

Impact on the Coverage of Women in Popular Magazine Advertisements - An Opinion Study in Chennai

Ms.N.Nazini¹

¹(Head & Asst Professor, Visual Communication, Sathyabama University, India)

Abstract : Advertisements have a tendency to represent the economic progress of societies and it ranges from the sophistication of the industrialized world to new life styles of developing nations. Women have always been measured against the cultural ideals of beauty, but advertising often uses sexism to make images of ideal beauty more prevalent and increasingly unattainable. Negative portrayals of women in advertisements draw closer in many different forms. In advertisements women are the prime and attractive model though women are given responsible social status in many advertisements. So it made the researcher to make an attempt to study about the framing image of women in Magazine advertisements using questionnaire. By employing survey method to gather the public opinion of women in advertisements. Stereotypes in the media inevitably affect and culture, especially the young. Female stereotypes in media tend to undervalue women as a whole and diminish them to sexual objects and passive human beings. There is a change in life style by viewing advertisements. Advertising agencies ought to follow some ethical aspects in the advertisement. This paper is intended to analyze the image of women in print advertisements and its impact towards the society.

Keywords - Advertisement, women, stereotype, Chennai, Magazine

I. Introduction

The importance of advertising is steadily on the increase in modern society. So advertising, using media as its vehicle, is a persuasive, powerful force shaping attitudes and behavior in today's world. Women are more likely to be portrayed stereotypically in ads for publishing, recreation, clothes, and cosmetics but less likely to be portrayed stereotypically in ads for tobacco, travel, food, and financial services. The role played by women when they purchase traditional "female oriented" products may be in line with gender-role stereotypes, it is reasonable to expect ads for such products to portray women in traditional ways. The women are often portrayed as the weaker sex and are not given sample opportunity to flourish. The advertisements were content analyzed to examine how women are portrayed in magazine ads. Wolf (1991) his views on advertising aimed at works by lowering their self esteem. Our Mass culture is heavily censored by beauty advertisers: as long as prime time television and the mainstream press aimed at women are there in mass culture will be dictated by the beauty myth. Goffman in his book , concludes that women are weakened by advertising portrayals via Five categories : Relative size, Feminine touch, Function ranking, ritualization of subordination and licenced withdrawal. And also his views on advertising deals with ideas, attitudes and values , giving them cultural from through its signifying practices. In the journal of advertising research, Courtney and lockeretz (1979) examined images of women in magazine advertisements. They reported the following findings:

- Women were rarely shown in out of home working roles
- Not many women were shown as a professional or high level business person
- Women were shown as dependent on men's protection
- Men were shown regarding women as sex objects or domestic adjuncts
- Females were most often shown in ads for cleaning products, food products, beauty products, drugs, clothing and home appliances.

II. Roles Of Women In Advertisement

From previous study, many researchers used different theoretical framework. A Framework which directs the idea to work under the theories. For the main Purpose of this study , Cultivation theory was developed by George gerbner in 1979 and this theory states that media effect audience perceptions of the world outside of their environment. Another Media theory is Agenda Setting , this states that hits the audience mind. This study also focus on Symbolic interactionism theory, states that the self is derived from and develops through human interaction. This means the way you act toward someone or something is based on the meaning you have for a person or thing. To effectively communicate, people use symbols with shared cultural meanings. Symbols can be constructed from just about anything, including material goods, education, or even the way people talk. This theory helps to understand better about the field because of the significant role the media plays in creating and

propagating shared symbols. Using the power of media, it can develop symbols and construct symbols on its own. This theory, researchers can look at the ways media affects a society's shared symbols and, in turn, the influence of those symbols on the individual. Media also propagate other noncommercial symbols. National and state flags, religious images, and celebrities gain shared symbolic meanings through their representation in the media. This study was to see if there was a common theme across the magazines in portrayals of women's body style, expression and gestures. They are different roles of women in advertising:

1. First role, in which women are portrayed, is in homely or house wife setting. The impact of this advertisement, it is pointed out that the women do operate dependently in other than low-cost and household related purchase is stressed.
2. Second role, in which women are portrayed as glamorous objects. Women in advertisement take on a non-natural because they are made to look perfect. They should look like young, very tall, slim, and long legged and have perfect skin with no wrinkles or pores.
3. Third role, in which women are portrayed, is in the selling area or working women as professionals. With the progress in the women's movement and equal rights, women are more interested to enter in the workforce.

