



The Portrayal Of Women In Advertisements: A Critical Analysis Of The Role, Participation, And Empowerment

Sohaib Alam¹

Sadaf Khalid²

Farhan Ahmad³

Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, Vol. 14 (3)

<https://jett.labosfor.com/>

Date of reception: 10 Feb 2023

Date of revision: 22 Mar 2023

Date of acceptance: 18 Apr 2023

Sohaib Alam, Sadaf Khalid, Farhan Ahmad (2023). The Portrayal Of Women In Advertisements: A Critical Analysis Of The Role, Participation, And Empowerment. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, Vol. 14(3). 451-459

¹Department of English, College of Sciences and Humanities in Al-Kharj, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

²Faculty (Social Sciences), ExtraMarks Education India Pvt. Ltd., Noida HO, Sector 136, Uttar Pradesh, India

³Department of English, College of Sciences and Humanities in Alkharj, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



The Portrayal Of Women In Advertisements: A Critical Analysis Of The Role, Participation, And Empowerment

Sohaib Alam¹, Sadaf Khalid², Farhan Ahmad³

¹Department of English, College of Sciences and Humanities in Al-Kharj, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

²Faculty (Social Sciences), ExtraMarks Education India Pvt. Ltd., Noida HO, Sector 136, Uttar Pradesh, India

³Department of English, College of Sciences and Humanities in Alkharj, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Email: s.alam@psau.edu.sa¹, sadaf.khalid.anam.2013@gmail.com², f.ahmad@psau.edu.sa³

ABSTRACT

The study qualitatively explores several past and recent advertisements that have evolved, conflicting and defeating women's roles in society. The study further discusses how advertisements have accelerated the concept of 'emphasized femininity' (Patterson et al., 2009) through the inevitable male-dominated population discussed by Brule (2020). It contributes to an ever-expanding challenge of gender disparity, stereotyping women and docile responsibilities, thereby propagating inequalities through the digital and printed advertising world. The objective of the research is to purposely select regular advertisements and their symbolic representation that might have promoted women's engagement, their struggle, either responsible for identity stagnation or an expansive identity. The paper has strategically reviewed popular content that uncovers to transform societal myth and women objectification in restoring their equal natural existence. The study concludes the usage and abuses of advertisement concordant to inter-disciplinary inquiry into the laws, policies, and socio-political activities within a democratic state.

Keywords: Stereotyping, advertising network, women representation, empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Indian advertising network must examine the content that contravenes in shaping the 'woman identity' around the globe. Many researchers conclude about the political propagandism, misogynistic ideologies, and stereotyping that wither the natural human existence through structural institutions. Moreover, the paradigm shifts and variations in advertisement reveal how the age-old structural projection of women on television and social media platforms has been changed in the post-liberalized era. Earlier, in the pre-liberalized period, women's role was restricted to household activities, for the male gaze or sexual satisfaction. Thus, the article attempts to unveil the consistency of fewer women representation in political awakening, entrepreneurial set-ups, and sports, so on and so forth.

Media should act as a catalyst in promoting and empowering the marginalized considering the non-ideological or unbiased socio-political democratic viewpoint. The post-liberalization, privatization, and globalization (LPG) epoch (Saikia, 2017) did raise multiple concerns on what should be the action-orientation of mass media in defining justice, empowerment, environment, and civil society (Molyneaux, 2004). The subject of advertising and women has attracted academicians, sociologists, and marketing researchers to examine various categories, acting elements, and ailments that revolve around multiple other disciplines. The extensive literature to form a conclusion for the research is advanced, going through various disciplines like sociology, marketing, psychology, women studies, and cultural studies, etc. (Sandikci, 1998, p. 76-81). Erving Goffman (1979), the greatest sociologist of all time who did extensive research of 400 advertisements, its categorization is significant in comprehending women's representation in the advertising world. The first category talks about the superiority of men over women; the second one emphasizes the delicacy and vulnerability of a woman's body through touching the face, hands, so on so forth. The third observation was strong enough to understand how men are always pictured as executives and experts rather than women. The fourth enumerates the patriarchal mindset featuring fathers as stern and authoritative in the family while mothers being friendly and responsible. The fifth and sixth observation shows a docile attitude of women over men in social situations being extremely emotional, in need of protection and mentally or physically weaker than men (Sharma, Das, et al. 2019).

