

WOMEN IN ADVERTISEMENT: COMMERCIALIZATION OF GENDER ROLES.

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Abstract

Indian television attracts consumers of every kind and of every background. TV have impacted the minds of the population beyond our wildest anticipation. Particularly focusing on the gendered nature of TV advertisements, this paper examines the changing nature of media depiction of role played by women in India. Cohort of advertisements are discussed and analysed to portray the way in which housewives are commercialised and an economy runs on such depictions of women. A keen focus had been on the audience's interpretation of advertisements and how the makers of the advertisement try to depict different genders based on class and the urban-rural divide. The findings of this paper suggest that the image of the woman is thus shrouded within these 'standards of decency and propriety'. She is overshadowed by the domestic role society has sketched out for her. For a very long time, women were used as props to sell products, sometimes products they did not even use. This has been changing since the advertising agencies recognized just how many women watched television in India. They moved away from the objectifying male gaze and tried to find the common denominator to address women of India. Advertisements, instead of just showing how hard housework really is, displays it as something that women not only consent to doing willingly but also thoroughly enjoy, especially if they choose to use the product, they are advertising.

Keyword: Home-makers, Commodity, Advertisements, Representation, Identity, Gender Roles

1.INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, media consumption seems to continue to be in an upward trend ever since it was introduced in the market with the advent of television. Specially in India, TV have impacted the minds of the population beyond our wildest anticipation. Ranging from soap operas, music concerts, live shows, sports to advertisements, audiences are engulfed by media presentations. The latest research conducted by the Broadcast Audience Research Council in 2016 suggests that in India over 780 million people watch television, which is about 64 per cent of the entire population. With around 850 channels, Indian television attracts consumers of every kind and of every back ground. With the drop in price of television; now days almost every family owns a television. The affordability factor of electronic goods like TV gives advertisers a strong advantage, especially in a growing market economy of a developing country like India (BARC Report, 2017).

In this paper, I have attempted to outline the growth of advertisement market and its ever-changing themes over time. Particularly focusing on the gendered nature of TV advertisements, this paper discusses and analyses the shifting nature of media depiction of women in India. The selection of advertisements is randomised, without having any particular time-range in focus; rather the objective was to focus on those advertisements which are widely discussed among domestic groups in the households in Indian. Also focusing on the span of time, such advertisements being aired on television. This paper is divided into four sections including introduction and conclusion. The first section brings forth debates drawn from existing literature on the theories related to advertisements, its nature, role and impacts. Further it locates gendered perception and its role depicted in such advertisement in the market driven economic system inspired through advance capitalism.

The second section discusses how Indian advertisements are a category differs and have own ideological stand apart from western models of advertisements. A keen focus had been on the audience's interpretation of advertisements and how the makers of the advertisement try to depict different gendered role based on class and the Urban-Rural divide. The third section is categorised into different themes, where cohort of advertisements are discussed and analysed to portray women specifically focusing on three major roles, namely homemaker, wife and mother. By doing this it would contribute to the debate in which the different role played by women are commercialised and an economy runs on such depictions of women. Last, an elaborate argumentation of the paper is followed up in the conclusion section.

2. TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS IN INDIA

Different cohorts of scholars have defined advertising differently. In the present advanced capitalist state, advertising serves an important role as an ideological state apparatus – reinforcing and justifying the existing social order and framing it as 'common-sensical'. Even the spaces for resistance are defined and limited by advertising agencies, and only done to incorporate even benign forms of dissent into the mainframe of the profit-producing neoliberal machine. The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1994) defines advertising as "the techniques and practices used to bring products, services, opinions, or causes to public notice for the purpose of persuading the public to respond in a certain way toward what is advertised". The word advertising can be traced back to the Latin word "adverto" meaning, to turn to (Varma and Agarwal, 1993). Patel (1995) explains that the chief task of advertising is to turn the attention of its viewers/public towards the commodity or service. Sahu (2003) argues the creative and destructive potential of advertisement in modern day marketing-oriented business world. He suggests if advertisement is used judiciously, it will appeal the audience to bring fortune to the company and blessing to the society altogether. However, if misused or misrepresented, it will cause a havoc in the society. While, according to Barthes' conceptualization, advertising, through its semiotic role of naturalizing history and erasing the political and social origins of hegemonic structures, serves the predominant role of

myth-creation. Of all the media, advertisements represent the structural-functional aspirations of the privileged, and overtly do the job of instilling these aspirations within the unprivileged (Althusser, 1971; Barthes, 1977). Thus, gender becomes an important axis along which advertisements can be structured. In the advertising world, there are more gendered products than non-gendered ones (Stern, Gould and Tewari, 1993), and for good reason, gendered products can be more effectively marketed (Milner and Fodness, 1996). Within the category of gender, women are the prime target of capitalist led profit-oriented market economy with advertisement. Women generally care that they do well in even the smallest act of purchasing and take pride in their ability to select the perfect thing, whether it is cantaloupe or a house. Advertisers who have creatively appealed to the expanded role of contemporary women are likely to have their efforts rewarded.

