

Perception of the Young Adults towards the Portrayal of Women in Contemporary Indian Television Advertisements

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The purpose of this article was to examine the perception of the audience regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements and the perception difference among them on the basis of their gender. 125 young adults comprising of 63 males and 62 females were selected randomly as the sample for the study. Primary data was collected through the survey method with the help of structured questionnaire. The study explored that majority of the respondents agreed that women in Indian TV advertisements are mostly depicted as young and beautiful, and rarely shown enjoying equal status with men and as professionals. They were not feeling much uncomfortable towards the sexual portrayal of women in advertisements. The study further revealed that gender has a great influence on the perception of the audience regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements. Female in comparison to male were found to be more critical about the portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements.

Keywords: TV advertisements, portrayal of women, perception, young adult, gender

Advertisement is the most powerful means of social communication. It has the power to control the market by creating varied personal needs, changing approaches, self image and preferences. It is omnipresent and because of its persuasive nature, it can't be ignored. We come across them from the time we tune to the morning weather forecast, until we relax with television or a magazine at the end of the day (Wright & Warner, 1966, p. 4). Advertisers are criticized for injecting certain problems in minds of the people and then provide their solution to them. As advertisement has both positive and negative impact on the society in its various forms, its role in the society is fiercely a debated topic. "It articulates meaning to the words and images, though it depends on how we interpret them" (Asemah, Edegoh & Ojih, 2013).

Gender Representation in Advertisement

Gender Role

Through the ages across the countries men are considered as breadwinners, decision makers, career-focused and independent, whereas women are made responsible for the well being of their families linked in to their roles as loving wife, caring mother and low-

positioned worker, undertaking the bulk of house hold work (Walby, cited in Dominelli, 2007, p.29). This difference between the man and woman generates common gender role stereotypes.

Situations have changed with time. Both Feminist movement and women's liberation movement have a deep impact in changing the role and status of women in the society. The boundaries of the gender division of labor between the productive and reproductive roles are narrowed down as women have started entering in to the formerly male dominated areas of work (Pandya, 2008, p.61). But despite the changes while discussing the perspective of cultural dualism, Whyte and Whyte (cited in Mishra, 1999, p. 9) said that it is very difficult for women to manifest, their autonomous individuality and their feminine destiny at the same time. The conventional thinking still persist -role of men and women are definite as the bread earner and as the home maker respectively.

Advertisements and Gender

Gender representations in advertising reflect "fundamental features of the social structure," such as values, beliefs, or norms (Goffman, 1979, p. 8). Though gender roles are getting refined and narrowed over the years, advertisers often use traditional gender stereotypes in their commercials based on the hypothesis that as people are well acquainted with such type of images, it helps the perspective customers to understand the content of the message without any doubt.

The study conducted by Bardwick and Schumann (1967), on gender role portrayals in television advertisements finds that women (compared to men) appeared more often as home bound and as housewives in television advertisements. This study was followed by several other studies on the same issue. Matlin (1987) explores that women's bodies are used differently from men's bodies in advertisements. Gender representation in advertisements highlights a prominent dichotomy of action vs. appearance or active male vs. passive female, hence exhibits a definite gender display in advertisements. (Shields & Heinecken, 2002, p.46).

Portrayal of Women in Advertisements

Traditionally, the roles of wife and mother have been seen as a woman's destiny and her only career choice. Accordingly advertisements represent the women in the same way, either as ideal housewife or as the object of desire. Women were mostly shown in home settings and for household products and projected as sex objects, as physically beautiful and dependent on men (Bardwick & Schumann, 1967; Venkatesan & Losco, 1975) in TV commercials. With the passage of time, several factors like globalization, growing market economy, increasing participation of women in higher education and their subsequent involvement in labor force, the equal rights amendments led to the transformation not only in role but also in the status of women in the society.

