Chapter II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE,
NEED AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This chapter deals with the review of literature that was relevant to the subject matter of the thesis. In order to get a complete understanding of any subject/concept, its operationalization and implications, scanning the work done in the past is essential. Therefore, as a first step towards the current research, secondary data was collected from all possible sources that directly or indirectly focus on the theme of the study and was studied thoroughly to attain conceptual clarity.

Leading on from that, gaps in the available literature were identified to uphold the need of the current study. Apart from the review of literature, the current chapter also thus deals with the need and the objectives of the present study.

2.1 Review of Literature

A large number of studies both descriptive and empirical have been conducted regarding the various ethical and social issues involved in advertising campaigns of business houses. A review of these studies has been done to highlight the various questions associated with the ethics of television commercials and the companies sponsoring them.

The telecast of terrestrial television in India was first experimented in the year 1959. Regular daily transmission was introduced in 1965. It was only in the year 1972 that television service was extended to two major cities – Bombay (now Mumbai) and Amritsar. However, it was not until the mid seventies (1974 and 1975) that national television service and Doordarshan were available in the major cities of the country. Hence, it was considered appropriate to conduct a review of the relevant studies conducted in or after 1974.

Jobber (1974) conducted an exploratory study into consumer reactions to television advertising. Consumer attitudes were assessed by the use of three criteria: consumer feelings towards exaggerated and annoying advertising; consumer’s subjective assessment of creative advertising; and their assessment of their ideal type of
advertisement. The study revealed uncomplimentary results and the disturbing reactions of the consumers, which could reduce advertising effectiveness.

**Atkin and Heald (1976)** studied the relationships between broadcast advertising exposure and various cognitive and effective orientations in a survey of voters during a congressional election campaign. The findings indicate that exposure was moderately correlated with political knowledge and interest. The highly exposed voters were somewhat more likely to attach higher agenda priorities to issues and candidate attributes emphasized in the commercials. Personal affect towards each candidate was mildly associated with advertising exposure frequency; hence implying that exposure of prospective voters to commercials can influence the decision of whom to vote for.

**Dowling (1980)** conducted a research to study the information content of Australian television advertisements. The Australian television advertisements were assessed in an operational replication of an empirical study of U. S. television advertising. A comparison of the study results for U. S. and Australian television advertising was made. The results indicated a difference in overall informativeness and daily screening time, and the association between informativeness and the type of product advertised.

**Higgins (1982)** conducted a study to highlight the importance of developing television program ratings, which focused exclusively on the content of television programs. The researcher identified audience segments by interest clusters and discussed its importance and great diagnostic potential for producers. The study also established content of television programs and commercials which audiences like and which they dislike.

**Frank (1983)** conducted a study to comprehend the trends in television programs directed at children. The researcher found that though children watched an average of 25 hours of television a week, they were not indiscriminate users. They only watched programs, which interested them irrespective of day part or type. The study also found that the programs that children preferred consistently featured on prime time. Lastly, action and games were established as popular categories of programs among children.
**Aaker and Bruzzone (1985)** studied the causes of irritation in advertising. They collected data from a nationwide sample of 1,000 households with the help of a self-administered questionnaire containing both photos and scripts of commercials. An analysis of 18 sets of high irritation and low irritation commercials in the same product class was done. The analysis showed that irritation levels were higher when television commercials emphasized a sensitive product, an unbelievable situation, a put-down person, a threatened relationship, a graphic portrayal of physical discomfort, tension, an unattractive character, a suggestive scene or poor casting. The analysis also showed that irritation levels for commercials depicting a happy mood, a warm mood, a credible spokesperson, humor, or useful information had lower levels of irritation.

**Berger and Mitchell (1989)** examined the influence of advertising repetition on several non-evaluative dimensions of attitudes and the strength of the relationship between attitudes and behavior. The results indicated that attitudes formed on the basis of repeated ad exposure were similar to those formed on the basis of direct experience, in that they were more accessible from memory, held with more confidence and were more predictive of subsequent behavior than were attitudes based on a single ad exposure. The results were consistent with the proposition that attitude accessibility and attitude confidence moderate the attitude-behavior relationship.

**Brown and Cody (1991)** investigated the effects of India’s first long-running television soap opera that was designed to promote women’s status in Indian society. The study was conducted in Northern India and a regression model was used for data analysis. The study found that exposure to the program was positively associated with viewer’s involvement with the characters in the program and with viewer’s television dependency but did not make viewers more aware of women’s status issues. On the other hand issues like extra-marital affairs, pre-marital sex, divorce etc. proved to be a threat to the Indian culture and respondents expressed concern over this type of cultural erosion.

**Haefner (1991)** conducted a study in which she explored the ethical problems of advertising to children.

After a discussion on the uniqueness of child audiences and commercial’s effects on them, the study addressed the values of advertisers who purposely or
inadvertently reached children with their messages. Three ethical theories were presented for use in recognizing the special consideration necessary for child audiences. The study found that the effects of commercials on children were critical. Finally Robin and Reidenbach’s model proposed in 1987 was presented as a means of introducing ethical values and theories into corporate decision-making policies regarding children and advertising.

Richins (1991) reviewed the theories that might explain how advertising causes dissatisfaction with the self. It was hypothesized that:

1. Consumers compare themselves with idealized advertising images.
2. Exposure to such images may change consumer’s comparison standards for what they desire or lower perceptions of their own performance on relevant dimensions; resulting in lowered satisfaction.

Exploratory and experimental research examined these hypotheses in the context of idealized images of physical attractiveness in ads targeted at young women. Evidence on comparison was found. Results suggested that idealized images raised comparison standards for attractiveness and lowered satisfaction with one’s own attractiveness.

Whittler (1991) examined viewer’s processing of racial cues in advertising stimuli. A total of 160 white and 140 black undergraduates rated a professionally prepared storyboard featuring a white or black actor.

The study revealed that low-prejudice whites showed no difference between their similarity or ability to identify with white or black actors, whereas high-prejudice whites perceived themselves as less similar to black than to white actors, and identified more strongly with white than with black actors. The findings further indicated that regardless of their attitude towards blacks, white adults were less likely to purchase the products, and had less favorable attitudes toward the products and advertisements when the advertisements featured a black rather than a white actor. The notion that viewers with stronger racial attitudes are more likely to be affected by source characteristics (i.e., whether the actors are black or not) than viewers with weaker racial attitudes was supported.

Kunkel (1992) conducted a study in which he addressed the nature and number of commercials during children’s programs on three different types of channels:
broadcast networks, independent stations and cable networks. The author carried out this study because he felt that an altered regulatory climate and changes in the industry structure (e.g., growth of cable and independent stations) suggested the need to reexamine the characteristics of messages targeting children.

The study found a clear pattern of differences across the various channel types. It also found that the broadcast networks provided the greatest amount of advertising; cable presented significantly less. Independent stations captured the largest share of toy ads. Cable presented the widest range of products advertised including such new categories as recorded telephone messages targeting children. The study also examined the theme/appeals employed in the commercials, disclosures/disclaimers used, and other content attributes of advertising.

Dorfman and Wallack (1993) conducted a study to find the barriers to the effectiveness of public service advertisements and counter-ads.

The study revealed that there were serious barriers to the effectiveness of both PSAs and counter-ads. The research suggested that PSAs must compete for less free advertising time, and, to get what time was available, they must maintain a noncontroversial focus on individual behavior change. The study also revealed that counter-ads faced barriers on account of their politically controversial nature, but despite these formidable barriers, public health had an obligation to develop prevention strategies that would address the context of public health problems. In the view of the researchers, this context had expanded from the narrow focus on the person at the centre to the social, political and economic landscape. It was also suggested that public health would be better served by using advocacy advertising based on political models of influencing public opinion and policy than by using public service advertising based on models of selling behavior.

