



IAA and Hansa Research findings on

# CHANGING TRENDS IN PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN INDIAN ADVERTISING

December 2014



**Advertising Council of India (ACI)**  
(A Division of STACA Trust)



**The status of Indian Women  
from the lens of Marketing and  
Creative professionals**



# Research Specifications

## ❖ Elicitation Method

- ❖ Face to face interviews were being conducted with the professionals with prior appointment

## ❖ In all the three markets, researchers and qualified interviews were responsible for data collection

## ❖ Total Sample Size - 84

## ❖ Spread across Marketing (52) and Creative(32) professionals

## ❖ Spread across Mumbai (39), Delhi (24) and Chennai (21)

## ❖ Target Group

- ❖ Marketing Professionals with designation of Marketing Manager and Above
- ❖ Creative Professionals with designation of Creative Directors and above

# State of Women

- Top 2 box scores (Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree with the statement)



Above figure in percentages %

## Key Takeouts

- ❖ Before we dig down to find out the response pattern or the views of the different stake holders, one thing should be kept in mind that the views coming out of the study are not representative of the actual state of women in India. The study was done in three metro cities and with a fairly homogenous audience.
- ❖ The findings suggests that the women of today have come out of their closet and are proving their worth. Almost all professionals are of the view that the women of today are ambitious and are shouldering equal responsibilities with men
- ❖ But as we delve deeper, things are not that rosy, High association scores on statements like **Marriage is more a social necessity for women as compared to men, Women empowerment restricted to up market households, Men normally judge a woman on the basis of beauty and sex appeal** suggest that there exists a difference in the intended vs. actual status of women in the society
- ❖ Though women, especially the educated women have come a long way in proving their mettle at work place but still the objectification of women is prevalent. The views expressed by the professionals about the statement - Men normally judge a woman on the basis of beauty and sex appeal – 56% substantiates it.
- ❖ But the wind of change has started blowing. The professionals believe that there has been a steady awareness towards giving women their dues and not mistreating them – 80%, is reassuring.
- ❖ Along with that, the disapproval of the clichéd statements like **Housekeeping is woman's work, Women should give up their jobs if family needs are more and Men who do household chores are effeminate** reflects the change in mindset towards women in society

# State of Women – By Creative vs. Marketing Professionals & Gender

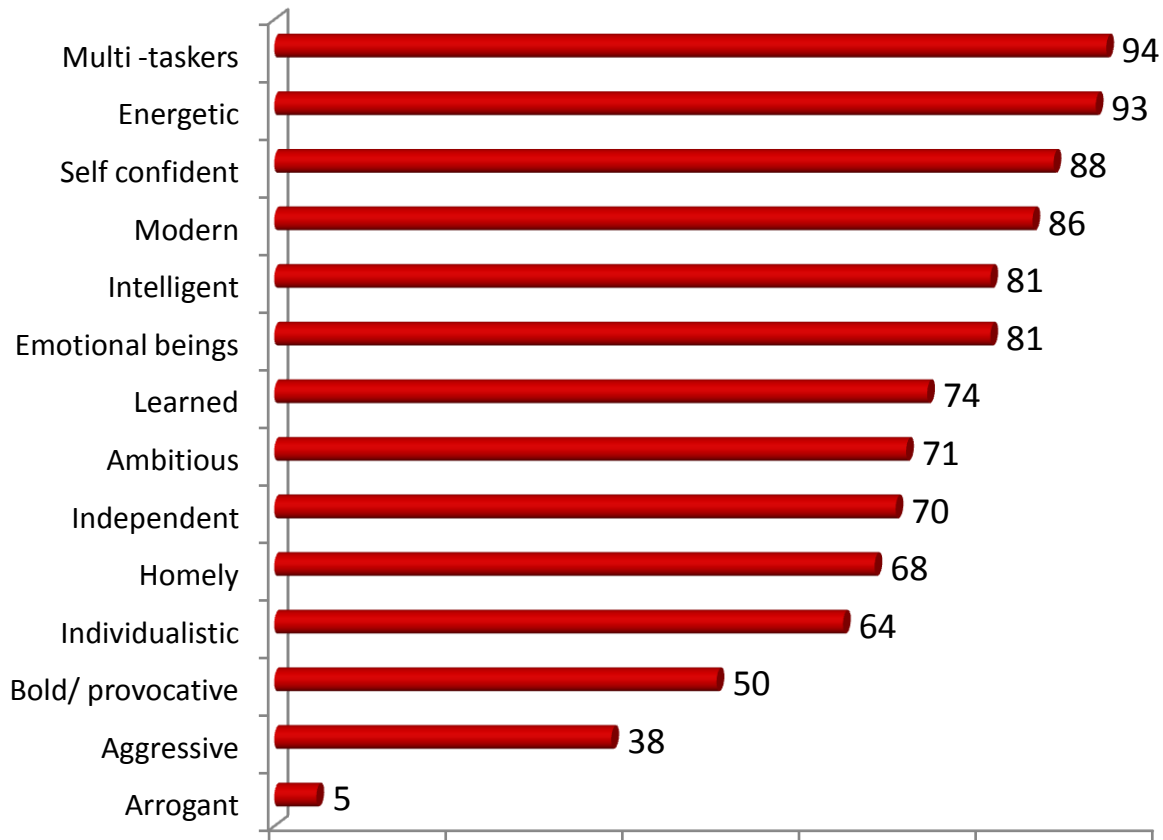
- Top 2 box scores (Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree with the statement)

