

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Gender Representation in Television Advertising

A Thesis

Submitted to

The Central Department of English, Kirtipur

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) in English

By

Indira Mishra (Acharya)

2011

Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled **Gender Representation in Television Advertising** by Indira Mishra (Acharya) has been completed under my supervision. I hereby recommend it for examination and acceptance.

Dr. Ram Chandra Poudel
Central Department of English,
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Nepal

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Letter of Acceptance and Approval

This thesis entitled **Gender Representation in Television Advertising** submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Indira Mishra (Acharya) has been examined and approved by the under signed members of the Research Committee.

Head of the Department

Coordinator of the Program

External Examiner

Supervisor

Central Department of English

Tribhuvan University,

Kirtipur, Nepal

November 2011

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Ram Chandra Poudel, Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, who has introduced me to the visuality of the texts and then provided me invaluable guidance and reference materials. It was under his guidance I could bring my work to the present form.

It is a matter of pleasure to acknowledge Prof. Abhi Subedi for his inspiration and advice during my research. I am equally grateful to Prof. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, Head of the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University and Dr. Beerendra Pandey for accepting my proposal and facilitating me to carry out the research. Similarly, I would like to pay my gratefulness to Dr. Anirudra Thapa, Coordinator of the program, for critically reading my thesis, making the suggestions and finally arranging for Viva-voce. My acknowledgements should also go to my teachers: Dr. Arun Gupto, Dr. Sanjeev Upreti, Dr. Shiva Rijal and Dr. Tara Lal Shrestha for their suggestions and encouragements.

I must acknowledge Surya Kumar Rai, Campus Chief and Dr. Kedar Poudel, Head, Department of English, Mahendra Multiple Campus, Dharan, for recommending me for the study leaves. I am also grateful to Pawan Shrestha, Chief News Editor of Nepal Television, Rajan Shrestha, Ashok Ghimire and other officials of Advertising Section, NTV, for providing me information and other source materials which helped me a lot. I extend my thanks to Martin Chautari for letting me an opportunity to share my opinion about Nepali TV commercials with different

intellectuals in its *Manglbare Discussion*. The discussion remained fruitful to refine my ideas.

My sincere appreciations go to Swayam Prakash Sharma, my teacher and a retired member of the Department of English, MMC, Dharan, for his scholarly reading of my manuscript.

Some friends and colleagues lent their support for the completion of this work. My acknowledgement goes to Archana Thapa, who provided me abundance materials related to feminisms and cultural study. In the same way, my thanks go to Ramji Timalsena for helping me with the translation of the ads.

In addition to friends and colleagues, I would also like to acknowledge my relatives and family for the intellectual, emotional and material support that I have got throughout this research. I am grateful to my parents who always have strong faith upon me. They are the source of my inspiration. My sincere appreciation goes to my husband, Pashupati Mishra, Assistant Dean, Central Campus of Technology, Dharan, for encouraging me for higher studies. Without his support I could not have completed this study. My thanks go to my brother in law, Udaya Raj Niroula and my nephew, Matrika Bhattraï, for their technical help. I should extend my thanks to my daughter, Upama, for helping me with the video clips and my son, Bivek, for teaching me the computer skills and making me realize the effect of gender role expectation in such an early age. Finally, my thanks go to Mira Bhujel of Ratna Communication Centre, Dharan, for printing the thesis.

Indira Mishra (Acharya)

Abstract

The present study analyzes television advertising. Superficially, the motive behind the TV commercials seems to promote the sales of goods and make optimum profit by selling the items being advertized. But, besides selling the goods they sell the ideology, belief and value system that are pervasively patriarchal. It has become a powerful agent for reconstructing and perpetuating gender stereotypes. To examine the role of advertising for strengthening the weaker position of women this project analyzes the advertisements aired by Nepal Television (NTV) because it has remained a major force in shaping the public opinion of the nation. It stands for the mainstream ideology of the nation as it is run by the state. It is the oldest channel of Nepal and has the larger coverage in terms of both population and land area. Hence people believe that as a responsible media it has to disseminate communication and information for the positive change.

The things disseminated by television are taken for granted and so is the case with television advertising. The way they present men and women go unnoticed as they are thought to be concerned with transaction of the market. However, the commercials on NTV assign different tasks and world values to men and women as if they belong to the different worlds. Mostly the ads associate female with domesticity where their main task is cooking, cleaning and looking after the children. The female models are juxtaposed with beauty products, homemaking, fashion and food and beverage. On the contrary they locate men with construction, hydropower, education, transportation and other types of role which demand both brain and muscle.

The assumption made here is these ads retain the myth of femininity and masculinity of women and men in which a man is projected as the bread winner

professional who is engaged in productive and paid works whereas a woman is either a loving wife or a caring mother who is mostly engaged in unpaid works and very often in frivolity and wastage. In these ads femininity goes together with passivity and domesticity, whereas, masculinity goes with activity, knowledge and rationality. Even if a woman is projected as a confidential professional, which is rarely done, her confidence comes from her beautiful look. Thus, her main aim is to look beautiful to the exclusion of other productive and creative works. The idea is women have more prominence if they are beautiful and provocative. The ads exploit sexual appeals as well. The images of beautiful ladies in revealing and tight and fitting dress are sexually suggestive. So my contention is the TV commercials are not gender neutral. By making the stereotypical representation of masculinity and femininity the TV commercials reinforce male superiority which fuels for the inferior position of the Nepali women. They are motivated by patriarchal ideology that systematically marginalizes women.

To justify my claim I have chosen fifteen ads randomly that are aired by NTV. The samples are taken from six categories: cosmetic and body care; food and beverage; cleaning and hygiene; jewelry; banking and finance and building and construction. To analyze the selected data it uses feminism, media analysis and multimodal discourse analysis. However, as the project is an interdisciplinary in nature, it applies eclectic methods.

In the process of analysis, it is found that mostly the female models are associated with beauty products, food and beverage and washing and cleaning. The message is cooking, cleaning and nurturing are feminine tasks and they best suit to women. Likewise, men are associated with banking and finance and building and construction. The message is these are rough and tough outdoor tasks so they suit to

the strength and rationality that go with masculinity. Women are portrayed as young and beautiful and are happy nurturing and caring the children and serving the husband. None of the women are shown as professional except in one case with the ad of *Complan*, however the focus is for motherhood. In these ads beauty appears to be a typical feminine value and aim and motherhood is also upheld as an ultimate goal for women. The research claims that the portrayal of women in these ads focuses on the importance of achieving femininity and self-esteem mainly through beauty at the cost of other important aspects like being independent and fighting for gender justice. Furthermore, most of the ads that portray women are supported by male voice-over. By supporting the ads by male voice-over women are systematically silenced. None of the woman represents the voice of authority and expertise.

It is confessed that many of the traditional norms and values are harmful, so instead of perpetuating them they should be abolished. Feminists believe that the traditional gender roles are harmful for the society on the condition that half of the population remains passive. Besides it is not possible for all men to assert their masculinity all the time and meet the obligation of earning the living for the family in this materialistic age. But the emphasis on the traditional gender roles discourages women taking part in the public field and engaging themselves in some income generating work. Moreover, their investment in cosmetic and jewelry decreases the investment for productive work and blocks them from gaining knowledge and skills and make them more dependent on men. Thus, it is vital to combat the stereotypical gender representation of women in the media.

I have attempted to expose the misleading nature of advertising. It may be argued that advertisers find it more practicable to start where the society is and they show what is generally practiced in the society. But the reality shown in the ads is the

exaggerated version of the reality; they simplify the things and manipulate the consumers to buy the things. My effort is to critically analyze these commercials and then resist the stereotypical representation of women with the realization that stereotypes are harmful as they contribute for prejudice and discrimination. I believe the representation of women largely in the feminine roles limits women's scope in the real life situation. My attempt is to show how advertising is helping to broaden the gap of gender inequalities and then to draw the attention of the stake holders to the seriousness of the matter.

Table of Contents

Letter of Recommendation	i
Letter of Acceptance and Approval	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	ix
List of Figures	xi
Chapter One: Making Connection	1-15
1.1. Background	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	6
1.3. Hypothesis	7
1.4. Objectives of the study	9
1.5. Significance of the Study	10
1.6. Delimitation	11
1.7. Methodology	11
1.8. Chapter Division	15
Chapter Two: An Overview of Advertising	16-42
2.1. Introduction	16
2.2. Types of Advertising	19
2.3. Medium of Advertising	21
2.4. Advertising as a Different Type of Discourse	22
2.5. Advertising as a marketing Message	25
2.6. Advertising as a Type of Discourse	26
2.7. Sex in Advertising	28
2.7.1. Types of Sexual Information in Advertising	30

2.8. Advertising and Commodification	33
2.9. Stereotyping and Advertising	37
2.10. Cinematography in Advertising	39
2.10.1. The Shots	40
2.10.2. The Camera and the Space: Height, Angle and Shot Distance	41
2.10.3. Camera Movement: Exploring Space	41
Chapter Three: Review of Literature	43-60
Chapter Four: Textual Analysis of Advertisements	61-119
4.1. Introduction	61
4.2. Nepali TV Commercials and the Importation of the <i>Bharatiya Nari</i>	62
4.3. Feminine Beauty and Body images in Nepali TV Commercials	71
4.4. Sexism and Male Hegemony: Gender Role Allocation	82
4.5. Male, Muscle and Masculinity	89
4.6. Appropriation of Femininity	107
Chapter Five: Conclusion	120-130
Works Cited	131-137

List of Figures

Fig. 1. Lite Horlicks. Advertisement NTV	65
Fig. 2. Lite Horlicks. Advertisement NTV	67
Fig.3. New Viva. Advertisement NTV	68
Fig.4. Fair and Lovely Ayurvedhik. Advertisement NTV	72
Fig. 5. Fair and Lovely Ayurvedhik. Advertisement NTV	73
Fig. 6. New Lux. Advertisement NTV	78
Fig. 7. New Lux. Advertisement NTV	80
Fig. 8. Wheel Ok. Advertisement NTV	84
Fig. 9. Wheel Ok. Advertisement NTV	85
Fig. 10. New Lifebuoy. Advertisement NTV	87
Fig. 11. Nepal Bank Ltd,. Advertisement NTV	93
Fig.12. Nepal Bank Ltd,. Advertisement NTV	94
Fig. 13. Nepal Life Insurance Company. Advertisement NTV	100
Fig. 14. Jagadamba Cement. Advertisement NTV	103
Fig. 15. Jagadamba Steel. Advertisement NTV	105
Fig.16. Clinic Plus Healthy Hair Contest. Advertisement NTV	109
Fig. 17. Vaseline White Cream. Advertisement NTV	111
Fig.18. Complian. Advertisement NTV	114
Fig.19. Shakti Wheel. Advertisement NTV	116
Fig.20. Shree Ridhi Sidhi Jewelers.' Advertisement NTV	117

Chapter One: Making Connection

1.1. Background

The position of women in Nepal, which mirrors the position of more than fifty percent of its population, is asymmetrical in terms of class, caste/ethnicity, religion, social status, educational background and geographical position. They have been unable to enjoy equality on par with men. Mostly, they are subjected to inequality, discrimination and exploitation. Despite some positive efforts made by the *Interim Constitution* (2063), and women being able to make 33% of their presence as CA members in the election of 2008, the real condition of Nepali women has not changed significantly. The fundamental hierarchical structuring of gender relation remains more or less unaltered.

Accepting the traditional role of daughter, wife and mother, Nepali women have allowed themselves for the corollary assumption that they are best suited for these roles by their natural traits of docility and maternity. The majority of exploited women lay outside the orbit of urban areas. Though the educated women who are part of the intelligentsia are more or less enjoying the benefits of change, the mass is alienated, oppressed and suppressed at the back. On the one hand in the name of culture, religion and tradition they are forced to remain voiceless, and on the other hand the present corporate world is asking them to appear with seductive dresses in advertisements and various recreational centers. This is a severe set-back to them. They are excessively preoccupied with romantic love and chained by their emotional and economic dependency on men.

They are caught in the cultural traps which value them to the extent that they are ornamental and are able to suppress their own potentiality for the

accomplishments of others. Moreover, as different researches, reports on the dailies and weeklies show, Nepali women are often viewed as emotional and sexual property of men. They are the victims of gender based violence, both in domestic and public places. Prativa Subedi, a woman activist and a founder member of Women Awareness Center Nepal, argues that though the constitution of Nepal has been maintaining the provision for the equality of all, there still exists gender discrimination that allows for violence against women. Different religious and cultural practices conspire to keep women in a position of inferiority (130). Meena Acharya et al. in their study about women in Nepal found that men are the perpetrators of violence in both of the public and private places (31-32). This is not because the perpetrators are brutal and they are brutal to anyone, but because they (the victims) are women. Likewise, Pratyoush Onta, a historian, surveying the reports concerned with “Violence Against Women” (VAW) reported by *Asmita*, a women’s magazine, writes “the harassment faced by women in public and private spaces and the concomitant mental and physical tortures experienced by them were identified as incident of VAW instead of just some generic ‘social problems’” (178). “Violence Against Women” is a widely practiced phenomenon in Nepal. Patriarchal value system, cultural practices and non supporting legal provisions are the main causes of “Violence Against Women” (FWLD).

In Nepali society, strength, competence, independence, and rationality are associated with masculine qualities, whereas fragility, passivity, and emotionalism are taken to be the feminine ones. Further selfishness, aggressiveness, egoism and violence are supposed to be males’ inborn qualities and they are not encouraged to control such emotions. Such concepts discourage women to resist the injustices upon them which then work as the cause of blocking women’s liberation. Actually, these qualities are not intrinsically “male” or “female;” they are the results of gender role

socialization. Researchers are of the opinion that children's ideas about how the world works come from their experiences and from the attitudes and behaviors they notice around them.

There are many agencies for gender role socialization. Family, peer groups, school and media work as "teachers" for socialization of gender roles (Crespy 4). Among the other media, television, being close to home, has remained more influential for gender role socialization. Keeping in mind that young children with developing minds watch many hours of television and recalling how television reinforces gender stereotypes it is not undeniable that children develop stereotypical beliefs on the same basis. Furthermore, researches indicate that television has a socializing influence on children regarding their attitudes towards gender roles. Many of the gender roles like what are appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for males and females are learned from TV. M. M. Kimball in his research found that children without television are less stereotyped in their gender role attitudes (268- 70). Because children model the behavior they see on the television, they are likely to perpetuate gender stereotypes they view (Basow 19).

Gender roles stereotypes are found in almost all types of TV programs and the advertisements that go along with it. Advertisements have an important cultural impact on society and their definition of acceptable gendered behaviors. In this context, Anthony J. Cortese, a researcher on media, analyzing the images of women and minorities in advertising, argues "Advertising is one of the most powerful mechanism through which members of a society assimilate their cultural heritage and cultural ideology of domination" (2). However, advertisements do not reveal reality about gender but instead offer what advertisers believe about gender roles.

Advertising uses stereotypes that can be shared by the mass and stereotypical depictions of men and women have become the norms. Advertisements have consistently confined women to traditional mother- home or beauty/sex oriented roles that are not representative of women's diversity. Advertising is simply an enormous presence in the contemporary society. As such, it has effects beyond those normally considered to be the province of economic transactions of the market. It seems to affect our overall values and shape our media. Thus, this research is designed to study television advertisements.

In particular, I am interested on exploring the ads screened on Nepal Television (NTV) that have female participants. Superficially, the motive behind the TV commercials seems to promote the sales of goods and make optimum profit by selling the items being advertised. But, besides selling the goods they sell the ideology, belief and value system as well. The ads assign different tasks and world values to men and women as if they belong to the different worlds and have significantly different interests. Mostly the ads associate female with domesticity where their main task is cooking, cleaning and looking after the children. The female models are juxtaposed with beauty products, homemaking, fashion and food and beverage. On the contrary, they locate men with construction, hydropower, education, transportation and other types of roles which demand both brain and muscle. These ads retain the myth of femininity and masculinity of women and men in which a man is projected as the bread winner professional who is engaged in productive and paid works whereas a woman is either a loving wife or a caring mother who is mostly engaged in unpaid works and very often in frivolity and wastage. Even if she is projected as a confidential professional, which is rarely done, her confidence comes from her beautiful looks. Thus, her main aim is to look beautiful to the exclusion of

other productive and creative works. The commercials dictate her to set herself in a particular appearance. The message communicated by the ads is that a woman can be visible if she is good at work and beautiful. But she will get no credit for her merits if she lacks beauty. But for a man appearance does not matter if it is a camera friendly. So my contention is the TV commercials are not gender neutral. They are motivated by patriarchal ideology that treat the female as an inferior being and subjugate her to the male. They naturalize the myth of feminine beauty. These commercials reflect and retain the glaringly unequal position occupied by males and females in the Nepali society by reaffirming the differential treatment of males and females as essential biological differences between the sexes. Thus, it is customary to analyze the TV commercials in order to find out the discriminatory nature of the ads making and there by resist it because researches have shown that men and women do not have different interests in TV. Women's interests are not limited to the stereotypical concerns of makeup, men and making homes (Gauntlett 216).

I have chosen to study on the NTV ads because NTV has remained a major force in shaping the public opinion of the nation. It stands for the mainstream ideology of the nation as it is run by the state. NTV began its regular transmission towards the end of 1985 on an experiment basis, and became a full fledged corporation under the Communication Act of the then His Majesty's Government in 1986. In the media history of Nepal, NTV has maintained a steady pace in its network development. Its signal, in the beginning, covered only the Valley of Kathmandu. The second and third phase of expansion enabled access to NTV's signal to 22% of the population. The popularity of NTV grew to such an extent within 25 years, Nepal Television covers 48% of the land area and 70% of the population of the country by using satellite based 18 terrestrial TV relay stations (Bhandari 36).

To inform and make the citizens aware about the world around is its main objective rather than make profit as it has conceived its slogan “Communication for Development.” It is believed that it speaks the voice of the government and is taken as an authentic one (Parajuli 6). Ashok Ghimire, a Senior Business Promoter (Business Promotion Section NTV) concurs, “Being a strong government media and socially responsiveness tracking national interest, it cannot act as private media and play business game freely and fairly in the market” (59). Besides it is the most accessible source of information as its signal currently covers a larger portion of the population. Ghimire further claims NTV is far ahead of other television channels in the market (59). Now it has twenty four hours broadcasting service. Since TV is an audio visual means of mass media even the illiterate may conceive the message being conveyed. Moreover, in the context of Nepal, NTV is the most effective mass media for advertisements because in the rural and semi- urban places there is not the availability of multi channels and the viewers cannot simply avoid watching the ads.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The primary function of the TV commercials is to promote the sale of their goods. For this they use popular people and celebrities both men and women as models to display the goods. They are believed to be there to offer the product or service for sale and the other aspects that they are disseminating go unnoticed. Despite this a close scrutiny of some of the ads on NTV reveals the fact that they are motivated by patriarchal capitalist ideology that go together with market dynamics. Most of the ads are oppressive and derogatory both materially and linguistically towards females in general. This project attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Who decides the structure of the TV commercials?
2. How do these ads portray men and women?

3. Why do the commercials assign different roles for men and different roles for women?
4. Are these ads perpetuating sexual stereotypes?
5. How do specific forms of women and gender representation contribute to the overall image of women in the Nepali society?

Focusing on the above mentioned research questions I endeavor to analyze some of the advertisements advertised from NTV.

1.3. Hypothesis

Most of the TV commercials are gender biased. The manufacturers, the ad makers, and the media men, who are mostly males, decide the structure of the TV commercials and they intentionally provide different roles to males and different roles to females to affirm the traditional roles assigned to males and females by the society. Although the females are used as models, the administrative branches, which embody power and authority, exclude women. Analyzing the exclusionary method of Nepali media Onta writes there are no women in the editorial and managerial posts in Nepali media (25- 26). The researcher herself tried to find out if there are any women in the decision making position in the domain of NTV and Nepali Advertising Agencies and found that almost all the posts of power of position are held by men: Kundan Aryal, Executive Director (NTV), Rajendra Dev Acharya, Director (NTV); Pawan Shrestha, Chief News Editor (NTV); Mandavi Shrestha and Rajan Shrestha, high ranking officers, Advertising Section (NTV), to name the few, are all men. Above all the existing Minister for Communication and Information, at the time of my study, Shankar Pokhaeral, and the General Secretary, Sushil Ghimire, are also men. Likewise, all most all the present members, including the President, Raj Kumar Bhattraai of the Executive Committee of Advertising Association of Nepal (ANN), at

the time of study, are males. When I asked to an officer, Ashok Ghimire (Business Promotion Section, NTV), if there were any women in the decision making position in Nepali media he said there are almost none. Though advertising is a complex phenomenon, and NTV does only air these commercials, as a powerful media it cannot be accepted that they are disseminated without the approval of the above mentioned personalities as the stake holders. Gender representation in television advertising, primarily shows gender insensitivity on the parts of the producers and ad makers, however, my concern is the representation of women would have been less oppressive if there had been women in the decision making situation in the media. Besides, ANN, in the front cover of its journal, urges, “Say Yes to advertising” and in its editorial demands client, creative/media agencies and media owners work together as a team (Dhungana). Since the area of the study is NTV the connection is found to be logical. It is not at all improbable that under intensive, repetitive, and long-term subliminal bombardment, the entire value system can be rearranged. But my primary focus is on the commercials on NTV; not NTV as it is.

It seems it would be unthinkable in the belief system of the ads to consider the part women might play besides as caring wives/mothers and other important feminine works. The women are commodified and trivialized as they are allowed access to traditionally female areas of life like entertainment and culture, art and domesticity, while the rest is reserved for men. The ads are guided by the idea of commodification of the body and the notion of consumerism. By making the stereotypical representation of masculinity and femininity the TV commercials reinforce the male superiority which emphasizes the inferior position of Nepali women. It is believed that advertisers are conservative in nature and they find it more practicable to start where the things are. Our society is conservative and the people are materialistic. So

is the advertising and blaming the advertising for its ills is blaming oneself (Sandage et al.438; Altman 551). However, it cannot be denied that it exploits human's emotion and passion for the sake of consumerism by simplifying the things. Baudrillard analyzing the manner in which it seeks to promote consumption views, "Advertising plays around with meanings drawn from a pre-existing culture to make objects seem more significant, more desirable and more personal than they are" (qtd. in Mcfall 4). The critical reading of ads makes it explicit that women contribution in the different aspects of life is downplayed by the commercials by repeatedly portraying them either as domestic servers or sex objects. Many women now work out of the home and many of them are in professional and managerial careers. Many advertisements seem to be offensive to them. From the reality perspective it is unfathomable that they have made tremendous contribution to destroy the homogeneous aspect of femininity. It can be argued that advertising does not only reveal the fact but it also weaves the story as suggested by Adorno "Authentic behavior is overtaken by false, copied performance" (82).

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to critically examine the ads on NTV to find out how men and women are portrayed in them. I believe that the existing gender stereotypes and their reinforcement in literature, art, film and ads are also part of the reason why women have limited participation and representation in the public sphere in spite of the global tendency to give more and more power to women and then empower them. The general objectives of this study, then, are:

1. To find out whether Nepali TV commercials reconstruct and perpetuate gender stereotypes.
2. To analyze the product association to men and women.

3. To make critical reading of the dialogues, settings and some other aspects of cinematography related to the selected ads.
4. To study the overall views, perceptions and figures as revealed in the selected ads and relate them to existing trends, perception and culture in society on gender roles.
5. And, finally to find out how gender oppression and other kind of oppressions are co-created and co-maintained in advertising.

