

**Portrayal of Women in Advertising with Special Reference To Television**

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**Abstract:**

The position of female in India has been a question to many grand changes over the past few years. With a downfall in their importance from the prehistoric to medieval times, the endorsement of equal rights by many reformers, their olden times has been exciting. In India women are considered as personification of goddess. The irony is that one side they are considered as goddess but on the other side their sufferings from many ups and downs to get equal representation in the society have become the topic of debates these days. It is believed that from the 19 century the status of women have improved but according to feminist writers modernization has deteriorated the status of women in comparison to pre colonial times, although they have made name and fame but people see them from different eye. Our constitution contains right to equality but in case of women, on one hand they are given equal powers like males but on the other hand only they have to face intolerance and become victims of rapes , dowry, domestic violence, eve teasing. In India women are known by their role of a daughter, mother, they are recognized by their personality. In Post Vedic period due to the customs and traditions like Sati Pratha, harassment, child marriage, women status and position has declined as compared to Riq veda where women enjoyed equal rights like men. In present context half of the population is still struggling to get a level playing field.

**Key Words:** Equality, feminism, modernisation, reform, intolerance, traditions & customs

## **Introduction**

The topic “Portrayal of Women in Advertising with Special Reference to Television” basically is about how the women in India are used in advertisement industry, its objective is to identify the trends and patterns of women representation in Indian Television advertisements. The study is divided into two phases; the first phase of the study will focus on the content analysis of various TV advertisements where women are portrayed. Advertisements that are broadcasted during the prime time i.e. from 8-11 P.M will be taken as a sample for the study. The second phase will be based on a questionnaire related to women portrayal for knowing the perception of the audience.

Over the past 10-15 years the image of women has changed and her boundaries have shifted from domestic sphere to professional field due to which outlook and depiction of women have changed as well.

Through the past 60 years people have written many scholarly articles and made various documentaries that claim that mostly men and women have been portrayed in advertising by unfair means. The status of representation of women has gone worst as compared to past. All through past 40 years due to the themes and behaviours image of sexuality in women advertisement have increased a lot.

First time when any women were used in advertising was in 1850’s when advertising company used sexual images of women to sell their products to maximize their profit. For example tobacco companies used totally nude women to sell their product and that time women don’t have any direct relationship between tobaccos. With the passage of time

advertising industry started showing contact between a male and female model and the representation looks so indecent that it explicit a sense of sexual act.

## **Hypothesis**

Hypothesis refers to tentative assumptions about a particular topic on which a researcher works to prove that particular statement is right or wrong. Simply it is the backbone of the whole research because if there will be no hypothesis in a research then researcher will have nothing to prove. Hypothesis is made on the basis of research objectives and the hypothesis for the research topic Portrayal of women in Indian TV advertisements are as follows-

- Portrayal of women in advertisement is influential in nature.
- Women are objectified in advertisements for better sales and promotion.
- Women are portrayed in Indian television advertisements in a negative way.
- There is a relationship between women and product category of the advertisements.

## **Literature Review**

Newspapers, magazines, books, films, radio, billboards and internet are different forms of mass media which plays a significant role in informing, educating and influencing people culture, beliefs, behaviour, attitude and their religious aspect. “With the use of experience and professional communicators mass media aims to dispense ideas and thoughts to large number of audience through an extended time frame.” (Folkerts & Lacy, 2004, p. 6).

## **Television media**

According to Well et. al. (2003) in contrast to the other media, television has three key compensation: its authority on consumer’s test and awareness is persistent; it can reach a

large audience at a time in a cost efficient manner; and, its sound and moving images create a strong impact.

The power and impact of television are manifold. But its power is expected to be still more important in the country like India the third major television performance market in the world (Bowman, 2004, p.10).

George Gerbner and colleagues found that, television is answerable for a key 'Cultivating' and 'acculturating' development, according to which people are bared systematically to a selective view of society on almost every aspect of life, a view which tends to shape their beliefs and values accordingly (McQuail, 1994).

## **Objectives of the study**

Studies are always conducted keeping a particular purpose in mind. The following study is done to find out the portrayal of women in Indian television advertisements. These advertisements utilize techniques which trigger the emotions and objectify the women in the way which is very different. These types of advertisements are becoming more popular nowadays because in one or the other way these tends to attracts the attention of audience towards itself as it shows a different world.

1. To find different types of roles and patterns in which women are portrayed in Indian television advertisement especially during prime time.
2. To find out the different types of roles played by women in Indian TV advertisements.
3. To know the image of women portrayed in advertisement.
4. To know the acceptance level of these advertisements among the youth.
5. To know how these advertisements tends to make women more dominant as compared to men.

## **Research Methodology**

Methodology is considered a process for carrying out a competent research study. Methodology is the support of a research work. There are many ways and methods to carry out the research like content analysis, focus groups, questionnaire, survey etc.

The survey method has been used in this research. The research has been conducted on inmates at the correctional centre and a questionnaire was formulated and survey was conducted with those prepared questionnaire..

The questionnaire covers various areas of life of women in advertisements such as how their standard of living has changed, in the name of empowerment are they exploited more, perception of people both males and female about them , how different brands use them . The respondents of the questionnaire belonged to various age groups with varying backgrounds and beliefs ranging from ages, caste to cross border ethnicities, race, caste, etc.

A survey is conducted based on 100 respondents from different age groups consisting of both male and female. The result of the survey is presented in the form of table and graph according to different perceptions based on age, group and educational qualifications.

## **METHOD**

The participants were almost 100 respondents including both male and female respondents. They ranged in age as well as represented various ethnicities. The respondents in this sample had a wide range of educational backgrounds, ranging from intermediate to more than four

years of college and PHD. The mean educational level completed was graduation. Of the respondents surveyed, both male and female percentage is almost equal. Out of this male and female percentage large number of population belonged to youth category i.e. almost 90% of the total respondents.