Statements	All		Creative	Marketers		Male	Female
Women are now highly ambitious and are proving their mettle not only on the home front, but also in their respective professions	96		94	100		98	92
Women are shouldering equal responsibilities with men in the family	92		94	88		90	96
There is steady awareness regarding giving the women their dues, and not mistreating them seeing them as objects of possession	80		79	81		78	<b>85</b>
There has been a positive change in the mindset about the way the women are perceived in society	76		77	75		78	73
Portrayal of women in provocative manner in advertisements helps grab attention of both men and women	75		67	<b>88</b>		72	<b>81</b>
Responsibility of kid lies more with the mother than the father	61		<b>63</b>	56		57	<b>69</b>
When it comes to work place, women are on equal footing with men	57		52	<b>66</b>		53	<b>65</b>
Men normally judge a woman on the basis of beauty and sex appeal	56		52	<b>63</b>		52	<b>65</b>
Getting married is more of a social necessity for a woman when you compare to man	51		52	50		53	46
Women empowerment is restricted to up-market households	45		46	44		47	42
Men are paid more for the same work than a woman	42		<b>46</b>	34		43	38
Today's women are losing a sense of their culture and tradition and are becoming way too modern	20		<b>25</b>	13		16	<b>31</b>
Housekeeping is woman's work	15		17	13		12	<b>23</b>
Women should give up their jobs if the family needs are more	15		17	13		17	12
Men who do household chores are effeminate	11		<b>13</b>	6		12	8

Above figure in percentages %

# General Portrayal of Women in Advertisements

- Top 2 box scores (Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree with the statement)



•The journey of women from being a care taker of the family and having no say in the financial decisions to being financially independent and decision maker is reflected in the way they are being portrayed in the advertisements

•The portrayal of women is no more synonymous with homely , emotional beings or provocative. Today's women are being portrayed much more than these. They are shown as multi taskers, energetic, self confident and modern in their approach

