


Investigating gender stereotypes in Indian YouTube advertisements from 2015 to 2021

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Original article</p> <p>Main Object: Media, Social Media and Advertisement</p> <p>Received: 14 November 2025 Revised: 14 January 2026 Accepted: 29 January 2026 Published online: 07 February 2026</p> <p>Keywords: dramaturgy, gender stereotypes, India, semiotic, video advertisement, YouTube.</p>	<p>Background: Advertising, which has been defined as, a systematic effort to shape people's opinions, attitudes and behaviours in a specific direction is a significant part of public communication. Nowadays, video advertisements are among the most important tools to attract different tastes.</p> <p>Aims: It is crucial to examine whether commercial advertisements shape gender stereotypes in a given society.</p> <p>Methodology: This study seeks to examine gender stereotypes in the Indian most watched video advertisements on YouTube from 2015 to 2021 using Barth's semiotic and Goffman's dramaturgy approaches.</p> <p>Findings: There is consistency between the gender of the actor and the voice of the narrator, the way of touching objects, the ritualization of subordination and the type of presence in the family and society as well as licensed withdrawal in Indian video advertisements that have the highest views on YouTube.</p> <p>Conclusion: The overall result indicates the presence of solid gender stereotypes in advertisements.</p>

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1. Introduction

Stereotypes are specific thoughts that are shaped and reinforced over time. As Åkestam (2017) maintains, the process of strengthening and reinforcing stereotypes can often be seen in commercials. Among television programs, television advertising has played an important role in this case. Television commercials indirectly affect the formation of viewers' thinking and behaviour and are able to create a special collective mentality among different members of society (Lajnef, 2023). The issue of gender stereotypes has been reproduced in the form of commercials for many years. The stereotypes that are created in commercials about women or men provides impressive images and attitudes. For example, doing some activities are considered in harmony with the "feminine nature" and others are regarded as "masculine nature". Sumano (2017) argues that the spread of these images affects the gender perceptions of people in society. Thus, it can be said that gender stereotypes are among the most significant cultural factors affecting the relationship between men and women.

Advertising industry has never been the first to bring about social change in the world, but it has been an important part of the process of bringing about positive or negative changes in societies (Jaffe, 2015). As elsewhere in the world, nowadays a large number of consumers in India are influenced by the advertisements. Dwivedi et al. (2020) stipulates that with the discovery of the said mass influence on consumers, advertisements have become more important for companies and even governments to send their social messages to their audiences and to the whole society. The present study aims to employ the dramaturgical approach and semiotic theory to investigate gender stereotypes on Indian commercial advertisement on YouTube.

Goffman (1979) argues that theatre shares similarities with advertising. These similarities can be found in video commercials. Drama theory and dramaturgy approach have been adapted to marketing and consumer behaviour studies using a variety of different perspectives. This approach can help analysing advertisements and investigating the role prescriptions, the ritualization of subordination, feminine/masculine symbolic space, and relative size. All these factors, in Goffman's attitude can open our eyes to gender representation and find gender stereotypes that are hidden in advertisements.

Barthes (1967) states that all signs are mediated by language and according to his semiotic approach, non-linguistic signs are carrying linguistic meanings. According to his semiotic approach in the advertisement, all the commercials are using purposive signs, colour, camera angle, and symbols. As Zhang and Gelb (1996), maintain, by investigating advertisements, it is possible to attain a viewpoint about the cultural understanding of a specific society and thus be able to find hidden stereotypes which are used in these advertisements. Finally, after finding these gender stereotypes, it is possible to refine them.

Against this backdrop, this paper aims to investigate gender stereotypes in Indian most watched video advertisements on YouTube. In particular, it seeks to examine how some video advertisements spread or break gender stereotypes. In doing so, the article, first explains advertisements, followed by discussing gender stereotypes on them. After that the article explains advertisements in the Indian context. Then, it offers theoretical frameworks, methodology and findings. Finally, the article provides conclusions with some remarks about the gender stereotypes on advertisement in Indian context.

