

**Portrayal of Women in Electronic Media
(With reference to NCR Region)**

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Abstract

The pre dominant attitude of the society gets revealed through the way subjects dealing with women are treated by the media. Electronic Media's role towards woman status is becoming major concern of the feminist writers, basically regarding participation, performance and representation of women. Because different circumstances relating to the media's role towards portraying the fair sex have opened a new angle by leaps and bounds to think precisely about it. There are various criticisms raised by the feminists. A majority of people in India consciously or unconsciously tend to believe that movies, or for that matter media in general, are often said to be the reflection of the society. It has been the topic of discussion that the media truly reflect the society or not, there's no doubt that media have a big socio-cultural influence on the society.

Introduction

It has been constantly said that Woman is the backbone of our society and has a very important role to play in a household. But when it comes to the world outside the home, the society has a different perspective towards her. If we talk about media, which is said to be the voice of backward and oppressed section of the society, it is expected that media should play an important role to empower them by creating awareness about the rights of this section. Having been neglected for centuries, women also need a push to claim their rightful place in the society - equivalent to that enjoyed by men. Media has contributed a lot by portraying the sorry state of affair of the fair sex but there is a lot to do when it comes to an equal footing for the women in media industry itself.

Media is the buzz word of the era of globalization. In fact, the rapid expansion of term and the concept of present form of globalization have been made possible only through the information revolution throughout the world. It has been widely recognized that media can play a substantial role in promoting and disseminating information and are key players in the social and economic development of women. Therefore, media largely reflects the life styles, socialization patterns, participation levels, cultural boundaries, political manoeuvrings, religious manifestations, educational standards, social hierarchy, and of course, society images of any given society. As per the political scientist, James Rosenau definition, "Media is a label that is presently in vogue to account for peoples, activities, norms ideas, goods, services, and currencies that are decreasingly confined to a particular geographic space and its local and established practices." In fact media can play a significant role in either perpetuating or challenging social norms and behaviours that condone violence against women. New media can be a platform for the objectification of women and girls, from everyday hyper-sexualized, one dimensional images of women and girls to overt violence.

Women are under great social control and pressure which has restricted what they can say and where and to whom. Cultural moves in almost every social set-up determine women's socialization in no uncertain terms. This has an important bearing on their ability to communicate and express their thoughts. To discuss women empowerment it is necessary to deal with the present situation of women in India. I would like to briefly discuss certain key aspects related to the women which media should adequately cover and facilitate the process of empowerment of women. Mass media is a technology which transfers information, concepts, and ideas to both general and specific audiences.

Objectives of the Study

- To find out whether the images of women in the electronic media are close to our traditional and cultural values.
- The portrayal of women in advertisements indicates the attitude of society towards women.

Research Questions

- To know to what an extent people get motivated to buy a product after watching advertisements.
- Do cultural values really matter while making an advertisement, what factors an advertising agency keep in mind while making an advertisement for a particular gender?
 - Are the Women being used as a tool for the promotion of advertisements?
 - Does the presence of female in advertisement affect the purchase of products?
 - Whether the stereotypical images of Women are being followed or not in the advertisements?

Women and Media

Information revolution, in its truest technical terms in India, is the latest phenomenon. During the phases of economic liberalization in last one and half decade, the overall scenario of media in India has changed tremendously. The depiction of Women in Indian media, be it films, television serials, news, media, visual advertisement, or modernized traditional media, is indeed an area of great concern for people having interest in social science research and studies. Some studies found have that social issues related to women (equality of status and opportunity) got less than nine percent while sensational stories relating to women which were invariably crime stories got between 52 and 63 percent of items in newspapers.

