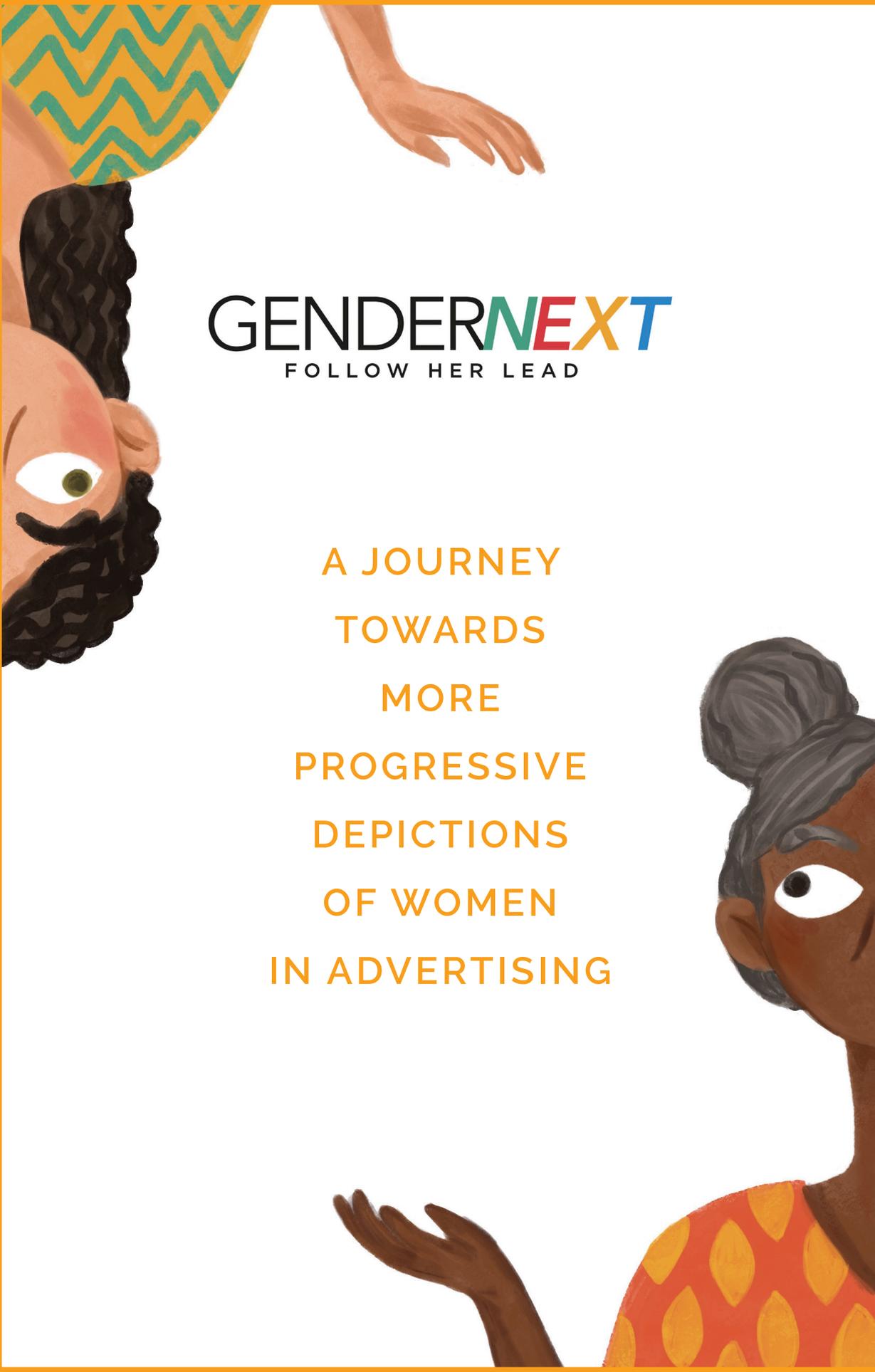


# GENDERNEXT

FOLLOW HER LEAD



*A study by The Advertising Standards Council of India & Futurebrands*



**GENDER****NEXT**  
FOLLOW HER LEAD

A JOURNEY  
TOWARDS  
MORE  
PROGRESSIVE  
DEPICTIONS  
OF WOMEN  
IN ADVERTISING

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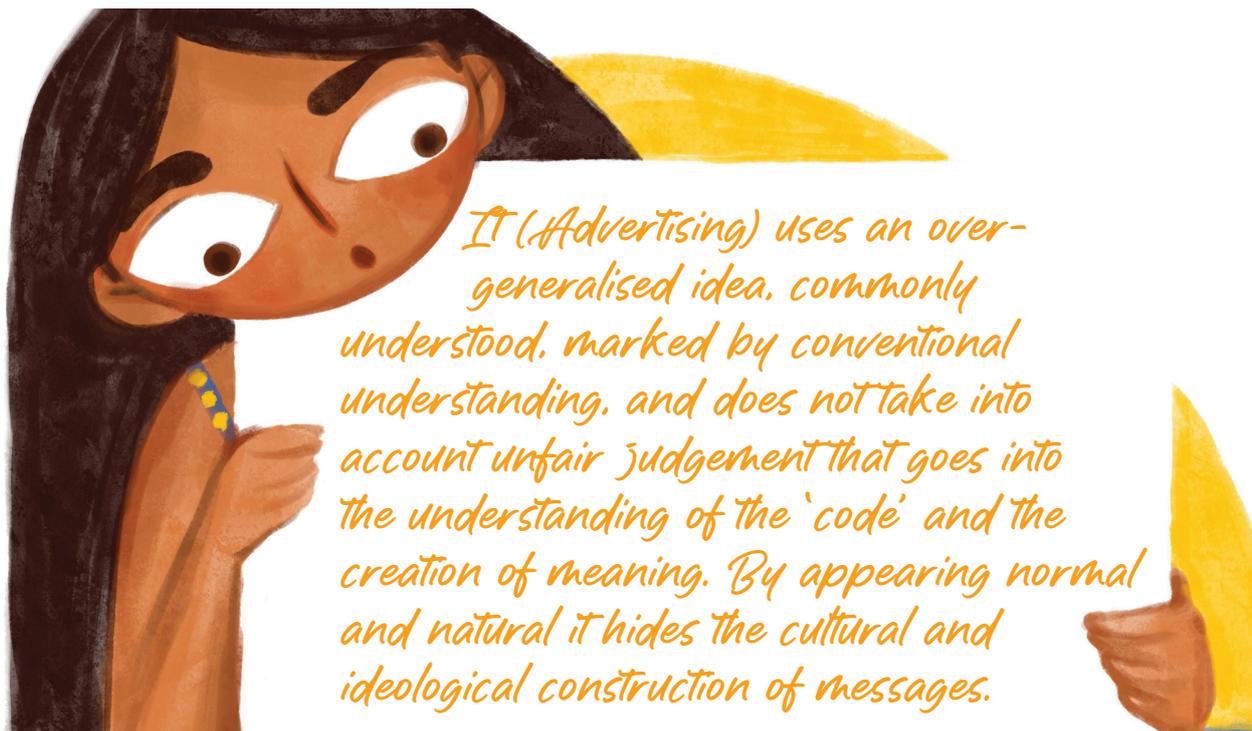
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# Foreword

In the decades that I have worked in the field of women's empowerment, I have seen that true change for women is not possible without a collective change in perceptions about women's roles and priorities. Presentations of women in media and advertising have a broad impact on the way we talk about women's concerns and are a force that should be harnessed to break down harmful stereotypes about women.

Advertising is a multibillion-dollar industry that both reflects and supports the generation of unconscious social beliefs. Women have long been a target of advertising messaging, and with women's growing economic capacity, advertisers seek to reach and influence women in their purchasing decisions. Advertisements try and sell things to viewers through a process of generating 'meaning' using 'codes', which are a complex pattern of associations that we learn as part of a culture. It is most often found that advertisements communicate to their consumers using 'stereotypes', which are widely held, through fixed and oversimplified images or ideas of a particular type, category of person or thing.



*It (Advertising) uses an over-generalised idea, commonly understood, marked by conventional understanding, and does not take into account unfair judgement that goes into the understanding of the 'code' and the creation of meaning. By appearing normal and natural it hides the cultural and ideological construction of messages.*

In their roles as consumers, women's beliefs, desires, and experiences are accessed and used to inspire the purchase of products and services. Advertising plays a dual role of both reflecting cultural social norms and creating new ways of understanding them. It has the power to both challenge and reinforce stereotypes about women.

That is why it is so important that gender stereotyping in media and advertising be monitored, challenged, and reinvented, so that visions of women's empowerment reach the widest possible audience. At the same time, social media and new structures

for media consumption have also created pathways for the depiction of alternative gender norms and narratives.

In this context, the GenderNext report on the state of women's representation in advertising is timely and important for building an understanding of how depictions of women in advertising can both reinforce and undercut the progress in women's empowerment. The study analyses messaging across a wide range of advertisements and identifies themes and patterns that reinforce a limited perception of women's roles, while also identifying trends that are aligned with the increasing diversity and modernisation of women's presentation in contemporary media narratives.

The report identifies many areas in which patterns of messaging reinforce marginal and subservient conceptions of women's roles and conservative gender narratives. For example,

- Women being featured in care-taking roles, placing the good of the family and friends as their primary focus and concern
- Women being targeted for beauty products featuring an unrealistic and unobtainable standard of beauty
- Women being informed and educated by the voice of a male authority figure

Women's bodies are still used to add sensual appeal to advertising and sell products to men, with the implicit message of increasing their desirability. Notably, women are often not targeted in the advertising for financial products and automobiles - though they are sometimes depicted as passengers and dependents, they are seldom shown as the drivers behind the wheel.

In contrast to the conservative, caretaking narrative, depictions of the 'modern woman' are also used to sell products, depicting the energy and modern orientation of contemporary working women. These messages are aspirational and often dramatic, though sometimes depicting a caricature of women's actual attitudes and experiences.

The 'breaking of stereotypes' in advertisements in particular appears to be a superficial change. The shift from traditional to modern values is riddled with contradictions.

- Domestic to public sphere shift changes the 'space' but the concerns of women continue to be based around their appearance and grooming
- Homemaker to working woman still seeks male approval, and has to be sexually alluring to be economically productive
- Appearance in traditionally non-feminine categories may have moved from women simply standing next to a car, looking sexy to actually discussing the virtues of a good car to buy. However, the women discourse invariably comes back to getting the dream man or finding a fiancé, and imply that women will be incomplete without a male

- Absence of men in the portrayal of empowered women and girls is another significant feature which assumes that had men been present, women would not need to take on these 'masculine' roles
- Women from lower social classes may be seen in work situations, but here it is a necessity
- Besides gender, discriminations based on social class, religious and ethnic identity are also commonly used

While progressive representation of women in advertising may be in its nascent stages, the GenderNext report explores in depth how new forms of media are at the forefront of creating more realistic portrayals of women's experiences. The report highlights the growing trend in popular television and OTT series, which feature more nuanced and realistic stories about contemporary women. The evolution of entertainment to include a more realistic presentation of women is a positive sign that will find its way into advertising narratives.

The production of this report engaged stakeholders across the advertising industry in discussing the ways in which women are depicted in advertising and presents a framework for addressing gender stereotyping. This framework offers two key tools to evaluate the depiction of women in advertising. The first, the SEA tool, helps content producers build empathy and evaluate the perspective of women in their narratives through the following aspects:

- Self-esteem: How the woman feels about herself
- Empowered: How the woman relates to the situation she is cast in
- Allied: How others partner in her progress

Exploring these factors in the crafting of advertisements will help producers see the narrative from a woman's perspective and examine elements of the narrative that may be disempowering.

The second tool, called 3S, screener, also uses three diagnostic measures to determine if a narrative may be supporting harmful stereotypes about women. The three measures are:

- Subordination – where the woman is placed lower on the hierarchy of decision-making and awareness
- Service – where a woman is seen in service to others
- Standardisation – where a woman is moulded into mandated projections which blur individuality

Such frameworks are useful in creating clear guidelines by which advertisers can assess their ideas and to help reduce the extent of unconscious gender bias that is reflected in their work. I endorse the adoption of these guidelines within the industry and believe

that these tools will aid in creating more progressive messages in advertising. I also note that the realm of advertisements is completely silent on the current situation, horrors of violence against the girl child and young girls, the impact of Covid 19 on adolescent girls and women, the rise in domestic abuse, the impact of global warming and environment destruction. The GenderNext study does not highlight how these political aspects impact the agency of women. Any socially meaningful discourse must take this into account.

The GenderNext report and the resulting frameworks provide an important tool for the industry to improve representations of women in advertising, and for all those working on women's empowerment to understand the cultural messaging that influences social understanding of gender. This understanding is the foundation of changing attitudes and unconscious social bias against women.



**Dr. Ranjana Kumari**

A renowned social activist and a prolific academician, Dr. Ranjana Kumari is the Director of Centre for Social Research as well as Chairperson of Women Power Connect.

# Introduction

ASCI is very excited to present to you one of the first initiatives of its kind from our stable - The GenderNext study.

The GenderNext report focuses on the depiction of women in advertising, a long-standing point of intense debate and discussion within the advertising industry, and amongst observers of the industry. At ASCI we were very clear that while we may start by looking at what has already been done, our vision was to provide insights to advertisement creators on what to do next. On how, through a deep study of women and of advertising, one could arrive at new starting points that not only could tell refreshing and real stories of women, but in a way that made brand narratives more compelling. No advertiser intends for their brand messaging to be regressive. However, so much of advertising is subliminal, and is not even on our radar during the creative development process. Its impact, however, is massive. As responsible advertisers, one cannot shrug off this responsibility of being more mindful of the messages we put out- intended and unintended.

We found Futurebrands an ideal partner for us in this exercise, with their rich understanding of change in India, as well as their deep connection with brands and communication. The team, ably led by Santosh Desai and Lipika Kumaran went about a multi-pronged approach to understand the issue at hand. In-depth consumer interviews and discussions, conversations with leading advertisers, creative leaders, policy makers and gender experts, and mining Bharat Darshan (perhaps the longest running study of change in India), gave us fantastic insights into the different facets of gender depiction. This was further bolstered by an in-depth reading of over 600 pieces of communication, national and regional, from a cultural and semiotic lens. This gave us an immensely robust and an all-round view of what the underlying patterns were, and how in fact advertising had a bit of catching up to do, because women- well they are progressing in their minds at an astonishing pace! We believe that the understanding and insights in this report will spark new conversations, lead to introspection, and push for real change.

As the body setting standards for the advertising industry, ASCI's role is to provoke these questions and support advertisers in navigating some of these tricky topics in more responsible ways. Self-regulation at its very core means being more aware of the work we do and the impact it creates in the lives of our consumers. ASCI is grateful to our sponsors who have supported this initiative to have this wonderful study be made available to industry, academia, policy makers and consumer organizations. We hope you will embrace this study, be inspired by it, think about the questions it raises, and incorporate some of the ideas it suggests. So that we can follow the lead of women, and speak with them in ways that are better for everyone.

I would love to have your views and feedback on this, and also help understand other such initiatives that you wish to see from ASCI, and how you could partner ASCI in making self-regulation come alive through education and learning.



**Subhash Kamath**

**Chairman, ASCI & Chief Executive Officer, BBH & Publicis Worldwide, India**



# Preface

Women - The Change within

Over the last 25 years, the fastest changing segment in society has been that of women. In urban India, across ages, income, town class, occupation and education levels, women have been changing- incrementally but relentlessly. Every single research outing had confirmed this- that there is a tectonic shift in the way women are imagining themselves and their place in the world. A lot of the changes do not spill over into the public domain and hence lie unnoticed or under-reported. The power asymmetry is so formidable that women have to use a whole array of strategies to try and win more space for themselves. But over time, change has been continuous – and, of late, has been accelerating. It is important for all of us in marketing and advertising to be fully cognisant of the extent of change.

The early stirrings took the form of a greater consciousness of inequality - women were more forthcoming in articulating the imbalance that they were subject to. There was more overt bitterness, and a clearer sense of how their dreams and aspirations were being ignored and overridden. Homemakers envied women working outside home as having greater freedom and capabilities, while those working outside of home felt burdened by the twin responsibilities of work and home. Popular culture added to this burden by its representations- its protagonists were shown lacking in agency and reveling in compromise.

