IMPACT OF ADVERTISEMENTS ON WOMEN'S IMAGE

Abstract

A television commercial is a form of advertisement that is a nonpersonal promotion of products. The duration of a TVC usually falls between 10 seconds to 3 minutes and conveys messages in a catchy, interesting way. The main aim of a TV advertisement is to reach a niche audience. "Advertising is paid form of mass communication, the ultimate purpose of which is to impart information, develop attitudes and induce action, beneficial to the advertising in the sale of a product or service." — R. H. Colley. To attract the customer, advertising agencies or the ad makers portray women as the main focus sometimes intentionally. It makes a so-called level of 'beauty standard' of perfect womanhood. On the screen, a woman is like an allrounder, a perfect wife, a caring mother, a beautiful girlfriend, maybe a boss but full of glamour, fair, tall, zero figure even more than that. But, in real life, things are not the same for everyone. Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) shows evidence of sexual objectification of women everywhere including in the media. Most of the women agreed that they suffer from self-doubt, low self-esteem, feeling isolated, obsession with fairness, and, weight loss. The purpose of the study is to describe how the advertisement agency portrays women and how the TV Advertisement affects women's self-image.

Keywords: TVC, Self-Image, Women, Advertisement, Beauty Standard, Objectification

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The origin of the term advertising is the Latin word 'advertere' means 'to turn the attention'. According to the Drugs and Magical Remedies (Objectional Advertisements) Act of 1954, Advertisement is 'any notice, circular, label, wrapper, or other document and any announcement made orally or by means of producing or transmitting light, sound or smoke.' The 1st TV ad was of a watch company named 'Bulova' before a game between the then-Brooklyn Dodgers and the Philadelphia Phillies (1st July 1941). And one of the oldest Indian-coloured TV advertisements was 1 minute 34 seconds for the 'Bombay Dyeing' (1984). It is a perfect example of a modern ad.

Adverting is a tool of marketing strategy. In India 'Calcutta General Advertiser' (29th January 1780) by James Hicky can be called the 1st Newspaper as well as an advertisement. Technology increased the medium of promoting ads. Advertisements now can take many different forms. Some types of traditional print media ads are newspaper or magazine ads, flyers, brochures, and outdoor ads. Word of mouth is the most common way of promoting any brand or product from the beginning. Broadcasting media ad one of the popular mediums which refers to radio, FM, or TV ads. Placement of products in feature films or TV programs is the trending way now. Digital advertising type is Display ad, mobile ad, native ad, PPC, SEO, podcast advertising, social media ad, and video ad on the web or social sites. A TV commercial is one type of broadcasting ad. There are several types of TV commercials in the market, like celebrity endorsement, customer reviews, educational, informative, storytelling, comparative, solution of a problem, emotional appeal, scientific proof by experts, etc. A TV commercial is not always promoting or introduce a new product, it creates awareness about the product, gives an idea of the use of the product or service, the content makes people switch to their brand, gives a reason why they are better than their competitor, improves the image of the brand. For a print advertisement, the space is not enough to connect with the targeted audience, TVC in a short time conveys the message to the audience, so it can feel more authentic and believable to the viewers. Devid Ogilvy believes that "What really decides consumers to buy or not to buy is the content of your advertising, not its form."

A women's image means not only what we see or what the media presents, but also what a woman sees in herself. Media has the power to shape minds and opinions. Adverting is a very influential multidimensional media. It can control the way of thinking, perspective, ideas, beliefs, values, narratives, assumptions, frameworks, etc. The primary representation of women in an ad is as a homemaker, not working independent human beings. As the media created a portrayal of a perfect woman as beautiful, glamorous, fair, thin, tall, allrounder, which affected the woman's views of herself, her self-image, and her perspective too. Self-image means a person's self-view of their, characteristics of themselves. In short, we can say it is a mental picture.

If we talk about the 1st colored TVC of 'Bombay Dyeing' (1984), we cannot ignore how they presented the female character there. The protagonist of the ad was Ardhendu Bose, nephew of Subhas Chandra Bose. And there are some female characters that look like decorative presentations. Female characters are dependent on the male protagonist and represent sexiness, glamour, and beauty. It can be shown without the female character though it shows women dancing in a bar in a revealing dress, coming from the shower wearing a towel, a kissing red glossy lips. This all refers to a decoration or a way to attract the opposite

sex. Courtney and Whipple (1974) defined "sexual objects as, where women had no role in the commercial, but appeared as an item of decoration". The male character is rescuing the female conveying that the females are dependent on him, and he is the saviour. For promoting a male product and when the target audience is male, using women as sex objects is the most common way for the advertising industry. Men's product advertisements portray that beautiful women will be attracted by the product. And for women consumers, more beautification is the way to get the attention of females, so they can attract men.

