

Vol IX 2019

ISSN : 2250-2653

# RESEARCH FRONTS

A Peer Reviewed Journal of Multiple Sciences, Arts & Commerce



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**Published & Printed by:**

Government Digvijay P.G. Autonomous College, Rajnandgaon. Chhattisgarh 491 441 (India)

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**From the Desk of Chief Editor...**

*This volume has the following features. **First**, it covers the regional diversity as it represents northern region (Delhi), central region (Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh) and eastern region of India. **Second**, it caters the academic diversity by addressing the issues of Education, Health, Food & social Security, Tourism and Portrayal of Women in Indian TV Advertisements from the social science stream. **Third**, it also enhances the academic coverage by including paper on Fish Fauna Diversity from the natural science stream.*

***Generous and timely contributions from the authors are greatly appreciated for regular publication of this journal which is fully financed by the autonomous cell of the college with the sole aim of enhancing research environment in the country.***

## **Study of Portrayal of Woman in Indian TV Advertisements-Stereotype or Progressive: A Content Analysis Approach**

**Meenu Kumar\* and Akanksha Raman Khare\*\***

### **Abstract**

Women play a pivotal role in society but ironies is that in a patriarch system of Indian family, she is deprived from taking decision independently, being economically independent and have their own identity. She is treated as an object and stereotyped to remain at home, cook meals and look after offspring. But the incessant efforts of government and social activists have changed the scenario and women are also coming out to earn, to have independent opinions, taking decisions and transforming from stereotype to progressive. Media carry advertisements, the messages of marketers across the customers. Media mirror the society and vice versa. The present study focuses on whether the changes in the image of women from stereotype to progressive is also reflecting in the advertising telecast on television channels or not. The research is carried out to gaze the changes in the image of the women in TV commercials. The product categories in which they are used, the relevancy, the background of advertising, the role of women have also been studied. Content analysis technique has been used to conduct the study. Out of hundred advertisements analyzed, jewelry, cosmetics and apparels ranked highest followed by food and beverages. The study also reveals that most of the advertisements projected women in progressive role though maintaining the role as mother, wives sister and friend.

**Keywords:** Advertising, Progressive, Stereotype, Television, Women.

### **Introduction:**

The condition of women in Indian society was not very good and did not have right to study, take decisions at home and were treated as an object and were treated in traditional ways to look after husband and family. Since ages, women have been reflected in stereotypical roles. She has been highlighted as “her place is in the home, they don’t make important decisions, are regarded as sex objects by men and as being dependent on men (Courtney and Lockertz, 1971). But many initiatives taken by governments and NGO the traditional thinking of people are changing gradually and literacy among women is increasing and is coming out of the

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boundaries of home to be financially independent and contribute in expenses of home. “The status of women in any society and community is the true indicator of its advancement and a factor that helps to define and rank a nation” (Towns, 2009).

Media play very important role in bringing changes in society as media and society are interdependent. Schaffter (2006) suggested that advertisements merely reflect society. And for the advertisers, it is easy and convenient to depict women as they are generally recognized by the society.

The present study has been conducted with following objectives:

### **Objectives of the study**

The study has been carried out with the following objectives:

1. To study the percentage of advertising featuring women.
2. To study the categories of products featuring women in advertisements.
3. To study the relevancy- the use of women in advertisements of products which women do not use.
4. To study how the women are used –endorser, as an expert or as just an actor.
5. To study the types of appeals used in the advertisements featuring women.
6. To study the location where the advertisements were shot in the advertisements featuring women.
7. To study the projection of women as stereotype or progressive in advertisements featuring women.

### **Literature Review**

Although content analysis has been used widely to analyze the content of TV advertisements, the studies to understand the projection of women in TV advertising are only a few. The similar studies carried out in other countries may not be beneficial in Indian context.

The study conducted by Das (2000) revealed that Indian magazine advertisements portrayed women less often as sex objects than that of the advertisements in western countries. He also found that women were portrayed in neutral ways (Das, 2000).

Fatima S (2016) suggested that modern Indian advertisements present a more realistic and balanced picture of a woman and there is shift from showcasing women merely as tradition bound homemakers to those playing modern roles.

Dwivedy et al (2009) analyzed fourteen hundred advertisements from 2006- 2007 and also disclosed that there is a change in contemporary role portrayal of women in Indian magazine advertising, but the progress is very slow.