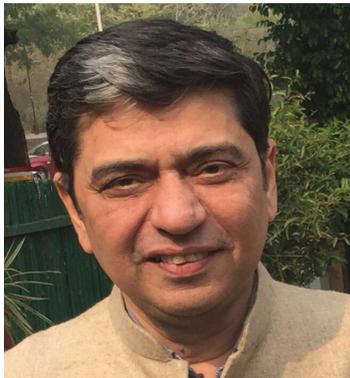
Advertising in this era was replete with images of women cowering in front of authority figures and trying their hardest to win a measure of approval from them. Typical representations include the Harpic ad where a woman is terrified of failing her mother-in-law's inspection of the toilet in her home, or the Everest masala ad, where the woman is panic-stricken at the thought that she might have missed out on a crucial masala in her cooking. Even apparently strong women characters like Lalitaji needed a man's endorsement as a final certificate.

Over time, with greater education, exposure to media, and loosening authority structures in families, resentment started giving way to a greater sense of confidence in one's own capabilities and role. Homemakers saw themselves as being the centre of their families and took pride in their ability to manage their context instead of being overwhelmed by it. Advertising depictions started reflecting a greater sense of effortlessness, with depictions like 'Dhoondte rahe jaoge' reflecting this breezy self-confidence of the homemaker. With time these representations evolved into a new archetype- that of the 'yes mom'- the mother/homemaker who, instead of acting as a gatekeeper of the home, played the role of the enabler of pleasurable activities. This was a homemaker who did not appear to be overly burdened by the many burdens

that she carried- she seemed to pull off the impossible with aplomb, all the while exuding a sense of optimism and good cheer. While it accorded greater agency to the woman, it created a stereotype that was as stifling as that of the meek, overwrought homemaker- the supermom, who needed to be perfect in everything she did.

The current research in the pages that follow show that things have changed significantly. There is a much stronger sense of being an individual, of rising above the roles one needs to play, and of wanting to invest in one's own self-development. Questions are being asked of men, with the clear sense that it is they who need to catch up and keep pace with the changes that women have already gone through. The advertising of the times has begun to reflect this but is still well short of the new reality that is being shaped by women.

As the report points out, there are still innumerable ways in which current depictions of women and the context that they operate in serve to cast her in a restricted and stereotypical light. What is needed are bold new representations that help create a new gender landscape, one that speaks to the women today, and acknowledges how she sees the world from her vantage point. Some progress has been made, but there is a long way to go. Hopefully, the pages that follow will provide a roadmap for change.



### **Santosh Desai**

One of India's best-known social commentators and advertising and marketing professionals, Santosh Desai is a columnist with several prominent publications. He writes extensively on media, popular culture, consumer markets and everyday life. He heads Futurebrands, a branding services and consulting company

# The Report

GenderNext - A journey towards more progressive depictions of women in advertising

*Why it is important to study and steer advertising portrayals of women in more positive directions*



## Advertising - Inspired by reality, but fashioning alternate ones

There is something unquestionably distinct about the way advertising pervades our lives. Unlike other dominant forms of media - cinema, television and more recently OTT, advertising does not think or frame itself as entertainment. In fact, it claims it is re-enacting reality, showcasing a 'slice-of-life' or reaching for a 'moment-of-truth' that connects its consumer to the proposition of a brand. Advertising, claim creators and marketers, is only holding a mirror to our real lives and is merely reflecting a prevalent truth.

This is not completely true. Advertising creates 'reality destinations' - it fashions realities that are a thin layer removed from existing ones. The purpose of an advertising strategy, the advertising brief and the resultant image/film is to persuade consumers to travel to these 'reality destinations' where brands await with their promises.

We, as the community of brand owners, creators, advisors and regulators, need to first acknowledge, and then perceive, the realities we fashion. It will be dishonest to begin this quest of understanding portrayals of women in advertising with the assumption of an oft-spoken phrase - "we reflect society", when it is clear that advertising does more than that.

### Brand dreamscapes

Advertising can also be construed as an expression of the market's implicit codes about consumers and their lives. Every ad is a brand dreaming up a world and the people within it. In this context, how women are portrayed by brands can actually be seen as a brand's vision of women, how it imagines they appear, how it believes they behave or how it imagines others relating to her.

The creation of advertising is a highly conscious process that involves several people's intelligence and creativity - from the briefing to the production process. The final storytelling and depiction is the result of a heavily discussed and debated process of advertising development. It is then fair to say that the depiction tropes featuring women that are so highly visible in advertising, are either willfully placed or have managed to escape discussions and debates during the development process. Either of these is far from ideal.

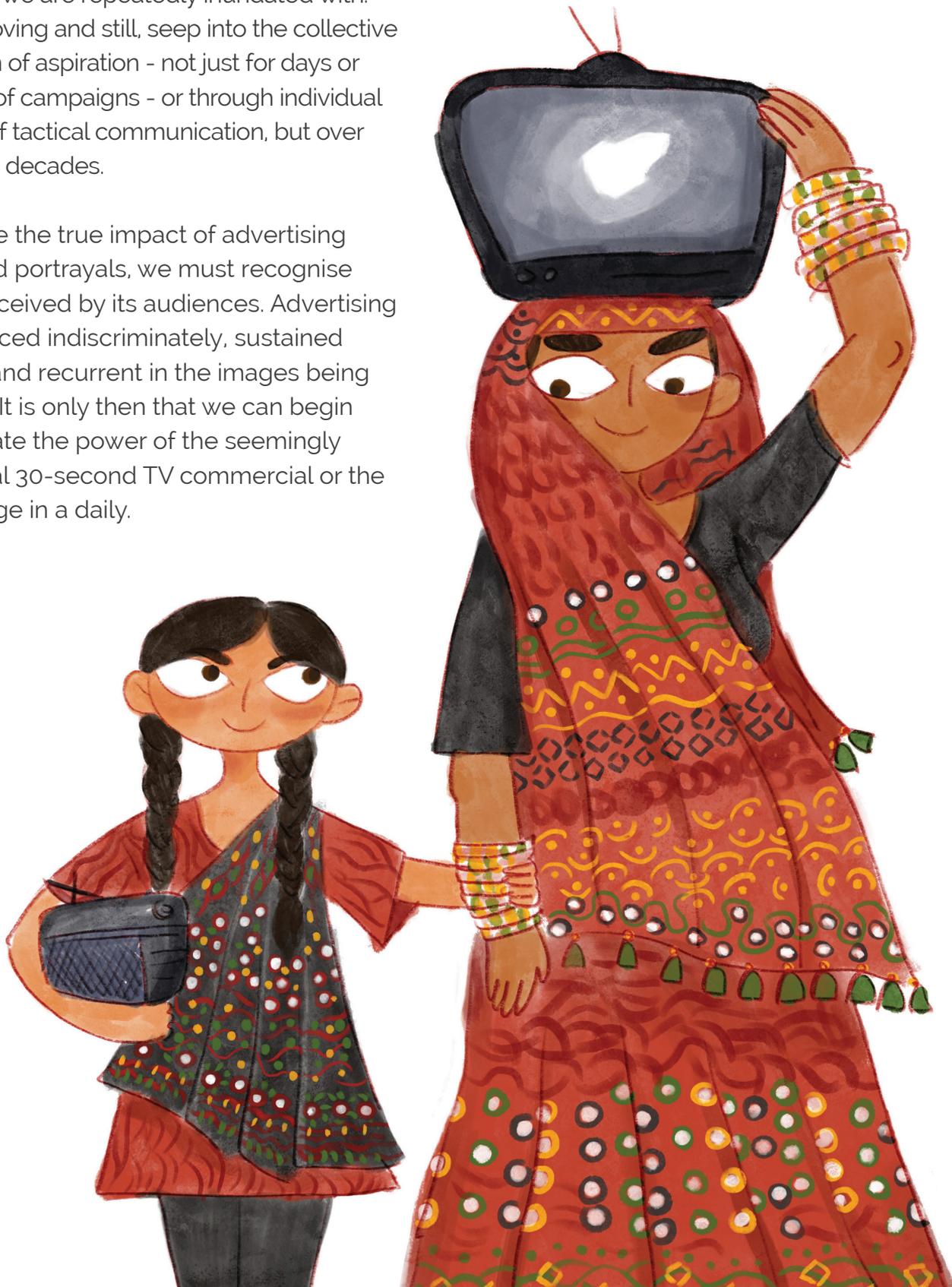
This study, therefore, also attempts to interpret the dreams of brands, the possible underlying beliefs in minds of key stakeholders and the implicit ways in which the marketing and creative industries see women and their roles. It aims to understand the gaps or congruence with reality, with social norms and self-imaginings in the context of women's lives.

# Why portrayals of women in advertising matter

## The drip-drip of depiction

Advertising, unlike other media, apart from being pervasive, is repetitive. Ads are bullets of messaging we are repeatedly inundated with. Images, moving and still, seep into the collective imagination of aspiration - not just for days or the length of campaigns - or through individual instances of tactical communication, but over years, even decades.

To perceive the true impact of advertising images and portrayals, we must recognise how it is received by its audiences. Advertising is experienced indiscriminately, sustained over time and recurrent in the images being portrayed. It is only then that we can begin to appreciate the power of the seemingly infinitesimal 30-second TV commercial or the quarter page in a daily.



## **The woman - ceaselessly portrayed, incessantly targeted**

If advertising were a shrine, it would seem it is dedicated to women. Women vastly outnumber men in the most advertised categories - food and beverages, health and sanitation, grooming and beauty, fashion and jewelry. Advertising images surround the woman in her daily life - within and outside of her home. She is blitzed by multiple images, each of which suggests to her an ideal way of being herself or playing the social roles she does - that of a mother, a wife, a homemaker, a daughter, a daughter-in-law, a professional or more. Each image encapsulates ideals of modernity or of tradition for her to choose from. The frequency and persistence with which advertising throws 'hints' at women on how they should imagine and present themselves is a powerful hum that women have no choice of turning off.

## **Offering her a conditional world of freedom and choice**

Advertising has often been presented as a refreshing vision offered to women, giving them access to new imaginations of who they are or who they could become. Over the years, these depictions have changed, with each era of advertising reflecting newer and more diverse images of women. Thus, it is tempting to cast advertising as a realm of freedom, inspiration and choice that uplifts women from the realities that might be stifling them. In fact it has often been explained by marketers and by the advertising community as being exactly that. Yet this overlooks the fact that this stated upliftment is conditional - advertising portrayals of women simultaneously project a conscious destination while subconsciously setting conditions for who qualifies to reach them. The terms of those qualifications are essayed in the frames of an ad-film scene or a still image. The terms of qualification span appearance, behaviour and one's general way of being in the world. It is surprising that while advertising aims to connect consumers to brands, the conditions it places through its persistent images, inadvertently 'disqualify' a large majority of consumers from doing just that. This is especially visible in advertising of categories like beauty and grooming, and fashion and jewelry, that speak to younger women. It is also deeply present in categories such as food and home cleaning, where the approval of the husband, elders and even one's children is earned through a pre-suggested ideal way of being a daughter, daughter-in-law, wife or mother. This conditional access even extends to the woman as an individual and how she sees herself - advertising portrayals can have a negative impact on women's self-esteem by offering them 'benchmarks' built through a limited and often unrealistic bank of representations.

## **Casual exclusions create a representation gap in some categories**

Until recently, in categories like finance and auto, the woman was not as much missing as she was excluded. Even though the instances of portrayals of women are on the rise in these categories, it is still glaringly minor within the complete body of advertising. These absences are striking when seen in the context of otherwise ubiquitous presence of women in advertising. Exclusions of depictions are another way that advertising yields power over imaginations of where a 'woman's place' is.



# *Gender Next:*

## *Envisioned to aid positive change*

From the inception of this initiative, it has been meant to act as a guide to stakeholders (brand owners, marketers and advertising professionals, policy makers, domain experts and academicians) to aid the creation of more progressive depictions of women in advertising.

This report neither intends to be a complete audit of advertising nor does it wish to offer prescriptive formulae of 'correction'. The analysis and insights in this report are meant to nudge creators of advertising to consider new starting points and eliminate implicit biases in the portrayals of women.

This study attempts to uncover and offer insights that could help steer and finetune advertising narratives and depictions of women to follow the path that women seem to have already put themselves on.

The multi-enquiry study, which culminates in this report, has attempted to look at the subject of stereotypical depictions of women from multiple vantage points. The attempt is to spark an introspective and an exploratory pursuit within the minds of marketers, advertising professionals and other key stakeholders of the advertising creation process. The report aims to do this by:

### **Revealing embedded patterns of stereotyping**

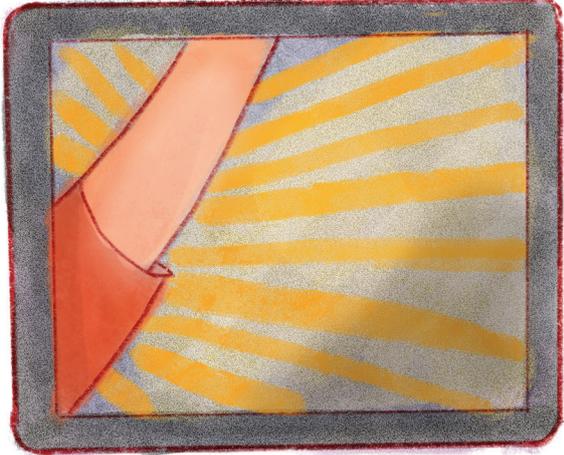
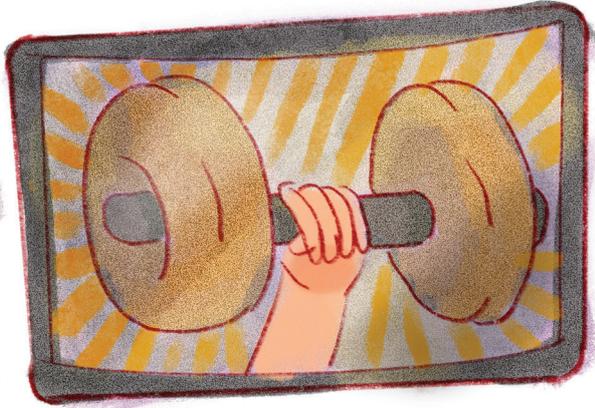
1. An analysis of advertising content to uncover deeply set, self-perpetuating stereotypes of and around women.
2. Uncover patterns that are not immediately apparent, but form a subliminal layer - powerfully framing how we see women in advertising images.

### **Recognizing of the changing self-imaginings and aspirations of women**

1. Insights from first-hand conversations with women consumers - how they see advertising, how they see themselves.
2. Insights from the exploration of the larger media context - depiction of women in TV shows, cinema and OTT.
3. Social media as a space of self-portrayals.

### **Revising existing ways of seeing, and developing portrayal ideas through use of proposed frameworks**

1. A 2-pronged framework
2. Adding a conscious development of women's portrayal.
3. Screening to flag implicitly operating codes that create stereotypes in advertising depictions of women.



# *Enquiries and methodology: The gendernext study - designed to look within and around*

Enquiries in this study were undertaken to examine portrayals of women in advertising in a holistic manner. In addition to an analysis of the content of advertising itself, this study also looked at the larger world of women's portrayals in media & pop-culture and at the changing woman herself.

## **The enquiries undertaken**

### **Mapping of the stereotype inventory**

What are the tropes that advertising uses repeatedly to portray women?

A content analysis of over 600 ads across film and print, across national and regional brands was carried out in order to identify the most repetitive images and portrayal contexts of women. The pool of advertising studied contains Indian advertising across categories and brands from 2015 to date.

### **A comparative media imagery of women**

What portrayals of women are we seeing in other popular media?

A mapping of depiction of women, female characters, plots and storylines revolving around women in television serials, cinema and OTT was undertaken. Content of highly viewed TV shows, OTT shows, popular Bollywood cinema and regional cinema was analysed. Social media accounts, popular influencer accounts, reels and vlogs freely available on the web, were also studied to understand how women are portraying themselves through their personal social media stage.