# General Portrayal of women in advertisements - *By Creative vs. Marketing Professionals & Gender*

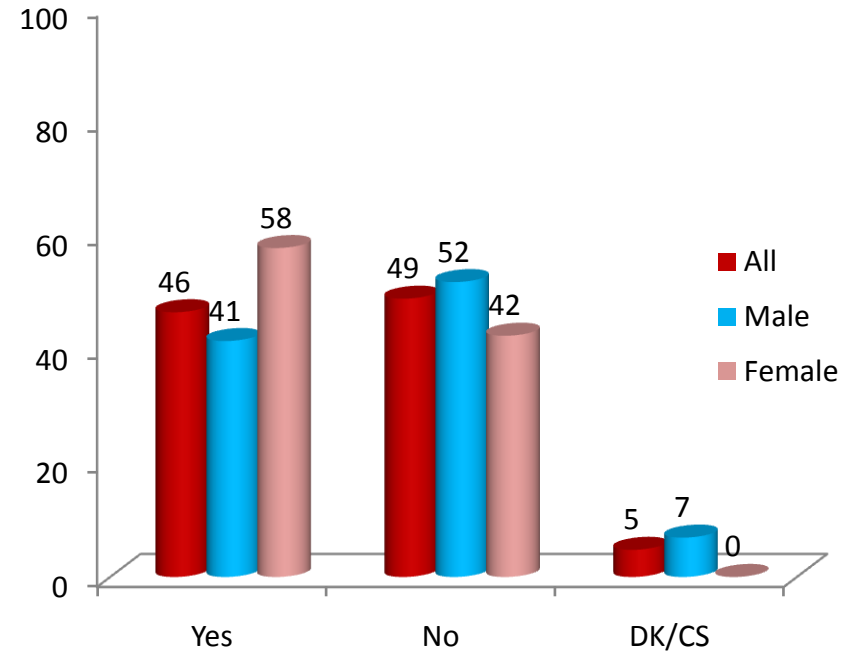
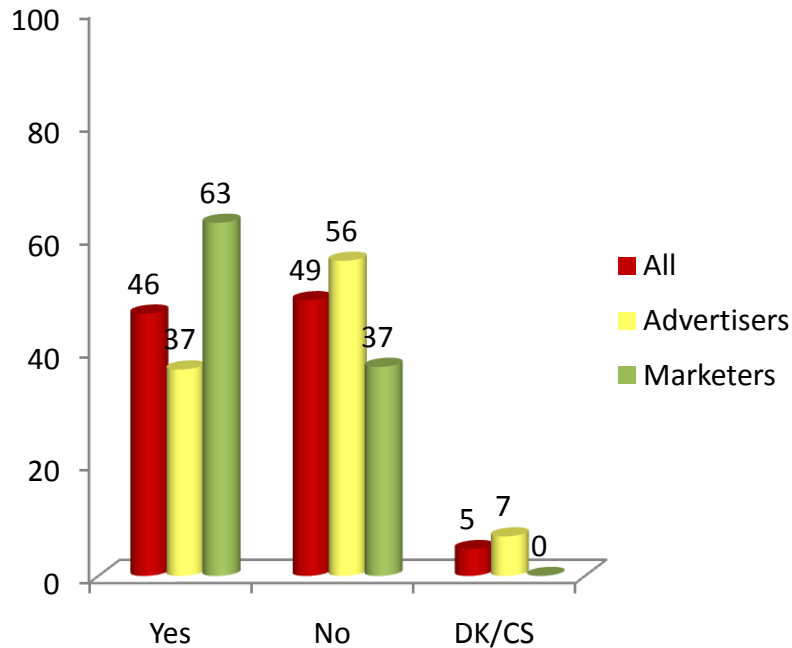
- Top 2 box scores (Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree with the statement)

Statements	All		Creatives	Marketers		Male	Female
Multi-taskers	94		92	97		91	<b><u>100</u></b>
Energetic	93		92	94		90	<b><u>100</u></b>
Self-confident	88		87	91		<b><u>91</u></b>	81
Modern	86		83	<b><u>91</u></b>		<b><u>91</u></b>	73
Intelligent	81		83	78		<b><u>86</u></b>	69
Emotional beings	81		83	78		79	85
Learned	74		69	<b><u>81</u></b>		72	77
Ambitious	71		73	69		<b><u>74</u></b>	65
Independent	70		62	<b><u>84</u></b>		66	<b><u>81</u></b>
Homely	68		65	<b><u>72</u></b>		60	<b><u>85</u></b>
Individualistic	64		<b><u>67</u></b>	59		60	<b><u>73</u></b>
Bold/Provocative	50		50	50		48	54
Aggressive	38		<b><u>42</u></b>	31		40	35
Arrogant	5		<b><u>8</u></b>	0		5	4