India is a rich cultural nation where the status of women is strongly connected to family relations. Worshiping the female God is one of the most important rituals from the Vedic period of Indian culture. In the 21st century still, people don't hesitate to touch the feet of Maa Durga, but also, believe women should be in the kitchen. Doing an office job could be an option for an educated girl, but the kitchen is mandatory. Representation of women in the media is just a reflection of what society wants to see. In the patriarchal society of India, if a woman doing a job, she needs to take care of her home, children, and elders as well, but a man can do the office job only. It is like the duty of being a woman. So, the TV commercial agency chooses content that people want to see, a mother, homemaker, allrounder, or just a sex object. According to the media, a decent woman will be in traditional clothes, a perfect wife, and mother, take care of everyone and disregard her own desires, and make sacrifices all the time. But, on the other hand, if she is not following all these rules, she is a vamp, wearing revealing clothes, and dark lipstick, careless, trying to fulfill her own wishes. So, society as well as women try to connect it in real life. The reel and the real are mixed up. The media creates different views on women. She is judging herself by her looks, and character, changing her way of life. in the last twenty century television got control over the houses and women's minds. Unconsciously they are attracted to glossy fair skin without wrinkles and dark spots, silky shiny hair, white teeth, sparkling eyes with eye makeup, smooth hands and legs without body hair, and zero figure. This illusion of ideal women's beauty concept gave an inferiority complex.

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, of 1986 was enacted to prohibit indecent representation of women through advertisements or in publications, writings, paintings, figures, or in any other manner. As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report from 2004 to 2014, there was a downfall of cases registered under the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986. It is a good thing that in 2004 registered case was 1378, whereas in 2014 the number of cases was 47 only. Governments are trying to promote women's empowerment and control the negative use of women's representation through advertisement but for the commercial benefit, advertisers are finding a new way of stereotyping.

Once Nancy Pelosi said "Women are leaders everywhere you look—from the CEO who runs a Fortune 500 company to the housewife who raises her children and heads her household. Our country was built by strong women, and we will continue to break down walls and defy stereotypes." Gender stereotyping is in every field. Instead of promoting gender biases, the media should promote the individual beauty of everyone. Advertising media created a definition of 'beauty' that is tall, slim, and fair. Beauty-enhancing products seem to make consumers feel less attractive or their beauty is not enough. But how a normal human being can be without acne, dark spots or always full of makeup! The portrayal of women in advertisements is changing over time. Some brands are working without the so-

called 'beauty standard'. For promoting and selling the product they are coming up with more creative and storytelling concepts which is appreciable but there is a long way to go to break the 'beauty standard'.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tripathi (2009) in his study "Advertising and portrayal of images of Indian women in print media" explained that a positive image of women is absent and has a narrow scope in advertising. There is a new stereotype of women's success as pop stars or beauty queens. For successful businesswomen, the positive image of a woman politician is absent. Popular magazines use vulgar and obscene pictures of women, and the advertising industry uses women to sell their products. They present women as sexual objects. When a woman presents in a nurturing role then only, she is considered an 'ideal' character. Media is so powerful; it can wipe out the traditional passive image of a woman and project a true and positive image of women. Media can change the attitude of the society towards women.

Shrikhande (2003) described in her thesis "Stereotyping of Women in Television Advertisements" the stereotypical portrayal of women in television commercials. People also act according to this stereotype; it is considered as socially acceptable. She gave a real-life example that when people think about a household cleaning product, most likely they can think about a woman. Stereotypes have a negative effect on women themselves. They may have accepted the happy housewife concept as a cultural directive and put their own desire for a career or personal life aside. They started to believe in the ideal illusion picture presented through culture including advertisements. It makes them less career-oriented. In advertisements, females are more likely shown as teenagers rather than middle age. Dressed in more revealing wardrobes is common. Women are over-presented for cosmetic advertisements and less likely for car, and automobile-related products.

Nagi (2014) in her study "Projection of Women in Advertisement: A Gender Perception Study" explain that media presents women as 'sex object' to attract viewers. The advertiser knows how to use the sexual theme and elements to match the appeal and their target audience. Stereotyping, sexualizing, and nudity are used to portray women. Now media not only uses stereotyping of women as a mother or housewife role anymore, but they have also found other ways to portray them as subordinate to men. Millions of women in India are contributing to the different sectors but they are intentionally not represented in advertisements.

