

## **Content Analysis of Tamil TV Commercials Aimed at Women in the Post War Context**

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### **Abstract**

Television advertising is an industry that has a huge investment opportunity. To help evaluate whether or not advertising investments are earning the best return on investment, it is important to know how effectively television ads capture and maintain audience attention and engage viewers. People watching televisions are bombarded with images and slogans through advertisements. There are more concerns regarding the representation of women in the media. Consumers in the Sri Lankan Post war environment are confronted with a large number of TV commercials for many products and services. In such clustered media environment, one of the major challenges for advertising is to attract and retain the attention of consumers, who have redeveloped a purchased patterns among huge number of brands. In the post war context women have much supremacy on the purchase decision making. Marketers attract the women as a special segment to reach their sales target. It is important to know the content of the TV commercials to fine-tune the best content compare with the competitors in the market. Identifying the content of the commercials form and the consumers' perspective helps to enrich the commercials in an expected way. Content analysis method was used to analyze the content of 14 TV commercials aimed at women in the post war context. Data were collected from 30 women on their perspective on the contents in the advertisements were analyzed. Through the coding method, researchers categorized the contents of the TV commercials as physical attractiveness, beauty, uniqueness, safety, ease, being modern, and nourishment. Finding shows that most of the TV commercials aimed at women comprehended of the physical attractiveness, and the beauty, to attract the women in the post war background.

**Keywords: Content Analysis, Tamil TV Commercials, Post-War Context.**

## INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a way to showcase one's products or services and offer consumers a vast choice in terms of what they are offered and what they can choose to buy. For the consumers, advertising offers them a choice to get at the best in the market at the best price. Today, it is unimaginable to expect people, especially in urban areas, to spend their money buying products of which they haven't heard a thing. People know what is in the market and then choose what they want. Nothing can be more satisfying than this, for then one gets his or her money's worth. But advertising has been not only a boon, but also a bane in many ways. Advertising relies on consumerism to succeed and consumer's judge by materialistic standards. Moreover, successful advertising means emerging triumphant in the face of tough competition, often without consideration of high standards or aesthetic tastes. women play an important role in the buying process, as we make up a majority of overall home and business expenditure.

According to Martha Barletta, author of *Marketing to Women*, women are the primary decision-makers for consumer goods in 85% of households. They make 75% of decisions about buying new homes, and make 81% of the decisions about groceries (Martha Barletta, 2005). They influence at least 80% of all household spending. Women drive 70-80% of all consumer purchasing, through a combination of their buying power and influence, which means that even when a woman is not paying for something herself, she is often the influence or veto vote behind someone else's purchase, (Martha Barletta, 2006) Women around the world are more similar than they are different, they are united by their brain structures, hormone levels and biological role in birthing the human race. They are also united by their roles as caregivers, relationship builders and communicators (Bridget Brennan,2016). Globally, they control about \$20 trillion in annual consumer spending, and that figure could climb as high as \$28 trillion in the next five years. Their \$13 trillion in total yearly earnings could reach \$18 trillion in the same period. According to the findings derived from the past studies it would be identical that women are the special segments in the whole market, therefore it is important to consider the women as a special segment for market development and for the collection of feedback. And yet many companies do just that, even ones that are confident they have a winning strategy when it comes to women. (Michael & Kate Sayre, 2009). From the different ideas given by the authors who considered women as a special segment, it is clear that marketers should separate the women segment and concern as a special market for their success.

Marketers use different promotional methods to capture women segments. Advertisement is a form of promotion, and promotion is the face of a company. As one of the four pillars of marketing (along with product, place, and price), promotion encompasses the variety of techniques an advertiser uses to communicate with current and potential consumers. The goal of promotion is to ensure that targeted customers know and like a company's products. There are many tools available to communicate a brand message to potential consumers, including ads on television and radio, print ads in newspapers and magazines, on the World Wide Web, outdoors on billboards and bus shelters, as well as in store promotions, coupons, direct mail, and many others.

TV commercials is just one of the ways that advertisers try to earn our hearts and hard-earned money. Television advertisement is a medium considered to be very important in delivering the message to its target audience as a fastest medium in creating awareness about products among strategies for deciding what products to put before a given audience Yousaf & Shehzad, (2013). Wolin, (2003) found that , Women assimilate more information from a commercial than men do, It's unclear whether gender of a spokesman makes a difference to the audience; some studies suggest it matters, some say it doesn't, Women are bothered by fast and loud music in ads, whereas men aren't, and Women have to see a commercial more times than men to be persuaded to buy a product, Women will buy brands that are aimed toward men or women, but men will not buy brands that are aimed toward women (Marti Barletta & Martha Barletta ,2006), .