The respondents were asked to report general information such as age, ethnicity, and education. They were then asked about their views on the questions related to women portrayal in television advertisements i.e. according to them whether the women are portrayed in right manner or not. All the questions are closed ended or structured and respondents have no other option instead of choosing from the options.

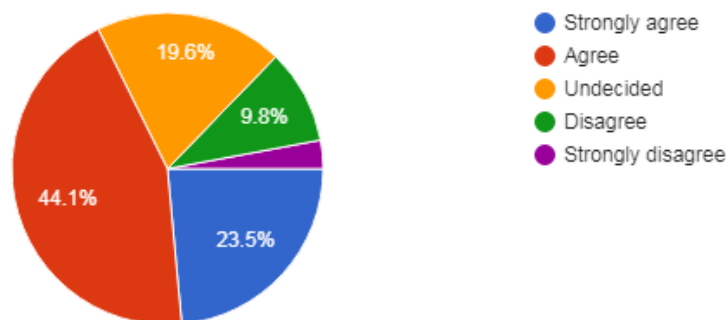
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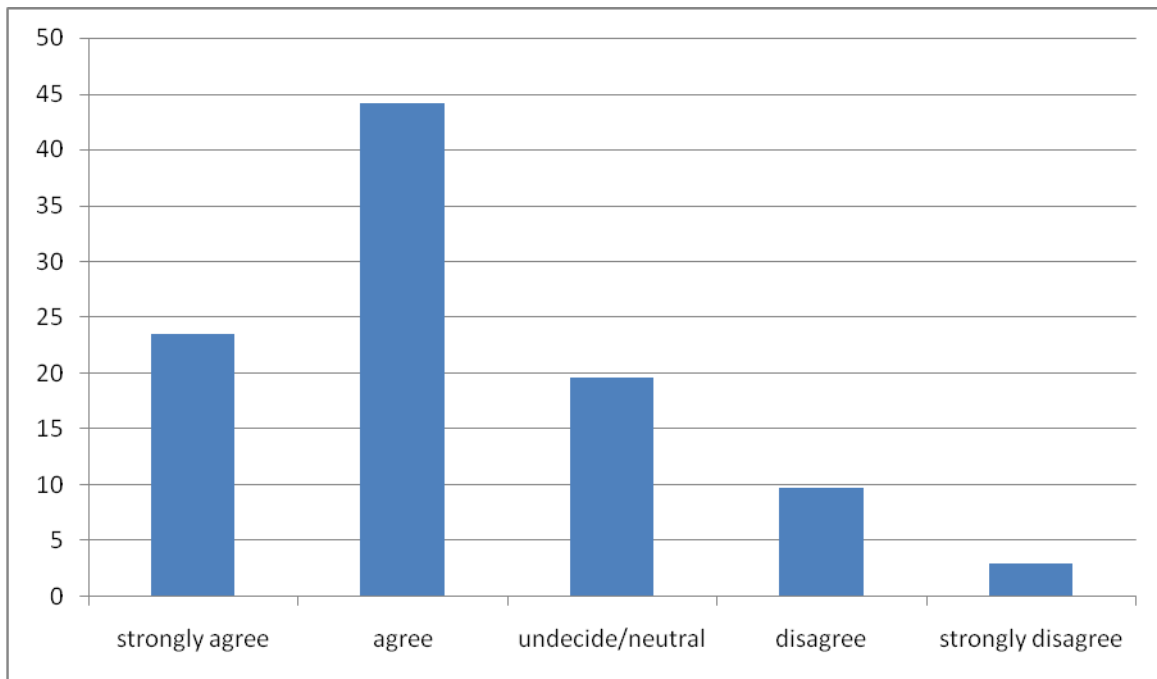
**RESPONDENT FEEDBACK TO SURVEY**

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23.5	44.1	19.6	9.8	3

Women are objectified in advertising as a decorative object for switching the mindset of people.

102 responses





**Observation**

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether women are objectified in advertisements for switching the mindset of people then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same. 44.1 % of the respondents agree to the statement that yes women are objectified for switching the mindset while 23.5% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 67.6% of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to them women are objectified in advertisement with a aim for switching the mindset of the people.

But there are 33.4% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 33.4%, 19.6% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e according to them the statement can be both right and wrong. But there are 11.8% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 9.8% of respondent disagree with the

