stereotyping but also "the unethical and offensive representations of women in advertisements that work to their detriment" and perpetuates an undesirable gender hierarchy.

The author places her detailed analysis of individual ads — a whopping 2,000 — against the backdrop of Indian societal, cultural and religious norms that reinforce patriarchy and the inherent violence in Indian society against women, be it through bride burning, rape, or a number of other ways.

Charging that the media loves to concentrate on men... "Their concerns, their activities, their achievements, their woes", she says that it generally disregards women and their interests and is hence "sexist". And with the media depending heavily on advertisements for revenue, it happily plays host to sexist ads.
Sharada has reviewed ads over a 12-year period from 1994 to 2005, but admits that the majority of the ads are from the 1990s, and her critical analysis raises some crucial questions that have troubled not only women but also social scientists cutting across gender. Unsparing in her observations, the author asks: "Does a woman need to be always tall and slim, young and light-skinned with silken skin and mop of gloriously shining hair? Is all this calculated to catch a man, and once she has caught him, to spend the rest of her life preparing mouthwatering dishes and washing his shirts until they outshine the sun — of course with a man (the voice in the ad) telling her what detergent to use — as ads persuade us to believe?"

She points out the dangerous repercussions of sexist advertisements in a "caste-conscious, tradition-bound, superstitious, feudal and intensely patriarchal Indian society. She maintains that while there is nothing demeaning in a woman being represented as a homemaker, "the profusion of such ads gives birth to an ideology" which implies that women should be primarily homemakers, and nothing more.

The author comes down particularly heavily on ads that turn "women into commodities that please men" and project "women's images as male-defined" as against "individuals of inherent worth".

Some of the pertinent questions she raises include:

- Do advertisers turn women into commodities that please men, or do they portray them as human beings conscious of their own worth?
- Are women shown preponderantly serving others or as pursuing profitable careers?
- Are they shown as objects of men's fancy, relying on their largesse, or as persons of value, capable of managing their own lives?
- Are they shown silly, stupid and mindless, or are they portrayed intelligent, strong and assertive, capable of successfully undertaking responsibilities and contributing to productivity in society?
- Are women shown fanatical about cleanliness around the house?

She also questions the need to irrelevantly divide the woman's body into segments — lips, arms, legs, etc. and represent her as an inveterate, irrational shopper. While on the subject of advertisements for beauty pageants and supermodel shows, Sharada is at her sparkling best. Commenting on how the "fame and fortune" attached to such contests brings parents of aspiring beauties into the act, she recalls how when Sushmita Sen won the Miss
Universe contest in the 1990s, it was written of her: "The winner does not need just a beautiful face, it's the mind that matters most." Adds the author, "But what she entered was not an intelligence contest, but a beauty contest. One of the requirements was to parade before the judges in a swimsuit."

Quoting the experience of NeHa Sancho, a former beauty queen of the Pacific from the Philippines, Sharada points out how the woman was expected to only smile and look pretty at an event. "When after the preliminary greetings nobody tried to have any sort of intelligent conversation with her, she realized that she was only a pretty object beautifying a room."

Raising another major concern of our times, the author says the association of "beauty (read desirability) with women is so strong that society tends to look at an ugly woman almost with abhorrence." While male ugliness can be overcome, female ugliness becomes the ultimate shortcoming; the booming of an entire personal care products and cosmetic industry is heavily dependent on the surmise that a woman has to be beautiful to be accepted, and hence the proliferation and immense success of beauty parlors.

The author acknowledges at the outset that over the years it took to write and publish the book "there have been changes in advertising. Men are now shown doing domestic chores on TV" and both boys and girls are shown plugging for education and more equal opportunities. "But there is still a long way to go."

What is striking about this effort is the meticulous dissection and analysis of advertisements, some of them serial ads, such as those of mobile telephone companies, where both men and women are shown as the consumers; but the subtle, unstated discrimination is that while the man is seen as one who works hard for a living, the suggestion is that the woman is a compulsive shopper and hence adept at going through long bills!

In the concluding chapter, Sharada presents a new code of ethics, challenging advertisers to re-examine their notions of gender in order to uphold women's inviolable right to be treated with respect and dignity.

