



Research article

Unravelling the Linguistic Tapestry: A Discursive Study of Gender Portrayal in Select Indian Electronic Advertisement

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Abstract

This discursive study explores the portrayal of empowering women in advertisements, shedding light on the evolving narrative within the realm of marketing and media. The analysis delves into the discursive strategies employed by advertisers to construct empowering representations of women, examining linguistic, visual, and cultural elements. Through a comprehensive review of diverse advertisements, this study investigates how these portrayals shape societal perceptions of women's roles and identities. The research seeks to unravel the underlying discourses that either challenge or perpetuate traditional gender norms, assessing the impact of these representations on both individual and collective consciousness. By critically examining the discursive dimensions of women's empowerment in advertising, this study provides insights into the socio-cultural implications and the potential role of advertisements in fostering positive societal change.

Keywords: Empowerment, advertisements, gender portrayal, discourse analysis



Gender Equality, Quality Education

Introduction

Power and ideology wield considerable influence in shaping societal perceptions, consumer behaviour, and cultural values. Advertisements are powerful tools for disseminating ideologies, promoting certain lifestyles, and reinforcing societal norms. According to Williamson (1978), advertisements are not merely conveyors of information but active agents in constructing and perpetuating cultural meanings. They contribute to the creation of desires and aspirations, influencing individuals to align their identities with marketed products.

Moreover, Berger's (1972) concept of the "ways of seeing" highlights how advertisements shape our perception of reality, framing products within specific cultural and ideological contexts.

Article History: Received: 19 December 2023. Revised: 18 January 2024. Accepted: 24 January 2024. Published: 25 January 2024

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Citation: Pathak, S., Mondal, I. & Mishra, S. (2024). Unravelling the Linguistic Tapestry: A Discursive Study of Gender Portrayal in Select Indian Electronic Advertisement. *Rupkatha Journal* 16:1. <https://doi.org/10.21659/rupkatha.v16n1.02g>

Advertisements often convey implicit messages about gender roles, class distinctions, and societal expectations, contributing to the reproduction of dominant ideologies (McCracken, 1986). For instance, gendered stereotypes in advertising perpetuate societal norms, reinforcing traditional roles and expectations (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971).

In consumer culture, advertising not only reflects but actively constructs ideologies, fostering a symbiotic relationship between media representation and societal beliefs. Recognising advertisements' power and ideological implications is crucial for understanding their impact on individual behaviour and broader cultural dynamics. As such, the study of advertisements becomes a lens through which one can analyse the intricate interplay between power, ideology, and consumer culture. (Vahid and Esmae'li, 2012)

Gender and Advertisement Research in India

In the dynamic landscape of electronic advertising in India, the portrayal of gender has emerged as a critical area of research and concern. This research explores the intricate ways in which gender roles and identities are portrayed in electronic advertisements in India. The portrayal of gender in advertising reflects societal norms and plays a significant role in shaping and reinforcing these norms.

Jha Dang and Vohra (2005) researched advertisements in India and other countries and found that (a) women are shown more frequently in advertisement promotions as compared to men, (b) the age gap was not there between genders, (c) especially feminine gender is shown as employed in occupations like doctors, engineers, designers, i.e. similar to men and, (d) the extent of women connoted as sex objects in Indian advertisements was lower than that in Western country advertisements (Das 2000).

In Indian magazine advertisements of 1987, 1990, and 1994, Das (2000) explored the representation of women and men. The discoveries indicated that the customary job depictions of people in Indian magazine publishing had diminished hardly over time; however, most commercials depict sexual orientation in cliché or conventional jobs. Das (2011) analysed portrayals of different genders in Indian TV advertisements in 2004 in three different regional languages, English, Hindi, and Tamil, over two weeks. Results revealed that advertisers preferred males to play central figures instead of females with dominating voice-overs in most advertisements, whereas women were primarily portrayed in partnership roles.

Recent research by Sharma and Gupta (2020) highlights a persistent trend of reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes in Indian electronic advertisements. Women are often portrayed in stereotypical roles, emphasising beauty and domesticity, while men are portrayed as assertive and dominant figures. This reinforcement of gender norms in electronic advertising perpetuates societal expectations and influences consumer perceptions (Bhola, 2021).

Methodology

The methodology used for this research is Discourse analysis. It is a qualitative research method that delves into the study of language use in various contexts, uncovering the intricacies of communication and the underlying power dynamics within social interactions (Gee, 2014).

It is a multifaceted approach to studying language use in various social contexts, focusing on how language shapes and reflects power dynamics, social structures, and cultural norms. According to Fairclough (2003), discourse analysis is not merely concerned with language as a set of abstract rules but rather as a dynamic social practice embedded in power relations. It emphasises the examination of both spoken and written language to uncover hidden meanings and ideologies.