### **Understanding the changing woman - her self-imaginings and aspirations**

In-depth conversations with women were conducted to understand their lived realities, their emerging aspirations and perceptions of themselves and the world. A large selection of advertising was also played back to them so they could react to depictions of their roles, life stages and gender, as seen in advertising. (These conversations with over 800 women were split across a 10-centre ad clinic exercise and a long-term change mapping exercise\* from 2011 to date)

(\* **Bharat Darshan** is India's largest continuing study on socio-cultural change - covering more than 200 towns and counting. Bharat Darshan offers a rich repertoire of insights gathered over a decade. It allows for a birds-eye-view on the evolution of self-imagination, mobility, journeys of identity, aspiration.)

## Incorporation of stakeholder and media expert views

### 1. Marketers

Round-table discussions with marketing heads and brand managers across industries like food, personal care, fashion, auto, banking, home appliances etc. to understand their perspectives, objectives and challenges on the subject of representing women in advertising for their brands.

### 2. Advertising professionals

Panel discussions with creative professionals in advertising whose work span multiple categories. Understanding the attitudes, processes and challenges were part of the process of advertising development in the frame of women's portrayals.

### 3. Experts in media and gender

Interviews with media and gender expert commentators to get their perspective on the advertising depictions of women and the urgency for progressive change in the same.

### 4. Policymakers

Interviews with officials who work to frame policies at national levels with regard to media standards.

# *Reinforced by the voice of the consumer*

A cross-section of women consumers across different life-stages and with varying consumption baskets were chosen:

## **Profile 1 - Role Negotiators**

1. Women balancing their social roles of being mothers, wives, daughters-in-law while also seeking more as individuals.
2. Women accessing new influences, shaping their roles to make room for their desires.
3. Women expanding their lives by negotiating and bargaining within social and cultural boundaries.

## **Profile 2 - Assertors**

1. Financially independent women - professionals, small business owners, single working women, gaining exposure outside the home;
2. Women experiencing the challenges and joys of colliding worlds of financial independence, entrepreneurial verve, career ambitions and domestic duty, slow collective change, expectations from and assumptions on women that may not be placed on men.

## **Profile 3- Pathfinders**

1. Young women stepping out and starting a journey of their own.
2. Women exposed to new influences, experiences and relationships.
3. Women energised to shape ideas of themselves and how they want to present themselves to the world.
4. Women who were beginning to construct imaginations of their future selves, partners, and choices at work or home.
5. Women building their expectations of their professional and personal lives.

In addition to the above key profiles, an online study was conducted amongst young working women and men active on digital platforms to understand their views on advertising and women's portrayals in it.



# *The current view within the industry and from experts*

**Media experts, advocacy groups, marketers and advertising professionals:** The need for more progressive depictions is strong across the board, yet there are also verbalisation of perceived challenges:

## **Views of gender domain experts and policy makers**

1. Domain experts who have worked with the government and with corporates on issues of gender sensitivity, have to contend with the self-perception of most content producers as being already gender-sensitive.
2. There is an immediate pointing to the lack of diversity seen in advertising portrayals of women - a view that advertising seems to portray an aberration, not the norm of how women are, appear and behave.
3. A view that the progress of women cannot be depicted without the accompanying story of men as partners and supporters of progress in the lives of their daughters, sisters or wives.
4. A suspicion that there is a problem of 'laziness' on the part of marketers and advertising creatives to move from convention, wipe the slate clean and rethink depictions of women.
5. A viewpoint that advertising used to be something people enjoyed watching, had better content and production than TV programming at times, but no longer remains so.
6. Experts believe that advertising is taking the easy road in categories such as beauty, as it is undemanding and cheaper to sell physical attributes/appearances of women than new ideas of womanhood that have to be impressed on the audience with nuance and backed with funds.
7. They point out the fact that advertising displays several implicit codes, e.g. every woman wants to have children or that women are placed at the centre of religious ritual or it is always women cast as the thread that ties families together and so on. These create and reinforce stereotypes that women themselves may be moving beyond.

8. There is a strong perception of inherent gender imbalance at the key stakeholder level - that most managers and copywriters tend to be male and tend to imagine target consumers as well as female characters in a script, through a distanced and stereotyped lens. They believe that women managers and copywriters will be better at recognizing stereotypes and educating and alerting their male colleagues to those.
9. The idea of 'progressive' has itself become a stereotype that gets delivered in superficial ways. Progressiveness is a journey that women are themselves on and it expresses itself in diverse ways, but advertising tends to reduce it to tropes in fashion choice and styling.
10. Advertising is obsessed with aspiration and seems to flinch from showing lived reality.

### **Views of advertisers/marketing professionals**

1. A need to build out the argument for progressive depictions as a business case. Portrayals that resonate with consumers or let brands speak a distinct language can be beneficial for business.
2. A view that stereotyping is unavoidable and that the task is not to eliminate all stereotypes, but to weed out the harmful ones.
3. Progressive portrayals of women can build thought leadership for brands - strongly differentiated female characters can let brands seed and tap new aspirations.
4. An admission that women are depicted overwhelmingly in roles of care-taking and not enough in decision-making. Stating a need to push for depictions that may not be part of convention.
5. Some readiness to create a strong push from within the system - where brand managers tap new ideas, develop original thinking instead of relying on data alone.
6. A recognition of the movement in women consumers - their fatigue with being limited to household roles and duties and a need to place women outside the home in advertising portrayals.
7. A sense that the mainstream consumer is not ready to confront issues that might be meaningful to women as a gender. A belief that if one is aggressive in depicting change, it can backfire.
8. A view that the frame of gender sensitivity needs to come in far before the advertising briefing and scripting stage and integrate itself within the purpose and values of brands and corporations themselves.

## Views of creative directors of advertising agencies

1. A sense that advertising needs to make bolder moves to create tangible shifts in depictions of women.
2. An admission that women consumers are moving ahead quickly and at a pace faster than advertising is learning to portray them.
3. A desire to nudge audiences towards more progressive ideas and not just mirror society.
4. Seeking partnership from marketers/clients to support and buy scripts that feature more positive portrayals and perhaps run counter to conventional themes of portrayal.
5. A desire to create more normalised depictions of women's progress and their new aspirations.
6. A belief that advertising may not have as many degrees of freedom as cinema in championing women - a worry that strong portrayals of women may not resonate with male audiences.
7. A consensus on the idea of male and female writers imagining and writing female characters differently, with male writers more prone to fall back on stereotypes in their portrayal of a woman.
8. Some male creative heads look to the younger generation of creatives for change, fearing being too conditioned by societal norms to easily break out of thinking in stereotypes when it comes to women.
9. An admission that women's empowerment is also a trope that can win awards.

## SUMMARY OF DISCOVERIES

### Part A

# Progressive portrayals of women as seen in advertising today

## Change is underway

There have been notable shifts in the depictions of women in advertising over the last few years. There seems to be an effort to break overt stereotypes that had been integral to such depiction for many years. We see ads depicting women in spaces and contexts they were historically not very visible in - outside the home at work, in banks, driving vehicles, making seemingly confident moves in social and romantic situations. In categories like beauty, we see a body language that is more active, not only coy, and a more confident gazing back at the camera. Women are also seen encouraging their husbands to take on some load of domestic labour.

There are some more notable strokes of change in depictions of women in advertising:

1. Some lowering of levels of anxiety built around her in different contexts - especially food and beauty.
2. A more diverse mix of faces and physicality is beginning to appear in a handful of brands.
3. Women are being portrayed as wielding power and strength, having ambition and drive, views and opinions.
4. Digital and app led brands in food delivery and dating are trying to seed new norms that are trickling into portrayals - women shown valuing convenience and leisure or making the first move in a dating context.



5. Dating app advertising is attempting new depictions of women as both desiring and being desired.
6. Some telecom service providers seem to show more real notes of friendliness and camaraderie between young women and men, normalising realities of educational and work spaces.
7. Many of the tropes that typified motorcycle, men's deo or hair styling product advertising where the woman was overtly sexualized, have either faded or been 'corrected' to be less objectifying in their depiction of women.
8. Leading brands with national presence in beauty, skin care and colour cosmetics seem to be aiming for more inclusive, less discriminatory portrayals of beauty.
9. An important note of change is in the depiction of men in advertising, especially how they are portrayed in the context of domestic life. There are some new depictions of men's roles in and their responses to the emerging attitudes and demands of women.

**Even as marketers and advertising professionals have evolved the portrayals of women over time, closer inspection of content reveals the tendency of these new progressive notes to be tied to less than ideal sub-structures of meaning.**

Even as this study recognizes some signs of movement in depiction of women across categories, it also seeks to reveal the stereotypes that seem to stay stubbornly lodged in a large proportion of advertising that portrays women and also targets them as consumers. As one looks closer at advertising content and studies a large sample of it, there emerges a gap between the intent to create more positive depictions of women and the current reality of depictions.

**Some more diversity in women is shown, yet uniform flawlessness of women persists:** The vision of beauty may have begun to show more diversity - but it still imposes the unreal standards it always has. We might see darker shades of skin or different textures of hair, yet the typical woman seen in these ads is still an exemplar of common notions of perfection in multiple ways - skin, hair, body, facial features.

**Dramatised, not normalised strength and ambition of women:** Depictions of women being strong, ambitious often dramatise the woman's struggles, devote disproportionate time playing out the challenge while giving only a tiny glimpse of the win.

**Women are shown free to do more but not less:** Though women are being shown making new choices like working outside the home, becoming an entrepreneur, financially contributing to the household, they seem to do so while continuing to bear the load they always have - managing the emotional and physical needs of their family. In fact, some of the most celebrated 'women oriented' ad campaigns tend to draw out a new trope: the 'over-burdened' woman rather than normalise the support she needs.

**Tendency to celebrate the bestower of freedoms more than the woman herself:** When portrayed gaining freedoms, women are shown to be very thankful to and appreciative of those that have 'granted' her those freedoms - typically a male figure (father). The end effect tends to valorise the person who is typically withholding freedoms from the woman, rather than normalising an idea that women do not need to constantly bargain for or be grateful to receive the same.

**Women continue to be the primary bearer of the emotional burden of their family or extended social spheres:** Women are entrusted with bearing the emotional load of their families - in charge of creating joy, always ready to empathise, dealing with the anxieties and needs of others. There is little relief for women or sharing of this burden by others. This trope seems to have trickled into depiction of women in the workplace as well.

**Women are unable to shrug off expectations of femininity even when portrayed as having made divergent choices:** Even when depiction conventions are broken and women are shown as exercising new choices - getting divorced, not bearing a child, choosing to be ambitious professional - these depictions remain tinted with stereotypes of femininity. Women continue to be shown unabatedly caring for others, investing their time and emotion to make others feel comfortable, looking their best in situations that may not always allow for it.

There is an energetic attempt on the part of brands to actively appear to celebrate and champion women and their causes. We see campaigns push the envelope on assumptions and defy stereotypes. In these woke representations and ad story lines, there is a conscious effort to overturn stereotypes - whether it is the young girl changing



tyres or the young woman making the first move or a mother giving her child some tough love. There are also instances of including unconventional choice of profession, appearance (specifically skin colour) and sexual orientation. Typically, these ads are released on digital media and not so much on mainstream media like television – and they are timed with women-themed days on the annual calendar - Women's Day or Mother's Day. The result is that even though they add to a new set of ideas on the portrayal of women in advertising, these ads end up doing so in a token way.

## **The Emergent Genre Of Woke Advertising**

Whether it is the financial resources put behind broadcasting them, or the marketer's strategy to connect with a digital audience that is more likely to receive it positively, these ad campaigns create only a limited ripple and cannot be considered to signify a wave of progressiveness of women's portrayals in advertising. What they do however signify is the brand's desire to connect to, reflect and even be celebrated for a more un-stereotyped view of women. As a brand signifier, woke advertising does let brands score better on an overall scale of progressiveness but its limited reach and frequency does not embed new ideas and representations of women with the efficiency of high-frequency/high-reach, big budget campaigns on mainstream media.



## Part B

*Analysis of cross-category advertising content reveals that a significant proportion and the most widely viewed cache of advertising seems to continue to borrow from an inventory of stereotypes*

**Women trapped in a loop of portrayals:** Content analysis of advertising reveals oddly persistent images that appear repeatedly. Every category seems to have its own 'key image' frames that appear across different brands. Whether it is a woman holding a tray of food, young girls wearing monochrome costumes in beauty and fashion ads, women being instructed by male voice-overs in detergent ads, young women gazing anxiously into the mirror in skin care ads, women being cheerful and carefree while washing dishes or cooking multi-course meals for the whole family - these images keep making a consistent appearance.

**Much of the stereotyping lies in the subliminal background of a film or image:** Stereotypes reveal themselves when one sees between the frames. It is in the general body language, appearance, attire, task-pairing, spaces in which women are set in, that a gender bias makes its appearance. For e.g., women wearing traditional clothing are often cast as being less aware than western attired ones, food advertising typically distances the woman from moments of life by placing her in the kitchen, skin care ads show groups of young women moving and mouthing jingles in sync.

**Women's empowerment-oriented advertising pins new stories on existing cultural stereotypes of women:** Even as advertising scripts show women being more successful, more independent - they stay loyal to existing cultural stereotypes. Women are increasingly shown to be independent but rarely to be free of the social behaviours typically attributed to them. E.g., new attributes like entrepreneurial zeal are still shown alongside the woman being caring and continuing to fulfil domestic duties or the emotional care-taking of her family.

**New stereotypes load women with burdens they may not seek to bear:** Old stereotypes are being replaced by some new ones. The 'working woman', the woman who 'balances work and home', the 'cool' or 'bindaas' teenage girl are part of a new set of representations. Though each of these are meant to reflect the new lives and choices

of women, they are also stereotypical new ways of being. We must ask ourselves if women want to be celebrated for bearing more burden at home and work, or for their fashion and style to be interpreted as an invitation to flirting.

**The male celebrity has coercive power over women in ad narratives:** Several categories like food, home cleaning, detergents - seem to use the male celebrity in a particularly authoritarian mould - evaluating, rejecting and then correcting a woman's actions or choices. A surprising factor of this coercion is that it usually plays out in the domain of the woman's home, where the male celebrity/movie star usurps power and space that should not be his to claim.

**A tendency to infantilise men, not normalise their partaking in domestic and emotional labours:** Though brands seem to want to show more equitable division of labour or more non-gendered attitudes to domestic duties or child-rearing, there is a common misstep. More often than not, such male characters are written to appear inherently incapable or inexperienced in basic tasks. This tends to reinforce stereotypes of both genders, keeping the burden squarely on women even though brands might intend to connote the opposite. The fact that men in this situation are typically written and depicted as 'cute' and childlike in their bungling of simple tasks, the ad builds in a reason to absolve them of the new duties they are being asked to shoulder.

**Typically, male oriented categories are slowly including women in the frame, but very often without agency:** Finance and automobile advertising is seeing more women present in imagery than ever before. However, women are still framed as silent on-lookers or receiving the benefits of good male judgment without seeming to have their own, or having weaker contact with or control over with the product than men have been shown to possess.

**Beauty is represented along very narrow definitions:** There seems to be an implicit code of beauty that women are measured against. This becomes visible in the casting of female actors in advertising. Not only is this code visible in beauty and fashion categories, where skin colour and tone, weight and height seem to be strictly defined, but is one seen across advertising. Implicit codes of what women's appearance should be also play out through a moulding of women through styling and apparel - seemingly mandating what a mother should wear, how a young girl's hair should be styled and so on. These beauty moulds are ones that too few women can fit in.

**New cliches of representation create hollow depictions of female empowerment, freedoms:** There is a tokenism in showing women in spaces beyond the home. Especially the new stereotype of the working woman who is rarely seen at work but is shown as 'returning' home. For example, the 'doctor-mother' or a professional woman are rarely shown in their work settings and most often at home with their family. We end up seeing what are significant aspects of women's self-definitions, represented

merely through wardrobe and styling. There is little change in the tasks she is aligned to, or the expectations others have of her. These don't seem to have undergone the make-over the woman has been given stylistically.

## *Categories seem to have their own sets of stereotyped depictions of women*

A content analysis of advertising across categories reveals that categories share a set of commonly appearing tropes. Every category, e.g. food, beauty/personal care, automobiles etc. has its own bank of depiction stereotypes that reveal how the category sees its consumer. It is likely that some of these stereotypes are so deeply embedded in the imagination of brand marketers and advertising creators, that they do not actively perceive them. The following is a list of stereotypes that different category groups tend to feature.