Above figure in percentages %

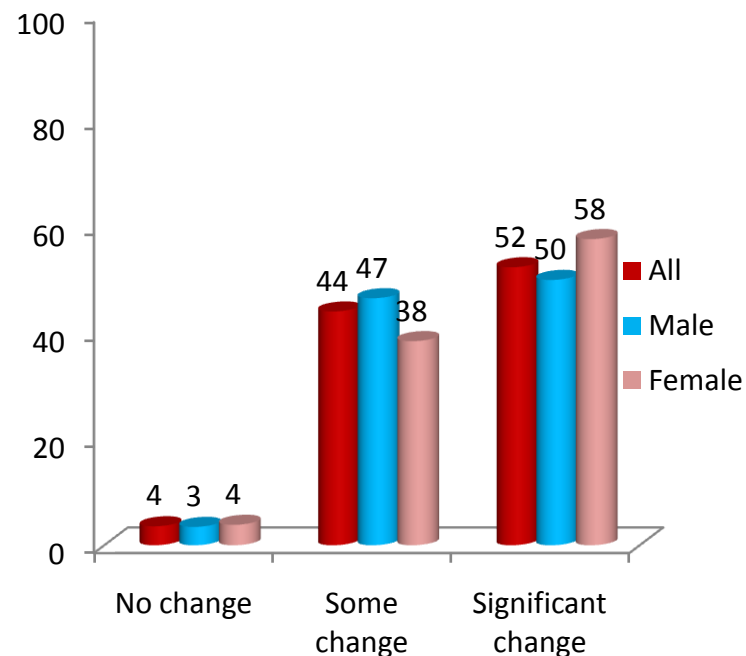
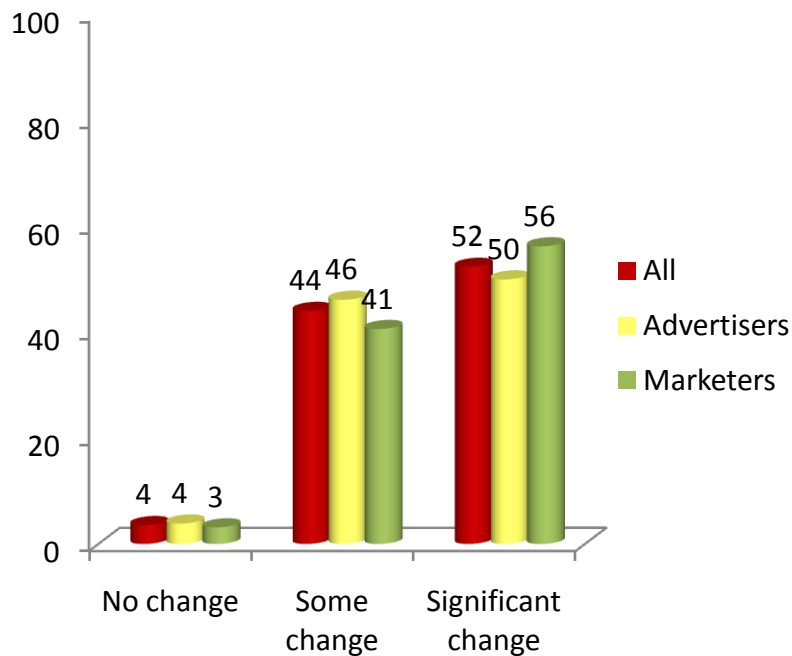


# Is the portrayal of women in advertisements in sync with their status in society?



- But is the portrayal of women is in sync with their status in the society. The answer is a resounding **'No'**.
- Majority of the respondent feel that advertisements have not been able to portray the actual status of women in society
- People in the agency are more in disagreement with the fact that the status of women portrayed in the advertisements are in sync with the society

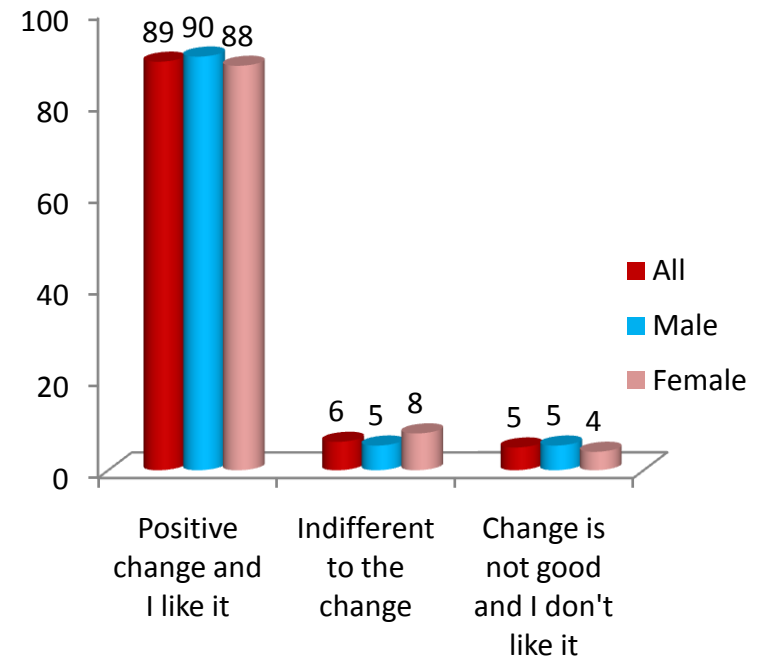
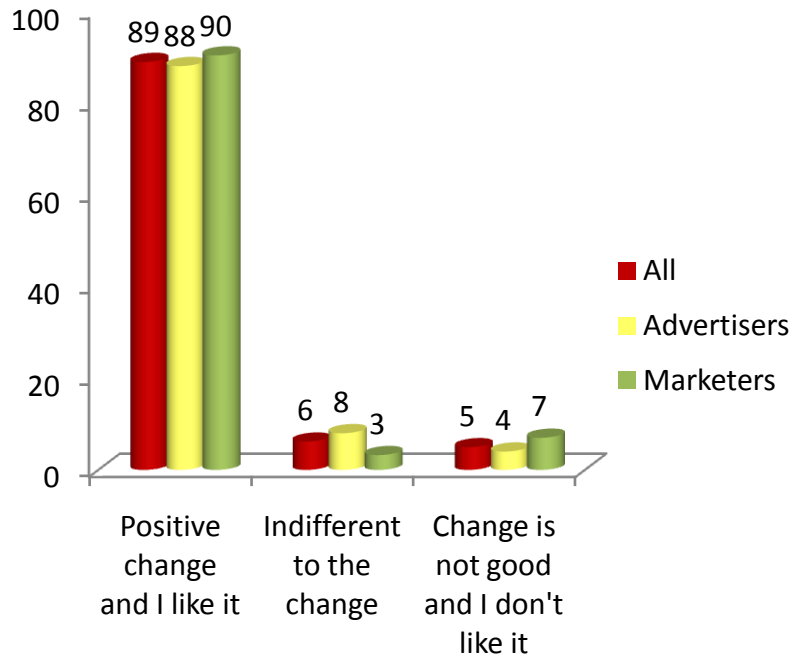
# Has there been a change in the portrayal of women in advertisements?



