

# MASCULINITY AND SURROGATE PRODUCTS: A STUDY OF PRIME TIME TV ADVERTISEMENTS

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## Abstract

The television has become a persuasive and powerful medium of communication in India but the image of Indian men and women on the television is derogatory and away from real concerns. Portrayal of women are housebound where as men as achievers. There are numerous instances of stereotyping and discrimination. TV Advertisements being persuasive evokes us to purchase products and services. The products of the advertisement which are harmful for human folk have been banned by the Government of India. Therefore, moving their products under the mask of another product of their own company has been a phenomenon in the recent past and is widely known as “Surrogate Advertising”. It has been found that most of the Surrogate products display male power and is layered with gender stereotyped traits eventually depicting women in poor light. Our society is suffering enormously in various aspects due to the existence of gender inequality. Hence, this study will focus on the Surrogate Advertisements and the notions of masculinity explicitly picturised in two Hindi TV News Channels. Prime Time of the TV channels has been studied for three months-October to December 2015 using specially designed codes for the study. The findings have been supported by Symbolic Annihilation Theory.

**Keywords:** Surrogate Advertising, Tobacco, Alcohol, Pan Masala, Hindi TV News Channels, Prime Time, Masculinity, Objectification, Women.

## Introduction

Advertisements can be placed by business organizations, firms, government, profit or non-profit organizations. The motive behind advertising is to sell the products. The word “Advertising” comes from the latin word “adverto” which stands for “to turn round”. It is thus the means by which the firm can attract attention to any object or service. By an advertisement, an advertiser aims to spread the ideas about his product or services to the general public. Through the mode of films and advertisements, the stereotypes related to gender roles gets reinforced and further enhanced. Masculinity is the term associated with the attitudes, behaviors, values, activities associated with being of a male. Men feel that masculine traits are embedded in them and if they do not conform to those, then they lose their status in the society. Traditionally, the idea of masculinity is acquainted to aggression, bravery, homophobia, superiority, independence and attitude. As Abercrombie et al., (2006) has stated that “Masculinity is usually associated with aggression, independence and activity”.

There has been a rise in the

“Metrosexual” men who prefer to groom themselves, does not shy away from visiting a salon. Therefore, it can be found that a host of beauty products dedicated to men. The advertisements convince men to use them in order to achieve “Boyhood” or “Manhood”. Men's range of products has a lucrative market. *However, certain advertisements are misleading to make the viewers consume unhealthy products as well as get away with the prohibition law laid by the government.* The trend of publicizing gutkhas, cigarettes and alcohol under the mask of another product which will bear the same name and logo is called as “Surrogate Advertising”. The government of India has enforced strict regulations in the form of a notification, which was issued on February 25, 2008, which made amends to the Cable Television Networks Rules 1994 to the effect that advertisements which promotes or permits directly or indirectly, the sale or consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco substances shall be terminated. *However, there are loopholes which challenge the Government's laws. This momentum to garner high revenues by advertising through tricky ways is called as “Surrogate Advertising”. Surrogate Advertisements aids in staying in the people's*

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*minds which is technically called as “Brand Recall”. Ray & Chugh (2008) mentioned that the depiction of surrogate advertisements creates negative impact upon the viewers and degrades the television content. Promoting the act of drinking through advertisements and television shows are spreading negative habits.*

Therefore, various techniques have been employed by the companies to advertise their products under the flagship of the same company, with the same logo. It is a deception to keep the advertisements running under the pretext of selling dubious products like mineral water, cds, cassettes or pan masalas. Sometimes the company sponsors or endorses certain programmes or award functions, in order to promote their products.

### **Review of Literature**

Singh, Chandrashekhar., (2015) has stated that, surrogate advertisements mislead and has false claims in several cases.

Choudhary, Shweta., (2014) has mentioned that surrogate advertisements have strong impacts and they influences the purchasing decisions of the consumers.

Ray & Chugh (2008) mentioned that the depiction of surrogate advertisements creates negative impact upon the viewers and degrades the television content. Promoting the act of drinking through advertisements and television shows are spreading negative habits they opined.

Hall and Crum (1994) have pointed out that women in beer commercials were mainly concerned with depicting women in scantily clothes. On the other hand men were in formal dresses. They also mentioned that the camera angles focused more on the chest, legs, buttocks and other private parts.

Linde, Fidelia in her study on beer advertisements found that male camaraderie, enjoying with a drink, muscular body, adventure are the themes and the products focus mainly on male audience.