- 1. Food and home (categories included: food, home cleaning, home appliances, detergents, service delivery apps)**



**Backgrounding of women:** There is a tendency to place women on the edges of a collective moment - anchoring her to labour and disabling her from being more central in a moment of collective enjoyment. A 'backgrounding' of women in panned out frames exists even while she is central to the story. She tends to be placed physically away from the moment playing out in her home or family and is often shown to enjoy the action from a distance.

**Uncomplaining service:** Food categories often show women catering to multiple demands placed on them by different members of their family. Though it creates a very happy picture of a family and its joys, this stereotypical depiction tends to obscure the burden of labour and demands placed on the woman behind a smiling and happy demeanour. Since women are shown to be happy and even energised in this context, this creates a sense that all her service must be joyfully given. This normalises the unthinking placing of multiple expectations, tasks and domestic chores on women and legitimizes the expectations of the husband/children/elders

with regards to being served without protest. It also frames these

demands as uniformly welcomed by,

and also fulfilling for women. There

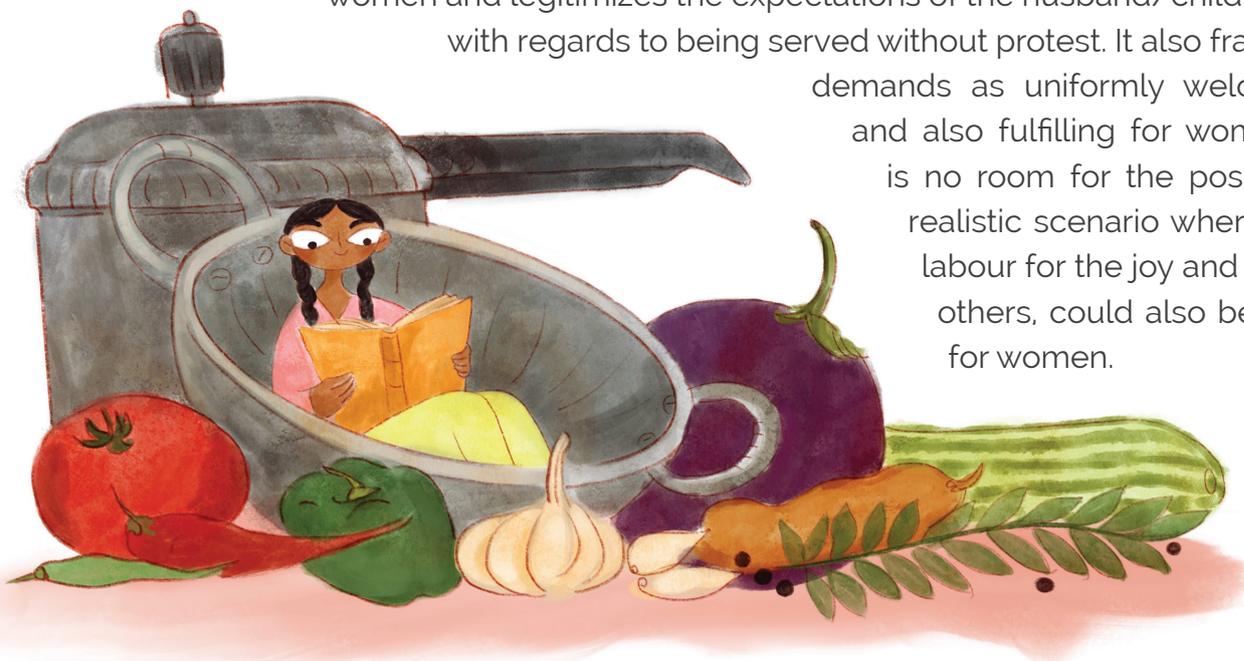
is no room for the possibly more

realistic scenario where constant

labour for the joy and comfort of

others, could also be a burden

for women.



**Leisure deficiency:** There is a stark contrast between the body language of women shown in advertising and that of others. Women are rarely shown at physical ease or at leisure. The woman is very often enacting a buzz of busy-ness while the others around her (husband/children/elders) are in postures of rest or leisure. Most ads have women standing or in motion between spaces or tasks while others around her stay seated. This is a highly embedded trope and easily visible when one is alerted to it. It is disturbing as to why, even when not central to the story, women are rarely shown to be at rest. There seems to be an implicit assumption that this deficiency in women's leisure is natural and even defining of their existence.

**Casual contrasting and gendering of tasks:** Categories such as food and home-cleaning tend to create a stark contrast between women's tasks and those of men.

A division of labour in portrayals cuts across brands and sub-categories in food. Pairing women with serving trays or chopping boards and men with laptops or newspapers is a common framing one sees.

**Costumed in modernity:** Women seem to be shown in western attire as a means to depict a surface modernity while keeping her anchored in roles that stay bound to tradition. There also seems to be a hinting to a hierarchy of fashion where those in the ubiquitous and most prevalent traditional attire (sarees, salwar kameez) seem to be 'losing' to or 'instructed' by those in western attire.

**Contestant syndrome/ever evaluated:** Women are repeatedly placed in situations where they seem to be vying for approval - from either the mother-in-law, the husband or other family members. The woman seems to crave approval from those she is seen serving. Often female characters are pitched against each other in a faux-competitive scenario - where one is trying to outperform the other. The depiction of women being put in a scenario where she is 'trying' to win seems to place women's actions under a constant frame of evaluation.

**Food burden bearing:** Remarkably, this is not restricted to portrayals of wives or mothers. Even in a 'fun and friends' setting, young teenage girls seem to be disproportionately saddled with the emotional labour around food - having it ready, ordering it, holding it or sharing it. In the same depictions, boys are allowed to comfortably or even cluelessly, just be hungry.

**Cheerleading men for the minimum:** Though placing men in the realm of domestic labour is a progressive note in relation to portrayal of women, it tends to be depicted with a disproportionate amount of fanfare and dramatic cheering that perpetrates a long-standing stereotype. While women are shown trying to win attention and approval, men are shown being showered with it.

**Hyper-sensualised eating:** The act of eating, when portrayed by a woman, is dominantly projected as a sensual act. The woman's mouth and facial expressions are very often used as a sensual prop by a wide variety of food categories like ice-cream, fast food, chocolates, cereals, biscuits and more. Even the food that women are portrayed eating seems plasticized and unreal. Again, when seen in contrast, depictions of men eating don't seem to have the added element of sensual charge. Women seem to be the chosen medium through which the 'attractiveness' of food is communicated.

**Space forsaking:** A dominant trope in the home cleaning category and one visible across brands in it, is the woman giving up space and control to a powerful male figure - most often a small or big screen celebrity. There is an immediate succumbing to a forceful entry of male authority into what is her domain - the home. She is often

portrayed as willing to be instructed and giving up not only control, but also actual physical space to intrusive male authority.

**Male voice of reason/Mansplaining VOs:** The male voice over is the most common means of instructing women in categories of home appliances, detergents, health and hygiene categories. Often the male voice over is embodied by a male character - typically a doctor or scientist or dentist - and becomes the 'specialist' voice that leads the woman towards a better choice. Sometimes the male voice over also has an accent of taunting that seems to normalize a more harmful and less visible verbal aggression. More often than not, the female/female voice emotes, while the male voice explains.

**Humour hedging:** Non stereotypical portrayals of 'atypical' female behavior are regularly couched in humour. When women are shown rejecting authority or popping the bubble of self-importance of those more powerful in the traditional hierarchy - mother-in-law, husband, elders - she is depicted as a funny aberration, sometimes over-the-top. This reveals an implicit code that tends to add an element of humour to soften any transgressive behaviour being shown by the woman, thereby quickly diffusing any legitimate power she may have been shown gaining.

**Heaped with festivity:** Festive seasons see a slew of ads from different kinds of categories - from fashion to appliances to gadgets. Regardless of how diverse the products of these categories may be, they have one factor in common - the woman as the central pivot around which celebration and ritual seem to rotate. Placing the woman at the core of festive celebrations, either as a mute motif of auspiciousness or the central 'festive worker' making sweets, stringing garlands or drawing rangoli.





## 2. Beauty, fashion and personal care (categories included: colour cosmetics, skin care, hair care, fashion, sanitary protection)



**Mute muses:** A common portrayal theme in jewelry retail, fashion and beauty advertising is the woman cast as a muse. The typical trope is where a male voice-over delivers an ode to her beauty or allure while the woman herself stays typically silent, wordlessly receiving the gaze as every little thing about her is sensualized.

**Lost beauties:** There is a common image in beauty advertising where the woman is lost in her thoughts, smiling to herself, gazing out of the window - she is depicted embodying a nothingness, hinting at an inner hollowiness and which then gets equated with feminine allure.

**Choice mediation:** Very often in categories like jewelry, the young bride-to-be seems to be on the periphery of choice making. There is a collective force that supersedes her individual choice. Though this might be true of a larger cultural truth of marriages and jewelry buying in India, one must question if this depiction is missing new aspirations and realities of how a new generation of brides imagine themselves and their choices today.

**Gaze acceptance:** The woman is often portrayed as a willing and even welcoming receiver of a gaze - often that of a stranger. This depiction seems to give permission to the gaze and also build an expectation that it will be received positively. What might be uncomfortable and even unsafe situations in real life, get normalized as a legitimate social interaction.

**Submission to the gaze of the camera:** There is a sensual engagement between the woman and the camera in colour cosmetic advertising. There seems to be an interplay between the woman and the camera in what makes her seem readily submitting to its gaze. Here the camera's gaze is a symbol of a larger collective gaze that is trained on women. This dynamic with the camera is rarely seen when it comes to depictions of men.

**Seeding beauty self-doubts:** A very common trope seen in skin care advertising is women comparing themselves with a 'beauty protagonist' who adheres closely to a conventional yardstick of beauty. The usage of beauty as a yardstick to create insecurity and qualify the non-protagonist women as less beautiful or not beautiful, not only deeply reinforces beauty stereotypes but also seems to actively rate women on a scale of an implicitly coded idea of beauty. This also makes a heavily codified view of beauty seem like the essential difference between success and failure in a range of situations.

**Doll housing - New freedoms and power seem staged:** Though there is a trend for colour cosmetics and fashion brands to depict more un-stereotyped images e.g. young women striding through the city, very often the city seems 'vacated' and empty. Women seem to lead empowered lives - at work, out of home - but seem to do it in perfectly manicured spaces. They are often shown to exist within spaces that are colour coordinated, cleared of the messiness of real life that real women navigate. The need for beauty advertising to look beautiful often seems to recreate an alternate reality that doesn't exist.

**Hive-minds and girl gangs:** Another common pattern in colour cosmetic and skin care advertising is the presence of usually a trio of young women that sing, dance, speak in synchronized sameness or wear outfits in the exact same colour. This styling of hair and clothes seems to mute individuality and present women as embodying a shared 'girliness'.



### 3. Finance (categories included: banking, insurance, wallets)



**Spender syndrome:** The shopping bag is an often-seen accessory of women in finance category ads like credit cards and debit cards. This trope of the woman as a shopper stands out only because it abounds while the image of men shopping/consuming is rare in the category - leaving the woman marked with the label of being consumption greedy, not men as much.

**Excluded from the conversation:** The typical banking and finance TV commercial has men talking to men while women look on. There are examples where a woman plays a more active role but it still remains marginal.

**Under the male provider's care:** There is a tendency to showcase women's dependencies in order to highlight men's abilities. Since the man is the central character in most finance category advertising, women often appear almost as children under their care.

**Emotion swaddling:** Women don't seem to be afforded the cool edge of practicality that men are usually portrayed while making financial decisions. Financial category ads featuring women tend to be played out on emotion heavy storylines.

**Worshipped selflessness:** Many depictions in the finance category place the woman on a pedestal. This theme tends to draw out a key stereotype of women - as long

suffering and self-sacrificing. Typically, these ads tend to mark Women's Day or Mother's Day and are perhaps a way to feature and celebrate women. Unfortunately, they seem to end up reinforcing archetypal stereotypes - rather than new behaviors and aspirations of women with respect to the category.

**Obscuring of the financial burdens that women bear:** The depiction norm in the category is of women being bestowed, being made secure, having their aspirations fulfilled by male figures such as the father of the husband. There is a striking lack of portrayals that is a resounding truth for many women - that they are co-bearers or even primary bearers of financial burdens of their households or their own lives.

#### 4. Gadgets and wheels (categories included: automobiles, two wheelers, gadgets, apps)



**Objectified sizzle:** Perhaps the oldest trope in automobile advertising is to 'place' a woman next to a car. A typical pattern that is prevalent in many instances of car advertising where the woman does not appear as a mere passenger - but actively as an object of desire. The purpose of the 'placement' of the woman in these contexts seems to be to add a sizzle or succumb to the desirability of the man in the car. This trope tends to equate the automobile and the woman, both being portrayed as attractive property to be acquired/owned, erasing the subjectivity of the woman as a person.

**Wheel withholding:** While women are increasingly featured in automobile advertising, they are very often not given the wheel. The woman is often placed in the passenger seat even when she is portrayed as a young woman in the adventurous outdoors.

**Superficial feature seeking:** When the ad is set in the space of a showroom or of buying a car, the woman is usually shown voicing preferences limited to the colour/shade of the car. So, while the woman is depicted evaluating the car as fashion, it is the man who 'seriously' evaluates the car as engineering.

**Childlike passenger:** There is an infantilisation of the woman and her actions when presented with the car. The woman tends to be cast as a joyful receiver of the car or the ride in a manner not very different from children.

**Lack of 'handling' of cars/roads:** There is a marked absence of women truly 'driving' cars even though they may be placed in the driver's seat. Framing of the shots in automobile films tend to slice the woman off from the 'body' of the car in a way that male drivers are not. One rarely sees women handling more than the steering wheel, that too in a gentle stance. This is in contrast to men driving in automobile advertising, where they steer actively and are more likely to be shown handling the gear stick or with their feet at the pedals.

**Paired with auspiciousness:** Women in car advertising are often presented carrying out cultural rituals around the car - typically when the car is 'welcomed' home.

**Femvertising flips:** Women's Day seems to be a moment for many auto brands to include women more actively into their advertising in ways they are otherwise not. This seems to imply and reinforce the notion that women are not seen as an everyday aspect in the world of automobiles.

**Body doubles for gadgets:** Women are dominantly featured in the showcasing of the 'body' of the gadget. Very often we see the women cast in gadget ads when the central messaging is about the aesthetic appeal of the gadget. This task dominantly falls to women and while men are portrayed to showcase the functionality or performance of a gadget.

**Comparatively de-linked from the gadget:** Women are often seen around the laptop, carrying out tasks (often domestic) while the men in the frame are in direct contact with it.

**Lower down in a 'tech hierarchy':** Ad depictions seem to show women lower down in the hierarchy of a 'tech' powerworld. In the imagination of a new world of tech-startups, the woman is portrayed as a consumer or 'follower' of male tech entrepreneurs. This again shows the woman not in relation to the new gadget, it's functions and uses, but rather

reinforces the 'shopping' trope often used in depictions of women. Current depictions don't seem to show women given a seat at the table of power in the way it does men.

**New functionalities power old responsibilities:** For example, the woman 'sorting out' a food crisis moment - while the man says 'pata nahin', shows the woman playing a stereotypical gender role in spite of the fact that she is using a cutting-edge delivery app. Tech brands seem to fall back on the same gender dynamic as long-established household product and food brands.

**New contexts paired with long standing assumptions:** Even though women are shown in a new context, attired in contemporary fashion, the functionality of the gadget/app is tied back to a gender stereotype e.g. father checking on her whereabouts when she's out on a date and wanting her to come home, or the messaging app ad that shows a girl living away from home yet '*she never forgets anything*' and is actively creating moments of joy that can be shared between her large family. Even though depictions may be showing new facets of her individuality, she is kept anchored in expectations that collectives have from women - being caring, nurturing, thoughtful and even obedient.

## **5. Women as depicted in categories that dominantly target men (Men's fashion, deodorants, cars and bikes)**

**Deprived damsels:** In fashion or deo advertising, there is a tendency for the central male character to be cold to or dismissive of the attention he receives from a woman. The portrayal of the woman's desire for the man is seen in contrast to his apparent lack of interest in her. This is a note visible in some automobile advertising as well.