Objectives of Research

- To study the portrayal of women in magazine advertisement
- To study the influence of advertisements among the readers
- To study the mindset of readers about the characterization of Female models.
- To study whether women had stereotyped related to that product advertising

Limitations:

- The age group from 18 is considered because they can understand and answer easily
- For this research the samples are collected only in and around Chennai city only
- The magazines are everybody known magazine only not low volume magazines

III. Research Methodology

The Method employed for data collection was structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were closed-ended multiple choice questionnaire leaves the respondents no other alternative but to tick one section. In case of open ended question the respondents have a choice to write what he / she feels strongly about. In case of close ended respondents have the choice to answer for the questions provided to them. The judgment sampling believes to have high incidents of bias of the researcher since they know the respondents and can guess on the kind of responses. Respondents should be from 18 years of age. So that they can have capability to answer for the questions. For the survey method 25 questions are framed based on women in advertisement and 100 samples are collected. The people opinions are selected in Chennai city.

IV. Results And Discussion

Based on the survey method. The graphical chart representation based on the advertisements which appear in magazine. The advertisements are using women in it only.

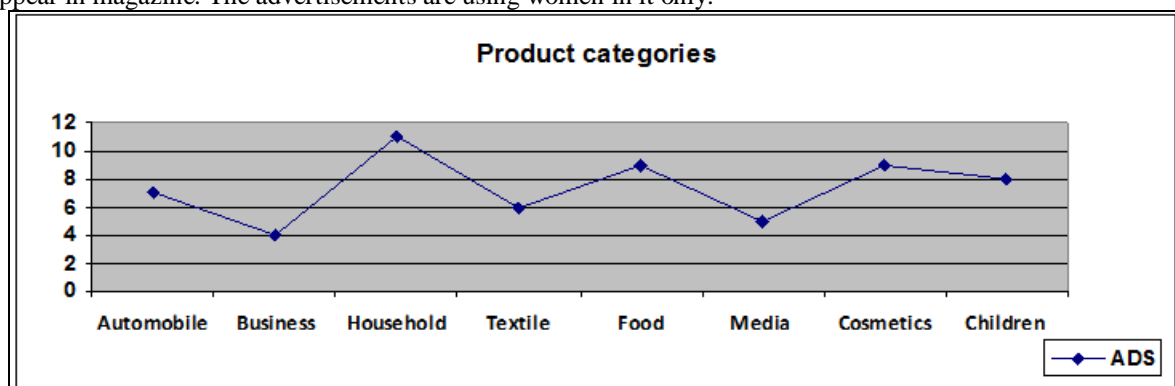


Figure 1

The above figure 1 states that product categories based on the advertising using women in general magazines and women's magazines. These are various categories of product found in magazines.