- Though the advertisement has not been able to portray the actual status of the women in the society, but the comforting point is that there is a change in the way women are being presented in the advertisements in recent times
- Almost half of the professionals of the opinion that there has been significant change in the way women are being portrayed in the advertisements in recent times

Above figure in percentages %

# Impact of change in portrayal of women in advertisements



• Almost all the professionals are of the view that the change has been positive and they like the change

# Key factors contributed to the change in portrayal of women in advertisements



1

*Women's education*

89%



2

*More and more women are becoming financially independent*

83%



3

*Changing role of women from looking after family member to bread earner*

77%



4

*Emergence of women leaders as role models*

65%



5

*Self realization by women about their rights*

63%

Above figure in percentages %

# Factors Driving the change in portrayal – *By Creative vs. Marketing Professionals & Gender*

- % of professionals rating the factor

Statements	All		Creatives	Marketers		Male	Female
Women's education	89		90	87		<u>91</u>	84
Financially independent	83		82	84		80	<u>88</u>
Changing role of women	77		72	<u>84</u>		77	76
Women leaders as role models	65		<u>70</u>	58		64	68
Self realization	63		56	<u>74</u>		<u>66</u>	56
Employment opportunities	62		64	58		63	60
Media attention	57		<u>60</u>	52		57	56
Societal changes	57		54	<u>61</u>		57	56
Social media	53		<u>58</u>	45		54	52
The decision making role	52		<u>56</u>	45		50	56
Women centric television content	42		<u>52</u>	26		41	44
Gender sensitive campaigns	37		<u>40</u>	32		36	40
Celebrity led campaigns	32		30	35		27	<u>44</u>
Government efforts	31		<u>36</u>	23		29	<u>36</u>
Reservation for Women	14		14	13		14	12
Regulatory framework	12		<u>16</u>	6		5	<u>28</u>

Above figure in percentages %

# Changes Observed in the portrayal of women

- spontaneous reactions

Content and message has changed, the characterization is different, innovative approaches have been deployed - 21%

Women's education, changing income and their general status of women – 13%

Showcasing social issues surrounding women more openly and expressing them through simplicity – 12%