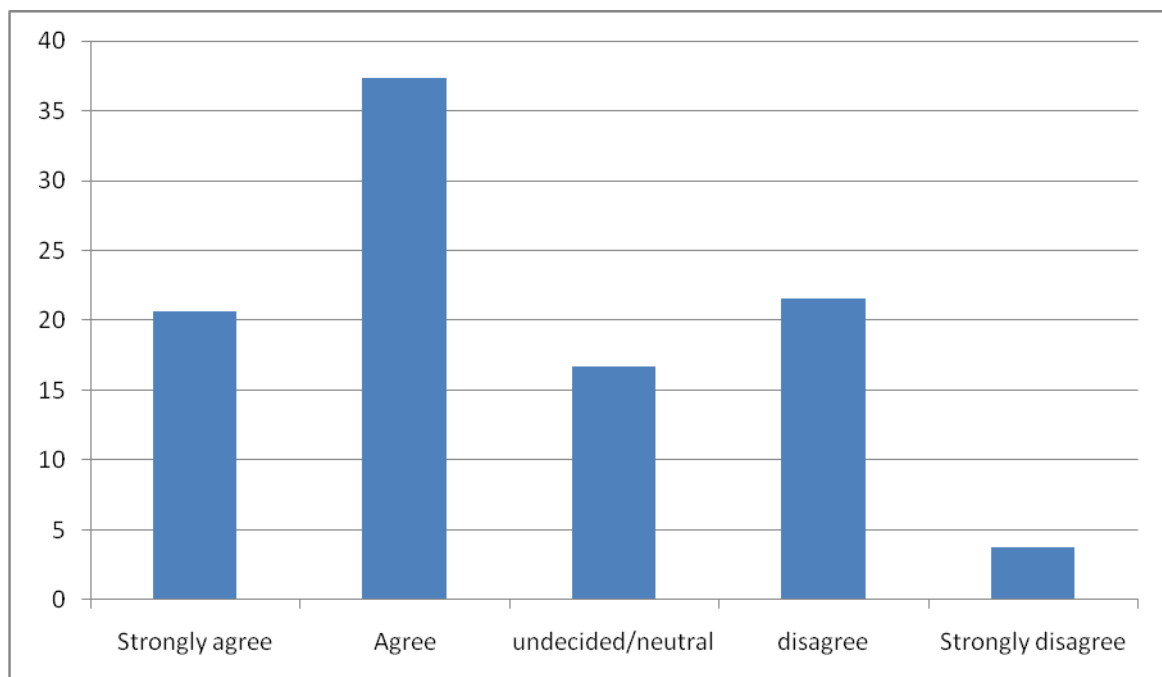
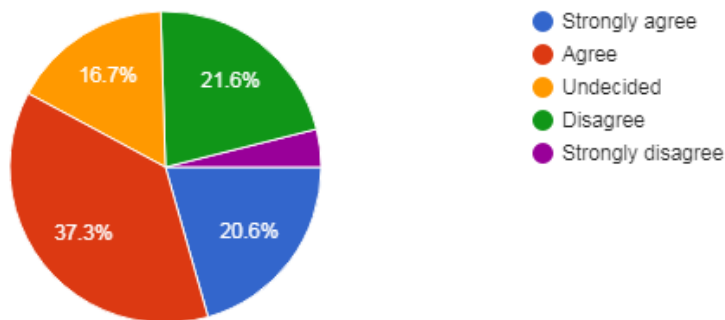
statement but 3% disagree strongly i.e. according to their opinions women are not objectified for switching the mindset of the people.

2.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
20.6	37.3	16.7	21.6	3.8

Present time advertisements tends to exploit women rather than making them empowered.

102 responses



**Observation**

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether present time advertisement tends to exploit women rather than making them empowered then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same. 37.3% of the respondents agree to the statement that yes present time advertisement tends to exploit women rather than making them empowered while 20.6% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 57.9 % of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to the present time advertisement tends to exploit women rather than making them empowered.

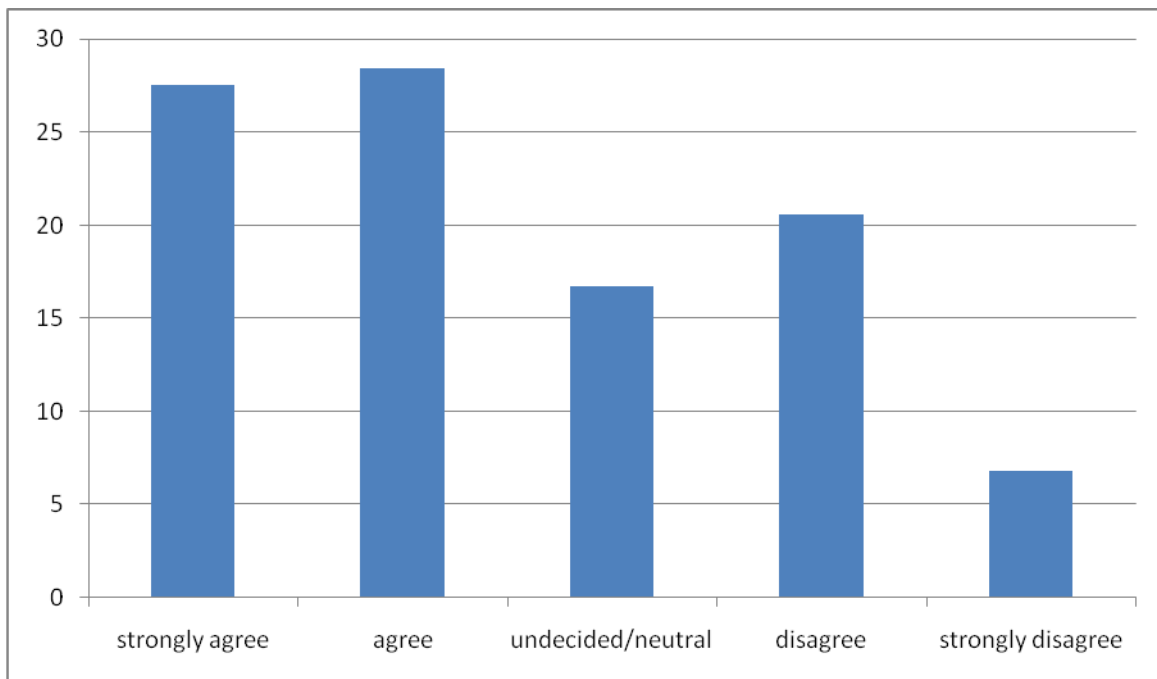
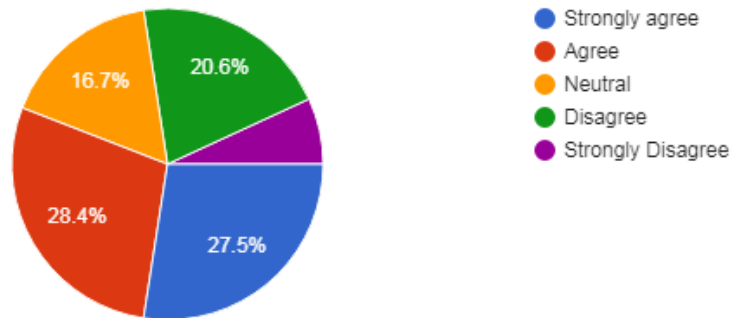
But there are 42.1% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 42.1%, 16.7% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e. according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don't have any idea. But there are 25.4% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 21.6% of respondent disagree with the statement and 3.8% disagree strongly i.e. according to their opinions present time advertisement don't exploit women, they make them empowered and powerful.

3.