On the other hand, advertisements also help the consumers to categorize the products, because of which they feel the urge to buy the product if they can relate to the said category (Penaloza, 1994; Fugate and Phillips, 2010). The consumers thus pay attention to are an incredibly powerful medium with which you can express multiple ideas, no matter what products they are selling. They are accessible not just to Indians, but to billions of people across the globe, piercing through cultures and affecting mindsets worldwide, thereby constructing global neoliberal aspirations. Whether you are watching a children's cartoon or a sting operation, adverts are imbued within every program, interrupting every narrative, and creating a set of images that are impossible to ignore. They reiterate and reinforce existing generalizations and subliminally present them as absolute. Advertising then becomes a source to understand the world (Goldman, 1992). Added to this, Kapur (2003) in her book 'Television Advertising and Consumer Response' writes that TV acts as an important agent of secondary socialization among the family members. TV is an integral part of Indian family and even considered as a family member. Therefore, TV has a greatest impact in children's socialization and thus children become the most attentive audience of TV advertisement and also respond to it irrespective of their choice and pattern of consumption. Advertisements then are coded to reach and be understood by the

largest number of people possible. They appeal to identity in order to appear to be relatable, so that the viewer is convinced that the product is truly meant for her or for him. It does not aim at imposing false consciousness, or in changing attitudes but in the unconscious categories through which conditions are represented and experienced (Curran, 1982) gendered cues in the advertisements, thereby helping the neoliberal world to materialize gender (Avery, 2012).

Similarly, O' Guinn *et al.* (1998) argued that people are the most noticeable audience advertisement projected in mass media whether they consume it or not but it does not leave free of its effect in their mind and perception. The advertisement makers consider the peoples' perception, their need, consumption pattern and purchasing capacity of different class. Keeping this in their frame, advertisement industry picturises their product into the consciousness of consumers (Arens and Bovee, 1994). Admaker Prahlad Kakar says, "Celebrities are instant attention grabbers. The television functions on a consumerist approach. one practically forgets what one sees on TV in three days. So, in order to have a good impact, well known figures are brought in" (Times of India, 6th Oct., 2006). While, Admaker Praseon Joshi explains, "Many a times celebrities are used as Crutches. And there was a period when that fundamental worked. But not anymore. The consumer has become smart due to the media exposure. He/she now understands what 'endorsements' & 'brand ambassadors' stand for. The solution according to Joshi is to use them as just actors, make them an interesting part of the concept. But despite everything, the fact remains that a few celebrities are featured in almost 70% of ads." (Times of India, 6th Oct., 2006). Dhote (2009) writes that television channel uses the audience's emotion in their advertisement strategy. She highlighted that reality shows in television channels use the voting and SMS technique to draw the attention of people. By participating in voting and SMS response in various reality shows, people become attached to the shows. Through this process, TV channels thrive their business. She cited an example that the in association with KBC, the Airtel telecom industry had said to be generated around three cores calls and SMS which flourished their business.

3. WOMEN IN INDIAN ADVERTISEMENT

Indian advertisements' relation to gender is specific to the Indian context and does not represent the worldwide trends. Indian adverts objectified women less than their Western counterparts (Jha, Dang and Vohra, 2005), which can be explained through the general trend of feminism in India being constructed around the role of the woman in familial settings rather than individualist ones (Munshi, 1998). The Advertising Standard Council of India adopted the Code for Self-Regulation in Advertising, of which a clause in Chapter II states, advertisements should not contain elements of indecency, vulgarity, specially in cases of women's identity, or nothing repulsive in the light of generally prevailing standards of decency and propriety, which may cause grave and widespread offence.

The image of the woman is thus shrouded within these 'standards of decency and propriety'. She is overshadowed by the domestic role society has sketched out for her. Literature suggests that women are portrayed less often as authority figures or 'experts' but rather users and consumers, less often as voiceovers or prominent protagonists, more often in homely private settings, more often in relationship roles and less often as clearly employed (Das, 2010; Jha, Dang and Vohra, 2005; Furnham and Bitar, 1993; Kim and Lowry, 2005; Furnham *et al.*, 2000; Neto and Pinto, 1998). Goffman (1979) had provided an interesting analysis on the representation of gender role and its stereotypical presentation in advertisement. It is very common phenomena in our society that advertisements are mostly represents gender role through stereotypical presentation which is a global phenomenon and considered it as normal reality.