Accordingly the new genre of advertising metamorphosed the image of women. Women started their entry with multiple roles in advertisements. But Zotos and Lysonski (1994) note that though there is a decrease in the representation of women in household roles and in roles of dependency, but there has been an increase in decorative roles and less portrayal of women as professionals, in advertisements. Women's presence in advertisements has no substantial relation to the product and increasingly woman's role is becoming more sexy and alluring. Women are typically portrayed as decorative objects (Plakoyinnaki & Zotos, 2009), in traditional role of a mother/ wife in advertisements which do not represent women's diversity (Rajagopal & Gales, 2002).

Milner and Higgs (2004) explore in Australian television advertisements women are mostly portrayed in a stereotypical way, which are far from the actual experiences of women. Parallel results are also found from the studies on TV advertisements of New Zealand (Furnham & Farragher, 2000), Poland (Furnham & Saar, 2005), Korea (Kim & Lowry, 2005), Bulgaria (Ibroscheva, 2007), Pakistan (Ali & Shahwar, 2011), South Africa (Holtzhausen et al., 2011) and U.S. (Morris & Nichols, 2013).

According to most of the studies, globally women in advertisements are represented in stereotypical roles. Though a number of studies have already been conducted on depiction of women in advertisements most of them are in western context. Das (2000) have found that representation of women in Indian and other Asian nation's advertisements differ from those of the western advertisements because of the cultural values, beliefs and norms, and religions. Asian television advertisements show more gender stereotype (Neto & Pinto, 1998) in comparison to the European advertisements (Furnham & Mak, 1999). Thus it will not be fair to generalize the results. In Indian background the number of the studies on this topic is few and further most of the studies in Indian context have limited scope. Majority of them are targeted towards the Indian print advertisements. Again a very few of them examine the response of the audience about the issue.

Though advertisements are blamed for reinforcing stereotypical norms in the society, however, the flip side is, its main aim is to lure the customer. So they need to know the perception of the audience regarding different segments of advertisements. Perception is a process of acquiring and processing information (Dwivedy, Patnaik, & Sur 2009a). Aruna, Kotwal and Sahni (2008) examine the perception of the adolescence on advertisements as general. Dwivedy et al. (2009a) try to explore perception difference of the younger group on the basis of their gender on magazine advertisements. Sukumar (2014) and Nagi (2013) have worked on the general perception of the audience about the advertisements. Researchers have already proved that (Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia, 1977; Aruna et al., 2008; Dwivedy, et al., 2009; Chisholm, 2014) gender has a moderating effect on the perception of the audience. So the present study hopes to fill this gap in the literature by exploring not only the general perception of the audience regarding the presentation of women in Indian TV ads but also the perception difference among them on the basis of their gender.

Out of the different medium of advertisements, television advertisement has a very powerful impact with wide coverage. According to Wells, Burnett, and Moriarty (2003), in comparison to the other media, television has three key advantages: as its influence on consumer's test and perception is pervasive; it has a wide reach in a cost effective manner; and, it creates a strong impact through the careful blend of verbal and visual components (p. 280). This article mainly focuses on the television advertisements. Because of the unavailability of enough literature regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV ads, literature on the portrayal of women on print ads (Indian context) are also discussed in the study to have a clear picture.

Findings in Indian Context

India has been a traditionally conservative patriarchal society (Hofstede, 1980), where a woman's image has been molded by years of male dominance and female-subservience (Adhikari, 2014). During 1970s women in the advertisements represented what society, especially the men of society hold as the ideal image for a woman, a perfect homemaker, whose role is limited to housewife, dependent on man, with lesser purchasing capacity, and rarely as professional (Gupta, 2012; Yakkaldevi, 2014). She was often portrayed as sex object, without any identity (Gupta, 2012, p.101).