Thus, this study aims in understanding of, explaining and also changing the hegemonic hierarchy of gender regimes and creating a foundation for change in ads making policy though in the personal level.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The importance of this research lies in the almost total lack of similar studies on gender and women representation in TV commercials. Studies of this type so far have focused on gender representation on mass media like daily news papers and magazines. In the context of Nepal, most of the literary researches based on gender study have concentrated on art and literature. In this sense, this research, by bringing the ads under the preview of literary studies, is an interdisciplinary one and opens a new avenue of research for the student of English literature. In addition to this, it makes the readers aware of the gender inequality that prevails in the ads and their deceptive nature so as helps them to safeguard themselves. Moreover, this project works as a supportive material for those wanting to study on gender and visual culture. I hope, this study, at least provides a way of examining the sociologically/academically unexamined territory, in the context of Nepal. I have tried to increase my sensitivity to the harmful effects of media images on individuals, especially on women.

1.6. Delimitation

This project focuses on the analysis of the TV commercials. Primarily its focus is on commercials on NTV. These ads are taken as primary texts. However, the history and evolution of TV commercials, their roles in the marketing system do not fall under the premise of this work. Neither has it dealt with the other programs of NTV. Rather it makes a random choice of those ads and puts them under closer scrutiny. The main focus is on the representation of gender and women in those ads. Since it is influenced by the feminists worry about the effect of advertising “stereotyping people – particularly women into accepted moulds,” (Sandage, et al. 56), it studies feminism and other cross reference materials for its end. While analyzing the advertisements this study focuses on the production side of the ads. Whereas secondary resources that deal with the reception side of the ads are used as back up for my assumptions.

It is confessed that no work is complete in itself so the final product of my work may seem deficient to some veterans of the subject. Basically, I am a student of literature and advertising and the complexities that go in the making of a particular ad do not fall under the premise of this study. Considering the scope of my study among other constrains I have focused on gender representation in the advertisements.

1.7. Methodology

In order to analyze the characteristics of gender representation the research adopts an interdisciplinary approach. It uses feminism, media analysis and Multimodal Discourse Analysis theories. It collects the ads randomly from those shown in the morning, during the day, in the evening and at the late night. Most of the ads made during the day focus women as their target groups. It seems to be guided by the notion that most of the women are home makers and they spend their free time

watching TV. The project draws insight from feminism that believes that gender is not naturally determined, but cultivated. By presenting women in the particular way these ads prevents the viewer from viewing women as people with ideas and expertise. In this sense, Simone de Beauvoir's opinion about gender construction is taken into account. She maintains "One is not born a woman; one becomes one" (*Second Sex* xii). Along with her other influential feminist critics, especially the post-modern feminists' opinions are applied as theoretical back up; because "Feminism, then has been focused from the beginning on gender because a thorough revision of gender roles seemed the most effective way of changing the power relations between men and women" (Bertons 98).

Pointing to the need of feminism study films, Jasbir Jain and Sudha Rai write in their introduction:

For feminism itself the written text and social activism are no longer enough themselves. It needs to interact with all forms of media- newspapers, journalism, theatre and film. One can no longer afford to run away from these mediums as they appropriate a much larger space in our lives than they did in the past. They project role models and sustain stereotypical ambitions while at the same time interrogating them or projecting them in an ambivalent manner. Even the focusing on female occupations and household chores can be done differently and subsequently perceived differently. Interpreting or 'reading' a film is as much a discipline as any other and meanings are often rooted in perspectives and positions. (10)

Since TV advertising largely exploits the tools of cinematography, and is the miniature form of film, my immediate aim here is to interpret the contemporary

gender scene in the world of commercials on NTV. Specifically, the idea is to explore the projection of women in the selected advertisements.

Treated as part of mass society, television was routinely analyzed for outcomes that were known in advance to be negative. It was a bad object, blamed for social, political, cultural and behavioral ills. According to Fisk and John television was belatedly recognized as part of public sphere (xi). Television not only is able to draw on social crises and anxieties, it has become one of the primary resources that individuals rely on to help them make sense of the world. Television, thus, “serves as a site of contestation, reflecting contemporary struggles over gender and family” (Heide 2).

Obviously, with regard to television study gender has remained a prominent component of academic study, and feminism has remained an active critical force. Both were concerned with the life of the home, the domestic reception of media and women’s expression in everyday life. Feminism took the role of texts within that sphere as important evidence of society’s portrayal of itself, and argued for serious attention to pursuits otherwise dismissed as trivial and irrational, such as daytime TV. Fiske and John too thought the same was true of television as a whole, though they did not see it as a “woman’s medium.” They suggest that television can be understood by using the vehicle of literary criticism. But acknowledge the problem as television and literature are two different types of media, they add:

Every medium has its own unique set of characteristics, but the codes which structure the ‘language’ of television are much more like those of speech than of writing. Any attempt to decode a television ‘text’ as if it were a literary text is thus not only doomed to failure but is reading television also likely to result in a negative evaluation of the

medium based on its inability to do a job for which it is in fact fundamentally unsuited. (2)

Apparently, television cannot be read using literary tools like that of a literary text. In the written text words promote consistency, narrative development from cause to effect. The sender of the message is identifiable and there is clarity about the tone of voice. Television, on the other hand, “is ephemeral, episodic, specific, concrete and dramatic in mode. Its meanings are arrived at by contrasts and by the juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory signs; and its ‘logic’ are oral and visual” as pointed by Fisk and John (2).

After all, everybody knows what it is like to watch television. Certainly, and it is television’s familiarity, its centrality to our culture, that makes it so important, so fascinating, and so difficult to analyze. It is rather like the language we speak: taken for granted, but both complex and vital to an understanding of “reading” television the way human beings have created their world as recognized by Fiske and John (3). Indeed, the resemblance of television discourse to spoken language explains their interest in the communicative role played by television in society.

Of course, when we apply critical theories that involve a desire to change the world for the better- such as feminism, Marxism – we will sometimes find a literary work flawed in terms of its deliberate or inadvertent promotion of sexist, classist, racist, heterosexist or colonialist values. So is the case with the TV commercials. In this sense, it is reading against the grain. It explicitly condemns the superficial values that put social status and comfort above every other thing. Advertising as discourse though not easy to analyze, can be interpreted using discourse analysis theory as suggested by Cook. As he reasoned for discourse analysis is not only concerned with language but it also examines the context of communication: “who is communicating

with whom and why; in what kind of society and situation; through what medium; how different types and acts of communication evolved; and their relationships to each other” (2). Likewise, the analysis is based on Multimodal Discourse Analysis, which as suggested by Key O’ Halloran, is not confined to works associated with any one school of linguistics (2). The project is eclectic in its nature so whatever comes to its aid is used to justify its claim.

The research is qualitative in its method although it collects ads on NTV as data which are taken as primary texts. Purposive samples have been used as a sampling method. Fifteen samples are taken deliberately from NTV to justify the points. The ads are communicated in Nepali language and they are translated using personal translation. Most of the time only free translation is given whereas transliteration is made only for those ads in which selection of words is felt important. It is basically a library research; however, interviews and discussions with the experts are taken into consideration.

1.8. Chapter Division

This project is divided into five main chapters and other sub chapters. The first chapter provides the background introduction of the research. It presents the rational, purpose, objectives, methodology and significance of the study. The second chapter provides a brief overview of advertising, highlighting some of its characteristic features and the third makes a review of the available literature. The fourth chapter is the most important part of my research. It critically examines the selected ads and reveals their discriminatory nature. This chapter makes clear how the ads blind the viewer towards the prevailing gender discrimination by making them perceive the gender roles as natural. Finally, the fifth chapter concludes the research along with its finding.

Chapter Two: An Overview of Advertising

2.1. Introduction

Advertising has been very much of a presence along our way. We are being fed with lots of advertisements, in our daily life, without our being aware of them. To understand this fascinating and provocative phenomenon it would be reliable to ask what advertising is all about. This chapter tries to consider what advertising is and what its features are.

Advertising is a worldwide phenomenon. One encounters it everywhere; from the TV room to bus drive, from the matchbox to [. . .] anything that virtually fall his/her eyes to. It is important at the outset to recognize that many advertisers use advertisements for many purposes with many different possible effects. The advertisers that include huge multinational firms to local shops and individuals intend from altering people behavior and even thinking pattern as well. Originated from the Latin term *ad verter* it means “to turn the mind towards” or “to draw attention to.” In its basic meaning advertisement is concerned with getting attention. Advertisement, then, in simple statement can be defined as “paid, non-personal communication form used with persuasive intent by identified sources through various media” (Sandage et al. 5). It is a kind of public notice designed to sell commodities. And it is a kind of communication whose purpose is to inform the potential customers about some products and services.

As paid communications, they are unlike other forms of communication like news or features material that media covers, the advertiser should pay for the coverage of their advertisements. Advertisements are overwhelmingly used with persuasive intent so as the advertisers strive to alter people’s behavior or levels of

awareness, knowledge and attitude in a manner that would be beneficial to the advertisers.

Jethwaney, an academician, in the process of defining advertising refers to the definition offered by American Marketing Association in 1948 as the most acceptable definition of advertising: “Advertising is any paid form of non personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor” (1).

But Dorothy Cohen argues the definition offered by the American Marketing Association does not suggest the persuasive and creative aspects of advertising.

According to Cohen:

Advertising is a business activity, employing creative techniques to design persuasive communication in mass media that promotes ideas, goods and services in a manner consistent with the achievement of the advertiser’s objective, the delivery of consumer satisfaction and the development of social and economic welfare. (5)

Cohen’s definition focuses on the creative and persuasive aspects of ads. Besides this, for him advertising is also concerned with the social welfare as well.

When one looks at the definitions put forward by various experts over a period spanning almost one and half centuries, advertising comes out as an art and to an extent applied as persuasive communication which must carry on, in the beginning to inform, incite, and interest the prospect in buying the product and later to reinforce the message. The media landscape is populated by generally profit-seeking newspaper, magazines, broadcasting stations and networks, overwhelmingly supported by advertising revenue.

Advertising is a complex phenomenon. It includes five parties - a) Advertisers b) Advertising Agencies c) Support Organization d) Media (generally Mass Media) and e) Consumers.

There is a great deal more behind the typical advertisement than simply a writer and an art director. Modern advertising, particularly television advertising often calls for a higher complex cast of specialist not employed either by the advertisers or the agencies. Specialists in casting, cinematography film/tape, editing, sound effects, musical scoring, and the like are common fixtures in the production of many radio and television commercials, as are photographs and artists in the print media of magazines, news papers, and direct mail advertising.

For the advertising people the mass media works as vehicles for the delivery of an advertising message to an audience, the advertising which has been gathered by the non advertising content of the station, newspapers or magazines. While watching a TV program, for example, there appear the familiar faces, which have nothing to do with the main program, to persuade the audience to consume a particular good or a service.

No audience is interested in watching these advertisements. One is there for entertainment and for information. However, he/she is exposed to a large array of advertisements. The uninvited presence of advertisements is irritating to the audience, especially on the TV program, because one has to postpone other important tasks for it. The media too are aware of these but they would not be providing the program if there had not been the advertising. Whether one likes it or not the TV commercials are the one who pay for the program. Similarly, advertising has become a boon for the mass media. They are largely sustained by the advertising revenue. Without advertising the modern world of communications is simply unthinkable as it is the life

sustaining factor to the mass media. The audiences are provided with entertaining and informative programs not for nothing. They are taking invaluable time of the audience and are making them watch and listen to the ads. A large sum of money is invested to get the audience's attention. They in turn will be paid by the audience in the form of consumers and customers of the goods and services.

With regards to non-commercial advertising they make the audience change the attitude, belief system and ideology if possible. In this regard a critic of American advertisement comments, "The function of a magazine in the United States is to deliver an audience to advertisers" (qtd. in Sandage et al. 10). It is confessed that virtually hundred percent of television and radio dollars come from advertising support, a great deal of time and effort is expended on the care and feeding of advertisers and their agencies (Sandage et al. 10). Thus it is not simply a matter of selling and buying the products. It has ventured into the domain of persuasion and its rhetorical categories have become omnipresent in contemporary social discourse - in the content and delivery of the meanings that people exchange (Beasley and Danesi1).

2.2. Types of Advertising

Basically advertising is divided into two types: Commercial and Non-commercial advertising. Commercial advertising can further be divided into two more categories:

a. Consumer/ Product Advertising

This is a type of communication which most people associate with the advertising. From shoes to refrigerators, from chocolates to the latest of the art of computers, from textiles to potato chips and from cosmetics to liquor and cigarettes, all products are advertised.

b. Public Service Advertising

Financial Advertising: Banks, financial institutions and corporate sector raising funds from the primary market make use of financial advertising.

2. Non-commercial Advertising

They are the advertisers who spend money to advertise items other than consumer product or service include political parties, interest groups, religious organizations and governmental agencies. Nonprofit organization may rely on free; rely on free modes of persuasion, such as a public service announcement.

Advertising, in its non-commercial guise, is a powerful educational tool capable of reaching and motivating large audiences. “Advertising justifies its existence when used in the public interest—it is much too powerful a tool to use solely for commercial purposes” (Sandage et al. 9).

Public service advertising, non-commercial advertising, public interest advertising, cause marketing, and social marketing are different terms for (or aspects of) the use of sophisticated advertising and marketing communications techniques (generally associated with commercial enterprise) on behalf of non-commercial, public interest issues and initiatives.

The important question then to ask is who uses advertising to reach what audiences through what media for what purposes? There are the business enterprises that originate a product or service for profit. They often offer the product or service for sale under a brand name. It may be a company’s name such as *Chaudhary Group* or simply one of many brands offered by a company like *Wai Wai*. Advertisements are mostly used by producers to reach individual consumers. They often use mass media to encourage the purchase of particular items or services.

2.3. Medium of Advertising

Virtually any medium can be used for advertising. Commercial advertising media can include wall paintings, billboards, street furniture components, printed flyers and rack cards, radio, cinema and television adverts, web banners, mobile telephone screens, shopping carts, web popups, skywriting, bus stop benches, human billboards, magazines, newspapers, town criers, sides of buses, banners attached to or the sides of airplanes (“logojets”), in-flight advertisements on seatbacks tray tables or overhead storage bins, taxicab doors, roof mounts and passenger screens, musical stage shows, subway platforms and trains, elastic bands on disposable diapers, doors of bathroom stalls, stickers on apples in supermarkets, shopping cart handles, the opening section of streaming audio and video, posters, and the backs of event tickets and supermarket receipts. Any place an “identified” sponsor pays to deliver their message through a medium is advertising.

The TV commercial is generally considered the most effective mass-market advertising format, as is reflected by the high prices TV networks charge for commercial airtime during popular TV events (Sandage et al. 10).

It is almost impossible to overstate the impact of television on the modern culture. Among other things it has legitimized a whole new set of personalities for it has many advantages:

1. Reaches a wide audience
2. Sight, sound and color give dramatic possibilities
3. Larger than life images
4. Achieve viewers empathy
5. High on credibility
6. Wide choice of channels without incurring extra cost

7. A family medium.

Because of these advantages more and more commercials are competing to make their presence on the TV screen.

2.4. Advertising as a Different Type of Discourse

The audience of an advertisement can notice that advertising is significantly different from other communications that he/she encounters in the daily life. For the communication certain facility conditions should be met as suggested by J.L. Austin. She says “to say something is to do something; or by saying or in saying something we are doing something” (177). She enumerates six conditions for the happy communication:

There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further, the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked. The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and completely. Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by person having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, than a person participating in so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend to conduct themselves, and further must actually so conduct themselves subsequently. (178)

According to Austin if any of these conditions is violated then communication misfires. But TV commercials do not know who is there or whether it is being

watched/listened by anyone or not. In the same way the speaker's intention may be different from that of the commercials. Hence TV commercials seem to violate these conditions. They are unique in the following sense:

a. Repetitive

First advertising is repetitive. It is known that not only the same advertiser but the same advertisement came again and again/many times even in a single program. This is the "intention of the advertiser" (Sandage et al. 11).

b. Competitive

Second, we receive advertising in a highly competitive environment. Some advertisements urge us to spend and others to save. Some suggest to buy this and others suggest to buy that for the same purpose. The repetitive nature of advertising combined with this competitive environment causes many advertisements too often, resulting in a disinterested or alienated viewer, listener/ or reader.

c. Irritating

No audience is interested in watching the advertisements. One is there for entertainment and for information. However, he/she is exposed to a large array of advertisements. The uninvited presence of advertisements is irritating for the audience, especially on the TV program, because one has to postpone other important tasks for it. The media too are aware of this but they would not be providing the program if there had not been the advertising to pay. Whether one likes it or not the TV commercials are the one who pay for the program. Similarly advertising has become a boon for the mass media. They are largely sustained by the advertising revenue. The audience is provided with entertaining and informative programs not for nothing. They are taking invaluable time of the audience and are making them watch and listen to the ads. Large amount is paid to get the audience's attention. They are

not paying for nothing. They in turn will be paid by the audience in the form of consumers and customers of the goods and services.

Unlike print media, on the TV programs they cannot add extra pages and manage more and more ads. Rather they have to accommodate in the given time within the programs. So, more time for the ads means less time for the programs. More and more sponsors of a popular program force the audience to spend more and more of their time in front of the TV screen. With the broadcast media the audience is a relatively captive audience.

The TV advertisers are not just sure who is “out there.” Thus, it is quite likely that many television viewers will be exposed to the advertising of products and services for which they have no conceivable interest, and this combined with the interruption factor, is destined to produce irritation. The television time is finite; that is the television station cannot add another page, as news papers or magazines can. Thus, there has been a tendency to break what is there into smaller and smaller segments.

d. Outlandish

Finally, advertising seems to be accepted as part of our popular culture. Thus one accepts many of the things that occur in advertisements as “the way things are,” even though we would regard this as outlandish in many others communication forms. Adults dance to celebrate soft drinks; wives are doomed to frustration when kitchen gadgets do not work. Generally, the world in those ads is bigger, neater, more beautiful, exciting, predictable, and interesting than we see around. Yet we typically accept it without a second thought and it is not unimportant that we do.

It is much too difficult to make generalizations about how people react to ads. Advertisers try to adapt socio-economic and other facets of social and individual life

of the people. In addition to its role in commerce, advertising has been accepted as a part of the total fabric of society. It has become a common medium where by churches, political parties, labor groups, trade associations, and lay citizens communicate their ideologies, platform ideas and concepts to the many publics making up the total society. Advertising has become an institution of persuasion to promote such social and economic values as safety health, education, benevolence, liberty, democracy, free enterprise and tolerance, as well as private ends. Controversial as ever it is clearly more of a presence than ever.

2.5. Advertising as a Marketing Message

Advertising, called the hand-maid of marketing, is an important ingredient in the marketing mix. Marketing comprises the four Ps, viz., Product, Price, Promotion and Place. Marketing encompasses all the activities from the time a product is conceived, to production, pricing, promotion, distribution, selling and also after sales. Advertising is the part of marketing which is called “promotion.”

Creativity has a very important role to play in “hidden persuasion” or the “dream selling” as advertising is often referred to.

Looking at advertisement is often fun: they shine, they glimmer, they dance, they sing, they amuse, they enthrall and they inform as well. Obviously, ads are intended to be functional. The advertiser is spending money with the expectation of getting something for it. Each advertisement, thus, has unique selling promotional intention. Thus:

1. Each ad must make a proposition to the readers or viewers buy this product and you will get this specific profit.
2. The benefit must be unique – one the competition cannot offer or is not offering.

3. It must be powerful enough to move the millions (Sandage et al. 10).

Today's television commercials need: name identification, the jingle, the story, the central character and a distinctive look.

How much easier it is for many of us to remember something we are told rather than something we have read. And, of course, this is due to the possibilities of tone, inflection, authority, sympathy and laughter that are available when one person talks to the other.

2.6. Advertising as a Type of Discourse

Advertising is a non-finite activity. The variety of types of advertising, their different intents, the multiplicity of media and message forms, and ultimately the complexity of human decision making as depicted through the frame of reference concept, make any attempt to determine advertising effects a perilous undertaking indeed.

What advertising is supposed to do to people as consumers of products and services is not easy to answer. Now because of its complexities due to source, medium, message, and intended effects, as well as the difficulty of sorting out one element (advertising) from a host of other possible factors: cultural, social, economic, psychological influences, advertising can be seen as ambiguous, fluid, dynamic, and lacking clear structure. Nonetheless, it has become the central meaning making in the modern culture. It sets the pattern of consumer behavior because the common human being is lured by the wants and desires, which are ignited by the stiff competition in the market place, with the availability of a plethora of products. A decision making process takes place in the mind of a person as a consumer when he/she buys a product or refrains from buying the same. Consumer behavior as it is called, is the sum total of acts of individuals involved in obtaining and using economic goods and services,

including the decision making process that precedes and determines these acts (Angel et al. 18). A consumer is a human being attached to various relationships, has aspirations, fears and susceptibilities. What he/she buys and the reasons for his/her buying are acts not in isolation of what his/her commitments and feelings are as a human being. In fact, the consumer decision making is dictated and dominated by the advertising which unfairly exploits desires, fears, and anxieties of consumers.

As a part of composite text, advertising makes use of more than one semiotic code: visual and verbal. It has a range of interactive and representative participants. In short, the world of advertising may have four participant worlds: the world of the sender (in which the products are manufactured and distributed), the fictional world of the characters, the fantasy world of the receiver, and the real world of the receiver (in which the product may be purchased) (Cook 177). In the process of production a range of participants is involved such as the manufacturer, producer, editor, director, actors/models, designers, camera crew, and so forth who are involved in the process of production. Although all these participants speak different voices and have different interests, they are nevertheless, all conspiring to serve the interests of their patrons, the producers. The advertising may also have its impact on the participants who do not buy the product but just watch it since advertising besides selling the goods, sells ideology and world views as well.

In fact, advertising is the most contested genre as it is contradictory, provocative and controversial. It is interrupting, infiltrating, irritating, restless, repetitive, intrusive, and destructive. It is necessary, amusing, creative, ubiquitous, condensed and powerful. It is a hybridized genre appropriating the features of other genres. Its symbolic narrative persistently reproduces tastes, attitudes, lifestyles,

manners, conducts, wants, desires, angers, struggles, fantasies, cultures, texts, and images that confirm consumerism.

To analyze advertising (especially TV commercials) as a type of discourse, thus, requires knowledge of visual principles and sound designs as well as narrative forms, i.e. the discipline of film studies. Nonetheless, the discipline of film studies too has adopted some of the terminologies of literary studies such as films as “text” and “interpreting” film as “reading” (Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis 1) as suggested in the *Film: A Critical Introduction*. This study also considers advertisement as text and takes interpretation as a form of reading. As an interdisciplinary study it takes help from both literary studies and film studies.

2.7. Sex in Advertising

As a basic working definition, sex in advertising can be thought of as a sexual appeal. By its very nature, advertising is an applied form of persuasion that attempts to inform, position, convince, reinforce, differentiate, and ultimately sell products and services. As such, sexual appeals are persuasive messages integrated with sexual information into an overall message about a brand.

Sexual information, defined by Harris (1994) as “any representation that portrays or implies sexual interest, behavior, or motivation” (qtd. in Sandage et al. 438), is often integrated within the ad as images, verbal elements, or both. For example, ads can contain images of attractive people clothed in revealing or tight-fitting clothing or contain verbal elements such as double-entendre and sexually suggestive words and phrases. Often, both elements coalesce to create sexual meaning in ads.

Aside from simply containing sexual content, sexual information in ads can be integrated within the message to greater or lesser degrees. For example, some ads

contain images of blatant nudity or models engaged in erotic liaisons. On the other hand, some ads contain only a hint of sexual suggestion, or perhaps a subtle innuendo or play on words. In many cases, people consider images of fully clothed, physically attractive women and men to be sexually attractive, and thus, subtle instances of sex in advertising.