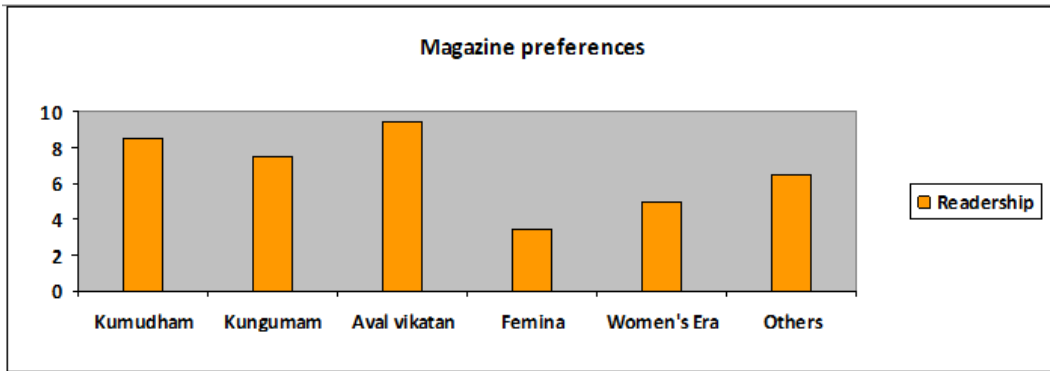


Figure 2

The Magazine Preferences chart fig 2 gives the details about preferences of the magazines by readers. The choice of the readers on reading the magazines. For Kumudham 8.5%, Kungumam 7.5%, Aval vikatan 9.5 %, Femina 3.5%, Women's Era 5% ,and others 6.5%.

The data's given below figure 3 in percentage based on survey with the samples for the influence of advertisement in Indian culture is 43% of them says that there is influence of ads in Indian culture and 32 % of them refused it and rest of 25.2% have no idea. Is women are shown in their related product the samples states that 25 % of them are accept it and around 74 % some of them are refused that women are not shown in related products.

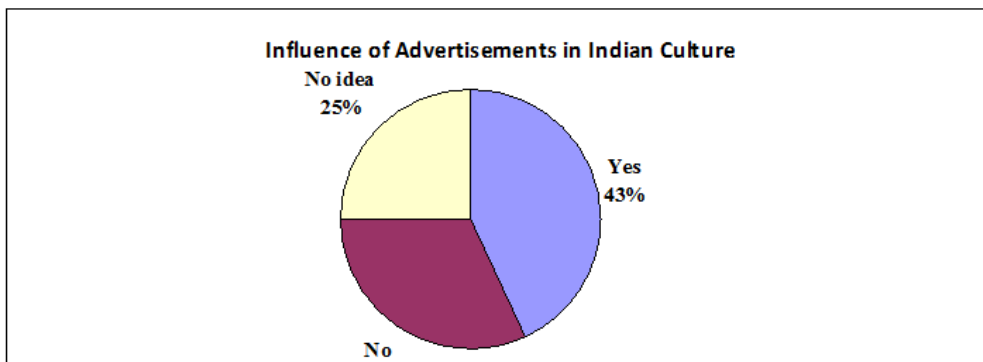


Figure 3

Below chart figure 4 represents image of Women in advertisement based on the samples, states that advertisements spoil women in showing their as a glamorous object 59 % accept it .17 % of them states that women using in men's product and rest of them 24 % showing as a dependent in advertisements.

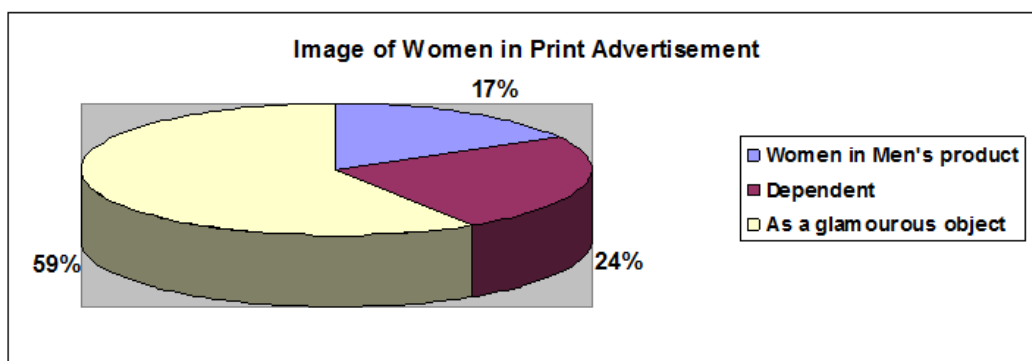


Figure 4

According to figure 5 ,Repondents states that the advertisements impact the society in cultural change 40% and no impact 10% and spoil youth's mind is around 30% of responded and around 20 % some advertisements are to create awareness. Around 15% of them views have said that it would create awareness to the people.