Portrayal of women in Soaps: The term "soap opera" was coined by the American press in the 1930s to denote the extraordinarily popular genre of serialized domestic radio dramas, which, by 1940, represented some 90% of all commercially sponsored daytime broadcast hours. The "soap" in soap opera alluded to their sponsorship by manufacturers of household cleaning products; while "opera" suggested an ironic incongruity between the domestic narrative concerns of the daytime serial and the most elevated of dramatic forms. The defining quality of the soap opera form is its seriality (Pingree and Cantor, 1983). Examples of the open soap include (The Guiding Light, etc.), the wave of primetime U.S. soaps in the 1980s (Dallas, Dynasty, Falcon Crest), such British serials as

Coronation Street, East Enders, and Brook side), most Australian serials (Neighbours, Home and Away,

Portrayal of women in Advertisements: In recent years, Indian advertising has witnessed a significant transformation in the manner in which women are portrayed. The way women are depicted in advertising changes with times, reflecting the transformation taking place in society. Advertising is one of the major media that affect our daily life consciously and unconsciously and are responsible to play a significant role in shaping the society in a much broader perspective. Women today are no longer consolidated behind kitchen walls. Their aspiration for coming out of the door also taught society to think differently. Marketer wisely utilized this transformation process to launch their product and advertisement strategically. Das (2000) examined the portrayal of women and men in Indian magazine ads from a wide range of magazines in 1987, 1990, and 1994. Results indicated that although the gender portrayals in Indian magazine ads have changed over the period, they are still portrayed in stereotypical ways. Vela et al., (2007) examined male and female stereotypes in Spanish magazine advertising during the last three decades of the twentieth century.

Women in Movies: Hindi cinema has been a major point of reference for Indian culture in this century. It has shaped and expressed the changing scenarios of modern India to an extent that no preceding art form could ever achieve. Hindi cinema has influenced the way in which people perceive various aspects of their own lives. The movies that have three different points of view towards women. To some extent they identify areas where 'modern feminism' comes into contact with 'traditional values.' Films have also been inspired to a large extent from religion and mythology whereby women characters were seen as the epitome of virtue and values, those who could do no wrong. The image of women as "Sita" has been repeatedly evoked in many films after independence. Over the past few years, much has been said about Hindi Cinema breaking the stereotypes related to women and the phenomenon of the Indian Woman 'coming-of-age'.

Effects on our Society:

Critics of the prevalent portrayals of women in the mass media observe possible negative consequences for various segments of the population, such as:

- Women self-objectify in terms of body surveillance by adopting a form of self-consciousness in which they habitually monitor their own body's outward appearance and spend significant amounts of attention on how others may perceive their physical appearance
- Unrealistic expectations held of how women should look or behave.
- Stereotyping of women who are positively portrayed by or sexualized in the media, such as the theme of a "dumb blonde" or "blonde bimbo", limiting the societal and career opportunities for people who fit these stereotypes.
- Psychological disorders such as body dysmorphic disorder, anorexia, and bulimia.
- The excessively coercive nature of appeal to strong sexual instincts to sell products or promote media.
- Increase in the likelihood and acceptance of sexual violence

Effects on young children and adolescents

In a study on the sexualization of women in media, by the American Psychological Association, it was found that women or girls are, statistically speaking, more likely to be dressed provocatively and forced into poses that suggest sexuality. Another study, on print media, completed by psychology researchers at Wesleyan University found that 51.8% of the time, women are objectified in advertisements. This number changes when the study was narrowed to men's print, where women were objectified in an increased 76% of advertisements.

A common problem seen among young girls is any number of afflictions directly attributed to a negative body image, caused by these objectified ads. The APA is aware of this situation and put together a task force to complete a study across all major advertising and media platforms. What they found was numerous problems being found in young women can be traced back to these displays of women as sexual objects. The affects span a wide range of disorders and illnesses, from anxiety, to eating disorders, to depression, and even prevent young girls from creating a healthy sexual life. This task force is reaching out to both the media and families with young children in an attempt to properly inform all people on the negative impacts of the way media is used nowadays.