The advertisements have depicted women's life surrounding in the home, mainly looking after the child and family members. Further, the image of women in these advertisements portrays as beauty seeker who always focus on beautification, glamour, and cosmetic. It added that women are impulsive shoppers who are lacking capacity to take rational decisions and seek for care and support. Goffman (1979) has classified the depiction of women into six categories: 1. Relative Size - Women are shown as smaller as or lower than men. 2. Feminine Touch - Women are shown caressing objects

or touching themselves. 3. Function Ranking - Women are shown in occupational positions subordinate to men. 4. Family Scenes - Women are portrayed as mothers and caretakers. 5. Ritualization of Subordination - Women are shown in childish poses. 6. Licensed Withdrawal - Women are shown as distracted or not involved in their surroundings. As mentioned above, in the following sections I have discussed the trends of depicting womanhood in the Indian framework of advertisements.

3.1. Women as Homemaker

One common trend to depict the woman is within the confines of her home. When it comes to advertisements, according to Das (2000) she is more frequently depicted in the private sphere than the public sphere. One common image is of her occupying her time in the upkeep of her home, frustrated that she cannot battle the environment as effectively, until the product that is being advertised comes to her rescue. She is seen as an ignorant damsel in distress, waiting for her Prince Charming to bring a magical product back home. So how women images and gender role has been depicted in TV advertisements in India has been discussed below by taking selected advertisements in India.

Milton Tiffin box

The advertisement 'Milton Tiffin box' is one of the famous television advertisements which depicts women role as home makers and aims to inculcate the traditional gender role in women. Thus, to narrate, the advertisement shows that:

"Theek dedh baje entry hogi, bina awaazkiye. Bag sofe pe jayega, chaabi counter pe. Zor ki bhook lagi hogi, par mujhe nahi uthayega. Sabzi garam karne rakhi jayegi...microwave awaaz karne ke pehle band kardiya jayega. Sabzi toh garam hogayi, par itniraat garam roti...? Isiliye Milton ka naya casserole, yeh roti ko gphantontak garam rakhtahai. Aur jo apne biwi ki neend ke baare mein itna soche, uski garam roti ke baare mein sochna toh banta hai na!"¹

¹ <https://youtu.be/NX7XX3DQmOM>

The above advertisement seeks the attention of wider audience both men and women in specific and family members in general. The story is about a husband who tip-toes into his house so that he doesn't disturb his sleeping wife. The wife knowing how thoughtful her husband is, reciprocates with her intuitive self. Even in the middle of the night, she ensures that he not only enjoys hot saabzi, but also hot and crisp rotis. With a little help from Milton's Crisp Casserole. As gender is a performative activity on a cultural stage, advertisements code gender in culturally specific ways, or rather through the lens of what the dominant agents believe to be culturally specific (Butler, 1990). In this context, it is observed that the differences between adverts from different countries in their approaches towards coding gender. Numerous research has addressed that how women are objectified and sexualised, especially in Western adverts. In India, however, the story is slightly different. For a very long time, women were used as props to sell products, sometimes products they did not even use. This has been changing since the advertising agencies recognized just how many women watched television in India. They moved away from the objectifying male gaze and tried to find the common denominator to address women of India. Invariably, the image what was chosen was of the Indian, mostly urbane, Hindu, upper-caste and upper-class woman who is constantly preoccupied by the worries of her household (Gupta and Jain, 1998; Chakravarti, 1998).

Wheel Detergent Powder

Another advertisement "Wheel Detergent Powder" depict women role as homemaker with specific gendered role of women to wash the clothes of family members and it's her responsibility to make the cloth clean. This advertisement goes like this:

"It starts with a famous Bollywood star actor Salman Khan, a rickshaw driver, turns up in a bright blue shirt. The other rickshaw drivers tell him that by the end of the day his shirt will be ruined, and it is so. However, Khan seems unperturbed as he says that his is a 'star' and her cleaning is 'dumdaar', buying her the new Wheel detergent."²

² https://youtu.be/o_QCtzeCUe4

This advertisement wheel detergent powder depicts one of the most favourite Bollywood star Salman Khan in order draw the attention of people regarding the gender role. It shows that washing clothes of family member is a most gendered role in the Indian households. This duty is vested to women and women have to internalised this role with expertise. This advertisement shows that bring wheel detergent powder at home would help the women to wash the clothes which satisfies her gendered role.

Milkmaid

Milkmaid is another most talked advertisement in Indian households which depicts the gendered role of women. This advertisement depicts that:

A newly-wed couple is seen in bed. The wife, sheepishly asks if he wants a cup of chai at 7 in the morning. The husband, reading his book, just grunts his acknowledgment. She puts the alarm and falls asleep. Next morning, she realizes that she has overslept, and loudly berates herself. The husband walks into the room with a tray of chai. She looks sheepish again, until he laughs and sets the tray.