Knowing that they have a quick and efficient means to introduce a new or an improved product to a large market manufacturers are willing to make substantial investments in new products' research and development. The faster they can get a millions of consumers to try and accept a new product, the faster they can build a profitable volume of sales, and faster they can recover the investment in research and development.

Expanding consumption is presumed essential to an expanding economy. Expending consumption involves more people spending more money for more goods and services to satisfy more wants. Indeed, modern economy wants us to spend more and to spend more we want more.

Individual decision making process stimulated by advertising may result in life styles that are personally and socially harmful. Here, then advertising is seen not simply as a link – solid or faulty - between persuader and target audience, but rather as a pervasive force in our society. David Potter, in his 1954 book *People of Plenty* claimed, “it dominates the media, has vast power in the shaping of popular standards, and is really one of the very limited group of institutions which exercise social control” (qtd. in Sandage et al. 439).

Sexual appeal is used to grab the attention. Advertisers attempt to take advantage of the interest generated by sexual information and use it to generate interest in their brands. Obviously, sexual information does grab attention. Sex evokes

a hardwired emotional response that is linked to species survival. One cannot help his/her eyes and ears being drawn to it because emotional information has a way of piercing our perceptual fields by rising above others environmental information trying to get our attention. Common theme followed: Buy this, get their formula. If you buy our product you 1) will be sexually more attractive 2) have more or better sex 3) just feel sexier for your own sex are the indirect messages conveyed by many ads.

Advertising not only informs us about the goods and services but they also persuade us to buy the goods, which is known as advertising appeal. One has to realize advertising ethics and also consider his/her social duties and responsibilities. But in a patriarchal country men have access and control over goods and services. They are the decision makers since they are the earning members. They are the ones who are informed and educated; this may be the reason that advertising in an attempt to impress the male audience makes abundant use of sex appeals. It seems advertisers are free to put their sexist ads and they are using sexual information to appeal to the young males.

2.7.1. Types of Sexual Information in Advertising

1. Nudity

It almost goes without saying that people, and revealing displays of their bodies, constitute an essential source of sexual information. In a recent study, participants were asked to think of a sexual ad, and then to identify the characteristics of that ad they made it sexual to them (Reichert et al. 20). Without exception, physical aspects of the people in ads—physiques and revealing clothing—were mentioned most often. Common responses referred to chiseled chests, short skirts, tight tops, muscular arms, breasts, bikinis, bare midriffs, and lingerie. The term “nudity” does

not imply the models that are completely unclothed. In sex in advertising research the term generally refers to the amount and style of clothing worn by models.

2. Sexual Behavior

Pornography can be defined as “the visual (and sometimes aural) representation of living, moving bodies engaged in explicit [...] sex acts” (Williams 30). While sexual content in mainstream advertising omits the sex act, it does include sexually provocative behavioral displays. Models are filmed and photographed in enticing poses and positions—sometimes with other models, sometimes alone. Sexual behavior can be woven into ads in two ways, as individual behavior or interpersonal interaction. With regard to behavior between two models - sometimes more, the degree of explicitness and progressiveness of the encounter can vary from portrayals of voyeurism, to simple displays of affection, to inferred intercourse.

3. Physical Attractiveness

According to psychologist David Buss physical attractiveness among humans is a trait that is central for predicting interpersonal attraction and mate selection. In his cross-cultural study, Buss argues that features of physical appearance, including facial beauty and complexion, play a central role in sexual interest and desire. There is little doubt that a link exists between physical attractiveness and sexual interest. For this reason, physically attractive models in advertising can be - and often are - considered examples of sex in advertising.

4. Sexual Referents

Images and words that refer to sex or that trigger sexual thoughts can also be considered examples of sex in advertising. These suggestive images are less tangible and are more oblique than graphic depictions of nudity or erotic behavior. Examples include innuendo and allusions to sexual information. Something within the ad causes

viewers to interpret it as sexual and to stimulate sexual thoughts. Sexual referents are different from other forms of sexual information because they depend on the receiver to interpret the message in the intended way. Related to verbal referents, elements of the ad apart from models can contribute to sexual meaning. The way commercials are filmed, along with design elements, camera effects, music, and lighting, can contribute to the construction of sexual meaning.

5. Sexual Embeds

Although sex in advertising is a controversial topic in and of itself, nothing in this area raises more debate than the supposed use of sexual embeds. Often referred to as subliminal advertising, sexual embeds are defined as referents or forms of sexual representation designed to be perceived subconsciously. Common types of embeds include: the word “sex;” objects that are shaped or positioned like genitalia and sexual acts; and small, hidden images of naked people, body parts, and genitalia. Sexual embeds are integrated into images by ad creators and are intended to go undetected by those viewing the ad. The use of embeds in advertising was popularized by Key in the 1970s and 1980s with the publication of his books *Subliminal Seduction* (1973) and *The Clam-Plate Orgy* (1986). Controversy pertains to the existence and supposed effects of sexual embed.

Does sex work in advertising? This question has advocates on either side. Many people, especially professors and scholars, regard the selling power of sex in advertising as dubious at best. On the other hand, many consumers and professionals are quite aware that sex is an effective selling tool.

Why might scholars negate the power of sex in advertising? For one, academic research fails to support much of a selling advantage for sex in advertising. But we must remember that experiments may not provide a realistic picture because

researcher-constructed ads are shown only once to lots of different people in an artificial environment. In the real world, professionally produced ads are seen many times primarily by the people that advertisers want to target.

“Does it work?” is not the question but “How does it work and in what situations?” As many people think, sex is used to grab a viewer’s attention. But sex influences people in many additional ways.

Many other forms have successfully used sex in advertising for sustained periods of time, and sex in advertising works in other ways beyond gaining attention and offering sex-related benefits. Suffice to say that as long as people desire to be attractive to others, and as long as people desire romance, intimacy, and love, and all the wonderful feelings they involve, advertisers can show how their products help meet those needs and desires. Whether we like it or not, products play a role in society’s intimacy equation.

2.8. Advertising and Commodification

The concept of a commodity and the word itself changes meaning when dealt with in various capital industries which engage in trade. For the purpose of this research, the meaning of commodity is taken as an economic good that is subject to ready exchange or exploitation within a market. And commodification is the process by which an object or social practice acquires an exchange value or market central meaning. In general, it refers to the assignment of economic value to something not previously considered in economic terms. Originated from the Marxist political theory commodification is used to describe the process by which something which does not have economic value is assigned a value hence how market values can replace other social values. It modifies relationships into commercial relationships.

My concern here is the role of advertising for the commodification of the female body and its exploitation of that body in the beauty market. The evidence of this can be found in the ads that focus on body images and the promotion and preservation of youth, beauty and the sexual desire. In fact, advertising sells the body of a woman with the product to which she is attached. Yvonne Tasker analyzing the projection of female body in the action cinema puts forward:

Postmodernism offers a way of speaking about the operations of a culture in which almost anything can be commodified. It addresses the flexibility and ambiguity of popular culture. More controversially, postmodernism has been used as a framework through which to address the supposed political potential of popular forms. In terms of art practices, postmodernism is associated with the play of surface, the appropriation and recycling of popular forms within the realm of 'art', the appearance of self-reflexive, parodic texts, and the self-conscious mobilization of style within narrative that stress plurality. (110)

Advertising distorts human values, that it makes people want wrong things (too much beer, liquor, cigarettes, self-medication, not enough school, anti-pollution controls, and urban renewal), that it promotes private luxuries at the expense of public squalor, that it creates discontent by making people dissatisfied with what they have or by making them wish for things beyond their reach, and that it contributes to waste by encouraging people to discard clothing, appliances, automobiles, and the like before they are worn out.

Analyzing how advertising mirrors society Altman Draper Davies views "to be effective, advertising must relate to society as it is, not society as we think it should be. Blaming advertising for the ills of society is like blaming your mirror for wart on

your nose” (qtd. in Sandage et al. 438). Advertising, when it is successful, reacts to existing predisposition. The people have been materialistic and advertising fuels them. “The sort of physical fitness which came through daily activity has now become another commodity to be marketed via exercise classes, television programs, and the creation of a new industry of personal trainers, dieticians, and so on [. . .]” (Altman, 55). Moreover, he further points the use of sexy bodies in advertising and mainstream newspapers “has become omnipresent, and with the creation of a homogeneity of desire through global advertising campaigns and interchangeable glossy magazines, which returns us to the question of the specific American content of ‘globalization’” (Altman 58).

Advertising plays a particular role in the globalization of certain body types, through fashion and film. It could be argued that consumer capitalism creates its own body types. There is a globalization of desirable body images; the very idea of Miss World or Miss Universe implies a single agreed upon definition of female attractiveness. The concept of the beauty contest has roots in many cultures, but in its contemporary form it developed out of the Miss America contest, linked in turn to the promotion of Atlantic City as a major resort. In 1951 the Miss America Corporation invented the Miss World Contest; Miss Universe followed a year later under rival sponsorship. By 1996 almost every country in Europe and the Americas, and signified number of countries in Asia and Africa had entrants in one of these quests (Altman 59).

Altman views that beauty contests are increasingly ways of combining the commodification of certain body images with the development of a global culture of entertainment, television and celebrity” (59). Nepali TV commercials also use the

Miss Nepal to promote different goods. The message is that your worth is measured by how you look, what you wear and how you appear to the male gaze.

Germaine Greer writes of her search for ‘the whole woman’ in terms which combine the nostalgia of colonial anthropology with a critique of the global:

No sooner had I caught sight of the whole woman than Western marketing came blaring down upon her with its vast panoply of spectacular effects, strutting and trumpeting the highly seductive gospel of salvation according to hipless, womb less hard-titter Barbie. My strong women thrust their muscular feet stuffed into high heels and learnt to totter; they stuffed their useful breasts into brassieres and instead of mother’s milk fed commercial formulae made with dirty water to their children; they spent their tiny store of cash on lipstick and nail varnish and were made modern! (56)

A woman is taught that her worth comes from her body in which she resides. As her property she can display it. Every part of her body is dismembered and tagged with different branded items. The exchange value is attached to her as it is not enough for being a woman but she has to mold her body in a particular type as they are telling her how she should dress, put on her make-up, the way her body should be sculpted to have that womanly figure. But the truth is that the attainment of that body does not come naturally – it is a personal achievement requiring constant work and vigilance.

The commodified female body is deemed incomplete unless she or rather her face is “painted” with make-up and the body donned with the “right” clothes/shoes/accessories. Going back to Marxist theory, commodity fetishism is the belief that “value inheres in commodities instead of being added to them through labor.” An object becomes a commodity when it has both exchange value and sign

exchange value (Tyson 62). For example, how much it cost to produce a branded bag versus the selling price of it because of its brand name. And as commodity fetishism derived from Marx's analysis of capitalist societies, describes the fascination with consumer objects whose value "lies in their power to signify signs of luxury, social power, sexual attractiveness" (Tyson 62). This is what the modern day women and the commodified female body is concerned with. Advertisers use women's bodies to sell everything from cars to tissue papers.

An object becomes a commodity when it has both exchange value and sign exchange value (Tyson 62). Advertising encourages people to buy expensive goods and display them for social prestige that is the sign exchange value of goods in Marxist terms. In the ads beautiful women are presented as object which men want to possess in order to get the attention of others.

2.9. Stereotyping and Advertising

A stereotype is depicted as a group's generated beliefs about the personal attributes of members of another group, where those members are viewed as a generic type, rather than as specific individuals. The word, stereotype is borrowed from the printing process in which one impression is used to stamp out many exact copies. "A stereotype is a rigid, over-simplified, often exaggerated belief that is applied both to an entire category of people and to each individual within it" (Johnson 282).

A stereotype is an exaggerated belief associated with a category. The main function of a stereotype is to justify or rationalize one's conduct in relation to that category. The belief, for example, that man cannot take care of children like women and women cannot be professional like men are stereotyped. In the same way, the stereotypical view of Asian Americans, for example, often involves characteristics such as being hard working, self-disciplined, outstanding in math and science and

having the ability to assimilate into American culture. Stereotypes of racial, social class, caste, religious and gender groups are commonly held and they often lead to the treatment of individuals according to unjustified preconceptions. Stereotypes are important because they form the basis of prejudice which in turn, is used to justify discrimination and both positive and negative attitudes. Though stereotypes can be positive also, their negative aspect is more often stressed. Stereotypes are regarded as undesirable because of the prominent role they play in social oppression based on characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity, etc.

If we select images and analyze the content of those images the result will be obvious that the incidence of stereotyping is still prevalent in advertising; and Nepal TV commercials are no exception. The female models are still portrayed explicitly in sexual and submissive pose. The question may arise whether males and females react differently to emotional advertising? Stereotypically, females are thought to be more “emotional” than males, and so conventional wisdom would suggest that females have more extreme responses to advertising with emotional content.

Patriarchal exclusivism is the foundation of all exclusivism familiarized and transmitted as norms. Stereotype and prejudice, besides being tools of exclusivist hegemonic practices, are based at the same time on cognitive patterns which enable us to recognize reality in the easiest and fastest way (Bamburace et al. 15). This is precisely why it is so hard or simplified categorizations as a self-sufficient method of cognition. Stereotypes are simplified and generalized mental images or views which distort our concepts of reality. They are resistant to change, because we tend to “economize” our cognitive capacities and “recognize” persons and phenomena using the shortest route.

Stereotyping representation involves simplification, deduction and naturalization. Stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes, and fixes differences and facilitates the binding or bonding together of all of “us” who are normal into one imagined community; and it sends into symbolic exile of them (Hall 324-44). In the process of stereotyping power plays a vital role. Stereotyping tends to be directed at subordinate groups (ethnic minorities, women) and they play an important part in hegemonic struggle. Hegemony involves control by consent.

The women are presented as types, either archetypes or stereotypes: both types that never change. They are never presented as individuals. It is the man who gets changed because of his experience. The women are one dimensional, they are static and fixed. In literature also males act out the human role, erring and correcting, experiencing the gamut of emotion and behavior, while females act out the type, standing as static poles in human (male) experience.

Men are mobile and dynamic; they make mistakes of judgment, values; they grow, learn, and fail or succeed. The human do err and then grow and learn. According to the traditional division of experience, females had to be morally superior to males and females were not permitted to err. Women cannot be redeemed. If she fell into unchastity, nothing on earth would save her. The very notion of individuality is “masculine;” the feminine principle is concerned with community more than with any individual. My study attempts to demonstrate how the Nepali TV commercials perpetuate stereotypical patriarchal notion about femininity.

2.10. Cinematography in Advertising

“The History of light is the history of life, and the human eye was the first camera” (Josef Von Sternberg qtd. in Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis 129).

The different aspects of filmmaking, which involves photographic or electronic procedures for producing images, fall under the general heading of cinematography. It can do more than just support the narrative; it also can contribute to the viewers' emotional response and aesthetic experience. Cinematographers "speak" to the audience in visual terms, using images as expressively as writers use words. To grasp the full import of visual expression, viewers must move beyond selective vision, which is the tendency to notice only those things they want to see, they expect to see and they are used to seeing.

How images can express an idea, this sub-chapter examines the ways, as explained by Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis, film makers use cinematography to develop characters, tell a story, produce a distinctive look, suggest ideas, and evoke emotions.

2.10.1. The Shot

The shot is a film's basic unit of expression: an image whose meaning unfolds over time. Shots vary in length. Editing several shots together produces a scene. Uninterrupted shots of more than one minute are called long takes. Long takes build dramatic tension, emphasize the continuity of time and space, and allow directors to focus on the movement of actors in the space of the *mise en scene*. Fast motion sometimes indicates the supernatural speed. For example, extreme close-ups combined with loud music and raised voice to help viewers recognize that anger is spiraling out of control. Some of the more commonly used camera shots are:

Establishing shot – A view of the whole act or location to establish in the viewer's mind the place, time and situation.

LS (long shot) – Taken from a distance showing a panoramic view or large sweep of background.

MS (medium shot) – A closer view concentrating on one subject head to feet.

CU (close-up) – Head and shoulder or equivalent.

ECU (extreme close-up) – Head alone or even closer - concentrating on one feature or even detail.

2.10.2. The Camera and Space: Height, Angle, and Shot Distance

Camera Angle is another aspect of camera position. In most shots, the camera is level. High-angle shots, where the camera is positioned above the character or action and aimed downward, tend to minimize the subject. One result can be that characters seem less powerful. But high angle does not always suggest disempowerment.

Low angle shots which position the camera below the subject, aiming upward often exaggerate the size and volume of the subject, including the human body. Characters often appear more powerful, as they physically dominate the shot. Low angle shots imply character's mastery of the situation. High angle shots of the man tumbling to the ground emphasize his defeat.

A Canted or Dutch Angle leans to one side. Generally the subject creates a diagonal line in the frame. A canted angle often signifies a moment of imbalance or loss of control. In a sense depicting an angle suggests a breakdown or disorder because the shift in geographical reference points - and specifically the horizon - disorients the viewer.

2.10.3. Camera Movement: Exploring Space

A camera that remains in the same position may produce a sense of stagnation. In contrast, a moving camera transports the viewer through a grand French estate. The camera reveals parallels between wealthy aristocrats and their servants, moving actor's class boundaries that the characters themselves cannot transcend.

Television commercials draw on the many elements of cinematography – visual, aural and optical elements to plan an effective television advertisement. They function much as a playwright or motion picture script writer does. They not only write what the characters in the play are to say but also develop the plot, visualize the scenes, plan the actions, and write instructions to the producer, the director, the performers, and the technicians who are to make the ideas come alive.

A change from one shot to another may be to change the point of view on the same action, or to change the scene. Changing the shot and/or scene may be essential to telling the story. It also adds interest in and movement in the message. Too many scene changes, however, confuse the viewers and splinter their attention. Some typical transitions are:

Cut - An instantaneous change from one camera to another.

Dissolve - One scene fades out as another fades in; is less abrupt than a cut and establishes a more continuous, quieter mood.

Fade to black - one scene fades out completely until the screen is black and then another scene fades in. It makes a strong break between the two (Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis 129 – 50).

My interpretation of the ads exploits these aspects of cinematography. However, since I am concerned with advertising as a type of text, a cultural text, and my focus is on gender representation I may not be able to discuss these aspects in detail.

Chapter Three: Review of Literature

This project work is an interdisciplinary one in its nature and, thus, it draws on diverse approaches: Feminism, Media Analysis Theory and Multi Modal Discourse Analysis. A semiotics of visual analysis will not only be adequate but quite essential to the interpretative mechanism. TV commercials at the same time make the use of sound, picture and language. With the aid of animation pictures and the language are put in motion. Thus, the available literature, which seems to be relevant for the purpose of the project, is reviewed.

TV commercials came to exist with the evolution of television in the 1950s. Now most of the TV stations are run exclusively by the advertising revenue. Advertising has considerable influence on contemporary society and commerce. Hence, there is no dearth of literature as such about advertising. Many scholars have analyzed the pros and cons of advertising. The industrialists, who are in favor of mass production, opine that advertising on the mass media is the cheapest and best way for the promotion of sales. They view that advertising not only informs the buyer about the existence of the goods but also provides the choices and then enhances fair competition among the producers.

Advertising has been credited with improving the quality of life for Americans, boosting the economy, and encouraging competition. Yet it has also been blamed for subliminally urging people to purchase products and services that they do not need or even want, constructing false expectations, and adulterating language. Hence, the critics of advertising claim that advertising manipulates people to buy the things by creating artificial needs. They argue every year advertisers spend millions of dollars trying to convince people that some product will make them sexier, healthier,

or more successful. Sexual messages are intentionally embedded in many ads in order to seduce the consumers. Further there are charges that advertisements are deceptive and misleading as well. Especially, feminists object for the stereotypical gender representation on the ads. It is pointed that the images of women in advertising has not been changed significantly. Many women now work outside their home; many of them are in professional and managerial careers. Much advertising seems to be offensive to them. Feminists worry about the effect of advertising stereotyping people – particular women into “accepted moulds.” Sociologist Erving Goffman, in his work *Gender Advertisements*, states: “women take their cues about gender behavior from the image of that behavior that advertising throws back at them, and they continue to become the ‘people’ in those ads” (45).

Goffman critiques the common sense biological thinking about gender in his *Gender Advertisements*. Gender displays, according to him, are not the residues of the evolutionary development of human species, nor are they natural expressions of human beings as men and women. Instead, Goffman contends that “there is only a schedule for the portrayal of gender [. . .] only evidence of the practice between the sexes of choreographing behaviorally a portrait of relationship” (8). Persons as gendered agents enact an appropriate schedule of gender displays. Nor are the displays to be treated simply as part of the froth of social existence: in the hierarchical relations between the sexes they are “the shadow *and* the substance” (Goffman 6) of gendered social life. Gender displays serve to affirm basic social arrangements (keeping women in their place) and they present ultimate conceptions of the nature of persons (our “essential” gender identity). These displays are suffused with a behavioral vocabulary typical of parent-child relationships. The “orientation license”, “protective intercession”, “benign control” and “non-person treatment” which parents

ideally extend to children also serves as a model which characterizes the socially situated treatment of adult women by men. Thus, “ritually speaking, females are equivalent to subordinate males and both are equivalent to children” (5).

Goffman was highly influential in terms of setting ways to examine gender and advertising. He recognizes that visual images, such as photographs, transmit most of the stereotypes in advertising. Images carry a great deal of responsibility for the message decoding in an advertisement. His “frame analysis” is a way to understand how images transmit messages about gender roles and relations.

Briefly Goffman’s claim is that the differential treatment of males and females is often justified by folk beliefs which presume some essential biological differences between the sexes. But for Goffman biology cannot determine social practices because many social practices frequently presented and executed as natural consequences of the differences between the sexes, are actually the means through which those same differences are honored and produced. Gender differences, at least in modern industrial societies, are produced and reproduced in interaction. Further, these interactional practices hold implications for the presumed human nature of gendered person. So practices which ostensibly reflect consequential biologically-based differences in our human nature, everything from engendering of pronouns and first names in European languages to the segregation of toilet facilities in public places, come in Goffman’s view, to constitute the differences between the presumed natures of the sexes.

Wilson Bryan Key is another critic who in his *Media Sexploitation* (1976) argues how the concept of free will has been subverted and appropriated in the interest of an efficient merchandising - consumer oriented economic system. For Key

this system modifies behavior invisibly, channels basic value systems, and manages human motives in the interest of special power structures. He argues:

Human perception of reality, at least in our society, depends heavily upon what our peers admit they perceive. And who would ever openly admit to perceiving such nonsense? What is 'real,' therefore, is often the product of consensus rather than of an individual's critical, autonomous perceptual evaluation. (10)

The media because of the use of subliminal techniques has evolved into a massive behavior modification as Key further reasons it is not at all improbable that under intensive, repetitive, and long-term subliminal bombardment, entire value systems could be rearranged.

Researchers such as Brown note, advertisers simply find it more practical to start where people already are, at least in terms of their values, "advertisers are being characteristic with their conservative nature, are not concerned with advertising social change; their main aim is to sell a product, not to alter the status quo" (14).

Now a-days, women are participating in a number of activities intended to alter the appearance of their bodies. The increase in these activities has been cited as part of a "backlash" against women's social and economic accomplishments, interpreted as an attempt (largely male) to enslave them in preoccupation with their bodies and thus limit their capacity for further liberation.

One typical argument posits that unreasonable beauty ideals have arisen as "backlash" against women's economic and social accomplishments. They control women by preoccupying them with efforts to change their inadequate appearances and by draining them off self-esteem. Because standards for feminine beauty are inherently inconsistent and impossible to meet, women must struggle with bodies and

appearances that inevitably fail to measure up. Yet many women focus enormous energy on molding their bodies into the closest possible approximations of the female ideal. As they do so, they encounter representatives of commercialized beauty industries who help to shape both their appearances and their relationships to those appearances. The following pages review the researchers who have made extensive and thorough study about ideal beauty, its origin, continuation and its effect in the present consumerist culture.