Pravinchandra (2016) explained in the research "Effects of Portrayal of Women in Television Advertisements on Society" that media is the mirror of society. And it should contribute to changing people's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions in a novel, moral way. Male-dominated society exploited women by portraying them as sex dolls. In the name of audience entertainment, they only think about higher ratings, not about women. Advertising uses women to attract males and make up a male gaze over women. The advertisement shows that a very fair girl can get a handsome guy, so girls get obsessed with fairness. Millions of girls spend hours beautifying them. The bodies of women are commodified like food, clothes, or cars.

Bareis (2021) in her study "Media's Portrayal of Women and its Impact on Body Image and Self-Esteem" states that there are so many magazines that started their journey long ago with the women's image influence. Like other social issues, people should take media literacy seriously and provide proper knowledge of media literacy. It is necessary to control the negative impact of media on body image and self-esteem. Also, she explained how she learned about the media's effect on the perception of women themselves. Photoshopped images are used for advertising, nowadays it's on everyone's smartphone. Young women like to edit their pictures like professional models. There are some popular applications, thought that they like to enhance their body beauty. Media influence makes them insecure about their appearance. She appreciated 'Dove' and 'Darling' advertising campaigns for their extraordinary step toward real beauty, not the so-called 'beauty standards'.

McAndrew (2020) described in her research "What Do You See When You Look at Me? Social Media, Socialized Gender Variables, and Disordered Eating Among Adolescent Girls" about adolescent girls' thoughts on body embarrassment, shame, and the 'ideal' body perception. It increases eating pathology, body dissatisfaction, self-criticism, anxiety, and depression. According to sociological theory, mass media depict the 'ideal' body of women as incredibly thin, moderate breast, and tall. It results in being underweight, and an unhealthy lifestyle among adolescent girls.

Ren, Wu, and Zheng (2022) in their study "Exploring the Impact of Social Media on Female Self Image" opine that to achieve the world judged 'beauty' women neglect their health and go for plastic surgery. Mass media shapes the unrealistic thin 'ideal' image which leads to women's eating disorders. With the development of technology, women got a platform to share their views via social media, but still, female discrimination phenomenon is everywhere. Social media can spread body positivity, and feminism and express true feelings of them. Some social media and commercials objectify women and try to build an image according to their psychological expectations.

Bridgers (2016) in her research paper "an examination of how advertising creates an unattainable standard of beauty and negatively affects the self-image of women" describes that one female university student told her that she didn't like her body, a model's swimsuit body makes her feel insecure. Now beauty is all about body appearance. Women buy products on the promise of what advertisements present and expect to get the same result as models. Most women cannot understand the fabricated images of ads. Photo editing tools change the original portrayal and can create an unrealistic picture of someone. Girls use that as they want to see them.

III. TV COMMERCIALS ARE SHORTLISTED (2023) ON THE BASIS OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE SELECTED TVCS

1. LUX Essence of Himalaya | Reveal the Most Glamorous You
2. Sabse Khaas Slice | Kiara Advani | Kya Aapne Slice Try Kia
3. Reliance Digital | Technology Se Rishta Jodo
4. PONDS BRIGHT BEAUTY SERUM
5. Brides of India 2023 | Featuring Alia Bhatt & Anil Kapoor | Malabar Gold and Diamonds

6. Pepsi Rise Up Baby x Samantha
7. SOFY Super XL+ for Extra Protection from Leakage
8. Dabur cool king Thanda Tel Ft. Nora Fatehi | Chiltube waala zabardast Thanda tel
9. An Unbelievable Waxing Experience | Veet Professional | Katrina Kaif
10. KS DEO 30 SEC HINDI
11. All-New Loreal Paris Hyaluron Moisture Hair | 72HRS of Hydrated Hair
12. Effortlessly, Fashionably, Unapologetically ME. LAKME
13. Yardly London talc ad with Priyanka mohan 97% naturally derived
14. You know a #PropahLady when you see one #PUMAxANUSHKA
15. Yeh Nhi Toh Kuch Nahi | Lux Cozi with Jacqueline Fernandez

IV. CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SELECTED ADS FROM 2023 THAT CAN AFFECT WOMAN'S SELF-IMAGE

1. **LUX Essence of Himalaya | Reveal The Most Glamorous You:** In this ad actress, Rakul preet Singh is presented like a Goddess of beauty. Very beautifully shows the connection of women's beauty with nature. It is an example of a celebrity endorsement advertisement. It is a very influential way to attract the target audience through celebrity. People believe and buy more when a celebrity shows that she is using it and getting flawless glamorous skin. Easily it is understandable that the target audience is female. In the 21st century because of the lifestyle and pollution maintaining skin is very tough. ladies are dying to get skin-like actresses. And skincare product-making companies are making a huge profit from their weakness. Here the female character shows a seductive nature and has flawless skin. How she is using the product will attract the men and increase the urge in females to get this type of skin so they can also get attention from the opposite gender. It completely objectifies the female body.