Andrews et al. (1994) conducted a study to demonstrate a recommended procedure for testing the equivalence of commonly used advertising belief and attitude measures across different cultures.

Data were collected from two culturally diverse countries: the United States and Russia (there is a wide variance between the countries in the amount of advertising expenditure as a percentage of GNP and per capita income). University Business
students served as respondents in order to enhance the homogeneity of the samples across cultures and the questionnaire was administered in each country during class time.

The results indicate that contrary to predictions, U.S. respondents were not more agreeable to the economic beliefs about advertising. In fact, the Russians exhibited significantly greater agreement than U.S. respondents with the statement: “Advertising is essential.”

It was interesting however, to see how similar the views of the U.S. and Russian samples were on the “Lower price,” “raises standard of living,” and “results in better products” items. It was pointed out that it is likely that Russian respondents view advertising as an opportunity to help improve their economy. The results for the social belief items were as predicted, demonstrating the U. S. sample’s more negative view of the social impact of advertising. While the U.S. means were not as negative as results reported in earlier studies (Andrew’s study conducted in 1989 was referred to), they were still negative as predicted by earlier studies. The results for attitude-institution were also were also as predicted, with the U.S. respondents more favorable than Russian respondents.

Conna et al. (1994) conducted a study to explore consumer perceptions of controversial advertising practices. The research dealt with two central issues: First, how do consumers perceive practices frequently cited as points of controversy in our literature and text books? Second, do specific perceptions of advertising controversies relate to more fundamental ideological dimensions, such as relativism or idealism?

A questionnaire was developed concerning ethical issues from seven different advertising topic areas: advertising to children, advertising to minorities, advertising using sex appeals, advertising using fear appeals, offensive advertising, tobacco advertising, and political advertising.

The findings suggest that with respect to ads directed at children, consumers expressed strong concern about advertising in public schools. By a large margin, consumers felt that parents, and not the government should regulate what children are exposed to on TV. Regarding ads directed at minorities, most consumers agreed that a) liquor and cigarette ads aimed at inner-city markets were unethical, b) lottery ads that
encourage low-income groups to buy tickets were unethical, c) advertisers have a moral responsibility to include minority actors in ads and d) ads suggesting women can find contentment at home are inoffensive. The study also found that in the minds of consumers, the ethics of the use of fear in advertising seem to depend on the motives and goals of the advertiser. For example, the use of fear appeals was seen as very appropriate when the appeal was used to warn about the dangers of drugs and was seen as very inappropriate when a teen was targeted by an acne medication advertiser. The study also found that while most consumers felt that tasteful sex appeals for certain products were acceptable, a majority believed that there was too much sex in current advertising and that nudity was not appropriate for general interest magazines, and also that sexy ads played a role in fostering teenage sexuality. This last finding was found to be particularly important, given the current problems of teenage pregnancy, sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS.

**Fay and Price (1994)** conducted a research study to study the potential linkage between the use of thin models in advertising and the rise in the incidence of anorexia nervosa.

The study utilized the Listener and the New Zealand Woman’s Weekly Index of the Advertising Archive at the University of Otago (these two magazines had had consistently high readerships for more than 50 years). Data were gathered for every fifth year from 1958-1988 and the total sample size was 669.

The study found that there was much advertising, which was concerned with dieting, slimming and body control. The study also found that it was normal for adolescent girls and young women to compare their bodies with media images. The study concluded that to a greater extent than non-sufferers, anorexics said that they were influenced and their self-image diminished, by advertising images.

**Henthrone and LaTour (1994)** examined whether a print ad displaying a strong overt sexual appeal resulted in significantly lower scores or ratings across dimensions of moral philosophy/ “ethics of advertising use” than a mild sexual appeal.

Data was collected through the use of a mall intercept during all hours of mall operation over the course of one week. At the end of the week 199 usable questionnaires were obtained.
The findings suggested that undesirable consequences and reactions may result from the use of strong overt sexual appeals. The study further emphasized that of concern to advertisers was to determine the point at which a sexual appeal may be viewed as sexual and therefore become counter-productive. The research showed that both men and women had potential ethical concerns about the use of strong overt sexual appeals in advertising.

An important implication of the research was the need for advertisers to recognize the moral/ethical complexity involved in the use of strong overt sexual appeals and to incorporate that understanding within their strategic thought. It was argued that advertising operates within the parameters established by society and as the moral and ethical considerations of society change over time, what is considered appropriate and ethical in advertising must also change.

Hyman et al. (1994) surveyed a random sample of academicians in the American Academy of Advertising to answer two questions:
What do advertising scholars believe are the major impediments to research on advertising ethics?
What do advertising scholars believe are the best opportunities for research on advertising ethics?

To collect data, a six-page questionnaire was developed and mailed to all the reviewers of the Journal of Advertising and a random sample of academicians listed in the 1992 AAA membership directory. In all 435 questionnaires were mailed, out of which 124 usable responses were obtained. Two tailed t-tests were used to analyze the data.

Results indicated that respondents clearly believed that there existed impediments to hinder research on advertising ethics, more than they existed for other types of research. These impediments were lack of practitioner interest, lack of sound measures and frameworks, lack of academic interest and lack of relevant theory in related disciplines. The study also found that use of deception, advertising to children, ads for tobacco and alcoholic beverages, negative political ads and the use of stereotypes in ads were the highest ranked topics for research in advertising ethics.
Pratt and James (1994) conducted a study to examine AAF (the largest association of advertising practitioners in the United States) members’ perceptions of four scenarios of advertising ethics and to analyze their reasons for such perceptions. The study also sought to link the practitioners’ perceptions to ethical theories. The research questions posed by the study were:

What were AAF members’ overall perceptions of advertising ethics as outlined in four scenarios on ethics?
Did such perceptions vary significantly with the type of ethical issue confronted?
What were the implications of the classical theory of deontology for the self-reported ethics of the sample practitioners?

Data was collected with the help of a three-part questionnaire that had six statements (responses were anchored on a four point scale) on each of the four potentially troublesome scenarios on moral issues. A single-wave mail survey was used. 174 usable questionnaires were obtained. For the purpose of analysis percentage response to each statement and item-by-item statistical differences between the 36 possible pairs of responses were computed.

The results presented in this study indicate a strong (perceived) reluctance on the part of the ad agencies to institute policies that would proscribe unethical conduct.

Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy (1994) undertook a study to analyze the impact of ethical judgments about political television commercials on global attitude towards the advertisement. Their findings indicated that the “non-salient” attitude structure acted independently of the “salient attitude structure or in other words, the salient and the non salient beliefs belonged to largely independent dimensions, as shown by their loadings on different orthogonal factors. The study further showed that the “ethical” attribute belonged to a set of salient “utilitarian” cognitions that influenced the evaluation of political commercials. The study concluded that for a political candidate, both ethical and exciting judgments contributed significantly to global attitude.

Richins (1995) used theories originating in social psychology to examine the impact of the idealized advertising images on consumer’s perceptions of their lives, particularly with respect to their material possessions. Using social comparison theory as a basis, the author argued that exposure to idealized images led consumers to
compare, often unconsciously, their own lives with those represented in idealized advertising images. In addition, information integration frameworks were used to explain how repeated exposure to idealized images raised consumer’s expectations and influenced their perceptions of how their lives ought to be, particularly in terms of their material possessions. The result of both these processes, for some consumers, was consumer discontent and an increased desire for more.