**More stylised and cookie-cutter beauty:** Though there has been some widening of the definition of beauty when seen in personal care and colour cosmetic advertising, the women featured in ads that target men seem to still adhere to a more fixed notion of beauty. This is underlined by how they are usually styled in these ads - typically wearing more make-up and figure-hugging clothing.

**Passive receiver:** Women typically get portrayed as being mute, passive and receptive in representations, usually reacting wordlessly to the demeanor or actions of men who are central characters.



## Part C

*The portrayals of women in other media are fuelling a diversity of portrayals, admittedly with its own troubling tropes - but there is a showcasing of new journeys that could have advertising play catch up*

As part of contextual understanding, this report also looked at other dominant representations of women as seen in popular culture. The overall theme is one of more progressive strokes of change, even in the 'slower to change' content that we see in TV soaps.

This is a study of advertising and not of pop-culture, but it was important to understand the movements being made therein. This is in no way meant to be a spanning read of all pop-culture in India today, rather it is a temperature taking through identifying some visible shifts and elements of newness in portrayals of women. The following is a short list of the visible signs of shifts rather than the dominant reality of depictions. It is these emerging themes of pop-culture portrayal that advertising must awaken itself to.

### **Signs of shifts as visible in the depictions of women in the content of TV, Cinema, OTT and Social media**

#### **Depiction of women in TV seems closer to how they appear in their lived reality:**

There are today several additions to the earlier, mainly melodramatic depictions of female characters. There seems to be an attempt to make the woman seem more real and relatable - be it in their attire, fashion, dialogue, expressions. Even the homes or other spaces they inhabit seem closer to reality. We see women attired more simply, reflecting an everyday fashion sense and displaying more relaxed body language and facial expressions.

#### **Women shown sharing more relaxed equations with their family and supported by their husbands:**

While traditional structures still hold strong in depictions, there is a more friendly & easy-going relationship between the woman and her family or elders in the home. The husband is beginning to play a more supportive role and standing by her and encouraging her personal journey.

**Beginning to be shown in more social and public spaces rather than just being bound to the home:** TV and OTT as well as cinema have begun to place women in spaces other than the home, making her visible beyond domestic realms. We see women occupying space 'outside' - in public places like roads, malls or holiday destinations. Women are seen in contexts of professions and also of leisure, and not locked merely within domestic labour.

**Messy realities finding a place in depictions of women:** Portrayals of women are no longer locked in perfection of the 'ideal family', the 'happy marriage'. She is also being shown in the context of failures, mess-ups, second chances - divorces, second marriages, professional challenges are being included into plotlines around women.

**Multi-dimensionality to characters, struggles and joys:** Female characters are shown as being able to play multiple roles and smoothly transition from one to the other. There is a movement away from portrayals that define women in binaries. We are seeing greater instances where she is shown as tender yet fierce, confident yet unsure, resilient yet vulnerable, happy yet conflicted - all at the same time.

**Body language depictions as more open, confident & animated:** We see women laughing out loud and fully, not holding herself back. A range of body language finds expression, making room for those that are more candid and not always calculated.

**Fashion and styling spectrum has expanded:**

There is a large spectrum of fashion choices that we begin to see. Fashion choices have begun to look more individualized than standardized for the character's life-stage or role.



**Portraying a spontaneity and impulsiveness not often seen earlier:** Especially in cinema, we see a more at ease, playful, spontaneous woman. She is being shown as someone who is enjoying living in the present, acting on her impulse and instinct. This is a departure from the woman typically 'playing to the script' of implicit cultural codes of how a 'good' woman should behave.

**OTT shows have made room for portrayals of fiercely individualistic women:** While the collective is not completely absent but the woman is being seen as relatively untethered from it. There is focus on the woman - her chasing her desires, ambitions, confronting her trauma, not backing down in conflicts. We see her navigating this without easily giving into convention or pressure from the collective.

**Scintillating rebelliousness:** OTT and also in cinema, there are today portrayals of women as rebels who can manipulate and scheme. Women characters today are seen breaking taboo, whether it is through indulging in casual sex, experimenting with drugs, enjoying alcohol and smoking. One must note, however, that there is often an objectification of the female body and a sensationalizing of these departures from culturally approved femininity.

**Emergence of a new sisterhood where women are cheerleaders of each other:** The relationship between women is shown as getting stronger where there are genuine friendships, there is empathy and support being shared between women. Women are shown standing up for other women, even when they might be strangers to each other.



## Women portraying themselves on social media

Social media content has democratised and personalised the production of content creating an endless library of real, ordinary individuals streaming the most mundane aspects of their lives. Instagram posts, Facebook reels, TikToks, YouTube vlogs are all ways in which thousands of women are seen to be broadcasting their everyday lives. This gives us rich insight into how women are portraying themselves and thus a sense of how they desire to be seen as well.

**Appearing in refreshingly genuine, real ways:** Through the content that they post, women are seen being themselves without much pretense. There doesn't seem to be a need to orchestrate perfection. Women speak in everyday language and vocabulary that doesn't seem scripted. We see them confident in the context of their lived-in, sometimes messy homes or hair and attire that may not always be perfect.



**Turning the idea of being a 'housewife' into an exciting and desirable domesticity:**

Homemakers are storifying their everyday routines. We see them approach routine tasks with excitement and also their pleasure at sharing their skills of cooking, craft or organising and decorating their homes. She is showcasing occasions like birthdays, anniversaries adding a celebratory quotient to life. We see her plan dates with her husband, on trips with her family, enjoying her domestic work and also enjoying leisure time. This is interestingly in contrast to an advertising trope that tends to place women in the background of joyful family moments, whereas in their own depictions of these moments, women place themselves in the centre, enjoying a moment equally.

**Her family is seen to be excitedly participating in her adventures:** Right from the husband to kids to in-laws, grandparents - everyone seems to be participating in her new exciting world. They are often featured in the content she shares, and participates in live Q&As with her followers.

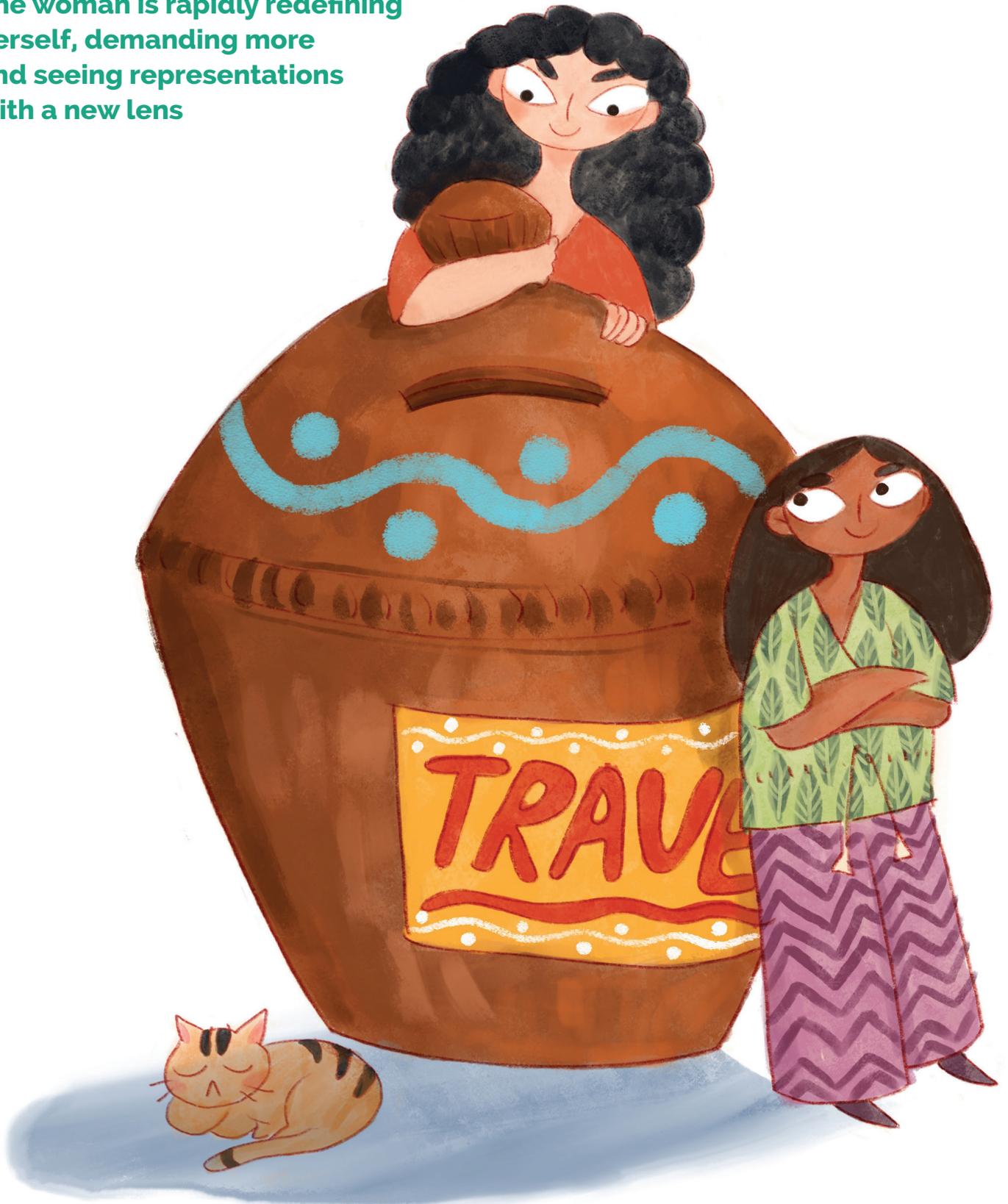
**Confident projections of her allure on a stage she creates for herself:** The woman is seen uninhibitedly portraying her beauty, sense of fashion and style in her social media content. We see women enjoying playing out on screen-moments of romance and attraction, giving glimpses into their talents in dance and singing in a way that they are seen enjoying themselves and minimizing the power of the gaze by seeming uncaring of the judgment of their audience. This is in contrast to what we see in advertising - a more ready submission to the camera's gaze and evaluation.



## Part D

# *Learnings from the immersive exercise with consumers from metro, tier 1 and tier 2 towns of India*

The woman is rapidly redefining herself, demanding more and seeing representations with a new lens



A new generation of women are re-engineering roles they play. Every generation has their own attitudes and beliefs, their distinct modes of consumption and new ideals to aspire to. Yet the startling pace of change witnessed in the last decade is one that is pushing brands and marketers to take stock and listen to new voices and new aspirations. The transformation that women have undergone is not necessarily outwardly stunning, neither do statistics show it as such. Yet, when one maps change over time and through intimate views of personal journeys, transformations are uncovered. It is amply clear that even as the day-to-day social and familial realm has not changed too much, the woman as an individual today, is a starkly different creature. Timeless feminine roles of mother, wife, home-maker and caretaker are being sharply tinted with individual self-imaginings.

## Self-imaginings

### **Women point out that it is not themselves but others in their sphere who lag behind:**

Women are crystal clear on who needs empowering. She sees herself as naturally ahead of the curve than her family, husband, elders and society in general. She wishes that others were on par with her in terms of openness to new ideas and ways of being.

**For young unmarried women, common stereotypes appear unpalatable:** Many depictions of women at home, in the kitchen are not aspirational for younger women. Their imaginings of their lives after marriage, the gender dynamics of their marriage, their own interests and desires, feel at odds with the depictions they see in advertising.

**Homemakers and mothers strongly desire that their value be recognised:** The woman today has outgrown the celebrated stereotype of the silently sacrificing mother/wife. She is strongly seeking recognition for her contribution. The idea of the untiring, wordlessly labouring woman feels claustrophobic and dated to her.

**Want to banish any misconceptions around the 'helplessness' of women like themselves:** There is a strong self-perception of being someone who is equipped, has the smarts and awareness to make the most of life today. They empathise but do not identify with depictions that show women as being without recourse. They do not want to be seen as women who are incapable of controlling situations or being overwhelmed by challenges they encounter in daily life.

**For homemakers, there is a desire to experience movement and growth in life - being 'settled' is not an end to vie for:** Homemakers are seeking more from life. Marriage and children is more a stage than a definition that seals her self-image. She is looking to learn, stay current and remain relevant. Social media and digital are helping her in this endeavour as she constantly adds to herself - whether through watching cooking vlogs and make-up tutorials or making reels of dancing and singing or watching content on self-help, parenting or soft skills.



**A strong belief in self-reliance that is not rooted only in financial independence, but in an inner fire:** Women speak proudly of their own strengths and admire it in other women - in real life and also in characters on screen. They see this inner fire of self-dependence as something that will serve them well in overcoming challenges and opposition that stand in the way of fulfilling their aspirations. Financial independence is seen as very important and empowering, but also not the only aspect of strength and power. In fact, attitudes of perseverance, self-confidence and fearlessness are what she believes core to successfully navigate the many challenges that women must face, regardless of their socioeconomic status or educational backgrounds.

**Her desire is to move the family along as she moves forward in her own journey - this is what she seeks assistance in:** She desires collective movement - to have her loved ones be part of her journey, not become hurdles in it. The desire is not to stand apart as an exemplar as that means winning but winning alone. There is a deep desire for something that can shake others into seeing life, opportunity and happiness in the same way she does.

**Standing up for other women is a more acceptable frame of strength than 'going up against society':** Women see empowerment as a collective stride that cannot only be about individual women. Using one's strength to create an impact in another woman's life is seen as meaningful even though less revolutionary.

**Caught in a tiresome loop of seeking permissions and being forbidden from small desires:** For some young women, pop-culture and social media fuel many aspirations that are 'cancelled' or controlled by those she is in care of. Parents, elders and very often, male siblings, are barriers in the way of aspirations big and small. Whether it's something like traveling solo or having a pyjama party, there is a sense that elders and parents use the frame of 'western culture' to forbid them from it.

**Young women are very aware of the evaluative gaze on their appearance:** She sees this as an inescapable truth and strives to modulate her appearance for the different contexts she is in. But there is also an acknowledgement of the discriminatory nature of this gaze that demands that even the most beautiful female movie stars have cosmetic surgery. She is caught between recognizing the exploitative demands of beauty placed on women, yet also unsure of rejecting the demand completely.

**Women in the roles of wives and mothers, see care-taking of the family as a means to garner support:** It is a burden that lets them negotiate and bargain for their desires and freedoms and not just tiresome labour that disappears into nothing. She sees these labours as enabling her to win over family members and getting them to see her point of view.

**Women desire a 'blended' idea of empowerment, while men see it in absolutes:** There is a gap between how women imagine the idea of empowered womanhood and how men do. While women seem to speak about an empowerment that combines individual success and power with an openness to receive assistance or have meaningful partnerships with her spouse, men tend to imagine the 'empowered woman' as an exaggeratedly independent character. It is interesting to see this echo with many depictions of the new stereotype of 'power women' in advertising and raises the question if there is an essential difference in how male stakeholders write briefs and copy on women vs. how female stakeholders would.



## Reactions to advertising portrayals of women

### Depictions of collective big gains are more rewarding than smaller individual wins:

Women find depictions where new ground is broken for a collective of women as elevating. This indicates a disenchantment with thematic tropes of depiction where outcomes are gaining approval, attention or compliments - which have been fixtures in categories like personal care, beauty, skin care, fashion.

**Depictions of carefree and 'bindaas' mothers score on aspiration:** Maternal toil is seen as a more conventional and tiresome framing of a mother. Maternal attitude, instead, is seen as a new edge for mothers. Women see the carefree attitude as a new kind of ability with respect to raising kids.



**Women welcome advertising that challenges conventions on behalf of them:**

Women centric ads that feature themes of remarriage or working in another city are seen to seed new dialogues in society.

**Older women recognise the new expressions of sexual freedom that young women today seem to be depicted playing out, but are not completely comfortable with it:**

Part of their reaction seems to stem from concern rather than scorn - a concern that such depictions could further stereotype that young women might have to bear the burden of in real life. Younger women recognize the different perspectives that older women or the older generation have and they have a pragmatic acceptance of this generation gap.

