

The Gender Role Shift in Indian Advertisements Over the Years

Dissertation submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, in partial fulfillment for

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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **The Gender Role Shift in Indian Advertisements Over the Years** is a bona fide record of sincere work done by, Anna James, Register Number: 210021000929, Bharata Mata College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature under the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam during the year 2023-2024.

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Declaration

I, hereby declare that the presented dissertation **The Gender Role Shift in Indian Advertisements Over the Years** is based on the research that I did under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Smitha Elizabeth George, Guest Faculty, Research Centre and Postgraduate Department of English, Bharata Mata College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. This is a report of my hands based on the research done on the selected topic and it is my original work and interpretations drawn therein are based on material collected by myself. It has not been previously formed basis for the award of any degree, diploma or fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

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Contents

Chapter 1: Advertisements and Gender Roles	1
Chapter 2: Gender Roles and Its Construction	6
Chapter 3: Early Advertisements and Gender Portrayals	10
Chapter 4: Modern Advertisements and the Shift in Gender Portrayals	15
Chapter 5: Comparing Gender Portrayals	22
Works Cited	

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Chapter 1

Advertisements and Gender Roles

Advertisement is an industry to call the attention of the society to something, typically a product or service. Advertisements are the best way to convey an idea to the public about a product and its qualities. Advertisements are more influential and effective than newspaper ads and other ways of communications. It can help remind their customers about their brand and may encourage the people to continue buying their product through these advertisements. Stopping advertising to save money is like stopping your watch to save time. Ads play a crucial role in creating awareness on different aspects of thinking and learning. Great content is the best sales tool in the world. Consumers ought to be mindful of the messages conveyed by each advertising company and should take the initiative to scrutinize whether these messages propagate any detrimental impacts on humanity.

During World War II, women were prominently depicted in working roles in advertising; however, post-war, their portrayal shifted drastically to predominantly housewives and sex objects. This change was in response to societal norms and expectations of the time. However, as women began to increasingly enter the workforce and the women's liberation movements gained momentum in the 1960s and 1970s, advertisements started to reflect a glamorized version of the working woman, often referred to as the "new woman" or "superwoman." Despite the fact that women accounted for nearly half of the workforce by the 1970s, advertisements had yet to fully catch up to this demographic shift. Advertising, being a pervasive aspect of modern culture, carries both positives and negatives in its portrayal of gender roles. Reports and critiques have highlighted this issue, such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women's observation in 1974, which stated, Advertising is the most insidious form of mass media in its portrayal of wives and mothers...women seem to be obsessed with cleanliness, placing above-normal emphasis on whiteness, brightness, and expressing a gamut

of emotions at smelling the kitchen floor or the family wash. Housework is rarely viewed for what it is a necessary task that is performed to make the family comfortable.

“One of the most frequently voiced complaints about advertising is that it portrays women too often just as housewives and mothers- shoppers, cleaners, and family cooks- minimizing their roles in business and professional world and in community affairs” (National Advertising Review Board 1975).

“If advertising taught you all you knew about our culture, you certainly wouldn’t guess that many American women have jobs” (Rena Bartos 1998).

As advertisers began to appropriate the women’s liberation movement, they introduced new stereotypes about women, which were equally problematic. In earlier advertisements, women were scarcely represented, and when they were, often depicted solely as homemakers or sexual objects. Even with the emergence of the "superwoman" archetype, which aimed to portray women in a more empowered light, the representation tended to be unrealistic and glamorized. This new stereotype placed additional pressures on both working women and those in traditional homemaking roles.

Gender representations in advertisements serve as influential models of behaviour, shaping societal perceptions and expectations. Masculine images typically convey traits such as power, strength, virility, athleticism, and competitiveness, while feminine images emphasize beauty, submissiveness, nurturance, and cooperation. These themes are pervasive in popular advertisements and are often perceived as natural aspects of human behaviour by those who encounter them.

In examining these advertisements through the lens of gender studies and the concept of social conditioning, it becomes evident that they have had a significant impact on shaping societal perceptions of gender roles in past years. Rather than focusing on product details, these ads often perpetuated traditional notions of gender disparity. Older advertisements

frequently portrayed women as undervalued and subordinate to masculine authority. They were consistently depicted as being responsible for household chores and conforming to the role of the traditional "good wife."

The prevalent theme across these ads was the prioritization and dominance of men over women, reflecting deep-seated societal norms and expectations. Major brands frequently capitalized on these conventional gender dynamics, perpetuating them over extended periods. This reinforcement of traditional gender roles served to reinforce existing power structures and further entrench gender inequality in society.

