



Femvertising the new trend in Indian Advertisements: A case study

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Abstract

Advertising plays an important part in our lives. It has a power to influence consumer behavior, and spend their money. It not only sells but it reflects the society. The representation of women in advertising has been a topic of discussion and debate for many years. Historically, women have been portrayed in advertisements as objects of desire, with an emphasis on physical appearance and sexuality. In recent years, many Indian companies have created advertisements to break stereotypes or portray women as more confident, determined and super-feminine multi-taskers. Companies have started using 'Femvertising' in various forms to stand out from the clutter of ads. There has been a shift towards more positive and empowering representation of women in advertising. This article is the study of new trend of women representation known as 'Femvertising'. 'Femvertising' refers to a trend in advertising that features feminist themes or messages, often with the goal of empowering women and challenging traditional gender roles. This approach to advertising has gained popularity in recent years, as many brands seek to tap into the growing interest in gender equality and social justice. This study focuses on Emergence of 'Femvertising' in Portraying women in India. This paper also covers the various case study of advertising using 'Femvertising' that change the scenario of women in current era. It will critically examine the reality of women in India in 2023. This study discovers the impact of 'Femvertising' as new trends in portraying women in Indian society and culture.

Keywords: Advertising, Femvertising, Women empowerment, Gender stereotypes, Women portraying advertisements, Representation of women.

Introduction

"Advertising has always been a way of life. Whenever something has needed selling, it has relied on some form of advertising."¹ (Singh, 2021) Advertising plays a significant role in our life. It actually gives shape to our society and culture. Graphics in advertisements communicates and it reflects our culture and society. Advertising has the power to influence consumer behavior, shaping what people buy, where they shop, and how they spend their money. Advertising also reflects the country's diversity and cultural heritage, showcasing everything from traditional clothing and festivals to modern lifestyles and aspirations. It is a powerful tool for promoting social change, raising awareness about important issues and encouraging people to take action. Advertising has been used to promote social

causes such as education, health, and sanitation in India.

Advertising can impact gender roles and perceptions of masculinity and femininity. In India, advertising has played a role in shaping traditional gender roles and expectations, but it has also challenged these norms, promoting greater equality and empowerment for women. It is an important industry in India, contributing to economic growth and creating jobs. It has played a role in the growth of various sectors, including media, marketing, and entertainment.

The role of women in Indian social development has been significant throughout history. Women in India have played a vital role in shaping and contributing to the country's cultural, economic, and social development. Women have been featured in advertisements for decades, and their significance in advertising has evolved over time. Initially, women were used in

¹ (Singh, 2021)

advertisements primarily as sex objects to sell products to men. But today the role of women in society has changed and their purchasing power has increased, advertisers have recognized the importance of portraying women in a more diverse and empowering manner.

Femvertising:

Femvertising is a relatively new trend in Indian advertising, which involves using feminist messaging and female empowerment in advertisements to promote products or services. This approach has gained popularity in recent years as advertisers recognize the importance of representing women in a positive light and appealing to the changing values of Indian consumers.

Over a period of time along with television commercial, digital media and also social media are in trending, there starts new trends with women role in advertisements as “femvertising”. ‘Femvertising’ means “advertisements which promote the idea, images, and messages consisting of female talents, and women empowerments”. It based on idea of inspiring women to take control and responsibility for their identity and choice. The idea of Femvertising started in 2004 with Dove’s “real beauty campaign” developed by Ogilvy and Mather, Dove redefined the concept of beauty by breaking the stereotype, that only young tall, slim ladies with flawless skin are beautiful. In the real beauty campaign, message was delivered as instead of telling or showing women how they should be, they should celebrate who they were.²(Nandi, 2022)

In India, femvertising has become a popular trend in advertising, with many brands seeking to appeal to the country's young, urban, and socially conscious consumers. One of the earliest examples of femvertising in India was the "Daag Ache Hain" campaign by Surf Excel in 2013, which featured a young girl helping a boy to clean his shirt, challenging the traditional gender roles that often dictate women's subservience to men.

