

Gender Sensitization in Advertising Industry

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Abstract

Being the contrast in opinions of various scholars on women portrayal in advertising media, it becomes a researchable topic for the researcher who aims at finding the need and status of women in advertising media. It is based on primary data via interview of 100 people engaged in Ad media where validity of results has been checked using F-values. Study found that it would seem that a more realistic portrayal of women in advertising is not only desirable but fundamental in a modern marketplace. Women not only want it, they deserve it. If advertisers believe that they are currently depicting women accurately in advertising, they may be advised to rethink their position. Study provides the value to the various stakeholders by bringing up the image of women in the society. It also efforts to reduce the gender discrimination, of which roots are very deep in our society. Time, cost and sample size have been the constraints of the study which limit its generalization.

Keywords: Women, Advertisements, Portrayal, Media, Gender.

Introduction

spheres of life, limiting the types of roles and responsibilities women can undertake. Advertising media is a part of business which aims at promoting the products. To attract more and more people towards the products has become the thrust of the businessmen and to achieve their target sales, they use all means to raise the demand of their products. Moving in this line, nowadays they have started to make the presence of women in their advertisements to encash the sexual chemistry of male and female. It is objectionable to some people with the logic that woman is being disregarded by presenting her as an object in advertisements whereas some people object it on some other ground like Gender Stereotyping, incompetency of women etc. This disparity is perpetuated and aggravated in the portrayal of women in advertisements in electronic media which is a powerful tool with far reaching impact and influence on human psyche. Advertisements in India generally portray gender issues in a biased manner. Women are objectified and portrayed as weak, dependent and they lack enlightened approach and sometimes liabilities to their families, while men are portrayed as a dominating,

independent and an asset to their family. Media purveys the stereotypes of gender roles, for example: bank advertisements for long term savings depict the reason as education in case of boys, whereas, it is marriage in case of girls but not otherwise. In another case, where the target audience is men, such as the case for men deodorant or shaving blades, but women are negatively portrayed in such advertisements as an object of sensuality just to attract male consumers. This leads to a new approach which focuses on women as isolated members of society with specific needs and interests. While this is true due to women's subordinate status in societies across the globe, this approach marginalizes women's voices and boxes women portrayed in the media into stereotypical roles. The media reports on so-called women's issues as not being connected to the issues of society in general, and it fails to make visible the interrelationships between gender roles, resource access and power.

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Literature Review

Only few studies have been made on women portrayal in advertising media. Some of them are as below:

The Fourth Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP 2009-2010) was a comprehensive study on gender biasness and consequent moves in news media which demonstrated women's image in the media. Report of the study showed that mere 24 percent of the respondents made to be seen or listened to or read about on TV and print news at global are women. Furthermore, women were found only 4 percent in political stories and just 1 percent in economic stories.

Ra'ana Malik (2013) made a study on the topic "Gender Sensitization of Media about Violence against Women" in which views of 280 media operational in different capacities in print and electronic media from four main cities of Pakistan namely- Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Peshawar were taken. Comprehensive interviews were conducted from the participants to gather the facts in depth. Studies found strong evidences of media personnel related to gender equality and violent behavior with women.

Sharanya Mukherjee (2013) made a discussion with the hostel students on how 'AxeDeodorant's promotional advertisements are completely disgusting whereas 'Unilever' has been advertising the product line with mercantile that shows women in an objectionable manner. Not only in advertising media but also in movies, woman is being presented as an object in the "Item Songs". This discussion reached the conclusion that a woman will be presented the way she wants, so she needs to be thoughtful in choosing the right place and path of finding the honor and respect in the society.

Umaire Effendi (2014) stated that so many advertisements then ever looked to promote women upliftment and gender equality in the year 2014. But advertising industry curved the page, where it is turning to be gender sensitive.

Adhikari Sharda (2014) made the comparison of men and women exposure in both Indian magazine ads as well as in other western ones. India versus Western countries, similarity has been traced in men and women stereotypical representation but stereotypical descriptions in India witnessed to be bit by bit 'softening'. In both of the cases, Indian as well as western advertisements, both the genders promoted different products of which character portrayals were seen to be influenced by the type of the product in the case of women as in other countries.

Different studies with different outcomes initiate the

researcher to choose this topic for the purpose of study.

Objectives Of The Study

Study aims at finding out the gender sensitization patterns of advertising media and analyzing the women portrayal in Advertisements.

Research Methodology

Being study descriptive in nature, it went through both primary via interview of 100 people and secondary data collection and its analysis with proportionate basis and testing its validity of results with F-values. It contains following procedures:

Data Collection:- The study is mainly based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire circulated to people engaged in advertising media and interview thereof to know their opinion on subjective matters.

Sample Size: As sample of 100 people, male and female equally 50 each, has been taken for the purpose of study.

Sampling:- Type of sampling is deliberate/purposive. People were selected on the basis of convenient approach and availability.

Analyzing Tools:- Proportionate Method has been used to analyze and interpret the data collected.

Testing of Hypothesis:- F-values have been computed to test validity of results. Hypotheses have been accepted or rejected on the basis of significance of F-values.