Germaine Greer, Naomi Wolf, Paula Black and others analyze the debilitating effects of eternal feminine cultivated and circulated by media and other resources. Greer in her first book, *The Female Eunuch*, declares that sexual liberation is the key to women's liberation. She examines in a new way the in-built and unchangeable biological differences between men and women and looks at them in the light of the psychological and social differences that result from the way society runs. The book's main idea, which is reflected in the title, is that the traditional, suburban, consumerist, nuclear family represses women sexually, and that this devitalizes them, rendering them "eunuchs." She complains women are so brainwashed about the "physical image that they should have that, despite popular fiction on the point, they rarely undress with éclat. They are often apologetic about their bodies, considered in relation to that plastic object of desire whose image is radiated throughout the media" (192). As women grow up, Greer argues, they embrace the stereotypical version of adult femininity produced by men, and they develop a sense of shame about their own bodies. They also lose any natural and political autonomy. The result is that women are left powerless, isolated, and suffering a diminished sexuality and general unhappiness. She suggests that women should overcome the fear and anxiety of being ugly and aged. They should be able to reject the advertising that seeks to draw

millions of pounds out of them each Christmas. They should be bold enough to move freely without putting the mask of make-up.

Similarly, Naomi Wolf identifies the ideology of beauty is the last one remaining of the old feminine ideologies that still has the power to control those women whom second wave feminism would have otherwise made relatively uncontrollable. “It is no accident that so many potentially powerful women feel this way. We are in the midst of a violent backlash against feminism that uses images of female beauty as a political weapon against women’s advancement: the beauty myth” (11).

Wolf posits feminism is obstructed by this ideology. Feminism gave women laws against job discrimination based on gender. Patriarchal religion declined, but “new religious dogma, using some of the mind-altering techniques, older cults and sects arose around age and weight to functionally supplant traditional ritual” (Wolf 11). She views every generation since about 1830 has had to fight its version of the beauty myth. Eighty years later, after women had won the vote, and the first wave of the organized women’s movement had subsided, Virginia Woolf wrote that it would still be decades before women could tell the truth about their bodies (Wolf 12).

However, beauty is not universal or changeless, she claims. Nor is “beauty” a function of evolution. Its ideals change at a pace far more rapid than that of the evolution of species. For women to compete with other women, through beauty, “is a reversal of the way in which natural selection affects all other mammals.” Anthropology has overturned the notion that females must be “beautiful to be selected to mate: Evelyn Reed, Elaine Morgan, and others have dismissed sociological assertions on innate male polygamy and female monogamy” (Wolf 13).

The beauty myth promises to tell women what men truly want, what faces and bodies provoke men's fickle attentions, a seductive promise in an environment in which men and women rarely get to talk together honestly in a public setting about what each really desires (Wolf 72). Women are misinformed and they exaggerate the magnitude of thinness as a result of promotion of thinness in women through advertising in the diet industry.

Women are trained to be competitors against all others for beauty. Beauty advertisements are unable to tell the whole truth about their advertised products; so "the healthier the industry, the sicker are women consumers and the civil rights" (Wolf 82). It is observable that the advertisements ignore older women or pretend they do not exist. Thus, women should be able to embrace the truth the way nature is but not to be misled by the false notion of beauty promoted by the patriarchal society.

Treated as part of mass society, television was routinely analyzed for outcomes that were known in advance to be negative. It was a bad object, blamed for social, political, cultural and behavioral ills. It attracted very little progressive optimism in formal academic, intellectual and critical writing which, according to Fisk and John, is partly a symptom of twentieth-century intellectual politics, with television as merely the latest in a long line of miscreant media stretching back through movies, radio and music hall to the gutter press, yellow press, and penny dreadful of previous centuries (xi). They point out Television was belatedly recognized as part of public sphere. Even the people for whom it was a popular past time rarely had good word to say about television.

With regard to television study gender has remained a prominent component of academic study, and feminism has remained an active critical force. Both were concerned with the life of the home, the domestic reception of media and women's

expression in everyday life. Feminism took the role of texts within that sphere as important evidence of society's portrayal of itself, and argued for serious attention to this pursuit. Fiske and John, too, thought that television should be treated as a text, though they didn't see it as a "woman's medium." They suggest that television can be understood by using the vehicles of literary criticism but acknowledge the problem as television and literatures are two different types of media.

Obviously, television cannot be read using literary tools like that of literature because the written word works through and so promotes consistency, narrative development from cause to effect and has a single tone of voice.

After all, it is known what it is like to watch television. Certainly, and it is television's familiarity, its centrality to our culture, that makes it so important, so fascinating, and so difficult to analyze. It is rather like the language we speak: taken for granted, but both complex and vital to an understanding of "reading" television the way human beings have created their world as recognized by Fiske and John (3). Indeed, the resemblance of television discourse to spoken language explains their interest in the communicative role played by television in society.

Fiske and John contend that any study of television must start with content analysis, i.e., what is on the screen and the reading of television must progress from *manifest* content to the *latent* content. So it can be inferred that television's overrepresentation of particular occupations may not be distortion of reality, but may reflect the priority given in our social system to power over others. Television does not represent the manifest actuality of our society, but rather reflects, symbolically, the structure of value and relationships beneath the surface. They found that women are, in the symbolic world of television, more socially disadvantaged than members of racial minorities. They found that all the male occupations have a positive power

index value; all the female occupations have a negative value with the exception of “lawyer.” They also referred to Dominick and Rauch (1972) who studied the image of women in television advertisements screened in 1971 and found, not surprisingly, that the same social value system was evident. Women were portrayed in fewer occupations than men, and those occupations had negative power index values (236).

Paula Black in her thorough study of beauty salons that she visited and underwent the treatments offered there learned much about what actually goes on behind the closed doors of the salons. Being grown with the legacy of 1980s, as she confessed, she tries to understand women’s visit to beauty salon from the feminist point of view. She, like the feminists, believes it is too heavy for women to spend on femininity through beauty treatment. However, she realizes that they visit beauty salons not just for beauty but for pleasure and escapism and enjoy in the company of other women. Black’s concern in her research *The Beauty Industry: Gender, Culture, Pleasure*, is to “reflect the interests of the clients and therapists in beauty salons, and their experiences cannot be reduced to the catch-all phrase of ‘beauty’.” She describes the social space of beauty salons and views that “a beauty salon has its own ambience.” In her study she provides the detailed layout of those beauty salons she visited; the decoration, their emphasis upon professionalism, the way they treat the clients and the general atmosphere in which “the intimate routines of body maintenance are carried out” (2).

According to her beauty therapy is part of a vast multinational industry. This industry includes cosmetics and skin care products, beauty treatments in spas, gyms, hotels and holiday resorts and salons, an advertising industry which supports this consumption, the cosmetic surgery industry, hair care, the dieting industry, and so on. Though the beauty industry is not a historically recent phenomenon, for Black,

contemporary beauty industry grew with advertising aimed at women. As she quotes Peiss in her writing:

Women's growing interest in beauty products coincided with their new sense of identity as consumers. Women had long bought and bartered goods, but around 1900 a new, self-conscious notion of the woman consumer emerged. Women's magazines and advertisers inducted their female readers into a world of brand-name products and smart shopping, while department stores created a feminine paradise of abundance, pleasure and service. (18)

Though women had been beautifying themselves on their own at home; women in this business were looked down. Cosmetic use and "beautifying" in general could still be scorned and associated with "loose" morality, and vanity. So the advertisers carefully managed to sell their product as a duty to women in order to preserve their own natural assets.

Furthermore, Black claims now it has become customary for women to use cosmetics. Cosmetics, consumption, and femininity seem part of a seamless fabric. In this formative period, however, mass-market firms actively searched for ways to package their goods that would legitimize cosmetic products and practices still questionable in the eyes of many. These male-owned companies would hire a well-known and "glamorous" woman to endorse their products. Sometimes they created the illusion of a female-owned company. In addition, such companies sought the knowledge and expertise of women in marketing and advertising.

By the end of the war cosmetics use had become part of a culture of femininity, no longer either seen as suspicious for its potential to mask the true women underneath, and also in general disassociated from prostitution and "loose

morals.” She points out the paradox that cosmetic use and beauty preparations are sold to women as bringing out their real inner beauty, or as enhancing their true nature. Artificiality is sold under the guise of a natural, already present femininity. This was accompanied by, for example, the development of cosmetics that clung to the skin, so that foundation or lipstick which did not rub off played upon its qualities of indelibility (23).

Those who visit the salon have the sense of defectiveness with them which does not meet the norms of feminine beauty promoted in the public sphere. To achieve the looks of appropriateness they need a certain level of expertise which the beauty salons provide them. However, the point to note is that though with the growth of beauty industry women have got job opportunities they are obliged to follow the patterns designed by the producers of those cosmetics. Black suggests all salon visits need to be understood as an investment in bodily capital. For women, bodily capital is an available capital, if one of limited value. It may be traded in limited circumstances, but will not ensure the rewards inherent in other types of capital, such as education. She acknowledges that even after the radical action that followed the rebirth of feminism in 1970s, which provided women the rights to reproduction, education and career, women really do not feel free. The affluent, educated, liberated women of the first world also feel restricted by apparently frivolous issues concerned with physical appearance, bodies, faces, hair, clothes - matter so much. Female liberation is directly affected by female beauty.

Writers like Tony Schirato and Jen Webb have made a detailed study of visual culture. In their scholarly text *Reading the Visual* they try to make sense of visuality to what people do and see. They differentiate between seeing and doing. As they explain:

What we see is in fact what we make or are made to see. We see through the frameworks and filters produced by our culture and by our personal histories. Sight is, of course, natural psychological process, but the perception and reception of visual elements is not; it depends instead on a number of factors [. . .] our culture, our history, the content in which we are looking, what we already know about the world, what are our own tastes, interests and habits predisposes us to see, and so on. (1-2)

They differentiate between looking and seeing. They also provide “ways of understanding the difference between looking and seeing by defamiliarizing the physical and by providing techniques for analyzing what we see [. . .]” (3). Like the printed texts the visual texts are, in short, ideological, they can presume, intrude, distort, exploit, demean and hurt. When the celebrities, political leaders, and other exemplary and influential people are depicted in the image of magazines, consumers generally attempt to model/fashion themselves and try to imitate their lifestyle. In their hermeneutical analysis of advertising they pay close attention to facial expression, posture and gesture. They opine that cultural and gender images in advertising are intricately linked to social arrangements and the power structure. For them every perception is a cultural product. Since our culture is guided by patriarchal mind set so is our perception.

Likewise, Margo Maine and Joe Kelley in their well acclaimed book *The Body Myth: Adult Women and the Pressure to be Perfect* analyzed the media pressure for women to maintain their body against the natural process of aging and decay. *The Body Myth* aims to help women rethink how they look at their own bodies, reshape how other people think about adult women, and discover positive alternatives for

measuring women's self-worth. It taps the great hope and inspiration in the voices of adult women who have overcome body image despair and eating disorders. By citing the experience of those aging women who were able to rescue themselves from the notion of body myth after their realization that the media's notion of perfect body is unattainable, they attempt to reveal the illusion that our self-worth (and our worth to others) is (and ought to be) based on how we look, what we weigh, and what we eat. We look for life's meaning and the answer to life's challenges in the shape of our bodies. As they claim "Perfection is a myth; it simply doesn't exist (at least not in this world). When we strive to create that perfect family, real relationships suffer" (159).

Furthermore, they believe that female obsession with body myth is harmful. Because we believe people value us only for what we do and how we look (not who we are), we also believe that accepting our imperfections will mean losing the affection or respect of others. But we are called "human beings" not human "doings" for a reason. It is who we are inside that counts, not what we do or how we look outside as they claim:

The Imposter Syndrome has far-reaching negative effects, especially if we are raising children. Believe it or not, children do not need perfect mothers. Girls in particular don't benefit from mothers who set impossible standards for themselves. Children learn from what we do more than from what we say, and girls are particularly good observers of their moms and other important female role models. No matter what we tell them about being "good enough the way you are" and loving themselves, our words are meaningless if we cannot embrace our own imperfect humanity. To be positive role models for our daughters and

other young women, we have to relinquish the Superwoman role and live as genuine and honest beings. (Maine and Joe Kelley 157)

Their argument is living genuinely makes our relationships, especially with our families' members, more real and more satisfying. Our loved ones will truly know us, and they will actually love us more because they are getting the real thing, not some imposter.

Their conclusion is our perfectionism and "Superwoman" aspirations harm our relationships with our children and also wreak havoc on our marriages and other intimate partnerships. If we never feel good enough or satisfied with ourselves, we cannot be open and available in our closest and most important relationships. Husbands and partners who want a trophy wife (rather than a real woman partner) do not deserve real women—and do not deserve to have their warped standards influence how we value ourselves. A relationship based on trying to be someone we are not is no relationship at all. Real men and real women want to be with real women. As scary as it may be, when we let down our guard and risk being who we are inside, we offer our best to our intimate partners.

Whereas, John V. Kulvicki suggests that pictorial representations should be taken like that of linguistic representations. He provides a philosophical study of images. His book, *On Images*, explains what makes pictorial representations special in that they seem to "occupy a corner of continuum of representational kinds." Though they are similar to all kinds of linguistic representations, they differ "in their *contents*, in which they *get* their *contents*, or in the *structure* of the representational systems to which they belong" (1-2).

Similarly, Ann McClintock, a Poststructuralist feminist, believes that competition created the need for a more aggressive promotion of the products led to

the first real innovation in advertising. She asserts through commodity consumption the social hierarchy is restored. The commercials are designed by the patriarchal world views that strongly believe in the absolute superiority of the man over the woman, the masculine over the feminine. The commercials are designed from the male point of view - women are peripheral if they appear at all (415).

There are other critics who have studied advertisements from different perspectives. Geoffrey Leech and others have made an extensive study of advertising from the point of view of discourse analysis. Leech's *English in Advertising* is a linguistic analysis of advertising with reference to Great Britain. He analyzes the various levels of language. But he is not concerned with finding out the discriminatory nature of discourse. Another important account of image in advertising is made by Judith Williamson. Williamson's *Decoding Advertisements* is a semiotic account of the structure of advertisement. Likewise, Gay Cook's *The Discourse of Advertising* is another comprehensive work on advertisement. The purpose of his book is to analyze ads as discourse. Cook's center of attention is language itself. He insists, "The study of language must take context into account, because language is always in context, and there are no ads of communication without participants, intertexts, situations, paralanguage and substance" (2). But he, too, ignores the visual grammar of advertising. Similarly, Beasley and Danesi's more recent work *Persuasive Signs: the Semiotics of Advertising* is a semiotic account of advertising. Liz McFall, also analyses different perspectives of interpreting advertising. Analyzing the pitfalls of semiotic analysis of advertising he writes placing meaning at the centre of advertising explains very little about the commercial practice of advertising (10). Reviewing the different perspectives that have been put forward about advertising, he analyses the pros and cons of those perspectives.

The latest study on media representation of gender roles and their contribution in perpetuating gender stereotypes is made by Nirman Maranjak Bamburce and others in their book entitled *Stereotyping: Presentation of Women in Print Media in South East Europe* (2006). In this book they collect six articles from six different countries, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia and try to show how the print media of these countries represent men and women. According to them, media still strongly mirror, represent and ultimately reify stereotypical gender roles and identities defined by conservative patriarchal ideology. The image of our societies that the media convey suggests that politics or any other “serious” public engagement remains reserved for men, while women are assigned roles in the private sphere and entertainment. The public sphere, as portrayed by these media, still remains the domain of men.

The authors represented in this collection argue media can be understood both as social technologies for the generation of gender and as institutions of power which, secretly espousing the ruling ideologies, daily fabricate effective matrices that legitimize themselves and maintain the *status quo* (15).

Likewise, sociologist, Anthony J. Cortese in his *Provocateur: Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising* (2008) provides an in-depth critical analysis of modern advertising. Focusing on images of women and minorities, he unravels the ideologies of domination and control in contemporary commerce. He blames the modern advertising for seducing the innocent. The modern advertising is a technique to sell to those who have been sold out by the empty promises of advertising (e.g., if you buy the car, the sexy young woman comes with it; if you use our makeup, you become the perfect provocateur: youthful, beautiful, and, of course, sexy) (8).

Provocateur, in shorts, centers on developing tools to understand, critique, and

resolve the ubiquitous advertising images that bombard our everyday life. It attempts to provide theoretical analysis at the cutting edge of mass media and multiculturalism.

In the context of Nepal, there are only two works that have analyzed the representation of gender in the media. Deepa Gautam tried to analyze the overall position of women in NTV in her *Kacha Ko Parda: Nepali Televisionma Mahila*. Being a senior official of NTV she has traced the history of women's arrival on the screen of NTV. She says until now there are very few women in the decision making position of NTV. The women are assigned the role of entertainers and anchors. The focus is given on their look and getup as the target is to enhance the glamour. She is of the opinion that women are marginal in the domain of NTV. She has also analyzed the advertisements that are advertised from NTV and asserts that they are biased and are discriminatory in nature. The advertisements are exclusive and portray only the upper middle class Brahmin and Chhetri women as representing Nepali Women. The language used by the ads is offensive and insulting towards female gender (148 - 56). However, her analysis is subjective as it is not supported by theoretical backup. Neither she clarifies different aspects of visibility, nor seems to be aware of the role of cinematography in the ads.

Similarly, Ram Chandra Paudel, a scholar from Nepal, has analyzed gender and sexuality in magazine and advertising. He argues that ads exploit human emotion of sexuality and gender relation (4). He is of the opinion that stereotypical representations of gender and sexuality have bad effects on the readers or viewers as they deceptively manipulate the consumers. Obviously, his focus is on the print media.

The researchers that I have managed to review found that pervasive and inescapable media images of sexed-up girls and women posing as adolescents can

cause psychological and even physical harm to adolescents and young women. Advertising and other media images can have adverse effects on female self-esteem and sexual well-being also. Moreover, such sexually objectified images of women have been linked to dangerous eating disorders in women. Even a cursory reading of the above mentioned literature shows that advertising has debilitating effects upon women. They are designed trickily to maintain the patriarchal *status quo* and then to deny equal power to women. However, there has not been a detailed study on the portrayal of women in the discourse of Nepali TV commercials. This study, though partially, tries to fill this gap.

Feminism forms part of the political struggle against the discrimination and exploitation of women on a wide scale. Central to my analysis is the feminist approach. It is against the TV commercials trivial understanding of male - female relations; low cultural aspirations and kitsch culture. My conviction is this type of representation degrades or deprives women of their profession, seeking to reduce them to sex objects.

Chapter Four: Textual Analysis of Advertisements

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to put some of the advertisements screened on NTV under closer scrutiny to analyze the portrayal of men and women in them. The study investigates how gender roles are depicted and whether gender stereotyping in Nepali TV commercials exists. The assumption made here is NTV commercials are not gender neutral so they juxtapose women to different products and men to different in appropriation to patriarchy. The way women are portrayed in advertising is regressive and is in opposition to women's empowerment. Study of gender roles in NTV ads provides some substantial knowledge on gender stereotyping. Gender representations are about men as well as women. Nonetheless, this work focuses in particular on the spectacle of femininity displayed in advertising - images of women in general and of new women in particular. Stylish, educated, sensual, caring, and sensitive, all at once, a "Super woman" is projected as a new woman. Projecting the models with these attributes repeatedly contributes to the construction of hegemonic femininity against the ethnic diversity in countries like ours.

To analyze gender representation in television advertising, during a period of four months, April, May, June and July, 2011, several non-consecutive days were chosen randomly. All advertisements aired between 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. were recorded using a TV card reader. Repeated advertisements were discarded. Any advertisements with unidentifiable central figures and cartoon characters were excluded from the analysis. Eventually fifteen ads were retained as samples for detailed analysis. The choice is made again using random sampling method which would serve my purpose. The rationale behind the selection is that these are the ads that are repeatedly aired

during the News Time and the popular tale serials like *Tito Satya*, *Zire Khursani* and *Meri Basai*. The following sub sections provide critical reading of the selected ads.

4.2. Nepali TV Commercials and the Importation of *Bharatiya Nari*

When NTV was established its main objectives were defined as to communicate information to its viewers namely the Nepali people and then entertain them. Since the Indian channel had already been in use it was necessary to establish its own channel for Nepal to stop the influence of foreign culture and there by preserve its own indigenous culture (Gautam 5). Durga Nath Sharma, a former Director of NTV, in his memoir recalls the justification of establishing NTV to preserve its own tradition and culture. Further, he adds to bring changes in the socio-economic aspects of the people and to acquaint them with the process of modernization, a means of mass communication like TV channel was thought to be essential (51). Similarly, analyzing the different facets of the middle class culture in Kathmandu, a foreign scholar, Mark Liechty writes since people were watching the Indian channel, *Door Darshan*, to avoid the encroachment of Indian culture the decision to establish NTV was taken (184). Irrespective of its aim, NTV has remained unable to stop the influence of Indian culture and tradition. To a large extent it depends on the pattern of Hindi Cinemas as Nepali cinemas largely imitate the Indian ones. In fact, there are religious and cultural similarities between Indian and Nepali people and besides other relationships there exists matrimonial relationship as well. Nepali market is largely dominated by the Indian goods. In the present situation there are multinational companies, both in India and Nepal. Nepal TV also exploits this situation positively as there are large numbers of Nepali TV commercials that advertise the products of multinational companies.

Many of such ads we watch on NTV are dubbed versions of the Indian ads. After they give it a Nepali voiceover, it is ready to be aired on the Nepali channels. So the *Bharatiya Nari*, which the post-colonial India imagined as a suitable modern Indian woman, is imported as a Nepali woman. The new woman who the post-colonial India envisioned would be different from the uncouth, rustic and illiterate Indian women; “for the ‘new’ woman was quite the reverse of the ‘common’ woman, who was coarse, vulgar, loud, quarrelsome, devoid of superior moral sense, sexually promiscuous, subjected to brutal physical oppression” (Chatterjee 127). The new Indian woman would be educated but “the central place of the educated woman was still at home,” so she should be different from the English *memsahib* for whom “education meant only the acquisition of material skills to compete with men in the outside world and hence a loss of feminine virtues” (Chatterjee 129). This new Indian woman would have the typical bourgeois virtues; she would be both modern and traditional, a hybrid.

It is, therefore, to maintain Indian sanctity in their spiritual domain they formulated a typical model for the modern Indian woman. Typically the modern Indian woman would be a decent one who would wear a sari decently and put a *tika* and other accessories that are the markers of a married Hindu woman. This Hindu woman, though she exclusively refers to the Hindu Upper Class Indian woman, is imagined to be the typical *Bharatiya Nari*. According to this model, she would be self- sacrificing, demure and would be happy for ever as the home maker. For her family’s happiness would be of paramount importance. She would be happily carrying out the duties of a dutiful wife and a loving mother. In the same way unlike the rustic, uncouth under class women of her own community, she would be neat and clean, sweet spoken, and never quarrelling. The ideal Hindu woman replicates the ideal

woman desired by patriarchy which Greer referred “Her expression must betray no hint of humor, curiosity or intelligence, although it may signify hauteur to an extent that is actually absurd, or shouldering lust, very feebly signified by drooping eyes and a sullen mouth” (69). As a “Super woman” she must be happy; the entire structure would topple if she were not. This image of the Indian woman is the recurrent theme of most of the advertisements disseminated by NTV. All the time she is shown busy: looking after the children, cooking food and cleaning the things. She does not have her own personal likes and dislikes.