Effects on women of color

Support has shown that the effects of media exploitation vary for women of different ethnicities. Research has depicted that these implications often resonate beyond cultural boundaries, to cause significant differences among African American, Latina, and Asian American women.

According to the American Psychological Association, when comparing one's body to the sexualized cultural ideals, this significantly impaired the ability for women of these ethnicities to regulate cognitive functions, including logical reasoning and spatial skills.

Spanish-language TV in the United States statistically projects more stereotypical roles for Latina women, often portraying them as 'exoticized' and 'overly sexual'; meanwhile, more Latina youth, on average, watch more television than that of the standard caucasian American child.[84] This combination projects increased rates of the acceptance of the negative effects within minority women within the US, leading to a greater acceptance of standard gender roles and negative stereotypes projected by Latina characters. However, studies have shown that Latina women who watch more black-oriented television shows see a general increase of body acceptance over time.

Research Methodology**Type of the research**

This research is descriptive research.

Population

Population is the citizens of Greater Noida, UP who are the viewers of electronic media and for this a sample of 400 electronic media viewers were selected from the city.

Sample size

As the electronic media mainly television is the general media for both educated and an uneducated individual, the sample was selected only on the basis of Television viewers. The sample comprised of male and female regarding their ages. The sample was consisted of 200 members of youth age group (100 males+ 100 females). This category includes the students of different university from different departments e.g. Mass Communication, pharmacy, MBA, Commerce, English etc. While the college students were selected from College of pharmacy, Greater Noida for Boys and College of engineering for Women. For the category of middle age population the sample of 100 people was selected (50male+50female). This category includes 50 house wives and 50 working males; working may be Connaught place mall or may be the shop keepers and other people belonging to certain different occupations. This category covered the general public both educated and uneducated. For the third category of old age population the sample of 100 people was selected (50male+50female). For this category retired people were taken as the target sample. These retired people were also selected from the educational institutes.

Sampling Techniques

The basic population is selected with the help of convenient sampling (as the viewers of electronic media were selected by the method of simple random sampling technique.)

Data type

Data is fundamental aspect to provide an insight in a research and collecting good data is like creating the foundation for gathering the evidence and achieving the accurate objective & result.

Data Collection, presentation and interpretation

To get the basic data for testing the hypothesis and the research questions, the method of survey questionnaire from the viewers of the advertisement of electronic media has been used. The structured questionnaire comprises of mostly close-ended and a few open-ended questions have been used to get the basic information and the opinion of the target sample as a tool of data collection.

Data Analysis

Both the quantitative and the qualitative techniques have been used for the analysis of the information gathered in the method of survey. For the close-ended questions the quantitative technique was used and for the open-ended questions the qualitative technique is used.

The quantitative analysis of the results of close-ended questions of the survey research is presented in numerical, percentages, tables, graphs and descriptive forms. The qualitative analysis of results of open-ended questions of the survey is illustrated in descriptive form.

1. Are the advertisements following the cultural and social values?

Options	Youth		Middle Age		Old Age		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	No	Percentage
Yes	24	11	0	0	0	2	37	9.25
No	51	74	32	43	48	35	283	70.75
Up to Some Extent	25	15	18	7	2	13	80	20
Grand Total	100	100	50	50	50	50	400	100

The responses regarding the question, whether the advertisement of our electronic media is following the cultural values or not, most of the responses are negative. We can say after analyzing the answers of general public that the portrayal of women in advertisements is not presenting our cultural and social values. The results also prove the 1st hypothesis that "electronic media is portraying women against the cultural and social values."

2. Portrayal of models and the settings of the advertisements are according to our cultural values?

Options	Youth		Middle Age		Old Age		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	No	Percentage
Yes	0	0	2	5	4	1	12	3
No	43	52	36	14	27	43	215	53.75
Up to Some Extent	57	48	12	31	19	6	173	43.25
Grand Total	100	100	50	50	50	50	400	100

The accumulative opinion of the people shows that the portrayal of the models in the advertisements is not according to our cultural values. 53.75% respondents have selected the option no 2 i.e. No and only 3% are in favour that the advertisements are following the cultural values. While 43.25% respondents think that this point is true up to some extent.