Barwise et al. (1997) conducted a study to assess people’s attitudes to television programs. The two variables used for the study were ‘audience size’ and ‘audience appreciation.’

The study found that most television programs could be divided into two categories: information and entertainment. The study further found that information programs tend to draw smaller number of audiences and higher appreciation scores than entertainment programs. This indicated that between the two main program types, the correlation of audience appreciation with audience size is negative and for different programs of the same type the correlation is positive.

The researchers pointed out the implication that more demanding a program is, more interesting and enjoyable it must be before the audiences will watch it.

Bhatia (1997) conducted a survey to establish the effect of tobacco advertising during the 1996 Cricket World Cup on children.

The results of the study clearly show that the 1996 Cricket World Cup encouraged children between the ages of 13 and 17 to start smoking. The results point out that there was a four-fold increase in the number of children who took up smoking during the tournament. The researcher argued that the increase was due to a leading Indian tobacco company sponsoring the World Cup.

Foley (1997) summarized a report (from the Pontifical Council for Social Communications) on the state of ethics in advertising world wide. During the course of the study, it was brought out that advertising profoundly impacted the way people understood themselves and the world around them. The study looked at the potential benefits of advertising on society and the harm done by advertising. The study further went on to identify the moral principles essential for ethical advertising. The study finally threw light on who was responsible for ensuring that advertising was ethical.
**Ford et al. (1997)** conducted a study to examine the cross-cultural female responses to offensive sex role portrayals in advertising. It was a contention of this study that the extent of feminine consciousness had a positive impact on critical perceptions of female role portrayals in advertising, which had a positive effect on perceived negativity with regard to the image of a company using potentially offensive advertisements. It was also debated whether these negative company images had a negative effect on the purchase intention of the consumers.

Data was collected with the help of a questionnaire (450 across 4 countries: USA, New Zealand, Japan and Thailand) via drop-off, pick-up methodology. Sample respondents were adult women. Technique used for data analysis was factor analysis.

Findings suggested various degrees of criticism where sex role portrayals, company image and purchase intentions were concerned. It was found that the women from New Zealand were the most critical followed by the U.S., Japanese and Thai samples. It was concluded that companies must exercise care in utilizing female models in advertisements across different types of viewers because what may be acceptable in one country, may not be acceptable in the other. As a result, a certain amount of localization in role portrayal depictions was recommended in any global advertising campaign.

**Stern and Taylor (1997)** conducted a research to heighten the industry’s awareness of some of the problematic consequences of even positive stereotyping.

The research method chosen was to conduct a content analysis of television advertisements from one full week of prime time programming on four major television networks.

The study showed that Asian-Americans were overrepresented in television ads according to the proportionality criterion but the portrayals raised questions about stereotyping, tokenism and gender asymmetry. The study further laid stress on the fact that advertisers do not probably intend to produce any of these consequences, for on the surface the portrayals show the group exhibiting positive traits. Nevertheless, constant reiteration of positive images can have a negative impact on the self-perceptions of minority individuals, as well as on the attitudes of other cultural groups towards those individuals.
Browne (1998) conducted a study to determine the levels of gender stereotyping in commercials targeting children.

Commercials for the study were videotaped during Saturday morning cartoon programming in continuous three-hour blocks between 8 and 11 o’clock. Content analysis was used to examine the advertising.

After content analysis, it was found that commercials contained more male figures than female figures; and the male-to-female ratio increased with age. It was also found that commercials predominantly featured male voiceovers and commercials targeting boys were substantially more aggressive than commercials targeting girls.

The study showed that the content, placement and amount of advertising aimed at children was worthy of concern and advertising codes of ethics pertaining to children’s programming warranted further attention. The study suggested that particularly in the areas of instrumentality and aggressiveness, greater attention to self-regulatory guidelines on the part of managers would serve desirable social ends.

Jones et al. (1998) examined whether “sexy” illustrations in ads influenced the response of the viewers or not. For the purpose of conducting the study approximately 300 undergraduate students were given an ad each, selected randomly out of five options. The options were: ad with a sexy male model, ad with a sexy female model, ad with a non-sexy male model, ad with a non-sexy female model and a landscape. The response of both men and women to both the male and female models used in this way (the “beefcake” and “cheesecake” of the title) was explored. The study concluded that the “non-sexy” ads were more effective while revealing that women demonstrated a more negative attitude to the “cheesecake” ad than men did to the “beefcake” equivalent.

Liebes and Livingstone (1998) analyzed most popular locally made soap operas in five European countries. This study of British, Scandinavian and European soaps, based on an ethnographic approach (for the purpose of arriving at the conclusion, both informal conversations and actual events were analyzed) to the social networks in the world of the soaps, for each of the subtypes, analyzed the gender and class context for narrative events as portrayed within the soaps. The study found that soaps tended to problematize gender issues in their conscious attempt to transmit social messages and
operated in a destabilized environment, in which families had more or less disappeared. This negatively affected the social values of the viewers.

**Munshi (1998)** analyzed the role which advertising discourses play in the construction of a “New Indian Woman” in her multiple avatars of homemaker. The study concentrated on the ideas that producers of media texts had about their target audience.

The study found that women’s spaces of resistance were created by advertisers themselves. The study also found that these spaces of resistance were a part of the entire dominant social structure, hence showing the relationship between advertising and society. The research showed that advertising discourses and the construction of gender and women’s subjectivities were all inherently interrelated, and they administered and moderated each other. Lastly, the study showed that advertising adroitly combined both ideologies of feminism and femininity within discourses of consumerism.

**Slade (1998)** conducted a study to analyze the impact of issues in soap operas on the moral behavior of children. The study was conducted in 1996-97 in schools in New Jersey during which excerpts of a popular soap opera were used to analyze how soap operas affected the moral and social behavior of children.

The study found that the moral and social values of children were corrupted by the soap operas, which bordered on the unethical. The study also found that children were being manipulated by media conglomerates and advertising firms. The study also indicated that the soap operas were well endowed with the outlines of moral decisions taken in domestic settings and provided the bones on which the flesh of moral argumentation could be developed.

**Dunfee et al. (1999)** conducted a study to explore the potential of the Social Contract Theory and the Integrative Social Contracts Theory (in the field of marketing ethics). The two theories were viewed as complementing and strengthening the existing constructs and frameworks of marketing ethics. The Integrative Social Contracts Theory contained several significant theoretical advantages as it encompassed two different types of social contracts: a hypothetical macrosocial contract used as a heuristic device and actual microsocial contracts. The study found a symbiotic relationship between the Integrative Social Contracts Theory and marketing. A useful ethical framework for
marketing was provided by Integrative Social Contracts Theory and in turn marketing provided the empirical techniques necessary for using the Integrative Social Contracts Theory at its best.

**Graves (1999)** studied how televised role portrayals and interracial interactions, act as sources of vicarious experience and lead to the development of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination among children. The extent and nature of racial/ethnic content on television, inclusive of the portrayals of racial/ethnic groups and of interracial/ethnic interaction was reviewed. The study focused on models that help in explaining the role of the television in the development, maintenance and modification of stereotypes, prejudices and discriminations. Research on the role of television in modifying/altering stereotypes, discriminations and prejudices (media intervention programs designed to address these issues, namely Sesame Street and Different and the Same, were given special attention) was addressed. Elaborate suggestions for future research were provided.