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
27.5	28.4	16.7	20.6	6.8

Brand image is directly proportional to female body and beauty i.e. the more beautiful female model will be the more...ill be the brand image and vice versa.

102 responses



**Observation**

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether Brand image is directly proportional to female body and beauty then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same, some of them agree to the statement and some disagree. 28.4% of the respondents agree to the statement that Brand image is directly proportional to female body and beauty

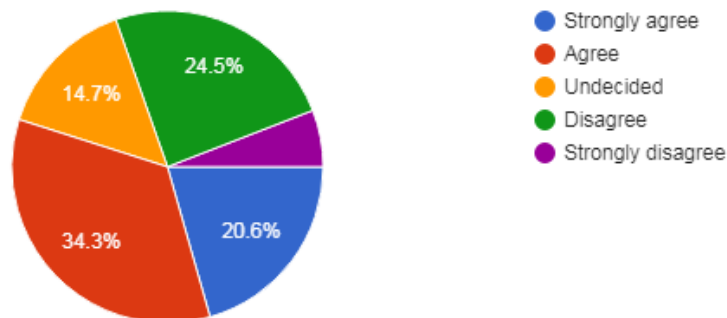
while 27.5% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 55.9 % of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to them Brand image is directly proportional to female body and beauty i.e. the more beautiful female model will be more will be the brand image and vice versa.

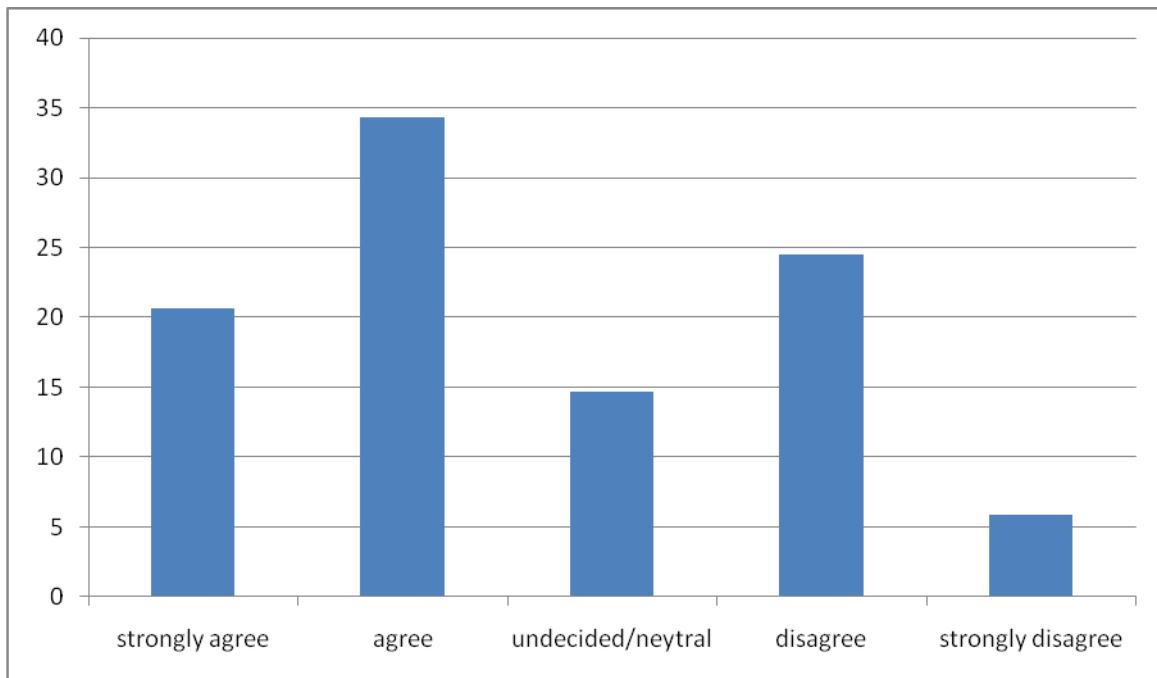
But there are 44.1% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 44.1%, 16.7% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e. according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don't have any idea. But there are 27.4% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 20.6% of respondent disagree with the statement and 6.8% disagree strongly i.e. according to their opinions brand image is not proportional to female body and beauty. 4

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
20.6	34.3	14.7	24.5	5.9

**Objectification of women has become a trendsetter for promotion**

102 responses





**Observation**

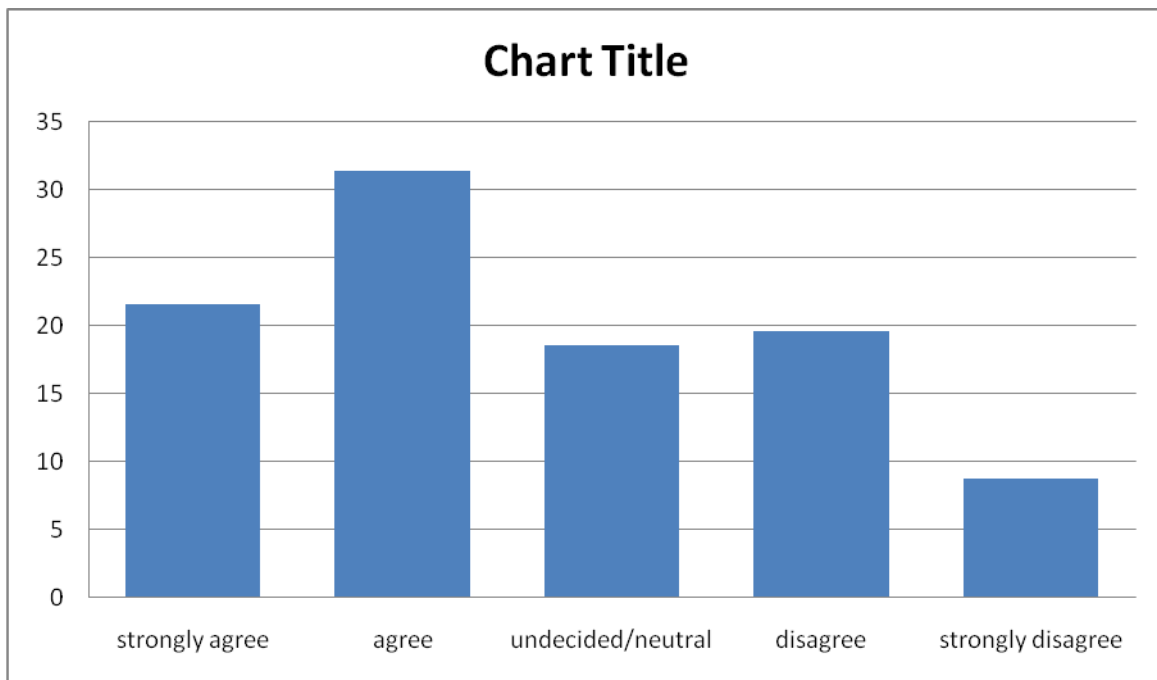
When respondent have to give their opinions that whether the objectification of women have become a trendsetter for promotion then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same, some of them agree to the statement and some disagree. 34.3% of the respondents agree to the statement that yes the objectification of women have become a trendsetter for promotion while 20.6% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 54.9 % of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to them the objectification of women has become a trendsetter for promotion.