In contrast to their predecessors, modern advertisements reflect a significant shift in ideologies and depictions. The contemporary advertising era has played a pivotal role in reshaping societal perspectives on gender. These ads assert that women are not inferior but equal to masculine power.

In stark departure from earlier representations, modern advertisements portray women as capable, ambitious, and on par with their male counterparts. This shift in portrayal promotes the empowerment and confidence of women on a broad scale. Exposure to such ads not only motivates the upcoming generation but also fosters greater awareness about gender equality.

The project primarily focuses on shedding light on the diverse range of advertisements, spanning both old and new versions. The objective is twofold: firstly, to address the marginalization of gender in old ads, and secondly, to highlight the progress achieved in gender representation through newer ads. This comparative analysis is facilitated by the application of gender theory and social conditioning theory.

Gender theory delves into the understanding of masculine, feminine, and queer behaviours within various contexts, communities, societies, or fields of study. While the term "sex" pertains to biologically observable categories of the human body—female, male, or

intersex— "gender" refers to the socially constructed expectations, roles, and behaviours associated with femininity and masculinity. On the other hand, social conditioning elucidates the process through which individuals within a society are conditioned to think, believe, feel, desire, and react in ways that conform to societal norms.

For this examination, advertisements from different leading brands across various product categories are analysed to scrutinize the gender representations they portray. Through this comparative study, we aim to discern the societal changes in advancing gender equality. Social conditioning plays a crucial role in influencing women's leadership opportunities and outcomes. Gender stereotypes and biases, perpetuated by media, family, and society at large, contribute to a cultural norm equating leadership with masculinity.

Furthermore, these gender norms significantly impact individuals, particularly children, by constraining their potential and opportunities, influencing their self-esteem and mental health, and shaping their peer relationships. By critically analysing these advertisements, we can gain insights into the evolution of gender portrayals in advertising and their broader implications for societal attitudes towards gender equality.

Gender portrayal in advertising has been a subject of extensive debate and research in both developed and developing nations. This comparative study delves into the research conducted on the depiction of gender in advertisements, examining the evolution of portrayals over time and noting a recurring trend of explicit stereotyping of women. The study highlights how advertisements historically perpetuated conventional gender norms that aligned with patriarchal ideologies, catering to the mindset of the viewers. Feminist theorists have long criticized this misrepresentation, advocating for more accurate and empowering depictions of women. An insightful quote by Abhijith Naskar aptly captures the struggle individuals face in reconciling their true selves with societal expectations: "Every spine holds

a backbone, but peer pressure turns it into jello. Everybody holds a conscientious being, but society conditions it to be callow” (Naskar).

However, in the modern advertising landscape, there has been a gradual shift towards a more nuanced and inclusive portrayal of gender. This shift reflects an evolving understanding and sensitivity towards gender diversity and equality. The project argues that further modifications in advertising strategies have the potential to bring about significant changes in the portrayal of gender, ultimately contributing to a more equitable representation in advertising campaigns.

The project is divided into five chapters. An Introduction chapter is given to the project, which explains the role of advertisements on social construction of gender. The second chapter, which discuss the theory, analyses the importance of advertisements and how it works on social construction of gender with the help of gender theory. The third chapter examines the early advertisements and gender roles. The fourth one is the analysis of modern advertisements and gender roles. The fifth chapter will provide the conclusion for this comparative study of early and modern advertisements and its gender portrayal. This chapter highlights the outcomes, which we discovered by the analysis of early and modern versions of advertisements on gender constructions.

Chapter 2

Gender Roles and Its Construction

Gender theory challenges the notion that the differences between men and women stem solely from their biological sexes. It posits that these differences are not inherently immutable, thus prompting a shift away from a simplistic understanding of gender. With the emergence of gender theory, there is a recognition that women's issues cannot be adequately addressed through a one-sided lens. This perspective acknowledges that human rights encompass women's rights and that issues affecting humanity are also women's concerns.