As I have already mentioned that Nepali market is largely dominated by the Indian goods Nepali TV commercials are also the imitations of them. Many of the ads are the dubbed versions of the Indian ads. The ads that are supposed to have been made by the Nepali advertising agencies also use the same model of Indian woman though the model/female actor is a Nepali one. Her getup, her manner and her role are largely imports of the *Bharatiya Nari*. Though the middle class urban Nepali women are like them they have formulated their ideology in imitation with the post-colonial Indian woman who is of a hybrid type. In this way these transnational companies are globalizing the cultures by imposing dominant cultures as different studies on visual culture show (Elkin 3).

For example, the ad of *Lite Horlicks* in its first long shot shows a couple in a bus journey. It may be that they are from their way back to home because the husband is tired and dozed off on his wife’s shoulder. Then the worried wife wonders “why the tiredness returns back.” Then the second shot shows a doctor, in his lab making an experiment in his white coat, who as an expert knows the function of the human body. In his assertive voice he declares “the important cause for tiredness is the damage of

invisible body cells.” He provides the solution with *Lite Horlicks* which has “antioxidant, nutrients and proteins.”

The explicit message of the ad is to add *Lite Horlicks* in the diet of your husband as he needs more energy to match the tough outside world and aging may damage his cells. Since he is the bread winner, he must remain healthy and it is the wife’s duty to take care of his good health.



Fig. 1. *Lite Horlicks* Advertisement NTV

But the implicit message is since the wife prepares food for him she should be aware of his good health. It centers upon the monogamous heterosexual relationship of a man and a woman, which then centers upon the product. The message shared to the growing girls is that “it is your future role.” In fact, gender role expectation is largely achieved through the media. Goffman believes that women take their cues about gender behavior from the images of advertising and try to become the people in the ads (45). It also reflects the reality most of the Nepali women are home makers and young girls will in turn do as the number of girls in the higher education diminishes as shown by the statistics:

Table. 1.

Educational Achievement: Number of Females per 100 Males, 2001.

Indicators	2001
Literate 6 years+	65.8
Primary education	76.8
Female percent among full-time students	43.1
SLC and above	43.6
Graduates and above	22.9

Source: Population Census, 2001.

As education level increases, the number of women with comparable educational degrees decreases. Given that there are only 23 women graduates for every 100 men graduates in the country. And in spite of being educated the women are not free of the household activities.

On the surface level, it may seem that the woman in the ad appears to be more powerful than the man. The man looks pathetic as he leans his head on his wife's shoulder and without her he seems helpless. But the fact is the woman is portrayed in the role of a "Super woman," who not only does the house hold works, but is also independent and does all the shopping for the family. One may raise a question would it not be possible for the wife to get tired since both of them are travelling. But it is the patriarchal mindset that a wife and a mother never get tired.



Fig. 2. *Lite Horlicks* Advertisement NTV

Further showing the male role in the white coat promotes sexism; it retains male's superiority. White coat is the sign of prestige and authenticity, a kind of certificate. The white color itself marks purity and transparency. Hence the man in white coat is taken for granted. The ad promotes the concept of men's superiority over women. Would it not be possible for a woman to appear in a white coat with expertise? Perhaps not for the ad as it reinforces the age old concept of men being guided by reason.

Since biology determines that women give birth, most of the cultural setups consider the child rearing acts as feminine roles, therefore, the sole responsibility of women. Our culture commonly accepts such gender roles and defines sexual division. Following such a division, women's work is restricted to the private sphere of the household, while men's work is extended to various occupations in the public sphere. Similar to many other patriarchal cultures, in Nepal also the basic definition of femininity and its surviving common theme is associated with virtues such as caring, nurturing, gentleness, kindness, tenderness, cooperation, patience, and passivity.

Likewise, the basic definition of masculinity and its common motifs are linked to qualities such as assertiveness, ruthlessness, courage, valor, and so on. Even a cursory glance at the binary opposition described above shows that the masculine traits are more active as compared to passivity associated with femininity. Because of these assumptions, it can be taken that gender roles have been so normalized in our day to day life that they often go unexamined. This can be illustrated by an analysis of the ad of *New Viva*:



Fig.3. *New Viva* Advertisements NTV

In its first shot it shows an elderly woman making her prayer along with her two grandkids, a boy and a girl. It is the Hindu custom to offer prayer to the God before starting other activities of the day. The boy seems to be older than the girl and a bit more active and mischievous than the girl as he tries to take the sweets, which have been offered to the God, before the prayer is over. Then in the second shot it shows a young mother, with decent mannerism, neat and clean, in the getup of *saubhagyawati*: *bindi*, *mangalsutra*, and a colorful sari which reinforce her marital status and the presence of her husband. She says that she starts her day providing *Viva* to her children and her mother-in-law worshipping for the betterment of the family. On the

one hand the ad retains the myth that boys are more active and playful than girls by birth. Again the boy asks his grandmother to bestow her blessings even to the cup. But the girl makes no comment; she just accepts the thing as they are. On the other hand, the ad clarifies the feminine role of caring and rearing the children. No grown up males are shown. They cannot have left the home because the women have just started the day. Obviously, the males have not left the bed yet, may be they are waiting their first cup of tea in the bed or might have gone for morning walk. And this is not an uncommon practice among middle class Nepali men. The ad makes stereotypical depiction of both of the young and the old women. It is more insulting to the elderly one as she is shown excessively fat and now since there is her daughter-in-law as well, she has to limit herself in the worshipping.

The guiding principle of these ads is the notion that a woman's place is her home. Time and again she is suggested to stay at home and do the household chores. It reveals the division of public and private sphere, a dichotomy within which women are ideologically linked to the space of the home while men are supposed to prove their masculinity by venturing *bahar*, outside the home. Chatterjee puts forward:

The world is the external, the domain of the material; the home represents one's inner spiritual self, one's true identity. The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuit of material interests, where practical considerations reign supreme. It is also typically the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world – and woman is its representations. And so one gets an identification of social roles by gender to correspond with the separation of the social space into *ghar* and *bahar*. (120)

A similar gender dichotomy of *ghar* and *bahar* traces traditional Nepali society. These two ads, by reinforcing the post-colonial Indian concept of new women, impose the same ideals for Nepali women. In fact, advertising not only sells the goods but sells the values and belief systems. Through the media multinational companies globalize a hegemonic culture. Chatterjee acknowledges that the process of women empowerment was stalled and took regressive turn because of this *ghar* and *bahar* dichotomy. According to him Anti-colonial nationalism, especially in India; constructed a “new” patriarchy during Bengal Renaissance. And this new patriarchy, in turn, forged a concept of new women in contrast to traditional women. Patriarchy in such a way can colonize the female sensibility leaving no other options to women.

The ads are elitist and bourgeois in their nature. Ordinary Nepali women with some education cannot afford to maintain that getup and stay at home all the time. Because, the forces of practical life and aspirations for modern facilities demand women step out of the domain of domestic terrain to contribute to the family income. Besides, most of the males in the rural areas migrate to India and other Arabian countries for employment. And many of the villages are now sans of male’s muscles. Such demands were undercutting traditional division of gender roles. Women are now carrying out the works like ploughing fields, carrying loads on construction sites and digging for road construction, the work traditionally thought to be masculine.

In this context Ghanshyam Bhusal notices in the rural Nepal labor of women often functioned as the stable sustainer of life because men temporarily migrate to urban areas or to neighboring countries for employment and their physical absence forces women to take masculine chores and individual decisions. Absence of men in the community also forces women to handle the conventional masculine job. Moreover, now there are women in every field including the armed forces (12). As

Hisila Yami, a former minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation, describes in her book, in rural areas, educated and well-informed women were actively participating in various social awareness programs such as “women transformation campaign,” “consciousness campaign,” “cleanliness campaign,” “anti-liquor campaign” and so on (19). Other educated women are showing their presence in other occupational fields as well.

But the ads manage to disseminate and reinforce the idea that women are born with unchanging qualities, including their non-aggressive, nurturing nature. So their place is in the home. This promotes the notion of feminine mystique which hinders the movement of women empowerment. Nick Perry in *Hyperreality* points though television is gifted by modern science and technology its nature is “bewildering.” According to him the TV commercials especially have the “potentiality of both novelty and exoticism” (152). In the Nepali TV commercials, accordingly, though women are shown as educated and modern, their traditional feminine role is reinforced.

4.3. Feminine Beauty and Body Images in Nepali TV Commercials

Female body is not only constrained by conventions of feminine movement and behavior but also by the apparatuses of fashion, beauty and the media. Many of the ads’ messages, rather than informing, seem to be misleading the society. A repeated message is like talent does not work; only beauty does. And to take that a woman is only as good as she is at household chores is detrimental to progressive psyche. Even multi-national companies’ adverts that are exposed to a large population – from urban centers to remote areas – neglect gender sensitivity.

It is frustrating to see women being constantly portrayed as domestic servers; and on top, they are shown clueless about even the households issues, with men or

The scene is of an audition where there are serious looking male juries who intently scrutinize her beauty. The audition is made to select a model for the role of the legendary female actor, Madhubala. Then the beautiful dark complexioned, talented girl says the role will be assigned to her. She performs in front of the juries and gets a huge applause from the audience. Then one of the juries, of course a male, compares her image with the image of Madhubala on the computer screen and comments “wide eyes, beautiful smiles but still lacking something, next.” That means another girl is going to be scrutinized. The distressed girl intently scrutinizes herself in the mirror and recites the jury’s comment “still lacking something?” Then her friend points out the lack lies in her natural cream and suggests that she should apply *Fair & Lovely Ayurvedhik*. A male voice-over supports the ad and recommends *Fair & Lovely Ayurvedik* for sensitive skin to get the natural skin. The lady who wants to play the role of Madhubala follows the instructions and gets selected for her fair skin.



Fig. 5. *Fair & Lovely Ayurvedhik* Advertisement NTV

The message was finalized: the most emblematic working women in this world could be visible if they were beautiful even if they were bad at their work; they could be good at their work and beautiful and therefore visible, but get no credit for merit. Or they could be good but not beautiful and therefore invisible, so their merit did them no good. In the last resort, they could be good and as beautiful as “you please.” It is an insult towards those who have dark complexion. And the paradox is fair complexion is natural and to get that one has to apply cosmetics, an artificial product. The application of cosmetics is to bring out women’s real beauty; artificiality is sold in the name of real, natural and beautiful. Indeed, the ad is not only oppressive to the women of darker complexion but also to the people of color. The priority to fair complexion is based on racism. “Dark complexion is ugly and, thus, undesirable;” is the implicit message, and this is established by the jury who happen to have fair complexion. Such types of ads are discriminatory to all the people who have darker skin. However, the women of darker skin will be doubly victimized, on the one hand they will be demeaned by all the white people and on the other hand their own men may give priority to the white women.

Both men and women, indeed, should fight together to demolish such practices as believed by Sandra Harding. She opines that men can play an important role in feminism and Bell Hooks comments that “men must be part of the feminist movement, and they must feel that they have a major role to play in the eradication of sexism” (qtd. in Olson 134). Her focus is there should be mutual relation between men and women in the feminist movement as there is the misconception that feminists are hostile to men in general and, thus, destructive to masculinity. So there should be harmonious relation between the sexes based on equality. The point to note is feminism is not only concerned with women or with men; it is concerned with

reciprocal relations between the two (Ojha 223). And the aim of gender study is not to demolish the patriarchal society and erect a matriarchal society; but to create equal space for the two.

Nonetheless, the double standard of appearance for men and women communicated itself every morning and every night to the notions of working women whenever they tried to play into the events of their world is harmful. The double standards of masculine power structure can be seen by the rules they make for women's dresses. They use the same token, if she is dismissed from the job - because she is not wearing a stylish dress, appealing and feminine, again if she is sexually harassed - ask was her dress provocative.

Women are being told by their upbringing, the culture, and the media that they can and should control their body's shape, weight, appearance and aging. But women's body is also complex and its rhythms and shape change as they move through adulthood. Teenagers have been dieting and struggling with body image issue. They are in the belief that they will be let down by the people/ boys if they look unattractive. They do have peer pressure to mould themselves accordingly because "what is real is the product of consensus rather than autonomous perceptual evaluation" (Key 10). They (ad makers) are handing over this painful legacy to the future generation. Being obsessed about body image is the teenager's problem. Misled by the romantic fantasy of the beauty, instead of cultivating their brain they start pursuing the beauty ideal. The pressure of this hegemonic feminine beauty is so high to resist it many women modify their body as a way to rebel against male domination and to reclaim power over their own bodies. According to Pitts in creating scarred, banded, pierced, and heavily tattooed bodies they aim to reject the pressures of beauty norms and roles of "proper" femininity (13).

Pressures to beauty norms, as pointed by Wollstonecraft, hinder women's liberation. Stating that the first duty of a woman was to cultivate reason and use them to avoid excessive sensibility, she wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. While declaring these sentiments, she knew full well, she was opposing a long established tradition that reason belonged to dominate men and sensibility and irrational dominate women. In Wollstonecraft's view women pursued sensibility because they had been taught to do so. Female education emphasized the nurturing of emotions. So that women would be distorted into sexual and passionate beings and grow subordinate to men. She warns "society is wasting its assets if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and alluring mistresses, denies them economic independence and encourages them to be docile and attentive to their looks to the exclusion of all else" (qtd. in Adams 394). Thus, she demanded that women should be provided with education like that of men, which permits people to develop their rational and moral capacities and their full human potentialities.

Overall, the series offers consumption as the solution to lady's dissatisfaction. The ad underscores a key aspect of the connection between women, television and commodification. The line demonstrates how women in performance are valued primarily for their appearance. Unless she applies the product, she is deemed imperfect.

As stated earlier, advertisements not only sell goods but ideologies, too. Nepali advertisements are sending out discriminatory ideologies, and women have to be conscious when exposed to such messages repeatedly. Media has always played an important role in bringing about changes in society. The messages that are played and replayed through media go a long way in determining the mindsets of the people. But when media like NTV run by the government itself send out messages that not only

retain but also reinforce traditional and biased patriarchal ideologies, how can one expect the society to be changed by the media? More than 70% of the visual advertisements use female models. In most of them they are either presented as commodities to attract viewers, or modeled them in subservient traditional roles, always catering for the male members.

Besides presenting women in traditional roles they are demeaned both verbally and visually. “The stereotype marshals an army of servants. She is supplied with cosmetics, underwear, foundation, garments, stockings, wigs, pastiches, and hairdressing as well as her outer garments, her jewels and furs. The effect is to be built up layer by layer, and it is expensive” (Greer 66). She is commodified and is used in every product. The ad agencies believe that advertising is the field of glamour and the target audience needs to be attracted and women can attract them. The power of attractiveness is well acknowledged. Attractive people are immediately evaluated and they can persuade others. It may be that men are captivated by the sex appeal but one needs to understand women too equally form the part of audience. Need they not be attracted? Obviously, the notion of glamour is also men’s notion, a patriarchal perspective. Jain and Sudha Rai argue “Even the focusing on female occupations and household chores can be done differently and subsequently perceived differently” (10). Women as consumers and viewers need to protest the offensive representation of women in the ads.

In order to demonstrate how sex appeal and attractive appearance are embedded in advertising to provide pleasure to the male audience, the following ad made for *Lux* (a toilet soap) can illustrate:



Fig. 6. *New Lux* Advertisement NTV

The exposition shows the popular female actor, Katrina Kaif, in a close-up shot taking her bath in a rupturing posture. After the bath in another shot, in gorgeous, sleeveless red dress she attends a party. She leaves the perfume on her way she walks and draws the attention of the central male character of this few seconds episode. The actor is enchanted by her and starts following her. She enjoys being looked at and pretends running upstairs. Wooing him she runs towards the interior part of the building. The handsome man desires to touch and feel the freshness and softness of her skin. Since the movement is towards the interior part of the building what follows is predictable. The woman as a site of male gaze is for his consumption. (The background music and the song highlight the intensity and the male voice-over that supports the ad that commodifies the model/female actor who is for the pleasure of the male viewers).

The female actor is presented as an idol for the ideal woman. An ideal woman is someone tall, thin, fair with long silken hair, a face without pores, symmetrically someone wholly “perfect,” “a perfect provocateur: youthful, beautiful, and of course,

sexy” (J. Cortese 8). The woman on the ad is more attention catching, stylish, curvy and slim. The red color is associated with sexuality, passion, emotion and so on. This matches the romance fantasy side of life. Her seductive glance is an invitation to the male viewer. The common sense theme is “use this soap and you will be sexually more attractive in the eyes of a heterosexual male.” The myth of women’s inferiority to men is supported by the myth of beauty that the ads largely exploit. In order to be attractive a female should have broad hips and a slender waist. She should be well formed, have pleasant smile, the gait of a goose, fine silky long hair and a delicate physique. The woman participant in the ad confirms the patriarchal definition of beauty; the feminine beauty promoted by the present consumerist culture.

The ad also associates the idea that women’s task is to put their body neat and clean, and attractive to look at. In the ad, the model is framed within the male gaze with the voyeuristic camera handled by the male, the male model who covets her, and the male audience who fantasize about her. “Men act, women appear. Men look at women; women watch themselves being looked at” (Berger 93). This quote suggests very succinctly the position of women in the realm of the “look,” including within the main stream Indian and Nepali Cinema. The Nepali TV commercials definitely are a miniature form of the Visual culture. In this ad made for *Lux*, for example, the woman has been relegated to the passive position as “bearer not the maker of the meaning,” merely an appendage to the man, the wielder of power (Mulvey 834). As Mulvey further quotes Boeticher who comments on the narrative cinema in the west, “What counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. It seems as if, in herself, the woman has not the

slightest importance” (837). This is applicable in the context of Nepali ads as well.

The next shot, the fixed attention of the man shows:



Fig. 7. *New Lux Advertisement NTV*

The message is all women want to be beautiful and men want to possess them.

However, beauty is not universal and changeless. The passion for beauty and love of a man keep women away from other nobler passions, as pointed by Wollstonecraft. So women, instead of trying to be loved, they should try to be respected. For feminists like Wollstonecraft and Greer the beauty myth is a trap made by men to enslave and debase the entire female sex. Thus, Greer pleads:

Draw near, woman, and hear what I have to say. Turn your curiosity for once towards useful objects, and consider the advantages which nature gave you and society ravished. Come and learn how you were born the companion of man and become his slave; how you grew to like the condition and think it natural; and finally how the long habituation of slavery so degraded you that you preferred its sapping

but convenient vices to the more difficult virtues of freedom and repute. If the picture I shall paint leaves you in command of yourselves, if you can contemplate it without emotion, then go back to your futile pastimes, there is no remedy; the vices have become the custom. (19)

Greer believes that the contemporary economy depends right now on the representation of women within the beauty myth. She further claims women in their role of consumers have been essential for economic reasons and the vices are transformed into social virtue.

She argues that the contemporary ravages of the beauty backlash are destroying women physically and depleting them psychologically. If they are to free themselves from the dead weight that has once again been made out of femaleness, it is not ballots or lobbyists or placards that women will need first; it is a new way to see (19). As women demanded access to power, the power structure used the beauty myth materially to undermine women's advancement. Globalization of economy has also played a major role in strengthening patriarchy as it has brought women on the centre stage of the sex market. The testimony to this fact is the increasing number of beauty pageants held even in smaller towns of Nepal and in most cases the pageants are sponsored by the multinational companies. In such pageants the worth of the participants is measured by how they look, what they wear and how they appear to the male gaze. The women are objects of beauty desired and gazed at by mainstream males. In this twenty first century progressive era, women in these ads have been relegated to the position of the "Other." Unless women are aware that they are being seduced by the ads, it is impossible for the abolition of the inequalities and indignities from which they suffer.

4.4. Sexism and Male Hegemony: Gender Role Allocation

Sexism is the ideology that sees one sex as superior to the other. The term is generally used to refer to male prejudice and discrimination against women. Sexism refers to any attitudes and actions which discriminate women on the grounds of their sex or gender. But it is not always done openly and in the presence of all. Many a time, it is practiced secretly, silently and in an undeclared manner. Sexist attitudes tend to objectify women which mean they treat women as objects of sex. They do not consider women as individuals worthy of respect and equal treatment in social institution. Likewise, hegemony involves control by consent. Here it is used to indicate males' control over females which both of the sexes have taken as for granted.

The importance of sexual inequality is often felt at the instance of the birth of a child. The first question parents ask at the birth of a child, in all societies, is perhaps the same "is it a boy or a girl." It is a brute fact of a society that in no society in the world men and women are treated alike, given the same status and guaranteed social equality. On the contrary, in every society, certain rights and opportunities have been denied to women. A social rationale given for this discrimination is that the talents and potentials of the sexes are different in many respects. Throughout history the inferior status of women has been seen as a self-evident fact of nature.

Within the global context, women in politics are accepted as equal to men but still fall prey to the myths of womanhood. In this sense, reinstating patriarchal gender roles becomes one of the major objectives of the representational politics of the media. Most of the central female characters in the TV commercials are young and beautiful women, below forty. The advertisers ignore older women or pretend as if they do not exist. Seniority for women does not mean prestige but erasure from

modeling. But this is not applicable to men. They become more powerful because of their seniority.

The home, as stated earlier, is her domain/territory, whereas the world belongs to the man. The indirect message is washing powder is her fate. Women are seen exclusively as sexual beings rather than as complicated people with many interests, talents, and identities. A woman is valued for her sexual appeal to the exclusion of other characteristics. She is not seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making. The female body is deployed to serve the interests of males and capitalist ideology rather than as a source of pleasure for the female participant herself.

Though women work both inside and outside home they are unable to enjoy the same position as men in the society. The lopsided relation between men and women exposes the fact how women's labor is exploited in the works that economically innumerate no remuneration. However, with the adoption of liberal economic system, private banks and finance companies are flourishing in Nepal as well. They have recognized that women form remarkable portion of their clients. Thus, they compete to attract the female as their client. Nevertheless, they are unable to overcome the idea that a woman too can be an earning member, a corporate or a business man or like that. They believe that even if she saves, she saves saving the penny that she has at the cost of bargaining with the groceries. This aspect can be justified by analyzing an ad made for *Wheel OK*, a laundry soap.

It shows a middle class woman (she has the aspiration to wear new clothes but does not have the resources) shopping at the retailer in the street shop and other two women, who happen to cross the street, are fascinated by her capacity to wear a new sari even while at a grocer's. The male salesman says "here are your two kilograms of

potatoes” to the female participant (who happens to be a regular customer for him since he addresses her with her first name). The woman (warning the man for not making the exact weight sternly pointing at him with her index finger) says, “*sa:huzi*” (Salesman!). Then she adds one or two more potatoes on the balance and says “now it is okay.”



Fig. 8. *Wheel OK* Advertisement NTV

The salesman confesses that Laxmi *zee* cannot be cheated. Then the third party, two women passers-by, comments upon her getup saying “look at wearing a new sari even to groceries!” They stare at her and look envious towards her. Then Laxmi, the first participant, asks her *Wheel OK*. The camera shifts over to a woman’s hands washing the clothes with soap foams rising, and a soft woman’s voice-over supports the ad that “other soaps harm the clothes but *Wheel OK* tenderly removes the dirt and keeps the clothes new for years.” The final voice is of the first participant who assures that “it is wise to buy a *Wheel OK*.” The choice of word *komalta*: (tenderness) in the final female voice-over that supports the ad also justifies the feminine connotation of washing.