### **Research Objectives:**

*The major objectives behind the research are as follows:- To critically analyse the gender stereotyped content of the advertisements featuring Surrogate products.*

*To study the frequency of the appearance of surrogate advertisements in Hindi News TV Channels.*

*To study, which, among the two television channels telecasts more surrogate advertisements*

### **Methodology**

The channels studied are “Aaj Tak” and “ABP News”. A period of three months from October to December 2015 was taken up for the study. Prime Time from 7- 9 pm was studied using structured sampling. A total of 24 days and 48 hours were studied and the surrogate advertisements were extracted. A set of codes were fixed which were the tools for analyzing the commercials and finding the gender stereotyped elements. The findings have been supported using Tuchman's Symbolic Annihilation Theory.

### **Coding**

The codes have been formulated on the basis of prime time television analyzing codes formulated by Arthur and Resko (1975). The codes assigned for studying the advertisements are as follows:-

Stereotype asserted	Portrayal of Man
Caption	Rewards offered

### **Findings and Analysis**

Total 17 advertisements have been extracted from the study of both the channels. The advertisements have been tabulated with the stance each product has adopted towards masculinity and gender stereotypes.

#### **Table 01. The table formulated after analyzing with the codes**

From the table above, it can be seen that Aaj Tak has aired 57 commercials out of which 10 commercials are surrogate by nature, with the frequency being (17.54%). On the other hand ABP News has aired 63 commercials out of which 9 commercials are surrogate by nature, with the frequency being (14.2%). Thus from the table above, it can be seen that on an average, Aaj Tak has aired more number of commercials related to Surrogate Products. As Saswati Gangopadhyay & Soumya Dutta (2015) has claimed that telecasting of such commercials persuades young people to drink and consume tobacco substances which promotes machoism.

Table 1

SI No	Product Name	Caption	Role of Man	Rewards offered for using the product	Stereotype
01.	Seagrams Royal Stag Mega Music (Ranveer Singh)	“It is Your Life, Make it Large”	Adventurous, Action, Heterosexual, Risk taking	Living an adventurous and successful life, both personally and professionally	Promoting adventure, male camaraderie, risk as manliness
02.	Seagrams Royal Stag Mega Music (Arjun Kapoor)	“It is Your Life, Make it Large”	All achiever, successful	Regretless life can be achieved	A man has to lead a successful life and should be the achiever.
03.	Seagrams Imperial Blue Superhit Music Cd’s	“Men will be Men”	Gazing at Women, showing off heroic deeds.	One will be a man if this product is used.	To be a man, one has to be casual, ogle at good looking women.
04.	Royal Challenge Sports Drink	“Game For Life”	Makes advances towards a woman	Consuming the product will make a person take risks and acceptable to woman	Impressing a woman and making advances towards her is depicted as a bold move by a man
05.	Foster Mineral Water	“Damn Cold Refreshment”	Adventurous, Male Camaraderie	Drinking this mineral water will make you feel cool, as if in the snow capped mountains	Casual attitude, male camaraderie, adventure, active are associated with being a man
06.	Shudh Plus Pan Masala	“The Ultimate Choice”	Man in control of the woman	For a happy and content life, a spoonful is necessary	Success is the prime criteria for a man
07.	Kamla Pasand Pan Masala (Rajnish Duggal)	“Anokha Swaad”	Risk Taking, Adventurous, Successful	The product will give confidence for leading a	Success has been equated with man

08.	<b>Magic Moments Cd's</b>	"Flavour of Life"	Man enjoying, women as seductive	The product if consumed will help in having magical moments	Fun, risk taking, enjoying the company of girls swarming around
09.	<b>Pan Parag</b>	"The Choice of Young India"	Both men and women taste success, in authoritative position	Young professionals can achieve success by consuming it	Success is essential and equated with being a man
10.	<b>Pan Bahar Pan Masala (Saif Ali Khan)</b>	"Pehchan Kamyabi Ki"	Successful, Risk Taker	Consume it for a successful life	Success equated with manliness
11.	<b>Rajnigandha Pearls (Priyanka Chopra)</b>	"Acchhai ki ek alag chamak hoti hai"	Women achieving goodwill	To have a content life, pan masala will boost up life	Success and good life with tobacco substances
12.	<b>Rajshri Pan Masala</b>	"Acchha Khayiye, Nischint rahiye"	All men chewing it and enjoying life	To have a good life, consume it	Good life and tobacco substances have been related
13.	<b>Vimal Pan Masala (Ajay Devgan)</b>	"Daane Daane mein kesar ka dum"	Adventurous, Fun loving, Casual	The product will help in enjoying and celebrating life	Manliness has been associated with being adventurous and casual
14.	<b>Dabang 2 Pan Masala (Jimmy Shergill)</b>	"Shaan hain toh pehchan hai"	Heroic, Rescuer, Bold, Strong Muscles,	To create and identity of your own and be "dabang".	Man is the rescuer for "damsel in distress."