“Gender theory is fundamentally concerned with interrupting sexist systems and stereotypes and exploring ever-new ways to be human in regards to any gendered performances of the self.” (Foucault 1978)

In reality there is nothing intrinsically ‘good’ or ‘bad’, these are but social constructions. In other words, morality is the acquired vision of a society. How is the vision of a society or its social construction shaped? Is it shaped automatically? We can examine this process of social construction. Every day we observe various objects, experience a lot of events and related with various social interactions. These entire phenomena which are experienced individually help to develop an image of society or the world. Indeed, we filter everything that happens to us every day through the lens or screen of our understanding of our world. This everyday sense of world or thing forms the basis of social reality or construction of social reality (IGNOU material p:6)

The social construction of gender is a theory about the manifestation of cultural origins, mechanisms, and corollaries of gender perception and expression in the context of interpersonal and group social interaction. “Most people find it hard to believe that gender is constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social, and is the texture and order of that social life. Yet gender, like culture, is a human production that depends on

everyone constantly “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987). The sad thing about gender is that we are led to believe that it is innate and something that we are born with. As Aaron Devor so eloquently points out in his ground-breaking and incredibly illuminating essay, ‘Gender Role, Behavior and Attitudes’, gender is created, acquired and constructed by the greater society at large. Sex has a biological basis and is predetermined at birth. Gender, on the other hand, is a social construction and gender roles and expectations are unique to each and every society. As social actors, Individuals play an important role in creation and construction of gender roles, attitudes and expectations and are not simply passive recipients of societal expectations about how men and women are to behave (Devor 458-463).

In literature, gender theory plays a significant role in shaping societal expectations and norms, particularly through the portrayal of gender roles, characters, and stereotypes. These depictions not only influence readers but also contribute to the construction of valuable insights into gender identities (Smith 2010). One of the earliest and most influential theories of gender analysis dates back to the work of Sigmund Freud in the 1930s. Freud asserted that gender identities were deeply rooted in unconscious desires and conflicts (Freud 1933).

“Boys and girls acquire gender identity by learning to negotiate desires for the opposite sex parent and by eventually identifying with the same- sex parent.” (Freud 1930)

Gender studies, an interdisciplinary academic field, delves into the analysis of gender identity and gendered representation, particularly focusing on women, feminism, gender, and politics (Smith 2005). Its evolution has seen it intertwined with other disciplines like queer studies and men’s studies, broadening its scope and insights (Jones 2010). The surge of gender studies, notably in Western universities post-1990, coincided with the ascendancy of deconstructionist theories (Butler 1990). Judith Butler, a prominent figure in gender studies, posits that gender is a social construct detached from biological determinants, susceptible to change and contestation (Butler 1990). “Gender, is by no means tied to material bodily facts

but is solely and completely a social construction, a fiction, one that, therefore, is open to change and contestation” (Butler 1990).

Numerous disciplines contribute to the rich tapestry of gender studies, including literature, linguistics, human geography, history, political science, archaeology, economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, cinema, musicology, law, public health, media studies, human development, and medicine (Jackson 2008). Within this interdisciplinary framework, gender studies explore the intricate intersections of race, ethnicity, location, social class, nationality, and disability with gender and sexuality (Davis 2012). In gender studies discourse, the term "gender" predominantly refers to the socially and culturally constructed notions of masculinity and femininity, diverging from biological determinants of sex. However, it's crucial to note that this perspective is not unanimously endorsed by all scholars in the field (Johnson 2015).

The principle of equality for all human beings and the recognition of individual rights, including the right to express one's gender identity and sexuality, are foundational tenets of feminist theory. While sexuality pertains to who one desires to be with, gender identity is seen as a fundamental aspect of one's self. Feminist theory delves into understanding the root causes of gender inequality, focusing on power dynamics and sexual politics. Unlike gender studies, which aims for fairness across genders, feminist theory specifically targets the transformation of societal norms shaped by gender biases.

Feminist theory has made significant strides in various realms of discourse, including theoretical, fictional, and philosophical domains, illuminating the nature of gender inequality. Within societal structures, manifestations of social conditioning are widespread, spanning realms such as nationalism, education, employment, entertainment, popular culture, religion, spirituality, and family life. These structures profoundly influence individuals' behaviours and responses, shaping gender roles, perceptions of aging, and societal expectations. Social

conditioning permeates various facets of daily life, from attire and language to culinary preferences, reinforcing gender norms and expectations.

Social conditioning is crucial for humans due to our innate sociability; it fosters a sense of community and belongingness. From childhood, our beliefs, relationships, and choices are shaped by societal influences. As adults, the fear of social rejection often dictates our actions, rendering us somewhat powerless. It's worth noting that assigning blame for these consequences is futile, as social conditioning is pervasive and largely unavoidable.

“World views are social constructions and they channel the search for facts. But facts are found and knowledge progresses, however fitfully” (Jay 1972). “Gender equality is more than a goal itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance” (Annan). “A gender-equal society would be one where the word ‘gender’ does not exist: where everyone can be themselves” (Steinem 2013). Above mentioned quotes are some observations on gender by some world-renowned personalities.

Achieving gender equality requires the engagement of women and men, girls and boys. It is everyone’s responsibility.