**Harwood and Roy (1999)** conducted a study involving a content analysis of print advertisements from five popular magazines in the United States and five in India. The advertisements which depicted older adults were examined to describe the nature of the depictions. The study revealed that while older adults were depicted in a relatively positive frame in both the cultures (that is well groomed, healthy, active and happy), older women were underrepresented. The study found cultural differences in terms of the products with which the older characters were associated, the types of magazines in which they featured, and the physical and social settings in which they were depicted. Results of the study were discussed in the light of the theoretical and applied issues.

**Lavine *et al.* (1999)** examined whether exposure to TV ads that portray women as sex objects caused increased body dissatisfaction among women and men.

Participants were exposed to 15 sexist and 5 nonsexist ads, 20 nonsexist ads, or a no ad control condition.

Results revealed that women exposed to sexist ads judged their current body size as larger and revealed a larger discrepancy between their actual and ideal body sizes (preferring a thinner body) than women exposed to the nonsexist or no ad condition. Men exposed to the sexist ads judged their current body size as thinner, revealed a
larger discrepancy between their actual and ideal body size (preferring a larger body),
and revealed a larger discrepancy between their own ideal body size and their
perceptions of other’s male body size preferences (believing that others preferred a
larger ideal) than men exposed to the nonsexist or no ad condition. Discussion focused
on the cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral consequences of exposure to gender
stereotypic television advertising.

Pechmann and Shih (1999) with the help of an experimental study tested the
rival thesis regarding the effects of smoking in feature films on youth and the ability of
the anti-smoking advertisements to nullify these effects. The respondents (eight hundred
ninth graders), were made to watch either the original movie footage with smoking
scenes or the control footage with smoking scenes edited out. The findings of the study
supported the Forbidden Fruit thesis. The results of the study pointed out that exposure
to smoking scenes aroused the curiosity of the young viewers, positively influenced
their intention to smoke and in their perception enhanced the social stature of the
smoker. The study further found that the perceptions so developed were malleable and
exposing the young respondents to anti-smoking advertisements before the movie
effectively repositioned smoking as tainted as against forbidden. And thus, the
aforementioned negative effects were nullified.

Susan Tai (1999) studied the use of sex appeal in Chinese advertising. His study
explored the consumer’s ethical judgments about the same. The study specifically
focused on responses regarding the attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand
and the purchase intentions.

The results showed that sexual appeal was evaluated as the most popular in the
Hong Kong print advertising and was also perceived as the most popular instrument.
The study also found that regardless of the gender of the respondent, the use of overt
sexual appeal was not well received and resulted in less favorable attitude towards the
ad itself and the purchase intention than using mild sexual themes. The study concluded
that the degree of sexual content used in the advertising had no direct influence on
brand attributes and that the advertisers should be careful in the use of sexual appeal.

Waller (1999) conducted a study to obtain a preliminary measure of attitudes of
business students of a large multi campus university, towards offensive advertising. The
study found that the responses of the male and female respondents were similar. The study also found that the advertisements featuring “racially extremist groups” were perceived to be the most offensive, with a mean score above the mid point of three (3.44), (3.39 for females and 3.52 for males). It was also pointed out that while males tended to be more offended than females by advertisements about male underwear, the alcohol advertisements tended to offend females more than males. The study concluded that advertisements using indecent language, nudity, sex, racism and anti-social behavior tended to offend more females than males. On an average, it appeared from the study that the perception of all the respondents regarding the advertising of controversial products/services/ideas was similar. According to the study the five products/services/ideas that were perceived as the most offensive were: racially extremist groups, religious denominations, female hygiene products, cigarettes and political parties.

Coltrane and Messineo (2000) conducted a detailed empirical study to explore the ways in which advertising imagery simultaneously constructs stereotypes of race and gender. This study reports on a content analysis of television commercials (n = 1699) aired during programs with high ratings for specific target audiences from 1992 to 1994. The study found that characters in the television commercials enjoy more prominence and exercise more authority if they are White or men. Logistic regression analyses was used which indicated that images of romantic and domestic fulfillment also differ by race and gender, with women and Whites disproportionately shown in family settings and in cross-sex interactions. The study pointed out that in general, 1990s television commercials tend to portray White men as powerful, White women as sex objects, African American men as aggressive, and African American women as inconsequential. The authors suggest that these commercial images contribute to the perpetuation of subtle prejudice against African Americans by exaggerating cultural differences and denying positive emotions. Results were discussed in relation to the segmentation of media markets and possibilities for social change.

Furnham et al. (2000) wrote a paper, which reported on two studies with almost identical methodologies. Both studies were content analysis studies of the way men and women were portrayed on television in South East Asia. One study was
conducted in Indonesia (where 119 television advertisements were content analyzed) and the other study was conducted in Hong Kong (where 175 television advertisements were content analyzed).

In Hong Kong, 9 of the ten content categories yielded a significant gender-role effect, particularly mode of presentation, credibility and role. In Indonesia, 9 of the 11 gender-role effects were significant, in particular, reward type and product type. Asian television commercials were likely to have greater gender-role stereotypes than Western commercials, was a fact, which was discussed in the study. Discussion also included difficulties associated with cross-cultural comparisons of this type of data.

Luke et al. (2000) conducted a study to use geographic information systems data and analyses to describe locations and characteristics of tobacco billboards in a large metropolitan area, and to assess the extent to which tobacco companies were locating billboards in close proximity to minority neighborhoods and schools. Observational study of billboards in a large metropolitan area was the method used. All stationary billboards in the city and county of St Louis were eligible to be observed, with the exception of bus stop and street side retail advertising signs. A total of 1239 non-blank billboards were observed. SPSS version 8.0 was used for some traditional statistical analyses. Chi-square analysis was used to analyze the data. The study found that Tobacco products were the single most heavily advertised type of product on billboards in St Louis. The study also found that the geographic distribution of tobacco billboards, as well as the types of images found on these billboards, was consistent with the hypothesis that tobacco companies were targeting poor and minority communities with their advertising.

Malhotra and Rogers (2000) analyzed the rapid development of private satellite television in India during 1990s and the resulting changes in the portrayals of the Indian women. A content analysis of the top rated television programs broadcast by private television networks in India was done. The ten programs chosen were based on audience ratings for June 1997 (IMRB, 1997). The research questions were: How are gender roles constructed by the private television networks in India, as evidenced in their top rated television programs?
Do the top rated television programs of private television networks in India reflect the process of cultural hegemony?

The findings of the study supported the notion that gender roles were an important area of social experience to make sense of. Women were gaining greater visibility in television programming, although still only ten percent of the female characters worked outside the home, as against 95 percent of male characters. The study suggested that alternative construction of gender roles in India were occurring. Furthermore, the data also reflected the process of cultural hegemony as reflected by the very western themes of the programs. Last but not the least; the study indicated the emergence of the new world for the Indian woman revolutionizing the way she looked at the world and herself.

Maloney (2000) conducted a study to examine the believability of advertisements by questioning respondents regarding anything that was “hard to believe” in an advertisement. Data was collected on a ten-point scale from a group of 600 respondents (house wives). After exposure to the experimental advertisement, it was observed that 204 respondents shifted up on the scale (towards a greater readiness to serve the product advertised), 312 did not change their positions and 84 shifted downwards. Regarding believability, 115 respondents found something hard to believe in the advertisement, whereas 485 respondents did not find anything hard to believe in the advertisement. The study also found that the responses to the “hard to believe” questions, in no way predicted the readiness of the respondents to serve the products advertised in the experimental advertisements.

Mayne (2000) conducted a study on how advertising manifested itself and the power it had over society in general. Some of the issues discussed in the study were gender and advertising, how advertising exercised its power over women in general and did advertising help in the reinforcement of power roles in society.