As a methodological framework, discourse analysis enables researchers to critically examine how language constructs and perpetuates social hierarchies, ideologies, and identity formations (Gee, 2014). Through the lens of discourse analysis, scholars can unveil power relations, uncover hidden agendas, and expose implicit biases in verbal and written communication (van Dijk, 1998).

We shall be extensively using select discourse analysis tools such as speech acts, presupposition, implicature, deixis, and politeness theory to critically analyse the speakers' utterances and understand the empowering language of women (if it is present) in these advertisements. These tools will help us look into the nuances that language contains. We are not making themes or sub-themes in our analysis; rather, we shall analyse all the advertisements separately, each in turn.

ANALYSIS

Advertisement I

Background

Sabhyata, one of the country's famous ethnic wear brands, filmed its first Diwali brand campaign highlighting the Bollywood veteran Shishir Sharma alongside impending celebrities Ritwik Sahore and Ahsaas Channa. The video rejuvenates Sabhyata's way of thinking of commending womanhood. This video, by Sabhyata, brings new father-daughter relationships, organised with modern lifestyle and thinking, characterises this advertisement in an extraordinary manner. This musing is executed in a basic yet charming way by the film's focal heroes: the young and free brother, the innocent sister, the modern and caring father and the understanding mother.

Analysis

The first line spoken by the father shows the Illocution of questioning as in this sentence, the speaker wants to ask if the listener is going somewhere. The word 'leaving' shows lexical presupposition as it is a change of action. Questioning someone shows positive impoliteness, and it can be face-threatening for the hearer. In the next scene, the Illocution of the utterance is that the speaker denies the fact that she is going somewhere. The word nowhere shows spatial deixis as it relates to some location. The father saying 'Pani pilado' shows that the speaker wants some water to drink, and so the illocutionary act of this sentence is requesting. The presupposition is that the speaker is thirsty.

The advertisement begins with the father going into the house, and he sees his little girl and finds out if she is going somewhere, and the young lady says no. He requests a glass of water. After that, she tells him that her companions are asking her for a get-together. His gaze makes her freeze.

In the next scene, the daughter's using 'Ji' is a term of respect because it shows respect for the listener, who must be older. 'Toh mai jau' shows the possibility of the action as the speaker is unsure of her getting permission and going out. The Illocution is requesting as the speaker wants to go out to meet her friends so asking for permission. The personal deixis used; 'Mai' refers to the girl in question. The presupposition can be that she is not independent to go out anytime, so she is asking for permission now. It can be sensed that daughters/females still have to ask for permission from elders to go somewhere, and they are not allowed to roam around freely. Also, it is seen that in our society, females are given less permission to stay outside at night as compared to men. Now, talking about men, in this advertisement, the father could have taken a glass of water by himself to drink, but he ordered his daughter to bring him that. Generally, it is seen that the male members of the family order the females to do these kinds of menial and easy work which they could have done by themselves. So, here, the patriarchal mindset plays a significant role where it is acceptable that households would only be done by females, whether it be cooking, washing clothes, or even bringing a glass of water.

Viewing the girl's perspective, we see that firstly, when the father asks if she is going somewhere then she says 'kahi nahi papa' (nowhere, father), then she gives the glass of water to her father expecting and hoping that if she pleases her father or performs something in favour of him then only, he would give her permission to meet with her friends. Again, here, it shows male domination in our society where the daughters/wives have to please or do something for them to get their permission to do something that the females wish to do.

In the next scene, where the son enters, the personal deixis used 'papa', 'mai', 'Sunny', 'mere' show the conversation going on between Sunny and the father where the speaker (son) is very confident of telling the fact of staying outside to his father. The dependent clause 'dekhe hai kya' shows certainty for some action. The meaning of the sentences is that the boy wants to get outside and stay at his friend's house. 'Ghar' is the spatial deixis as it refers to someplace. 'Raate' is the temporal deixis, which refers to a specific time frame. The last sentence shows the speech act of questioning, and the earlier ones show assertion. The presuppositions are that he wants to play games with his friends, get outside his house, etc. Speaking these lines, the speaker is performing bald-on-record politeness because he is direct and clear while speaking and is using the strategy of requesting. The use of language in these lines shows that males are always confident that they will not be asked any questions about their actions and are always independent regarding their choices, whatever they want to do, anytime. The body language of the boy shows that he is very confident that he won't be cross-questioned by his father. The vocabulary items 'card game' and 'joote' reinforce the abovementioned ideas.