After globalization, though Indians are becoming modernized and embracing the western values, the image of the self-sacrificing husband worshipper Indian women has changed, they still hold on to some of their traditions (Overgaard, 2010). Thus Wolf (2002) claims that, gender equality is seen in India not in individual-centered but in family-centered ways. Being a mere reflection of the society, advertisers are influenced to portray women in the same way; thus fail to depict the new developments that evolve in gender roles at verge of globalization.

Munshi (1998) examines the way Indian housewives are portrayed in Indian television advertisements during 1990s and finds that though the portrayal of women had changed slightly over the years the representation of the Indian woman has not been changed in a substantial way. The result of the study conducted by Das (2000) finds that though over the period the portrayals of men and women have changed, they still are portrayed in stereotypical ways. Although some stereotypical depictions i.e., housewives, concerned with looks, are decreased in the nineties, portrayal of women as sex objects increased.

Dang and Vohra (2005) note that women compared to men appear more often for household products and personal or beauty products and seldom as being employed. Schaffter (2006) analyzed 200 Indian TV advertisements over a 12-year period from 1994 to 2005 and reveals the similar trend as that of Dang and Vohra (2005). She further adds that in India, advertisers often treat women with disdain and portraying them as if they have been created only to attend to man's comforts.

Dwivedy, Patnaik, and Sur (2009b) explore that in contemporary magazine advertisements women are primarily portrayed as concerned with physical attractiveness, housewives and sex objects. Studies conducted by Das (2011), Sukumar (2014) and Shyma and Shivani (2015) reveal that though advertisements portrayed women as independent; they still are portrayed mostly as fashionable, glamorous, decorative and sexual objects, and rarely as career oriented. Yakkaldevi (2014) mentions that the portrayal of women in Indian advertisements seems to have worsened over time and it often fluctuates between the two extremes: the "mother India" and the "glamour girl" image.

The above studies have proved that the portrayal of women in advertising has not changed to reflect the evolving role of women in the society. However, contrary results are also found from the studies (Fathima, 2013; Nagi, 2014; Menon, Pankambekar, & Bhatia, 2015) that in most of the contemporary advertisements women are depicted as confident, dominant and independent. Their role portrayal is becoming healthier over the years.

Objectives

Keeping the above review of the literature in mind, the present study tries to find out the perception of the audience regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements. Sub-objectives that are derived from the primary objective are:

- (i) To find out the general perception of respondents regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV ads, and
- (ii) To find out the perception difference between male and female respondents regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements

Hypothesis

H₀: Gender has no impact on the perception of the audience regarding the portrayal of women in television advertisements

Methodology

The study tried to explore the perception of the audience regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements. One hundred twenty five young adults comprising of sixty-three males and sixty-two females were selected from the students of BITS Pilani, Pilani campus through the random sampling for the study. All the participants were within the age group of 18 to 29 years of age. They comprised of students pursuing their graduation and post-graduation studies (B.E/M.E/MSc/PhD). Youth has been observed as trendsetters, early adopters, literate, more positive, idealistic, and multicultural, and usually care for practical ads that sell a life style instead of just a product (Maciejewski, 2004). The Institute was selected purposively, as it is one of the top ranking private engineering institutes of India (Outlook, 4th July, 2016; India Today, 21st May, 2016). It is purely a residential institute and 90 per cent of its population is from outside Pilani, representing different parts of India, thus comprising a heterogeneous group. (Das & Sharma, 2016). Primary data for the study was collected through the structured questionnaire during September- October, 2016. One hundred seventy questionnaires were distributed in both the girls and boys hostels in every alternative rooms of which 145 questionnaire were returned and 125 were found to be accepted for evaluation.