The research showed that advertising did not portray men and women in realistic ways. It also showed that the readily seen images in advertisements revealed the strong patriarchal element of the society. The research concluded that advertisements on television and in magazines portray women as subordinate to men.
Pollay (2000) reviewed the work of significant humanities and social science scholars for their thoughts and theories about advertising’s social and cultural consequences. In brief, he found that they view advertising as intrusive and environmental and its effects as inescapable and profound. They see it as reinforcing materialism, cynicism, irrationality, selfishness, anxiety, social competitiveness, sexual preoccupation, powerlessness, and/or a loss of self-respect. Drawing heavily on original sources, these ideas were synthesized into a framework that structures advertising’s supposed effects and causalities. The study found advertising damaging to morality and society. Also discussed in this study were the problems and prospects for needed research and the moral imperative for the research.

Pryor and Crage (2000) undertook a study after noticing a penchant on the soaps to present prevarication that seemed remarkably high. Their research was aimed at finding out how much lies were there in soap operas.

The authors watched six episodes each of two leading soap classics (Days of Our Lives and Life to Live) watching each episode three times so they could catch the nuances of each plot twist. A lie-quotient for the soaps was calculated.

The study confirmed that some of the biggest liars on television appear as characters on the daytime soap operas. It was also found that during one week of viewing the shows averaged five lies per hour, and that female characters lied with greater frequency than male characters.

Abernethy and Wicks (2001) to replicate and further extend the findings of current research, examined current television advertising. To collect data, 898 commercial television stations (both cable and broadcast) were selected randomly from the 1996 broadcasting cable yearbook. The percentage of all standard advertisements for which the respondents had asked for substantiation, as well as the percentage of all standard advertisements rejected (for any reason) was asked. The study found that the average advertising rejection rate was 1.62 percent, which was significantly less (p < .01), than the 1986 rejection rate of 2.79 percent. A significant relationship between substantiation and rejection was observed. It was also found during the course of the study that the major television affiliates were significantly less likely to accept advertisements for psychic advisor services, 900-phone services and advertisements
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simulating newscasts (p < .001) compared to non-network stations. According to the study, a greater competition for advertising revenues led to acceptance of advertisements of products that would have been rejected 10 years back.

**Appaih (2001)** examined whether the strength of ethnic identity influences black and white adolescent’s responses to advertisements featuring models of different races.

The researcher digitally manipulated the race of characters in the advertisements as well as the number of race-specified cultural cues while maintaining all other features of these advertisements. 173 black and white adolescents evaluated black or white character advertisements.

The findings demonstrated that the black adolescents who had a strong black ethnic identity perceived themselves as more similar to and identified more strongly with black character advertisements than did black adolescents with weaker ethnic identities. Other results suggested that white adolescents, despite their ethnic identity, found black character advertisements with varying degrees of black culture cues as appealing. The study suggested that while targeting white or black audiences stress should be laid on the creative strategy.

**Dallmann (2001)** conducted a study to highlight the importance of identifying culture-specific advertising strategies while targeting global market segments. The difference-in-differences approach was the statistical methodology used.

The study analyzed German and Japanese magazine advertising targeting women across four dimensions: advertisement format, usage of models, male and female role portrayal and value appeals. Despite some apparent transnational similarities in advertising aimed at women, the analysis revealed gross cross-cultural differences in the way marketers adapt their strategies in the women’s market. The results point out that non-traditional approaches in targeting women seem to be far more culturally specific than the traditional ones. The study also indicated that male role portrayal (not very popular as a research subject), was the crucial element of the non-traditional approaches in Japanese women’s magazines.
Johnson (2001) analyzed the role of television in the process of social change in rural India. Data for this research were collected through ethnographic fieldwork (both informal conversations and actual events were taken into account) in 1995-96 and during the summer of 2000. The two study villages were located in the mountains of Western Maharashtra (Danwali and Raj Puri). Through participant observation and in-depth interviews, the research explored the role of television within the structure and dynamics of rural India.

The study found that village audiences were an active participant in the use of media, which had ramifications for ‘development’ both at the village level and beyond. The research also found that the respondents watched television to discover new life styles, validate ideas, beliefs and aspirations, find answers to their questions, to relax, to socialize and to enhance their image of the self and their view of the world. In short, the study found that rural Indians actively seek out and use television for a variety of both personal and social endeavors.

Kavoori and Chadha (2001) examined the future of advertising in the developing world by examining the discourse of advertising.

A visual record of New Delhi and textual analysis of advertisements in a mass circulated Indian newspaper and magazine were the methods adopted.

The study found that there was a need to rethink the discourse of digital celebration and euphoria that had accompanied the internet in the developing world, especially India. The study showed that the themes emergent in the advertising of internet firms provided for a vision of the future of the internet, which reifies issues of linguistic hegemony, technological solutions, a consumerist (rather than a citizenry) culture, and reiteration of the traditional discourses of masculinity and class. The study also showed that the internet created a culture of consumption and masked the cultural contradictions it created.

The research suggested that we should think about the future of internet technology in the developing world as intimately connected with issues of global capitalism and cultural hegemony in place of a focus on objects of technological innovation or individual innovators of technology.
Radhakrishnan (2001) attempted the construction of gender and nation in Indian television channels and highlighted the ideological beliefs and assumptions underlying and reinforcing these stereotypical definitions of Indian womanhood.

The methods used were a content analysis of advertisements aired on the electronic media and the television serials.

The study observed that commercials in Indian television channels claimed to redefine the discourses of women's liberation and modernity, but ended up highlighting and reinforcing the prejudices of upper class males and the advertiser did not question the privilege of male domination. The author also pointed out that the difference between the advertisements of 1960s and the 1990s lied only in the portrayal of the "modern" woman, but her societal status did not change in any drastic way as her roles were still defined by men.

The study concluded that the Indian women had become the "nation" to be conquered and retained.

Cleland et al. (2002) studied ethicality in weight-loss advertising. They found that the use of false or misleading claims in weight-loss advertising was rampant. They also found that nearly 40% of the ads in their sample made at least one representation that almost certainly was false, and 55% of the ads made at least one representation that was very likely to be false or, at the very least, lacked substantiation. Findings also suggested that in 2000, consumers spent approximately $35 billion on supposed weight-loss products, while 2000 sales for the eighth largest weight-loss companies totaled $788 million.

These findings suggested that a substantial portion of weight-loss companies were engaged in white-collar crime. The discussion focused on the severity of such harms. Aside from the financial aspects associated with these crimes, the continued health risks associated with obesity suffered by consumers who believed they were addressing their ailment were also discussed.

Rumbo (2002) conducted a study in which the pervasive influence of advertising on consumer culture was examined in relation to a postmodern condition marked by increased speed, fragmentation, and the decentering of the subject. This condition, as was pointed out in the study often prompted the consumer to develop ad-
avoidance strategies that protected his/her psychic space by filtering out excess advertising clutter (which also colonized the public and discursive space of consumer culture). The author described the struggle for these cultural spaces as resembling a war of position between the ideology of consumerism and its opponents, who attempt to cultivate alternative worldviews toward consumerism. He further went on to say that although some perspectives saw consumption as a means for self-expression and the fashioning of multiple identities, this position valorized consumption practices irrespective of their environmental and social impact. During the course of the study an evaluation of the antiadvertising magazine *Adbusters* illustrated the obstacles inherent in launching challenges to consumerism, and the difficulty of resisting consumerism given advertising's control over cultural spaces. The author pointed out that marketers have converted resistance efforts from some of consumption's most ardent critics into market segments by targeting certain goods and services toward them.

**Scrase (2002)** analyzed whether an increasingly globalized television culture has led to a transformation of middle-class Bengali cultural identities.