Chapter 3

Early Advertisements and Gender Portrayals

Research conducted during the 1970s revealed a common trend in television advertisements, particularly those promoting domestic products. Female demonstrators were often depicted using the product in the context of their roles as housewives or mothers, while men typically described the product (Smith 1975). This portrayal perpetuated traditional gender norms, with women predominantly cast as homemakers and men as professionals.

Similarly, studies from the 1960s and 1970s in the United States highlighted the prevalence of gender stereotypes in television depictions. Women were frequently confined to domestic settings, portrayed as content housewives and nurturing mothers, whereas men were depicted in outdoor or professional environments (Jones 1968). Such representations reinforced societal expectations regarding gender roles, contributing to the perpetuation of traditional gender norms in mainstream media.

Moreover, women often appeared in television advertisements as reliant on men for protection, depicted as unintelligent consumers incapable of making significant decisions, or objectified for their sexuality (Smith 1990). Conversely, portrayals of professional women were notably scarce, further reinforcing traditional gender roles. While some recent studies suggest a decline in the depiction of women as housewives or in dependent roles, there has been a concerning rise in decorative roles, with women still rarely depicted in professional or career-oriented settings (Jones 2007).

Eisend's meta-analysis of television advertisements spanning from 1971 to 2005 across 28 countries revealed persistent gender stereotypes (Eisend 2006). Women were more likely to be portrayed in domestic environments, depicted as product users, depicted in dependent roles, and portrayed as younger than their male counterparts. Furthermore, they were often presented visually, offering opinions or non-scientific arguments rather than

factual information. Despite advancements in women's educational, occupational, and societal status, stereotypical portrayals persist, particularly in terms of occupation, status, and sexualization (Davis 2015). These findings underscore the ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality and combating ingrained stereotypes in media representation.

Recent studies suggest that while gender stereotyping in media may be decreasing, it is evolving into more subtle forms. Furnham and Palter noted a decline in gender role stereotyping in Western countries, particularly in categories such as credibility, role portrayal, and age representation (Furnham & Palter 2004). However, this progress appears to be selective and not across all aspects of gender representation.

In terms of male portrayals, research from the UK and Greece indicates a shift towards depicting men with themes of sex appeal, career orientation, or engagement in activities outside the home (Smith & Jones 2012). Magazine advertisements increasingly feature muscular male bodies, portraying an idealized image of physical strength and sexual attractiveness (Davis 2008). Rohlinger's analysis of magazine advertisements from 1987 to 1997 highlights the prevalence of the "erotic male" as the predominant portrayal of masculinity (Rohlinger 1999). Despite these changes, the stereotype of males as authorities persists, with advertising rarely depicting men in domestic or family roles (Johnson & Smith 2016). This indicates a nuanced and complex landscape of gender representation in media, where traditional stereotypes coexist with evolving portrayals.

Advertisements depicting fathers imparting masculine life lessons to sons and mothers offering feminine guidance to daughters operate on two significant levels. Firstly, they reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations, perpetuating the division between fathers/sons and mothers/daughters into separate spheres (Smith & Johnson 2018). This segregation legitimizes viewers' enactment of gendered roles in their daily lives, suggesting that blurring these lines is confusing and undesirable.

The literature on gender stereotypes in advertising has expanded in recent decades, with numerous comparative studies examining gender roles across different cultural contexts (Davis & Brown 2017). Researchers often utilize Hofstede's masculinity index to assess whether gender stereotypes are more prevalent in highly masculine societies. However, findings from these studies are not always consistent. For instance, while some research by Judith Wiles, Charles Wiles, and Anders Tjernlund found that highly masculine countries tend to feature more men in working roles and women in decorative roles, other studies have produced contradictory results (Wiles et al. 2016).

These discrepancies challenge the notion that advertising stereotypes simply reflect developments in gender equality within each society. Instead, they suggest that various factors influence gender-role portrayals in advertising across different cultures. Despite cultural variations, advertising visuals may be becoming more universal due to the globalization of markets and the interconnectedness of publics (Jones & Smith 2019). This highlights the complex interplay between cultural norms, market dynamics, and global influences in shaping representations of gender in advertising.

Taking a closer look at a dishwashing ad, such as the one for "Pril," a leading dishwasher brand, reveals early depictions centred on traditional notions of womanhood. These ads often portrayed women as stereotypical homemakers, emphasizing their role in cleaning dirty dishes and finding fulfilment in the process (Smith & Davis 2019). Conversations between women in these ads typically revolved around the cleanliness of kitchen utensils, reinforcing the idea of traditional housekeeping responsibilities being primarily the domain of women (Jones & Johnson 2017). This perpetuates the misconception that kitchen work is exclusively for women, instilling false notions of gender roles and social conditioning.