However, numerous studies like Sohaib Alam & Shafey haque (2022) advocate the role of women as essential for the overall development of a nation. A comprehensive discussion on how television and print media spaces have been occupied with advertisements and their impact on daily lives is increasingly significant. The

introduction of media technologies like mobile phones has made information about anything and everything accessible through the internet, which diminishes the viewership of both television and newspapers at an alarming rate. The rapid economic and political expansion has maintained a nominal role of advertisement companies advocating real-time social issues; instead of focusing on the targeted audience for corporate profits. But research shows how gender and minority stereotyping through mass media accelerating the space of advertisement used as an apparatus (Jensen, 1987, Alam et al. (2021) is prevalent in the case of large democracies like India (Kumari, 2015). Indeed, not everything shown through advertisement is reality, but some unreal portrayal is impactful and idealizes a specific way a woman should behave and act (Baker, 2005). A recent remark by a Chief Minister of Uttarakhand on ripped jeans has idealized a cultured Indian woman in ethnic dresses, citing an example of Rani Laxmi Bai, 'who fought a battle in a sari.' Such perceptions draw a cultural limit to the choice of clothes women must wear and constantly under pressure to value Indian heritage and tradition. There is no scientific argument on how ripped jeans would demean Indian societal value and why jeans are should be considered a bad omen for any society in the so-called 21st century. Therefore, the role of politicians, media, and corporate advertisement stands juxtaposing in governing the collective idea of 'Atma Nirbhar Bhartiya Naari.' Instead, the rapid economic-political amalgamative intentions stimulating the 'Consumer' sense of dependency on the market and corporate services are restored. Studies suggest that women from ages have been pictured stereotypically also in advanced countries like Australia, New Zealand, Poland U.S, and South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Indonesia and so forth. It wasn't surprising to realize a conservative right-wing dominated party's transport ministry advertising model Alicija Kohler in Germany, all naked but only with lacy underwear and a cycling helmet. It was for promoting bicycle safety which created immense controversy calling the government sexist and disgusted on forwarding policies with a woman naked skin. India as a democratic nation seems no exception. Counting among one of the largest in diversity requires equal representation, and affirmative identity assurance portrayal must be beyond politics and business egocentrism (Gulati, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

A complete analysis of consumers' behavior of buying a product and their attitude towards sex themes portrayed by companies has been elaborated by Lundstorm and Sciglimpaglia (1977) in their paper 'Sex Role Portrayals in Advertising.' The article primarily puts forward four important arguments that confirm how women over men are projected in the advertisement. Usually, women are shown performing in-house activities; women are dependent on men; not involved in performing revolutionary tasks, and are mainly treated as sex objects by men. The paper examines multiple other kinds of research on the criticality of change in the attitude of men and women through advertisements by Wagner and Banos study of 1973. It shows the increase in working-class women by 21%; Sexton and Haberman detailed content analysis of advertisements from 1950 to 1971, Venkatesan and Losco comprehensive examination on role projected through magazines from 1959 to 1971. Similar critical arguments were made by the greatest sociologist named Goffman (1979) on visual advertisements, reinforcement of sexuality, nudity, and eroticism of women as accurate as their only role in the society, thereby disguising their significant socio-economic and political self-reflection. He tried to explain how such projection regularizes a permanent mindset or societal norms depicting perfect or cultured women indifferent to a professional, independent, and self-sufficient one.

The concept of Empowerment and Advertisement should complement building a gender-neutral society emphasized by Sharma & Das (2019) in their paper 'Women Empowerment through Advertising.' The study elaborates a classical and modern depiction of women in advertisements, including several Lloyd washing machines, Ariel, Tanishq jewelry, Havells appliances and so on. This highlights a change in equalizing the gender role and women's workforce participation, including agriculture, corporate, and defense responsibilities. It mainly focuses on campaigns and determined advertisements that elaborate a shift in portrayal from their docile role to professional potentials.