To draw analysis on this advertisement, it can be argued that many advertisements propagate the idea that technology can lessen the burden imposed by gender on women. It nevertheless, usually uncritically assumes that it is the women who are the natural homemakers. By directly relating the quality of work done to the worth of the woman herself, her womanhood becomes encapsulated in how effectively and happily she maintains the household. Men, on the other hand, only need to accomplish the minimum to have the appearance of metrosexual and caring personality, as that of the role played by Salman Khan (Chaudhari, 2001; Roy, 1998; Munshi, 1998). Akin to this, Gramsci suggests, through small doses of oppositional ideology, the dominant class subdues protest as well as gains consent from the oppressed. If the man does any chores, even if it is as basic as not waking the wife up in the middle of the night to make him rotis, it is hailed as a great accomplishment. Though the Milkmaid advertisement has the husband actually doing a chore

rather than just being the receiver of women's service, this subversive act is undervalued by how sheepishly the wife accepts his chai. He is portrayed as a thoughtful and kind husband for undertaking this great effort in the stead of his wife (Gramsci, 1979). Further, when men doing simple chores is considered as something that should be celebrated, on the other hand, for women, the chores' intensity is underplayed. Advertisements, instead of just showing how hard housework really is, displays it as something that women not only consent to doing willingly but also thoroughly enjoy, especially if they choose to use the product, they are advertising. Housework, when women do it, is almost like a hobby, easy and fun (Munshi, 1998; Chakravarti, 2000; Roy, 1998).

Surf Excel

In the category of gendered role, the advertisement 'Surf Excel' is another addition which depict how women are devoted to domestic works with specific focus on keeping the clothes of family member clean. This advertisement thus shows that:

The son comes back from polishing his grandfather's shoes, thoroughly dirty. The grandfather coos over his grandson, while the grandmother sympathetically worries about how much effort the mother will have to do to clean his clothes. The modern and urbane daughter-in-law laughs off the older woman's worries, saying that cleaning clothes has never been easier with the new Surf Excel Easy Wash, claiming that now she has 'ten hands.'³

This advertisement shows that in addition to naturalizing housework, it is also glamorized, as if it is the grand project of all women. Homemaking becomes a glossy activity, equipped with scientific details about how effective a certain product can be secure the health and well-being of her household. It makes housework seem almost business-like, complete with cost-benefit analysis of different choices between household products and services. When once upon a time, the Indian woman was considered to be an ignorant consumer, she is now encouraged to make informed

³ <https://youtu.be/ViQ9gDAaY6s>

choices to better liberate herself from the drudgery of housework (Munshi, 1998).

Aqua guard RO Water purifier

The advertisement Industry mostly use famous celebrities to project their product in order to get the targeted audience. For this, they mostly use the gendered role as significant content to sell their product. This act is not limited to making profit rather this further act as a medium to train women and regeneration to internalisation, socialise the socially constructed role of women. The advertisement "Aqua guard RO Water purifier" is one of the important advertisements which beautifully play the gendered role of women. This advertisement depicts that:

Madhuri Dixit worrying about her son, but then being relieved as she learns of the new technology the water purifier is equipped with. She takes care of her soon by feeding her aqua guard treated water, which causes all the difference in his day-to-day performance. The motherly voiceover claims, 'farak dikhta hai'...⁴

In the field of household products, female voiceovers are not as uncommon. Unlike the Harpic floor cleaner ads, Aqua guard RO water purifiers has both a male and a female 'expert'. Some argue that this is still ultimately articulated as a private concern of the woman – she going out of her way to 'protect' her family and its wellbeing (Das, 2000). Do these gendered technologies really emancipate women from housework, or does it further perpetuate the myth that only women are concerned with housework? Munshi (1998) suggests that this discourse gives us a glimpse into what Indian modernity is visualized to be. The woman, still coded as traditional and chained within domesticity, is exploring consumerist means to achieve modernity, not to challenge but to uphold patriarchal hierarchies and 'values' in a familial setting. She is still strictly coded inside the framework of the private sphere, allowing her the agency to have fun with modern gadgets and products but never enough agency to break the binary altogether. She is seen modern when she uses new products, and this image is counteracted with drab

traditionalism, usually depicted through an older woman (Munshi, 1998; Chakravarti, 2000; Roy, 1998)

3.2. Women as Wife

The term Housewives have undergone knife and been transformed into Home-maker. With such a transition in etymology of the term, the meaning and nature of home makers have also undergone a huge transition in certain spaces. Largely the urban spaces comprising of nuclear families with different lifestyles from its predecessors and high level of aspiration, the decision-making powers within domestic chores and well-being of the children are more or less vested upon the home makers. Thus, advertisement world chooses the home-makers as its target audience and frames advertisements that depicts their problems and the advertised products as the solution to their problems. However, the role of wife plays distinct role in society. Women as a wife and as a homemaker are expected to play sets role which is desired by the society. A good wife has to adopt certain behaviours, attributes, roles and characteristics, physically, psychosocially and emotionally. Selected advertisements has been discussed in the following section in order to bring forth the notion and perception of wife depicted in Indian advertisement.