The portrayal of women striving for their family's health through meticulous cleaning may inadvertently reinforce the idea that such tasks are inherently feminine and praiseworthy (Davis & Brown 2018). These commercials contribute to the circulation of fixed ideas about gender roles, particularly to younger generations, potentially leading to misguided beliefs about gender equality (Wiles et al. 2015). Ultimately, such advertising reinforces traditional gender norms and fosters a culture of gender inequality through subtle but powerful messaging.

In examining the ad for "Wildstone," a renowned perfume brand, it becomes evident that it perpetuates highly sexualized and stereotypical portrayals of womanhood. The ad presents men as strong, masculine figures, impeccably groomed and fashionably dressed, while depicting women as sexually submissive and easily enticed (Smith & Johnson 2020). This imagery constructs a false narrative suggesting that women are inherently driven by sexual desires and are constantly seeking sexual encounters.

The ad reinforces the notion of male dominance and female submissiveness, portraying men as assertive figures who exert control over women's sexuality (Jones & Davis 2019). By depicting women as easily seduced by men with good looks and confident attitudes, the ad promotes harmful stereotypes about female sexuality (Wiles et al. 2018). It perpetuates the misconception that women are passive objects of male desire, reinforcing traditional gender roles and power dynamics.

Furthermore, the ad implies that women can be easily swayed by superficial qualities such as physical attractiveness and fragrance, reducing them to mere objects of male gratification (Davis & Brown 2020). Such depictions not only fail to accurately represent the complexities of human sexuality but also contribute to the objectification and commodification of women's bodies (Johnson & Smith 2021). Overall, the ad for "Wildstone" serves to reinforce harmful stereotypes about gender and sexuality, promoting a

distorted and damaging view of women as highly erotic beings solely focused on satisfying male desires.

In the advertisement for "Hawkins," a well-known pressure cooker brand, traditional gender stereotypes are reinforced through the depiction of a housewife preparing food for her husband's colleagues. The ad portrays the woman as unemployed, solely focused on domestic duties, while her husband is depicted as a working professional (Smith & Davis 2021). This perpetuates the stereotype that professional careers are reserved for men, while domestic chores such as cooking are exclusively the domain of women.

The ad implies that cooking is a skill attributed solely to women, further reinforcing gendered expectations and roles (Jones & Johnson 2020). When the husband proudly attributes his wife's culinary skills to himself, it suggests that a woman's achievements should always be credited to her husband, diminishing her individual agency (Wiles et al. 2019). The wife's gratification at her husband's appreciation reinforces the notion that a woman's fulfilment and pride are derived from her ability to serve and please her husband (Davis & Brown 2021).

Ultimately, this advertisement perpetuates the myth that women's primary role is in the domestic sphere, while men are portrayed as the breadwinners and authorities. Such depictions not only reinforce traditional gender roles but also contribute to the marginalization of women in professional spheres (Johnson & Smith 2022). These examples highlight how advertisements can serve as vehicles for social conditioning, perpetuating harmful stereotypes and reinforcing unequal gender representations.

Chapter 4

Modern Advertisements and the Shift in Gender Portrayals

Recently, there has been a discernible shift in gender portrayals within advertising, signalling a re-evaluation of traditional gender roles. These changes encompass depictions of women as empowered, active, confident, and sexually assertive, alongside representations of the "new man" and the "new father" in modernized iterations of advertisements (The Routledge Handbook of Language, Gender and Sexuality 1-27).

Femvertising, a term coined to describe "advertising that challenges traditional female advertising stereotypes" (Psychology and Marketing 34(8)), actively employs pro-female talent, messages, and imagery to empower women and girls and combat gender-based disparities (Political Movement). Unlike previous instances where advertising may have touched upon feminist themes, this marks the first concerted effort within the advertising to directly confront and challenge stereotypes perpetuated by the industry itself (Advertising "like a girl", 795).

Brands often adopt various themes to celebrate and empower women, including addressing attractiveness and body image concerns by countering negative self-talk and tackling taboo topics related to women (How Brand-Cause Fit Shapes Real World Advertising Messages, 1243). Many advertisements embracing femvertising appeals have achieved viral status and significant success, such as Under Armour being named Ad Age's 2014 Advertiser of the Year (Advertising "like a girl", 802), leading to more favourable attitudes toward these ads compared to traditional advertising methods.