Discussion

The emergence of Femvertising as a new trend in Indian advertisements can be attributed to several factors:

Evolving social and cultural landscape:

Indian society has been witnessing significant shifts in gender roles and women's

empowerment. There is a growing emphasis on gender equality, women's rights, and challenging traditional stereotypes. Advertisers recognize this societal change and aim to reflect it in their campaigns.

Increasing women's purchasing power:

Women in India are becoming an influential consumer group with increasing purchasing power. Advertisers are acknowledging the significance of women as consumers and are catering to their preferences and aspirations. Femvertising helps brands connect with this target audience by presenting empowering and relatable narratives.

Consumer demand for authenticity:

Modern consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, value authenticity and socially responsible brands. They are more likely to support companies that align with their values and beliefs. Femvertising allows brands to demonstrate their commitment to gender equality and social progress, thereby appealing to socially conscious consumers.

Amplification through digital platforms:

With the rise of social media and online platforms, the reach and impact of advertisements have expanded significantly. Femvertising campaigns can quickly gain traction and generate conversations online, enabling brands to connect with a wider audience and drive social change.

Influence of global movements and campaigns:

International movements like #MeToo and feminist campaigns have resonated with Indian audiences. They have raised awareness about gender issues and inspired conversations about women's empowerment. Advertisers are tapping into this momentum by creating campaigns that reflect these sentiments and align with the global discourse on feminism.

Positive brand image and loyalty:

Brands that embrace Femvertising and authentically promote gender equality can build a positive brand image and foster customer loyalty. Consumers tend to support brands that champion progressive values, leading to long-term relationships and increased brand affinity. Overall, the emergence of Femvertising as a new trend in Indian advertisements is a response to the evolving societal context, consumer demand for authenticity, and the need for brands to align with progressive values. By challenging gender stereotypes, addressing social issues, and empowering women, Femvertising

² (Nandi, 2022)

campaigns aim to create a positive impact and drive social change.

Importance and Benefits of Femvertising :

Firstly, it empowers women by challenging gender stereotypes and promoting positive representations. By showcasing women in diverse roles and breaking traditional norms, femvertising inspires women to embrace their capabilities and aspirations. Secondly, femvertising captures the attention of progressive audiences. Consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z, appreciate brands that align with their values. By promoting gender equality and social change, femvertising campaigns can attract and retain these socially conscious consumers. Thirdly, femvertising enhances brand reputation and loyalty. When brands authentically support women's empowerment and equal rights, they foster positive associations and build trust with their audience. This can lead to long-term loyalty and advocacy. Lastly, femvertising promotes gender equality and social change. By addressing issues like gender-based violence, workplace discrimination, and unequal opportunities, femvertising campaigns create awareness and inspire action. They contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society where women are valued and treated equally. femvertising in Indian advertising is important as it empowers women, captures progressive audiences, enhances brand reputation, and drives social change towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

Key Elements of Femvertising in Indian Advertisements

A. Authentic representation of women :

This involves portraying women in a realistic and diverse manner, moving away from stereotypes and showcasing their strength, individuality, and agency. For Example: Tanishq - "Rivaah - The Wedding Vows Collection" (illustration 1) (Illustration2)

In this advertisement, Tanishq, a renowned jewelry brand, launched their "Rivaah - The Wedding Vows Collection" campaign, which celebrated the diverse beauty and traditions of Indian weddings. The advertisement stood out for its authentic representation of women by featuring real-life bride Kirti in a remarriage scenario. Kirti, a beautiful woman in her late 40s, portrays a bride preparing for her wedding ceremony, challenging the conventional notion that marriage is limited to a particular age or

stage in life. The advertisement showcases her grace, confidence, and happiness, along with the support and acceptance she receives from her family.

By featuring Kirti, Tanishq effectively breaks away from traditional stereotypes surrounding women and marriage. The ad empowers women by presenting an alternative narrative that encourages them to embrace their choices and find love and happiness at any point in their lives. The authentic portrayal of Kirti's emotions and the positive response she receives in the advertisement resonated with audiences and garnered praise for challenging societal norms.

This example demonstrates how the authentic representation of women in Indian advertising can challenge stereotypes, promote inclusivity, and empower women to make choices that align with their aspirations and values.