Down the ages, the status of women in Indian society has undergone several changes. According to Maitra-Sinha (1993), before the advent of foreign rulers such as the Muslims, Moghuls and British, Indian women enjoyed a high status in society. Evidence of this is exemplified in the fact that both the great epics in Hindu mythology — the Ramayana and
the Mahabharata are heroine-centred sagas (Maitra-Sinha, 1993). However, Chattopadhayay (1983)(24) describes how, with the formation of the class system around 500 B.C., the status of Indian women declined dramatically. They were denied education, restrained within the house and expected to be subservient to men. Desai and Krishnaraj (1990) (25) describe how, with the advent of British rule in the seventeenth century, English became the medium of instruction. This phenomenon introduced a newly emerging Indian middle-class to the western concepts of liberty, equality, respect for the individual and secularism. The Social Reform Movement of the nineteenth century, and the National Movement for independence of the twentieth century brought into focus the issue of the deplorable status of women in society (Desai and Krishnaraj, 1990).

According to Singh (1990) (26), around the end of the nineteenth century, the Social Reform Movement merged with the National Movement for independence. This scenario provided Indian women with the opportunity to participate with men on equal terms in the struggle to emancipate the country from British rule. With the gain of independence in 1947, Maitra-Sinha (1993) states that the Indian Constitution guaranteed women, who at that time constituted nearly half of the country’s total population, equal employment opportunities and voting rights. The subsequent rapid growth of industrialization, urbanization and modernization of the country helped women to step out of the domestic terrain and into the workforce (Maitra-Sinha, 1993).

Asaf Ali (1991) (27) describes how the initiatives of modern Indian social and political leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi and Mahadev Govind Ranade, who believed that political progress and social reform go hand-in-hand, especially in a fledgling democracy, gave a boost to the status of women in the post-independence years. Pandey (1989) (28) adds that the Women’s Liberation Movement in the United States and European countries such as Britain, the Netherlands and Germany, provided Indian women’s rights activists with further inspiration and direction in their work.

According to Saxena’s (1989) (29) study of Indian women in the workforce, educated women have been steadily carving out a niche for themselves in the various avenues of industry and business since the 1950s. For example, in services, professions and industry, women’s employment has grown at a rate faster than the total employment growth rate in these sectors. This surge became perceptible in the late 1970s and 1980s, and the indications are positive for the current decade (Saxena, 1989).
Education is a strong indicator of the progress of any group within society. According to Kumar (1989) (30) efforts to raise the level of women’s education in India has been an ongoing process, and although their total enrollment figures are less than those for men, the overall enrollment is steadily increasing in academia and professional disciplines. In their research on literacy rates in India, Mishra and Singh (1992) found that in 1991, the overall literacy rate for the country was 52.11%, of which male literacy constituted 63.86% and female literacy stood at 39.42%. It is important, however, to bear in mind, that higher education for women in India is limited to the urban-middle and upper classes (Kumar, 1989).

According to Maitra-Sinha (1993), western concepts of liberation and equal opportunity may have opened the doors for many Indian women to a better future in the work place. However, tradition and culture are instrumental factors which obstruct the working woman’s struggle to participate in the work world as equals of men (Maitra-Sinha, 1993). Gadhially (1988) (31) states that the fact that Indian society has conditioned women for centuries to suppress their needs and willingly devote themselves to a life of self-denial, self-effacement and unquestioned domestic service, speaks for itself about the difficulty Indian women have in making the transition from the domestic to the professional role. Misra (1992) (32) reports how on the one hand, professional women in India are expected to fully participate in building the economic structure of the nation, while on the other hand, they are still expected to fulfill the stereotypical duty of single-handedly managing the home front.

This section defines the average educated urban working woman in India today in a dual light. A small handful has managed to successfully assert themselves in their careers. But the majority, according to Sharma (1990) (33), are in a transitional phase wherein they are in the process of leaving behind a traditional domestic past and dedicating themselves fully to their career goals.

These two categories of urban working women constitute the female readership of India Today, the magazine examined in this study for its portrayal of women in advertising.
Portrayal of Women in the Indian Media

FILM
The genre of commercial cinema in India is the cheapest means of entertainment available to the vast population of the country. Unfortunately, according to Desai and Patel (1990), the commercial film industry, which is a purely profit-based industry, cares little about the image of women they portray to the public.

In the 1960s, Pandey (1991) (34) states that the heroine of the films were depicted as threatening mystery and as a source of unparalleled pleasure. Since the 1970s, Desai and Patel (1990) add, commercial films have followed a set pattern of female image portrayals wherein women are projected as sacrificing themselves for the family and reaffirming values of self-effacement and devotion to the male head of the family. Women who opt for a less traditional life are portrayed in a negative light. Furthermore, these films vividly portray physical violence against women and hardly ever show women as being capable of thinking for them in a logical or rational manner (Desai and Patel, 1990).