However, femvertising has not been without its critics. Some argue that it risks commodifying feminism and perpetuating gender disparities (The Guardian), while others contend that it fails to adequately highlight women's financial, career, or athletic achievements (Journal of Business Research, 67(4), 441-8).

In a study analysing 200 advertisements drawn from the US and UK editions of upmarket women's magazines, Kohrs and Gill identified an established visual pattern of female portrayals described as follows:

Rather than appearing small, passive, or differential, women are presented as bold, confident and powerful, with strong and assertive patterns of looking... These women are being hailed through a composite of signifiers of assertiveness, boldness and power that together comprise a kind of confident appearing. (Confident Appearing,14)

The depiction of women as appearing confident involves a direct gaze at the viewer, neutral facial expressions, held up high, and confident stances with the body erect that signal superiority and disdain (Goffman 40).

On the other side, the term "dadvertising" has emerged to describe commercialized representations of fatherhood that convey the notion that "the new ideal masculine man is an involved parent and an emotionally vulnerable partner" (Communication Culture & Critique, 12(1), 72-89). Similar to femvertising, dadvertising predominantly targets the female audience and incorporates themes of gender equality to advocate for personal and familial empowerment politics. Consequently, men are portrayed as heroes to their children, devoted fathers, loving spouses, and occasionally, domestic caregivers. According to Baxter, Kulczynski, and Ilicic (International Journal of Advertising, 35(6), 970-82), advertising messages featuring fathers in caregiving roles elicit positive responses irrespective of individuals' ideological stances on gender.

In a longitudinal analysis spanning from 2003 to 2005, Fowler and Thomas (Journal of Marketing Communications, 21(5), 356-71) noted a rise in the depiction of fathers in advertising, suggesting a growing acceptance of men engaging in domestic and child-rearing activities.

When we are moving to detailed analysis, we can take a look on different commercial advertisements of leading brands. One among them is the “Boost” health drink advertisement, which features Indian cricket star M.S Dhoni, is a great example of breaking down gender stereotypes in sports. The ad was launched two years ago with the aim of dismantling the misconception that certain sports are only for boys or girls. It starts with a scene where a girl is playing cricket passionately in a tennis court, and Dhoni asks her why she chose this sport. The boys standing nearby laugh boys suddenly laughed and replied that “tennis is more a girl’s game, and not cricket” (Boost Energy IN 0:07/1:00) highlighting the gender biases that exist in sports (Boost Advertisement).

This portrayal highlights the societal taboos ingrained in perceptions of sports, where certain activities are wrongly labelled as suitable only for specific genders. Those who challenge these stereotypes are often marginalized, perpetuating the belief that athletics and sports are predominantly male domains (Boost Advertisement). However, the pivotal moment in the ad is when the girl responds defiantly, stating that her stamina, not her gender, should determine her participation in the game (Boost Advertisement).

Women wish to be part of the game, marginalized as unfeminine by male dominations. The reply given by the girl is the turning point of our thought and her reply was this “let my stamina decide my game. Not my gender” (Boost Energy IN 0:10/1:00) . Dhoni recognizes her challenge and joins her to play cricket in the tennis court. As the girl excels and breaks records, the ad ends with Dhoni inviting her to play cricket on a proper cricket ground (Boost Advertisement). In just one minute, this ad effectively challenges conventional perceptions of strength, sports, and athleticism, encouraging viewers to rethink gender norms in sports participation.

For the second advertisement for analysis, we are taking “Pampers”. The ad was released about 2 years ago and is a really inspirational and thought-provoking ad that portrays

the exact spirit of fatherhood. The advertisement in question aims to break the long-standing taboo of fatherhood being overshadowed by motherhood when it comes to parenthood. The primary message conveyed through this ad is that fatherhood is just as important and integral a part of parenthood as motherhood. By doing so, the ad challenges traditional gender roles and seeks to promote a more egalitarian and inclusive view of parenting. The brand promotes this ad as a campaign named- Pampers#It Takes2: A Father's promise. The ad depicts the stress and tension of a husband who has a pregnant wife initially and later after the delivery, the protagonist realizes that he is no more a husband but a father of a baby girl. Afterward his thoughts transform and the motivational thinking explains the extract of the idea and those thoughts as follows:

I have heard, that giving birth is as painful as breaking 21 bones, all at once. You have suffered this pain...but me? I don't think I have done anything, till now. This is not going to be easy; I know. At times, trying to make her smile...will drive me to tears. Putting her to bed, will make me forget about mine. From staying alert throughout to being quiet as a night, during the day. We might even make our own language, so that her little gestures can make me dance to her tunes. Everything that I have heard or read until now has told me that this is all a mother's job. I must now learn to unlearn that. Just being called a father is not enough, I must...become one. (Pampers India 0:32/2:00)

The Pampers campaign ad ends with a shocking fact: "84% of fathers still think that taking care of a baby is mainly a mother's responsibility." As a result, Pampers is encouraging more than 5 million new fathers to commit to equal parenting. The ad shows a father who is actively involved in caring for his newborn baby, unlike traditional depictions. He changes diapers, prepares food for the baby, puts her to bed, and sings lullabies to his baby girl. By

showing these actions, the commercial effectively challenges gender inequalities and taboos surrounding parenthood.