2. Discussion

2.1. Gender stereotypes in advertisements

Nowadays, there is a fierce struggle over the sale of goods and services in the world of industry and commerce. Siddiqui and Alahmadi (2021) emphasized that in today's modern world, commercial advertising is no longer a simple act that can easily be analysed and interpreted, but it is a reality embedded in the life of the modern human being, which can easily inject good or bad cultural messages into society. Therefore, their effect on the thoughts and views of society is certain. One significant issue representing by advertisements is gender roles.

Gender representation includes beliefs about what it means to be a man and a woman. These representations can include information about physical appearance, attitudes, interests, psychological traits, social relationships and the type of jobs. In a study conducted by Arima (2003) on Japanese cartoons, it was seen that female characters were more likely to be at home than males. While men were shown as office workers, women were shown as housekeepers. Advertising campaigns often use stereotypes as a shortcut to communicate with a set of concepts that exist in the mind of the audiences. Mirza (2016) states that media content can have a significant impact on how we perceive the realities around us. Media content also gives an understanding of gender to the people it addresses.

A study conducted by ElSafty (2005) emphasizes that gender inequality is a global reality that can be said to have stronger roots in Eastern culture. In Eastern countries, the ideal image of a woman in a male-dominated society is the image of a submissive and oppressed woman, and in other words, a second-class citizen. This traditional image and gender stereotypes of a woman in Eastern culture leads to the situation that many women in these societies easily accept these gender stereotypes and inequalities. In studying gender stereotypes in advertisements, it should always be noted that gender stereotypes exist for men as they exist for women, and this is a point that has not been addressed in many studies. In advertisements, men are generally depicted as pragmatic personalities, either next to heavy machinery, making business decisions or wearing formal clothes and they are often

shown taller than women. Women are often portrayed as working with kitchen utensils.

Sovič & Hus (2015) argue young children are bombarded daily with language and images that influence their realization of gender roles. At age four, girls realize their primary role is “housekeeping” and the boys' role is “wage-earning”. In many societies, men and women grow up with the same stereotypes, and the roots of these gender stereotypes are so strong that can hardly be dispelled.

According to Sharma and Gupta (2015), advertising in India has one major challenge which is the diversity of the country. As a multicultural country with various cultures and languages there is a high possibility that consumers may have different interpretations of the same advertising message and actually, the meaning of all verbal and non-verbal communication used in advertising are differently analyzed by consumers.

A research project was conducted by UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, UNICEF India with the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. In this research, the team investigated the extent and modality of gender stereotyping found in Indian advertisements on television and YouTube. The results show that in India as a collectivist society with a strongly patriarchal culture, the advertisements follow the gender stereotypes and reproduce it. It is promising that in recent years the presence of women and girls in commercials has increased and the gender equality in this regard can be observed. However, this issue does not necessarily lead to reducing gender stereotypes in commercials (Geena Davis Institute, 2019).

Ramaccia (2010), Cerrato & Cifre (2018), and Copenhaver (2002) show that television commercials often associate gender portrayals with gender markings of needs and goods. Women are often restricted by their families, emotional and personal dependencies, housework, marriage, motherhood, and home environment. The goods that they need are often limited to the things like detergents, cleaners, foodstuffs, and the kitchen.

In contrast, men are seen in advertisements for commercial goods. Emphasis on the job and professional complexity along with dependence on professional goods focus on a different pattern of gender representation. Men are either not present in the advertisements related to housework and housekeeping, or if they are, they are shown as using the services provided to them and most of the time, this service provider is a woman.

2.2. Advertisements in India

In India, advertising is regulated by various statutes like the constitution of India, the 1999 trademark act, the 1986 consumer protection act also the codes of advertising standard council of India. Ciochetto (2004) states that after the liberalization of Indian markets in the early 1990s,

India witnessed enormous growth, which also caused growth in the advertising sector. This sector has been rapidly taken over by foreign agencies that try to sell foreign goods and services to people in Indian markets. The Indian advertising industry has changed and reshaped as time passed and currently, it is one of the world's strongest sectors. This industry is expected to be the second-fastest-growing advertising market in Asia after China and to take second place held by the United States.