Responses were recorded through the five point Likert scale (strongly disagree=1 to strongly agree=5). The questionnaire is adopted from the study conducted by Lundstrom and Donald Scigliimpaglia (1977). Construct validity had been checked to ascertain the appropriateness of the questionnaire. The Alpha reliability of the questionnaire was .717, which can be considered as enough for the instrument to be used for the study. According to Hair, Black, Badin, Anderson and Tatham (2007), the value of .60 to .70 is considered as the lower limit of acceptability (p.126). The questionnaire had two parts, the first part comprised of the questions related to demographic profiles of the respondents' and the second part had eighteen items describing the information related to depiction of women in contemporary Indian TV advertisements. All the questions were close ended questions. The face validity of the questionnaire had been checked by four experts, to examine whether questions that are formed are directed towards achieving the objective of the study or not (Kumar, 2005, p.154). Their suggestions were incorporated and some phrases were deleted that may create confusion for the respondents.

Exploratory Factor analysis was used to construct the factors. The determinant of the co-relation matrix was .004 which indicates all the statements were correlated fairly well and the correlation coefficient was fairly large and there was no need to eliminate any questions. The KMO measure was .627 and the Bartlett's test was highly significant ($P < 0.001$). Factor analysis with Varimax Rotation for Eigen values greater than 1 resulted in four factors, i.e. decorative role, freewheeler, family role and working role with the alpha reliability of .776, .847, .682 and .607, respectively.

The communalities of the factors and the factor loadings are given in the Table 1. Together, the four factors explained 51.14 per cent of the total variance. Though the minimally accepted value for factor loadings is $\pm .30$ to $\pm .40$ (Hair, et al., 2007, p. 153), one of the items i.e. "Ads seldom show women in executive position rather show in subordinate position (clerk, PA) in comparison to men (item-5)" with the factor loading .280 was accepted by the study as it was one of the important items of the study.

Table 1. Factor Analysis of the perception of the audience regarding the portrayal of women in advertisements with their factor loadings

Label	Items	Factors with their loadings				Communalities
		Factor:1 Decorative role	Factor:2 Free wheeler	Factor:3 Family role	Factor:4 Working role	
7	Ads often show women as 'sex objects'.	0.799				0.655
18	Ads mostly show women as objects of desires	0.749				0.620
9	Ads show female body and body parts excessively and unnecessarily	0.821				0.690
16	Sometimes I feel uncomfortable to see women depicted as sex object in ads with my family	0.703				0.571
11	Majority of ads depict young and beautiful women	0.450				0.206
17	I would prefer to see more (normal looking / ordinary) women in advertising dressed in common women fashion rather than extremely beautiful ultra thin models in scantily clad dress.	0.486				0.345
6	Ads rarely show women as independent decision maker, contributing positively towards the society		.925			.858
4	Ads rarely show women as dominant over men in ads		.879			.775
2	Ads rarely advocate equal footing of women with men		.725			.648
8	Ads often portray women with their family members and household chores (taking care of the food, health & hygiene of the family)			.541		.402
10	Ads mostly show women inside the home			.776		.619
12	Ads suggest women as the decision makers mainly for the products like cosmetics, health & hygiene and kitchen product			.323		.320
3	Ads seldom suggest women as educated, professionals and career oriented			.412		.221
1	Ads often suggest women as dependent on men			.776		.621
15	Ads seldom portray women to represent the products of high value like automobiles, share market, insurance etc.				.611	.457
14	Ads suggest women mostly as product user rather than authority, even for the cosmetics & kitchen related products				.653	.515

Label	Items	Factors with their loadings				Communalities
		Factor:1 Decorative role	Factor:2 Free wheeler	Factor:3 Family role	Factor:4 Working role	
13	Ads generally show women as sex object for men's products like men's wear, shaving cream, deodorant, perfume, razor etc.				.691	.539
5	Ads seldom show women in executive position rather show in subordinate position (clerk, PA) in comparison to men				.280	.163
Eigen value		3.272	2.604	1.924	1.406	
Variance explained (%)		18.177	14.465	10.689	7.809	
Cronchbach's a(%)		0.776	0.847	0.682	0.607	
Total Variance Explained (%)		51.140				
Total Reliability Cronchbach's a (%)		0.783				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .717						
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 = 648.441$, $df = 153$, $p = 0.000$						

The role portrayal pattern for the study was adapted from the Erving Goffman's theory of gender stereotype and from the various studies (sources are described in Table 2). As there are very few studies on portrayal of women in advertisements in Indian context, studies from outside that have looked into the same are consulted to identify the categories for the present study. Some modifications were made to fit the Indian context.