3. Presence of female models in advertisements is necessary to increase the saleability of the product?

Options	Youth		Middle Age		Old Age		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	No	Percentage
Yes	20	12	12	4	0	3	51	12.75
No	57	41	27	18	27	31	201	50.25
Up to Some Extent	23	47	11	28	23	16	148	37
Grand Total	100	100	50	50	50	50	400	100

This table indicates the point of view regarding the question that whether the presence of female model increases the salability of the product. According to the data collected with the help of survey research 12.75% (51) viewers answered yes, 50.25% (201) viewers chosen the option B which is No, while 37% (148) viewers chosen the option C which is up to some extent.

4. The portrayal of female model in the advertisements is presenting the actual status of women in our society?

Options	Youth		Middle Age		Old Age		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	No	Percentage
Yes	33	18	9	4	2	6	72	18
No	23	35	3	18	27	20	126	31.5
Up to Some Extent	44	47	38	28	21	24	202	50.5
Grand Total	100	100	50	50	50	50	400	100

The comparative analysis of the findings reveals a significant difference among the views of certain age groups and genders as well. 18% (72) respondents were of the view that the advertisements of the electronic media are portraying the female model according to their original image and status in our society, 32% (128) of the respondents chosen the option B

which is No; while 50% (200) respondents answered that the status of women being portrayed in the advertisements is according to their original status up to some extent.

5. The advertisements without female model can never get the proper attention of the viewers?

Options	Youth		Middle Age		Old Age		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	No	Percentage
Yes	31	11	6	3	7	22	80	20
No	5	43	21	36	31	8	144	36
Up to Some Extent	64	46	23	11	12	20	176	44
Grand Total	100	100	50	50	50	50	400	100

The general public opinion regarding the presence of female models in the advertisements and the effect of their presence shows significantly different opinions i.e. 20% answers were in favour of this view point while 36% are against this and 44% opinions supported this point up to some extent. In this way 64% responses are in favour of this which proves the hypothesis No. 6 which is "A woman's bodily charm is used to promote ads concerning physical fitness products, cosmetics and those that add to appearance of the body." The findings also support the Hypothesis No. 5 which is "Women are being used as decorative and entertaining elements in the commercials.

6. The presence of female models in the male use product can raise the sale of that product?

Options	Youth		Middle Age		Old Age		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	No	Percentage
Yes	67	11	9	2	1	36	126	31.5
No	4	7	18	43	45	14	131	32.75
Up to Some Extent	29	82	23	5	4	0	143	35.75
Grand Total	100	100	50	50	50	50	400	100

The comparative analysis of the opinion about the presence of female in the male use products shows that the 67% Males and 11% Females of young age are in the favour of this hypothesis and the opinion of middle age males and females also followed the same patterns that of youth opinion but 72% females of old age were in favour of this while only 2% males chosen the option A. 32.75% of overall respondents preferred the option B which is No. But most of them preferred the option C which is up to some extent. The results show that most of the opinions are in the favour of this concern that the presence of female can raise the salability of male use products.

7. Overall image of women in the advertisements is blemished?

Options	Youth		Middle Age		Old Age		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	No	Percentage
Yes	21	52	13	24	41	37	188	47
No	34	37	5	7	0	0	83	20.75
Up to Some Extent	45	11	32	19	9	13	129	32.25
Grand Total	100	100	50	50	50	50	400	100

The collective analysis of the responses regarding the overall image of female presented in the advertisements significantly elaborate the general public opinion that the advertisement's portrayal of female is vague rather than the actual respect of female in our traditional aspects of society. These findings also strengthen the view that women are being used as decorative and entertaining elements and this portrayal is creating frustration among the minds of female viewers.