Wagh Bakri Chai

'Mujhe aaj bhi who din acche se yaad hai jab aap mujhe dekhne Bareilly aaye the. Mujhe abhitaak tajjub hota hai ki mere saare hi-fi cousins mein se, aapne mere jaise tuti-futi angrezi bolnewali ladki ko kaise pasand kiya. Aapko yaad hai, aapne mazzak mazzak mein ek baar kehdiya tha, "Madam, mere saath bike par baithnahaitoh weight lose karnapadega". Us din kebaad, shaaditak, maiharroz Ganganagar bridge pe chhechakkarlagatithi. Aisikaeesaaribaateinaapkobatanachahtithi, par shaadikebaadaapkowaqt hi kahaanthasunne ka. Honeymoon kedusre hi din patachala ki chai kebinaaapki din ki shuruwat hi nahihoti. Us din chai banana hi nahi, aapko company dene keliye chai peenabhiseekhlia. Us din kepehle chai ka ek ghoonthbhimainekabhinahipiyatha... Din bha din mujhemehsoos hone lagahai ki chai ki tarah humare

⁴ <https://youtu.be/gNa2DwR6UFc>

rishte ki garmaahat bhi kam hoti jaarahi hai. Mai jaarahi hu' ⁵

She isn't dismissed as unimportant. On the contrary, her role as a homemaker is valorised, as Betty Friedan notes, while any sort of extreme deviation is looked down upon. Her image is appropriated and naturalized - she becomes the 'soul' of the household, an inseparable part, holding the fort with her new Indian modernity to ensure that it remains a safe leisurely heaven for the man (Friedan, 1958; Roy, 1998). Munshi's extensive research proves that women are more often portrayed in relationship roles than men. One of the most common relationships that advertisements seem to be enamoured by is that of husband and wife. Because India as a country hold marriage and kinship ties in a high regard, one of the most common trends of advertising is posing the exchange-value of commodities as being capable of solving an entire range of marital troubles – even such as adultery and domestic violence (Chakravarti, 2000).

Videocon Air Conditioner:

Two women are sitting in a café with a man in the middle. One asks the other about her life. She says nonchalantly that she is having an affair with her friend's husband. The husband, between them, looks scared and his position seemed jeopardised. The wife, however, easily moves past this new information and continues chatting. The final frame is of Videocon air conditioner, claiming that it can 'keep the brain chilled'. ⁶

The ad claims, women lose their temper in cases of extra marital affair, while men can hold on to their temper even when caught red handed. But, Thanks to the air conditioner, that makes even women stay cool no matter what happens - even if she finds out her spouse is having an affair with her best friend, for example. Almost without any grounds for debate, it seems like men has the capacity and audacity to have affair out of marriage. This practice is mostly acceptable phenomena in case of men and even unquestionable. But in case of women, specially married women, the risk of ostracization, humiliation, domestic violence and

segregation remains the most immediate outcomes. She may lose her dignity, status, position and security in the house and society. The family, community, kinship groups are questioned and defamed when a married women entre in a relationship outside of her marriage and in many cases her family members too bear the consequence which is not same in case of men who entre in a relationship outside his marriage.

Cello Chairs:

A man is watching cricket on TV. His wife comes and changes the channel. He changes back. She turns the TV off and huffs off in anger. He stands up, with his palms raised. He moves towards the TV instead but doesn't hit it. He goes to the fish tank and thinks better off it. Instead, he hurls a plastic chair on the floor and throws it around. The male voiceover encourages him to pour his anger onto to the chair because it won't break. A wife is shown yelling at her husband, as he is about to relax and play video games. He tries to appease her but she is angry that he hasn't bought groceries, and a dramatic battle ensues between the two. The husband then orders groceries through the Peppertap app on his phone, without leaving the couch. Max Stores, declaring its season sale, shows a husband getting caught in a lie by his wife, and having to buy his wife new clothes to appease her. The advert ends with her smiling, the caption reading 'Damage Control'. ⁷

Very often the woman is portrayed as someone who is nagging the husband into doing something that he does not want to do – whether it is changing channels on the TV or simply asking him to buy groceries. She is visualized as the villain in these cases, her frustration unjustified and incomprehensible. On the other hand, if in the advert, even if a woman is mad at her husband for a valid reason, it ends with him reconciling by buying her the product or taking advantage of a service. Thus, woman needs a product to forgive her husband, while a man needs a product to stop the nagging and irritating wife from interfering in his life. Woman's anger, justifiable or not, is seen as something that is intellectually insubstantial, and is materialized as the product, consequently both trivializing her and objectifying her. She always forgives, making her love

⁵ <https://youtu.be/YUhbq8FK0VQ>

⁶ <https://youtu.be/1uiTK1X5cpA>

⁷ <https://youtu.be/IHIy-TnyImU>

for her husband seem sacred and incorruptible, glorifying her role as the virtuous wife (Gupta and Jain, 1998; Chakravarti, 2000; Roy, 1998).