Table 2. Operational definition of the factors with their sources

Factors	Sources	Operational Definition
Decorative role	Goffman (1979); Das (2000); Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2008); Dwivedy et al. (2009); Trivedi (2014)	It refers to the portrayal of a woman in an advertisement where her main focus is on physical beauty and her body and body parts are used to sell the products
Freewheeler	Das (2000); Dwivedy et al. (2009)	It includes the portrayal of a woman as independent decision maker; who does what she wants to without thinking what the other people are thinking about her. Sometime she has a dominant role portrayal over man. It has the same characteristics as the non-traditional role portrayal of Dwivedi et al. (2009) and Das (2000)
Family role	Goffman (1979); Das (2000, 2010); Dwivedy et al. (2009); Trivedi (2014)	It refers to the depiction of woman as spouse, mother, in relationship role like daughter, daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, sister etc. engaged in any type of domestic activity such as cleaning, serving food, cooking etc.; women as dependent, in need of protection
Working Role	Goffman (1979); Das (2000, 2011); Trivedi (2014), Shyma and Shivani (2015)	It refers to the portrayal of women as professionals like doctors, lawyers, politicians, spots person, or in any other profession, which is considered to be of a professional nature

Result and Analysis

Objective 1: To find out the general perception of respondents regarding the portrayal of women in TV ads (item wise)

To find out the general perception of the respondents item wise mean was calculated. SPSS had been used for various statistical data analysis. The calculated mean value for each item (Table 3) implies that majority of the respondent were agreed to the item no. three and eleven, where as they were partially agreed with the item no. seven, nine, ten, twelve, sixteen, seventeen and eighteen. The data further explores that majority of the respondents partially disagreed with the item no. one, two, four, five, six, eight, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen.

Table 3. Perception of the respondents regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements (item wise)

Sl. No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	Ads often suggest women as dependent on men	2.63	1.32
2	Ads rarely advocate equal footing of women with men	2.56	1.23
3	Ads seldom suggest women as educated, professionals and career oriented	4.02	.756
4	Ads rarely show women as dominant over man	2.95	1.10
5	Ads seldom show women in executive position rather show in subordinate position (clerk, PA) in comparison to men	2.62	1.18
6	Ads rarely show women as independent decision makers; contributing positively towards the society	2.86	1.14
7	Ads often show women as 'sex objects'.	3.13	1.28
8	Ads often portray women with their family members and household chores (taking care of the food, health & hygiene of the family)	2.21	.845
9	Ads show female body and body parts excessively and unnecessarily	3.39	1.18
10	Ads mostly show women inside the home	3.21	1.14
11	Majority ads depict young and beautiful women	4.30	.704
12	Ads suggest women as the decision makers mainly for the products like cosmetics, health & hygiene, kitchen product	3.32	1.20
13	Ads generally show women as sex object for men's products like men's wear, shaving cream, deodorant, perfume, razor etc.	2.18	1.10
14	Ads suggest women mostly as product user rather than authority, even for the cosmetics & kitchen related products	2.40	1.21
15	Ads seldom portray women to represent the products of high value like automobiles, share market, insurance etc.	2.37	1.16
16	Sometimes I feel uncomfortable to see women depicted as sex object in ads with my family	3.16	1.27
17	I would prefer to see more (normal looking / ordinary) women in advertising dressed in common women fashion rather than extremely beautiful ultra thin models in scantily clad dress	3.50	1.16
18	Ads mostly show women as object of desire	3.04	1.26

Objective 2: To find out the differences in perception between the male and female respondents regarding the portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements

H_0 : Gender has no impact on the perception of the audience regarding the portrayal of women in Indian television advertisements.