Here, in these above explained two scenes, it can be seen that the girl had to ask for permission from her father to get outside and in the case of the boy, he just conveys the message that he is going outside and his way of saying that shows he doesn't need any permission from anyone to get outside anytime. This shows bias and inequality for different genders in our society that if the person is a male, he is independent to do anything at any time. However, if the person is female, she has to ask for permission and is dependent on others to give her permission (and always not sure that she will be permitted). The huge difference between the body language of the two characters, the daughter and son can be seen here clearly shows that the daughter was very

humble and was not sure that she would get the permission, but the son exudes confidence. He just told them for the sake of informing them.

In the next scene, the conversation goes between the father and daughter and, indirectly, with all the other members. The spatial deixis used is 'Yeh' (this), which denotes something. The Illocution of these sentences is questioning as the speaker wants to know what his children do when getting outside at night. The word 'baahar' is a place deixis as it denotes someplace. The presupposition is that children should not leave their houses at night. Two interrogative sentences are present in this whole utterance. 'Raat ko' is an adverbial clause of time that shows how certain periods are not suitable for travel and interaction. It presupposes that they should not be out at night, but at other times they can.

When the mother arrives in the next scene, the Illocution of the sentence she speaks is questioning as the speaker wants to know the matter. These utterances show so many interrogatives thrown on the face of the hearer, which is considered negative politeness and can be face-threatening for the hearer. These lines presuppose that the hearer has not done anything like this and what would happen if he (the son) does something like this and brings disgrace to the family. The Illocution of these lines is that the speaker is accusing the hearer of asking their son who would take the responsibility if he does something wicked. Personal deixis employed here are 'inse', 'beta', 'ladki', 'apni' as they reflect the gender relations in society. The phrases like 'chhed diya toh', 'kar aya toh' show possibilities of action. The above two dialogues spoken by the father show negative impoliteness as the hearer's will of doing something is being obstructed and causing problems for them, damaging the hearer's desire for freedom of action.

His father asks, 'Consider the possibility that our child goes out around evening time to badger a young lady or he plans something terrible for anybody.' Moreover, he looks at his girl cheerfully and allows her to go out. He requests that his girl drop her brother at his companion's home. The above utterances by the father show an ideology of social change. The father faces a dilemma after he asks his daughter some uneasy questions and gives logic for not going late at night just because he is aware of the societal norms and beliefs that his girl might be in danger if she goes out at night. However, when it comes to his son just saying that he is going out without even asking, he asks his wife to ask her son the same questions he asked his daughter. The ideology shown here was that if the parents know that they are scared about their daughter going out late at night because of unsocial elements of society, they should ask the same question concerning their son: What if their son gets involved in a case like that and what if their son ends up harming some other girl out there? So, the father concludes that if we cannot allow our girl to go out just because we feel unsafe, we also cannot allow our son to go out because someone else's parents might feel unsafe for their daughter. In the end, he says rules are the same for everybody irrespective of gender, and with a nice gesture of showing his confidence and faith in his daughter, he asks her to go out and drop his son at his friend's place also, which shows a change in his mindset.

In the advertisement's final scene, the father uses personal deixis 'isko'. Illocution of this sentence is ordering where the speaker wants his daughter to drop his son on the way. The presupposition can be that the boy does not know how to drive a car or that this gesture of the father shows gender equality by making the girl the driver who helps her brother. This line shows the ideology

of considering daughters and sons equally strong and self-dependent. If the boy can drop his sister on her way, the girl can do the same for her brother. Also, it assumes that both genders can drive and learn things beyond the household. The advertisement ends with everybody grinning.

There is an ongoing presupposition that in any festival celebration, the male members will go out to celebrate and have fun outside partying, drinking and playing cards. In contrast, the girls should involve themselves with household chores like cleaning and decorating the house, making sweets, worshipping gods etc. The advertisement makers have used the tagline 'redefine the celebration' to show the changing mindset of society where girls nowadays are allowed to get out of their houses, be it daytime or night, and they are also free to celebrate the festivals as they wish to. So, it becomes a beautiful idea to celebrate any festival when both genders equally get the right to celebrate it in their own way.

The overall ideology that appears in this advertisement is to treat both genders similarly. These sorts of gender discrimination ought to be removed from the minds of the general public. This may occur if individuals change their mindset. The objective behind the advertisement is to make people aware of treating the two sexes similarly on an individual and social level. Women ought to be respected and regarded based on their existence, elegance, and freedom of action. *Gender inequality* is defined as discriminating the two genders based on their sex. Females are constantly viewed as weaker and dependent and are discriminated against everywhere in the world, however more so in Indian culture. It is seen more in Indian culture because of the male-dominated societal framework and mindset. Society has made it a standard that specific things ought to be done by men and not ladies. These sorts of gender role imbalances and segregation will possibly change when the mindset of men changes. The advertising aims to show that they should consider women as one among them and treat them similarly. Indeed, men need to change their perspective as, through social conditioning, they have become part of a similar manipulative arrangement of male-centric society and assume a superior position in it. Everybody has the right to live their way; the advertisement advocates just that.