**Young women seek healthy depictions of themselves, their desires:** Young women are placing new frames of evaluation on depictions of women like them, in their life stage. They are not against depictions of sexual freedom, but have a nuanced view on what qualifies as healthy and wholesome. They are quick to call out imbalances, overt sexualization or sensualisation of young women.

**Femvertising is more cathartic than empowering:** Homemakers, wives and mothers find much of empowerment themed advertising cathartic and revelatory of the current challenges or miseries of women in general but do not necessarily find it empowering or inspiring. They consider these ads as revelatory for others rather than inspiring for themselves. The woman depicted seems more helpless and less powerful than what women's imaginations of themselves are.

**Young women see advertising as a shaping force:** As a highly media aware generation, young women today see not just the content of advertising but also recognize it as a force that shapes perceptions. They are, thus, more keen to see progressive depictions of women – depictions that resonate with their imagination of themselves, their freedoms and choices, their future.

**Young women desire depictions that normalise wins:** There is some impatience with the continued trope of young women being bestowed with freedoms only after putting up a fight. They desire to see women like themselves accessing freedom and choice with ease, with the support of those around her and freed of the expectation that she should consider herself lucky or should be thankful to receive what she believes should be owed to her.

**Young women are eager to see more happy and weightless depictions of women:**

They point out that women's anguish is at times overdramatised to draw attention to a product. They talk about the fact that when they regularly see depictions of women's pains and struggles, it only reminds them of anxieties which they are trying to overcome. They seek to see a normalization of joys, of 'happy women' enjoying

themselves and an easy exercising of new choices and freedoms, rather than a slew of portrayals that instead normalize a belief that women are 'suffering' or often in a state of distress.

**Advertising is a nudge for others not for her:** Across life stages, women feel that empowerment themed ads are not so much a nudge for her as they are for those around her. She sees advertising as a conveyer of her challenges and her desire for support to her family, parents or husband. Women welcome advertising that targets others more than her as she believes this will let her family or larger society catch up with her. There is a belief that women themselves are more evolved in their views, their aspirations but constrained by the limited imaginations of others in the larger collective.

**Seeing many new depictions as superficial window dressing on conventions:** Women are able to see through the surface change in how women are styled or the look of their homes in advertising, while staying tied to the roles of cooking for their family or cleaning their home.

**Annoyed at ads that seek to empower or celebrate but end up reinforcing toxic stereotypes:** Some amount of impatience and dismissal of advertising that seems to start conversations around women's issues, but does so by using the same stereotypes, giving those stereotypes prime screen time and only 'suggesting' minor change in behaviour. There is a view that these kinds of ads serve the brand's attention seeking more than truly trying to solve the challenge or even present a new scenario for women.

**Male respondents professing an irony about progressive depictions of women:** A belief that women being shown in progressive modes such as making the first move, being less coy about their sexual desire etc. would have created an outcry if pictured on men.

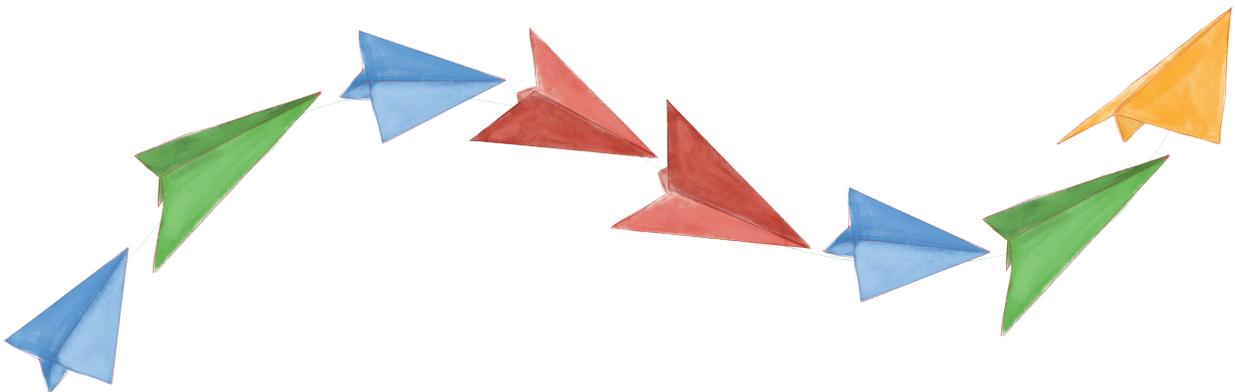
**Progressive depictions if they nudge social change, can take the pressure off men in situations of romance and sex:** Men find themselves unsure on how to navigate new contexts with the opposite gender. A belief that if women are making the first move or being open and upfront about their desires, it eases the man's second-guessing and embarrassment at being rejected. Depictions that show the same, find a more uniform acceptance with men, whereas young women are more interested in the nuances of these new dynamics and underline that women in these new situations should not seem giving away their power or appearing needy. They speak of the fact that desire should be equally evident in the man as well, even if the woman makes the first move.

## Summing up

Advertising has clearly changed in how it portrays women. While there has been a conscious movement towards positive depictions of women, there are still gaps that exist. It is important to embrace a new spirit in which to consider the lives and realities of women consumers, their new needs and ideas of living, shifting value systems and also their aspirations. The need is for a spirit that furthers a more conscious thinking about portrayals - right from the imagination of target consumers to the styling of female models during a shoot. As we have seen, much of the stereotyping get established implicitly.

Implicitly held beliefs about women emerge in the form of images and ideas that reinforce stereotypes through pervasive repetition. Fundamental movement towards more progressiveness can be triggered through a more self-aware process of advertising creation. The process needs to confront such implicit codes that are in operation and a conscious effort to move away from them.

Brands today are also on a journey themselves - building their own narratives of purpose and the impact they wish to create. This is an opportune time for the more conscious journeys of brands to break down the implicit biases in the unconscious storytelling and portrayal of women. As this report has observed, women today give much inspiration and seek ideas that support their many new needs and aspirations. The journey to progressive portrayals can begin by following her lead.



## Part F

# Framework for depiction + screener for stereotyping red flags

### Presenting a new framework to aid development and evaluation of portrayals of women in advertising

Through conversations with marketers and advertising professionals, it is clear that the need for evolution in depiction is perceived and desired. Yet, the process of developing advertising does not build in a frame through which a piece of creative can be conceptualized or evaluated with respect to the woman/women being featured in it.

This report offers a new framework for actionable change in advertising depictions of women. The framework has been conceptualized, basis understanding gleaned not only from an analysis of stereotypes present in advertising, but also from the voices of women as consumers of brands and as an audience of advertising.

This framework is not a list of 'dos and don'ts'. It is a means of imagining and evaluating creative material with an awareness of tendencies that advertising falls into when depicting women. It is also a recognition of female consumers' perceptions of themselves and how they wish to be portrayed and seen today.

### Nudging awareness of the conscious as well as the implicit ways of seeing and portraying women

**S-E-A\*** Framework to imagine and evaluate portrayals of women through key points of the advertising development journey - from target consumer definition to casting briefs.

*\*Self-Esteemed (How the woman being depicted sees herself)- Empowered (How the woman being depicted relates to the situation she is placed in, her power in it) - Allied (How those around her support her desires/needs)*

**3S** Screener to use as a self-check of scripts/storyboards or to evaluate advertising.  
**S**ubordination (where the woman is placed lower in the hierarchy of decision making, awareness) – **S**ervice (where the woman is seen at the service of others) - **S**tandardisation (where the woman's appearance or demeanor is styled/directed into mandated projections that blur individuality)

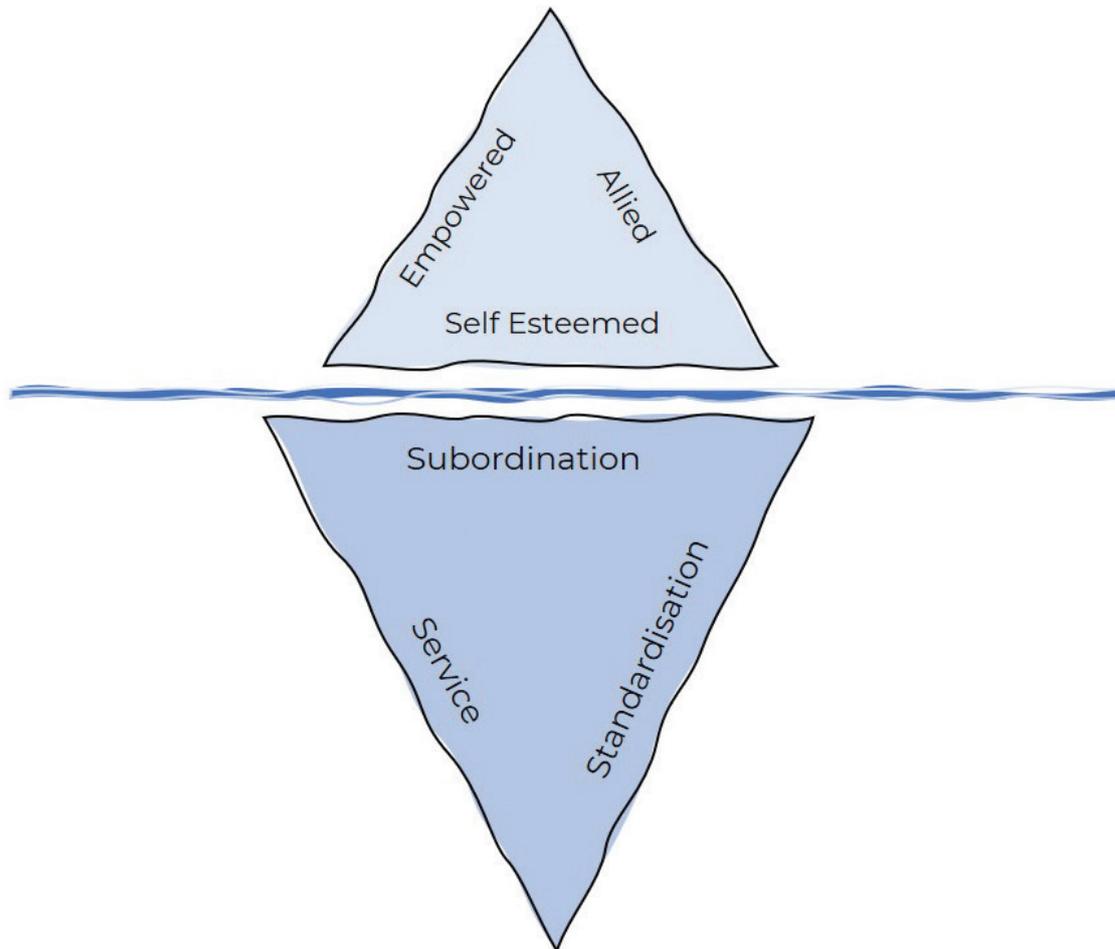


## The frameworks

### Powering a SEA change in the advertising depictions of women - A framework to create more positive depictions of women -

#### **SEA change model**

(to imagine and evaluate depiction of women)



#### **The 3S screener**

(to identify stereotypes)

SEA is a category agnostic framework that aims to guide stakeholders in imagining as well as evaluating portrayals of women in their advertising.

The SEA framework has been built to work in two key ways as a long-term guide of women's portrayals

- By building empathy
- By aiding evaluation

When stakeholders use the SEA framework, they enter the portrayed woman's reality, her view of a situation and her place and power in it - and very importantly, distribute the responsibility for empowered moments beyond the woman alone.

This framework can, and should ideally be, considered at every stage of the advertisement development process - from definition of the target audience, the creative briefing, casting and production briefings.

3 key measures to imagine and evaluate the portrayal of women

## **SEA: Self-esteemed - Empowered - Allied**



### Self-esteemed - How the woman feels about herself

- Is the storyline seeding anxieties or fueling present ones?
- Are her decisions being sparked by anxiety or by confidence?
- Is the woman being put in situations where she is comparing herself to others, especially other women?
- Is there a glimpse of how she feels about herself or does the ad only show how others feel about her?
- Is she confident or nervous about her actions and decisions?
- Will a woman come away from the ad feeling better about herself or worse?

### Empowered - How the woman relates to the situation she is cast in

- What is the power she holds to influence the situation she is placed in?
- How does her power in the situation compare to those of others?
- Is there a hierarchy of roles or decision making - where is she placed within it?
- Are others seen to decide on her behalf or advise and explain choices available to her?
- Does she seem to take decisions independently or is she shown as seeking inordinate amounts of assistance and approval?

### Allied- How others partner her in progress

- How is she supported by those in her sphere?
- Are others around her easing her journey aiding her /aspiration?
- Are others reinforcing hurdles she seeks to be free of?
- Is there a celebration of others for granting basic freedoms?
- What is the change of perspective, change in actions of others, not just the woman?
- Are others being cast as less equipped or able to carry out domestic tasks that typically fall to women?

## **3S screener (for scripts/storyboards, casting, styling)**

The 3S screener identifies stereotype red flags by looking closely at three key aspects of stereotypical representation. These stereotypes manifest in body language, task pairing, location placing, attire/styling of women as seen in advertising images.

The role of the screener is to also check if stereotypes appearing in the script or storyboard are vital to the story. This screener is not prescriptive but rather a self-check to avoid stereotypes from slipping into depiction.

- **Subordination** (where the woman is placed lower in the hierarchy of decision making, awareness)
- **Service** (where the woman is seen at the service of others)
- **Standardisation** (where the woman is moulded into portrayals that blur individuality)

## Subordination

1. The woman being instructed (by an expert character or voice over etc.)
2. The narrator being a man while the central character is a woman.
3. Women shown in subordination (role/body language) to men in professional or workplace settings.
4. Women being told that they are wrong in their perception of a situation.
5. Women having to seek permission to access choices/freedoms.
6. Women surrendering space to men
7. Woman being placed in the background of a frame while key to the narrative
8. Women 'giving into' and being sensual for the gaze of the camera
9. A contrast in body language where women are labouring at tasks while others are at rest.

## Service

1. Women being shown as lone care-givers to children/elderly/family.
2. Women being shown serving food/beverages to others.
3. Women doing multiple things at the same time.
4. Women's leisure being interrupted to take on a chore or task.
5. Women being shown smilingly taking on burdens.
6. Family, children, husband casually placing multiple demands on the woman with an assumption of being served.

## Standardisation

1. Women being styled similarly, made to look similar, mono-themed appearance when seen in groups
2. Women being shown comparing themselves with 'standard' portrayals, pre-decided yardsticks of appearance.
3. 'Flawless' orientation in casting of female models.
4. Styling and portraying life stages in typical ways (how they appear, what they are doing, what spaces they are in).
5. Equating costumes, styling with intellect or authority thereby creating a hierarchy of modern vs. traditional attire.

## End Note

The case for progressive portrayals of women in advertising is made even stronger through the GenderNext study. It appears that there is actually a congruence of intent amongst advertisers on the one hand, who wish to show more progressive portrayals, and women on the other, who wish to see their dreams reflected in advertising. Yet it is somewhat incredulous that there still exists a significant gap in this respect particularly in mainstream advertising. One of the challenges advertisers perceive is the calibration of the depiction that can work for differing mindsets across the country, and between different sets of family viewers. And therefore, while some new ground is broken by a few brands and campaigns, there seems to be a hesitation in wholeheartedly embracing the changing journeys of women.

As this study shows, the change required is subtle, but demands deeper attention to stubborn tropes and patterns that have made advertising their home. The change needed does not impinge upon the brand narrative, but rather enriches it with greater relatability and aspiration. It allows advertisers and advertising to catch up with women's own imaginations. The "Emerging Indian woman" has long since emerged, and advertising needs to account for this. As the report points out, the impression that the "new woman" is an individual who desires to break away from society is not entirely correct, what she desires instead is for society's progress to be inclusive of her aspirations. Advertising can be a powerful ally for her in this journey.

The SEA framework equips creators and evaluators of creative work, with the means to include more positive portrayals both in overt and subliminal ways. The 3-S screener allows for closer scrutiny to parts of advertising that are often overlooked, but become extremely problematic if not addressed by the advertising industry.