To find out the perception difference between the male and female respondents an independent sample t-test is used between the gender of the respondents and their perception regarding different roles portrayed by women (decorative role, freewheeler, family role and working role) in Indian TV advertisements (Table 4). Effect size is calculated by measuring Cohen's d to measure the magnitude of the influence of the independent variable gender. According to Cohen (1988) $d = 0.2$: small effect, $d = 0.5$: medium effect and $d = .0.8$: large effect.

Table 4. Impact of gender on the perception regarding the portrayal of women in advertisements (independent t-test)

Variables	t value	df	Sig (P value)	Mean		SD	
				Male	Female	Male	Female
Gender x Decorative role	-3.569	123	.001	19.095	22.016	4.937	4.174
Gender x Freewheeler	-3.851	123	.000	7.285	9.306	2.942	2.922
Gender x Family role	-3.044	123	.003	14.539	16.274	3.4352	2.909
Gender x Working role	10.527	123	.000	7.555	11.596	2.069	2.221

$P \leq .05$

The result of the independent sample t- test (Table 4) indicates a significant difference in score between the perception of male and female respondents regarding different role portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements such as; Decorative role $t(123) = -3.569$, $p = 0.001$, with female perception ($M = 22.016$, $SD = 4.174$) scoring higher than male perception ($M = 19.095$, $SD = 4.937$); Freewheeler, $t(123) = -3.851$, $p = 0.000$, with female perception ($M = 9.306$, $SD = 2.922$) scoring higher than male perception ($M = 7.285$, $SD = 2.942$); Family role, $t(123) = 3.044$, $p = 0.003$, with female perception ($M = 16.274$, $SD = 2.909$) scoring higher than male perception ($M = 14.539$, $SD = 3.4352$); and Working role, $t(123) = -10.527$, $p = 0.000$, female perception ($M = 11.596$, $SD = 2.221$) scoring higher than male perception ($M = 7.555$, $SD = 2.221$). The value of the effect size are 0.638 (medium), 0.689 (medium), 0.545 (medium) and 1.882 (Large) for decorative role, freewheeler, family role and working role respectively. This indicates that the magnitude of the variance created by gender on the perception of the audience regarding the portrayal of women is more in working role and less in family role in comparison to the other role portrayal. Thus the null hypothesis that gender has no influence on the perception of the respondents regarding the portrayal of women in advertisements is rejected.

Discussion

In the present study though most of the respondents agreed that ads mostly show women as young and beautiful and rarely depict them as professionals; at the same time they disagreed that women are rarely portrayed as independent decision maker, seldom enjoying equal status with men and represent the high value products in advertisements. In addition to these, the study finds an interesting fact that the respondents were not feeling that uncomfortable to watch the portrayal of women as sex object in advertisements and they partially preferred the portrayal of normal looking women instead of extremely beautiful model with scantily clad dress in ads. According to the developmental model of Erikson young adults (18-29 years) are more interested towards developing relationships with an intimate partner, or series of partners and in making casual sex than making the

commitments (Hewstone, Fincham & Foster, 2005). Zimmerman and Dahlberg (2008) find the similar trend that the younger generation is less offended by the portrayal of women as sex objects in advertisements in comparison to previous generations. As today's generation is constantly exposed to the sexual images of women, it now becomes very common for them. Younger women consider sexuality as their power (Wolf, 2002), so it is quite obvious that they find these advertisements as culturally acceptable. According to Aurana et al., (2008) adolescent boys and girls have the tendency to identify themselves with the TV characters and are attracted by the fashionable and glamorous images. The study of Das and Sharma (2016) also finds the similar trend that majority of the respondents follow the models in ads as their role model.