Sukumar & Venkatesh (2011) in their study on images of women in TV advertisements and their impacts on society have revealed that the role of Indian women in advertisements has also changed according to their roles in the society. The researchers further added that the new transformation has led to a new personality of India women- economically independent and having financial control over the family. They opined “There is a shift in the portrayal of woman in advertisements from a mere house wife to a career oriented and professional with independent identity and multiple identities, who is a super woman successful in balancing her personal and professional life”.

In an analysis of 200 advertisements for period of 12- year from 1994 to 2005, Schaffter (2006) revealed “sexism and gender stereotyping are still prevalent in the Indian advertising industry”.

Jha ( 2007) concluded that the advertisements are projecting women as smart mom’s, the super wife with assertion in choice, the young girl having choice of getting education over marriage, balancing their professional and personal life, but are also being portrayed as highly sexualized and decorative objects.

Yakkaldevi (2014), mentioned the deteriorated portrayal of women in advertisements and very often their swinging role between “mother India” and “glamour girl”.

Fathima's (2013) opinion on portrayal of women in TV advertisements is totally a different from the earlier studies. She found a changed and improved depiction of women in Indian advertisements, better over the years. She suggested "in contemporary advertisements women are depicted as confident, outgoing person, leading, aspirants and having go-got attitude rather than being a housewife washing clothes, utensils, cooking, taking care of the health and hygiene of the family members etc".

But contrary to above study, Moorthi, Roy and Pansari (2014) revealed that women's role in television advertising has slightly changed over the decades. They opined that women are still portrayed in stereotypical roles but the product categories advertised by them are changed.

## **Research Design**

### **Sampling**

The advertising telecast on Entertainment channels like Star Plus, Zee TV, Sony Color and News Channels like NDTV, AAj Tak, India TV have been analyzed. The programs were recorded from 1<sup>st</sup> Oct 2019 to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019. These were later analyzed for the advertisement telecast during the programs. 100 Television Advertisements were thoroughly analyzed to carry out research.

### **Methodology**

The aim of the study was to find out the pre defined variables in the advertisements for which content analysis technique was used. It is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantities manner for the purpose of measuring variables. (Kerlinger F1986). The unit of analysis was the advertisements telecast TV channels and were coded under number of variables like presence of women, their no, product categories and field (TV, Films or Sports), appeals, locations, and projection as progressive or stereotype.

### **Statistical tools**

Only percentage has been calculated to see the use of women in TV advertisements.

### **Data Collection and analysis**

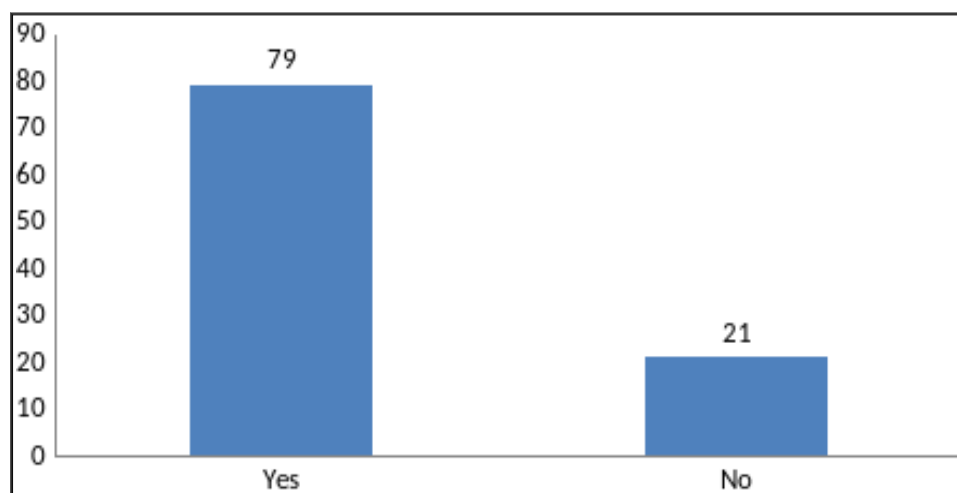


**Use of Woman in TV advertisings:** Table 1 reveals the number of advertisements in which women was used and on analysis it has been found that out of 100 advertisements, 79 advertisements featured women and 21 advertisements had no any women. Thus most of the advertisements use woman to persuade consumers to use products or services. The result is also shown graphically in Fig1.