But there are 45.1% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 45.1%, 14.7% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don't have any idea. But there are

30.4% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 24.5% of respondent disagree with the statement and 5.9% disagree strongly i.e according to their opinions the objectification of women have not become a trendsetter for promotion.

5

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21.6	31.4	18.6	19.6	8.8



**Observation**

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether by these advertisements women are degrading themselves by doing comparison then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same, some of them agree to the statement and some disagree. 31.4% of the respondents agree to the statement that yes by these advertisements women are degrading themselves while 21.6% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 53% of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to them by these advertisements women are degrading themselves by doing comparison in terms of body, beauty etc.

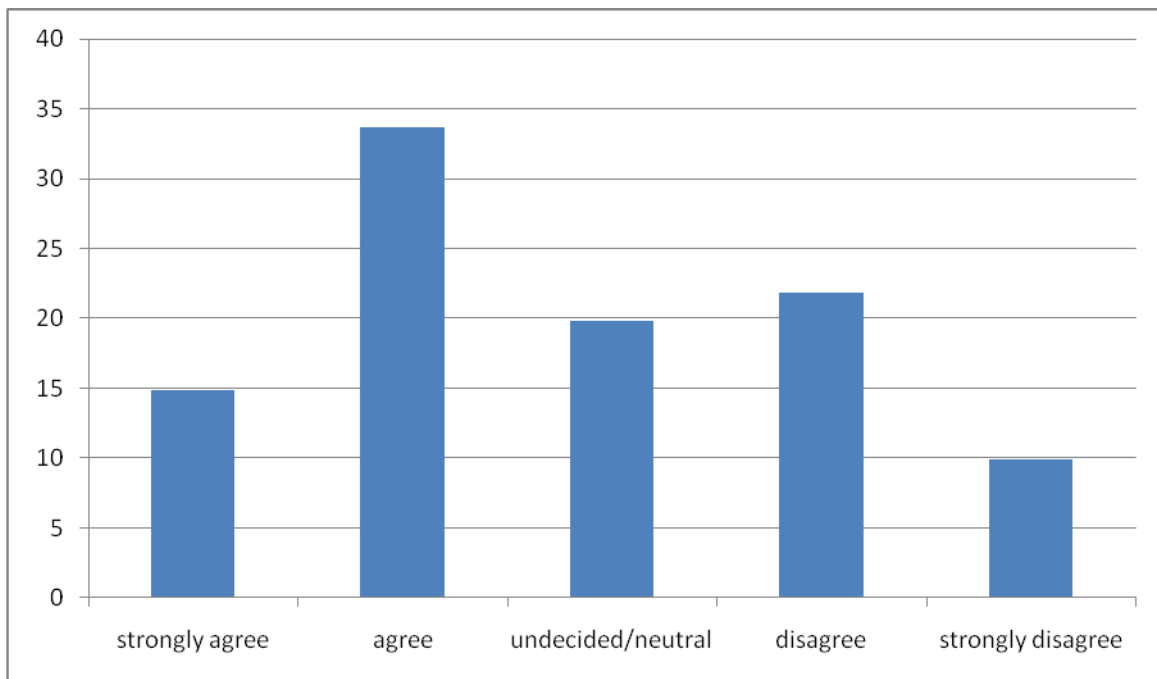
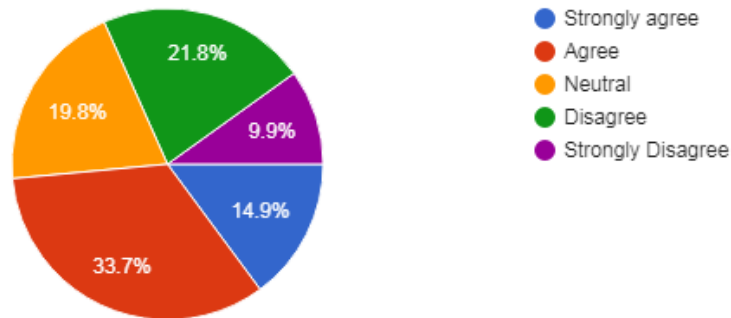
But there are 47% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 47%, 18.6% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don't have any idea. But there are 28.4% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 19.6% of respondent disagree with the statement and 8.8% disagree strongly i.e according to their opinions these advertisements are not degrading women.

6

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14.9	33.7	19.8	21.8	9.9

### Heavy use of nudity in advertisements of product results in gaining more awareness and profit.

101 responses



#### Observation

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether the heavy use of nudity in advertisement of product results in gaining more awareness and profit then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same, some of them agree to the statement and some disagree. 33.7% of the respondents agree to the statements that yes the heavy use of nudity in

advertisement of product results in gaining more awareness and profit while 14.9% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 48.6% of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to respondent’s heavy use of nudity in advertisement of product resulting in gaining more awareness with respect to profit of product and brand.