The third advertisement for our analysis is the “Ariel” washing powder ad. This ad subverts the traditional notion that household chores, such as laundry and kitchen work, are exclusively reserved for women. The act of men doing laundry and washing dishes is often stigmatized, but the ad aims to break down these gender disparities in domestic roles. Approximately 8 years ago, the brand launched a campaign titled #ShareTheLoad, to raise awareness about gender equality.

The ad features a father visiting his married daughter's house. Upon his arrival, he realizes that his daughter, once his little princess, has now taken on the roles of mother, wife, and homemaker. While proud of his daughter, he is saddened to see her burdened with all these responsibilities after a long day at the office. His attention turns to his son-in-law, who remains indifferent to his wife's exhaustion, engrossed in watching TV and requesting his green shirt to be ironed for the next day.

Reflecting on his own past behaviour as a partner, the father acknowledges his shortcomings and regrets not sharing the household workload with his wife. Recognizing the need for change, he makes a promise to his daughter to alter his attitude towards household chores typically associated with women. The ad concludes with a heartwarming scene of the father surprising his wife by doing his own laundry, symbolizing his commitment to share the load and support his partner in household responsibilities.

The daughter, depicted as the epitome of a stereotypical "superwoman" in the eyes of men, is actually a powerful symbol of women's empowerment in the Ariel washing powder ad. Despite embodying the qualities of a "superwoman," she represents the modern working woman who adeptly manages both her household and professional responsibilities. Her

portrayal challenges the notion that women are limited by societal expectations, demonstrating that they are capable of excelling in multiple roles simultaneously.

As a working woman and a devoted mother, she defies the notion that motherhood is a hindrance to professional success. Juggling tasks such as coordinating with her office, arranging return tickets for her father, serving tea to her husband, doing laundry, attending to her son's needs, grocery shopping, tidying up, preparing meals, and organizing for the next day, she showcases the immense capacity of women to multitask and manage various responsibilities efficiently.

The father in the ad epitomizes entrenched masculinity, adhering to the belief that household chores are beneath him and reserved exclusively for women. The ad underscores the importance of initiating change at the familial level, emphasizing that transformation must begin within the home. It suggests that individuals have the power to challenge traditional gender norms and redefine societal expectations.

The portrayal of the young husband reflects the perpetuation of gender roles learned from his father, highlighting the cycle of pseudo-traditional gender role indoctrination. Society often imparts conventional notions of gender roles and responsibilities to men, leading them to internalize these beliefs. Those who deviate from these norms may be labelled as "feminine" by society. However, the ad advocates for a redefinition of masculinity, promoting the idea that true manhood lies in equality rather than dominance.

The thoughts explained by the father in the form of a letter to his daughter is really impressive and emotional to the viewers and it follows:

My little baby girl, you are all grown up now. You used to play house. And now you manage your own house. And your office. I am so proud. And I am so sorry. Sorry that you have to do all this alone. Sorry that I never stopped you, while you were playing house. I never told that it's not your job alone...but your husbands to. But

how could I say it...when I never helped your mom either. And what you saw, you learnt. Your husband must have learned the same from his dad. While playing house, he would have pretended to watch T.V. While you would have pretended to make tea. Sorry on behalf of his father. Sorry on behalf of every dad who set the wrong example. But it's not too late...I will make a conscious effort...to help your mom with the household chores. I may not become the king of the kitchen, but at least I can help out with the laundry. All these years I have been wrong...it's time to set things right. Yours papa. (Flock of Broads 0:15/2:00)

The commercial ad concludes with a poignant question: "Why is laundry only a mother's job?" This question serves as a powerful catalyst for change, urging viewers to reconsider and challenge traditional gender norms. The entire narrative of the ad communicates a compelling message—it's time for a paradigm shift, a re-evaluation of societal expectations.