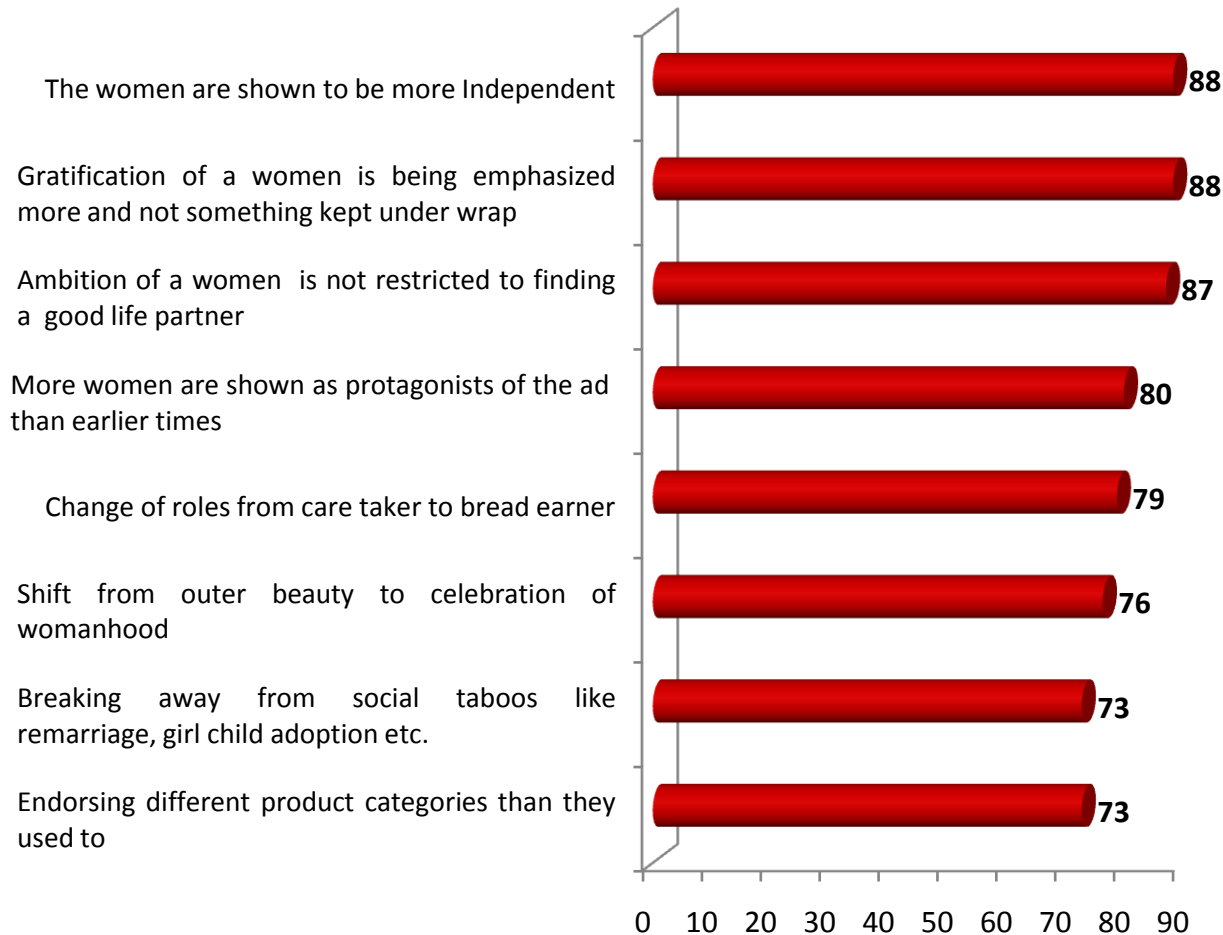
Financial independence, decision makers for more categories – 12%

The change is more in line with their status in the society – 7%

Their need for being meaningful and different – 4%

# What has changed over the years - Changes observed in the portrayal of women

Top 2 box scores (Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree with the statement)



•With financial independence and decision making power, the women are being shown as independent and living on their own terms. The Creative professionals are also not shying away from depicting the ambition and gratification of a women in the communication to connect with the audience

Above figure in percentages %

# What has changed over the years - Changes observed in the portrayal of women in advertisements – *By Creative vs. Marketer's & Gender*

Top 2 box scores (Strongly Agree + Somewhat Agree with the statement)

Statements	All		Creative	Marketers		Male	Female
The women are shown to be more Independent	88		87	91		<b><u>95</u></b>	73
Gratification of a women is being emphasized more and not something kept under wrap	88		85	<b><u>94</u></b>		86	92
Ambition of a women is not restricted to finding a good life partner	87		85	91		84	<b><u>92</u></b>
More women are shown as protagonists of the ad than earlier times	80		69	<b>97</b>		81	77
Change of roles from care taker to bread earner	79		75	<b>84</b>		81	<b><u>73</u></b>
Shift from outer beauty to celebration of womanhood	76		77	75		76	77
Endorsing different product categories than they used to	73		67	<b><u>81</u></b>		72	73
Breaking away from social taboos	73		75	69		72	73

