



Objectification of Woman in Media

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Abstract

A trend that is developing in entertainment media today is the objectification of women in society. Specifically in movies, music videos, music, and television, there is strong focus on women as sexual objects rather than women. This is detrimental to society because the media is creating social stereotypes for both men and women that can result in unhealthy social and physical habits. This Proposed study explores how this media portrays woman as an object –commodity not as a human being. Irony is that one side woman's role change into society still in large context media portrays woman in advertisement in stereotype role even woman's body is more important than her face which reflects negative side. While some advertisement also try to change this scenario of objectification through tagline. In today's world Media plays an important role to change the situation so this paper studied how objectification of woman portrays in Media.

Keywords :- Objectification, Advertisement, Society

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Advertising has evolved into a powerful marketing tool over the last century. According to American Marketing Association, marketing is defined as: "The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives." Advertising is one of the "promotional tools" used in marketing endeavours, as one means of communication between the seller (advertiser) and the buyer (consumer or organization). Hence advertising is defined as: "Any paid form of non-personal presentation of goods, services, or ideas by an identified sponsor (advertiser)." (Berkowitz et al., 1991) This definition separates advertising from other forms of promotion, namely publicity and personal selling. Advertising is "paid" for, as opposed to publicity, which is "free". Advertising is also "non-personal" implying no "personal selling" and is created for communication with a mass population.

Advertisements are effective tool of mass media which impart knowledge and information with a dash of entertainment. Advertising affect our daily life consciously and unconsciously and are responsible to play a significant role in shaping the society in a much broader perspective. Advertising is a vital marketing tool that enables the firms to communicate directly with the consumer. Therefore, ads are made with the intention to seek viewer attention and response. Advertising apart from selling products or brands also sell attitude, behaviour or life style. On an average an adult spends about two years of his life watching TV advertisements.

It is presumed that viewing these advertisements affect the viewer's attitudes and preferences. Advertisers have long been enamoured with women and culture. Most of the advertisements portray women as the torch-bearers of cultural heritage. They are often portrayed in stereotypical images. She could be a wife, mother, daughter-in-law or mother-in-law. A common sight of women in advertisement for decades is in the kitchen, cooking food, washing bucket-full clothes, or feeding husband or children.

Advertisers have also been accused for objectifying women's bodies. Nudity and sexuality of women are often used to gain consumer's attention. Most of the time women's appearance may not even be appropriate to the product being advertised. Women are often dressed in indecent attires with a sensuous

gaze. The depiction of Women in Indian media be it films, television serials, news, media, visual advertisement is indeed an area of great concern.

Objective of the Study

As part of the audio visual media, advertisements are very important when it comes to influencing the choices and attitudes of people. But these advertisements have been accused of portraying women in negatively manner and ignoring the real aspects of women's lives by feminists. Women are either portrayed in typical traditional ways: busy in doing household chores, or if they are outside the home they are portrayed as mere a sex object with possible shortest clothes. The main objectives of this paper are:

- To study the portrayal of women in advertisements of different brands or products. How these advertisements portray women on television through a very short and effective tool of media that leave a great impression on people's minds.
- To study the objectification of women's body as an object in advertisements that women are often used as a piece of decoration to attract the audience, when sometimes they are not even needed for the product being advertised.
- To study the negative impact of this portrayal of women's body that sometimes leads to the violence against women.

Review of Literature Valdivia, Angharad N. (2004) in her edited book A Companion to Media Studies discussed that advertisers recognized that it has been so long portraying women in stereotypical roles, so they started to change the depiction to some extent. They try to address women's concern but on the other hand they bluff with the audience thorough their campaigns that equality has achieved. But close examination of such advertisements reveal that they reinforce same stereotypes in modern manner. The change in the image of women is not enough, the change must be occur in the mind set of advertisers and in the social system that surrounds us. Women are needed to be portrayed in strong independent public figures like politicians or athletes.

Linda Lazier and Alice Kendrick (1993) in their article women in advertisements: sizing up the images roles and functions, found out that the portrayal of women in the advertisements of television and print media has not change over the period of time. They claim that women in advertisements are not seen as important decision makers although they make important financial decision at home. Further the contribution of women in the workforce has been ignored by the advertisers socially and statistically and stereotypes that are used in the advertisements ignore the complex lives of modern women.

Perse, Elizabeth M. (2001). In her book Media Effects and Society talks about the effects of media on the society; one of the worst effects of media on society is through sexual content which is opposed by many feminists. They claim that it is harmful for women as it promote objectification of women's body, sexualisation of women, discrimination against women and support a society that accept violence against women very easily. According to feminists pornography is the main sexual media content that de-values and de-humanizes women in eyes of men.