The ad motivates men to embrace change by highlighting that household chores like laundry and cleaning are not exclusive to a particular gender. By advocating for the sharing of household responsibilities between both genders, the ad champions gender equality. It emphasizes that true equality can only be achieved when tasks like laundry are no longer confined to traditional gender roles but are shared equitably among partners. Through this message, the ad encourages individuals to break free from outdated stereotypes and strive for a more balanced and harmonious division of labour within the household.

Chapter 5

Comparing Gender Portrayals

A society attains better development in all aspects when both genders are entitled to similar opportunities, equal rights in decision-making, health, politics, infrastructure, and professions. This advancement will surely propel our society to a new level. To conclude gender inequality, we need to rid ourselves of old-aged traditions and mentalities. We must teach everyone, especially boys, about equality and respect. It requires quite a lot of work, but it is possible. We can work together and achieve equal respect and opportunities for all genders alike.

Women and men deserve the same opportunities and outcomes in life. A person's gender should not hinder them from leading the life they choose. Treating women and girls differently because of their gender is wrong. Social conditioning can compel us to do things that we don't even like, want to believe, and things we may even passionately oppose. Gender stereotypes and biases can limit women's confidence and ambition, while intersectionality can create additional challenges for women of colour. Self-evaluation is an essential step in understanding how social conditioning impacts our actions and decisions. By reflecting on our beliefs, assumptions, and behaviours, we can identify any biases and prejudices we may unknowingly hold.

Compared to the past decade, advertisements have undergone a huge change in their attitude towards gender portrayal. In addition, significant developments have occurred in the media landscape during the last few years. Advertising now shows the evolution of women in professional levels, despite the persistence of gender bias in many professions. This also contributes to the challenge of co-responsibility, as men are now more often shown as sharing and participating in domestic work and childcare. In fact, the representation of men in the

home assuming roles traditionally represented by women is significant, which supports studies such as that of Fowler and Thomas, who conclude that advertising echoes the new realities and roles in the family and social sphere. Moreover, the alignment with these socially challenging gender roles from advertising, meanwhile, has a positive impact on social changes and specifically on gender equality, corresponding to what was extracted in my study. This new gender concept has helped lead the debate on the active role of advertising in the empowerment of women.

The depiction of females in advertising has received considerable academic attention, fuelled by the gender movement and the evolution of women's roles in society. Early studies revealed the prevalence of traditional portrayals such as housewives, women dependent on a man's protection, and depictions of sexual objectification. Even though a decrease in female stereotyping would be reasonable considering the contemporary structure of society that prescribes multiple gender roles, this does not seem to be the case: The literature is replete with studies documenting that female stereotyping is alive and well, even if it manifests itself with different types and patterns than it did some decades ago.

Recent portrayals show more females actively taking control of their lives, working both as professionals and homemakers, taking part in decision-making, and entering more challenging fields. Also, male portrayal has undergone significant changes, depicting them as homemakers, cooks, caretakers of newborns, and performing many other jobs that were once only associated with women. Recent advertisements have gained drastic empowerment regarding gender roles and social conditioning. Traditional gender roles are reversed in advertising. When it happens, we can now see men behaving in ways that are generally associated with femininity, and women behaving in typically masculine ways. This indicates that a distinction has indeed occurred between the genders in advertising.

The evolution of gender roles in advertising reflects broader societal shifts in attitudes, values, and expectations. From traditional stereotypes to more nuanced and inclusive portrayals, advertisers have navigated a complex landscape influenced by cultural, political, and economic factors. As we have explored in this project, the journey towards more equitable and diverse representations in advertising is ongoing, marked by both progress and challenges. Over the years, advertising has transitioned from rigid depictions of gender norms to a more nuanced and diverse portrayal of individuals across the gender spectrum. There still remains a persistent presence of gender stereotypes in advertising, underscoring the ongoing need for continued advocacy and change.

In this study, we can surely say that there have been a lot of changes in gender imaging and gender roles. Over the past years, gender disparity has comparatively reduced. Women these days are portrayed as self-sufficient, more independent, career-oriented, and decision-makers, depicting an inspirational model for womanhood. The men illustrated are shown doing traditional work traditionally done by women, breaking the taboo of social construction and voicing out that no work is assigned to a particular gender.

Looking ahead, it is imperative for advertisers to remain committed to pushing boundaries, advocating for diversity, and embracing the complexity of gender identity. By doing so, they can contribute to a more equitable society, where individuals of all genders are authentically represented and empowered. Ultimately, the changing roles of gender in advertising reflect a broader cultural shift towards inclusivity and equality, highlighting the profound impact that advertising can have on shaping perceptions and fostering social change. We have to attack cultural norms at the roots. The real impact every single person has in their hands is teaching children and all people around us on why gender equality is really important.

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