Advertising must be held accountable for the messages it puts out- both intended and unintended. Brands will do well to realize that consumers today don't just evaluate advertising for the products they peddle, but that advertising itself is under scrutiny by more and more stakeholders. From an ASCI perspective, the study is a significant investment that brings to the surface issues that afflict advertising today, and pushes the industry to introspect and hold itself accountable to a higher standard of responsibility. But it also goes beyond that to offer new possibilities and exciting alternatives to brands that truly wish to engage with women, and follow their lead.



**Manisha Kapoor**  
Secretary-General, ASCI



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Bumble. "Equal Not Loose", "BBDO India"

Bumble India. "Priyanka Chopra"

Community Matrimony. "Hindi"

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Happn ad. "Ft Hrithik Roshan"

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OkCupid India. "Love Is living In The moment together"

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Shaadi.com. "Select Shaadi", "Like Nahin Like Like"

Shaadi.com. "This Women's Day, Pledge to #TakeThePressureOff with Shaadi.com"

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Tinder India. "Adulting Can Wait!", "Ft. @Mikey McCleary"

Tinder India. "Boo", "#SwipeStories"

Tinder India. "Now What?", "#SwipeStories"

Tinder India. "Start Something Epic", "ft @The Raja Kumari & @Mikey McCleary"

Tinder India. "Start Something Epic Again"

Tinder India. "Super Likeable"



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Bata. "gtoq Collection, Where Style Meets Comfort"

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Pantene India. "Priyanka Chopra's Message to all Young Women"

Pepperfry. "#WowWomaniya Sale", "Incredible Offers"

Prega News. "#ImwithYellow", "A gender equality social experiment by Prega News"

Preganews. "5 Heart Touching Ads by Preganews", "#Yoursecondhome series"

Rajnigandha Silver Pearls. "#MaaKehtiHai", "Rajnigandha Pearls wishes you a Happy Mother's Day"

Reebok India. "#BruisesCanBeGood"

Reliance Fresh. "#JeeLeZara", "Happy Women's Day"

Sunfeast Mom's Magic. "Celebrating Teachers: Our guides outside home, this Teacher's Day"

Sunfeast Mom's Magic. "Celebrating the love of Moms all around us, this Mother's Day."

Tata Tea. "Jaago Re", "Women's Day 2017"

TVS Eurogrip. "Salutes #TheRealSpecialist"

upGrad. "Career Coaching", "#TeachersOfupGrad"

Vedantu. "Teacher's Day", "MasterTeachers", "Learn LIVE Online", "Aamir Khan"

Vivo. "Celebrating Womanhood - #BeBoldForChange Ft Bani J"

VLCC. "#EkJhootMomKeLiye Mother/Daughter Full Film - Happy Mother's Day"

Voltas Beko. "Mother's Day"

WHY & WHAT. "2 Best Ads to Show How Your Small Help can Make Someone's Life in tough times"

WHY & WHAT. "4 Best Teachers day Ads of 2020"

Zomato. "Cooking is her choice, not her duty - Women's Day"

### **Gadgets & Wheels**

Bajaj Avenger. "#RideYourIndependence", "Independence day Film"

BMW. "Heist Movie Sexy Car Commercial"

Fastrack Reflex. "New Ad by Fastrack 2017"

Fiat 500 S. "Funny commercial"

Ford. "Open Doors to A New Beginning"

Hero. "Lavanya", "Hero Glamour MALAYALAM"

Hero Motorcop. "Hero Splendor 2015 ad"

Hero Pleasure. "TVC ft Alia Bhatt"

HP India. "The Group Study"

Hyundai. "Smart Cars for Smart India", "Official TVC"

Hyundai. "The New 2017 Grand i10", "It's Wowsome", "Official TVC"  
Hyundai. "Women's Day", "Women#Men"  
Kia Sonet. "#WildByDesign"  
Maruti Suzuki. "New Alto 2019 TVC", "Shivam Autozone", "Mumbai"  
MI. "Xiaomi India's No.1 Smartphone", "Ranveer Singh"  
New Fiat 500 Riva. "The smallest yacht in the world Commercial"  
Nexa Experience. "Baleno 2015 - The Bold Side of NEXA"  
Paisabazaar. "My Father's Dream #StoryOfADaughter"  
Royal Enfield Bullet X 350 TVC  
Tata Harrier. "All8TVCSeries", "#LoveatfirstdrivewithHarrier", "Ft#Fatimasana#Siddhantchaturvedi"  
Titan Raga. "#BreakTheBias"  
TOP 10 CAR ADVERTISEMENT IN INDIA  
Toyota India. "Power to Dominate", "Style to Lead"  
TVS Scooty. "Pep - Pongal Edition"  
TVS Scooty. "Zest 110: Long Distance No Bar"  
Volkswagen. "The all-electric ID.3 - Now you can"  
Volvo Auto India. "Make Your City Safe", "Women Safety Video"

### Men's Categories

Durex India. "Durex Jeans TVC"  
Fogg. "Latest New Ad 2018", "Strom At Bus Stand"  
Manforce Condoms. "Double the Pleasure with Manforce Cocktail Condoms!"  
Manforce Condoms. "Sunny Leone", "Game Condoms"

### Money, Education & Tech

Amazon. "This Diwali, give your business a #ShubhShuruat by Selling on Amazon"  
Axis Bank. "Dil Se Open Celebrations", "Offers on Electronics with Credit and Debit cards"  
Axis Bank. "#ReverseTheKhata"  
Axis Bank. "Dear Ma"  
Axis Bank. "Dil Se Open Celebrations", "Offers on Home Loans"  
Axis Bank. "Dil Se Open Celebrations", "Offers on Two Wheelers and Car Loans"  
Axis Bank. "Dil se Thank you"  
Axis Bank. "Emergency Funds", "#ResolveToSave", "02"  
Axis Bank. "Fast Payment with Axis Bank Android Smart POS Machine", "HINDI"  
Axis Bank. "Home Loans with 12 EMIs off"  
Axis Bank. "Safe Banking", "UPI Frauds"

Axis Bank. "Select Credit Card", "1 year complimentary Amazon Prime membership"

Exide Life Insurance. "#DhoniKaSaath", "Lamba saath, bharose ki baat"

Exide Life Insurance. "Bharosa Hai"

Exide Life Insurance. "Breakfast Time With Dad", "MS Dhoni", "Partnerships for Life"

Exide Life Insurance. "Meet Jugaadu Lal", "#NoMoreShortCuts"

Exide Life Insurance. "#ApnoKeLiyeDoKadamAur", "Mithai/Sweet Shop", "Master"

Future Generali. "Diwali Ka Challenge", "Errol - Aditya"

Future Generali. "Mohit Vaswani in Future Generali India ad"

Future Generali. "Mohit Vaswani in Future Generali India ad."

HDFC ERGO. "Health Insurance ka ho Sawaal, toh HDFC ERGO hain sahi Jawaab!"

HDFC ERGO. "Motor Insurance Ka Ho Sawaal, Toh HDFC ERGO Hain Sahi Jawaab!"

HDFC Life. "Be assured", "Online Insurance Plans from HDFC Life"

HDFC Life. "Insure your family's future and prepare them to bounce back"

ICICI Bank. "A businessman gets a solution for all his import and export business banking problems"

ICICI Bank. "An inspiring story of Manoj who never stopped dreaming"

ICICI Bank. "Businessmen discuss their business banking problems"

ICICI Bank. "Corporate Social Responsibility"

ICICI Bank. "Fully Digital Personal Banking", "YOU ARE THE BANK (Hindi)"

ICICI Bank. "How to turn your store into a super store", "Ft. ICICI Bank Super Merchant Current Account"

ICICI Bank. "Instant account opening and Remittances with ICICI Bank UK iMobile App"

ICICI Bank. "Mr India Anil Kapoor ICICI Bank", "TV Ads"

ICICI Bank. "Pay almost anywhere with ICICI Bank Cards and Samsung Pay!"

ICICI Bank. "Poore India Ke Liye Aaya iMobile Pay"

ICICI Bank. "The Culinary Circle"

Kotak Mahindra Bank. "Kona Kona Kotak", "Hindi"

Kotak Mahindra Bank. "Kotak 811 #DreamsInvited (Kannada)"

Kotak Mahindra Bank. "Kotak 811 launches India's first zero-contact Video KYC savings account"

Kotak Mahindra Bank. "Kotak MyTeam cards – The Auction #KonaKonaCricket"

LIC. "Life Insurance of India Ads"

LIC. "Sabse Pehle Life Insurance New Hindi LIC Ad"

Meesho. "#MyStoreMyStory: Jitni lambi contact list, utne zyada products!"

Paisa Bazaar. "My Father's Dream #StoryOfADaughter"

Paisa Bazaar. "The Wedding Speech"

Paytm. "The Divide", "A Social Experiment"

PayTm. "Away from loved ones on Diwali? No problem!"

PayTm. "IPL 2021 Ad", "The Ice-cream"

PayTm. "Funny and Creative indian Paytm Commercials ads part 1"

Paytm Ads. "Bank transfer Free", "Classic Ads", "Indian Ads Company"

SBI Home Loan 2021. "Home Loan In Hindi", "SBI Home Loan Interest Rate", "Home Loan In SBI", "Mortgage"

Swiggy. "Beautiful AD By Swiggy On Mother's Day", "Happy Mothers Day"

Tata AIA Life. "Saluting the spirit of motherhood in every woman"

## Personal Care and Beauty

Ads of Pads, Tampons, and Periods. "Ads about PADS", "New Ads 2020", "Laughing Gas"

Amazon Fashion - #HarPalFashionable

Amazon India. "#FreshItUp with Amazon Fashion"

Bajaj Almond Drops. "Ab Har Day New Hair Day"

Bajaj Almond Drops. "Hair Oil Hindi Ads", "Anti-Hair Fall Solution", "Hair Fall Oil"

Bajaj Almond Drops. "Non Sticky Hair Oil, Badam Oil Ads", "Parineeti Chopra"

Bata. "gtog collection ft Kriti Sanon"

BIBA. "#ChangelsBeautiful", "Change The Convention"

BIBA. "Change The Convention #ChangelsBeautiful"

BlueStone. "#ChooseYourTwinkle"

BlueStone. "Alia Bhatt"

BlueStone. "Happy Mother's Day"

BlueStone. "New Campaign #ChooseYourTwinkle"

BlueStone. "The Occasion", "Launch Commercial"

BlueStone. "This Women s Day, be your own kind of beautiful!"

BlueStone. "To Me, With Love!"

Caratlane and Tanishq. "5 Best Emotional Jewellery Ads (Specially for woman)"

Clinique India. "#EvenBetter - Makeup with skincare benefits"

Clinique India. "#EvenBetter - Mini Foundation (Hindi)"

Clinique India. "#MoistureSurge - Radhika x Clinique (Hindi)"

Clinique India. "Sanya Malhotra", "Moisture Surge 72-Hour Auto Replenishing Hydrator"

Clinique India. "The NEW Moisture Surge 100H"

Colgate. "Begin again with a smile", "Remarriage", "Hindi with Kannada subtitles"

Colorbar Cosmetics. "Be Who You Want To Be", "6 Looks"

Colorbar Cosmetics. "Jacqueline Fernandez Iconic Festive Looks", "#TurnUpTheDrama"

Colorbar Cosmetics. "Sinful Matte Lipcolor", "Jacqueline Fernandez in 24 Sinful Matte Lipstick Shades"

Coloressence. "Get the glow"

Coloressence. "Let your eyes do the talking"

Coloressence. "Look awesome in every Mausam"

Dabur. "Amla", "TVC Ft. Kareena Kapoor"

Dabur. "Rohan Joshi", "Amla Hair Oil"

Dabur. "Samantha Dabur Vatika coconut Hair Oil"

Dabur Vatika. "Coconut Hair Oil Commercial Ad"

Dabur Vatika. "Enriched Coconut Hair Oil", "TVC-Telugu", "2017"

D'Cut - Gifting by TBZ. "Akanksha Seda", "Neil Mukherjee"

Dove. "#CombChallenge. For tangle-free smooth hair", "Hindi"

Dove. "#StopTheBeautyTest (Hindi)"

Dove. "#StopTheBeautyTest (with English subtitles)"

Dove. "Dove Intense Repair Shampoo & Conditioners", "Marathi"

Dove. "Light Hydration Body Lotion & Cooling Gel Crème", "48hrs Hydration", "Paraben-Free Formula|Hindi"

Dyna. "Shraddha Kapoors Soap ad"

Eldia Pure Coconut Oil TVC feat. Raashi Khanna. "Pride", "Tamil"

ELLE 18. "Eye Drama Kajal - Bengali"

ELLE 18. "Eye Drama New"

ELLE 18. "Nail Pop New"

ELLE 18. "New Color Pops Matte Lipstick #Matteisin"

Fashion Film. "Ad Shoot", "Kanchipuram Sarees", "Kerala", "India", "Sony a6300"

Feminy Sanitary Napkin Ad Film 1 Telugu. "#SiriHanmanth", "Director TD Raju", "Thought Sprinklers"

Flipkart. "Become a fashionista with the biggest fashion deals during #TheBigBillionDays"

Forest Essentials. "Warrior Princess", "2015"

Garnier. "Alia Bhatt Make up with Garnier Micellar Water"

Garnier. "Bright Complete Vitamin C Serum", "Hindi"

Garnier. "Garnier Color Naturals", "Open Up To Browns"

Garnier. "Light Complete Serum Cream"

Garnier. "Mask Facial-like Glow B2G1", "Hinglish"

Garnier. "Natural looking hair with Garnier Black Naturals", "English"

Garnier. "Neem+Tulsi Face Wash", "French Fries"

Garnier. "New Garnier Ready-to-Use Serum Sheet Masks"

Garnier. "Ultra Blends", "5 Precious Herbs"

GRT Jewellers. ""Diamonds are an emotion" - Tamil (தமிழ்)"

GRT Jewellers. "Auspicious beginning", "Tamil ( தமிழ்)"

GRT Jewellers. "Bangle Mela Offer 2017", "Tamil"

GRT Jewellers. "Dazzling diamonds, Pleasing Prices"

GRT Jewellers. "Diamond Jewellery Collections (Tamil)"

GRT Jewellers. "Diamonds are an emotion", "Tamil (தமிழ்)"

GRT Jewellers. "Golden Eleven Flexi Plan TVC - Tamil"

GRT Jewellers. "Live Video Shopping TVC"

GRT Jewellers. "Symbols"

GRT Jewellers. "Thanga Deepavali Offer 2016 Tamil"

GRT Jewellers. "Aadi Suprise", "Tamil"

GRT Jewellers. "Aditi Rao Hydari GRT Jewellers Wedding Collection Friends Tamil Ad"

GRT Jewellers. "The ultimate Jewellery destination", "2021 Tamil – 60 SEC"

Hair & Care

Hair & Care. "Shradhha Kapoor", "Oil Ad"

Herbodaya Bringa Hair Oil. "SKM SHREE GROUP", "ACTRESS SACHU", "AYESHA", "SOM SHEKARI  
Wedding"

Herbodaya Bringa Hair Oil. "SKM Shree Group", "SACHU", "AYESHA", "SOM SHEKAR"

Himalaya. "Anti-Hair Fall Regime"

Himalaya. "Kajal Agarwal New Latest Ad Film", "Pure Expression Kajal TV Commercial Ad"

Himalaya. "Lip balm Review in Hindi", "Dark lips", "Himalayan lip balm"

Himalaya. "Purifying Neem Face Wash (Hindi)"

Himalaya. "Purifying Neem Scrub – Tough on Blackheads, Gentle on Skin-Hindi"

Jewel One

Joy. "#BeautifulBynature Lemon Face wash"

Joy. "Apple Facewash", "Mithila Palkar"

Joy. "Beautiful By Nature", "Honey & Almonds Body Lotion"

Joy. "Facewash TVC", "Kriti Sanon", "Hindi"

Joy. "Facewash TVC", "Mimi Chakraborty", "Bengali"

Joy. "Hello Sun Sunscreen", "TVC", "Mouni Roy"

Joy. "Honey and Almonds Body Lotion TVC", "Hindi"

Joy. "Honey and Almonds by Kriti Sanon"

Joyalukkas. "Diwali Offers"

Joyalukkas. "Ft Kajol"

Joyalukkas. "Golden Beginnings"

Joyalukkas. "Kajol shines with stunning Joyalukkas Diamond jewellery"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Amitabh Bachchan about 4 level Assurance Certificate"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Celebrate this Gudi Padwa with Sankalp Collection"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Exquisite collection of gold and diamond jewellery (Telugu)"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Great designs, Great prices", "Kannada"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Muhurat At Home (Malayalam)"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Muhurat Floor"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Muhurat Wedding Jewellery"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Nagarjuna", "Muhurat Collection for every occasion"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Transparent pricing & billing policies at Kalyan Jewellers", "Hindi"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Trust - the one emotion that binds every relationship!"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Trust - the one emotion that binds every relationship!"