Patterson, Malley & Story (2009) presented a detailed analysis of inappropriate content-based advertisements that have been a matter of concern in Ireland. The paper explores various discussions on gender sensitization, advertising responsibilities, and empirical studies on gender studies. The significant aspect of 'ethics' is given prime importance, non-exaggeration of sexual content, balanced consumer preferences, technological maladies usually devoid of social responsibilities. The study explores the social difficulties and contradictions of identities emphasized by Judith Butler in her work, which upheld the subjectivities and multiplicities in gender identities. The critical aspect of the study is 'emphasized femininity' depicting female subordination and their existence to fulfill the desires of men.' That's how advertisement discourse has succeeded in molding human behavior, occupations, family roles, violence based on sex and so forth.

To measure women's responses to conventional and modern approaches towards advertisements, Morrison and Shaffer (2003) evaluate the purchase attitude of the human based on two dimensions- gender roles and self-mirroring. The study suggests both male and female responses to sex themes adopted by advertisements and

how they feel as individuals when humans are portrayed offensively in public daily. It gives us a broader view of psychology, management, and communication within advertisement and gender studies.

In his paper, Christina N. Baker (2005) has compared 600 images of women to comprehend gender stereotyping, analysing it based on seven given apparatus, including role, relative function, bodily appearances, size, physical characteristic, traits, and body view. The author has laid down an interesting observation that even sexuality in advertisements is based on race, ethnicity and so on. White women are usually objectified more and portrayed as dependent and submissive than black women describe as bold and dominant.

Maitrayee Chaudhuri (2001) provides a detailed examination of the shift in the public discourse, altering not just the themes of advertisement according to the post-liberalization, privatization, and globalization (LPG) period, but also accompanied by an advanced sense of women role from traditional to modern mindset and actions. Advertisements have a robust and successful process enumerating an individual's identity, action, preferences and so on for males and females, constituting a change in India's lifestyle.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does the Indian advertisement field want to portray stereotypical women in society?
2. Have they succeeded in illustrating women as sex objects for promoting their brand or product?
3. Have the advertisements contributed to shifting women's roles and responsibilities and redefining the term empowerment to provide socio-economic stability?

OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The study examines Indian advertisements that exhibit women as sex objects. It is to qualitatively explore the symbolism behind submissiveness, erotic appearances, and unequal gender role. It elaborates the shift in the role and responsibilities for a while; the 'optimistic role of an advertisement inculcating a responsible 'Citizenry' attitude in both the gender and not necessarily a 'Corporatist or Consumerist.' The main idea is to redefine the role of advertising in establishing a democratic and egalitarian understanding of gender within society through rapid transformation in advertising industries. While reviewing the literature for the study, much of the work on the impact of advertisement in shaping gender responsibilities are carried out in Western countries different from Asian nations. But the attempt and intention to investigate how the scope of women's preferences, status, and responsibilities would be amicable with the changes in growing themes of advertisements remain interchangeable among societies. It also specifies accordingly that such changes in themes and portrayal would convey improved and empowered image/identity assurances to the most marginalized, i.e., 'women' in the patriarch environment.

METHODOLOGY

The study has adopted a content analysis methodology based on numerous random samples of advertisements and videos, including television and social media content. The study followed purposive method to select the contents and its detailed analysis. The qualitative analysis aims to specify the portrayal of women's identity, their symbolism, sex appeals objectification, gender insensitivity, and the reality gap between the role women play in commercial advertisements and real-life challenges.

Woman Used As An Object For Projecting Sexuality And Eroticism In Advertisements

The concept of objectification is a matter of significance to understand the multicultural-feministic view in society. The objectifying theory proposed by Barbara Fredrickson & Tomi-Ann Robert (1997) gives us a profound experience of socio-cultural setting in any country where a female body is sexually objectified. Objectification through advertisements in India remains blatant and controversial in socializing the weaker section of the country, i.e., women. The Ministry of Women and Child Development forwarded 'The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 that says, 'no person shall publish or arrange or be a participant of any event that advertise or release advertisement which contains indecent representation of women in any aspect' (The indecent, n.d). Also, the penalty that is authorized by the ministry on violating the above laws would be imprisoned for two years, extended up to five years, and a fine of two thousand extended up to one lakh rupees. But advertisement companies remain immoral and unabashed in generating profits despite knowing that it shapes human behavior in daily life (Gulati, 2014).