India, after its economic liberation, opened its door to many foreign companies and attracted the attention of these firms. Suggett (2020) mentioned that the advertising industry has some major players. It is divided into different types of advertising platforms such as the television advertising market.

Other types of advertising platforms include print media, radio, internet and online advertising as well as mobile and even outdoor advertising market. Nowadays, with the rise of information and communication technology and at the same time the decreasing role of print media the way of offering advertisements has been changed. Due to rapid internet access, the production of digital advertising has become more prevalent.

Ebrahimian Jolodar and Ansari (2011) concluded that video advertisements are more popular and effective because they have elements such as moving images and sounds. Their research showed that a visual advertisement has a greater impact on the audience's mind and thus the audience can establish an emotional bond with that advertisement.

India is the second-largest country in the world in terms of population. Advertising has flourished in the country for a long time Indians have been actively involved in the advertising industry since the nineteenth century and have been among the best in the world until today. Nowadays, many Indian people have easy access to mass media, and advertisements can be seen everywhere, from radio and television to the Internet (*3 Dots Design*, 2020).

3. Theoretical framework

The present study analyses the phenomenon of gender stereotypes in Indian video advertisements. It used two different but related theories which are relevant to the understanding of gender stereotypes in video advertisements. Using these two theories, i.e. Goffman's dramaturgy and Barth's semiotic approaches, simultaneously has led to more scrutiny of commercials and helps completing previous research in this field.

Women have long been stereotyped in media, and Goffman (1979) after analysing television and magazines noticed that there are five trends in gender roles. These five trends are (1) relative size, (2) feminine touch, (3) function ranking, (4) the ritualization of

subordination, and (5) licensed withdrawal which are described in more detail in the data analysis section. Using the dramaturgical approach to investigate video advertisements can give a better understanding of both the language as well as the body language and can be expanded to gender-role and stereotypes which are hidden inside the layers of the video advertisements. Dramaturgical theory of Goffman (1956) likens real-life human behaviour to a play on the stage, stating that each person is an actor. Humans use perception management to control how they are seen and viewed through appearances. Erving Goffman's "dramaturgy" approach to gender and its representation in the visual media is one of the most fascinating, complex, and unique perspectives on gender studies. In "Gender Advertisements", Goffman looks at how people reveal their gender identity to others and how that gender identity is used in advertising. According to him, gender is visually constructed in various ways in the field of media advertising (Nesvadba, 2017: 40). Unlike most theoretical approaches, Goffman does not directly relate the patterns of gender inequality to unequal access to social rewards, and instead of referring to the realities of inequality such as differences in salary and promotion opportunities, he examines how women and men act and how they interpret each other. It explains more about the interactions between the two genders and the impact of social frameworks on it (Schwalbe et al., 2000: 420). Bell and Milic (2002) argue that first Goffman explores the relationship between men and women and he is not only focusing on one or the other and this can give a complete analysis of gender stereotypes. And second, by using this theory, less obvious elements of advertising are identified to understand gender representations and give us a clearer view of advertising.

Investigating advertisements using the semiotic theory of Barthes (1967) provides an important framework for decoding and interpreting video commercials. In the semiotic theory by reading signs and focusing on their interpretation by different cultures or societies we can go deeper into the meaning. Roland Barthes's semiotic thought is aimed at image analysis. Using the principles of semiotics, Barthes achieved a new reading of the codes hidden in the layers of the meanings of visual works. He believed that it was through interaction with signs that one could approach the text.

According to Heriwati (2017) although semiotics was mostly used in linguistics in the beginning, it gradually opened its way to fine arts and advertising. As we know, advertising needs artistic and creative ideas. Using the theory of semiotics, advertisements are dissected, and advertising elements that are not clearly visible at first become visible to the audience. Semiotics reminds us that hand or eye movement can have a meaning and a purpose that is not directly seen by the viewer and requires the use of semiotics to be seen.