15.	<b>Baba Elaichi (Akshay Kumar)</b>	“What’s your pleasure?”	Heroic, Adventurous, successful, risk taker, action hero, craves for women’s attention	To have pleasure in life, one needs to consume the product.	Heroism, Success, partying, drinking, love for car, women’s attention are all associated with being masculine.
16.	<b>Seagrams 100 Pipers Music Cd’s</b>	“Be Remembered for Good”	The man is achiever, successful, enjoys all the luxuries of life.	Enjoy a successful life and be a good human being	Success is equated with being a man.
17.	<b>Blender’s Pride Fashion Tour (Priyanka Chopra)</b>	“Taste Life in Style”	Woman being flattered for her sense of style and grabs attention	To be stylish and get noticed everywhere.	Good and successful life, urging youth to imitate models and their lifestyle.

**Table 02: Frequency of the commercials in Aaj Tak and ABP News**

Channel	No of Advts in an Hour (Average)	No of Surrogate products advertised	Frequency (%)
Aaj Tak	57	10	17.54 %
ABP News	63	9	14.2 %

### Conclusion

The purpose behind banning harmful tobacco and alcoholic substances has been defeated with the extended product advertising called 'Surrogate Advertising'. The companies aim to market their products through any way and gender roles seems to an avenue for relating to the customers, which is promoting masculinity, particularly Hegemonic Masculinity. It is needless to say that advertisements have a huge role in socializing people as TV has penetrated into the nooks and corners of our country.

Masculinity and femininity are products of gender roles which have been associated with an individual after birth and allotted by the society on the basis of the sex. In patriarchal

society, masculinity has been equated with being successful, bold, adventurous, strong. Most of the products here are trying to project a successful, enjoyable, content life for men by consuming pan masala/ alcoholic drinks. Success for men is not only equalized professionally but also in terms with possessing a woman. Bhatt (2012) has claimed that the surrogate advertisements promotes a better lifestyle and creates a desire for materialistic pleasures.

Celebrities like Priyanka Chopra, Ranveer Singh, Arjun Kapoor, Ajay Devgan, Jimmy Shergill who are icons for the youths endorsing Surrogate Products adds credibility to the product. Celebrity endorsement of both the product and the heroism depicted through its

commercial has a negative influence. The rewards offered by the products for consuming their product lures the men to be adventurous, dare devil, successful, content, impress a woman, male camaraderie which are the tenets of being “Masculine”, thereby damaging their health. Gazing at women (Laura Mulvey's Gaze Theory) has been associated with the products to be heroic and adventurous and a mandatory quality to be “real men”. The captions of the advertisements for Surrogate products are alluring men to be successful, create an identity, be stylish, to be a 'man'. Not only through commercials, Surrogacy can be seen when the companies sponsor certain shows or award programmes like “Royal Stag Mirchi Music Awards”, “Kamla Pasand Life OK Screen Awards”. It is also a means of sales promotion, which is thereby harmful for the society. George Gerbner and later Gaye Tuchmann have propounded the Symbolic Annihilation Theory which states that people learn about their gender roles from the Media. Further, these advertisements singlehandedly ignore any role of women and third gender in their advertisements. Therefore, it is the

stereotype of male-power which promotes the unequal power distribution in the society and regards women as secondary citizens. Through the advertisements represented, we see that men are consuming the products to personate themselves as Masculine and it is essential for proving their manliness to keep the power in the patriarchal society. Only three advertisements from the table above- Pan Parag Pan Masala, Blenders Pride and Rajnigandha Pearls have depicted women consuming the product as a means to achieve success and be adulated by all.

For the holistic development of the society, it is necessary that media takes up the fight against gender inequality, as it is the mother of all inequalities, be it caste, class, race, linguistic and so on. Hence, Media should take a stand in stopping these gender stereotyped commercials and promoting surrogate products as it has an adverse effect on the health of the people. Media has spread its wings to Social Media as well, where people directly interact through the pages and posts, hence, promoting of the Surrogate products has to be checked.

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