The analysis was based on ethnographic fieldwork (for the purpose of arriving at the conclusion, both informal conversations and actual events were analyzed) carried out with middle-class households in West Bengal, India during 1998-2000. Participant observation and in-depth interviews with low-ranking salaried workers and their families were carried out in Calcutta and Siliguri (North Bengal). Utilizing a snowballing method, a total of 120 people were interviewed (semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted). Women constituted 47 percent of the sample while men constituted 53 percent of the sample.

The study found that satellite, cable and global television were perceived as a potential cultural threat and the youth were critical of certain aspects, such as the sexualized portrayal of women in many advertisements. There was an ongoing tension in terms of the control of women’s sexuality and roles. Television was replete with images of sexual permissiveness, especially in advertisements. While the tastefulness of such images was questioned, what remained critically unaccepted was the assigned role of wife and mother, the bearer of Bengali family tradition and honor. The research also showed that increased consumption was welcome and desirable and the informants
were not morally opposed to it. Their moral opposition was couched more in terms of the demise of Bengaliness— the loss of one’s language, customs and traditions.

Chan (2003) conducted a study to examine Chinese children’s level of materialism through their response to a scale of 14 items. The rationale behind the study was that, “advertising had an undesirable influence on children’s preference for material goods as a means of achieving success, happiness and self-fulfillment.”

A quota sample of 246 children (aged 6 to 13), with nearly equal numbers of boys and girls from grades two to six, were interviewed face to face during March and April 2002. A structured questionnaire consisting of 24 close questions was used. The questionnaire had questions on materialism, perceived function of advertising, perceived truthfulness of advertising and liking of advertising. The technique used for data analysis was one-way ANOVA.

The study found that Chinese children did not endorse materialistic values strongly. However, they had a strong desire for possession of money and new things.

Childs and Maher (2003) examined the advertiser’s use of gender in food advertising to children. Advertising for food products was compared to non-food advertisements. Content analysis was used to examine 215 taped advertisements. The study examined the measures of voice-over gender, gender of dominant product user, gender of main character, activity level, aggressive behavior level and soundtrack volume.

The study found that gender preference was significantly present in four of the six measures examined. The findings contributed to a general gender dominance where boys were dominant figures and role models. The male dominance in the food industry’s advertising to children suggested that girls were inappropriate consumers for food and it also suggested that this may have in some way contributed to the existence of several eating disorders that affect young women with greater prevalence than young men.

Saffer and Dave (2003) conducted a study to empirically estimate the effects of alcohol advertising on adolescent alcohol consumption. To explain the effects of advertising on alcohol consumption, the theory of brand capital was used. Evidence gathered from previous studies and the industry response function indicated that the
empirical strategy should maximize the variance in the advertising data. Because the data sets were independent, the confidence in all the results was increased due to the basically consistent findings. The study found that the effect of advertising on females was greater than that of males. It was also indicated by the study that both price policies and advertising have the potential to reduce adolescent alcohol consumption substantially.

Spurgin (2003) examined whether the use of computer generated images of perfection (advertisers create these images by using computer technology to remove unwanted traits from models or to generate entire human bodies) in ads was unethical or not. He began by explaining the common objections against advertising and by demonstrating how critics might argue that those objections apply to computer-generated images of perfection. In his study he demonstrated an ethically significant difference between computer-generated images of perfection, and the images in the ordinary ads. Finally, he also argued that the computer-generated images of perfection were subject to an ethical objection that was based on aesthetic considerations. He also laid stress on the fact that advertisers were obligated to avoid certain aesthetic results that were produced by computer-generated images of perfection.

Andersson et al. (2004) conducted an empirical study on violent advertisements. Data was collected with the help of a questionnaire, drafted according to the semiotic picture analysis. The questionnaire contained four pictures and four questions were asked on each picture. In all, the questionnaire consisted of twelve questions.

Both the male and the female respondents reacted negatively to the excessive usage of sex and violence. The results indicated a change in advertising trends, whereby heavy usage of violence was not appreciated by the consumers. The findings of this study are inline with the criticism against the traditional advertising communication models and in favor of the Consumer Response Approach.

Arrington (2004) argued that there were four issues to be considered when examining ethics in advertising: autonomous desire (the desire was present before the exposure to the ad), rational desire, free choice (can the customer resist the desire) and control.
Notable, however is that the author sided with the advertisers in the ethical debate. The author cited that the consumers had the choice to view advertisements or not and advertisers did not have the ability to control the desires and actions of consumers.

**Bansal et al. (2004)** conducted a study to assess cigarette companies’ marketing strategies in Mumbai, India.

A two week study was conducted in Mumbai in September 2003, observing, documenting, and collecting cigarette advertising on billboards, storefronts and at point of sale along two major thoroughfares, and performing a content analysis of news, film industry, and women’s magazines and three newspapers.

The study found that cigarette companies had developed sophisticated campaigns targeting men, women and children in different socio-economic groups, many of which circumvented the Indian tobacco advertising ban. The study concluded that it was critical to understand these marketing strategies to minimize the exploitation of loopholes in tobacco control legislation.

**Ciochetto (2004)** conducted a study to explore the profile of contemporary advertising in India in the wider context of trends in international advertising, the recent changes in Indian economy and society, and issues concerning the cultural impact of foreign advertising in India.

Primarily secondary data was analyzed. This analysis was complemented with a case study of outdoor advertising collected in two visits to India in 2000 and 2001.

The study found that increases in advertising expenditure and the promotion of foreign products have an impact on culture, through the undermining of traditional habits and behaviors, the creation of new wants and desires, often for products like soft-drinks that have no nutritional value, and also by strategies that rework cultural values and beliefs. The study also found that the roles of men, women and children were changing traditional places within home and family. The concepts of beauty, identity and personal cleanliness were also undergoing a major change. The overall impact of massive increases of foreign company advertising was the acceleration of India into the culture and ideology of consumerism, the expansion of foreign businesses into India and the export of profits to foreign corporations.
Cranston (2004) in a study examined whether advertisers should probe the human minds as a means of boosting product sales.

Using sophisticated MRI scanners, doctors at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia studied changes in brain activity that occur as people process images. Instead of striving for the laudable goal of understanding mental illness, they sought to determine what advertising images will promote higher sales of soft drinks, food and automobiles. These doctors thus sought the “buy button” in the brain. The study called into question whether the society at large was at a risk of immediate or eventual harm because some people considered the resultant advertising “coercion.” The study further explored whether neuromarketing (as the new technology was called) was a new, more scientific form of consumer interest research or was it just a manipulative, underhand way to sell unneeded products to unsuspecting buyers?

During the study it was pointed out that neuromarketing was another method to try and torque the buyer. However, the author concluded by saying that like other technologies, this too had a positive and a negative side. If used in a moral legitimate way this technology could help the hurting, and this was how it should be used.

Duff (2004) investigated how children approach the advertising they encounter in their lives. The author probed the understanding of what advertising involved and moved further to examine the claim, “young children cannot distinguish readily between advertising and editorial messages, and are unduly susceptible to persuasion as a result.”

The study concluded that children are accustomed to accessing information instantaneously and with little effort. This contributed to their attitude towards advertising – they considered it a resource to be used for their own benefit. They believed that the primary purpose of advertising was to inform.

The implication for the marketers was that if they wanted to be successful, they should advertise in a way that was engaging and spoke directly to the children. The advertisers should avoid spin because children want to be informed and, if the product is good they will act.