Džanić (2013) mentions that in semiotics, Barthes tries to highlight the fact that signs can bring the viewer to the structure and foundation

of a society's culture. Images and text that communicate with their audience are not just plain images. Therefore, advertising is not only about promoting specific brand products or services but can have other goals such as promoting a specific value in a society.

Bal (1994) stated that in Barthes semiotics and the analysis of advertising videos using his theory, four factors should be investigated. These factors include (1) mise-en-scene, (2) sounds, (3) camera, and (4) editing, which are clearly described and interpreted in the data analysis section.

4. Research questions

As aforementioned, the present article aims to analyse the Indian video advertisement on YouTube from 2015 to 2021 with an emphasis on gender identity and gender stereotypes by answering three research questions.

- Main question:
How do Indian advertisements represent gender stereotypes according to semiotic and dramaturgical theories?
- Minor questions:
 - How do Indian video advertisements on YouTube reinforce gender stereotypes based on the rules of semiotic and dramaturgical theories?
 - What is the share and quality of the presence of men and women in video advertising according to semiotic and dramaturgical theories?

5. Methodology

This research will provide new insights into the significance of video advertising and the impact of media in shaping and reshaping stereotypes in Indian society. In this study, two methods of semiotics and dramaturgy approaches have been used to obtain a clearer view of the advertisements and gender stereotypes in them.

5.1. Data collection process

The process of data collection includes two steps. First, the most-watched ten Indian advertisements on YouTube in every year from 2015 to 2021 were selected. The total sample at this stage was 70. In the second stage, among the advertisements that have been selected in the previous stage, those were featuring at least one man and one woman were chosen. It is important to note that commercial advertisements that used male and female voices without their presence were also included in the samples. The total sample of the study became 60. YouTube has been selected because it is the second most popular website in the world after Google and as well in India it has great popularity (*Statista*, 2016). The above numbers show significant and increasing rate of Indian people's attraction to video channels, whether

542 Investigating gender stereotypes in Indian YouTube advertisements from 2015-2021

it's for entertainment, news, education, or sports. According to the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2016), the government of India in 2016 joined the campaign called women transforming India and announced this year to advance gender equality. These major changes and revisions began in 2015 and was generally approved in 2016. These changes have brought new opportunities for women's empowerment, although, in a patriarchal society like India where gender inequalities have deep roots is not easy to make complete changes, it is necessary for the realization of women's rights and the elimination of problems. Although the advertising patterns are not completely coherent and clear, their study can provide a good understanding of women, men, and their status, and consequently the gender stereotypes in Indian society, in 2015, the year before the adoption of women's protection laws; and in 2016 the year of its adoption and implementation and a few years after the implementation of this law.

5.2. Operationalization and data analysis procedure

Data will be analysed within three steps. First, all the selected videos will be analysed using Barthes's Semiotics theory. In the second stage, of all the selected videos will be analysed through Goffman's Dramaturgy approach. In the third stage, the data will be analysed to see whether they include gender stereotypes or not. In the following sections, the way of operationalization of these three steps will be explained.

5.3. Operationalization of Barthes's semiotics theory

According to Barthes's Semiotics theory, there are emotional meanings in symbols that affect our rational self. Advertising designers use this strategy to put the audiences in the field of emotional reaction with their advertisements. Additionally, Roland Barthes proclaimed that semiology aims to take in any system of signs like images, gestures, musical sounds, and objects. These signs constitute a system of significance. Semiology as a qualitative method applied in media research helps the researcher to discover the hidden meanings of the visual texts: films, adverts, and posters and so forth within the socio-cultural context. According to semiotics in the advertisement described by Barthes (1967), the advertisements rely on the audience's cultural understanding of wordplay when reading into the image. Signs are selected by media producers to create specific meanings. Barthes argues when a sign is used consistently in a culture, that sign can become a myth, and a myth is almost like an accepted dominant connotation of a sign. Somehow media is shaping societies' ideology through the repeated use of signs (Nolan & Lenski, 1996: 24).

To operationalize Barthes' semiotics theory in selected videos, four basic categories were examined as follow.