Advertisement II

Background

The Biba advertisement shows a brown Indian girl sitting in front of a mirror in a pretty salwar kameez, murmuring intensely and putting on gold studs. The girl's father steps into the room and requests that she dress quickly, get ready, and come downstairs as the to-be groom's family stays back to meet her. She goes to her father and asks him how she can choose to get hitched to somebody by talking for a few minutes over a plate of samosas. Her father requests her to get ready fast and come downstairs. The groom's family says they truly liked the girl and inquires whether they ought to consider the rishta settled. However, the girl's father says they need to visit their house to see whether the boy can cook and do family tasks; then only he will let his daughter get married into their family. The boy's mom says he can hardly boil a packet of noodles and does not even know how to boil water. The girl's father answers that they cannot tie the knot then, as she cannot live on noodles. Then the boy says he will learn to cook some dishes in 10 days, and afterwards, they can visit their home, 'ladka dekhne'. Everybody grins adoringly at one another.

Analysis

In the first scene of the advertisement, the father speaks, and the personal deixis used in this line are 'tum' and 'sab log', which indicates that the focus is on the girl as the centre of attention. Illocution of the above line is the father asking/questioning his daughter if she is ready to come down the hall and meet the boy's family. The presupposition is that the girl is not dressed till then to meet the guests. The spatial deixis present in this utterance is 'downstairs' because it refers to some location. The word waiting shows temporal deixis because some time frame is related to the word. The speaker performs negative politeness while uttering these sentences as a question tag is used because it might threaten the hearer's face by asking such a question.

In the following line spoken by the daughter, the personal deixis employed here are 'papa', which shows the conversation between the daughter and the father as that denotes the girl's marriage decision regarding the boy. The Illocution of this sentence is questioning that the speaker wants to know how she could decide her perfect match over a few lines of conversation. The part 'ki zindagi isi ke sath bitani hai ya nahi' contains counterfactual presupposition as it is imaginary, and the presupposition here is that she has not yet decided with whom she wants to marry. Here, the speaker uses negative politeness as she is being pessimistic and indirectly hedging. This can be an FTA for the listener (her father), implying that she needs more time to take such a major decision in her life.

At the start of the advertisement, the daughter's question shows a tradition in Indian society concerning arranged marriages, where a girl and a boy's marriage is mainly decided by their parents without them getting to know each other completely. So, the language used in this dialogue is a sense of query with self and with a father, whether this tradition is right or not, whether being a female leaves no choice to a girl getting into an arranged marriage scenario and whether a girl is supposed to do whatever her parents ask her to.

The next scene is seen using the word 'aana', a lexical presupposition related to the change of state of a verb and the presupposition that the girl still needs to arrive at the desired location. The Illocution of this sentence is ordering that the speaker wants the hearer to hurry up. This line shows bald on-record politeness as some statements have been directly stated to the speaker, and it might be face-threatening to the hearer's face as she has been ordered to do something, and the father seems to have ignored the daughter's comment.

In the first line, the speaker is trying to minimise the imposition on herself that she has already eaten so much by being polite and refusing to eat more. The Illocution of the speech is rejecting the offer of food and, later, the speech act of asserting that she liked the girl and wants her son to tie the knot with her. Personal deixis used are 'aap', 'hume', 'mai', 'Payal', which point to the bride-to-be and the prospective alliance. The overall presupposition is that neither of the children is married.

After this scene, the following line spoken by the father uses personal deixis like 'aapke', 'hume', showing the contrast between the thinking of the boy's and girl's parents. The verb 'aana' refers to the change of state of something, and the presupposition is that the speaker has still not visited the listener's house. The word 'ghar' is spatial deixis as it refers to some location, and the phrase 'hume bhi toh' shows the obligation to do an action. 'Ji' is used as the 'term of respect', and the

speaker is putting a direct question on the hearer's face, which is an FTA for the listener's face as the speaker disagrees with the fact that they want to visit their (boy's) house too. The Illocution of the utterance is that the speaker is questioning the hearer's intention to visit their house, which is generally not practised in Indian society. The presupposition here is that the family members of the daughter's side still need to visit their house.