Nagi Parul (2014) concludes in her article Projection of Women in Advertisements: a Gender Perception Study that the study concludes that women in print advertisements are depicted as mere sex objects. She also said that women are portrayed in advertisements whether the product is related to them or not. The purchasing behavior of people is affected by the charming women portrayal but this preference varies from person to person. Sometimes people influenced by the charming portrayal of women but most of the time the quality of product can not be confirmed by its portrayal. She suggests that there must either be self regulatory mechanism or government should control the portrayal of women in advertisements.

Dr. Raina Anshu (2014) after analysis different advertisements on Indian television concludes in her article Representation of Indian Women in Advertisements that women are treated as trophy or gift in Indian advertisements which will be given to the person who uses the advertised product. Women are often projected as without any common sense or wit to make decisions. They are very easily attracted or

influenced by the person who is using the product being advertised. Such advertisements leave impression on common people's mind that women are very weak and foolish that they can be exploited very easily.

Portrayal of Women in Indian Television Advertisements

Today, we come across hundreds of advertisements daily. They are affecting every aspect of our day to day dealings, our conversations, our thoughts and to a certain extent control our behaviour as customers and consumers. Advertisements stare and scream at us from every street corner, every newspaper, every magazine, every hoarding, every stall or shop or showroom, radio and television. They don't even spare our computer screens when all we are interested in is checking our mail or even simply browsing through.

Advertisement educates people about new products and their uses. Advertising message about the utility of a product enables the people to widen their knowledge. It is advertising which has helped people adopting new ways of life and giving-up old habits. It has contributed to the betterment of the standard of living of the society. But there is another concern about the advertisements that advertisers are using advertisements to sell their product without taking into consideration the negative effects of the content they use in their advertisements. Advertisements has been accused by many feminists of using women in ways that had adverse effects on women's identity in the eyes of world as well as in the eyes of women themselves.

Objectification of Women's Body

Advertisements have long been accused of objectification of women's body for the purpose of selling their products. Feminists have always been opposing advertisements that objectify women's body in any manner. Sometimes women are used in advertisements as a piece of decoration, sometimes advertisers use women to attract the audience specifically male audience. Irrespective of the fact that women are needed or not in any advertisement, they are casted by advertisers just to attract the audience. From 2012, advertisements of Slice Soft Drink started running on television that has one of the most famous actresses of Indian Film Industry Katrina Kaif.

Slice has launched many advertisements casting Katrina Kaif and in every advertisement the portrayal of her body can catch attention of anyone. The Slice advertisements with tag line "Ab Ras Barsega" (juice will shower) starts with the view of room in which the lead female is sitting in the window watching a mango tree outside. She stands up and goes to the mirror and put off her bangles while her back is in the full angle of camera with a thin strap showing her back from neck to the end of her spine.

First of all why do we need women in the advertisement of men's talcum powder and second if we use women anyway, why there is a need to portray her in such a manner that only her body parts becomes the central piece of advertisement and catches all the attention of audience. In this very advertisement, the scene of ice cube running through her body because his hand touches her is very fake and unrealistic. The lady was so much lost in that, that she did not notice that the boy is touching her body parts and reason behind this was only the talcum powder that was being advertised. What message is passed to the general audience, what image of women it creates in the eyes of people, can any woman be so blindly attractive towards an unknown person, these are some of many questions that can be asked to the advertisers of such advertisements. The meaning of the narration "Just Zatak Her" can be interpreted as „just attack her' or may be make a woman so vulnerable through the touch that she losses her senses to him.

Advertisement is a very powerful tool of media which affects the mind set of people in a very short period of time. In today's world, women are equally participating with men in almost every field. In mass media, women today have more space than ever before. In advertisements also, now women can be seen much more than men. Advertisements have tendency to carry out a story in one or sometimes even in half minute that leave a great impression on viewers' mind because of short and very loud messages they carry. But after close analysis of Indian television advertisements it can be conclude that advertisements in India are not fulfilling their duty towards the society. The projection of women in Indian advertisements that can be done for highlighting the real issues of women's lives, for their upliftment, for the awareness among

people about the rights of women, for the empowerment of women etc. But the focus of advertisers is on something else; their main object is to grow sells of their products without taking into consideration the message any particular advertisement brings to the society. Women very often are used as a piece of decoration in the advertisements for the products that are not connected to them such as men's deodorants or undergarments. One factor behind the violence against women is the portrayal of women as only sex objects in advertisements. On the basis of conclusion the following suggestions are made:

- Advertisers should understand that the projection of women in advertisements affects the lives of women and they can sell their products with casting women in stereotypical roles.
- The false depiction of women's sexuality should ban on television.
- Women should be casted in advertisements of products that are related to them not just a piece of decoration to attract the audience.
- The objectification of women's body in advertisements needs to examine by authorities. The advertisers need to understand the harms that objectification of women's body can bring to society specifically to women.
- The over emphasis on the outer beauty of women should stop and advertisements of beauty creams should not show women with dark skin color as inferior to others or being rejected because they are not fairer.
- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986 should be implemented in more effective manner. Every advertisement in India that cast women should go through the analysis under the sections of this Act.

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