

Ambiguous Identity of the Commodified Women's Body

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Irigaray claims that society, as we know it, is based on the exchange of women. Much like commodities that ensure the smooth economic functioning of society, the consumption, circulation and usage of women's bodies ensures social and cultural life. As commodities women are at once utilitarian objects and also bearers of value, they have two forms, a physical or natural form and a value form.

In a capitalist economic system commodification is the transformation of things, ideas, nature, people into an object of trade. Unfortunately, in this process of commodification women's body is openly used without any hesitation. It is very surprising that woman herself is involved in this process, either ignorantly or by her own sweet wish. She is never treated as a complete being of ideas, emotions and thoughts. Her commodification we can witness everywhere very easily, whether it is in films, media, magazines or serials etc. It creates serious social and cultural problems. We must examine women's representation in society and this observance will focus on the point that why women are treated as the creatures to sell products. Portrayal of woman in advertisements and media sector and her commodification is increasing day by day and giving impetus to cosmetic surgeries and other means of physical beautification.

An advertiser clearly knows the subconscious bias of the Indian audience. He primarily reflects upon common ideologies of societies, living no stone unturned in strength ingredients them further. Any fairness cream very easily highlights that a fair, educated girl is the ideal standard of beauty of India. In a deodorant advertisement featuring a male to attract a woman, "just spray it on and turn her on". The objectification of woman in this particular ad has disgusted the limit of abhorring self.

A woman since her childhood is programmed to look like a Barbie doll—an image of perfection. Her that image is portrayed through ads too. In the advertisements too we see a woman who has perfect skin and shining body, without scars and blemishes, without wrinkles is the one who is considered suitable and of worth and it seems that beauty is all

to be a perfect woman. She must have a head of silky, radiant hair and looks dazzling bright. It's very ridiculous and funny but reality that advertisements do what they should not do. How disgusting it is to say women continue to be sexualised and misinterpreted in advertisements. Advertisers can not look at a woman selling beyond stereotypes and sex-whether it is a fairness cream ad or a clothing brand. A wedding jewelry brand still hints that getting married is what every girl dream of. A beverage label can't help but use woman as a seductive image to sell its mango drink.

Taking full advantage of women's subordination, various institutions standing in the gender biased system and its components have turned women's labour and bodies into their profits in the era of globalization. It has big role in commercials and movies. A serious question arises on the way women are being presented in advertisements, what is the product and to whom it is being sold? What are the reasons and working mentality in making such distorted portrayal of women, a means of product to sale. This is the main question on which much has been written from the point of view of the market. But this topic appeals to include other socio-political aspects along with the market point of view and which is more important to understand.

Today obscenity dominates the compositions in advertisements. Advertising agencies have prompted consumerism under the guise of an illusory upper class life style. The woman body has been used in a planned manner to sell unfit goods. In advertisements for male products, female models are shown in such a derogatory manner that due to branded perfume or underwear, the man's face is filled with kisses. Such advertisements teach that a beautiful woman will only want a man who has expensive branded consumer goods. Infact, this consumerist culture has bound the woman in the circle of consumerism. Advertising of women in ads remains a topic of discussion. Physical inferiority of woman and its decorated form is directly in front of us. In every type of commercial advertisement on T.V. from man's vest to blade, the woman has been presented in such a way where questions are raised about her presentation. If we observe the historical background of advertisement agencies, one thing very clear that they are full of unnecessary sexuality. One minute commercials of some products like perfume, creams, undergarments, condoms have brought obscenity to the household. In these advertisements, the work of attacking the dignity of women and their self respect has been done tremendously.

In such a situation the question arises that what is the necessity that has made a woman's body as a means of selling her sexuality? After all, which mentality basically exists? The products are of men whose target consumer is man but still woman is presented

as a product. On T.V., an ad of the bike used to come, in this a woman who is shown lying on a bike, at the same time a man is shown riding on it. It is clear from viewing of this entire advertisement that the bike has been compared to a woman which is used as an entertaining product for man. Rather it should be said that it has been presented as a symbol of the bike's merits. The company wants to tell through this ad that how comfortable and enjoyable the bike is and how satisfying it is like a female body. In fact it can not be denied that large advertising agencies are under this patriarchal mentality. All the companies are serving new standards of beauty by awakening this beauty curiosity. By this 'beauty myth' they are also successful in extracting money from their pockets. The beauty myth twists female's freedom into her face and body. Exactly this mindset also determines the role of women in advertisements. This is the gift of patriarchal ideology based on gender discrimination.

Male supremacy is maintained by the presence of men in the advertisements of everyday household items like detergent powder, chillies, turmeric, dish washing products etc. . In such ads women are shown cooking and men eating to show the qualities of spices and taste. Food is shown praising and where there is an advertisement of any utensil polishing product, the man plays the role of a seller in such ads. What does this mean? Somewhere this whole tradition is under male dominance. In the context of men and women in the society, man has got the position of regulator, chief or doer. He is the first class citizen in a patriarchal society. The woman is under him not he. This is at the core of the structure of society. The man is like head and the woman is in the form of mistress. It is a kind of slavery in which women are made to serve only their physical beauty by ignoring their intellectuality. It is a neglect of her whole personality where she is not presented as an intelligent, talented, proud, existent human being but as a product. It would not be wrong to say that non existence women in marketism and the economy dependent on gender division labour has been encouraged. Gendered division of labour is the reason that the homogeneity of work between men and women is far away.

No doubt partial progress is also seen in advertising sector and we can say that if glass is half empty its half filled too. I understand there are some ads continuously trying to uplift the status of women in society with their sensible and sensitive narration. But those ads are very few. Those handful progressive ads are not enough to uplift the women's head high is

the society. These ads surely do have certain responsibilities towards society because they reach millions of homes and influence people directly or indirectly. Indian ads should hear the alarm and understand that incessant exposure to such messages does have an impact on the viewers and society at large. So, advertising agencies should try to be selective in their advertising process.

References:-

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