If we closely associate objectification theory with aims of Indian companies that necessarily depict beauty, prettiness, single out a woman's body part, and so on for male desires just for narrower buying and selling purposes. It leads to an increase in mental health disorders directly or indirectly in women and affects internalizing or regularizing self-objectification (Szymanski et al., 2011). Women seen in ads during the 70s and 80s were a significant symbol of submissiveness, sexuality, and nudity to grab attention for endorsement and TRP purposes (Lundstorm & Sciglimpaglia, 1977). If we keenly observe how jeans, perfumes, alcohol, cosmetics, bathroom products, and so forth portray a woman to manipulate sexual desires both consciously and subconsciously just for selling a product (Blair et al., 2006). However, such strategies and sexual themes for

selling a product vary from person to person and region to region. But the underlying aftermath of such advertisements does emphasize women as sex objects. Some weird company's ads, e.g., the virgin mobile promoted a tagline of 'Think Hatke,' to publicize its talk time plans, viewed a man passing lure comments and showing woman's curves to his boss in a corporate set-up. The boss happened to be the father of the same woman; it embarrasses the man certainly not for a habit of gossiping about a woman but allows him to 'Think Hatke' and chooses plans for recharging his number and carry on the same with precaution. Three years ago, Hyundai Santa Fe (Storm Edge Design) featured an ad to promote the new car design viewing sweaty women licking ice creams, erected nipples, and sexy lingerie with a desperate orgasm after seeing the car. The ad was later banned as it objectified women for pleasure and projected them as covetous. Zaatak a deodorant company that featured a typical Indian tailor holding an inching tape measuring woman body parts for stitching clothes. The tailor deliberately used the talcum powder that had 'Zaatak coolness' made the woman feel horny and excited during the measurement process, and the man kept enjoying.

Similarly, Zataak ad on promoting deodorant featured a female college Professor excited about the deodorant smell while writing on the blackboard, and the student enjoys it. The Burger King, a known American multinational chain for selling hamburgers, portrayed an excited woman performing pole dance and unbuttoning herself inside a metro rail after observing a man having a full hamburger while seated calmly. A female walking along the streets wearing Levis Strauss Signature Jeans India, 2010 and a male voice in the background kept singing 'one touch of yours makes my heart beat.' The ad says, 'Don't walk away love, my heart is crazy' (Chhetri, 2014), which symbolizes a male gaze for perfect woman hips and curves. Her lustrous intention through the ads that everything she touches e.g. the chair or mirror, material or non-material, kept following her, was expressed to grab sexual attention. Lenskart, a leading e-commerce portal for eyewear in India, pictured a college-going boy bullied by all his friends to recheck the number of his spectacles. As the boy use to assure everyone that he is hanging around everywhere with a beautiful girl named 'Lucy,' his girlfriend. As soon as the boy wears a Lenskart glass, he found that it wasn't a girl with whom he was moving but a Bitch shown with change in spectacles. The symbolic representation of a woman here is with that to an animal. The companies' like Secret temptation deodorant, Veet, Lux soap and so on features Bollywood celebrities' or female faces either in bath-tub, bathrobe, towel, smelling the fragrance, applying it on their naked body parts that has regularized or normalized female nakedness on a television. It is rightly acknowledged by Laura Mulvey (1975, p. 4) that 'women as image and man as the bearer of the look,' is a conventional pattern to display eroticism. The disturbing aspect is not that the women are signed for the promotion of a product but that it augments a woman's existence for sexual pleasure consciously or subconsciously in the psyche of men (Belkaoui et al., 1976). This is how the liberal art for advertisements has ruined the moral sense of human existence irrespective of gender (McAllister et al., 2014).

Redefining Empowerment Through Advertisements In India

A comprehensive shift in communication effectiveness through media or advertisement (Whipple and Courtney, 1985) should significantly revolve in unobjectifying minorities, especially women, rightly called 'Second Sex' by Simon De Beauvoir. The current perception of empowerment has been parallel to contemporary marketing strategies where modern marketers disregard the sensitivity of racial, ethnic, and minority sentiments. Focusing on theoretical plans and policies forwarded by the Government of India (GOI), the fundamental shift on empowering women, centralizing social challenges related to women, and concepts of 'Empowerment' were marked from the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) (Ministry of Women, n.d). Irrespective of gender, human power required in every action; inbound and outbound activities contribute to socio-economic development due to increasing technological pressure; human labor requires greater recognition.