**Table 1: Use of Woman in TV Advertisements**

Woman Used in TVA	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	79	79.0
No	21	21.0
Total	100	100.0

**Fig 1: Use of Woman in TV Advertisements**



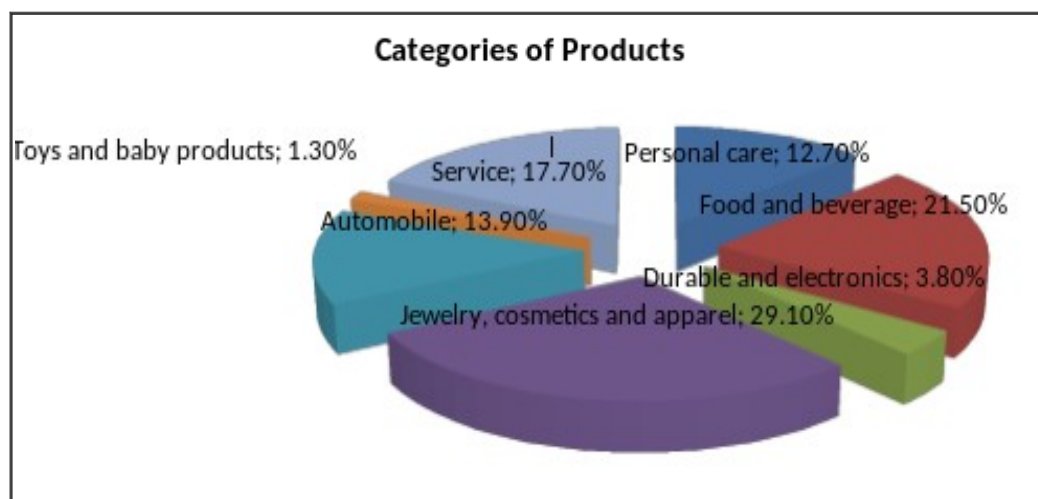
### **Categories of Products Featuring Women in Advertisements:**

Categories of products which featured women have been depicted in Table 2. On examining the table it has been found that maximum advertisements which featured women are from jewelry, cosmetics and apparel the number of which are 23 and the percentage is 29.1 % which is obvious as these are the products which are used by women. It is followed by food and beverage the number of which is 17 and percentage is 21.5%. Out of 79 advertisements which featured women, 14 are from service sector, 11 are from automobile sector, 7 are personal care products, 3 from durable and electronics and 1 is from Toys and baby products with percentages 17.7%, 13.9%, 12.7% 3.8% and 1.3 % respectively. The result is also represented in Fig 2.

**Table 2: Advertised Product Categories featuring Women**

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Personal care	10	12.7
Food and beverage	17	21.5
Durable and electronics	3	3.8
Jewelry, cosmetics and apparel	23	29.1
Automobile	11	13.9
Toys and baby products	1	1.3
Service	14	17.7
Total	79	100.0

**Fig 2: Advertised Product Categories featuring Women**



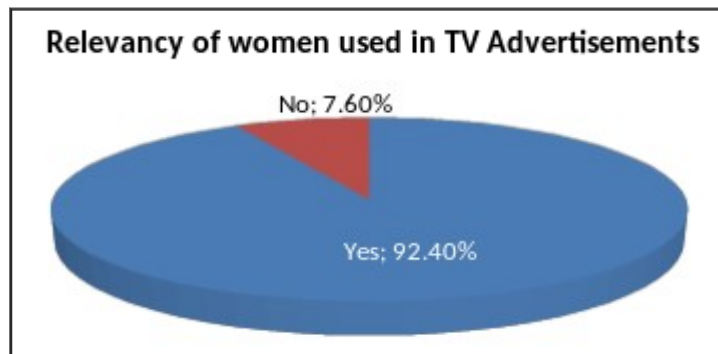
### Relevancy of Women Used In The Advertisements Featuring Women:

The Table No 3 features relevancy of women used in the advertisement. It means the use of women in the advertisement of products which are meant for men and the table shows that only 6 advertisements out of 79 were found to be non relevant and 73 advertisements with the 92.4 % are using women to sell the products. Fig No 3 presents result graphically.