Impact of Gender on the Perception of the Respondents

Chisholm (2014) finds not only advertisements depict men and women differently, but men and women also receive and evaluate the information of the advertisements from different perspectives (p. 89). Men respond positively to the male imagery and women respond positively towards women imagery (p. 89). The survey among the respondents in the present study explores the similar result that gender of the respondents has greatly influenced their perception. Females are found to be more critical than males regarding different role portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements.

Decorative Role

The study finds females more than males agreed that women in Indian TV advertisement are mostly portrayed in Decorative role and 64% variance was explained by gender. Similar results are found from the studies conducted by Lundstorm and Sciglimpaglia in USA (1977), Sukumar in India (2013), Daechun in Korea (2013) and Archana and Joshi in India (2015) that women in comparison to men have more critical attitude towards their portrayal as decorative object.

As the biological and psychological need of man and women are different (Grazer & Keesling, 1995); they are attracted more towards the opposite sex, sexual images than to the same sex images (Reichert, Heckler & Jackson, 2001). When men like appeals using sexy woman; women are tensed seeing such image (Reichert & Lambiase, 1999). This may be the reason that in the present study female more than male are found to be more conscious about the representation of women in decorative role in Indian TV advertisements. This finding is consistent with findings of Aruna, et al. (2008) where boys more than girls wanted women to be shown as fashionable and glamorous in TV advertisements. Therefore, sexual portrayal of women in advertisements produce two conflicting result, i.e. attracting man's attention and offending women generally (Taflinger, 1996).

Freewheeler

The survey result reveals that females in comparison to males perceived that women in Indian TV advertisements are rarely portrayed as Freewheeler with independent identity, in dominant /superior position than man or enjoying equal status with man. The study explored 69 per cent of the variance was explained by gender. As the working status of women has been gradually improved in the society, the contemporary women prefer to see the depiction of women in ads as liberated, independent, and confident (Aurna et al., 2008), where as the men in the society have a different perspective, they prefer the portrayal

of women in traditional role (Dwivedy, et al., 2009a). In a patriarchal society like India the power distance is fairly high in comparison to the western countries. Here the authoritative/ dominant role portrayal of women in comparison to men can't be recognized easily (Dwivedy, et al., 2009b).

Family Role

The present study finds females in comparison to males are found to be more critical about the portrayal of women in Family role in Indian TV advertisements. The variance explained by the gender is found to be 54 per cent. Chisholm (2014) notes that men and women because of their cognitive strength, receive, react and perceive the advertising message from different perspective. The studies conducted by Dwivedy et. al. (2009a) and Archana and Joshi (2015) find men in comparison to women prefer mostly the traditional portrayal of women i.e. as mothers, housewives in Indian TV advertisements.

India has a patriarchal society and Indians irrespective of their status and educational qualification; they use to give much importance to their family and want to see the women of their family as the perfect homemaker. Even most of the Indian women still have faith on their old customs and traditions (Hofstede, 1980). The role of mother, wife and sister are the integral part of our society, they can't be changed. Thus the variance explained by gender to this role portrayal is less in comparison to other role portrayals under the study. Advertisers use this traditional gender stereotypes in their commercial with an assumption that they are well known to everybody. Thus it is quite convincing when Munshi (1998) explored that though the Indian women are portrayed as liberated still they are traditional.

Working Role

Female more than male were found to be more conscious about the rare representation of women as professionals or career oriented. The variance created by gender on the perception was large. The earlier studies (Munshi, 1998; Dwivedy et al., 2009b; & Das, 2011) also support the trend that women are rarely portrayed as working in Indian advertisements. Even if they were shown as professionals, again it is rare to see them in executive role or authoritative role. When she is shown as the doctor her patients are her family members (Trivedi, 2014). Goffman (1979) termed it as Function ranking.