Above figure in percentages %



# Advertisements where women have been portrayed positively (Spontaneous)

- % of professionals recalling the ad



## AIRTEL – WIFE BOSS AD (28%)

- Best example of today's woman as multi-tasker. She manages both work and home front with ease. At office she is shown as a tough boss but at home she wears the hat of a loving and caring wife.
- The advertisement showcases women on equal footing
- Women are shown being in charge
- Refreshing portrayal on the backdrop of a feudalistic society



## TANISHQ – REMARRIAGE AD (21%)

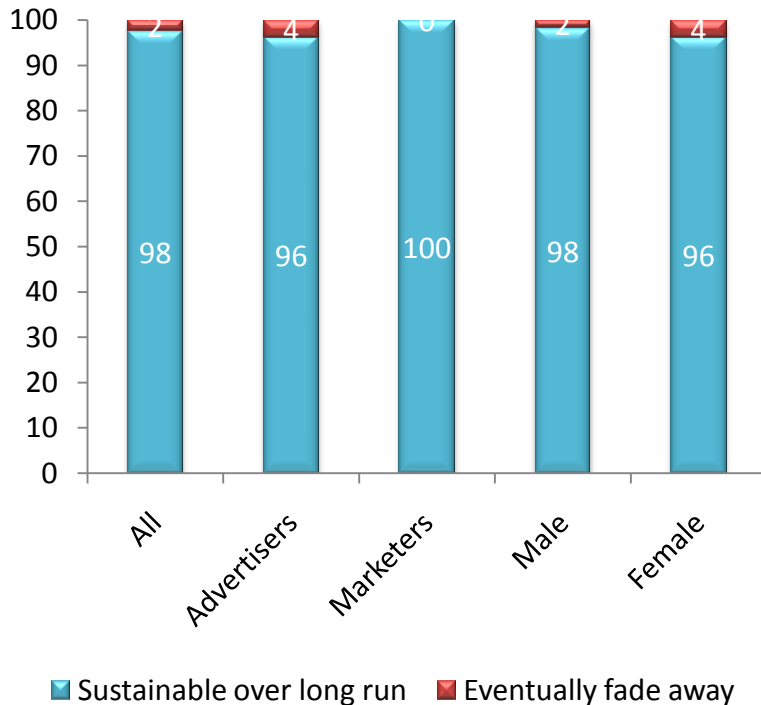
- Remarriage on her own terms
- Breaking away from stereotypes. Concept of remarriage of a girl in a traditional way in the presence of family members is the refreshing change
- Empowered women of today. Deciding about the life on her own terms and not succumbing to the age old regressive beliefs
- Aspiration of a modern woman in taking care of herself
- Women have come of age and men are acceptable and supportive of their stance
- Women having a dark complexion with a girl child is getting remarried
- Getting widowed is not the end of life. The women can start her life afresh on her own terms



## BOURNVITA – MOTHER TRAINING HER KID (13%)

- Presentation of women as tough mother who believes in the betterment of the child. The line between father and mother is getting blurred as the women of today are no more identified as emotional beings but capable of taking independent and tough decisions
- Being by her child even at the time of failure and not allowing the child to lose confidence in the face of adversity portrays the strong personality of the today's mother.
- Girl child shown as practicing boxing which reflects a change in the mindset of the society towards girl child. A girl child is no more restricted to certain fields

# Is the change in portrayal of women in advertisements sustainable in the long run?



## Why do they think the change is sustainable over long run

**Societal Change – 24%**

**Financial Independence – 13%**

**Sustainable as its still the start of a revolution – 8%**

**Involvement in Decision Making – 6%**

**Increased opportunities as the outlook has changed – 5%**

•The sustainability of this change rests on the fact that companies now look at women as a potential segment which will facilitate growth; thereby making it important to tap the potential of this segment which is now experiencing independence on the financial as well as decision making front.

•This realization by the companies will drive this change that is currently being witnessed in advertising.