Personal deixis used are 'hamari', 'beti', 'aapka', 'ladka', 'hum', 'apni', 'ladki', which shows the relations connecting two families for marriage. The Illocution of the speech is an assertion that the speaker wants to know if the boy can do household chores like cooking. If not, then the speaker would not let his daughter get married into their family. The utterances presuppose that the girl's family is wondering if the boy can help her in doing household work. The 'if phrases' like 'agar aapka beta', 'agar khana bana sakta hai' show the presence of counterfactual presupposition because these are assumptions that need to be followed to achieve gender equality. Clauses like 'hai ya nahi' and 'tabhi toh denge' in the sentences show the certainty and possibility of the actions. In these lines, the speaker is performing positive impoliteness (by being direct and blunt) as he directly states that he will not be accepted if the listener does not possess those qualities. Here, the speaker is showing a sense of distrust toward the hearer, which is an FTA for the hearer.

When the boy's parents say that they like the girl and are ready to accept the *rishta*, the girl's father asks an unorthodox question, which surprises the boy's parents. This puts the boy's parents in a surprise because it is in the context of Indian society that the advertisement was made, and hence, most of the time, it is a boy's family which cancels or postpones a marriage proposal and not the other way round which shows the ideology of modern India, where a girl's parent is equally put-on par with the boy's parents. This one dialogue shows how the thinking of society has changed over time, especially the thinking of a girl's parents, who were till now doing whatever the boy's family asked them to do, be it giving dowry, not contacting their daughter often after marriage or giving a proper farewell to the daughter.

In the next scene, the lines spoken by the boy's mother show that the Illocution of this utterance is both an assertion and exclamatory as the speaker wants to convey that her son does not know how to cook food. The presuppositions are that he does not know how to cook food but can hardly boil noodles. Here, the speaker is pessimistic and tries to minimise the imposition of her son's fault indirectly, which shows negative politeness. The phrase 'microwave me' shows spatial deixis as it is related to some location. The boy's mother states that just like any other boy's upbringing in traditional Indian society, her son also does not know any of the housework and only knows how to cook some ready-made 2-minute noodles, which needs no effort. This dialogue shows a lack of shame or very little shame on the mother's part as she pompously declares that her son knows nothing about housework. It points to a prevalent ideology – boys need not do housework, and any parent with a feudal mindset in Indian society would think the same as that is the need of their son to learn some cooking skills because it is the girl who is responsible for household work. So, this dialogue shows an ideology of having a feudal, patriarchal and traditional social mindset.

Changing the scene in the advertisement, the speaker (father of the girl) is using bald on record politeness, and the Illocution is rejected as he is directly stating the fact that he cannot let his daughter be a part of their family if the boy cannot help her with household work like cooking. It

is an FTA for the hearer as the speaker is criticising the hearer's statement. Also, later, the speaker is performing positive impoliteness by applying the strategy of being blunt and direct to show that the boy will not be accepted into their house if he cannot do household chores. Now, knowing that the boy cannot even do the basic household things, the girl's father rejects the proposal of marriage, which is a rare thing in Indian society. He says that their daughter cannot live only on noodles; this single line shows three things:

1. After listening to this, the girl smiles, knowing that her parents do not think of her as their burden and want to get rid of her via marriage with any of the boys who come with a proposal.
2. This shows that now Indian parents are not in a hurry to marry their daughter into the wrong house or even into the right one without getting their doubts cleared about the boy's and his family's background.
3. The line itself shows that it is not only the responsibility of a girl to run a household, but both genders are responsible for running it, be it washing clothes, doing the dishes or even cooking or cleaning; it is not a gender-specific role which is the norm of a feudal society.

In the last scene, the conversation is going between the boy and the father where the personal deixis used in the following utterances are 'sir,' 'aap',' hamare' 'mai' 'ladka', as the focus is now on the boy to show his skills. Spatial or location deixis present is 'ghar'. The phrase 'kyu nahi aate' shows the presence of lexical presupposition (father has not been to the boy's house) because the verb is associated with the change of a place/scene. 'After ten days' is the temporal deixis because it relates to some time frame. The phrase 'seekh lunga' shows the possibility of an action. The Illocution of the speech act is convincing as the speaker wants to convince the hearer to visit his home after he learns the basics of cooking. The presupposition is that the speaker does not know how to cook food. The speaker politely requests the listener to give him time to do so.

The main vocabulary item and tagline used in this advertisement is 'change is beautiful', which means there should be a change in the mindset of people belonging to society as running the household should not be a gender-specific task, and both can participate. The advertisement makers try to bring social change by spreading the message that boys too can learn cooking and help their wives/mothers/sisters in the kitchen. This type of change is beautiful not only for a couple but also for the entire nation from the viewpoint that the girl knows that her time in the kitchen will be shared by her husband too, and she can also participate in other works and engage in jobs etc. which will aid in the family income. This will bring transformation at the levels of family and society.