1. Diverse portrayal of women in terms of age, body type, and ethnicity :

In Indian advertising, a key element is the diverse portrayal of women in terms of age, body type, and ethnicity. This involves moving away from the narrow beauty standards and stereotypes traditionally associated with women. Instead, advertisements strive to represent the true diversity of Indian women, reflecting the range of age groups, body shapes, and ethnic backgrounds found in society. By doing so, brands promote inclusivity, challenge societal norms, and empower women to embrace their unique identities and feel represented in the media.

2. Avoiding objectification and promoting realistic beauty standards:

In Indian advertising, it is essential to avoid objectification and promote realistic beauty standards. Rather than portraying women as mere objects of desire, advertisements should focus on showcasing their talents, accomplishments, and inner qualities. By presenting women in a respectful and non-exploitative manner, brands contribute to a healthier and more inclusive media culture. Moreover, promoting realistic beauty standards means celebrating diverse body shapes, skin tones, and features, rather than perpetuating narrow ideals that can lead to insecurity and self-esteem issues. By

doing so, Indian advertising can inspire confidence and empower women to embrace their authentic selves.

B. Narratives challenging gender stereotypes: In Indian advertising, narratives challenging gender stereotypes play a crucial role in promoting gender equality and breaking societal norms. Instead of perpetuating traditional gender roles, advertisements aim to present alternative narratives that showcase women as strong, capable, and independent individuals. They challenge stereotypes by portraying women in non-traditional professions, positions of leadership, and as decision-makers. By doing so, these ads encourage viewers to question and redefine gender expectations, promoting a more inclusive and progressive society.

1. **Breaking traditional gender roles and expectations:** Femvertising in Indian advertising aims to break traditional gender roles and expectations by presenting narratives that challenge societal norms. These advertisements showcase women engaging in activities traditionally associated with men, such as pursuing careers, participating in sports, and taking on leadership roles. By highlighting women's capabilities and achievements in these areas, femvertising promotes the idea that gender should not limit one's aspirations or capabilities. These ads encourage viewers to question and redefine traditional gender roles, fostering a more inclusive and empowering environment for women in Indian society.
2. **Highlighting women's achievements and capabilities:** Femvertising in Indian advertising highlights women's achievements and capabilities, giving them the recognition they deserve. These advertisements showcase women excelling in various fields, breaking barriers, and making significant contributions to society. By highlighting their accomplishments, skills, and talents, femvertising campaigns inspire viewers to recognize and appreciate the diverse capabilities of women. These ads aim to challenge stereotypes and promote the idea that women are capable of achieving greatness in any endeavor they choose. Ultimately, highlighting women's achievements and capabilities in

femvertising campaigns helps to empower and inspire women across India.

C. Addressing social issues affecting women

Femvertising in Indian advertising addresses social issues affecting women, shedding light on important topics and advocating for change. These advertisements raise awareness about gender-based violence, workplace discrimination, unequal opportunities, and other challenges faced by women in society. By addressing these issues, femvertising campaigns strive to initiate conversations, challenge societal norms, and promote empathy and understanding. They encourage viewers to reflect on these social issues and take action towards creating a more equal and inclusive society. Ultimately, femvertising in Indian advertising serves as a powerful tool to advocate for women's rights and drive positive social change.

1. **Focusing on issues like gender-based violence, workplace discrimination, etc.:** Indian advertising is increasingly focusing on sensitive issues like gender-based violence and workplace discrimination. These advertisements aim to raise awareness, spark conversations, and drive societal change. They shed light on the prevalence and impact of these issues, urging viewers to challenge societal norms and contribute to creating a safer and more equitable society. By addressing these sensitive topics, Indian advertising plays a crucial role in advocating for gender equality, promoting empathy, and inspiring action to combat these social injustices.
2. **Supporting causes related to women's empowerment and equal rights:** Femvertising in India actively supports causes related to women's empowerment and equal rights. These advertisements align with initiatives and organizations that work towards uplifting women and promoting gender equality. They highlight the importance of education, economic empowerment, and breaking societal barriers. By advocating for these causes, femvertising campaigns strive to create a more inclusive society where women have equal opportunities and rights. They encourage viewers to support and engage with these causes, fostering a collective effort towards women's empowerment and creating a more equitable future.