In recent years, it has been observed a significant propensity to equalization of the basic skills of both gender (Royo, 2007). It could be observed a gender equation in recent years: equal access to education and health (UNDP, 2010) and a decline in the performance of household responsibilities (Aguayo et al., 2011). Women are playing significance role in business development as entrepreneurs as well as consumers in the North Sri Lanka, where is being a prolong influence by war (ICES, 2016). women are associated primarily to utilitarian products, such as cleaning products and food (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971; Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976; Venkatesan and Losco, 1975), which may be mainly due to recent social changes related to their entry into the workforce and the increase in the purchase power of women, which has transformed them into a desired target audience (UNDP, 2010). The messages transmitted in advertisements shape our ideas about appropriate gender roles, as well as our attitudes and expectations as men and women (Signorielli, 1989). Exposure to gender stereotypes is advertising is associated with

negative attitudes towards women and about the ideas of how they should behave and the roles they should play in society (Kilbourne, 1999).

### **Need for the study**

In the last fifty years, the world we live in has changed melodramatically. Women have gained greater financial individuality and accountability. The trend toward larger numbers of women graduating started with the baby boom generation (Holland, 2012). It created a group of women who are well educated, financially independent, and capable of making their own investment and purchasing decisions (Sam et. al, 2010). Women often decide large and small purchases alike as they have taken over the role of the primary breadwinner of the family. the majority of women today are financially responsible for generating their own and their family's income (Fearnow, 2012). However, only three percent of creative directors for advertising agencies are women (Holland, 2012). Companies need to adapt to the changing market place in order to not only survive but also thrive as a business. The need for companies to adapt to the current market is not a new phenomenon. It has always been a challenge to adapt to market changes, but adapting to a radical shift in market segmentation can be even more difficult.

Due to thirty years of civil war, in Northern Sri Lanka, many women lost their spouses in their families and they have to play as a major role to manage their families as a leader and the earner. Therefore, they play important role in each family. Earning for life via managing business, and spending money for consumption and other purposes are considered by them. many companies are interested in working with war widows, female single headed households and military widows. These women need to be helped further with assistance to rebuild their lives, gain livelihood options and other basic amenities. They must also be empowered so that their voices are heard in the development drive taking place in the conflict affected areas. So many companies target them as an important segment for their strategic decision making. Women consumers in the post war marketing environment are confronted with the large number of TV commercials for many product and services. TV commercials can be seen in popular Tamil television channels like "Rubavahini," "DanTV," "ShakthyTV" "SunTV" "StarTV", "VijaiTV", which transfer the messages to the audience.

In such a clustered media environment, one of the major challenges of TV commercials is to attract the consumers and to be the leader in the market segment, where the women

consumers reshape the spending pattern and experienced as a knowledge consumer. How consumers understand the content of the advertisements, is one way to study the segments, and it gives more information about the segments, many authors analyses the content of the TV commercial in their perspectives. But, how the segment perceived the content is important as which give customers' perspectives.

Content analyzing the advertisements gives the rich data to both the organizations and the consumers to check whether the expected messages are conveyed to the aimed audience Moniek & Valkenburg (2002). In a single sentence it can be said that content analysis is the end product of the advertisers specially the TV commercial producers who hypothetically assumed the message, which would be more effective in any context, they could check the assumptions through the content analysis as a proven message passed through the TV commercials, content analysis is a valuable tool for measuring effectiveness. Content analysis can be done in different perspectives, advertisers can express their perspective through the content analysis, researcher can make the contents. Researchers can analysis the content of the advertisements on their perspective, like what messages TV commercials have or content analysis can be done on customer's perspective, what and how they perceive the content conveyed through the TV commercials. Many advertisements splashing images in advertising, it's no wonder many viewers, scholars and commentators have voiced concern over the increased objectification of targeting women through media, and the potential effects these images may have on them. There has been a significant amount of research done on the effect that advertising has on women (Chan, & Cheng, 2012; Kilbourne, & Jeane, 1999). By creating advertisements with unrealistic messages given to the women segment, it has resulted in anxiety, low self-esteem, and low self-confidence in many women. Most of these negative emotions stems from unhappiness among body and appearance (Belkaoui, & Belkaoui, 1976). Therefore, whatever the content marketers are in, should have an appropriate strategy to survive. Unrealistic messages/content which are not match with the content will expenses more to the marketers, as the past researched mentioned. To draw the realistic messages, consideration of the consumer segment specially the women segment, who involve much in the post war context would give more strategic alteration to the marketers.