When the father of the girl outrightly rejects the proposal, knowing that the boy is not capable enough to take care of his girl and the family, the boy, being modest, humble and modern, asks the girl's father to wait for ten days and then visit his home, so that he might learn some basic skills and then let the girl's father judge him on his capabilities. This line shows a sense of responsibility and willingness to do something outside the usual practice. An Indian boy, brought up in a patriarchal society, not knowing cooking or any basic chores, trying to give it a chance, shows how today's generation is getting ready to give the other gender a chance to come on par

with them so that no one is left behind. It shows the ideology of modern society, where tasks are not gender specific, and the partnership between genders is important for a successful relationship and a happy home. The girl is shown wearing a red Anarkali suit, which signifies the most remarkable tones in Indian culture and holds much significance. The red colour is related to dread and fire, riches and influence, wealth and power, virtue, richness, fertility, seduction, love, and magnificence. Red is additionally illustrative of a specific time and spot in one's life, including when a lady gets married.

So, the advertisement makers try emphasising a point that even some traditional practices can be performed in a modernised way in today's world, which directly connects with their product, clothes, that even in the Indian society, someone can have modern thoughts even if s/he wears a traditional dress, and being modern and traditional are not paradoxical things.

Advertisement III

Background

The famous brand Titan Raga's campaign shows empowering females in their advertisements. The advertisement talks about the most common situations Indian women face in the corporate world. It is not necessary that only men need to progress in life; females should also be allowed an opportunity to prove themselves, which is what the Titan Raga TVC discusses.

Titan Raga thus commends the 'women of today' in this advertisement. They show us a determined, high-spirited, serious, and independent lady who is fit to settle on her own life decisions. She has desires and is not reluctant to assume responsibility for her life in her hands.

Analysis

In the first scene of the advertisement, the man is seen entering the airport cafeteria, and the woman is seen waiting for him. The Illocution of the first dialogue is questioning by asking the woman if the seat is reserved for someone else. The presupposition for this sentence can be that the seat is reserved for someone else as the girl may be waiting to meet someone other than him. This line can be face-threatening for the speaker (the man) as the woman could have rejected him for the seat. In the following line, the woman assures by saying 'no', which can be assumed that the woman already knew it was him only for whom she was waiting. This acts as a marker of politeness for the man. Then, in the next scene, they start talking about using icebreakers. The personal deixis used in the line is 'you,' which shows the girl's concern for the boy's asking for his well-being. The overall presupposition that can be understood is that they have known each other for a long time.

In the following lines, the boy speaks using personal deixis 'tumne', 'you', 'we', shows they had a love relationship before. The phrase 'chora tha' represents temporal deixis as it relates to some time frame in the past. This line presupposes that the man was expecting the woman to leave her job for him and, second, the woman to be married till now. The words 'could' and 'would' are epistemic modal verbs as they show the actions' possibility and obligation, respectively. So, here, the speaker (man) says that he has realised that they both could have continued their relationship.

The Illocution of the speech acts states that the man was imposing his will on the woman to leave her job and expecting her to leave her job to be with him.

The way of using language in this advertisement shows the tone of taunting from the man's point of view, who is trying to make the woman realise that it was her fault or ego because they are not together, and also, it was she (the woman) who broke up with him. However, another tone and attitude of being a wise person is seen in the woman's speech and behaviour, who, even after knowing that the man is taunting her, smiles and replies with the subtle art of having no regrets and being proud of what she has achieved in her life with that one correct decision.

The ideology in this first part of the conversation is shown to be of male dominance or patriarchal mindset, where the man is shown telling the woman she should have quit her job to stay together, which shows it has to be always the woman who is supposed to sacrifice her everything (job, aspirations, dreams and even her own family) for a relationship.

In the next scene, when the girl speaks using personal deixis 'tum', she justifies the decision not to leave the job for him. The clause 'kar sakte the' shows the possibility of action – the possibility of the boy to leave his job for their relationship. Here, the presupposition is that the girl expected the boy to sacrifice his job for her. As mentioned above, the Illocution of the Speech Act is a strong assertion. After being questioned if she could quit her job to save the relationship, when the woman replies, 'Tum bhi toh quit kar sakte the', the instant reaction of the man was, 'How can a man not work yaar?' This reply shows that the language used here is centred on the male ego, which is common in Indian society, where a breadwinner is always supposed to be a male. Due to his male ego and even due to different kinds of pressure from society, peers or family, it is the man who is always supposed to work and the woman who is supposed to do every household work, even after knowing that if both of them work, their economic condition would be much better. This presupposition is reinforced through the man's dialogue.

Then the man uses the personal deixis 'meri', which shows the conversation was becoming so personal, and the presupposition is that he would never sacrifice his job for the girl.