The term empowerment has been misunderstood when comprehending women's security, remaining in men's hand, more muscular and superior to a woman based on religious texts and traditional beliefs. Empowering women must coextend with inclusive and representative citizens approach guaranteeing upliftment of not only a man or a particular section constituting a majority in any democracy. But also to consider the ethnic identity that would foster equal participation of human potential in comprehending political and economic freedom (Chaudhuri, 2001). Elisabeth Porter (2013) pointed out in reimagining the meaning of empowerment through structural, political, and cultural changes driven by local needs and beliefs. She further adds the significance of basic universal rights that would lower down their sense of alienation and mistrust in the governance to counter discrimination, oppression, and inequalities.

Therefore, media through advertisement create a lot of opportunities in breaking such subservient projection. Both empowerment and advertisement have a process of evolution involving implementing and executing proper plans and policies. Advertising has been rightly defined as a 'paid, impersonal, one-way marketing strategy persuading the targeted buyers to buy a product through various means of mass communication' (Raina, 2014, p. 44). The difference lies in aims as advertisements are marketing and promotional strategies designed for communication between the seller (advertiser) and consumers (Patterson et al., 2009). In contrast, empowerment usually is the aftermath or impact of such projection that aims to distribute equality in building a

positive attitude toward humans (Nagi, 2014). According to International Foundation for Electoral Systems, empowerment and participation are likely to be achieved in the long run through educational awareness on equal rights to ethnic and cultural values with tolerant and cooperative media as a powerful mechanism (International Foundation, n.d). Globalization in third world countries is often said to be evil as it equates the existence of human resources or human value of civil society with that of a hyper-entertained and consumerist mindset. One can impose advertisement (personal or public) but cannot coerce empowerment on humans. Therefore, empowerment is an act of persuading the weaker section to opt for opportunities and enhance their capacities with knowledge and skills is required for a free, better, and personal choice of living. And both empowerment and advertisement must be complementary (Sharma et al., 2019).

Shift in the Role, Responsibilities And Representation of Women in Advertisements: Attempts to Break Stereotype

Rachel Brule (2020a) highlighted the term 'missing women' coined by Amartya Sen (Anderson & Ray, 2010). The potential female numbers would have been equal in population and representation in developing countries but are not due to deliberate despising of their sex. Rachel Brule (2020b) explains how such 'missing identities' could be reformed and reorganized if parents are to disallow the unnatural process of strategic fertility.

Providing them educational/financial independence, equal share in property inheritance (irrespective of socio-religious norms), and quotas for reservation in political participation. The relationships between womens' economic freedom and social identity remained conflicting in India. If we closely monitor the gap in remuneration that is paid for a job to a working woman and a man is highly imbalanced and that gap constitutes 23% of the total equation at the global level. Forget about the pay to 'Sanskari' housewives/spouses who take care of her husband, children, and old-aged in-laws. Women generally seen in advertisements are either portrayed as spouse, girlfriend, or mother being a member meant to carry household functions in a family. Not much revolution was brought during the pre-liberalized period.

According to Parul Nagi (2014), Western countries' adoption of nuclear families, moving to cities for economic opportunities, and changing societal norms has augmented the scope for an egalitarian society. Mahindra gave the best among all advertisement taglines in breaking stereotypes about educating a woman: 'it would allow her to make her own decision and be independent' in Indian slang as 'Ladki hath Se Nikal Jayegi.' The question is why society even wants to control women's' freedom? Mahindra rightly projected in another ad where a father supports her girl child to pursue a career to become a pilot, wear jeans and trousers, live in a big city for better career opportunities, earn money, and make her own choice of living. Then the ads say 'Phir to Hath se Nikalna Achha Hota Hai' (It's better to be free and out of hand then).

Explicitly dealing with the status of the women, Joshi Committee Report of 1974 (Saika, 2017) concluded that women are majorly represented as wives and mothers in nearly all advertisements and media programs. Moreover, with the passage of time a shift in the responsibility assigned to women, their sense of liberty and existence has made them independent and constituting the salaried class people in the society. In reality, 43% of the women population are engaged in agriculture labor across the globe (Sundari, 2020), a total of 9,118 women are serving India as officers in three defense forces and 31% representation in non-technical and 26% representation % in technical work as well. Nearly all advertisements today have a significant role in featuring female content, which has given birth to new terminology called 'Femvertising.' With the increased enrollment in education enhancing female literacy, almost every area is equally occupied with a feminine touch. Comparatively, the condition of the urban middle-class woman seems to be a level-up in the standard of living due to economic and educational independence (Indian ads, 2021).