### **Research objectives**

1. To identify the contents, of Tamil TV commercials aimed at women from the customers' perspective
2. To suggest the new ideas to have effective contents appropriate for the women segment in the post war context.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Advertising provides images and language that are relevant to its target audience while keep pace with specific cultural, economic and social changes (Zhang, Srisupandit & Cartwright, 2009). And advertising is a “distorted mirror” (Pollay, 1986) as it serves the interests of the advertisers by portraying selected lifestyles and values considered to be beneficial to the advertisers. From the finding of the researched distorted mirror means that it is the one-way communication to the audiences, but the perspectives from the audiences are needed. Periodically many researchers have studied the content of advertisements, whether they are accepted by the consumer for example content analysis study found that many traditional Confucian values such as humility, patience, and thrift were not employed in Chinese television advertisements (Zhang, Song, & Carver, 2008). Further the studies tried to identify the importance of gender balance in advertisements, since gender role is defined here as a set of culturally defined behavioral norms associated with males and females, respectively, in a given social group or system (Connell 1987), and they found the significant difference in gender role, for example, McArthur and Resk (1975) found that overall, men appeared more often than women in TV advertisements and men and women differed in terms of the following: Credibility – men being authorities and women users; Role – women are portrayed in terms of their relationships to others and while men's role is perceived as independent of others; Location – men are shown in occupational settings and women in the home; Persuasive arguments – men gave more “scientific” arguments than women; Rewards – women were shown obtaining approval of family and males; and Product type – men were authorities on products used primarily by women.

Later researchers found the importance of women in the market and how they can be treated separately and the importance of them. Guha (2013) in his study explained the changing perception and compared the buying behavior for working and non - working women in Urban India and in turn their influence in buying behavior of family members. From the study it was concluded that working women are more quality and price conscious and store

loyal than non-working women. Working women are developing as important segment for marketers. Bishnoi and Sharma (2009) in their study aimed to find the background of the consumer and TV advertising influences the buying behavior. They found that Advertisements influence on male purchase behavior than female consumers. Yousaf and Shehzad (2013) studied the effect and influence of TV commercials over illiterate and literate people of Pakistan. Findings shows that illiterate spend more than 2hrs per day of TV commercials and literate watch less than 2hrs per day. With regard to content watching 70% of literates prefer content in TV commercials and 68% of illiterates likes content. These studies only identified, whether they preferred the contents in the advertisements, but they failed to define how the consumers quoted the contents of advertisements.

Girls and young women are primarily told by advertisers that what is most important about them is their clothing, their bodies, their beauty. Girls of all ages get the message that they must be flawlessly “beautiful,” and above all else, they must be thin ( Kilbourne, Jeane. (1999).

Teenage girls and young women spend over \$4 billion annually on cosmetics alone due to the heavy advertisements (Kilbourne, Jeane. (1999).) The amount of time young women spends watching TV, listening to the radio, or going online is related to a wide variety of social and demographic factors. Girls and young women from higher incomes are least likely to report a bedroom equipped with a TV — 44 percent where the median income is over \$40,000 and 61 percent where the median income is under \$25,000 (Henry J. Kaiser (1999). Content analyses of TV programming suggest that girls and young women are shown that skinny is beautiful and that girls have to be attractive to men; that sex is fun and risk free; and that most people think about and have sex frequently, without much concern for love or the stability of the relationship (Kunkel, et, al ,1999).

Further, many researchers had interested on women segment in the market, for instance Bardwick and Schumann (1967) analyzed male and female role portrayals in television commercials and concluded that women are portrayed primarily as homebound or as housewives. Courtney and Whipple (1974) studied the portrayal of women in television commercials and found significant differences between men and women. Women were over-represented in advertisements for cosmetics and were less likely to appear in advertisements for cars, trucks and related products. Seventy-five percent of all advertisements using women

were for products found in the kitchen or bathroom, 8 reinforcing the stereotype that a woman's place is in the home. Women as compared to men were portrayed mostly in house settings rather than business settings.

In recent era researchers tried to analysis the content of TV commercials aimed at children (Moniek, Buijzen & Valkenburg , 2002). In this research researched analyzed the verbal quotes displayed in the advertisements. Swati Bisht (2013), studied how TV commercials influence on the purchase decision of youth, this research considered the both segments. Chan, and Cheng, (2012) analyzed the Portrayal of females in magazine advertisements in Hong Kong.

content analysis of commercials aimed at children and teenagers studied by Moniek Buijzen & Patti M. Valkenburg (2002) . In this research they analyzed the appeals in the TV commercials aimed at children and teenagers. In this study researchers did not considered the gender difference, they analysed the quotes conveyed through TV commercials.

Few studies have been done in the post war context on this topic, for specimen, Dilogini and Shivany (2014) tried to explore the relationship between age variance and TV commercials in this context, in the same context, further studies have been done on TV commercials and parent & child conflict, resolving methods for conflict from TV commercials (Dilogini, & Shivany, 2015, 2015). Shivany (2011), studied attitude of the consumers towards the TV commercials in the same context. Further Shivany (2016) extended her idea into critical discourse analysis of Tamil cultural identity in celebrity endorsement in advertisements. Form this study researches extended this idea how the consumers quote the content of TV commercials aimed at women in the post war context.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to analysis the text message which provide a message to communicate something to the women in the unique context.