King's refined oil

A husband comes home late to see a note that says that his wife has left him. His mother comes into the picture stating that she was angry when she left. Nevertheless, he finds notes everywhere in the house, telling him where the food is, and where the plates are. Another note tells him that she has bought his ticket as well. He finds her with their son in a theatre. She doesn't look at him as he sits down. But then smiles and their arms touch. The caption says, only King's refined oil, for my king.⁸

Young women are very often portrayed as having frivolous fun, staying out late, a constant worry for mothers and a constant source of gossip for Indian aunties. Their freedom is starkly and squarely contradicted with that of the mother image, thereby compartmentalizing the two narratives, leaving the image of the housewife/ mother untainted (Rajan, 1993; Roy, 1998).

Tanishq:

A woman is seen in a car with her parents. The father is trying to show her an image of a prospective husband and exclaims that the boy has settled in America! The woman refuses to look at him. The mother, sitting at the back of the car, looks on knowingly, and asks the father to stop the car outside a jewellery showroom. The woman with her mother is seen having fun trying on jewellery, but when the attendant asks when the wedding is going to be, the mother asks her to keep it all back as her daughter does not wish to get married. The daughter looks pained removing all the jewellery. Back in the car, she asks her father to show her the boy's image. The mother smirks and sends her husband a text, stating that it has been 25 years and he still hasn't understood a woman's heart.

There are a whole range of products that advertising agencies believe a woman's love can be bought by, but the most egregious examples are the jewellery adverts. It is a very common for jewellery advertisements to not

only show how a woman's 'best friend' is a shiny rock but also that it symbolizes the institution of marriage itself. 'Jo apne roshni se zindagi ko zindagi banaye. Ek heera aapke heere ke liye', claims one advert. According to these adverts, there can be no marital problem big enough that cannot be mediated through jewellery, there is no greater way to show your love for your wife except jewellery, there can be no woman who can resist the allure of jewellery. Sometimes, as in the following advert, jewellery is enough reason to marry an unnamed and unseen man, reinforcing the image of women as being gold-diggers. However, as it has been mentioned before, the trend cannot be seen adverts of household products. Here, it is assumed that the target audience is women, the natural caretakers of the house, who want to buy their products and want to save money. In these cases, women are the ones who are trying to manage the nitty-gritties of the household finances, even if it means saving 5% off of a detergent soap. Nonetheless, it is never just this reason to justify the purchase of the product. It is again linked to her husband, her family, and her own worth in the household. Even if she is saving her money, the focus is that her husband's reputation is maintained and her self-esteem is thus regained (Chakravarti, 2000).

Cyclone Washing Machine:

A boss congratulates his employee on getting married but asks him why he is wearing a sweater in this weather. When the employee comes back home, his parents ask him the same. We see his wife looking sheepish in the background. In privacy, he takes off the sweater to reveal a stained shirt underneath. He laughingly asks his wife that the next time she stains his shirt to not do so on a very visible spot on the shirt. Fortune Vivo, Diabetes care oil: We see a woman cooking with her back to the camera, and a middle-aged man wearing shorts and holding a tennis racket next to her. He claims that he has come from playing tennis because he has made a deal with his wife. She turns, smiling, saying that the deal states that she will only cook his favourite food as long as he exercises.

The woman is then, the provider of services, while the man is the consumer. Many adverts show how a wife constantly worries about her husband's health. In some

⁸ <https://youtu.be/5ETSzfYJl6o>

of such adverts, the image of the nagging wife is repeated, while the husband is seen frustrated that he cannot indulge in his favourite gastronomical vices. The wife then wins back the love of her husband by buying a healthier option that tastes just as good, thereby making her man-child happy again (Gupta and Jain, 1998). An irritating presence, a frivolous shopaholic, a greedy gold-digger, a constant worrier, and yet an innately caring wife who never doubts her husband and never leaves his side – most Indian advertisements constitute the woman as the marginalized other, even when the point of view is of that of a woman. John B. Thompson, with his notion of mediated quasi-interactionism, views media as an effective way of renewing and maintaining our identities and values. What themes are eventually included is a representation of the current societal values which, through the media product, are re-embedded back into the locales and adapted to the material and cultural conditions of reception (Thompson, 1994).