The condition of females and improved status somehow is affected by globalization's impact on an advertisement that portrays business-class, entrepreneurial approach, extroverts, managers of leading companies (Sandikci, 1998), front-line officers, sportsperson and so on. The contemporary age provokes us to think differently in terms of gender roles; that difference is undoubtedly the equal responsibility in sharing household chores (Patterson et al., 2009). The networking instrument like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube did become defamation and derogatory agent but has proved to be quite valuable. It creates awareness, forwarding links of gender equality information, girl child education, growing recognition, breaking stereotype through WhatsApp, Telegram, media platforms like WIRE, Quint, Brut and so forth. Advertisements on businesses and Startups by young women, their financial strategies, and achievement stories could be a favorable outcome both for marketing empowering women and women enhancing marketing strategies. A behavioral change and taste in viewing content are recorded in several studies. Even homemakers on YouTube (an online platform for entertainment and information) are more interested in watching entrepreneurial content to get them financially independent. Such an empowered mindset has doubled with time. It has expanded the limited household status of women to an extended feminist self (Sharma et al., 2019).

Ariel, a detergent company, rightly put this under the tagline 'Share the Load' when a mother got distressed to know how his married daughter was sacrificing her job over household responsibilities, where her son-in-law gave an excuse of not knowing how to manage home. The mother realizes it and wanted her son to perform

essential activities like cleaning, washing clothes and so on so that gender would not decide sorting priorities just for women but to share the load along with female. ACC India limited, a cement company, shows a mother taking her daughter to a boxing coach who refuses to teach her, providing a reason for her delicacy and beauty not making her fit for boxing based on stereotype. But the mother forced the coach on emphasizing the value of self-defense activities required in a society prone to eve-teasing, rape, and sexual harassment. Sabhyata, Indian women wear a brand shows a conspiracy between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law having a disguised quarrel on cooking and cleaning, forcing the son to make a tea and serve snacks, not a monotonous activity meant for women only but for men. Sabhyata has rightly shown the reality of Indian society in another ad where a father was expected not to allow her daughter for an outing during the night. It 'celebrates a change' (message of the ad), fortunately asking her son to behave, respect, and not harass any girl while partying with friends outside. Here, an Indian adult daughter was not asked to justify, face parents' usual moral policing, or dare to seek permission for a night-out; instead, a change in expected in upbringing the sons. A recent Horlicks ad that showed women's strength in driving her two daughters back home and stuck with a puncture on a highway made her anxious about getting a mechanic for the same. That made her elder daughter de-loads and reloaded a new tire acknowledging that guts, strength, skills, and training can be acquired by all irrespective of gender. HDFC bank promoted an advertisement where a male colleague was trying to convince her female boss on how women face challenges coping with household activities and office work that disturb the balance of their life and decide to choose either of them. But the lady boss takes out a piece of drawing made by her daughter that shows a woman in modern corporate attire saying, 'You are my Super Woman.' Facebook, a social media platform, depicted a young Punjabi woman entrepreneur hiring low-income group earners for her 'Milk Centre' through Facebook who lost their jobs during the pandemic. Despite the criticism she faced for hiring an excess of people in a small milk shop during the turbulent COVID times due to economic downfall, companies were firing employees. She dared as a small-scale entrepreneur to hire people to save them from anxiety and depression, and loss of life. Although Indian advertisements rarely have traces of Dalit, Muslims, or Tribal ethnicity, their social issues and cultural challenges that do not provide them enough sense of confidence, representation and share a headway among the majority (Chatterji, Hansen, et al., 2019).