In the next scene, the woman sarcastically agrees with the man's lines, stating her opinion about him. Personal deixis employed in the utterances are 'Akash', 'you', 'tumhe', 'maine', which shows that the girl is really happy with her earlier decision to end the relationship with him (the man). The Illocution of the utterances shows that the speaker (woman) is somehow proud of her decision to leave the man and continue the job. The line presupposes that the man was never supportive by nature, and the girl herself put her steps forward to end the relationship with him as he had a very narrow-minded and patriarchal mindset. This part of the conversation shows two things: First, the woman realises that she made the right choice by not quitting the job and leaving the man before, and second, that the old-school thinking of the man has not changed in years, even after she left him. The language used here shows relief, wisdom and realisation, where the woman takes a sigh of relief that she made the right decision by not staying up with a man who does not think that a man can quit a job, while the man realises that all these years he had been living with a narrow mindset and is embarrassed about it.

Finally, in the last line, the woman asks the man to have coffee with her, which she has ordered in the cafeteria (paying the bill for the same shows her ability to pay her financial empowerment, for

which she is very proud). The Illocution of the speech act is offered as the woman offers a cup of coffee to the boy. The presupposition of this line can be that both of them like to drink coffee.

The line 'tum bhi toh quit kar sakte the' is the turning point/scene of the advertisement, which shows that women are no more bound by the traditional ways and thinking of patriarchal society and are not ready to sacrifice their jobs to stay with men. The above advertisement tries to reach the viewers by influencing them to perceive their work (especially the work considered male-centric, like having a job in an IT or a multinational firm) through a gender-neutral lens and not be biased towards a particular gender having career. This advertisement tries to show that a woman has all the rights to choose her career and not sacrifice her job for a relationship where her partner is not understanding and does not support her choices and ambitions.

The tagline of the advertisement, 'khud se naya rishta', which is a well-thought line, directly connects the product and the advertisement in the sense that if people wear a Titan watch, like the girl shown in the advertisement, people will be able to take the right decision at the right time and will be able to create a new form of his/herself saying Khud se naya rishta. The focus on empowerment, self-reliance and self-belief comes to the surface in this advertisement as shown through the body language and visuals of the two characters. Both are dressed in Western wear and pastels to suit their professional roles, but the woman is more confident and more intelligent, a move towards gender equality.

Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the transformation in the portrayal of gender roles within advertisements signifies a significant shift in societal perceptions, particularly in the evolving roles of men. Historically, advertising delineated rigid gender-specific responsibilities, reinforcing stereotypes and influencing societal norms. For instance, commercials showcasing cleaning products or laundry predominantly featured women, inadvertently endorsing that such chores were exclusively meant for the female gender. However, contemporary advertisements reflect a departure from these entrenched stereotypes. Present-day promotions, whether related to sports or household activities, challenge the traditional male-centric narrative. The inclusion of women in sports-related advertisements dismantles the notion that physical prowess is exclusively a male domain. Similarly, the representation of both genders in kitchenware or culinary ads signifies a departure from the past, conveying the message that culinary responsibilities are not confined to women alone.

These shifts in advertising demonstrate a positive and expansive influence on society, actively challenging gender dichotomies and roles. Modern advertisements seek to debunk stereotypes, prejudices, and assumptions tied to specific gender roles. They convey a powerful message to society, encouraging men to participate in household chores while empowering women to explore diverse career opportunities. Notable campaigns, such as the Sabhyata and BIBA advertisements, emphasise the importance of shared responsibilities in domestic tasks, promoting the idea that both genders should possess basic skills like cooking and cleaning.

Moreover, these advertisements advocate for equal norms within households, endorsing principles of freedom and equal opportunities for both genders. For instance, the Sabhyata

advertisement underscores the idea that if a boy is free to venture out at night, a girl should be accorded the same liberty. These campaigns collectively contribute to a broader societal narrative, urging individuals to break away from antiquated gender norms.

This study provides valuable perspectives on current gender dynamics; however, there remains considerable opportunity for additional investigation and analysis of gender equality and women empowerment within advertising. Moreover, there is a need for comparative studies to elucidate the evolving nature of gender roles within this dynamic landscape.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Funding Disclosure

We declare that no funding has been received for research or/and publication.

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Appendix

Advertisement I

Link- Sabhyata gives a lesson about gender equality through this beautiful ad | Redefine the Celebration

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0BYUvug4-M>

Dialogues

Father to daughter: Kaha ja rahi ho? (father entering into the house)

Daughter: Kahi nahi, papa

Father: Pani pilado

Daughter: Ji. ummm... wo papa kuch friends bula rahe the is samay. Toh mai jau? (her phone ringing) Son: Hey papa! Sunny ke ghar cards party hai wahi ja raha hu. Raat ko wahi rukunga. Thik hai phir. Joote dekhe hai kya kisine mere? (son entering into the scene acting very confident)

Father to daughter: Yeh koi time hai bahar jane ka? Wo bhi itni raat ko. Pata nahi raat ko bahar jake kya karte hai?