In their study of the mistreatment of women in commercial Hindi films, Das Dasgupta and Hegde (1988) (35) examined a sample of 30 movies spanning the decade 1973 to 1982. The mistreatments mostly occurred when women stepped out of their traditional and socially approved roles. The researchers concluded that the mistreatment of women in Hindi films is a mechanism which reinforces and perpetuates the patriarchal order of Indian society.

TELEVISION
According to Punwani (1988), (36) television, which first arrived in India in 1959, has been accused of portraying women in a manner which has little to do with the wider and actual reality of women in Indian society. Regarding the portrayal of women on Indian television, Shrivastava (1992) observes Middle class ideologies of women's roles as wives and mothers provide the underlying basis for all programmes. In a country where 36 percent of the agricultural work force is female, women continue to be projected predominantly as non-producers and as playing a limited role outside the home. Women are basically seen as performing a decorative function and as being marginal to national growth and development. . . (p. 62).
Another important aspect of television programming, according to Desai and Patel (1990), is that a large chunk of the entertainment programs are drawn from commercial film content. A crucial implication of this phenomenon is that as in commercial films, women on television entertainment programs are projected as non-thinking, sacrificing and suffering beings while educated and motivated women are seen as the scourge of the patriarchal order of society (Desai and Patel, 1990).

In a study of 12 prime time television serials spanning a period of two and a half years, Punwani (1988) found that even though women were present in these serials in significant numbers, their portrayals did not reflect the complexities which form part of a contemporary average Indian woman's life. This and other findings confirming domestic stereotyping led the researcher to conclude that women in Indian prime time television shows are mainly portrayed as tradition-bound and passive. Those who attempt to break free of the traditional mould seldom meet with happy endings (Punwani, 1988).

**RADIO**

As in the case of television, Desai and Patel (1990) state that the majority of the radio entertainment programs in India are drawn from commercial films. As mentioned earlier, these films primarily depict women in submissive and suffering roles. As far as typical women's programs on radio are concerned, on an average, 60% of program time is devoted to entertainment. Twenty percent is slotted for educational programs, and 20% is used for imparting information. The stereotypes reinforced through these programs are that ideal women should fulfill their duties as housewives and mothers, and that working outside the house causes neglect of home and children. Women are portrayed as gossip-mongers, and they are given advice on how to become a good wife, a good mother and improve their physical appearance. They are also given elaborate instructions on how to cook, sew, knit, etc (Desai and Patel, 1990).

**PRINT MEDIA**

The print media in India (when compared to the electronic media), according to Desai and Patel's (1990) observations, have limited impact on the vast and mainly illiterate population of the country. The majority of the population has depended on the oral tradition of cultural transmission for over two thousand years (Desai and Patel, 1990).
However, it is important to examine the impact of the portrayal of women in the print media on the small percentage of educated individuals who comprise the audience of the print media since these are the people who play a crucial role in planning the advancement of the nation.

Limited research has been conducted in the area of the nature and content of the Indian print media. Jha (1992) (37) states that as far as employment figures for the involvement of women in the print media are concerned, hardly two percent of the total work force engaged in the newspaper industry is female. Since this means there aren’t many women involved in the editorial gate keeping process, news about women tends to get relegated to the inside pages (Jha, 1992). No significant research data is available on the portrayal of women in Indian magazines or newspapers.

**ADVERTISING**

In her research on gender portrayals in Indian advertising, Shelat (1994) (38) describes how after the gain of independence in 1947, advertising in India was restricted mainly to the print media since television reached the country only in the late 1960s. It was also around this time that commercial advertising began on All India Radio, India’s one and only national radio station at the time (Shelat, 1994).

According to Pandey (1991), since advertising agencies in India are predominantly run by men, the tendency to portray women in traditional roles, or in superhuman roles where they manage the home and the job front at the same time, has been inherent in the content of Indian advertising. According to Shelat’s study (1994), the print advertisements of the 1950s and early 1960s portrayed men as breadwinners of the family, decision-makers and professionals while women were portrayed as being inordinately concerned with their physical appearance and cooking sumptuous meals to please their men and families. They shopped, cleaned and pampered tired husbands, demanding in-laws and delightful children (p. 8).

Desai and Krishnaraj (1990) observe that the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s saw an increase in the number of employed educated urban women. Also, according to Shelat (1994), television advertising was increasing in popularity. Advertisers began to subscribe to the superhuman portrayal of women wherein they would beautifully juggle their careers with domestic duties (Shelat, 1994). Balasubrahmanyan’s (1988) (39) research shows that these
women were depicted as super efficient, and in no need of help from their partners in managing burdensome housework. Women, according to Krishnan and Dighe (1990), were also increasingly portrayed in service roles within the home while men were portrayed mainly as being involved with outdoor activities.