Fig. 9. *Wheel OK* Advertisement NTV

The unstated aspect of the ad is women should always look clean, decent and well dressed. But it is not applicable to men. The salesman is neither young nor well dressed. Besides, women are gullible and can be cheated as their attention is not fixed; diverted towards what other women are wearing and they are gossipy. Sexism is revealed by the salesman's light attitude towards the first participant as he says she cannot be cheated. His expression shows no sign of regret or guilt. She is his regular customer but even then he tries to cheat her. They address each other, he as "Laxmi zee" and she as "*Sha:hu zee;*" *zee* is an honorific word in the Nepali language. But he takes her to be his junior and addresses her with her first name. Whereas, she uses the occupational word *Sha:hu* equivalent to salesman/merchant and adds *zee* at the end. This is an example of sexism that believes that men are always superior to women.

Obviously, the message is since women are not engaged in productive work they do not understand the value of money. If they want to be smart they need to

understand the value of money. Furthermore, whenever women are shown purchasing something, they are shown at the retailer bargaining at the cost of potatoes, soap cakes or like that. They are never shown dealing with the valuable things, except buying jewelry. The only market accessible to them is the small scale shops. Besides, the sales-men at such shops are not fair and honest and try to cheat the women customers. So the characters/participants are fictitious and highly deceptive. It also retains the stereotype notion about women that rivalry and jealousy are inherent part of women's character. Indirectly they are encouraged to compete with each other by wearing new clothes. The importance of clothes, here, comes not from their utility aspect but from their "sign exchange value," i.e. the capacity for attracting others' attention. This promotes consumerism, which may have a negative impact upon women having limited income resources. Acharya et al. while explaining the different causes behind adult Nepali women turning to Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs) write, "Modern consumerism have also lured young women of even middle class families into prostitution, as evident from the fact that CSWs are not necessarily illiterate or from poor family backgrounds" (19). The ad not only supports the inferior status of women but also sells the person with the goods to which she is attached by the mainstream ideology which is highly patriarchal.

It is noticeable that these ads never include women in expertise, and some even tend to hamper women's solidarity. It promotes hostile relation among them. The women shown in the ads have false impression about her (Laxmi's) washed up sari which they think is a new one. But Laxmi does not share the secret of her new looking sari rather she is happy to impress them in the deceptive way. She is vainly proud of petty things. The irony is that they have aspiration to wear new saris/clothes

but do not have the adequate resources, nor can differentiate between the new and the old.

Advertising explicit sexism is better demonstrated by the ad made for *New Lifebuoy*, a toilet soap:



Fig. 10. *New Lifebuoy* Advertisement NTV

The setting is of a hospital clinic where a male doctor is shown in a white coat. The table, the medical instruments and the layout of the room reveals its significance. There are two young mothers standing and their young sons, whom the doctor has checked up, are on the bed. Identifying their problems he says:

The diseases are different but the problem is caused by the same germ. If it sticks in the skin it causes skin infection, pimples, and rash; have you seen? And if it enters through hand into the mouth, it causes stomach infection, flu and common cold. Either the disease is inner or outer the solution is the same.

Then he hands over each of them a cake of *Lifebuoy* soap. The mothers are taken aback knowing the medicinal value of the soap. They exclaim, “*Lifebuoy!*” The doctor

assures them as “*New Lifebuoy*.” The women are convinced by the man as he is a doctor, a certified man, who can prescribe things. It just reveals the superior status of men that both men and women have taken as a rule. Beauvoir in her essay “Woman as Other” opines, “Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply that man decrees; thus she is called ‘the sex,’ by which meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex – absolute sex, no less” (209-10).

The ad tells many things. The seriousness of the location suggests that it is a men’s place. The job is certified and authentic and respectable. The ladies are made to stand and listen to him. The choice of scientific, medical terminologies “infection, rash, flue” etc. suggests that the occupation is guided by reason and knowledge. Shulamith Firestone, one of the radical feminists, believed we associate science and technology with men and the humanities and the arts with women. Thus, the “‘masculine response’ to reality is the ‘technological response:’ ‘objective, logical, extroverted, realistic,’ concerned with the conscious mind (the ego), rational, mechanical, pragmatic and down-to-earth, stable.” In contrast, the “feminine response” to reality is the “aesthetic response;” “subjective, intuitive, introverted, wishful, dreamy or fantastic, concerned with the subconscious (the *id*), emotional, even temperamental (hysterical)” (qtd. in Tong 56).

In both of these ads of soap, women are presented as consumer, user of the goods. Cleaning clothes is a menial job that needs no expertise so a woman’s hands are shown. Besides, the woman, mentioned in the ad, knows how to clean clothes. Whereas treatment of diseases requires both knowledge and skill; it is a serious thing to do, so men’s expertise is required.

Then the question arises who decides this dichotomization? There are layers of speakers setting the agenda for these advertisements. It is the manufacturers, the ad makers who rule the system not the models. It is they who assign different roles to men and women for the purpose of consumerism. Nepali media landscape is populated and dominated by men. It seems that they are working to serve the interest of their patrons, i.e. the producers of the goods and services.

Obviously, the commercials are designed from the male point of view - women are peripheral even if they appear at all. The women participants rarely represent a voice of authority or expertise. They remain more passive or pacified in contrast to men. Patriarchal world views stemmed from the belief in the absolute superiority of the man over the woman, the masculine over the feminine. The ads show male chauvinism and turn blind eyes towards gender discrimination, by appropriating traditional feminine roles assigned to women. The reinforcement is marriage and motherhood are all for women, and home and family are women's sole area. This patriarchal notion is wrong for feminists like Friedman who view that women can and should take part in the paid job. Friedman demands women escape the excesses of the *feminine* mystique "which defined women solely in terms of their relation to men as wives, mothers and homemakers." She reasons that wife and mothers' partial absence from home would enable husband and children to become more self-sufficient and capable of cooking their own meals and doing their own laundry (Tong 27). Hence the idea that home and family are women's sole responsibility is wrong; rather these are men's and women's joint responsibilities.

4.5. Male, Muscle and Masculinity

This reading of advertisements is motivated by feminist thoughts. The aim here is to examine the ways in which NTV commercials reinforce and appropriate

social, economical, political and psychological oppression of women. The ads uplift the cultural habit of seeing male experience as universal. Manufactured from the patriarchal point of view in these ads women are dominated or subordinated to men in every aspect. Feminists believe that the inferior position long occupied by women in the society has been culturally, not biologically, produced. Gender, accordingly, sees not what males or females are but how a given culture sees them. Thus, to say that women are naturally timid, sweet, stupid, intuitive, self-pitying, overemotional, and cute but helpless is just to construct a role for them. So, traditionally called feminine is a cultural construction, it is a gender role that has been assigned to biologically born females. Similar is the case with masculine roles like strength, rationality, stoicism and self-reliance, heroic, brave, and adventurous traits given to males. The traditional gender roles assigned to males and females are harmful and destructive for the society; on the condition half of the population remains inferior. Hence, for feminists, the reconstruction of gender roles is required: "Since no one in their right mind will want to give serious power to a person who must be timid, dependent, irrational, and self-pitying because she is a woman, the effort to purge the culture of such gendered stereotyping is absolutely crucial" (Bertens 98). Because women occupy more than half of the population of the world, it is not advantageous for the society as well to give them secondary role or mistreatment.

Despite this, the ads associate male with masculinity and portray men performing traditional masculine roles. Men are portrayed as free individuals guided by definite targets. They are in pursuit of knowledge and wealth. With the advancement of science and technology, men have become more powerful to control the nature. Now knowledge is power and to run the machine one needs the technical knowledge. That is why the ads largely portray men who are either muscular with

strong muscles, an invincible one who is not defeated by the adversity of nature or one with knowledge and expertise. To show the association of male, muscle and masculinity the analysis that follows explores four ads, namely the ads made for *Nepal Bank Ltd.*, *Nepal Life Insurance Company*, *Jagadamba Cement*, and *Jagadamba Steel*. The analysis is to focus “[. . .] what it means to be a man – in words, flesh, deed, effect; in relation to others; in various arenas of daily social life - and the ways in which masculinity may be performed” (Chopra et al. 3).

Conventionally, men are predominantly the ones who interact with the outside world. For the most part, work is a source of economic and social progress and personal achievement for both men and women. Employment can help women to empower and gain equality in the society. Women empowerment refers to a process of enabling women to take charge of their own lives and escape from poverty which arises not from lack of productivity but from oppression and exploitation. Empowerment is the most used term by feminists. The nature of empowerment renders it difficult to define. It is a process of acquiring, providing, bestowing the resources and the means or enabling one the access to control over such means and resources. The opportunities of employment for women can provide them the financial autonomy which leads to the growth of self-esteem and their mobility. Their income generation is likely to increase their power of decision making in the family and in community matters. Women’s lives can be improved through employment. With this realization different INGOs like Plan Nepal, United Mission to Nepal and others are working to increase the economic efficiency of women and to enhance their socioeconomic status and individual capabilities (Acharya et al. 47).

Nonetheless, until now women are expected to serve men physically, taking care of their homes, property, clothing, children or persons; economically doing

countless jobs in which they are paid less or not paid at all. Since women do all the household work, which men do not wish to do, they are free to spend their time on socially valued activities for which they receive all kinds of material or psychological rewards. The softer, weaker and more dependent the woman is, the stronger and more powerful the man appears. The more she withdraws in to her home the more chances he gets in the public field. That is why patriarchy desires to perpetuate females' weaker position. In this context, Simone de Beauvoir contends, "all history has been made by male" (*Second Sex* 1). According to her, "Legislators, priests, philosophers, writers and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of woman is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth. The religion invented by men reflected this wish for domination" (*Second Sex* 11). She strongly resists that this state of affair should not be continued.

An interpretation of advertisement made for *Nepal Bank Ltd.* and aired by NTV deciphers patriarchal desire to continue women's subordination to men. Nepal Bank Ltd. is the sponsor of the economic news of NTV. The advertisement disseminates the message that you can be economically successful with the loan provided by the bank. It highlights the notion that material prosperity is the secret of happy family. It depicts the ideal family, a nuclear family in a comfortable house with two kids, a boy and a girl who are about to go to school in their uniform. The feudal social mechanism governs the notion that only the riches can provide happiness. The tea table, the husband taking his breakfast hurriedly in the business man like manner and the alluring wife serving him, all show the feudal tendency of the advertisement. The wife is shown in the secondary role; she is subjugated to him only as a helper. She needs to serve him because he is the upright man who has been able to accumulate the desired prosperity of the family. The triviality of the wife is reflected

by the fact that she helps him put his coat on, and waves her hands to the children going to school.

Here man stands for knowledge, command, mastery, expertise, intelligence, enlightened, professional, and so on. Woman, by contrast, stands for ornamentation, beautification, and glamour, pretentious, extravagant, kitsch, flashy, artificial, skin-deep, cosmetic, trivial, and frivolous and so on.



Fig. 11. *Nepal Bank Ltd.* Advertisement NTV

In a medium shot it shows a middle-aged man, well-groomed; his dress up shows he is about to leave for his office, a tie round his neck. Then another shot shows his alluring young wife coming from the interior to the drawing room carrying his coat; helps him wear his coat and then hands over his hand phone. The man then drives the children to school on his way to office whereas she shakes her hand standing at the door with her cant head; being limited to the domestic periphery she does not cross the threshold of the house.

The ad motivated by a Feudalistic male dominated society depicts the picaresque style of man's epic journey from poverty to prosperity. Common predicament of women in a capitalist patriarchy: the exploitation of their sexuality, victimization of women in a capitalist metropolis may be successful. It would be wrong, however, to think new and empowering possibilities. The family is an ideal happy family and the couple living a happy married life. The secret of Hindu marriage is silence: order, authority on the part of the husband and submission, beauty, innocence on the part of the wife.



Fig. 12. *Nepal Bank Ltd.* Advertisement NTV

Though the ad is set in the modern setting; banking facility, car, mobile, the husband in his tie and the wife in the modern attire, it is not able to embrace the concept of gender equality. The only change that has taken place in the process of modernization is, instead of cleaning dishes and sweeping the floor with the brooms, women are shown busy with combing the hair, putting nail polish or make-up, and rapping themselves in alluring dresses. The process of modernization, so far as women's

empowerment is concerned, is regressive. In the conjugal life her role is insignificant and plays the submissive role. Man has to confirm the biological superiority and he dominates the female. In this case, Marx's opinion about women exploitation within the family is quotable: "in the family, men dominate women and exploit them both economically and sexually" (qtd. in Ojha 136).

Patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have the dominant, or masculine, roles and women always have the subordinate, or feminine, ones. This ideology is so powerful, said Millett that men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress. Men do this through institutions such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men, resulting in most women's internalization of a sense of inferiority to men. Should a woman refuse to accept patriarchal ideology by casting off her femininity - that is, her submissiveness or subordination - men will use coercion to accomplish what conditioning has failed to achieve. Intimidation is everywhere in patriarchy. According to Millet the streetwise woman realizes that if she wants to survive in patriarchy, she would better act feminine, or else she may be subjected to "a variety of cruelties and barbarities" (Tong 52).

Moreover, the strong male voice-over that supports the ad and the use of assertive sentences also show masculine enterprise of accumulating wealth and remaining commendable:

bis^hwa:silo sa:t^h hos/ sa:t^h hardam driD^h hos/ driD^hata:
 faithful company be/ company always strong be/ strength
 atya: d^hunik hos/ saksham hos/ tapaiko jiwanko prtek nirnyako sa:t^hi/
 ultra modern be/ capable be/ your life of every decision friend

Nepal Bank Ltd. itihās bokeko atya: d^hunik bank

Nepal Bank Ltd. history carried ultramodern bank

‘Let there be faithful company. And the company will always be

strong. Let the strength be ultramodern. Nepal bank limited

accompanies you in your every decision for ever. It is an ultramodern

bank having its history.’

The use of words like strong, strength, decision etc. in the ad suggests that banking and finance are masculine fields. In addition to this, the closure in the sentences *hos* symbolizes the authenticity of the father- governed, phallogocentric language, which Kristeva recognizes as the “symbolic” use of language. For her “semiotic” and “symbolic” are the two modalities of signification. “Semiotic” for her, is related with the pre-linguistic and pre-Oedipal state of maternal closeness. Whereas the “symbolic” is associated with the norms of social rules and regulations which the child masters slowly after he enters into the social system (239). It is, therefore, the symbolic use of language that supports male domination. The male voice-over that supports the ad retains the continuation of male domination.

The stereotypical notion as the husband is the breadwinner and he has to deal with difficulties outside, the wife should provide him emotional refuge. The portrayal of family life and roles with regard to womanhood explores no other possibility than values of the traditional family model, thus reinforcing existing societal norms and stereotypes. Engels in his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) writes:

In the great majority of cases today, at least in the possessing classes, the husband is obliged to earn living and support family, and that in itself gives him a position of supremacy, without any need for special

legal titles and privileges within the family he is bourgeois and the wife represents the proletariat. (qtd. in Ojha 137)

Obviously, the husband is the one who earns living for the family and the wife depends on his earning; it is taken for granted that she should serve him.

The lifestyle promoted is largely elitist in nature: the female model in the commercial is overwhelmingly extravagant; her blue dress, loose hair, make-up, *pote* and bangles all enhance her presence as a decorative show-piece. While men definitely face pressures to meet certain social ideals of masculinity; his getup, maturity in terms of age (he looks older than his wife), his moustache, all suggest his seriousness.

In fact, the women have never been projected as economically self-sufficient or tending to themselves and making a positive contribution to the family purse. Indeed, it is this aspect which helps in giving them the status at par with their male counterparts, who again lead a dependent life. It is confessed that “in order to release women from their dependent and unequal status, improvement of their employment opportunities and earning power has to be given the highest priority” (Mitra 30-31). This is equally applicable in the context of Nepali women whose empowerment lies in their financial self-sufficiency which, in turn, would help them in making a shift from cultural and traditional bonds and they must be projected as such in all forms of media.

Furthermore, differentiation based on gender seems to be a universal feature of human society. Men have been traditionally considered the “providers” for the family, while women have been expected to assume almost every responsibility, to take care of the child and to attend to house hold duties. Most of the cultures view many forms of work as “women’s work” or “men’s work” using as sexual stereotypes their basis.

For example, women are pushed into jobs like nursing, teaching, and childcare, whereas men are pushed to business, science and technology and engineering.

According to Jane English, terms such as *sex roles* and *gender traits* denote “the patterns of behavior which the two sexes are socialized, encouraged, or coerced into adopting, ranging from ‘sex-appropriate’ personalities to interests and professions” (qtd. in Tong 42). Boys are instructed to be masculine, girls to be feminine. Psychologists, anthropologists, and sociologists tend to define the “masculine” and “feminine” in terms of prevailing cultural stereotypes. Thus, to be masculine, in general, among other things, is to be rational, ambitious, and independent, and to be feminine is, among other things, to be emotional, nurturing, and dependent. So, if some biological males manifest feminine gender traits and some biological females manifest masculine gender traits, such individuals will be deemed exceptional or deviant. Advertising retains these culturally learned characteristics as natural and retains and reinforces them time and again.

Radical feminist, in particular, reject patriarchal society’s assumption that there is a necessary connection between one’s sex (male or female) and one’s gender (masculine or feminine). They object to patriarchal society usage of rigid gender roles to keep women passive “affectionate, obedient, responsive to sympathy and approval, cheerful, kind and friendly and men active, tenacious, aggressive, curious, ambitious, painful, responsible, original and competitive” (Tong 72). Society remains structured in ways that favor men and disfavor women in the competitive race for power, prestige, and money. Kate Millett in her *Sexual Politics* (1970) claims “unless the clinging to male supremacy as a birthright is finally forgone, all systems of oppression will continue to function simply by virtue of their logical and emotional mandate in the primary human situation” (Tong 52). Because males control both of the public and

private worlds, maintains Millett, males' control must be eliminated if women are to be liberated. For this men and women have to eliminate gender - specifically, sexual status, role, and temperament - as it has been constructed under patriarchy.

Obviously, the concept of gender ideals refers to the cultural expectations woven around males' and females' behavior. Gender ideals then reveal what men and women are supposed to be like in a particular context. For example, in Nepali society, men are expected to be actively engaged in some good job, confident, courageous, responsible, and respectful, helpful and so on. Similarly, women are expected to be very affectionate, tolerant, obedient, loyal, dutiful, hospitable, service minded, loving and more committed to the family than to their careers. Gender role expectation demands every man to be economically independent and successful. The following analysis of the ad made for *NLIC* (Nepal Life Insurance Company) will justify this.

This ad features two of the most popular artists of Nepal, Hari Bamsa Acharya and Madan Krishna Shrestha in the form of colleagues who have met after a long interval. These two middle aged men are shown outside a building in a long shot. The conversation goes:

Acharya (after this A): (who is in suit): Oh friend after such a long time!

Shreatha (after this S): (who is in the typical Nepali dress): Oh!

A: Let's go inside.

Both of them move into an office room; the *Mise-en-Scene*: the table, chairs, computer, and stationery; all, traditionally, suggest that it is a males' domain. The conversation takes place in the office and the talk centers on the masculine enterprise: completing higher education, going abroad, being professional, accumulating wealth and managing a settled life. The dialogue which takes place in the office room is reproduced below:



Fig. 13. *Nepal Life Insurance (NLIC)* Advertisement NTV

S: After College you went abroad for higher education.

A: You went back to serve in the village. Later I started my own business now look at my present status.

S: But to study abroad, start one's own business and then get settled, money?

A: From NLIC friend, from NLIC.

S: NLIC Life Insurance? I will go to the village and remind everyone about it.

Finally, it is supported by a strong male voice-over "Life Insurance for everyone's life insurance."

They are the men of reason and reality. As free men they express their individuality freely. Males are transparent, unlike the female participants shown in the ad of *Wheel OK*, the man here shares the secret of his economic affluence. Both of them are independent and know what they are going to do. What matters for men: education, business and settlement, for all these they need money. Making money is a masculine enterprise. The choice of words: foreign, education, business, settlement all have

connotation with masculinity. Their getups also suggest the seriousness, commitment and responsibility demanded by the financial sector. They are well-groomed middle aged men (above fifty). No suggestion of erotic desire is made by their body or dress-up. Their figures do not matter, what matters is their economic independence. Looking at their appearance one can infer many things about them: their social class, professional status and their belief system. The ad attempts to construct the “hegemonic masculinity” in which only the macho men are the real men. The Westernized dress-up of the popular actor, Hari Bamnsa Acharya, the layout of his office, the spread arms and his confidence suggest he is a successful man. So those men who are unable to acquire knowledge, accumulate wealth and get settled in their life are excluded from its premise. Further, the absence of female participants suggests a symbolic annihilation of women from the world of finance.

Opposed to the role of women, men are shown as authoritative and aggressive in nature. Advertisements are in recorded form and while recording the voice of men is often sought to be bold and authoritative. The language they use is also authoritative and, thus, phallogocentric.

In our culture, marital heterosexuality is taken as the most honored form of sexuality. So a true man is a heterosexual man who is violent, aggressive and concerned with controlling others. Further, accumulation of wealth through commercial enterprises and gaining knowledge are men’s concerns. Nepali TV commercials also focus on these aspects of masculinity and portray men with these traits. Men who are not physically strong and who are unable to gain knowledge and accumulate wealth with their expertise are excluded from the male preserve. The distribution of power over males and females partners in these ads mirrors the distribution of power over males and females in society at large. Feminism saw very

clearly that the wide spread negative stereotyping of women in literature and film constituted a formidable obstacle on the road to true equality (Bertens 95).

In the same way, Helen Cixous, an eminent French feminist begins her philosophical essay 'Sorties' with the questions "where is she?" while answering she suggests that women's place in the history of Western thought has been at the negative pole of the series of binary oppositions which have structured that history. For instance, she posits a hierarchy: Activity/ Passivity, Sun/ Moon, Culture/ Nature, Day/ Night, Father/ mother, Head/ Heart, Intelligence/ Sensitivity, and Logos/ Pathos (287-88). Patriarchy, in such binary, thinks that the left sides of each slash are superior to the right side and vice versa. She demands women move outside that male- centered, binary logic altogether.

Cixous argues that the male/ female opposition is central to Western culture and is pervasively present in all sorts of opposition that at first sight has nothing to do with either males or females. The inferior term is always associated with the feminine, while the term that occupies the privileged position is associated with masculinity. For Cixous, this never ending privileging of the masculine damages us all; females and males alike, because it curbs the imagination and is therefore oppressive in general (288-89).

Patriarchal ideology blinds us towards these discriminatory practices and we take them as if they are natural. The objective realism of the present day ads is not so objective at all. The models are presented in the way the patriarchal ideology wants them to appear. Heroism and health is related to masculinity. And "Action men" and fathers are the figures of authority. Human physical strength has always been associated with masculinity, whereas fragility and vulnerability go with femininity; and such discourses construct the gender truth about men and women. An analysis of

the campaign made for *Jagadamba Cement*, as a support to the *status quo*, will suffice this:



Fig. 14. *Jagadamba Cement* Advertisement NTV

The location is outdoor, open space. Here masculinity is constructed as a hardworking person with strong muscles. The sweat is the result of physical labor in outdoor activities. The participant is a strong, macho-man with strong muscles performing different athletic activities. As a macho-man he is invincible and is able to cope with the adverse situation, the extreme weather: wild wind, hot sun and the pouring rain. He is a determined man in his Herculean attempts. He is thoroughly wet with sweat but does not stop. His revealed body, unlike the women's in the above mentioned commercials, is neither for seduction nor for pleasure for the opposite sex. Rather it is to enhance the notion that in order to carry out rough and tough outdoor activities one should have strong muscles. This shows his bravery, courage and faithfulness. The participant is the embodiment of ideal masculinity; he is fearless, athletic and confident. The strong male voice-over that supports the ad further confirms the strength of masculinity and its association with the strength of cement, an essential ingredient for constructions, like buildings, bridges, pillars etc. These things are

exposed to the extremities of weather and protect the human beings from the hardships of nature and so is the macho-man:

a:st^ha: c^h ani b^hrosa c^h/ sbaiko biswas eutai ka:d^hma: c^h
 faith be and reliability be all's belief only shoulders on be
 g^ha:m, pa:ni, a:d^hi, weri c^hin kasiko Dar/ na z^hukc^h yo na tuc^h yo
 sun, rain, storm, thunder no any fear/ nor surrender this nor crack this
 cta:n sari ub^hi rhnch yo/ Nepalko srwa:d^hk biswa:silo Jagadama: cement ho
 rock like stand this/ Nepal's highest trusted Jagadamba cement yes
 Nepalihruko
 Nepali's

'There is faith and expectation. Everyone's confidence rests upon one's shoulders; there is no fear of sun, rain and storm. Neither it succumbs nor surrenders, rather keeps on standing like a rock. The most trusted cement of Nepal is Jagadamba Cement, Nepali's Cement.'