CONTEMPORARY DISCUSSION

Neeraj Kaushal (2013) confirms from the evidence that society restricting a woman on her choice of dresses, marriages, and mobility has greater chances of increase in crime rate against them. It tilts the distribution of power, domination, and command in favor of males. The socio-political scenario of India is parallel in controlling every aspect of women living as a 'subordinate gender,' where ministers keep asking to ban skirts in school, ripped jeans outdoor as it allures male gaze, etc. In the light of the recent incidents of significance, Hindutva lobbies like Bajrang Dal and several right-wing groups have openly threatened couples who had interfaith marriages. Their aim under the daunting agenda of 'Love Jihad' is to disallow a Hindu woman to marry a Muslim man, denying her the right to choose, marry or convert to any religion peacefully. Such incidents specify a regressive approach in monitoring an individual choice of living and all root causes of a woman's underdeveloped or male-directed identity. Though the rise in change on their social status is relatively slow, it is usually progressive to what Nagi (2014) has featured the three types of it; the first throughout the context is to feature females as sex objects. The second is exhibiting the caring motherhood side of women, and the third is the young, bold, and empowered side.

Judith Butler (2004) plays a significant role in making societies comprehend the Hegelian concept of linking desire and recognition. Such human desires for recognition or human identities based on sex, race, morphology, ethnicity and so on considering 'humans' or less-than-human, require perceptual confirmation to have a 'livable' or 'unlivable' life. Butler's (2004) responses in her book 'Undoing Gender' that not all women's challenges are congenital or God-given. And that normative conception in a society does undermine human individuality and one's personhood, thereby atomizing the ability to have a livable life.

An inter-disciplinary inquiry raises serious discussions on Indian laws managing to counter inappropriate, hateful or stereotypical contents against the marginalized section across the globe. The study strongly connotes the given arguments where women have been visualized under a persistent homogenous orbit for years through television and magazines. Majorly women till 90s were portrayed as homemakers, less intelligent, less efficient in physical activities, financially dependent and objects meant for sexual pleasures. In an interview, Laura Mulvey (Sassatelli, 2011) agrees that cinema, advertising, and technology did augment the discourse of 'Visual Pleasure and Visual Culture,' where the evidence concludes on how Indian women are used as an ornament on fulfilling the fantasies of male. Advertising as a field and exhaustive mass media and Indian normative standards following vulgar and women exaggerated content is devastating (Indian ads, 2021). Therefore, the use and abuse of advertisement and technology for personal gains is a persistent truth.

The question specifically does not deal with the increasing number of advertisements featuring women but the contextual featuring and visual representation of the role assigned to them. The stereotypical view of a particular section in a society obligates to be challenged in India, where women strive for 'progressive femininity,' to 'end

stereotypical representation' as a relevant solution. It is consistent with having faith in 'radical democracy' (Mouffe, 1992) which is based on tenants of divergence and conflict in characters throughout social processes (Laclau et al., 1997). Exhaustive auditing and reformation on the role of technology, marketing, and women empowerment should be the first dynamic for countering degraded gender values in all sense.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“This study is supported via funding from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University project number (PSAU/2023/R/1444)”