- **Mise-en-scene.** The production of moving images includes

setting the stage, constructing the elements inside the scene, specifying the location of each of the elements of the scene, lighting, clothes, make-up of the actors, their behaviour and movement, and their body language, the composition of images in each scene, the relationship between objects and people in each scene, the relationship between light and dark, the colour of the stage.

- **Sounds.** In general, it includes dialogues, music, and even noises that can be heard from the background of the moving image (voice-over) being known as sound effects in videos. Sound can be a very important element in inducing meaning.
- **Camera work.** It plays a critical role in the analysis of semiotics, includes how the camera is framed, its composition, the movement of the camera and how it induces meaning to the viewer according to these movements, the angle of the camera, and its different degrees during filming can change the overall purpose of a film. The position of the camera in relation to the subjects can affect the viewer's perception of the scene. A scene may be filmed from several different angles simultaneously to enhance the emotional effect of the film.
- **Editing.** Literally, it means the use of sequencing, the way that one clip moves directly to another. This stage includes selecting shots and their size, lining up shots, scenes, and sequences one after the other, combining all sounds and determining their loudness, and finally blending and harmonizing the final sound with the image (Lin et al., 2021: 34). Cutting is used to attract attention and fast and consecutive cuts are used to create excitement.

5.4. Operationalization of Goffman's dramaturgy approach

As the second step of data analysis, all the selected videos were analysed using Goffman's dramaturgy approach. Goffman, in defining his theory, explains that he uses dramaturgy as a theatrical metaphor for human beings in the world. To operationalize Goffman's Dramaturgy Theory, six basic categories, which has been identified as six visual patterns of gender display in advertising were examined:

- In the ritualization of submissiveness, women create a situation that shows their submission to the control of others. From this point of view, women show more comforting behaviours such as smiling and showing helplessness. Compared to men, women adopt more gentle expressions such as expressions of fear and highlighting the delicate curves of women.
- The relative size refers to the fact that, in general, women are depicted as shorter than men in advertisements and visual media, and this is a symbol of less authority.
- The function ranking refers to how men control the actions of

544 Investigating gender stereotypes in Indian YouTube advertisements from 2015-2021

others, while women are controlled. In the advertisements, men are shown less often in the nursery or kitchen, or when they are depicted in these feminine arenas, it is not realistic (Tuchman, 2000: 151).

- The feminine touch refers to the fact that in advertising images and visual media, women touch and caress objects but on the other hand, men manipulate objects, and change the shape of a product and transform it into a better product.
- The licensed withdrawal means that men often take the lead in order to remove women from social situations or leave them aside due to psychological conflict. Goffman (1976) observed in visual advertising that compare to men, women frequently enter into conflicts that psychologically remove them from social situations.
- The family analytical model shows that women are more frequently in family situations and men are more frequently outside home. According to Goffman's observations, in advertisements, men are usually either not at home or far from it. According to him, this issue may be due to the fact that the house is traditionally considered a 'female domain'. Therefore, it emphasizes that in the space of the house, men may indulge in 'feminine duties' and are shown only in the role of women's assistants in the kitchen. In advertisements women are shown as a way that they have authority in matters related to cooking, cleaning, and shopping. This refers to the gendering of spheres, meaning that women belong to the sphere of the home and men belong to the sphere of work and politics outside the home.

5.5. Operationalization of gender stereotypes

As aforementioned, this paper seeks to investigate the modality of gender stereotypes in Indian video advertisements and whether the passage of time and the approval of the national policy for women in 2016 by the ministry of women & child development impacted the advertising sector in India or whether people involved in the advertising continue working with the same patriarchal and stereotyped view regardless of this law. In addition to investigating the issue through semiotics and dramaturgy approaches, the study investigates the existence of gender stereotypes in the selected video advertisements.

Gender stereotypes in this research is operationalized in the following forms:

- The roles of men and women in the family which refers to the mother's role as the child's caretaker and the father's role as the supporter.
- Personality characteristics showing men as active and have the ability to control others and women as dependent.
- Professional role showing the social roles of men and women as

- an illustration showing men as bosses and women as employees.
- Body image refers to the modality of showing the body of women and men; for e.g. women are depicted in stereotypical and sexy ways in ads more than men.
 - The purpose of the presence of men and women in which women are displayed visually and men are the ones responsible for the approval and superiority of the products.