Femvertising in Indian advertisements:

Today many Indian brands have followed suit, with campaigns that focus on issues such as body positivity, women's empowerment, and gender equality. For example, the "Share the Load" campaign by Ariel, which highlights the unequal burden of household chores that falls on women in many Indian households, has been widely praised for its feminist message. Femvertising is started using for many campaign in different forms to distinguish in the clutter of advertisements.

Titan Raga - "Khud Se Naya Rishta"

This advertisement by Titan Raga, a renowned watch brand, challenges the traditional portrayal of women as submissive and dependent. It showcases a woman confidently pursuing her passion for music and breaking societal barriers. The ad emphasizes self-expression, empowerment, and the importance of embracing individuality. Illustration3

Nike's "Da Da Ding" campaign in India focuses on celebrating women in sports and breaking gender stereotypes. The advertisement features prominent female athletes, such as Deepika Padukone, doing intense workouts, challenging the notion that sports are primarily for men. The ad aims to inspire women to embrace their strength and participate in sports fearlessly. (Illustration-5) (Illustration6.)

Whisper - "Touch the Pickle"

Whisper, a popular feminine hygiene brand, launched the "Touch the Pickle" campaign to address menstrual taboos prevalent in Indian society. The ad encourages women to break free from the restrictions imposed during their periods and challenges the notion that menstruation is something to be ashamed of. It promotes open conversation and empowers women to embrace their bodies. (Illustration7) ,(Illustration8)

Anouk - "Bold Is Beautiful"

Anouk, a fashion brand by Myntra, released the "Bold Is Beautiful" series, featuring stories of strong, independent women who defy societal norms. The advertisements showcase women making choices that challenge conventions, such as interfaith marriages and single motherhood. The campaign aims to inspire women to be true to themselves and make choices that empower them. (Illustration9.), (Illustration 10.), (Illustration 11.)

Tanishq - "Remarriage"

Tanishq, a prominent jewelry brand, released an advertisement highlighting the concept of remarriage and challenging societal taboos associated with it. The ad depicts a bride preparing for her second marriage and showcases the acceptance and support she receives from her family. The campaign celebrates the idea that love and happiness can be found at any stage of life. (Illustration 12.), (Illustration 13.), These examples illustrate how Femvertising in Indian advertisements promotes empowerment, challenges gender stereotypes, and addresses social issues, resonating with progressive audiences and driving positive change in society. Govt of India awareness campaign, promoting girl's education "Beti Bachao, Beti Pado" and "Oriflame beautiful change" is recent ad with the same message that an established women takes the responsibility of her maid's daughter education. (Illustration 14.), , (Illustration 15.), (Illustration 16.).

Advertisement by Myntra "Bold is beautiful" a series of ad campaign for Anouk an ethnic wear brand, portraying bold and beautiful either it was about choosing life partner of same sex or pregnancy is not creating any handicap situation for any woman nor it is an end to a women's career. Whisper advertisements break different types of taboos and stereotypical mentality regarding menstruation cycles. Ariel's ad campaign "Share the load" promote the idea "Why is laundry a mother's job?" questioning century old Indian stereotypes. One of the most popular Nike's ads depicts Gender equality message by Nike's "Da Da Ding" focused on the athletic spirit of women and stood out within the clutter of advertisements by giving a strong message to people who don't give enough importance to female sports. (Illustration 17), Illustration18.) Titan's "I am Flaunt the flaws" is a beautiful ad where beauty of women is redefined, and projected women as they are.

Dove's StopTheBeautyTest ad film walked us through hard-hitting, real stories of beauty-based judgment and rejection faced by women during the matchmaking process, and the impact this has on their self-esteem.³ (Illustration 19), Paytm's Campaign for women's day showcase 'The Divide' social experiment that Approaches with confidence!