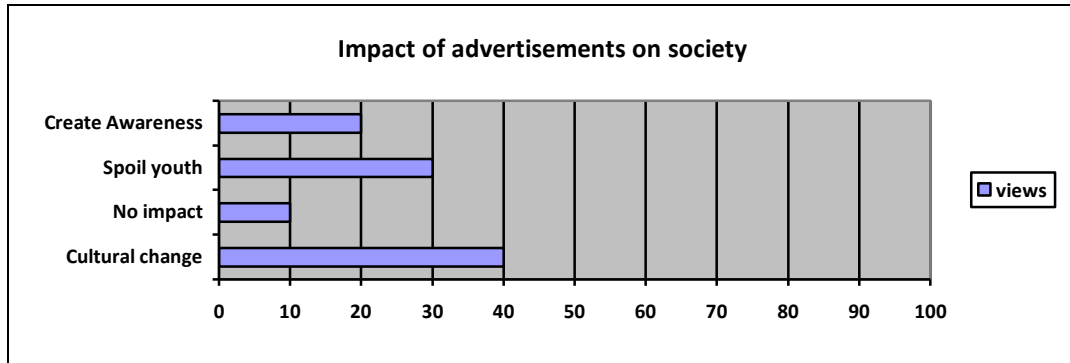


Figure 5

The Exploitation of women in advertisements. The exploitation of women is there in advertisement many of the respondents has given their opinion about that advertisements.

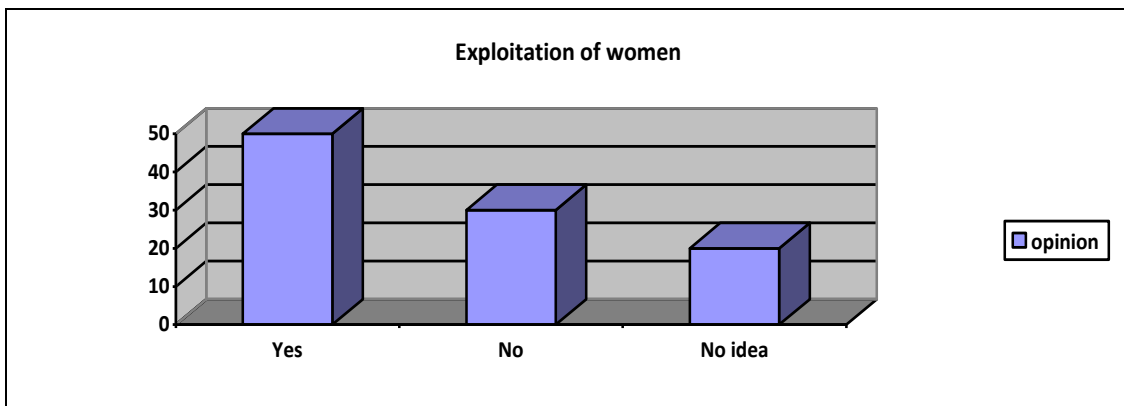


Figure 6

In the advertisements the women are exploited around 50% of them responded yes option and 30% of them views that women are not exploited in the advertisements and there is no idea around 20% of them towards the exploitation of women in advertisements. Women in advertisement have shown in their related product. The readers opinion about the advertisements were women have shown in their related products or not in their products.