6. Findings

The findings of the article are presented based on the three operationalisation sections mentioned in the research methods section. The results of first section are offered based on Barth's semiotic theory. At this stage, all video advertisements were carefully examined, and items such as mise-en-scene, sounds, camera work, and editing were checked. Another part of the results is offered based on Goffman's dramaturgy theory. In this part, the ritualization of submissiveness; the relative size; the function ranking; the feminine touch; the licensed withdrawal; and the family were checked. Finally, the results related to the existence of gender stereotypes in the advertisements are also offered in the third section. The results of this part were specifically based on the roles of men and women in the family; personality characteristics; professional roles; body image and the purpose of the presence of men and women. After reviewing all the selected video samples, questions such as how video advertisements show gender stereotypes based on semiotic and dramaturgical theories, strengthening or not reinforcing gender stereotypes in popular Indian video advertisements, and finally, the extent and quality of the presence of men and women in video advertisements based on theories of Semiotics and dramaturgy were answered.

Results suggest that in the examined video advertisements, male images show strength, masculinity, expertise, and sportsmanship, while the images presented of women showed beauty, cooperation, service to others, and submission. The representation of gender in advertisements can show very powerful behaviour patterns that lead to imitation of this behaviour at the community level (Iember Anweh, 2019: 47). Of course, it should be mentioned that in 25 out of 60 of these video advertisements, the presented image of women was opposite to conventional stereotypes, women were portrayed as powerful, athletic, and independent from men, and men were depicted as single fathers doing housework which is stereotypically labelled as women's work, but these cases were very few among all the video advertisements. The studies conducted using the two theories of semiotics and dramaturgy have shown that men usually express emotions less than women in a patriarchal society like India. Depicting women who are laughing and crying without control emphasizes the weakness of women and the lack of control over their emotions, which is one of the clear examples of

gender stereotypes seen in almost all the selected video advertisements. The transformative role that advertisements play in achieving gender equality in societies is very important. Middleton & Turnbull (2021) argued that by producing content with the aim of breaking gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality, video advertisements can help changing traditional, social, and cultural attitudes regarding the issue of gender representation. By Portraying women in more specialized roles, not as few exceptional cases that were seen in these sample videos, advertisements can lead to the fair formation of gender representation and improve the general attitude of people of that certain society.

In general, although in the years 2015 and 2021, the selected commercial advertisements show that women and men are depicted in situations that are not within the boundaries of gender stereotypes and break these boundaries, in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, the number of videos that locked men and women in the cage of gender stereotypes is much more than few cases in which gender stereotypes are broken.

The results of the video reviews show that while men are usually depicted in formal clothes in advertisements, women often wear clothes that show feminine features and have colours that attract the attention of the audience. The use of women as stereotypical and hyper-sexualized objects is an issue that was seen in most of the investigated advertising videos in this research. In some advertisements, it was even seen that women were present in some few advertisements for no reason and based on specific motives. For example, in 14 videos out of 60, the woman's appearance and her clothes in videos are in such a way that rather than attracting the mind of the audience to the advertised product, it attracts the audience to the woman.

Unfortunately, gender stereotypes are common in 48 video advertisements in this research and 6 video commercials emphasize that women should always have a well-shaped body, white skin, and long hair, while these advertisements do not emphasize that men should have specific physical characteristics. Reproducing these gender stereotypes in video commercials leads women to use more cosmetic products and diet plans so that they can reach the ideal that the advertisement republishes in society. If these women cannot achieve the reproduced ideal of these advertisements, they will suffer depression and frustration. Reinforcing gender stereotypes about men is different. Advertisements always depict men who have very good jobs and all of them have special expertise. Almost all the men who were depicted in the selected video advertisement are at high levels of their job. To complete this content, it should be said that reinforcing gender stereotypes also can create the impression in the minds of many men that women cannot be placed in a higher occupational position than them, and this makes them unable to accept the presence of women in

some positions which are stereotypical male positions and this view can cause many problems for the society.