Henriksen et al. (2004) conducted a study to find whether cigarette advertising was more prevalent where adolescents shopped frequently. Trained coders counted
cigarette ads, products and other marketing materials in a census of stores that sold tobacco in Tracy, California (n=50). A combination of data from focus groups and in-class surveys of middle school students (n=2125) determined which of the stores, adolescents visited most frequently. Chi-square analysis was the technique used for analyzing the data. The main outcome measures were the amount of the marketing materials and shelf space measured separately for the 3 cigarette brands most popular with adolescent smokers and for other brands combined. The study found that compared to other stores in the same community, stores where adolescents shopped frequently contained almost three times more marketing materials for Marlboro, Camel and Newport, and significantly more shelf space was devoted to these brands.

Lee (2004) conducted a study focusing on the nature of female stereotyping in Singapore’s television industry. The study involved a content analysis of one working week of television commercials, conducted on one of the Singapore’s English-language channels. The coding technique was derived from previous studies and an array of variables were employed to examine how and in what situations were women portrayed in these commercials.

The study depicted that women were depicted in diversified roles – ranging from home making and childcare, to endorsing beauty products and working in offices. The study also pointed out that some degree of patriarchy was still prevalent. The study argued that advertisers should depict men and women in situations of equal partnerships, since now they had to handle the increasing demands imposed by both work and family.

Tamburro et al. (2004) conducted a study to determine the proportion of commercials that depicted violence or other unsafe behavior during major televised sporting events. A list of 20 programs that were most highly rated was obtained. All commercials (1185) that were aired during these programs were reviewed at standard speed for unsafe behavior or violence. Chi-square analyses were used for analysis. The study found that children who watched televised sports viewed a significant amount of violent and unsafe behavior.

Usha (2004) conducted a study to define the role of a woman in television in general and the influence that it exerted on her thinking in particular. For the purpose of
the study, programs were divided into three categories: sitcoms or serials, commercial advertisements and anchor person programs. For the survey, 100 houses from Thiruvananthapuram district were selected and it was ensured that all the viewers interviewed had at least studied up to the X standard.

The study found that on the Malayalam small screen woman had a ubiquitous presence, but her voice was not heard. Though formally educated, she was depicted as a docile and meek person who got little opportunity to form her views leave alone air them. The study concluded that fed on these sitcoms, women viewers of Kerala were in grave danger of being reduced to becoming silent, suffering heroines of the type depicted in these programs.

**Vadehra (2004)** outlined the Indian law relating to advertising to children and explained the deficiencies in the system. The implications of the Cable Act were discussed. Advertisements directed at children, television programs directed at children, advertising in schools etc. were some of the issues discussed. It was concluded that there were few laws which dealt with child related advertising issues in India and television channels flouted the existing vague laws with great impunity. It was also pointed out that advertising to children in India was unregulated for want of a particular legal framework for sponsorship of children’s programs on television.

**Burns et al. (2005)** conducted a study that compared the safety-related content of automobile advertising with government-sponsored crash test evaluations. The study examined all major automakers and their respective divisions and observed the claims made regarding specific models in relation to their individual crash test scores. The comparison facilitated analysis regarding the relationship between the automaker’s stated or implied concern for safety in their advertising, and their actual concerns for safety as evidenced in crash tests.

A total of 561 advertisements were studied in 74 editions of three magazines used for data collection.

Findings suggested that misleading consumers was not beyond the scope of behavior found within the automobile industry. Results from this study led to several issues concerning the advertising practices of automobile manufacturers. The study concluded that an ongoing disjunction between advertised images of automotive safety
and automotive dangers perpetuated the public’s inability to perceive the scope of everyday automotive violence, much less the layers of corporate deviance that underlie it. The study also suggested that in a world of endlessly circulating corporate persuasion, the image of product safety continued to triumph the safety of the product itself and hence there was little motivation for the automakers to resolve the disjunction between the safety of their products and the alleged safety that they advertised.

Chatterji (2005) analyzed how advertisements exploit women. A content analysis of advertisements featuring women in India was done. It was pointed out that in ads only the more extreme stereotypes were presented, which reinforced the already negative feelings many women had about themselves. The exaggerations made in the ads added to the guilt, confusion and shame women were trying to overcome. A lifestyle oppressive to other women was perpetuated through ads. It was also deduced that women models were actually selling a culture, which in its perfection was an unattainable fantasy and led to greater frustration, an already disadvantaged segment.

Sinha (2005) conducted a study to examine the impact of gutka advertisements on smokeless tobacco use. The study design was a survey through anonymous, self-administered questionnaire on a two-stage probability sample proportional to the enrollment size. The sample size was 15,247 (school going students in Sikkim between the ages of 13 and 15). The study variables were tobacco use, gender and exposure to gutka advertisements.

The results indicate that there was no significant difference in current smokeless tobacco and gutka use among boys and girls. Boys and girls were exposed to all advertisement and promotions of gutka alike. The results also indicate that current smokeless tobacco users than never tobacco users were significantly more likely to watch gutka advertisements in all media; to have something with gutka brand names; and to have a positive attitude towards tobacco use.

The study also found that there existed a strong association between exposure to gutka advertisement and current smokeless tobacco use among boys and girls.

Liu et al. (2006) conducted a research to explore the gender differences in Chinese consumers’ responses to sex appeal advertising.
In order to collect the data, experiments were conducted at a University in South China with a total of 157 commerce students (convenient sample). Four advertisements, designed for the same fictional brand but featuring different genders and different levels of sex appeal, were tested. Data analyses were conducted using t-tests and ANOVA.

The findings highlighted that when comparing male and female differences in the responses to the ads, males and females only differed significantly when they were exposed to the ad featuring a male model with low level of sex appeal. No significant differences were found between male and female consumers regarding the other three ads featuring the male model with high level of sex appeal or featuring the female model with low or high level of sex appeal. Further analyses on male and female consumer’s responses to the four ads found that females had significantly different attitudes towards the ads, whereas males did not.

This study was the first empirical study on mainland Chinese consumers’ responses to sex appeal advertising. It provided significant insights into gender differences among Chinese consumers regarding different sex appeal advertising. The findings of this study suggest that international advertisers need to take careful consideration if they use sex appeal in their advertising to the Chinese consumers. Furthermore, they must take into account whether an ad targets a male or female audience.

Maher et al. (2006) conducted a research to investigate the changes in the type of advertised food products and the use of nutritional versus consumer appeals in children’s advertising from 2000 to 2005. The method used was content analysis and the results indicated that food processors and restaurants had not changed their advertising messages to children in response to the multitude of pressures the industry was facing. Specifically, this pre-post longitudinal comparison showed no significant change regarding types of food products advertised and the type of appeals used in the ads directed towards children.

The study implied that it was important to monitor changes in food advertising to children in the future and to ascertain whether and to what extent food companies would be able to change both what they advertise and the appeals they would use to gain the child consumers.
Parekh (2006) studied sexuality and nudity in Indian Soap Operas. 14 soap operas (Tara, Banegi Apni Baat, Kurukshetra, Hasratein, Kyunki Saas Bhi Khabhi Bahu Thi, Lipstick, Love Marriage, Kittie Party, Kkusum, Tumhari Disha, Jab Love Hua, Kumkum, Sindoor, Kaisa Yeh Pyar Hai) were content analyzed for sex and nudity.

The study found that for a long time sensuality or scenes with sexual overtones were covertly expressed on the small screen, even if it was an integral part of the story, however in the new soap operas seductive scenes were incorporated expansively. The study also found that although there were some partial nude scenes, there was not any full nudity in Indian soap operas as of yet. Issues like sex, condoms and sexuality were being openly discussed in Indian soap operas. Indian serials so far have not dealt with burgeoning issues like homosexuality and AIDS.