³ (Nandi, 2022)

Lead or be part of the conversation on the key trends and developments in marketing. In this impactful social experiment is a center around financial literacy and gender disparity in Indian society. At the end of the experiment there emerges the wide gap of financial literacy between men and women. The campaign seeks to encourage the viewers to separate gender from finance. (Cabico, 2021) (Illustration 20.) In the “Nayi Soch” campaign, Star plus has launched an ad where the name of the sweet shop is kept “Gurdeep Singh and Daughters”. The ad overwhelmed us by challenging the age-old Indian convention of keeping names of any business by the name of father and sons⁴. (Nandi, 2022)

Overall, the rise of femvertising in India reflects a broader trend towards greater gender equality and social justice in the country. By promoting messages of empowerment and challenging traditional gender roles, these campaigns are helping to shift cultural attitudes and promote a more inclusive and equitable society.

Conclusions

The portrayal of women in Indian advertisements in earlier was often stereotypical and limiting. Women were typically depicted in traditional roles as homemakers or objects of desire, with little regard for their intelligence, skills, or accomplishments. But in the present era, there has been a significant shift in the portrayal of women in Indian advertisements. Many brands are now adopting a more inclusive and diverse approach, with a focus on empowering women and challenging traditional gender roles.

One of the most notable trends in contemporary Indian advertising is the rise of femvertising, where brands feature feminist themes or messages that promote gender equality and challenge social norms. For example, the "Touch the Pickle" campaign by Whisper challenged taboos surrounding menstruation, while the "Do You" campaign by Nike celebrated female athletes and encouraged women to pursue their passions. In addition to femvertising, many ads now feature women in a wider range of roles and contexts, highlighting their skills, achievements, and intelligence. Women are shown as CEOs, entrepreneurs,

athletes, and professionals, challenging the notion that they are limited to domestic roles. There is also a growing awareness of body positivity and a move towards more realistic representations of women's bodies in advertising. Brands are featuring models of different sizes, shapes, and skin tones. This has helped to break down harmful beauty standards and promote a more accepting and diverse society. More over there has been a growing trend towards using humor and satire to challenge gender stereotypes and promote social change. For example, the "Share the Load" campaign by Ariel, which highlights the unequal burden of household chores that falls on women, used humor to make a powerful statement about gender inequality. Overall, the portrayal of women in Indian advertisements has become more inclusive, empowering, and diverse in recent years, reflecting the growing awareness of gender equality issues and the changing cultural attitudes in the country.

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⁴ (Nandi, 2022)

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 27. Figures and Illustrations



Tanishq - "Rivaah - The Wedding Vows Collection" (Illustration 1.) (Illustration 2.)



"Khud Se Naya Rishta"(Illustration3) (Illustration4)



Nike - "Da Da Ding" (illustration5.), (illustration6.)



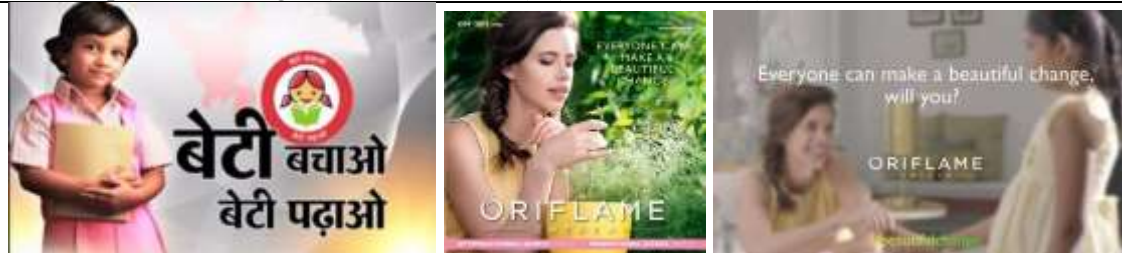
Whisper - "Touch the Pickle" (Illustration7) , (Illustration8.)



Anouk - "Bold Is Beautiful" (Illustration9.), (Illustration 10.), (Illustration 11.)



Tanishq - "Remarriage" (Illustration 12.), (Illustration 13.),



"Beti Bachao, Beti Pado", "Oriflame beautiful change" (Illustration 14.) , (Illustration 15.), (Illustration 16.)



"Share the load" (Illustration 17), (Illustration18.)



Dove's StopTheBeautyTest (Illustration 19), (Illustration 20.)



“Nayi Soch”Illustration21.)(Illustration 22.)