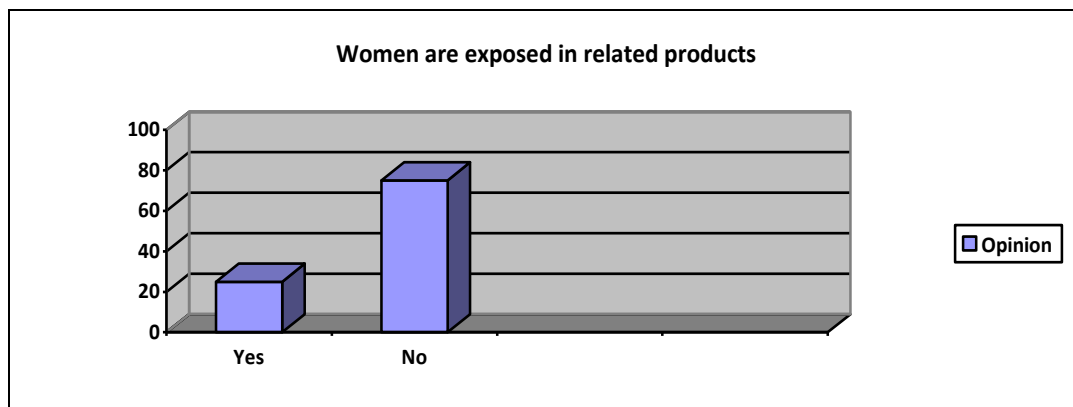


Figure 7

From the Figure 7 states that women are shown in their related products people around 25% of them are accept it and 75% of them are refused that women are not shown in related products. The above chart shows that women are more used in unrelated products. It also shows less significant Exposure of women in related to the their own products. The below chart represents changes in life style (Fig 8). It shows that the advertisements changes their life style 80% of them agree with option Yes and some of them agreed with no option (20%). This

explain that the advertisements changes the life style of the people. They changes the perceptions of people based on the their needs.

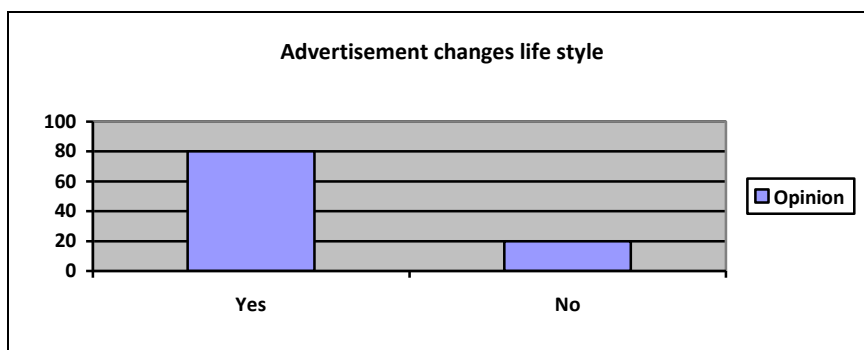


Figure 8

The major part of advertisement effect makes changes women in their personal life 20%, women character change in 25% of them respond to this option. Women respect changes 30% of respondents select this option and around 20% of them responding to changes in social status refer in the below Fig 9. This show the how advertisements lowering women self esteem. The advertisements create different perceptions of women and create an identity.