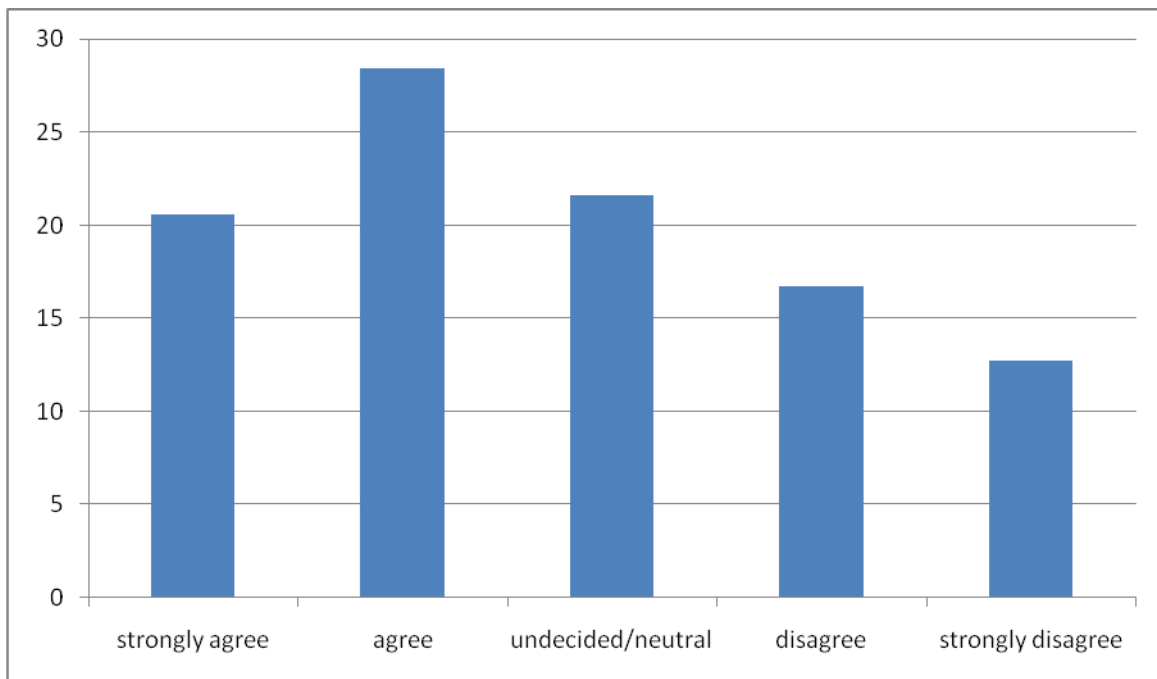
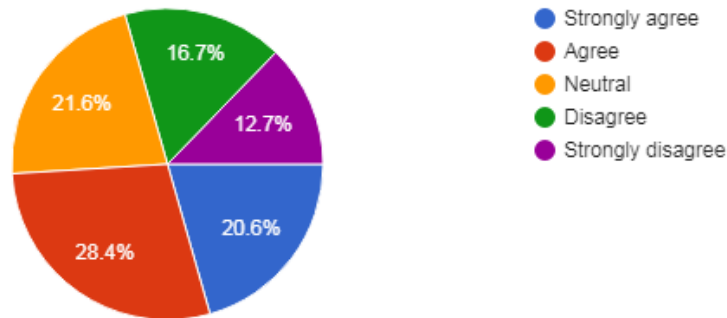
But there are 51.4% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 51.4%, 19.8% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e. according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don’t have any idea. But there are 31.6% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 21.8% of respondent disagree with the statement and 9.9% disagree strongly i.e. according to their opinions heavy use of nudity in advertisement of product does not results in gaining more awareness and profit of product and brand.

7

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
20.6	28.4	21.6	16.7	12.7

These advertisements are resulting in cultural pollution i.e. destroying the culture

102 responses



**Observation**

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether these advertisements are resulting in cultural pollution then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same, some of them agree to the statement and some disagree. 28.4% of the respondents agree to the statement that yes these advertisements are resulting in cultural pollution while 20.6% of respondents

are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 49% of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to them these advertisements are resulting in cultural pollution i.e. destroying the culture.

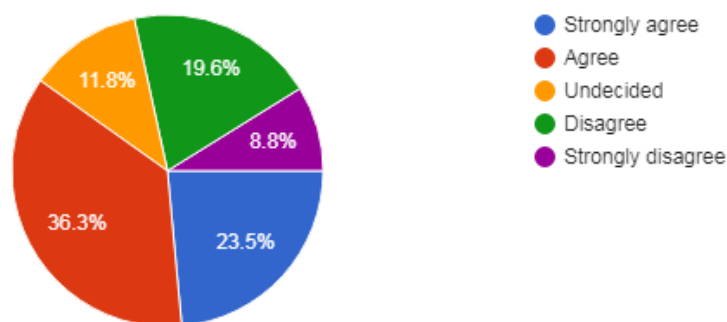
But there are 51% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 51%, 21.6% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don't have any idea. But there are 29.4% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 16.7% of respondent disagree with the statement and 12.7% disagree strongly i.e according to their opinions these advertisements are not resulting in cultural pollution i.e. these advertisements are destroying culture.