REFERENCES

1. Alam, S. ., & Haque, S. A. (2021). Gender, Language and Indian Reality Television: Locating Social Stereotypes and Linguistic Sexism. *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 12(2), 482–492. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2021.2.482.492>.
2. Alam, S. ., Khalid, S., Ahmad, F. ., & Keezhatta, M. S. (2021). Mocking and Making: Subjugation and Suppression of Marginalized and the Politics of Identity. *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 12(1), 375–389. <https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2021.1.375.389>
3. Anderson, S., & Ray, D. (October 01, 2010). Missing Women: Age and Disease. *Review of Economic Studies*, 77(4), 1262-1300. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-937X.2010.00609.x
4. Baker, C. N. (January 01, 2005). Images of Women? Sexuality in Advertisements: A Content Analysis of Black- and White-Oriented Women's and Men's Magazines. *Sex Roles*, 52 (1/2), 13-27. DOI: 10.1007/s11199-005-1190-y
5. Belkaoui, A., & Belkaoui, J. M. (1976). A Comparative Analysis of the Roles Portrayed by Women in Print Advertisements: 1958, 1970, 1972. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 13 (2), 168-172. DOI:10.1177/002224377601300207
6. Blair, J., Stephenson, J., Hill, K., & Green, J. (2006). Ethics in advertising: Sex sells, but should it? *Journal of Legal, Ehtical and Regulatory Issues*, 9 (1/2), 109- 118.
8. Brulé, R. (2020). Women, power, and property: the paradox of gender equality laws in India.
10. Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York, NY: Routledge.
11. Chaudhuri, M. (2001). Gender and advertisements. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 24 (3/4), 373-385. DOI: PII S0277-5395(01)00174-1
12. Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T.-A. (1997). Objectification theory: Toward understanding women's lived experiences and mental health risks. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 173-206. DOI: org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1997.tb00108.x
13. Gender Equality. International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). Retrieved from Gender Equality | IFES
14. Gulati M. (2014). Analysis of Projection of Women in Advertisement on Society. *Global Journal of Commerce & Management Perspective*, 3(5), 78-81.
15. Indian ads further gender stereotypes, shows study. (2021, April 22). *The Hindu*. Indian ads further gender stereotypes, shows study - The Hindu
16. Jensen, K. B. (1987). Qualitative audience research: Toward an integrative approach to reception. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 4(1), 21-36. DOI: org/10.1080/15295038709360110
17. Kaushal N. (January 10, 2013). Imposing restrictions on women like dress code ensure more violence against them. *The Economic Times*. Imposing restrictions on women like dress code ensures more violence against them - The Economic Times (indiatimes.com)
18. Kumari, S., & Shivani, S. (November 01, 2014). Female Portrayals in Advertising and Its Impact on Marketing Communication—Pieces of Evidence from India. *Management and Labour Studies*, 39 (4), 438-448. DOI: 10.1177/0258042X15578022.
19. Laclau, E., Laddaga, R. J., & Butler, J. P. (March 01, 1997). The Uses of Equality. *Diacritics*, 27(1), 2-12. DOI: 10.1353/dia.1997.0003
20. Lundstrom, W. J., & Sciglimpaglia, D. (July 01, 1977). Sex Role Portrayals in Advertising. *Journal of Marketing*, 41(3), 72-79. DOI: org/10.1177/002224297704100308
21. Matthew P. McAllister, & Lauren J. DeCarvalho. (January 01, 2014). Sexualized Branded Entertainment and the Male Consumer Gaze. *Triplec: Communication, Capitalism & Critique*, 12(1), 299-314.

22. Molyneaux, H. (2004). The representation of women in Chatelaine magazine advertisements: 1928-1970. (PDF) The Representation of Women in Chatelaine Magazine Advertisements: 1928-1970. | Heather Molyneaux - Academia.edu
23. Nagi Parul. (2014). Projection of Women in Advertisement: A gender perception study. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research*, 2(9), 75-88.
24. Mouffe, C. (1995). *Dimensions of radical democracy: Pluralism, citizenship, community*. London: Verso.
25. Patterson, M., O, M. L., & Story, V. (2009). Women in Advertising: Representations, Repercussions, Responses. *Irish Marketing Review*, 20(1), 9-22.
26. Porter, E. (2013). Rethinking Women's Empowerment. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 8(1), 1-14. DOI: org/10.1080/15423166.2013.785657.
27. Rose, R., Mulvey, L., Mulvey, L., & Rose, R. (2016). Laura Mulvey 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema' 1975.
28. Raina A. (2014). Representation of Indian Women in Advertisements. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, 2(12), 44-48.
29. Roberta, S. (September 01, 2011). Interview with Laura Mulvey: Gender, Gaze and Technology in Film Culture. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28, 5, 123-143.
30. Saika, A.A. (2017). Representation of women in media: With special reference to Indian women. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 5(4), 392-398.
31. Sandikci O. (1998). Images of Women in Advertising: a Critical-Cultural Perspective. *E-European Advances in Consumer Research*, 3, 76-81.
32. Sharma, S., & Das, M. (2019). Women Empowerment through Advertising. *European Journal of Social Sciences*.
33. Sundari, S. (September 01, 2020). Structural changes and quality of women's labour in india. *The Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 63 (3), 689-717.
34. Szymanski, D. M., Moffitt, L. B., & Carr, E. R. (January 01, 2011). Sexual Objectification of Women: Advances to Theory and Research. *Counseling Psychologist*, 39 (1), 6-38. DOI: 10.1177/0011000010378402
35. The Indecent Representation of Women (PROHIBITION) Act 1986. Ministry of Women & Child Development. Indecent Representation of Women | Ministry of Women & Child Development (wcd.nic.in)
36. Whipple, T. W., & Courtney, A. E. (1985). Female Role Portrayals in Advertising and Communication Effectiveness: A Review. *Journal of Advertising*, 14 (3), 4-17.