3.3. Women as Mother

Mothering and motherhood are inseparable part of women life. To be a mother is most desired for women and society which must be full filled in whatever condition. Biological motherhood is the essence of women life in Indian society. The status, identity, position and security of a women in the family and society is determined by their biological reproduction. Therefore, becoming mother is most required and desired for women in Indian society which all women strive to achieve it. Further, mothering is not limited to biological reproduction, it includes various traits to be a mother such as caring, loving, emotional, family oriented, sacrifice, religious, good cook etc. The following section discussed how the role of mother has been portrayed in advertisement.

Maggi Noodles

Maggi Dumdaar: A mother is in awe of the new maggi. The kid, playing a video game, states uninterestingly that it now has added proteins and vitamins, along with added vegetables. The mother, to berate her son for not being interested enough states that if there are vegetables in it already then, he doesn't need a mother, and walks off. The

son calls out after her saying, 'But then who will make the maggi?'

If there is one image of the woman that is valorised the most is that of the mother. Invoking the traditional ideals of Indian motherhood is the currency with which many health, hygiene, nutrition, cleaning, and other household products are marketed. But the new Indian woman is not just a mother. There is a duality between her motherhood and her own personality. She is learning new things, exploring new ideas, becoming more than just her ideal image (Munshi, 1998). She is also no longer a 'boring' mother. She is a fun mother, who clicks her tongue in jovial distaste when her son demands her to cook her a 'fun' meal. There are two points to note here. One, that her fun-ness emerges from her being not traditional, but modern. She resorts to packaged food, something that the child clearly enjoys, but proclaims its health benefits as well. Second, the fact that most adverts have a clear delineation between a mother's relationship with her son and her relationship with her daughter. An increase can be seen in the imagery of the nuclear family in Indian adverts – a symbol of urban modernity. This image, if it includes a single child, is usually a son. The mother is shown fussing over him, insecure about how well he does in school as well as in sports. The ideal son is seen as an 'all-rounder', strong, intelligent, energetic and healthy, and the ideal mother is the consumer of products that claim they can make him so (Munshi, 1998; Roy, 1998; Chakravarti, 2000).

Horlicks Health Drink

A Horlicks advert, we see Rohan Basu becoming the student of the year. He is smart, good at sports and is talented in every field. Every teacher claim that Rohan Basu is successful only because of him/ her. Even the father makes his claim. The mother looks at her son from a distance, smiling, knowing that the success of her son can only be attributed to her and her choice of feeding him Horlicks.

Her relationship with the daughter seems more concerned with maintaining her beauty, the health of her hair and her body and to incorporate her in the realms of domesticity. While soaps marketed to erase body odour usually have boys in their advertisements,

soaps marketed to enhance beauty have girls instead. Daughters are seen caring for their mothers in adverts like those of Zandu balms and are seen depending on them for haircare. As Chodorow states, the daughter learns from the mother what it is like to be womanlike, so a lot of the narratives around mothers and daughters in Indian adverts portray the socialization process of young women (Munshi,1998; Roy, 1998; Chakravarti, 2000).

Rajnigandha Ad:

Rajnigandha created this ad as a Mother's Day campaign: A fussy mother is nagging her two young children, one boy and a girl, and the husband is seen in the background. An older teenage girl is seen leaving the house late, and the mother nags her as well. The daughter rebukes her, telling her to leave them alone. The mother seems to leave for a couple of days. The responsibility of taking care of the house, uncritically, falls on the shoulders of the older daughter. The father only comes late at night and is not seen doing anything. The younger brother notices that their elder sister starts behaving exactly like their mother and yells at her to not 'mother him'. The father comes back one day and the children call for their mother. The father then smiles and asks them to turn around, as it is apparent that the only thing, he does of value in the advert is to bring the mother back into the household.

Erving Goffman, in his dramaturgical theory of interactionism, notes the important role media characters plays in representing and amplifying social norms and conventions. Gender display in media reproduces the conventionalized images of interaction rituals in social life. The stereotypes presented themselves are not the only significant technique, the importance lies in the mediated construction of conventional social situations, normalizing them and opening them to imitation. This is what Goffman calls 'hyper- ritualisation' (Goffman, 1979). One essential framework of interaction when it comes to gender in adverts is the clear demarcation between public and private. Married women are more than often relegated to the private sphere, as noted in the various examples presented, while men occupy the public. Post-1990s, nonetheless, there was a significant change in the representations.

Scooty Motor Vehicle Ad:

"Where are you going?" asks the mother. Priyanka Chopra groans, "Going out with friends". Female neighbours also ask her what her plans are and she says "Masti" and giggles. She sits on her scooty and rides away, claiming, 'Why should boys have all the fun?'