The choice of words: sun, storm, rock, trust, shoulder etc. suggests masculine activities associated with building and construction. This type of work demands strength and labor. French feminist argue that male dominates women through language. The patriarchal language is rigid and penetrating. Men possess the capacity of expressing violently and confidently. Thus the superior voice of male dominates. The authorial voice, the focused attention of the participant and his strong muscle appropriate hegemonic masculinity. The person has a strong determination and commitment to the task which he is going to accomplish.

The scientific and technological invention has also played vital role for the production of hegemonic masculinity. Now masculinity is associated with expertise and technical skills (Connell 246). The association of male's muscle and masculinity

with building and construction, which require technical skill, can further be revealed by an analysis of an ad made for *Jagadamba Steel*. Taken in a long shot, the exposition is a huge panoramic scene of a construction site. It is a tough outdoor task which requires physical strength and some sort of skill and special knowledge. Here one has to carry heavy loads, bear physical risk as the work is hazardous; hence the traditional concept of masculinity is juxtaposed with the product, rod that is needed for erecting the pillar and supporting the infrastructure. The strong male voice voiced by the popular model/actor, Rajes Hamal enhances the product's association with men:

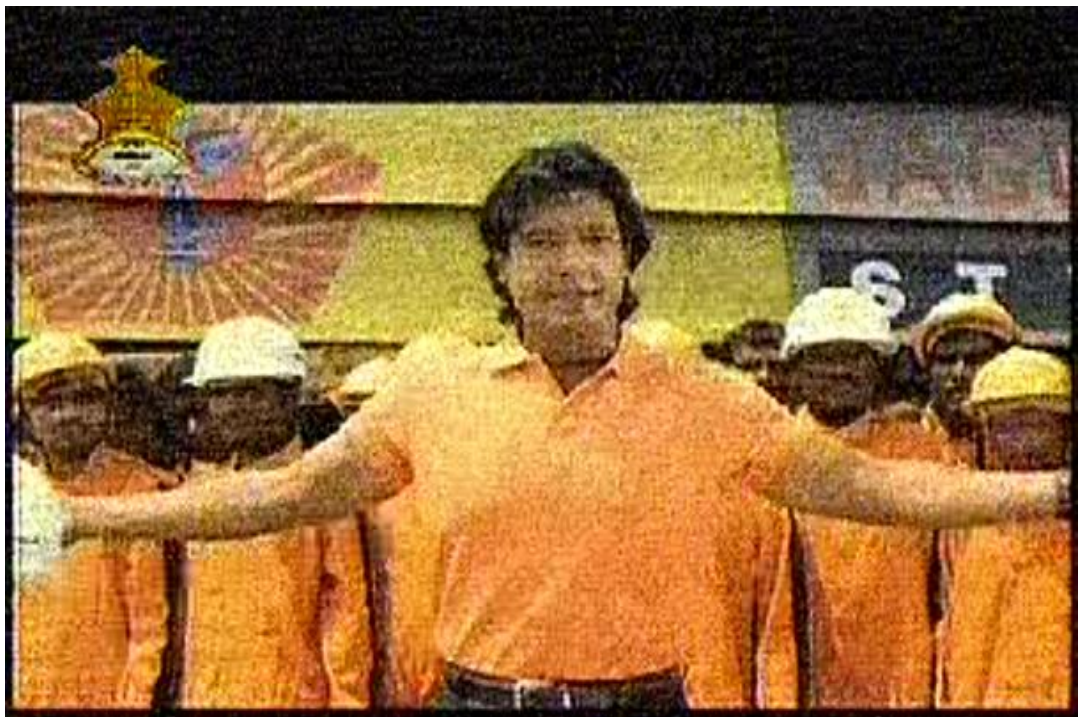


Fig. 15. *Jagadamba Steel* Advertisement NTV

Featuring the popular actor, it tries to exploit the reliability of the actor for the sale of the rod. His solid features and long career support the durability of the steel. To carry and handle steel and erect pillars male's strong muscle is required. It also promotes a particular muscular body: tall, well-built, sharp nose, wide eyes and strong assertive voice. All the males are not like that, nor do those who work in the construction site

bear supple, strong physique. The men who are lean and thin and of short height are excluded from the craft of engineering related to steel. Besides the absence of women in the ad annihilates women symbolically from the engineering field. When the model/actor stretches his arms, his muscles get swelled. Man's muscular and tough shoulders are the symbol of power. The point to note here is the actor's arms as the symbol of power does not represent the arms of those of the laborers. They do not have the power to assert nor is their voice authentic so they are in the background; unidentified and they wear the helmet to safeguard their head but the actor does not. Clearly, his voice is the voice of the manufacturer/producer, who has the power to assert. His assertion of the quality of the rod is logical and reasonable as he explains the benefits of the rod because of its homogeneity in terms of length and breadth. Further, the emphasis is on the economic aspect of steel because of its good quality, economically one has to pay less. The male voice-over supports the ad, calculates its pros and cons and provides reasonable conclusion. The mathematical calculation reveals the utility aspect of the rod. There is no hint about aesthetic pleasure/principle. Finally, "the right price, right weight and strong construction" go together with the hegemonic masculinity that it features. Hence, as suggested by the TV commercials, building and construction are exclusively masculine enterprises as they are the things that provide support and protection.

To sum up, the male models are shown completely determined and concentrated in their task full of risk. The way they are portrayed associates them with the state of being industrious, painstaking, enthusiastic, strenuous, bold, threatening, vigorous, invincible, vital, and virile and so on. The male characters are shown in movement and the association is with dynamism and development. Since men are

hyper masculine: scientific and progressive and women feminine: childlike, superstitious - the man has every right to colonize the feminine.

4.6. Appropriation of Femininity

On the basis of gender assignment the TV commercials juxtapose women with Beauty Products, Homemaking, Jewelry, Food and Beverages and Child-care whereas they juxtapose men with Building and Construction, Banking and Finance and other productive works. Featuring women with the products such as washing powder, toilet soap, food and beverages, looking after the children and limiting them within the domain of home, obviously, suggests the idea that women are primarily concerned with domesticity and child-caring. Male models are, by contrast, featured with iron rods and construction and other types of tough outdoor activities. The suggestion is that men are physically and mentally fit for such works. The ads assign different task for males and different tasks for females.

The women are shown wearing different accessories like jewels, make-up, having long polished nails. So the decoration is to attract the male viewers and then to stimulate sexual desire in them. The appearance of the female body is to be viewed by the male voyeur so that the male husband/lover rewards them, or takes notice of them. Thus most of the female characters have internalized the male orientation of looking at the female body. The female body is the “marked” body which is presented as an object of male gaze. The women have to accommodate themselves within the system set by the male:

[. . .] since man occupies a privileged situation in this world, he is in a position to show his love actively; very often he supports the woman or at least helps her; in marrying her he gives her social standing, he makes her presents; his independent economic and social position

allows him to take the initiative and think of contrivances. (Beauvoir, *Second Sex* 998)

Being dependent upon men, women cannot think about themselves. Being blinded by the patriarchal notion of femininity for them family happiness is paramount.

Patriarchy wants to continue the subordinate position of women because it suits men. Women, too under the patriarchal system, programmed to continue the role assigned to them. Motivated by the feminist reading of advertisements the aim of this research is to reveal the way in which women are dominated by men as suggested by Kate Millett. For Millet, the “essence of politics is power” (qtd. in Moi 205). And the task of feminists is to expose the way in which male dominates the female. She used the term patriarchy to show the cause of women’s oppression. She is of the opinion that:

Patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male, and this power is exerted, directly or indirectly, in civil and domestic life to constrain women. Despite democratic advances, women have continued to be coerced by a system of sex-role stereotyping to which they are subjected from the earliest age.

(Selden 215)

In her view, the sex-roles, as perpetuated in society, are repressive. And the acting out of these sex- roles in the unequal and repressive relations and domination and subordination is what Millett calls ‘Sexual Politics’ (Selden 215). The representation politics of media is to appropriate patriarchy. In addition to selling the products and services, the ads sell patriarchal worldview.

Besides the above mentioned ads which are analyzed in detail I would like to analyze a few more ads, though in brief, which will illuminate the way NTV

commercials appropriate the traditional/patriarchal gender roles. The coming analysis is about five ads from NTV: *Clinic Plus Shampoo*, *Vaseline Cream*, *Complan* (Food Drink), *Shakti Wheel* (washing powder) and *Ridhi Sidhi Jewelers*'.

The campaign *Clinic Plus Healthy Hair Contest* portrays a young mother who is enjoying playing and marry-making with her daughter. Both of them are expensively dressed and have set their long, black, silky or healthy hair loose. They look as if they belong to the affluent family, as the mother is enjoying her leisure. The male voice-over that supports the ad explains the activity of an ideal or a loving mother: "A mother forgets herself caring for her daughter, feels pleasure in the daughter's happiness and gets proud of the success of her daughter. Besides she worries for the bright future of her daughter."

Then another male voice urges women to "take part in the *Clinic Plus Healthy Hair Contest* and make their daughter's future bright." The slogan is "Healthy Hair is the Basis for the Bright Future."



Fig. 16. *Clinic Plus Healthy Hair Contest* Advertisement NTV

The message is “make your and your daughter’s hair healthy and win the contest which will provide scholarship for your daughter.” But it sells many things besides the product. The mother and the daughter look rich. The mother is educated as she is teaching her daughter. But she is associated with frivolity and wastage; the emphasis is on leisure and luxury. To make your daughter’s future you need not take part in healthy hair contest. Rather you should work hard, earn money and invest it for her education. But, traditionally, a woman makes no money and the property is of her husband, she cannot invest it on her own upon her daughter. Indirectly, the mother is teaching the daughter about her future role as a woman. Because “the child becomes male or female in response to the females or males she encounters in her family and to the male or female images she constructs according to her experience [. . .]” (Jones 92). The mother is playing a role model for the daughter. If both the daughter and the mother spent their time making their hair beautiful, they would get less time to cultivate their brain. It is a part of socialization; television as a “particular cultural technology,” plays important part in socialization (Williams 114). A feminist critic, Ann Oakley believes, “Mothers are not born, they are made” (qtd. in Ojha 257). The mother model, depicted in the ad, is, then, an exaggeration.

The ad is misleading because a body is a composite part, a whole, organic unit. There should be proportional health condition; one cannot have healthy hair irrespective of the body. The idea about healthy hair itself is confusing. What about curly, bushy, brown, fair and other types of hair? It encourages the growing girls to beautify themselves by caring their hair and skin. The ad is repressive as it underestimates the interest of the educated women. For educated women can be engaged in some income generating work and add in the family purse to secure their children’s future.

Likewise, the ad made for *Vaseline Whitening Cream* depicts women only as a flesh; women's inclination is only towards their body.



Fig. 17. *Vaseline Whitening Cream* Advertisement NTV

In it the popular Indian female actor, Anushka Sharma is shown walking confidently. She is wearing a revealing, sleeveless, fitting dress which shows her fair complexion that matches the fairness and smooth contours of her body parts. Her confidence is the result of her fair complexion which has made her attractive. She encounters another girl in a pink color, sleeveless dress. Her revealed parts are darker than her face. As a result she seems to feel insecure/low self-esteem; the way she walks illustrates this. Then the female actor suggests the solution with the *Healthy White Cream* that has triple sun screen.

With the cream white complexion is sold; the value attached to fair complexion indirectly supports racism. The space is provided to women who are tall,

thin and have fair complexion. The flawless, symmetrical body without pores and wrinkles is promoted. This creates hegemonic beauty. Aged women, women with short height and dark complexion are excluded from the sphere of beauty; so are women who do not attract the attention of heterosexual males or masculine women with strong muscles. Advertisers know very well that physical appearance, facial beauty and fair complexion play a central role in sexual desire. Growing girls and women, being exposed to such images, are forced to apply the cosmetic to have the particular complexion. Through such advertisements the commercials are colonizing women's body as they are constrained in such a way that they cannot walk without putting the mask of cosmetics. Women who refuse to wear make-up are termed as unfeminine in the present consumerist culture.

Desire to look beautiful has a negative effects on women as pointed by Nomi Wolf. She argues (with regards to cosmetic surgery) that it is something that runs counter to the feminist stance on their body. For Kathryn Pauly Morgan, cosmetic surgery is "primarily self-imposed surveillance of the body under patriarchal power [. . .] a form of colonization of women's bodies" (qtd. in Tong 277). Wolf, like Morgan, postulates that women's desire to be beautiful "is the result of nothing more exalted than the need in today's power structure, economy, and culture to mount a counter-offensive against women." Beauty industries help the producers, manufacturers and the advertisers earn money and more powerfully as claimed by Wolf serve for the power that want women keep economically, politically, and socially stagnated. Because women are forced to focus on their look they have little time to focus on far more important issues (Wolf 88). The ad also promotes consumerism as it increases the consumption of the cream which the women have not

only to put over their faces but also to their body parts which they are expected to reveal.

Not only does beauty appear to be a typical feminine value and aim in the commercials; motherhood is also upheld as an ultimate goal, without which a woman's life would be incomplete. Hence the combination of the myth of beauty and the family confine the models of successful women in these ads, and consequently their viewers, to the pursuit of beautification and motherhood. This leaves careers and other social achievements an option rather than a necessity for a woman. The campaign for *Complan* (Nutrient Food Drink) highlights the idealized concept of "motherhood" and the embedded patriarchal value system that have been defined and redefined through patriarchal perspectives. It also shows how the consequences of colonization of a woman's body, control and domination results in psychic oppression. In her essay "Male Hegemony and Colonization of the Female Body" Sangita Rayamajhi, an academician and a writer, questions, "Does not a woman have the right to make a choice about her role in reproduction" (7)? Not being able to procreate a (male) child she constantly feels guilty. The hegemonic discourse of motherhood subsequently transforms her into a psychologically alienated victim. Her alienation is caused due to the social ideology that perceives motherhood as essential for feminine identity. As Rayamajhi states in the same article, "unfortunately this idealized concept of motherhood never did open up a space for women, but paradoxically, by this very process of idealization, a woman is imprisoned in her own body, which necessitates that only male child take birth from her" (5).



Fig. 18. *Complan* Advertisement NTV

Taken in a long shot, the exposition shows a young lady doctor in a white coat moving forward. She confesses her lack of knowledge about the real worth of the food drink, *Complan*. She claims “it is known that children who have *Complan* grow but it is not known that they grow twice as much as the children who do not. So, mothers like me and others went to find out the truth.” Then in another shot, she, along with other mothers, is shown going to the *Department of Nutrition*. The camera takes inside the lab where a male doctor in a white coat is doing his research. The doctor explains the result of the research and the lady doctor/mother is assured. Then she urges her son to take the drink to grow faster. She is completely satisfied with the explanation made by the male doctor. The big smile in her face is the sign of her pleasure and satisfaction resulted from her being a successful mother, though a professional.

Despite male and female are juxtaposed with the same product and belong to the same occupation, what is highlighted is feminine aspects of women: nurturing and caring. The male is associated with professionalism, research, and expertise. Why she has to depend on the research made by the man? What would have happened if a lady is shown in the lab? The answer is a woman's life remains incomplete unless she becomes a mother. The patriarchal belief is that family and children are more important to women than the career. Further, a woman compromises her career for the sake of her family. This is the reason that the male participant can devote himself in the research whereas the woman cannot and then depend on his expertise. So education for women, until now, like those of nineteenth century Indian women is to "develop such womanly virtues as chastity, self-sacrifice, submission, devotion, kindness, patience, and the labors of love" (Chatterjee 121).

Women subordination to male expertise is embraced by other ads as well. Likewise, rivalry and jealousy are traditionally seen as negative feminine qualities. This stereotype notion about women is also retained by many of the commercials on NTV. Women are shown as competing to each other for looking better or doing trivial things like cleaning and so on. Such types of representations obstruct female solidarity and women sisterhood. An example of this can be seen in the ad made for *Shakti Wheel* (detergent powder):



Fig. 19. *Shakti Wheel* Advertisement NTV

In this ad two young women are competing washing their clothes. The woman in the right, who is in bright color dress, washes her clothes with *Shakti Wheel*, whereas the woman in dim color dress uses ordinary washing powder. The message is *Shakti Wheel* cleans clothes far better than the ordinary detergent powder. But it sells many things about femininity: washing is females' task, women are jealous, and compete for petty things. Moreover when the smiling lady demonstrates the cleaned clothe; it is a man's T-shirt. Obviously, they are doing the washing for men because men have to wear clean clothes to enhance their personality in the public field.

Similarly, it is said that women are fond of wearing jewels and presenting themselves as showpieces. In fact, it is alleged that women's love for wearing expensive jewels contributes unhealthy competition in between them and creates gaps between the Haves and the Have-nots. NTV commercials also show women as show-pieces. These types of ads promote commodification as women are valued not because of their personal traits but because of the ornamentation. The following ad made for *Ridhi Sidhi Jewelers'* will suffice this:



Fig. 20. *Shree Ridhi Sidhi Jewelers'* Advertisement NTV

The location is inside the home and the participants interact in the sitting room. An analysis of this ad can decipher the notion that women are gossipy and they are fond of wearing jewels and displaying them. Indeed, traditionally women and jewels are taken as synonymous. The accessorized woman body is the mark of her blessedness, and revelation of her husband's masculinity: his good health, his wealth and his love for her. The accessorized woman's body enhances her husband's prestige and social status in a patriarchal society. In it the lavishly ornamented woman in Fig. 15 appears at the door of her friend whose response to her is elicited by her ornaments:

Participant A: What beautiful jewels? Where have you bought them?

Participant B: He (she uses honorific third person pronoun *Uha* to address her husband) has bought it from *Ridhi Sidhi Jewelers'*.

Participant C: (A's Husband to A): I have bought it for you from *Ridhi Sidhi* (he hands over the jewel-case to his wife).

A: Wow! (*Aah kti ramro!*) The camera focuses on her jewels and the satisfaction/pleasure that glows on her face.

The lavishly ornamented woman signifies the social power of her husband. She is commodified as sign exchange value is attached to her; for she gets responded because of the ornaments. This type of representation encourages women to buy expensive jewels and display them for the social prestige that is the sign exchange value of the goods.

A strong male voice-over, finally, supports the ad “approved by ISO, *Riddhi Siddhi* is Jewels of pure gold and diamond, with hundred percent guarantee of pay back.” Again where to buy and what type of jewels to buy is determined by the man. It is the man who can certify and guarantee in a patriarchal society.

The ad very cunningly maintains the inferior position of women to men. In the Hindu society a wife has to respect and honor her husband. He is not only her senior and protector but also a *guru*. So she is not allowed to pronounce his name. A wife addresses her husband as *uha* or *hjur* as noted by an anthropologist, Lynn Bennett. She writes, “[. . .] the wife’s public behavior towards her husband is always marked by humility and deference. She must walk behind him, carry burdens for him, eat after he has finished, and refer to him in honorific terms (while he uses the lower form in addressing her),” [. . .] (174). Here also as pointed by Bennett the husband treats her as junior, *Timi* (you) indicates junior in the Nepali language. To please the wife the husband gifts her expensive jewels whereas to please him she should beautify herself and remain forever young. Hindu married women wear ornaments and put make-up for the good health and longevity of their husbands; ornaments, make-up and bright color dress are the sign of *swbhagya* (blessedness). Moreover, the two women are younger than the man; especially the wife is far younger. The hint is a husband should be senior to his wife, and remain dominant. The lay out, the choice of participants, the dialogue all support the inferior feminine aspects associated to female.

Similarly it promotes consumerism for women will compete wearing and displaying expensive jewels. They perspire to remain stylish, young and beautiful. This obstructs feminists' attempt for women solidarity and sisterhood. Rather it serves patriarchal desire to divide and rule women.

Briefly, these ads illuminate women's marginal position in the Nepali society, and try to reconstruct the meaning assigned to femininity in a country like ours. Not only these ads appropriate the acquiescent role of women, but also encourage women to perpetuate their own oppression by negotiating the assigned roles. Gender specialist Umay Abu Hana objects that women should not always be shown on TV busy in household chores. Even if they are shown their work should not be shown in the simplified manner (Gautam 50). Despite such objections women as shown in the commercials have a compulsive need to clean, scrub, wax and polish. They seem robot-like, uniformly impeccable, unruffled, and have well-proportioned body-contours.

To sum up, the images of submissive, meek, docile and demure women are some of the examples of appropriating and reinforcing traditional patriarchal gender roles assigned to people born as females. These representations assume that the female gender is a homogeneous category made up of women with identical interests and desires, regardless of caste, ethnicity, class, and geographical locations. These representations also function as supportive materials that block alternative forms of femininity. They firmly hold the age old dichotomy that makes a sharp division between the protectors (men) and protected (women). The representations still reflect, reconstruct and largely reconfirm existing stereotypes. Such images of women help disempower women as the sex and gender-specific experiences of women in real life situations.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This reading of Nepali advertisements has been inspired by the feminist thoughts. Acknowledging the problems of reading advertisements like that of a literary text, however, I have maintained to analyze the ads from other perspectives as well. I have analyzed fifteen ads from NTV. They are studied under five sub headings in details. The critical reading of the fifteen ads shows the relation between advertisements and the representation of the social mores. Basically, the study has examined the ways in which these commercials reinforce and appropriate the traditional concept of femininity and then appropriate the inferior status given to women.

Nepali advertising industry is still in its primary stage. There are rarely original advertisements that would knock off the orthodox concept and promote a progressive attitude. As seen from the analysis, most of the advertisements that we watch on NTV are a dubbed version of an Indian advertisement. Women in such ads represent Indian womanhood which is emulated as an ideal for Nepali women though they are regressive. The irrational norms of good wifeliness are borrowed from these ads. Women have not only to take care of their homes, husband, and children but also the aged. This is appropriated by the Nepali TV commercials. Mostly women are shown as cooking, serving the foods on the table, looking after the children, and cleaning. The primacy of a woman's traditional role as wife and mother is reiterated. In addition to this, the unintended message in the outside world does not fit to women. But the point to notice is that these ads are made to match the lifestyle of the urban, educated Indian women. Conceived from the patriarchal point of view these ads retain the dichotomy of public and private spheres that is deciding factor for gender role

allocation in the post-colonial India. The reinforcement is that these are essentially feminine tasks and women enjoy doing them. However, they do not match the expectation of educated Nepali women nor to the real life situation of average Nepali women. For the rural Nepali women and lower class women who have always been doing man's work, the household works of the urban middle class may seem a luxury. And the post-modern feminists' claim that technology can free women from cultural constraints (Gimlin 18) is still unattainable for them. Hence, such types of representations are frustrating to them as there lays a wide gap between their expectation and their real life situation.