**Table 3: Relevancy of women used in TV commercials**

Relevancy of Women used	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	73	92.4
No	6	7.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Fig 3: Relevancy of women used in TV Advertisements**



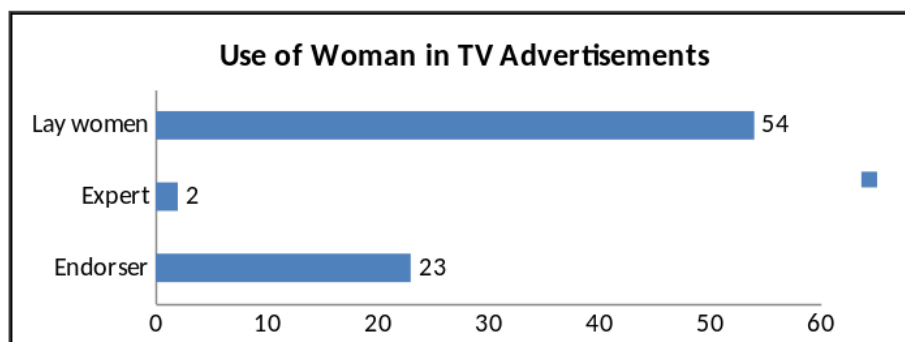
#### **How the women are used –endorser, as an expert or as lay women?**

Marketers use different gimmick to persuade the customers to make purchase of their products. Some of them are endorsing the products by some celebrities, making the products recommended by some experts and some time the advertisements are shown just as the lay man user. The Table no 5 indicates that out of 79 advertisements, 23 have been endorsed by some female celebrities, in 2 advertisements women are used as expert recommending products to their customers and 54 advertisements are being shown as user of the product.

**Table 4: Use of Woman in TV Advertisements -Endorser, Expert or Lay Woman**

	Frequency	Percent
Endorser	23	29.1
Expert	2	2.5
Lay women	54	68.4
Total	100	100

**Fig 4: Use of women in TV Advertisements**



#### **Types of Appeals Used In The Advertisements Featuring Women**

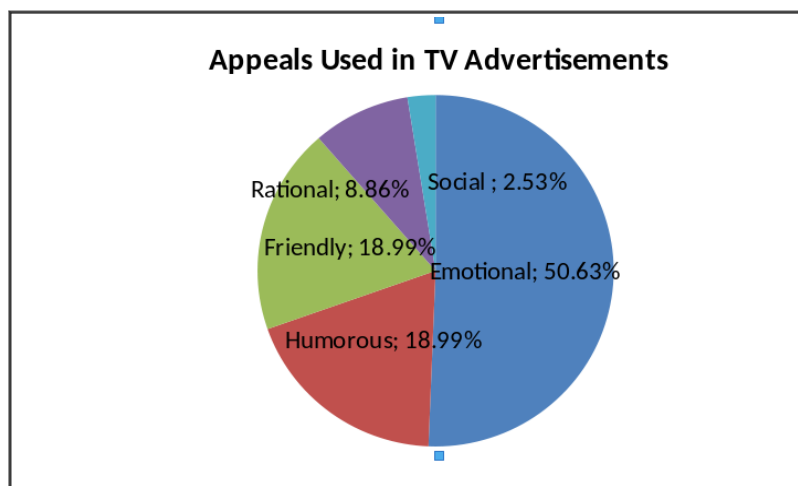
Appeals are another way to persuade customers and advertisements are analysed to know what appeals are being used in which women are featured, the result has been presented

in Table No 5. The result indicates that maximum advertisements are having emotional appeals the no of which are 40 with 50.6 percent followed by humorous and friendly appeal 19 percent each. Rational appeal has also been used in 8.9 percent but advertisements with social appeals are only 2.5 percent. Thus emotional appeal is the dominant in persuading consumers. The result has also been presented in Fig 5.

**Table 5: Appeals Used in Advertisements Featuring Women**

	Frequency	Percent
Emotional	40	50.6
Humorous	15	19.0
Friendly	15	19.0
Rational	7	8.9
Social	2	2.5
Total	79	100.0