This difference only makes the traditional mother's domesticity much more prominent. Yes, she is modern now. She is fun and learning new things. She has friendly banter with her children. However, she is still the one worrying about the house, about germs, about her child's failures, about the family's health. She is the one willing to make sacrifices, as a Bournvita ad suggests, 'Jab tum giroge toh mai bhi girungi'. Why aren't the fathers seen equally worried?

Rent Mojo Ad:

A faceless cleaning lady is seen washing clothes in an unmarried man's house. He seems young and has a friend over. They both watch her, judgmentally, as she beats his clothes on the floor. The friend asks him to buy a washing machine to replace her.

This reflects the greater urban trend of traditional tasks being outsourced and Macdonaldized, while the woman's contribution is dehumanized. On the other hand, women, even when they are portrayed as employed, are still seen as preoccupied with domestic and personal matters which usually hinder her ability to focus or succeed at her workplace. Thus, at once, woman working at home is conjured up as being expendable, while woman working outside home appears to be inefficient (Datta, 2005). Research suggests that post-liberalisation, advertisements provided India with models of identity, by the 'recasting of gender images' of both men and women (Chaudhari, 2001). 'Modern' men were seen as more metrosexual, taking up feminine qualities with gusto. However, when it comes down to the portrayal of these metrosexual, usually upper-caste and upper-class, men in domestic chores, they are conveyed as being agential and in control, very often using gadgetry and services to replace women's work (Datta, 2005).

4.CONCLUSION

Consumerism is a *technology of the self*, then: through purchasing particular products, the advertisements tell us, we can become like the liberated, aspiration beings seen in the advertisements. Consumerism promises women self-transformation and appears to validate women's choices. Yet, even as subjects, women have faced an impossible imperative 'to be ourselves' through 'doing ourselves' mediated by 'doing' make-up (making yourself up), fashion (fashioning yourself), dieting and exercise (re-forming yourself). In an article titled 'Consumerism and "compulsory individuality', Cronin (2000) argues that the discourses of advertising emphasise *choice* and the power of the individual to transform themselves – through the purchase of certain products. These choices are seen as expressions of our individual identities. She warns that these regimes can never make women truly individual; indeed, as more and more messages tell us to 'just be yourself' or 'express yourself', this 'compulsory individuality' takes women further and further away from truly being 'an individual' (Cronin, 2000). These 'technologies of the self' become a technique for discipline, which Foucault calls the panopticism, making certain ideas the 'truth' or as the 'good', while deliberately excluding others. It is a system of internalized surveillance, of biopower, wherein the individual unconsciously determines what is the ideal image they want to aspire towards. Advertisements are run for the sole purpose to create the contingency for biopower (Foucault, 1995). Nevertheless, there are advertisements in which we see a progressive outlook, a subtle subversion of the dominant narratives.

In one Amazon ad, we see a woman gifting a man to cheer him up. In a Ziggy ad, we see a woman buy medicines for her former mother-in-law, even after divorcing her husband. In fact, there are several adverts that are no longer dependent on pitting the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law, such as the Dairy Milk advert that shows the two dancing together joyfully. In an advert by Amazon, a son, apparently living somewhere outside India, sends a package to his mother. Lo and behold, it has an expensive camera in it. He writes to her, saying that he knows that before her mother's wedding, she was interested in photography. He says that he now wants to give her the choice of becoming more than just a mother. One Myntira advert

was brave enough to show a lesbian couple on screen, nervous to ask for their parents' approval.

New adverts constantly bring new things to the table. But just how subversive these get is still a matter of debate. Some dismiss these acts of resistance as merely subjugating dissent to material concerns, and only gaining superficial progress (Chakravarti, 2000; Roy, 1998). But in reality, all advertisements remain strongly urbane, Hindu, upper-class and upper-castes. The rural is made into mere colourful ethnic background, against which the rich urban usually male protagonist ushers in 'development'. Advertisements become a blueprint for what modernity means – the rural, the lower-caste, the lower-class, and even the ones with darker skin, are decidedly unmodern. Only upper-caste, fair-skinned, rich Hindu women are permitted to be images of modernity - a highly restrictive deeply patriarchal versions of modernity. It is no wonder then, that the Hindu right wing finds no qualms in standing by neoliberal globalization. After all, the discourse around choice does not really accord political agency to women. Women are still viewed solely as housewives, now only a glossier and more commercialized version of the same. When it comes to being prudent about finances, many advertisements assume that it is always the man of the house who needs to take care of his family. Invariably, insurance companies always seem to target men through their ads. Women, very often, are portrayed as the source of the man's financial worries. She becomes an excited shopaholic who cannot resist the consumption of 'womanly' products, such as dresses, make-up and saris. This trend is seen quite often when a store declares a season sale, suggesting that both the wife can buy without worry and the husband can 'let' her do so without a worry in the world.

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