Above figure in percentages %

# Ads found to be different from mainstream advertisements when it comes to portrayal of women with rationale (Aided)

- Bringing the idea of re-marriage to the fore-front
- Captures the aspirations of women
- Incorporating sensitive issues in advertising
- Women living on her own terms

Tanishq Ad (88%)



- Humorous take on the situation in Indian families and the voices of women calling for change
- Shows women voicing their opinions against the expectations from men in an aggressive manner

Havells Ad (77%)



- Women is the boss at work but comes back to cook; portrays the man to be the boss at home no matter what.
- Women is capable of balancing a successful career alongside that of a homemaker

Airtel Ad (73%)



- Portrays women to be strong, confident and determined individuals
- Women are capable of being the drivers of social change and taking matters in their own hands to do so

Nirma Ad (65%)



- Mother's today are strong, confident individuals with a thought process of their own
- Breaks away from the stereotypical portrayal of mothers

Bournvita Ad (63%)



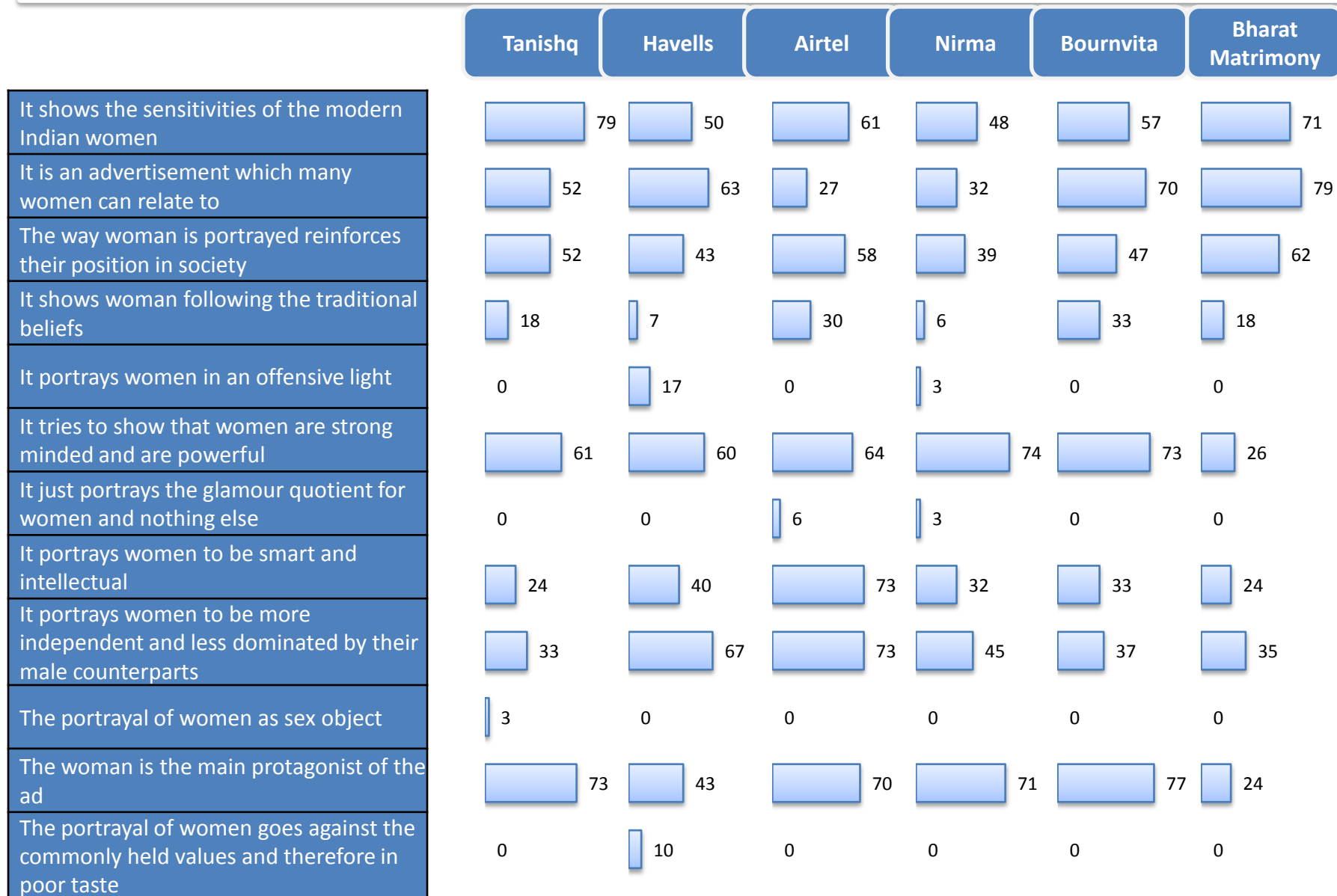
- Highlights the importance of men changing their outlook towards women and embracing the women's right to follow her dreams

Bharat Matrimony Ad (62%)



# Portrayal of women in the ads which are found to be different (Top 6)

- % of professionals associating the statement with the ad



Above figure in percentages %

THANK YOU