In 34 out of the 60 selected video commercials, if the advertisement's narrator is a woman, at the end of the advertisement, it is a man's voice who suggests the product to the audience. This issue can be a re-publishing of gender stereotypes that women are more visually displayed in an advertisement and the announcement of the superiority of goods should be made by men. This point emphasizes on a gender stereotype which states that women are not qualified to offer a product or service, and men are more knowledgeable and they can assure the audience about the product or service that is advertised.

Ross & Studer (2019), Prieler & Centeno (2013), and Furnham & Paltzer (2010) argued that in many advertisements if women's voices are used in the advertisement, that advertisement belongs to the kitchen, detergents, and hygiene products, which indicates that the voice of a female narrator is generally used to advertise products that are according to gender stereotypes are defined and used in the feminine domain. In the videos which are investigated in this research, if a woman's voice is used in an advertisement, there is no emphasis on the gender marking of needs and goods.

After reviewing all the videos, it can be concluded that 48 out of 60 of these advertisements try to create gender stereotypes and limit women to a private area, i.e. the home. While men are mostly depicted outside the home, women are depicted inside the home, doing housework and taking care of children, although this gender stereotyping has been broken in 25 video advertisements, especially in the years 2015 and 2021 and women have been shown in roles such as bosses, experts, and national athletes, these advertisements are few compared to the total advertisements. Investigating videos in the years 2015 and 2021 show that the advertisers have tried to make video advertisements focusing more on breaking gender stereotyping but results show unfortunately, in the years 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 advertising videos configured more gender stereotyping than breaking these gender stereotyping.

Finally, after reviewing the 60 videos that are selected from the videos that have the most visitors on YouTube between the years 2015 to 2021, results show that although the presence of women in these videos is prominent, in a large number of videos, women are still shown in their stereotypical and traditional roles such as mothers and wives. The results of the video reviews also show that young women are depicted more than young men in these selected video advertisements. The researcher came to this understanding that in the advertisements that do not have a strong scenario, women are depicted with open and exposing clothes to create more sex appeal and to increase the number of video views. Additionally, in these advertising videos, men are

depicted outside the house and are using specialized equipment more than women.

It seems that in some cultures including India, men tend to go outside the home and women tend to stay at home. Although the house is the centre of human communication, it seems that men do not feel good when relating to this space. Tognoli (1979) states that in childhood many factors contribute to forming such a feeling, one of which is that boys are allowed to spend more hours playing outside the house than girls. When a boy becomes an adult, during socialization, he tends to think that the home environment is a woman's domain and the outside is full of adventure and male responsibilities. In 51 out of 60 of these selected video advertisements if men are shown at home environment, they are depicted at a distance from the family, and again, it is the woman who is closer to other family members at home. Only in 1 of the 60 most viewed videos in 2021, which belongs to the 'Unacademy' brand advertisement, the breaking of gender stereotyping is seen, and the man is not only depicted in the house, but he is also the one who is responsible for taking care of the children. However, in 2021, in all the ten most visited video advertisements except only one video advertisement, women are depicted in situations outside the gender stereotypes defined in society. In general, in the other years that were examined, gender stereotypes were always present and only in few video advertisements, gender stereotypes are broken.

7. Results and Conclusion

This article aimed to investigate gender stereotype on the most watched Indian YouTube video advertisement from 2015 to 2021 using Barths' semiotic and Goffman's dramaturgy approaches.

The results of the study show that women are still portrayed as sex object compared to men, and the presence of women in some advertisements is only to increase the number of viewers as well as the sale of the product that is advertised. Here, it is necessary to emphasize that a woman can freely assume the role of mother and housewife and ignore other social roles and responsibilities, or a man can always have exclusive responsibilities, however by reproducing these stereotypes in modern society, there is probability that the audiences think that all men and women should act within the scope of these gender stereotypes.