2. **Sabse Khaas Slice | Kiara Advani | Kya Aapne Slice Try Kia:** This is just a mango fruit drink ad where advertisers are comparing their product to some other same type of drink. But they have chosen some other seductive way to compare. Kiara Advani is used as a female character here and the focus point too. The camera is more focused on the face and the expression of her. The way she is eating the mango and biting of lips is not the appropriate way to promote any drink. This way the audience will be attracted to the ad first then they will remember the brand name for the content.

3. **Reliance Digital | Technology Se Rishta Jodo:** People cannot think about a microwave oven advertisement without a female. With the emotional appeal this ad smartly tells the importance of a microwave in the kitchen. It's a perfect homemaker example. she is cooking all by herself but she needs a man to go to the appliance store. Her husband was looking for some headphones and she chose an oven; it's clearly portraying the ideal housewife image as per the social norms of India. Here her identity is as a caring mother, a perfect wife who makes good food for her family and friends. She is constantly trying to make her family happy with delicious food. We cannot see revealing clothes here because 'ideal women' wear only decent traditional clothes.

4. **Ponds Bright Beauty Serum:** Like a beauty enhancing or fairness cream, this serum ad also indirectly gives a message to the consumer that pigmentation is not a part of beauty. Pigmentation is a very common harmless skin condition and is mainly caused by age or

liver. Instead of going to the doctor, females are more into this kind of serum or makeup. The advertiser has used two female characters, one who has pigmentation and another one who doesn't. In this 21st century generation, every girl wants to look beautiful in their picture, so when one of the characters is showing her photos with pigmented skin, she is unhappy and another character suggests a serum to remove it and get a skin like her. Just like this ad women compare themselves to advertising models. It harms her dignity and self-image.

5. **Brides of India 2023 | Featuring Alia Bhatt & Anil Kapoor | Malabar Gold and Diamonds:** This jewellery advertisement presents brides from different states of India with a grand wedding ceremony theme. This is a mixed type of ad examples, celebrity endorsement, emotional appeal, and storytelling. Very smartly they have shown that their product is suitable for all weddings from every culture. They have tried to highlight women's empowerment also. But nowadays this Bollywood grand wedding badly hurts the pocket of the bride and groom's family as well. Most people are now planning a big grand wedding ceremony. Young girls are influenced by the movies and this type of ad. They want to look perfect on their big day with all the jewellery, make-up, dresses, and decorations. Before the wedding girls get obsessed with losing weight, getting perfect skin, and maintaining beauty, their main focus is to look like a beautiful bride like this type of ad.

6. **Pepsi Rise up Baby x Samantha:** This is a cold drink advertisement where actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu is shown as the protagonist. While promoting its product, the agency is giving positive messages to girls and presenting how society judges a girl on her marriage time, and being late from work, also showing how in the film only the male protagonist is. "Tu tera kar" is a catchy dialogue, It could be a positive influence on women. "Duniya to khichega hi niche" line presents the real face of society. But the ultra-thin body, extra smooth legs, and glamorous looks of the actress are used here to attract the views.

7. **SOFY Super XL+ for Extra Protection from Leakage:** 5girls on a road trip is the content of this sanitary napkin advertisement. This is a female hygiene product, so the agency used girls is okay, but it is only fair, slim, beauty standard-maintained girls. We can find very few ads in this 2023 that present dark skin, fat, short girls. In the media industry, they use dark skin or large-sized girls only for some different kinds of advertisement. There are 5 girls, and advertisers choose different clothes and styles for them, but they cannot select different body sizes or skin-colored actresses for the ad every day everywhere women are judged by their looks, and the media influences them to judge their self-image too.

8. **Dabur Cool King Thanda Tel Ft. Nora Fatehi | Chiltube Waala Zabardast Thanda Tel:** This advertisement is less ad and more item song. This a perfect example of the commodification of women's bodies. This is just an oil advertisement, but they use the actress as an item girl. The actress Nora Fatehi is known for her attractive looks and sexy figure. She has already an impression as a bold dancer. Depicting sexy actresses in advertisements is a common trend in the industry. The dance move, reviling dress, and expression clearly point towards sexualizing the body image. Viewers will not be attracted to the product or content; they will enjoy seeing the actress only.