Profile of the Respondents:- The females available for interviews during data collection constituted only about 40 percent of the total sample. The educational status of majority (80%) of the respondents was graduation and post-graduation. Hence, the selected sample is highly qualified having an insight of the current issues. The males and females had almost similar levels of education. More than three-fourth respondents were in the age range of 20 to 40 years. This shows that the selected sample is the voice of youth of the country. There were only 5% percent respondents in the age group of above 50 years.

Parameters Of The Study

Study covers the following aspects of feminism:

1. **Gender Stereotyping:-** It is the people's perception that women are dependent, physically weak, passive, bungling, modest, emotional, apprehensive,

flexible, softhearted, calm, care takers whereas men are physically strong, competent, imperative, rational, decision-makers, antagonistic, alert, and self-confident. In present study it has been examined whether such perception exists in advertising media or not.

2. **Portrayal of Women:-** This parameter specifies the necessity of women in various advertisements.
3. **Working ability of males and females:-** It is the acceptance or rejection of common perception of women as they are less competent in comparison to men. So, it becomes necessary to examine whether such perception is true in advertising media or not.
4. **Gender Equality:-** No doubt, women empowerment is rising but the next question arises “is it changing the mentality of people in real world?” Answer of which is given generally in a diplomatic manner.

Hypotheses

Being four variables of the study, following alternate hypotheses have been set of all stated variables as:

H1: Gender stereotyping exists in advertising electronic media.

H2: Women are portrayed in electronic media of advertising.

H3: Women work better than men in advertisements.

H4: People are aware of gender equality that means society is undergoing to transform into a modern one.

Results & Discussions

The study shows the dominance of males in media. Advertisements in electronic media as in the following results-

1. **Gender Stereotyping:-** Present study lays down on the portrayal of common stereotype images of males

and females in Advertisements. Majority (80%) respondents stated that Advertisements in electronic media are female oriented, dominant, active whilst males are weak. It indicates that in spite of having young enthusiastic blood and high qualifications, the advertisement media are still very much surrounded by women. The change in media is coming at a very fast pace and the gender portrayal revolves around the female images in advertisements.

2. **Portrayal of Women:-** About 85% respondents thought that woman’s presence is necessary for the marketing of products, particularly in the electronic media. One of the respondents from Advertisement agency said, “...without women TV becomes black & white.....” More than 90 % respondents agreed that women are used as a decoration piece. To pull the audience regardless of their need in advertisements, most of the respondents (65%) agreed that electronic advertisements have a great impact on youth and gender portrayal of roles is followed by them in real life situations.
3. **Working ability of males and females:-** The data indicates that females are expected to work better in advertising industry particularly in electronic media. In fact, the perceptions of the advertisers reflect that the modern assignments should be given to women in the society undergoing to transform into modern one.
4. **Adoption of Gender Equality:-** Only few respondents (23.7%) had an understanding of international and national commitments made by India regarding gender equality. 70% of the respondents were found to be aware of gender equality and 50% adopted its acceptance whereas only 40% were found agreed towards showing the women in advertisements.

Table1: Statistical Analysis of Data gathered

Variables	Male		Female		F-Value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Gender Stereotyping	12.4	.25	15.9	.54	4.038
Portrayal of Women	10.9	.48	18.0	.86	3.781
Working ability	15.8	.07	8.4	.05	4.861
Adoption of Gender Equality	2.0	.12	10.0	.25	4.537

Testing of Hypothesis

All F-values shown in Table- 1 are significant, that means there is a lot of discrimination in Gender Stereotyping, Portrayal of Women, Working ability, Awareness about Gender Equality etc. between male and female. As women dominance is higher than males in advertising world particularly in electronic media. So, all set hypotheses have been proved true.

Conclusion

Present study shows that it would seem that a more realistic portrayal of women in advertising is not only desirable but fundamental in a modern marketplace. Women not only want it, they deserve it. If advertisers believe that they are currently depicting women accurately in advertising, they may be advised to rethink their position. Therefore, advertisers cannot simply write off complaints about the portrayal of women in advertising to a small group of liberal feminists. The concern appears to be widespread. There is scarcity of data in the past in this subject area and the results of the present study challenge the preconceived notions about advertiser's attitude towards female in India. The advertisers follow the modern society based on the modern socio-cultural norms and customs. Women's presence in advertisements, specifically at TV channels and internet, is mostly to get attention of the masses. The problems faced by a common woman is that most of the times they do not get attention of the advertisers. Special editions are taken out and talk shows, documentaries become the news of the day. There is a wide difference in the areas of men work and women work in advertising. Traditionally, the advertising world was male-dominated, globally as well as nationally but now women are portrayed and presented here. The ratio of male-female in the media is heavily imbalanced in favor of women resulting in biasness against men in many areas. This biasness affects images of women in the media and in turn has a negative effect on women's image in a society.

Recommendation/ Implications Of The Study

It is recommended that let the woman be clear how she wants to be portrayed in advertising media. Today, our media is male dominated. But, it doesn't mean that women are incompetent, so media particularly advertising, should not present the female as an object but as people with real thought, feelings and ability. Study will benefit to society at large by lifting up the status of women particularly to those people who has weak psychology about women and object women portrayal in advertising media. Further, present study also gives answers of various questions arisen in mind of media world about women like their competency etc.

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