Kalyan Jewellers. "Amitabh Bachchan & Shweta Bachchan"

Khazana Jewellery. "Directors Cut"

Khazana Jewellery. "For the Many Women in You (Telugu)"

Khazana Jewellery. "Ft Kajal aggarwal"

Khazana Jewellery. "Kajal aggarwal"

L'Oréal Paris India. "How To Use the Dream Lengths No Haircut Cream"

Lady Fly AD 1 ( Hindi ) NDTV India.

Lady Fly AD 2 ( Hindi ) NDTV India.

Lakmé India. "9to5 Primer + Matte Perfect Cover Foundation"

Lakmé India. "Peach Milk Moisturiser and Soft Crème (TVC)"

Lakmé India India. "9to5 Naturale Range - English"

Lakmé India India. "9to5 Primer + Matte Lipstick - English"

Lakmé India India. "Absolute 3D Matte Lip Color"

Lakmé India India. "Absolute Matte Melt Mini"

Lakmé India India. "Absolute Matte Revolution Lipstick #FreeYourLips"

Lakmé India India. "Absolute Matte Ultimate Lip Color"

Lakmé India India. "Absolute Nudes Reinvented"

Lakmé India India. "Absolute Perfect Radiance Facial Kit", "English"

Lakmé India India. "Absolute Perfect Radiance Trueview", "Hindi"

Lakmé India India. "Blush and Glow Sheet Mask"

Lakmé India India. "Eyeconic Kajal"

Lakmé India India. "Find Your Lakmé India Absolute Matte Revolution shade"

Lakmé India India. "Peach Milk Moisturiser"

Lakmé India India. "Skin Gloss"

Lakmé India India. "Sun Expert", "English"

Lakmé India India. "Sun Expert", "Expert Protection for your skin", "English"

L'Oreal Paris India. "Aishwarya Rai Bachchan x L'Oreal Paris 2019", "Total Repair 5"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Choose your Hair Expert", "Aishwarya Rai, Katrina Kaif, Sonam Kapoor", "Creative Ads"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Casting Crème Gloss – Aditi Rao Hydari #AShadeApart"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Casting Crème Gloss – Mithali Raj #AShadeApart"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Casting Crème Gloss – Shakti Mohan #AShadeApart"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Crystal Micro Essence", "Technology"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Extraordinary Oil Serum – World's No.1 Hair Serum"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Hyaluronic Acid Serum 1.5%"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Infallible 24Hr Matte Cover Foundation"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Lash Paradise Mascara & Skin Paradise Film ft. Camila Cabello, Elle Fanning"

L'Oréal Paris India. "L'Oréal Paris India X Sabyasachi Limited Edition", "Matte Lipsticks"

L'Oréal Paris India. "Total Repair 5", "Win Over Damaged Hair", "Aishwarya Rai & Sobhita Dhulipala - English"

Lotus Herbals. "WhiteGlow Night Creme"

Lotus Herbals. "SparkleEveryday Digital campaign"

Lotus Herbals. "WhiteGlow Gel Crème"

Lux. "Beauty is Our Right"

Lux. "Brand Ambassador Sridevi"

Lux. "Deepika Selfie"

Lux. "Gives Moonlit Glow Hindi| Naya Lux Jo De Chand Sa Roshan Chehara"

Lux. "Stay Protected Stay Beautiful with Lux Soap"

Lux soap. "Chand sa Roshan Chehra| Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli| Our best soap for Glow", "Hindi"

Magna Jewel 03. "Riythivika TV Ad", "LGR SARAVANAN", "SHAMMY", "GHIBRAN"

Malabar Gold and Diamonds. "Bollywood Sisters Kareena & Karishma Kapoor #Allure Collection"

Malabar Gold and Diamonds. "BRIDES OF INDIA 2017 EDITION FILM"

Malabar Gold and Diamonds. "BRIDES OF INDIA 2019 EDITION BRAND FILM"

Malabar Gold and Diamonds. "GEMSTONE AND UNCUT DIAMOND JEWELRY BRAND FILM"

Malabar Gold and Diamonds. "PRICE PROMISE TVC MALAYALAM"

Malabar Gold and Diamonds. "Tamizh Brand Film", "International Women's Day 2021"

Manyavar. "Har pal banega khaas, pehen kar apni pehchaan"

Manyavar. "Virat Kohli ki ladkiwalo se demand"

Marathe Jewellers Birthday

Max Fashion

Max Fashion. "#PujoShuruMaxE"

Max Fashion. "Diwali Khushiyo Wali"

Max Lingerie. "#BeComfortableEveryday"

Mayanvar. "#DulhanWaliFeeling like never before"

Maybelline. "New York", "Fit Me As I Am"

Maybelline. "Sensational Liquid Matte Marathi"

Maybelline. "SuperStay Matte Ink", "Try It On"

Mia. "#BestAtWork"

Mohey. "#DulhanWaliFeeling", "Ft Alia Bhatt"

Mohey. "Alia Bhatt in #DulhanWaliFeeling"

Myntra. "Anouk Bold is Beautiful", "Pregnancy doesn't mean the end of the Career"

Myntra. "Fuel Your Fashion wala Passion"

Myntra. "Try Myntra, You'll Love It!"

Myntra. "Try Myntra, You'll Love It!"

NAC Jewellers. "For the golden bond that treasures for ages", "Telugu ad"

NAC Jewellers. "Launches 3 new store", "Perambur, Velachery & Kanchipuram"

NAC Jewellers. "Presents Muhurtham Collection"

Natural diamonds. "Sneaking Out"

Nike. "Da Da Ding", "Wieden+Kennedy, Delhi"

Nirav Modi Jewels. "Say yes, forever", "Sidharth Malhotra", "Priyanka Chopra", "Shakun Batra"

Nivea India. "Celebrate this Diwali with Soft & Smooth Hands"

Nivea India. "Chill out with Chilled Mint"

Nivea India. "ft. Raj Bedi & Anushka Sharma"

Nivea India. "Get fresh, non-greasy skin in seconds"

Nivea India. "Get party-ready with Berry Blossom"

Nivea India. "Have fun with Tropical Fruit"

Nivea India. "Have fun with your kids", "A fun game of Tic Tac Toe", "Nivea #ManyWaysToCare"

Nivea India. "Have fun with your kids", "Father and Artist Daughter", "Nivea #ManyWaysToCare"

Nivea India. "Have fun with your kids", "Mom and Little Tiger", "Nivea #ManyWaysToCare"

Nivea India. "How to look awesome for a fun day out with Nivea Soft Tropical Fruit"

Nivea India. "Nourish your skin from deep within with Nivea Body Milk"

Nivea India. "Oil-In-Lotion #IndulgeYourSkin"

Nivea India. "Soft Moisturising Cream"

Nivea India. "The Secret To A Natural Healthy Glow Is Here", "Nivea Milk Delights Face Wash"

ORRA jewellery TVC. "2018", "Anshul Chauhan"

Oswal Soap Group. "CHUTTI", "Happy Touch Sanitary pads TVC 2021", "Alok Nath"

P.C. Chandra Jewellers. "Heavenly Wedding Hindi Ad"

P.C. Chandra Jewellers. "Wedding Collection 2017"

P.C. Chandra Jewellers. "Latest Wedding Collection", "Bengali"

Pantene India. "Anti-Hairfall Shampoo Kiara Advani Copy"

Parachute Advansed. "Aloe Vera", "Baal Banaye Soft Soft", "Hindi (20 Seconds)"

Parachute Advansed. "Bin karan... Bewajah", "Thoda Love Jatao Na"

Parachute Advansed. "Hot Oil", "No More Winter Hair Dryness"

Parachute Advansed. "Mere Baal Meri Jaan (Hindi)"

Parachute Advansed. "Pongal-O-Pongal", "#EnMudidhaanNaan"

Patanjali Ayurveda. "Product of Patanjali Saundarya"

Platinum Days Of Love . "The Bet", "#EqualsInLove"

Platinum Days of Love. "Rent", "#EqualsInLove"

Platinum Days Of Love. "The Talk", "#EqualsInLove"

Platinum Evara. "#MyFirstEvara"

Platinum Evara. "Kanyadaan", "#RedefiningRituals"

Platinum Love Bands. "Because You Share What's Rare"

Ponds. "#SeeWhatHappens"

Ponds. "A busy lifestyle causes skin to age| Try the new Ponds Age Miracle for youthful glowing skin."

Ponds. "Age Miracle"

Ponds. "BB CREAM", "Hindi"

Ponds. "BB+ Cream Reveal Your Festive Glow This Season"

Ponds. "Body Lotion Get soft, smooth skin this winter - Hindi"

Ponds. "Cold Cream Dadu"

Ponds. "Dreamflower Floral Talcum powder, for a fresh & fragrant beginning", "MARATHI"

Ponds. "Flawless Radiance Derma+ BB Cream"

Ponds. "Skinfit Bani J"

Ponds. "Starlight Talc Disha Patani"

Ponds. "The New Oil-Free Ponds Super Light Gel", "English"

Ponds. "Try new Skinfit", "High Performance Skincare Range For Fitness Enthusiasts"

Ponds. "White beauty", "Hindi"

Ponds. "White Beauty Face Wash", "Hindi"

Ponds. "White Beauty ft. Kiara Advani & Arushi Chawla"

Pothys. "Samudrika - TVC - 2020"

Pothys. "Visual Ad 2018"

Prega News. "#ShelsCompleetInHerself - A Women's Day Initiative by Prega News", "Mona Singh (Hindi)"

Prega News. "Is celebrating #SundayIsMomDay"

Reliance Trends. "Diwali Collection"

Reliance Trends. "Digital ad 2018"

Reliance Trends. "Eid Ads Best Ads"

Reliance Trends. "Get #TaiyarForTyohar with Trends"

Reliance Trends. "Keerthy Suresh for Trends"

Reliance Trends. "Keerthy Suresh New", "So Cute & Lovely", "Keerthy Suresh", "Funny Troll"

Reliance Trends. "Nayi Wali Diwali"

Revlon India. "Ultra Matte Lipcolor"

Rio Pads. "Make The Right Choice With RIO Heavy Duty Pads For Heavy Flow", "Balloon TVC"

Sanitary Napkins. "2021."

Sanitary Pads Ad. "Raho Sanitary Pads", "Best Sanitary Pads Best Pads for Periods Time"

Snapdeal. "Unbox Fashion, Unbox Zindagi Wedding Snapdeal Online Shopping"

Sofy. "#EmbraceTheNew", "Everything you need to know about using Tampons"

Sofy. "Pantyliner", "Hows your Day"

South India Jewellers. "Ad film 2K Full"

Stayfree. "Don't miss school due to periods", "STAYFREE® Secure"

Story of Every Arranged Marriage - Part 1. "Best Of Ads"

Sunsilk. "#DoTheSunsilkGirlGiri this wedding season", "Hindi"

Sunsilk. "#DoTheSunsilkGirlGiri this wedding season", "Hindi"

Sunsilk. "Almond and Honey Shampoo ", "For smooth, beautiful hair. (Hindi)"

Sunsilk. "Black Shine", "Alia Bhatt"

Sunsilk. "Black Shine", "Shampoo with Amla Pearls", "HINDI"

Sunsilk. "Blackshine", "Duniya mein chhao all the time", "Hindi"

Sunsilk. "ft. Model Muskaan"

Sunsilk. "Long and Healthy Growth", "Hindi"

Sunsilk. "Look your best with Sunsilk Thick and Long!"

Sunsilk. "New bahar se, Wow andar se"

Sunsilk. "New Sunsilk Freshness Shampoo Hindi"

Sunsilk. "Pooja Path to Pooja Party!"

Sunsilk. "Presents Wedding Diaries"

Sunsilk. "Sapno Ka Email", "Priya Malik", "Hindi Poetry"

Tanishq. "Zuhur"

Tanishq. " Zyra", "Wear a New One Everyday"

Tanishq. "#AparupaByTanishq"

Tanishq. "Aao manaaye #TanishqWaliDiwali"

Tanishq. "Aao manaaye Tanishq wali Diwali"

Tanishq. "Aao Manaaye Tanishq Wali Diwali", "Virasat By Tanishq"

Tanishq. "Anniversary Solitaires"

Tanishq. "Deepika Padukone", "Gulnaaz", "Extended Commercial"

Tanishq. "Deleted ad", "Hindu Muslim Love Story"

Tanishq. "Director s Cut"

Tanishq. "Divyam by Tanishq"

Tanishq. "Engagement Rings WhenItRingsTrue"

Tanishq. "Great Diamond Sale", "Father & Daughter"

Tanishq. "Little Big Moments"

Tanishq. "Onam Film"

Tanishq. "Poila Boishak", "A New Beginning With Tanishq"

Tanishq. "presents Mirayah", "Celebrate With Colours"

Tanishq. "presents My Solitaires"

Tanishq. "presents Queen of Hearts", "The Queen s Charm"

Tanishq. "Proposal Solitaires"

Tanishq. "Rivaah"

Tanishq. "Rivaah", "A Jewel For Every Tradition"

Tanishq. "Rivaah Brides By Tanishq TVC"

Tanishq. "Sampoorna Onam"  
Tanishq. "Sisters", "Dir Cut"  
Tanishq. "Soubhagya", "The Mangalsutra Collection"  
Tanishq. "Teej Film"  
Tanishq. "Valentine s Day"  
Tanishq. "Varamahalakshmi"  
Tanishq Jewellers. "Celebrating Mother's Day", "#ForYouMom"  
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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Aaryama studied Communication Design at NID, Andhra Pradesh. A freelance illustrator and book cover designer, Aaryama has worked on books published by HarperCollins, Penguin Random House and Pratham Books among others. Her other projects include branding and packaging for food brands. She draws to survive, reads for herself, and eats to stay happy. More of her work can be seen on [www.instagram.com/highonmangoes](http://www.instagram.com/highonmangoes)



**Aaryama Somayaji**



Established in 1985, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) is committed to the cause of self-regulation in advertising and protecting consumer interest. Over the past few decades, ASCI has established a robust mechanism for handling complaints against objectionable advertising content and this has gained recognition from the industry as well as the government. ASCI is a part of The Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act's Advertising Code. ASCI's code is also mentioned in the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, and appended in advertising guidelines of All India Radio, Drug Controller Authority of India, Press Council of India's norms of journalistic conduct, among others. The ASCI code is constantly updated to keep pace with the needs of consumers and society, as well as changes in the advertising and media environment.

Besides complaint handling, ASCI also works on initiatives to educate and advise the advertising ecosystem so that advertising may be more responsible, thereby protecting both consumer interests and brand reputation.

## *futurebrands consulting*

Futurebrands is one of India's leading brand strategy and consumer insight consultancies. It has closely watched and mapped cultural change in India for more than a decade. An expert in immersive ethnography, Futurebrands has consistently advised leading brands on evolving their narratives to become more meaningful in the lives of their consumers. Almost 15 years of first-hand consumer contact to map change and a continuous analysis of cross-category advertising, gives Futurebrands a head start in the effort to analyze gender depiction in Indian advertising.

## ABOUT THE LEAD AUTHOR

Lipika is a brand strategist who uses ethnography, semiotics and pop-culture analysis to put brands in touch with the changing lives of their consumer, evolving product imaginations and socio-cultural shifts that reshape people and markets. After early stints in advertising at leading agencies like Ogilvy India, McCann Erickson India and Publicis India, she has spent the last fourteen years at Future Brands consulting crafting brand strategy for brands in diverse categories from food and finance to automobiles and beauty. This has aided her insight into different product categories and change in consumer mindsets across varied constituencies.



**Lipika Kumaran**

Lipika has been a keen follower of advertising, noting what it communicates not only through its conscious messaging but also what it suggests through the more implicit codes it seems to operate with.

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