9. **An Unbelievable Waxing Experience | Veet Professional | Katrina Kaif:** Removing body hair is the common beauty standard today. Women spend hours in beauty salons for facials, waxing, spas, etc. It's like a routine for them, just to look beautiful they bear the pain of waxing regularly. In this TVC they are showing a working woman, but she needs to do waxing before going office. Actress Katrina Kaif is showing the feature of veet waxing kit. So, women can do it at home. Adolescent girls are extremely influenced by all these beauty kits.

10. **KS DEO 30 SEC HINDI:** It is a male deo ad where they used a female who got attracted to the fragrance of the deo. This is very funny to think in real life that women will be attracted just by perfume. This ad is mainly not about any female product so there is no individual need for a women character, this character is just decorative. Presenting a sexiness and boldness of women without any importance.

11. **All-New Loreal Paris Hyaluron Moisture Hair | 72HRS of Hydrated Hair:** Pointing toward to audience Aishwarya Rai Bachchan is saying "Now for Your Hair" directing the female that shiny silky hair is part of the beauty. With different elements hair care brands are telling people how important haircare is. They are setting the example and making women believe that they also can get this celebrity-looking hair.

12. **Effortlessly, Fashionably, Unapologetically ME. LAKME:** Besides sexualizing the model's body, the lines used in this ad are extraordinarily mean. "Three hours to get ready but who's counting" clearly means that girls take too much time to get ready, to beauty themselves. "When you look like a million bucks" makes girls believe that with makeup they will look expensive. Looking sexy and expensive is always a trend among women. With their hand, legs, body movements, and facial expressions models are presented as sex symbols. The main aim is to get women's attention but by the presentation, it will attract men as well.

13. **Yardly London Talc Ad with Priyanka Mohan 97% Naturally Derived:** In this ad, the advertiser promises a glowing face naturally with beauty talc. When the actress used the talc suddenly, she suddenly became fairer. firstly, it is impossible to become fair with only beauty talc, and another thing is it is misleading the consumer. Because of these fake promises, girls tend to buy this product to get white skin.

14. **You Know a #Propahlady When you See One #PUMAxANUSHKA:** This ad breaks the stereotypical judgment of society to being a proper lady. People should promote and appreciate this type of content. Mass media is using their power in a positive way. In the 21st century girls should not follow the illusion of the 'ideal' image made by society, they should think about their career, individuality, and inner beauty. Apart from all the good things in this ad, girls will feel for actress Anushka Sharma's zero figure.

15. **Yeh Nhi Toh Kuch Nahi | Lux Cozi with Jacqueline Fernandez:** Unnecessary portray of women can be found here. It's a male innerwear advertisement. There is no importance of any female character. But hardly the audience can see the male character here, the camera focusing on the actress only. The female character is used here to attract men's attention. She is dancing with an undergarment of men and memorizing their personal moments while waiting for her partner. The content conveys some underlying message.

There are so many other men's innerwear ads where the main character is male, to think out of the box, the agency is intentionally sexualizing and commodifying the female character here.

"We found that people remember ads with sexual appeals more than those without, but that effect doesn't extend to the brands or products that are featured in the ads," said John Wirtz, an associate professor of advertising at the University of Illinois. Through sex-appealing content, advertising agencies plan to attract more attention from viewers. It helps to memorise the brand but they ignore the effect of it on the audience in the long run. The most powerful tool for changing perspective is being used wrongly. Nothing wrong with being a homemaker, but the problem is being judged and it cannot be the only 'ideal' image of a woman.

V. CONCLUSION

Relation between women and body image is complex. One out of four young college girls can be found doing a diet to control or lose weight. TV commercials badly influence females as well as males. Men get a message about what kind of girl should be called beautiful, women should be submissive or the decent, ideal image of a proper woman. Aging is the most dangerous thought for women, they feel pressure to look less than their age. Through manipulative messages, advertisements are making people believe that dark skin, large size body, and body hair are 'Ugly'. By using fair-skinned young girls agencies try to attract the opposite sex and show the example of 'beauty'. Advertising is everywhere, from waking up to going to bed we are seeing ads everywhere. Drawing rooms to metro stations, cinema halls, and pathways, on everyone's hand. Agencies are force-feeding people different kinds of advertisements every moment. "Advertisers use sex because it can be very effective" said Tom Reichert, former head of the UGA Department of Advertising and Public Relations. Instead of commodifying, sexualizing women, or finding new ways of stereotyping and dominating them media should show their real power. People will buy the product for their needs, not for sexual appeal. For the sake of entertainment, the agency should not influence women negatively. Before making an ad, the research team should think about the bad influence of it. Through every media, content makers need to be a little wiser. So that they could sell their product with dignity not vulgarity.

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