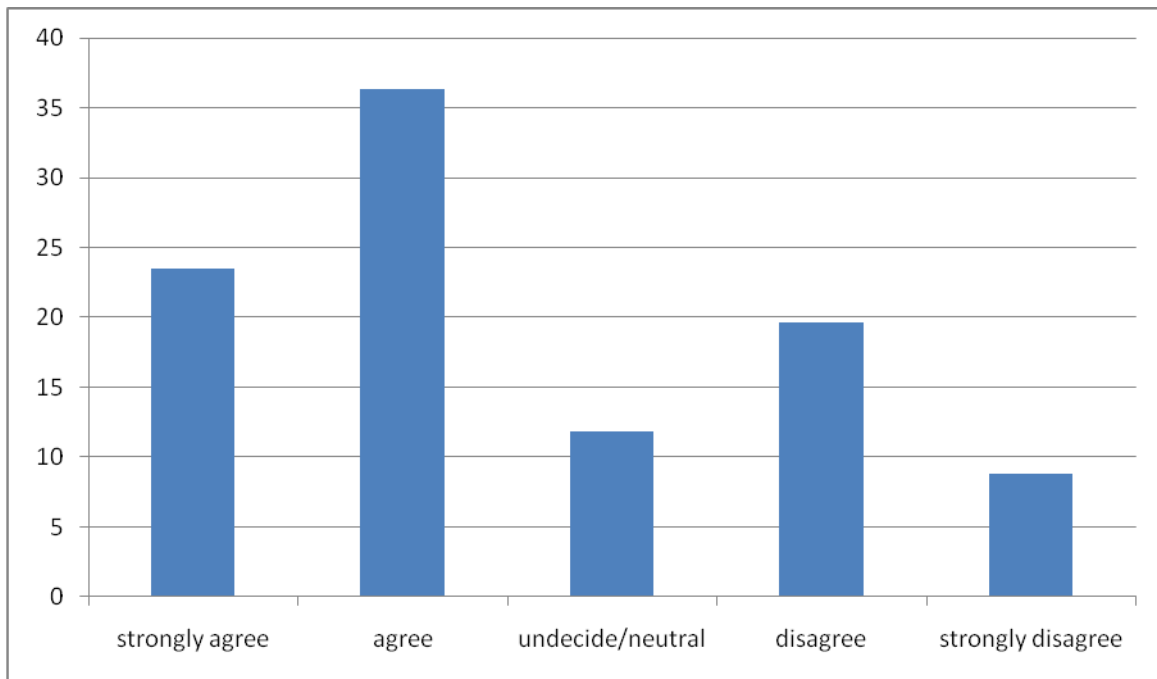
8

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
23.5	36.3	11.8	19.6	8.8

These advertisements are developing a negative mindset where normal women starts to compare themselves with the models, their body and figure.

102 responses





**Observation**

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether these advertisements are creating negative mindset where a normal women starts to compare themselves with models then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same, some of them agree to the statement and some disagree. 36.3% of the respondents agree to the statement that yes these advertisements are creating negative mindset while 23.5% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 59.8% of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to them these advertisements are creating negative mindset where a normal women starts to compare themselves with models, their body and beauty.

But there are 40.2% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 40.2%, 11.8% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don't have any idea. But there are 28.4% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 19.6% of

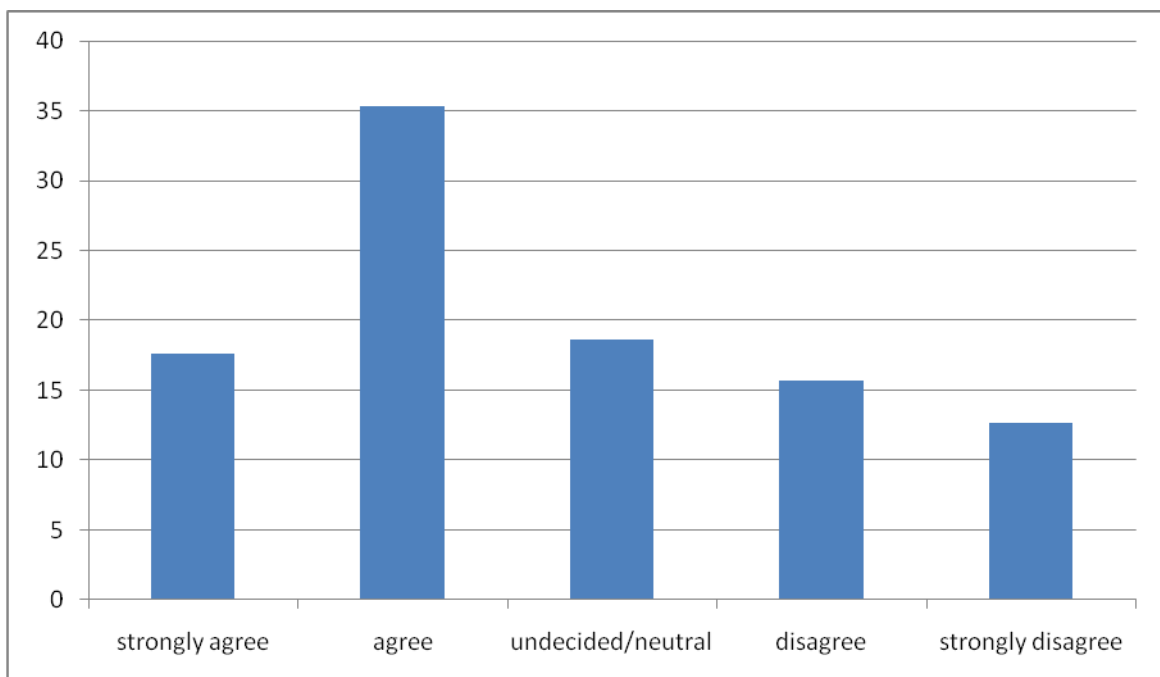
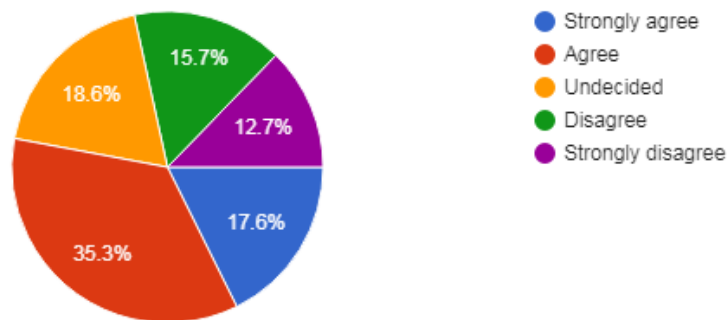
respondent disagree with the statement and 8.8% disagree strongly i.e according to their opinions these advertisements are not creating negative mindset.