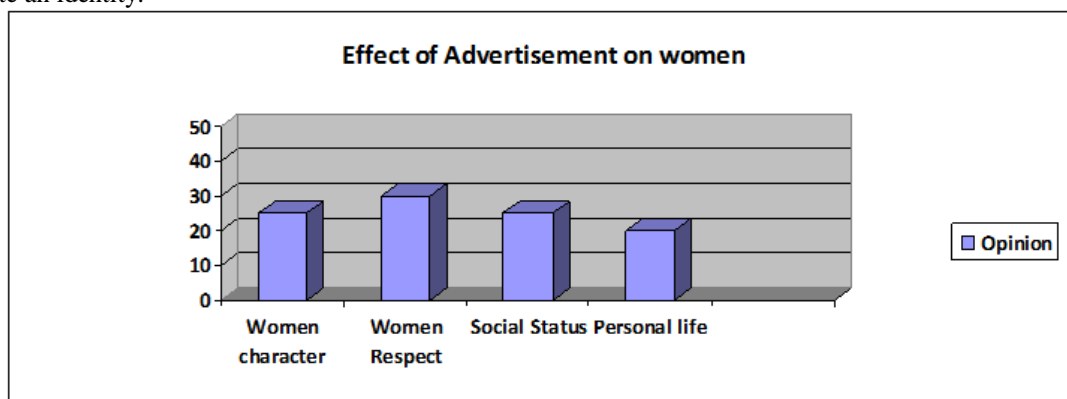


Figure 9

The advertisements changes from past to present advertisements in certain aspects. Recent advertisements are improved in technical, visual, concept, wording and style of expressing the products. From past to present the advertisements plays major role in promoting the products. It creates the attraction through words and visuals. For the product promotion portrayal of women in developed in appear and attraction in visuals and technical effects using the latest technology.

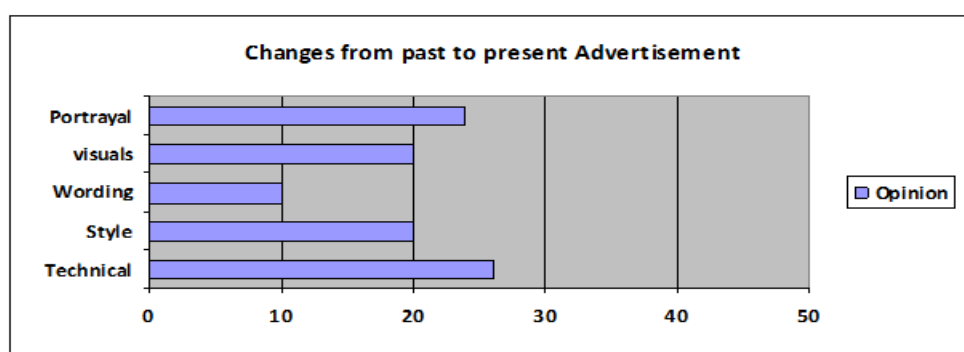


Figure 10

The respondents are selected based on options , the above fig 10 states that changes in advertisement from past to present are in technical level is around 26%, style changes around 20% of them said and Wording is improved 10% of them responds to that option, and visuals based on concepts is improved around 20% of them responds to this option. Major part the portrayals are changed in different ways is said by 24 of them.

Samples are collected from different age groups. This is personal details of samples from the age group 42% are 18-27 and 8% people are 28 -37, 25 % are from 38 - 47 and 17% people are 48 – 57 and above 58 are 9% .The Major groups of people are youngsters that the researcher collects the samples. Below chart shows the ratio of females (58%) and Male (42%)are in samples in fig (12).

Sex Ratio

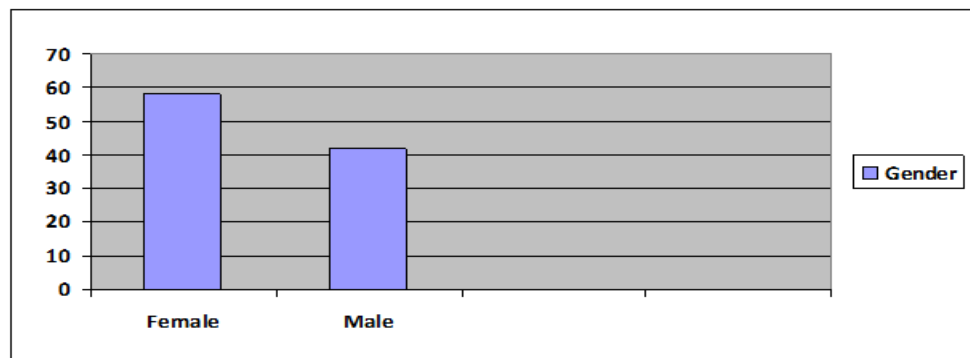


Figure 12

From the analysis and interpretations, all the advertisements that appear in print advertisements are likeable and they are viewed only if it is necessary. In Magazine advertisements, women are exploited through advertisements. Product categories used in this study theanalyze the portrayal of women in magazine advertisements. The products advertised were classified into clothing and fabrics, food and beverages, tobacco and alcohol, insurance/financial/ medical services and industrial goods, jewellery, footwear, automobiles and related items, travel and other.