8. The portrayal of female models in the advertisements is decreasing the respect of women in our society?

Options	Youth		Middle Age		Old Age		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	No	Percentage
Yes	11	47	8	36	47	21	170	42.5
No	37	14	5	0	0	5	61	15.25
Up to Some Extent	52	39	37	14	3	24	169	42.25
Grand Total	100	100	50	50	50	50	400	100

Comparative analysis of responses of the viewers shows a significant difference regarding the question that whether the portrayals of female models in the advertisement is decreasing the respect of the females in our society or not as 42.5% responses are in favour of this point of view and while 15.25% responses are against this point. 42.25% people think that this point is true up to some extent. The overall analysis shows that the portrayal of females in the ads is decreasing the respect of female in the society.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis was used in analyzing the views of the general public regarding open-ended questions. There were two open-ended questions asked from the public: why are females being used in all the categories of the advertisements? In response to this question, most of the people were of the view that the most important motive of portraying women in advertising is to capture the concentration of the viewers towards their product and to grab the attention means to increase the potential consumer's market. Advertisers portray female models in striking and colourful backgrounds just to make their commercial more eye-catching and another aim is to amplify the salability of that product as the frequency and the reach are the factors which can change the minds of potential consumers. As the available research study covers all the commercials during a specific time duration, that's why statistical test is not applied.

The other question was about getting opinion of the people that how the standard and quality of advertisements can make better or up to the mark. In response to this open-ended question, the collective view of the people was almost the same. Most of the people said that the advertisements should be according to our social and cultural values. Advertisements should follow our cultural and social values as well. The dressings of the models and the settings of the advertising should be according to cultural values. There should not be any language or message which can cause the frustration in the minds of the viewers. Moreover, the opinions showed that the advertisers were responsible for unnecessary and needless portrayal of women in the advertisements. So there should be some precautionary measures

to prevent the minds of women about their distorted image in the advertisements as such type of faint and insulting image can cause annoyance among the minds of young girls.

Discussion and conclusion

After analyzing the data collected with the help of survey research, it is concluded that the women are excessively and unnecessarily portrayed in the commercials. The results of survey research reveal the general public opinion regarding the portrayal of women in the advertisements. There were 400 respondents selected from the city of Greater noida. 98.5% respondents were the viewers of T.V and most of them i.e. 64.75% were heavy viewers of T.V. 69.75% respondents used to watch the advertisements of the electronic media.

70.75% general public was of the opinion that the advertisements are not following the cultural and social standards. 58.25% public believed that the advertisements are the best medium of exchanging the cultural diversities. 69.5% respondents believed that the advertisements are the agent of change in the field of language and the dressing patterns i.e. advertisements are changing the language styles of the viewers. 53.75% opinions were against the view that the advertisements are following our cultural and social norms. 75.75% opinion proposed that the setting of the advertisements followed the mixed culture i.e. Indian and Western as well. The presence of female is not necessary in the opinion of 50.25% respondents. While 50% opinions assumed that the portrayal of female is according to the actual value given to the female in our society. 44% people thought that without the female model the product can never get the proper attention of the consumers.

Similarly 53.75% respondents assumed that the presence of females in the male use products can raise the salability of that product up to some extent. 47% people said that the female's image is being portrayed in distorted style and unnecessarily. The advertising portrayal of females is changing the standards of respect regarding the female in the opinion of 52.5% people. The overall results indicate that the portrayal of females in most of the advertisements is unnecessary and needless. The females are used as an attractive and eye-catching element of the advertisement having the function of capturing the attention of viewers. It also reveals that the portrayal of female in the advertisement is causing certain alterations in the cultural and social values and also affecting the dressing styles and language expressions of the viewers up to some extent. Moreover the results reveal that the woman's bodily charm is used to promote ads concerning physical fitness products, cosmetics and those that add to appearance of the body.

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