**Fig 5: Appeals Used in TV Advertisements**



#### **Location where the advertisements were shot featuring women:**

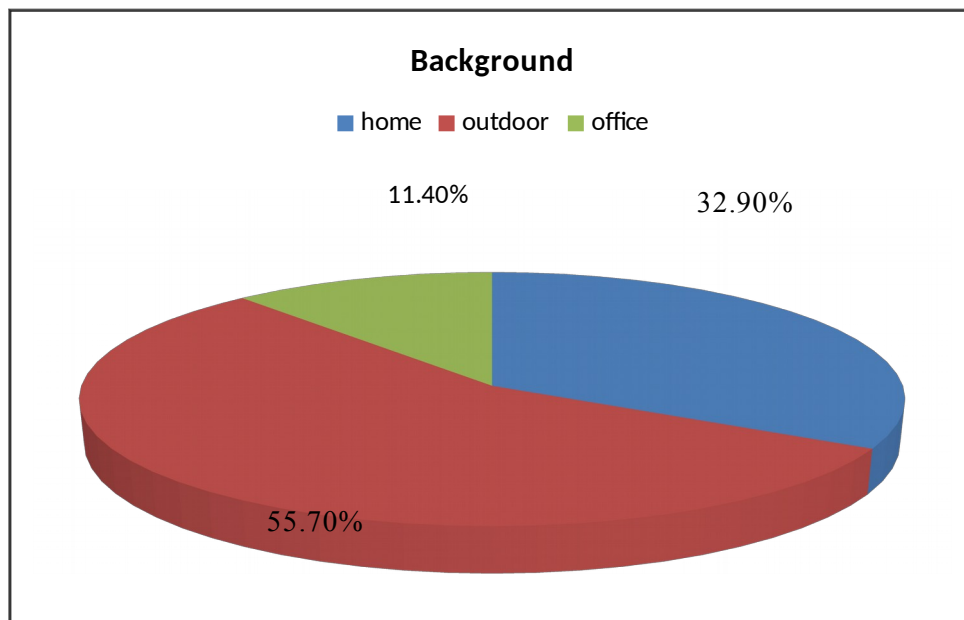
Advertisements are usually shot in various location like at home or at working place or at wedding, picnics, malls, markets, pools, schools and parks etc.

**Table 6: Location where the advertisements were shot featuring women**

	Frequency	Percent
Home	26	32.9
Outdoor	44	55.7
Office	9	11.4
Total	79	100.0

In the present study three locations have been identified-home, working place and outdoors. The result indicates that out of 79 advertisements, 44 are shot outdoors like marriage places parties, shopping malls or playgrounds followed by 26 advertisements were shot at home and only 9 advertisements have been shown in office or working place only.

**Fig 6: Background used in TV Advertisements Featuring Women**



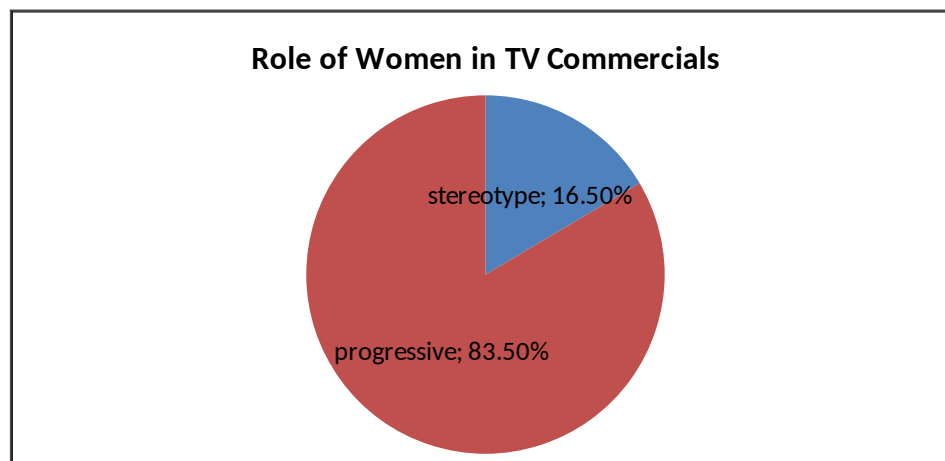
### Projection of women in advertisements featuring women

Table 7 presents role played by women in Indian TV advertisements –that is whether it is still stereotype or progressive and the result indicates that 83.5% advertisements projected women in progressive role in modern, confident, capable to take decisions and also enjoying life. Only 16.5 % advertisements have shown women in stereotype.

**Table 7 Role of women in TV commercials**

	Frequency	Percent
stereotype	13	16.5
progressive	66	83.5
Total	79	100.0

**Fig 7: Role of Woman in TV Advertisements**



### Findings and Discussions

**The Study** has been conducted across the world to understand the depiction of women in TV advertisements but as Indian culture is quite different from other countries so those studies are of little use.

In India also researchers are keenly interested to know whether the changes which are visible in society are being depicted in TV advertisements or not and most of the studies revealed that there are shift in the image of woman from traditional stereotype, clad in sarrees, limited to boundaries of home, looking after families to modern progressive working woman, being independent, having an identity and free and capable to take decisions but this shift is slow.

The present study also found that most (85.5%) of the advertisements under study depicted woman in progressive role. Though they are sharing the responsibilities of home, a modern mother, wife, friend and in many advertisements an individual personality playing role model.

Media and society are indispensable as society need media for information, entertainments and education and media mirrors the society and so is the advertisements.

The result of present study indicates that the status of women in Indian society is improving and the attempts of gender equality and empowerments are clearly visible in advertisements.

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