Manipulated by the post-colonial Indian nationalism these ads promote the concept of *Bharatiya Nari* who have all the feminine qualities desired by patriarchy. Despite being educated, her primary role is limited within the private sphere. Besides selling goods they uphold the conservative Indian notion about the position of women in the society. These are regressive because of the limited roles assigned to women their talent goes unutilized. Moreover, the hegemonic femininity is imposed through these ads: the costume, the getup of these models and their face cut resemble the upper caste Brahmin and Chhetri urban women of Nepal that largely ignore the cultural and ethnic diversity of Nepali society. Similarly, presenting the upper caste Hindu women as Nepali women these ads exclude people belonging to other castes and then support caste discrimination retaining the feudal notion that only these upper caste educated women are beautiful and cultured and, thus, desirable.

Likewise, in most of the ads, women are presented as commodities to attract the viewers or they are modeled to subservient traditional roles. Advertising is thought to be the field of glamour and the target audience needs to be attracted and women can attract them. I do not negate the pleasure in looking or being looked at,

but one must remember that there is a power inscribed within that and when predominantly one sex is constituted as the spectacle and as the bearer of the look; there is a cause for concern. One can only wonder at how much this costs women including the female actors who live with the presence of the oppressive gaze of millions of men, in terms of bad body images, inferiority complexes, depression and pathologies like bulimia and anorexia.

Being exposed to such ads, and lured by the reward of feminine traits and beauty, growing girls instead of cultivating their brain they start cultivating their body. But, it is obvious that human body is not a changeless entity and in spite of the rigorous attempt it cannot be kept in the desired shape. The orientation towards the body, in the long run will make the girls duller and weaker and which will in turn block their entry from the productive work. This is the cause why women are unable to earn as much as men do, in spite of their longer working hour as explained by McClintock, “[. . .] women do 2/3 of the world’s work, earn 10% of the world’s income, and own less than 1% of the world’s property [. . .]” (92). Their labor is exploited in such never-ending fruitless job. The beauty myth is, therefore, deployed by the advertisers at women’s disadvantage.

It may be argued that advertising provides good opportunity for women’s exposure to the public field. Modeling is supposed to have great scope and helps women to earn big bucks. So the argument goes “what is wrong if someone is beautiful and presentable.” “Presenting oneself beautifully is an art, so it is good to keep yourself fit and desirable.” But the grim reality is they are merely the puppets in the hands of the producers and manufacturers who are the deciding factor about women’s role in advertising. The moment a woman's body and skin matures, she is headed socially downhill - and sometimes very rapidly. In this case, Key writes North

American statistics show that divorce around the age of forty is a highly predictable event. Usually the male remarries a younger woman, while the aging female is most often headed for loneliness and sexual ostracism through the remaining half of her life (19). Valuing women only for their youth and beauty these ads exploit women's unconscious fears of being rejected and provide substitutes through commercial products and consumption.

Obviously, beautiful women are there just to promote the sales of the goods, which will benefit the capitalists by selling their look, which will generate negligible remuneration for them in comparison to the profit made by the capitalists. And the fact is that Nepali media is largely dominated by men. Onta, in his research, has found out "despite much talk about 'gender and development' for the last twenty years, the owners of most media organization have done very little to increase the number of women in the editorial and management staff" (26). Since women are not the deciding factors they follow men's dictate. Women are presented either as the sex objects to attract the male audience or as the happy home maker. Showing women as desirable commodity the commercials ignore women's intellectual integrity and also help generate misconception about beautiful women. Many of them tend to characterize women as men's object of desire and portray women as sexually willing and available objects like any consumer item in the market. These advertisements are jeopardizing women's empowerment by constantly presenting women as passive, dependent, subservient, frivolous, and materialistic; and by pressurizing them with the compulsion to look beautiful. Such ads disempower women by filling them with either insecurities or vanities. Analyzing the negative effects of such representations Tyson writes: "[. . .] the patriarchal concept of femininity - frailty, modesty and timidity - disempowers women in the real world: it is not feminine to succeed in

business, to be extremely intelligent, to earn big bucks, to have strong opinions, to have healthy appetite (for anything), or to assert one's rights" (88). It seems the commercials try to preserve the conservative world views at all cost.

These advertising stereotypes have contributed to reinforce negative or undesirable views of these groups and contribute to discrimination against them. Because of traditional concepts about homely women and their fragile and weak character, they are mostly preferred to be seen applying lotions and washing clothes, rather than going to office. Bruno Bettelheim insists that "we must start with the realization that, as much as women want to be good scientists or engineers, they want first and foremost to be womanly companions of men and to be mothers" (qtd. in Greer109). This typical concept about women is appropriated by these commercials.

Women never appear in the ads as dynamic persons with distinct individual traits. A closer scrutiny shows they undermine the notions of women's solidarity and sisterhood by portraying women as hostile to each other. The commercials rarely portray women as having camaraderie relationship and being engaged in recreational activities. Many of them reconstruct and perpetuate the negative feminine qualities as women are shown gossipy, envious and jealous to others. Being mean minded, they are found to be competing in petty matters, like cleaning the clothes, wearing new saris and jewelry and like that. For example, the ads made for *Wheel Ok*, *Shakti Wheel*, and *Riddhi Siddhi Jeweler's* to name a few, that I have studied, have systematically managed to degrade women.

Contrarily, men are presented as strong, rational, stoic and adventurous. The emphasis is on their friendship, so the men in the ad of *NLIC* address as *Sathi* (Friend). Feudalist in nature, these ads are elitist in tendency. The husbands do not manage their personal things as wives are shown fetching their coat, cell phone and

like that. However, ordinary Nepali women with some education cannot afford to limit her role only as a happy home maker. They are struggling hard to uplift their position by making their presence in the public field. Such ads undermine the role of working women. Materially and linguistically also the patriarchal system dislocates obscures, rigidifies, excludes and oppresses women.

These ads also promote sexism by casting men as superior to women. Advertisements are in recorded form and while recording the voice of men is often sought to be bold and authoritative and that of women is intended to make informative or seductive. Women feature in all most all categories of commercials, despite this, males' voice-over supports them. It is noticeable that these ads never include women in expertise.

In this modern era people turn to different forms of media to know about the day-to-day happenings in their society. Media is taken as moral police to alert and question people about their behavior. Nav Raj Pokharel, Executive News Editor, NTV, explains "People believe on media for speaking the truth, a reason why governments want control over the media" (41). But now, this moral police have suddenly increased the use of women as sex symbols to grab the attention of people. One of the major forms of influential media in Nepal is advertising which is often portraying the entire group of women in the stereotypical ways.

Though it may be claimed that advertising is moving towards a slightly less stereotypical stance, women are still being portrayed in stereotypical ways, and stereotyping is becoming even stronger. In spite of the superficial advances the female models are trapped to the conservative notion of femininity. Though they are shown, most of the time, cooking and serving cheerfully at the dining table, they are never having food. In most of the Nepali family grown up women, mostly the mother/ wife

are the last ones to have the food. This means in many cases the most delicious and nutritious foods never remain for them. As a result, they are likely to suffer from irreparable damage in health and nutrition. It is still believed that a wife “should arise before her husband and elders and eat only after they have eaten” (Nabar 175). The continued exaltation of such self-effacing norms would pressurize growing girl to mould themselves accordingly. Beauvoir in her *The Second Sex* has also comments on the thankless nature of most housework, and has even compared it to the “torture of Sisyphus” (470). Unacknowledged martyrdom has always been part of a wife’s existence.

The enormous research carried out by feminists into the lives of women over the past few centuries has revealed that, whatever the religio-cultural framework, a certain common patriarchal ethic sought to relegate women to secondary roles. The increasing exclusion of women from public sphere, according to Vrinda Nabar, was “subtly achieved by buttressing such exclusion with seductive images of the alleged essence of womanhood” (177). She quotes Wollstonecraft who insists that if men would but allow themselves to enjoy the benefits of “rational fellowship” with women rather than expecting “slavish obedience” from them, they would “find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers - in a word better citizens” (178).

The focus of my study has to do with the role of advertising in our existence and the need for feminism to discredit the harmful legacies of tradition that these ads are handing over to us. I have attempted to specify how these stereotypes affect women’s creative impetus. My point is women’s refusal to subject these images, at least, will be an aid to women’s emancipation. Clearly enough, the woman who checks her makeup many a times in the mirror, worries about her sari and monitors

her food intake to stop being fat can never cope with the life's challenges. This self-surveillance is a form of obedience to patriarchy (Tong 280). So women should disobey the dictates of advertisements that are oppressive.

The normative femininity that is rules for being a good woman is concerned not only with duties and obligation, but capacity to look beautiful and bear male issues, is coming more and more from these commercials. I do not mean that women should not stay at home doing the household works nor do I mean that being beautiful is bad. But continuous representations of women as a sex object or a happy homemaker leave them no option. Women who want to utilize their full potentiality by exercising their brain in the economically productive work will be discouraged. Nor do I mean that being juxtaposed with iron rods and cements the muscle men are in the privileged position. I know the muscles are not that of the capitalists but those of the laborers who are constructing those things bearing the risk. I am not unmindful to the fact that the ads are equally oppressive to them. So it may be argued that being the happy home makers, rather women are in a better position as they are free of hazardous works. I do agree with the third wave feminists who believe gender oppression and other-kinds of human oppression co-create and co-maintain each other (Tong 273). But the point to note is the laborer's wife does not have those facilities to be a happy home maker. Poverty and deprivation may make one loud, quarrelsome and uncouth. Rather the muscle man, in spite of his hardships, his work is economically rewarding.

It is alleged that children learn about gender roles expectation from TV since most of them become familiar to it before they encounter with other social agencies. Although little experimental research has examined the consequences of gender stereotypes in television advertising, the few studies that do exist support the notion

that TV ads can influence viewers' self concept. Television commercials are a pervasive source of social information (Lavine et al. 1049). No NTV commercial ever shows either sex trying to do that which belongs to the other. Not a single man is shown with the role of cooking and cleaning except when he is a servant. This expectation obstructs women's pursuit to professionalism. If both husband and wife happen to hold jobs and are in nuclear family, it is much too difficult to maintain the normative aspects of womanhood. In this respect, sociologist Nicky Hart argues that the increasing divorce rate can be seen as a "product of conflict between the changing economic system and its social and ideological superstructure (notably the family)" (161). Wives are now encouraged to take up paid employment not only because of the demand for their services, but because the capitalist controlled media have raised "material aspiration" - the demand for goods that families desire. These material aspirations can only be satisfied by both spouses working as wage earners. However, conflict results from the contradiction between female wage labor and the "normative expectations" which surround a married life. "Working wives" are still expected to be primarily responsible for housework and raising children. In addition, they are still expected, to some degree, to play a subservient role to the male head of the household. Conflict between the spouses can result from this contradiction, and conflict can lead to marital breakdown. Media influences about gender roles expectation on the readers/viewers, then, cannot be ignored.

Even though, Nepali society is moving toward modernity, for many women it has still not brought their freedom. There are many women who have paid jobs and access to market. But the market and commodities are also shaped by male ideology. Beautifying products, feminine cloths, decorative accessories, and even the shape and size of feminine bodies are influenced by the modern male ideology. Despite apparent

changes, it can be argued, the fundamental hierarchical structuring of gender relation remains more or less unaltered. Girls are never encouraged to stay away from the burden of wearing jewelry or using a whole lot of make-up and presenting themselves as pleasing “show-piece.” They are taught that other women - through the purchases of clothes, cosmetics, food, etc. - are more desirable and feminine than they are. Hence, women buying cosmetics and other beauty products may be profitable for the merchandisers, but not for them.

As long as the market, the media and society are guided by patriarchal beliefs, ad makers will continue to ignore gender perspectives. It is important that there should be more women at the policy and decision making level. To bring about a change in social structure and outlook on women is definitely a daunting task. But if one truly believes in empowerment, all it takes is to rightly perceive and portray women, and have a progressive mindset at that. Women need to understand that advertising at its best is a hyperbole and at worst lies. They should know what is transmitted is not a realistic portrayal but an exaggerated version of social life. They should make sense that gender roles are not ultimate; they are established by the generation of men and women who went on performing them and they can be otherwise as suggested by Judith Butler. She challenges the general view that sex, gender, and sexuality constitute a seamless web such that if a person is biologically female (XX chromosomes), she will display feminine traits and desire men as her sexual partners. Instead, Butler claims that there is no necessary connection between a person's sex and a person's gender and suggests since gender roles are performative they can be resisted or performed differently. Samanth Holland also suggests that the category called the feminine can never be carrier of complete, unchanging, naturally given identities; it is open to challenges and changes that perpetually rewrite its

discursive borders (7). Women, therefore, must learn how to question the most basic assumption about feminine behavior because everything that they may observe could be otherwise.

To conclude, the elusive concepts of “womanliness” and “manliness” have had a strong hold on Nepali cinemas and TV commercials. However, it is to be understood that the essence of gender - both masculine and feminine is nothing more than the romantic sentiment and a nostalgic tradition of imposed limitations. Women, therefore, must smash the concept of masculine need for mastery and dominance, aggression and self-righteousness. They should fight for equal access to development and policy and decision making processes. So the sexist ideology made by bourgeois society can be dismantled. For this, women need education and employment opportunities which can lead to women’s liberation. An educated woman only can say no to everything that is unjustifiable. She can find out the causes of women victimization and fight to eliminate them and free her from the malaise of domesticity and the untenable narrow boundaries of her prescribed roles by revolting against all types of exploitations.

Finally, I have attempted, though on a personal level, to resist the way women are portrayed in NTV commercials with the realization that the personal is the political. However, this is not enough. More and more study should be carried out analyzing the portrayal of women in media and make the general mass conversant to media literacy. Representation of women in the News papers and magazines, in the context of Nepal, is also an unexplored field. Potential researchers may take this path. Likewise, gender role allocation in the Nepali cinemas and tale serials would be another field for further researchers. They have to raise a feminist consciousness, which will begin to see previously invisible realities of gender and women’s lives.

Works Cited

- Acharya, Meena et al. *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Nepal*. UNFPA, 2007.
- Adams, Hazard, ed. *Critical Theory since Plato*. USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College, 1971.
- Adorno, T. *The Culture Industry*. London & New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Altman, Dennis. *Global Sex*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Angle, James F., David T. Kollat and Roger D. Blackwell. *Consumer Behavior*. Illinois: Dryden Press, 1968.
- Austin, J.L. "How to do Things with Words." Lecture II. Ed. Henry Bail. *The Performance Studies Reader*. New York: n.p., 2008.
- Bamburac, Nirman Maranjak, Tarik Jusic and Adla Isanovic, eds. *Stereotyping: Presentation of Women in Print Media in South East Europe*. Sarajevo: Mediacenter, 2006.
- Basow, S. A. *Gender Stereotypes and Roles*. 3rd ed. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1992.
- Beasley, Ron, and Marcel Danesi. *Persuasive Signs: The Semiotics of Advertising*. New York: Mouton de Guryter, 2002.
- Bennett, Lynn. *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sisters: Social and Symbolic Roles of High Caste Women in Nepal*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- Berger, Asa Arthur. *Media Analysis Technique*. London: Saga Publication, 1994.
- Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Bhandari, Hari. "Nepali Television: From Transmission to Reception." *Smarika*. The Silver Jubilee Journal. Singhadarbar: Nepal Television, 2011.

- Bhusal, Ghanshyam. *Aajako Marxbad ra Nepali Kranti*. Kathmandu: Nepal Adhyayan Kendra, 2008.
- Black, Paula. *The Beauty Industry: Gender, Culture, Pleasure*. London & New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Brown, Bruce W. *Images of Family life in Magazine Advertisements: 1920- 1978*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981.
- Buss, David. *Evolutionary Psychology*. < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>>. Retrieved: Sept. 15, 2011.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- CBS. "Population Census 2001." National Report in Collaboration with UNFPA Nepal, 2001.
- Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nations and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Chopra, Radhika, Caroline Osella and Filippo Osella, eds. *South Asian Masculinities: Content of Change, Sites of Continuity*. India: Kali for Women and Women Unlimited, 2004.
- Cixous, Helene. "Sorties." *Modern Criticism and Theory*. Ed. David Lodge. London and New York: Longman, 1988.
- Cohen, Dorothy. *Advertising*. USA: Scot, Forsman and Co., 1988.
- Connell, R. W. "The History of Masculinity." *The Masculinities Studies Reader*. Eds. Rachel Adams and David Savran. Malden, Massachusetts USA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2002.
- Cook, Gay. *The Discourse of Advertising*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

- Cortese, Anthony J. *Provocateur: Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008.
- Crespi, Isabella. "Gender Socialization within the Family: A Study on Adolescents and their Parents in Great Britain." <<http://www.google.com>> . Retrieved: Oct. 15, 2011.
- de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Trans. H. M. Prashley. London: David Campbell Publishers Ltd., 1993.
- . "Woman as Other." *Essays on Western Intellectual Tradition*. Eds. Shreedhar Pd. Lohani et al. Kathmandu: MK publishers and Distributors, 2008.
- Dhungana, Nirjal. *Advertising*. Vol 2. Issue: 2 Year. Dec. Kathmandu: ANN, 2008.
- Dominic, Strinati. *An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Elkins, James, ed. *Visual Culture*. UK: Intellect, 2010.
- Fiske, John and John Hartley. *Reading Television*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.
- FWLD. *Discriminatory Laws against Women and Their Impact: A Review of the Current Situation and Proposals for Change*. Kathmandu: Forum for Women, Law and Development, 2000.
- Gauntlett, David and Annette Hill. *TV Living: Television, Culture and Everyday Life*. London & New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Gautam, Deepa. *Kachko Parda: Nepali Televisionma Mahila*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2006.
- Ghimire, Ashok. A personal Interview. Kathmandu, Nepal, April 15, 2011.
- . "Arresting Business Opportunities; Nepal Television." *Smarika*. The Silver Jubilee Journal. Singhadarbar: Nepal Television, 2011.

- G. Johnson, Allan. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology: A User's Guide to Sociological Language*. 2nd ed. Boston, 2000.
- Glimlin, Debra L. *Body Work: Beauty and Self – Image in American Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Goffman, Erving. *Gender Advertisements*. New York: Harper, 1976.
- Greer, Germaine. *The Female Eunuch*. UK: Harper Collins, 1970.
- Hall, Stuart. "The Spectacle of the 'Other'." *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Ed. Stuart Hall. London: Sage publication, 1997.
- Hart, Nicky. *When Marriage Ends: Study in Status Passage*. London: Tavistock Publication Limited, 1976.
- Heide, Margaret J. *Television Culture and Women's Lives*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.
- Holland, Samantha. *Alternative Femininities: Body, Age, and Identity*. Oxford: Berg, 2004.
- Humm, Maggie. *Feminism and film*. North America: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Jain, Jasbir, and Sudha Rai, eds. *Film and Feminism: Essays in Indian Cinema*. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publication, 2002.
- Jethwaney, Jaishri N. *Advertising*. New Delhi: Phoenix Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1999.
- Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Writing the Body: Towards an Understanding of *Icriture Feminine*." *Feminist Criticism and Social Change*. Eds. Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt. New York and London: Methuen, 1998.
- Key, Wilson Bryan. *Media Sexploitation*. California: Prentice Hall Trade, 1976.

- Kimball, M. M. "Television and Sex Role Attitude." *The Impact of Television: A Natural Experiment in Three Communities*. Ed. T. M. Williams. Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1986.
- Kristeva, Julia. "The Speaking Subject." *Theory of Criticism*. Ed. Raman Selden. London and New York: Longman, 1988.
- Kulvicki, John V. *On Images: Their Structure and Content*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Lavine, Howard et al. "Depicting Women as Sex Objects in Television Advertising: Effects on Body Dissatisfaction." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. Vol. 25 No. 8, August 1999. 1049- 1058.
- Leech, Geoffrey N. *English in Advertising: A Linguistic Study of Advertising in Great Britain*. London: Longman, 1966.
- Liechty, Mark. *Making Middle-Class Culture in Kathmandu*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2008.
- Maine, Margo & Joe Kelley. *The Body Myth: Adult Women and the Pressure to Be Perfect*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2005.
- McClintock, Ann. "Soft-Soaping Empire." *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. 2nd ed. Eds. Bill Ashcroft and others. London: Routledge, 2006.
- McFall, Liz. *Advertising: A Cultural Economy*. London: Saga Publication, 2004.
- Mitra, Jyoti. *Women and Society: Equality and Empowerment*. New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 1997.
- Moi, Toirl. "Feminist Literary Criticism." *Modern Literary Theory*. Eds. Ann Jefferson and David Robey. 2nd ed. London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1986.
- Mulvey, L. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Visual and Other Pleasure*. Ed. L. Mulvey. London: Macmillan, 1989.

- Nabar, Vrinda. *Caste as Woman*. India: Penguin Books, 1995.
- O' Halloran, Key I., ed. *Multimodal Discourse Analysis: Systemic Functional Perspective*. London, New York: Continuum, 2004
- Ojha, Netra. *Models of Society*. Ed. Padamlal Devkota. Kirtipur: Academic Book Center, 2006.
- Olson, Gray A. *Women Writing Culture SUNY Series, Interpretations Border Testimony(ies) and Critical Discourse*. Ed. Henry A, Girous. USA: State University of New York Press, 1995.
- Onta, Pratyoush. *Mass Media in Post- 1990 Nepal*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2006.
- Parajuli, Shekhar. "Nepalma television sanskritiko lekhajokha." *Nepal Television: Abyash, Anubhuti ra Bislesan*. Eds. Deepa Gautam and Shekhar Parajuli. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2008.
- Perry, Nick. *Hyperreality & Global Culture*. London & New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Pitts, Victoria L.. *In the Flesh: The Cultural Politics of Body Modification*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Pokharel, Nav Raj. "Can Nepal Safeguard its Sovereign Sky?" *Smarika*. The Silver Jubilee Journal. Singhadarbar: Nepal Television, 2011.
- Poudel, Ram Chandra. "Gender and Sexuality in Magazine Advertising: A Critical Discourse Analysis." PhD Diss. Tribhuvan University, 2009.
- Pramaggiore, Maria & Tom Wallis. *Film: A Critical Introduction*. 2nd ed. China: Pearson, 2008.
- Rayamajhi, Sangita. "Male Hegemony and Colonization of Female Body." *Who is the Daughter of Nepal? A Collection of Essays*. Kathmandu: Across Publication, 2001.

- Reichert, Tom et al. "The Effect of Sexual Marketing Appeals on Cognitive Processing and Persuasion." *Journal of Advertising*. Vol. 3, No. 1. (Spring 2001), 13-27.
- Sandage, C. H. et al. *Advertising Theory and Practice*. Delhi: I.I.T.B.S. Publishers & Distributers, 2000.
- Schirato, Tony and Jen Webb. *Reading the Visual*. Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2004.
- Selden, Raman. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 2nd ed. New York: Harvester Wheatsheat, 1989.
- Sharma, Durga Nath. "Nepal televisionko nalibeli." *Nepal Television: Abyash, Anubhuti ra Bislesan*. Eds. Deepa Gautam and Shekhar Parajuli. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari, 2008.
- Subedi, Prativa. *Nepali Women Rising*. Kathmandu, Sahayogi Press, 1997.
- Tasker, Yvonne. *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Tong, Rosemary. *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Westview Press, 2009.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User Guide*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Williams, Raymond. *Television Technology and Cultural Form*. Ed. Ederyn Williams. London: Routledge, 1975.
- Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Women Are Used against Women*. America: Harper Collins e- books, 2002.
- Yami, Hisila. *People's War & Women's Liberation in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Janadhwani Publications, 2007.