### **Research Design**

14 Tamil TV commercials broadcasted on the local TV channels were considered as sample of the study. From 2016 January to June, six-month period was considered the research

period as the observation period for research. To analysis the content of the Tamil TV commercials, 30 women was selected as the respondents to understand their perspectives on those contents

### **Sampling method**

Population of the study was the TV commercials targeted to women. Due to the limited time offered to the researcher only 14 advertisements, and 30 women were selected for analyzing the content of Tamil TV commercials on their perspectives. In qualitative research, there are variety of sampling methods available to answer the complexed and simple research questions, the sampling method is hinge on the methodology, which the researcher uses to answer the research questions. (Marshall, 1996). According to Sounders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007), qualitative has not the purpose to generalize the findings from the sample to population, it is to explore the in-depth understanding of the phenomena from the richness data collected from while saturation. In practice, judgment sample Also known as purposeful sample, this is the most common sampling technique.

### **ANALYSIS**

Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967). Text data in verbal, print, or electronic form and have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or print media such as articles, books, or manuals (Kondracki & Wellman, 2002). The goal of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Present study followed the content analysis to analysis the contents of the TV commercials targeted to the women in the post war context. Data analysis of this research has two parts. initially women were selected based on the theoretical sampling method for collecting feedback on the content of the advertisements. Selected women were requested to observe the advertisements, which were selected in this research, then after one week, data were collected from the women and they requested to point the contents wht they could observed in those advertisements.

## **RESULTS**

There are 14 advertisements telecasted on “Dan TV”, a local Television channel were considered as a sample size for this research. Researchers requested the selected women for observing the selected advertisement for a week. They collected the contents, which the women noted as content during their observations. For 14 advertisements women quoted 42 contents. They specified the contents of each advertisement, then the researches translated each quote said by the respondents, then researchers coded each content to make them into a common category.

At the initial coding stage researchers found 42 initial codes/concepts (Charmaz,2006), then at the second stage axial coding 11 categories or concepts identified form the 42 initial codes, then 09 core categories were identified as a content conveyed through the TV commercials aimed at women (see table 1).

Through the coding method, Study categorized the contents of the TV commercials as physical attractiveness, beauty, uniqueness, safety, ease, being modern, and nourishment. Most of the TV commercials aimed at women contain the physical attractiveness, and beauty, to attract the women in the post war context.

### **Implication to the marketing theories and organizations target women**

Through the content analysis method this study found that there are nine contents the women perceived about the Tamil TV commercials in the post war environment. The content which have been derived from the coding of said vocabularies by the women in the context. This study has an implication for the organization, that they can check whether the consumers go for with the messages, what they thought to be placed in the minds of women. The identified contents such as physical attractiveness, beauty, uniqueness, safety, ease, being modern, and nourishment are the common and standard contents used by many organizations globally. It is a common messages conveyed by the marketers, who wanted to target the women segments. Post war marketing environment is unique. war provoked widows, women headed families, parentless girls, separated women, women dependents, discharged warriors, and desperate mothers, worried companions, livelihood women executives, and ect. Therefore, organizations which target the women in the post war environment should consider this different segment in the context and should have a special message to attract them to become

a leader in the market. This study further has another implication to theory in marketing. So practitioners ought to consider the special messages to the specified women segments.

**Table 1: Content analysis of TV commercial from the women perspective**

Quotes said by the women in the context	First cording	Contents	Type of the TV commercials
Slim Cholesterol free Weight losing in nature Weight loss after pregnancy Smart	Slim Weight loss	Physical attractiveness	Green tea Nutritional supplementary milk powder
Colorfulness Gracefulness Refinement Clean Attractiveness Skin tone beauty Always young Whitening for young look	Attractiveness and beauty	beauty	Cosmetics Car Paint Insurance scheme
Women as best As a leader Home maker Involvement and committed Be smart	Women is unique	Uniqueness	Cosmetics Nutritional supplementary milk powder
Life security Money for future Safety for women Safety given as a mother Pregnancy Feeding	Safety Security	safety	Saving account Insurance scheme
Freedom Can do any works No barriers No pain Free from menses sick	Free and easy	ease	Deposable pads Home made products Instant foods
Personality development Support for empowerment Slim and smart Grate look Active lifestyle Assistance for home making	Modern lifestyle	being modern,	Hair oil Garments Car
Bone health For active involvement Régime for healthy life Healthy and safety Food supplement For best morning For the family support	Healthy life Smart and slim Nutrition	Nourishment	Milk powder Vitamin capsules

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