- All the advertisements that appear in print advertisements are likeable and they are viewed only if it is necessary.
- Majority of samples argue that women are exploited through advertisement.
- Though women are portrayed in their related projects, now a day's maximum numbers of advertisements contain women where she has nothing to do with the product.
- Youth are spoiled by viewing advertisements and also more cultural changes appeared due to the advertisements.
- Appearing of women is related in women's product is lower level compared to appearing in men's product .
- Exposing women as glamorous female hygiene, beauty aids and cosmetics, men's toileteries, household items and appliance,
- object and make them degrading in advertisements
- Advertisements from past to present changes in all level, more in visual and concept of making advertisements
- Mostly age a group of 18 -27 responds more in the survey study.
- There is change in lifestyle by viewing advertisements. For e.g. The fairever advertisements which say only when a woman is fair will be respected in the society and moreover only, when she is pretty fair she will get a job. If a woman is a dark complexion she will be neglected.
- Women when portrayed as a glamorous object spoil her image in the society.
- The advertisements which uses a woman in it reaches the city quickly by way of magazines specially designed for the women as trend changes. Women in upper class are trendy due to the advertisements.
- It was also Shown how readers create mindset on women characteristics and their changes from the effect of advertisements.
- Most of the advertisement are influencing the people .

People end in buying the product if a woman is engaged in an advertisement. The advertisement which uses women in it reaches the city quickly by way of magazines specially designed for the women as trend changes. Women in upper class are trendy due to the advertisements. The IIMC analysis revealed that 'one out of every five ads featured a female model, whereas a male model appeared in only one of every seven ads. In more than 10 % of the ads featuring female models, their presence was necessary. They were there merely as attention getters or as 'props'. Ads for cigarettes and textiles were found to be particularly guilty of this approach. Ads for fabrics, readymade garments, cosmetics, jewellery, leather goods and toiletries were also found to portray a highly westernized, showy and snobbish life style in English magazines. The commercial ads on magazines depict women essentially as a consumer. Cosmetics and clothes promise the development of

women's potentially to entice the right man; they portray a smart but very capable housewife who is clever at using things in the kitchen, which are appreciated and approved even by the mother – in – law. She also presented as a very devoted and loving wife and mother.

V. Conclusion

The advertisements reflect like a mirror. Few advertisement agencies only follow the unwritten code and ethics. The print media earns crores and crores of money from the advertisement agency. Advertisements really have an impact on the society and it is noticeable by cultural change. The women are exploited through advertisements. The women have many roles and powers in the society. Business owners and advertising agencies have recognized the power that women possess. Being intelligent business persons, they use women to manipulate of a very patriarchal society. Some trends in advertising, creating women as a lustful sex symbol. In addition to centering attention on such details as the use of the hands, facial expressions, body positioning and relative sizes of women in magazine advertisements, on looking at the “big picture” to obtain overall message of an ad. To conclude the new generation advertisements and products have intellectually corrupted the mindsets of the mass and it creates new world orders were those with high pace and speed can only survive. The new mantra which can be coined is the world today is meant for the survival of the fastest. Mass media are the agenda setters and the advertisements are the formulas for its implementation. Even though we cannot go back to out past, it is recommended to maintain the values and ethics with which only a nation can grow further. The Advertising standard council of India should enforce the advertising agency to follow the codes and ethics. The central and state government takes steps to control over the advertisements using women as a glamour and degrading objects. The advertisers should have self – regulations when they are in media. Because media is a powerful weapon. It should be used in proper way.

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