According to Tefft’s (1987) report, recent complaints against the nature of the portrayal of women in Indian advertising have centered on the indecent sex object portrayals. Desai and Patel (1990) state that studies have shown that whatever the product being advertised may be, cosmetics, fabrics, and luggage or stationery women are mostly projected in glamorous and enticing roles. Tefft (1987) adds that while advertising executives insist that the modern portrayal of women is in keeping with the changing role of the urban female consumer who is becoming more independent and working outside the home in non-traditional jobs, women activists are marching to government offices demanding laws banning the indecent portrayal of women in Indian advertising.

Although recent research on the portrayal of women in the Indian media, especially the print media, is limited, the available literature review suggests that the overall trend seems to be in favor of portraying women in domestic roles or as decorative sex objects. Portrayals wherein women are realistically portrayed as useful contributors to the world of commerce, politics and development are sadly lacking.

**Portrayals of Women in Print Advertising in Other Asian Countries**

The studies on the image of women portrayed in the advertisements in most Asian countries are few and far apart. As in India, women in many of these countries are restrained from realizing their full potential by similar traditional and cultural norms. According to Leung’s research (1992)(40), the advertisements in these countries also reflect this phenomenon.

According to Ho’s (1983) (41) study, women in the advertisements of three Hong Kong newspapers were portrayed mainly in connection with feminine and leisure-related products. Men were portrayed more in connection to business-related products. Although the proportion of men and women shown working was nearly equal, women were portrayed in traditional female job roles such as beauticians, waitresses, etc (Ho, 1983).

Cho’s (1990) study of dependency in American and Korean magazine advertisements showed that women were mostly portrayed as being dependent on men while men were
SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will attempt to project various aspects of the changing scenario of women in print media advertising. This proposed study has vital importance not only from academic point of view but also from the development and improvement point of view.

OBJECTIVES

Following are the objectives of this study:

- To find out the types of advertising in the Newspapers
- The find out the types of advertising in the Magazines
- To identify the types of the women’s image in the newspapers advertising.
- To identify the types of the women’s image in the Magazines advertising.
METHODOLOGY

Three scientific methodology of research will be adopted in the proposed study considering the objectives.

1. **Content Analysis** - The advertisement published in the newspaper and the magazines of the given period will be analyzed to achieve the objectives. The sample of content analysis will be taken from the publication of Delhi only. Due to following reasons-
   # Circulation figure of the publication being taken for the study are considerably high, hence the reach of the advertising over target market is also wider.
   # Most of the brands and newspapers and magazines being taken for the study have wider geographical and demographical reach hence these are most representative sample.

The research study will be based on content analysis of the ads appeared in national newspapers and magazines. The following six newspapers for the period of one month will be taken.

**English Dailies:**
1. The Times of India (New Delhi Edition)
2. The Hindustan Times (New Delhi Edition)

Following five Magazines for the period of six months will be taken:
- India Today
- Cine Blitz
- Femina
- Grihshobha
- Griha Lakshmi
In this study the type of Ads appearing in print media will be categorised on the following basis-

- Consumer durables
- Food
- Banking & Insurance
- Education
- Automobile
- New Communication Gazette
- Life style
- Personal & Health Care
- Entertainment
- Others

Further it will also be observed that the product or service having woman figure in the ads is targeted to woman or not or it is for both men and women.

Printed ads will also be categorized on the basis of object or person appearing with woman figures as follows –

- Woman with woman
- Woman with man
- Woman with child
- Woman with product
- Woman with the certain background
- Woman alone

The type of image projection of woman in the ads will be categorised on the following basis

- Traditional
- Middle class assertive
- Youth smart
- Sensual seductive
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Print Mass Media: Print mass media refer to the print from of mass communication such as newspapers and magazines.

Advertising: Advertising is mass media selling. It is the communication of product information by means of mass media the purpose of which is to sell products to consumers.

Following are three general types of newspaper advertising.

- **Classified ads:** Classified ads generally consist of the commercial messages arranged into types according to interest of the readers. These are usually listed under a major heading with little embellishment or white space.

- **Display ads:** Display ads are a dominant form of newspaper advertising. These can be of any size and are found anywhere but the editorial page in a newspaper.

- **Supplements:** Both national and local advertising can be carried in newspaper supplements. Supplements refer to syndicated or local full color advertising inserts that appear throughout a week and especially in Sunday edition of newspapers.

Scope of the Study

This study will attempt to project various aspects of the changing scenario in the projection of women in print media advertising the proposed study has vital importance not only from academic point of view but from the development and improvement point of view also.