Mother: Kya hua? (she came from the kitchen)

Father: Inse hi puch lo? Ghar ka jawan beta bahar jake kisi ladki ko chhed diya toh? Kahi kuch galat kar aya toh? Kaun dega tujhe apni ladki? Bata? (the daughter starts smiling and mother looks shocked)

Father to daughter: Jate jate isko bhi chhod dena. (father smiling and nodding his head to give permission to his daughter to go out)

(background music playing Let's celebrate a change!)



Image 1



Image 2

Advertisement II

Link- BIBA - Change The Convention #ChangeIsBeautiful

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aS_wwC8P12I

Dialogues

Father: Abhi tak taiyaar nahi hui? Are niche sab log intezaar kar rahe hai. (the girl getting dressed in her room and soft classical music is playing in the background)

Daughter: Papa! sirf samosa khilake kaise decide kar rahe ho ki zindagi isi ke sath bitani hai ya nahi?

Father: Zaldi ana (he went downstairs)

Guest 1: Are nahi bas bas. Aap ne hume pehele hi bohot khila diya.

Hume toh aapki Payal bohot pasand aai. Toh mai yeh rista pakka samjhu? (everyone sitting and talking)

Father: Ji zaroor. Par hume bhi toh aapke ghar aana hoga.

Guest 1: Most welcome ji, par kyun? (the guest looked a bit confused)

Father: Hamari beti ko bhi dekhna hai aapka ladka ghar samhaal sakta hai ya nahi, khana bana sakta hai ya nahi. Tabhi toh hum denge apni ladki.

Guest 1: Ise toh pani ubalna bhi nahi aata. Bas kabhi kabhi noodles wagara bana leta hai, microwave me.

Father: Maaf kijiyege. Meri beti toh bas noodles pe zinda nahi reh sakti na.

Guest 2: Sir, aap 10 din baad hamare ghar kyu nahi aate?

Father: kyu?

Guest 2: Sir, tab tak mai kuch banana seekh lunga. Phir aa jaiyega aap ladka dekhne (everyone smiling).



Image 1



Image 2

Advertisement III

Link- The Raga Woman Of Today #HerLifeHerChoices

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXRobOjVI9s>

Dialogues

Man: Is this seat taken? (entering into the airport cafeteria)

Woman: No! It's not (reading a magazine)

Hi! (both smiling and hugging each other)

How have you been?

Man: Bas waise hi jaise tumne chora tha.

And you... are still not married (looking at her visiting card) Woman: Kaam se time kaha milta hai?

Man: Of course!

We could have made it work; you know. If you would only quit working.

Woman: Tum bhi toh quit kar sakte the.

Man: Meri baat alag hai.

Woman: Kaise? (sarcastically smiling) Man: How can a man not work yaar?

Woman: Actually, you are right Akash. (sarcastically smiling and looking at the watch) Tum naa aaj bhi waise hi ho jaisa maine tumhe chora tha. (the boy realised his mistake and intense music playing in the background)

Coffee? (both of them continued their conversation)

("Khud se naya rishta".... Titan Raga)



Image 1

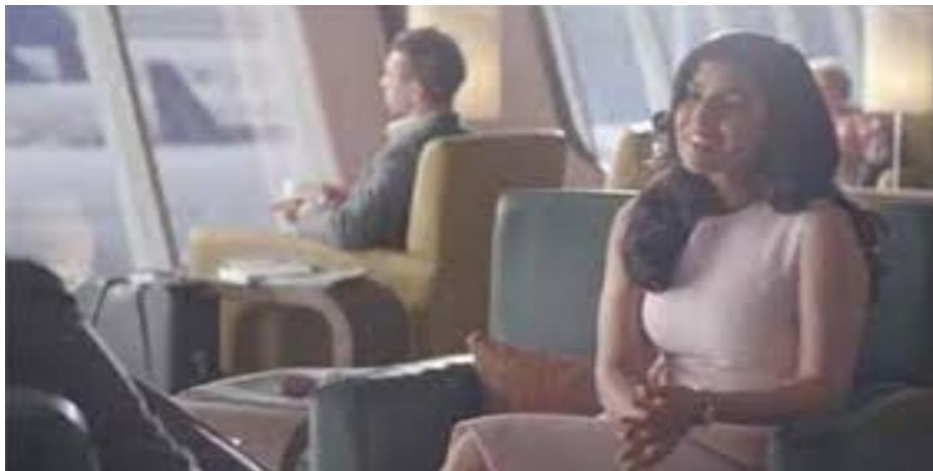


Image 2

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