Data was collected with the help of a nation-wide survey in the year 2004. The sample size was 1142.

The author during the analysis of the data collected, found that advertising promoted materialism, used manipulation to promote products, targeted children and on the whole sent the social value system of the Indian culture down the chute.

Schaffter (2006) analyzed gender issues in Indian advertisements.

The author analyzed 200 ads (60 in detail) over a 12 year period from 1994 to 2005.

The study found that the representation of women in Indian advertisements was not just stereotypical but unethical and offensive too, worked to the detriment of women and perpetuated gender hierarchy. The study also found that the Indian advertising industry offered discriminatory behavior to women and qualities attributed to women were mostly negative. Most of the advertising portraying women perpetuated their secondary role in society and invented fresh circumstances that characterized women as inferior to men. The study also showed how little girls were conditioned to become passive, dependent, narcissistic, subservient homemakers eager to please men when they grow up.
Royo-Vela et al. (2007) conducted a research to analyze the male and female stereotypes in Spanish magazine advertising during the last three decades of the twentieth century in order to determine if they reflected or not the important cultural changes of Spanish society in these years.

A content analysis of 1,033 different advertisements randomly selected was done. To ensure reliability two independent codifiers of opposite gender worked together, one as an analyst and the other as a judge. Three agreement indices were calculated.

The research revealed that the use of male and female portrayals had undergone relevant changes in the last 30 years in accordance with the social evolution of Spain. For both men and women stereotypes persisted but there had been a move from the portrayal of the character in situations considered socially traditional to less traditional scenarios. At the end of the period analyzed, Spanish magazines showed low and decreasing levels of sexism.

Chan and Cai (2009) conducted a study to examine the cultivation effects of television advertising viewing on the perceived affluence in society and the materialistic value orientations among adolescents in urban and rural China. A survey of 646 adolescents aged between 11 and 17 was conducted in 2006. Constructs were measured using established scales. The study found that television advertising viewing demonstrated first and second order cultivation effects among urban as well as rural respondents. It was also found that heavy television advertising viewers were more likely to have a higher perceived affluence than light television advertising viewers. Heavy television advertising viewers were also more materialistic than light television advertising viewers. When television advertising viewing was controlled, urban respondents had a higher perceived affluence, while rural respondents had a higher level of materialism. The study implied that different marketing communication strategies should be adopted for the urban and rural adolescents.

Drumwright and Murphy (2009) conducted a study on the current state of advertising ethics. Industry and academic leaders were interviewed (including interviews with practitioners, interviews with chairs and relevant faculty of leading advertising departments) and their perspectives on the current state of advertising ethics
were sought. Advertising agency web sites and reviewed textbooks on advertising were also analyzed.

The information gathered during the study highlighted significant issues regarding the ethics of advertising. It also found how there were no significant norms regarding deceptive advertising and how it was openly allowed. The study pointed out that this was mainly due to the delegation of ethical decision making by the advertising agencies to the client. It was also pointed out that leading text books on advertising had inadequate literature on advertising. The study concluded that both academia and industry must become more proactive in dealing with ethical problems and setting norms. It also pointed out that norms should be developed which involve ensuring transparency and protecting privacy in new and non traditional media. Emphasis was laid on the fact that the advertising industry should embrace its responsibilities, take more of a leadership role, develop ethical organizational cultures and assume the role of a leader.

Osmonbekov et al. (2009) conducted a study using a sample of 1854 consumers from the United States, China and Japan, to investigate the relationship between materialism and attitudes towards advertising in general. The results suggest that materialistic attitudes towards advertising were moderated by consumer expertise. It was further found that the relationship was stronger when consumer expertise was high, as opposed to low. Strategic implications of this research for practicing managers were also discussed.

Pegoraro et al. (2010) using the NCAA Men’s Basketball tournament as its sample, conducted a study to identify how advertisements contained within both the online and television broadcasts contribute to consumer culture and consumption. Content analysis was used to identify specific tactics related to materialism, maximization, regret, social comparison, and anti-materialism within 144 unique advertisements contained within the broadcasts. Findings include a high prevalence of maximization tactics, a significant correlation between length of ad and the use of materialism tactics and a significant correlation between the use of regret and maximization tactics and fear appeals. It is notable that the use of a spokesperson in an
advertisement showed no relationship with the five tactics and no difference was found for the use of the five tactics and medium.

2.2 Need of the Study

Recent researches have demonstrated with awful clarity the depth of the fallacy, the fallacy of unethical business practices and their catastrophic consequences (Richins, 1991; Pollay, 2000; Roy, 2006). However, what are society’s views of current controversies surrounding these practices? Surprisingly little data exists that can shed light on this important subject. There is thus a need to conduct a research to discover the perceptions of the viewers regarding the ethics of commercials / programs being aired on various channels in India. Also, the social responsibility of the business houses sponsoring these channels / television programs needs to be examined.

Further, it can be said that complaints and concerns about TVCs have been extensive since their advent and the possibility that the society might be negatively influenced by the unethical content of TVCs has aroused concern among the members of the society for quite some time now. Although some substantial research has been done on the negative consequences of TVCs across the world, the behavioral consequences and distortion of values caused by exposure to them is yet an unexplored area. The researcher has not come across much research on this issue in India. This study is, therefore, timely as the society needs to be made aware of the influence of TVCs on the social and moral turnout of the viewers. Also at this juncture, an attempt must be made to evaluate the social implications of inappropriate commercials being aired on television in the light of the moral outrage caused by these recent unethical trends.

Furthermore, a large body of research has investigated the ill-effects of advertising on society (Andersson et al., 2004; Chatterji, 2005; Schaffter, 2006); however there are visible gaps in the literature available on how to prevent these ill effects. Although laws do exist to prevent the society from unethical practices, the skillfulness of those involved in bypassing them, makes them successful in circumventing these laws successfully (Bansal et al., 2004). As a result, the efforts
made to fight the social problems associated with unethical advertising so far have not been able to yield the desired results.

In the light of the above discussion means must be suggested to prevent cultural evasion and curb excesses because of misleading claims and illegality in TVCs.

The ethical principles of marketing as per the code of the American Management Association clearly state that, “the field of marketing can clearly be seen as a game par excellence. This is why one needs to be reminded of a statement of the Rules of the game.” Marketing like any other game has its rules and like any other game, it must also be played according to its rules. These ethical principles establish ethical standards and the first principle acknowledges accountability to society as a whole. Each marketer has a social responsibility, which unfortunately is being ignored in many cases in an attempt to easily attract and create customers.

Research studies have become vehicles for pitching the sponsor’s products. Research sponsored by a particular business house more often than not concludes in a favor of that business house, making a mockery of the entire system. Research has become self-serving and has lost its credibility.

The call of the hour is therefore to conduct a research that can define what marketing integrity is; to define the ethical boundaries of the business houses. The ethical demand placed today is to discern what spaces are available for free choices that the business houses can make and for this there is a need to understand what sets of values or core beliefs might the viewer draw upon when contemplating the ethics of controversial practices in commercials. It must be remembered that “the ethical area is the only area of liberty” and no one has the right to step into the unethical area.

2.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to examine the extent of value degeneration promoted by Indian television channels, which are sponsored by business houses and in turn assess whether or not business houses in India are fulfilling their responsibility towards society at large. The objectives of the study are as follows:
1. To examine the impact of television commercials on the social and moral behavior of viewers.
2. To study the theme content of the programs sponsored by the companies floating the television commercials.
3. To assess the extent of financial stress created through television commercials.
4. To suggest means to prevent cultural evasion caused by unethical business practices.