In a male dominated society a girl whether to opt for a professional life mostly depend on the decision of the head male member of the family and for a married one the decision of the husband is must. Indian woman is regarded as the true 'Ardhangini' to her husband, who is mostly not encouraged to step out of the house, to take up paid jobs, to assert their independence apart of her husband (Channa, 2007, pp. 37-44). Advertisers are following this pattern only. They don't want to dissatisfy their male consumers in a male dominated society. Thus women in advertisements represent what the society, especially the men of the society, holds as the ideal image for a woman (Aurna, et al., 2008). This may be the reason that in current study majority of female respondents in comparison to male believed that women are rarely depicted in working role in advertisements.

Implication of the Study

Young adults are the future customers. Their perceptions can't be ignored. The result of the study would help the advertising agency to know how the young adults evaluate the depiction

of women in Indian TV advertisements and the perception difference among them on the basis of their gender regarding the same. Secondly in comparison to male, female respondents are found to be more critical about the role depicted by women in Indian TV ads. The independent women of today prefer to see women in advertisements as confident, independent and career focused (Aurna et al., 2008) rather as decorative objects. The stereotypical portrayal of women in ads not only adversely affects the brand image but also has the carryover the effect on buying behavior of the consumers (Ford, Voli & Clark, 2004). In addition now-a-days female consumers emerge as an important market segment with increasing buying power. Therefore, the advertising industries should be careful while depicting women in advertisements, to get the support of the female market segment in India. Thirdly, the respondents partially preferred the portal of normal looking women as models in advertisements, which implies that the younger generations are quite influenced by the exaggerated beautiful models of the advertisements. Studies (Mask & Blanchard, 2011) have proved that the constant exposure to these models foster upward comparison and leads to depression, low confidence and body image disturbances. According to McLuhan the main problem is the message, how we are decoding the media message. Thus the study could also be used as a base for the educators, to develop and implement the media literacy programme at the grass root level, which can help the audience to critically evaluate the media message before accepting them.

Conclusion

The way women are portrayed in advertisements reflects the basic social structure of the society. The result of the study highlighted that in Indian TV advertisements women are mostly depicted as decorative objects and rarely in professional roles. Females in comparison to males were found to have more critical attitude towards the different role portrayal of women in advertisements. The variance (created by gender) was large in perception regarding the portrayal of women in working role; which indicates that majority of the male respondents are not keen to see women as independent. In a patriarchal society like India, men irrespective of their level of education prefer to see the women of their families primarily as ideal homemakers who can be caring mothers, loving wives and adoring sisters, but constantly in need of men's support.

The portrayal of women in advertisements mainly based on the gender role norms of the Indian society. Most of the women still have firm belief on their culture. Their depiction as mother and wives in advertisements can't be avoided as they are the vital part of our tradition; but improper portrayal of women as decorative objects is deplorable as they demean the self respect of the women in the society. But surprisingly the study found majority of the young adults are not feeling that uncomfortable to see women in scantily clad dress in advertisements. As today's generation is raised in a sexualized world and sexual content dominates the media (Zimmerman & Dahlberg, 2008), they consider sexuality as their power (Wolf, 2002). Thus, they have started accepting it as a part of their culture. Women as sex objects in advertisements only attract the immediate attention it would never help to establish long term brand loyalty among the perspective customers. Though the young adults were not feeling much offended for the decorative role portrayal of women, female were found to be more upset than males for the same. Thus the advertisers while designing an advertisement campaign they should keep in mind not only the preference of the diverse target groups but also the frame of mind of the individuals in a country like India where the traditional approach and liberal perception prevail concurrently.

Future research should address the limitations of the present study. However, the study was conducted on relatively small group of students from one age group. The sample size can be increased including respondents from different age groups for the better generalization of the result. Keeping the present study as the base, the future study can be conducted on the impact of the role portrayal of women in advertisements on the perceived body image of women. Besides these, studies in future can also be conducted on the gender role portrayal not only on Indian TV advertisements but also in other medium of advertisements like print, online and billboard to get a whole picture.

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