The results also show that advertisements have a great emphasis on gender roles. This acceptance of gender stereotypes in society has consequences such as suppressing dreams and stopping the development of talents (Padavic et al., 2019: 1-2). Since commercial advertisements are not just a tool to introduce goods, but as cultural elements, they carry signs and messages that represent the cultural values and beliefs of a society. Advertisers in these sampled video advertisements reinforce gender stereotypes with the help of

paralinguistic features in social and cultural contexts and in some cases have attempted to break gender stereotypes.

It should also be mentioned that the review of Indian advertising videos with the highest number of visitors on YouTube channels between the years 2015 and 2021 shows that the approval of the national policy for women in 2016 by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, which in media emphasizes the reduction of the production of commercials that have gender stereotyping contents has not had a special effect on the content of the videos.

The adoption of laws and making changes in the process and approach of commercial advertisements alone cannot break the gender stereotypes rooted in Indian society. Education, especially the education of children and introducing gender justice to them at a younger age, leads society in a direction where people in all aspects of life strive for the creation, survival, and sustainability of this justice among different genders.

In different cultures and societies around the world, men and women accept different roles; men and women have different duties even inside the home. These differences are made both culturally and socially. In a patriarchal society like India, the power is in the hands of the men and the general image that is accepted in this society: men are born to have power over women, and because of this acceptance, from the very beginning of a children's life, they enter the society where gender inequalities exist. In this situation, they should choose whether to accept these gender stereotypes or not.

Del Boca et al. (2019) argue that advertisements are very effective in the formation of ideology and intellectual vision in children, so researchers should not simply ignore the issue of advertisements. It should also be mentioned that in patriarchal societies it is almost impossible to reach a society without any gender stereotypes, this impossibility should not be an obstacle to at least try to remove and diminish some levels of these gender stereotypes (Marinova, 2003: 4).

Since advertising deals with the prevailing value system in culture, it can easily strengthen an ideology accepted in society and prevent society from thinking and considering individual and opposing views. Although at first glance, advertisements only have an economic aspect and sell goods, a closer look at advertisements makes it clear that advertisements can also dictate norms, views, and gender stereotypes in society.

Traditionally, in India, women have always taken caring and serving roles such as nursing and housekeeping while men have always been leaders. After social changes such as increasing the number of educated women and their employment in professional positions in India, the traditional and stereotyped views have been broken to some extent. Still, many Indians tends to see women and men in the same traditional and stereotyped roles. Many societies expect women to consider the

550 Investigating gender stereotypes in Indian YouTube advertisements from 2015-2021

needs of others as superior to their own needs and men to not show their natural feelings such as crying when they are so sad. Women and men who have broken these gender stereotypes have been severely judged by the members of their societies.

Even in today modern societies, doing the jobs by men and women and accepting the responsibilities which were previously classified by gender, have not been considered favourable and positive. Accordingly, one of the potential lines of inquiry for further investigation can be the analysis of advertising videos in which gender stereotypes are deliberately and specifically broken.

According to Vadehra (2022), to eliminate gender stereotypes in Indian society, these gender stereotypes must first be known and since advertisements can give the society good educational messages about gender equality. After identifying these stereotypes, those kinds of advertisements should be made that can either break or at least stop the reinforcing gender stereotypes. It should be mentioned that investigating the content of advertisements is a significant tool to gain insights into how they produce meaning and influence the audience and society over time (Sheehan, 2004: 16-17). Advertisers must move beyond the economic utility of stereotypes and consciously produce content that depicts diverse social roles, thereby normalizing gender justice. Finally, policymakers should recognize that legal frameworks are insufficient without accompanying cultural shifts; thus, policy must be integrated with educational initiatives that promote gender equality from an early age. Future policy making should focus on analysing advertisements that deliberately break stereotypes to identify effective strategies for social change. Ultimately, transforming the narrative in commercial media is essential for fostering a society where gender stereotypes no longer dictate individual potentials.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

Ethical considerations

The authors have completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc. This article was not authored by artificial intelligence.

Data availability

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the author on reasonable request.

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