9

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17.6	35.3	18.6	15.7	12.7

These advertisements have an indirect impact on girls' body image through influence on boys' expectations and evaluations of girls' appearance.

102 responses



**Observation**

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether these advertisements have an indirect impact on girls body image through influence of boys expectations and evaluation of girls appearance then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same, some of them agree to the statement and some disagree. 35.3% of the respondents agree to the statement that yes these advertisements have an indirect impact while 17.6% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 52.9% of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to them these advertisements have an indirect impact on girls body image through influence of boys expectations and evaluation of girls appearance

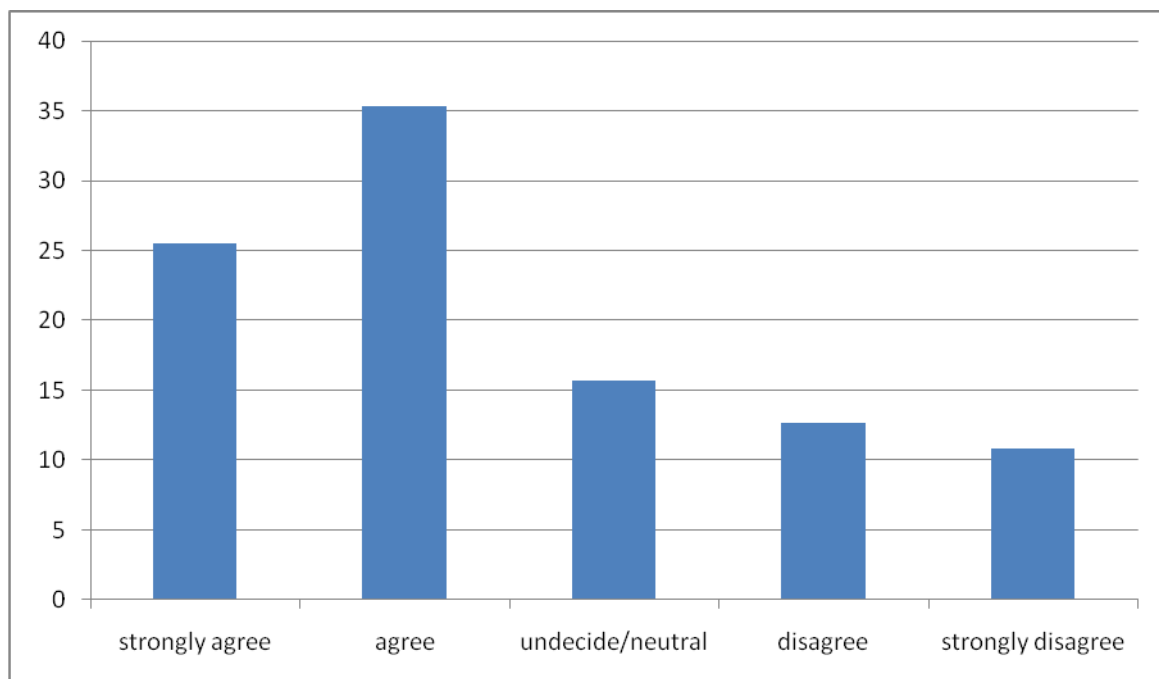
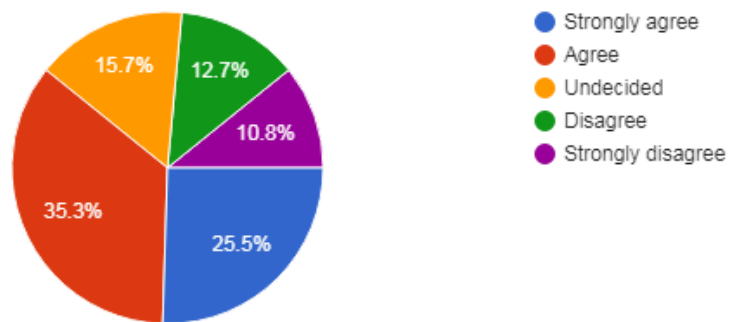
But there are 47.1% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 47.1%, 18.6% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don't have any idea. But there are 28.4% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 15.7% of respondent disagree with the statement and 12.7% disagree strongly i.e according to their opinions these advertisements do not have an indirect impact on girls body image through influence of boys expectations and evaluation of girls appearance.

10

Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided/neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
25.5	35.3	15.7	12.7	10.8

### Advertisements portraying women are persuasive in nature

102 responses



## **Observation**

When respondent have to give their opinions that whether advertisements portraying women are persuasive in nature then the opinions of most of the respondent are the same, some of them agree to the statement and some disagree. 35.3% of the respondents agree to the statement that yes these advertisements are persuasive in nature while 25.5% of respondents are there who strongly agree to this statement. So as a whole it can be predicted from the graph and table that 60.8% of total number of respondent who filled the survey are in favour of the statement. According to them advertisements portraying women are persuasive in nature.

But there are 39.2% of respondents are left who have different opinions about the same statement. Out of this 39.2%, 15.7% of the respondents are undecided or neutral i.e. according to them the statement can be both right and wrong or they don't have any idea. But there are 23.5% of respondents who are not in the favour of this statement and out of this 12.7% of respondent disagree with the statement and 10.8% disagree strongly i.e. according to their opinions advertisements portraying women are not persuasive in nature.

## **CONCLUSION**

We all are living in the era of globalization where all the things are moving with the great speed, so as our advertisement industry is moving very fast but not in direction where it has to be.

In today's advertisements there is so much negativity, harsh words, stunts which is truly making the negative mindset of the people which in turn results in diverting them for the track by changing their opinions and mentality about a particular product.

We all know that today people are smart enough and they know what to watch and what is best for them but when we talk about medium of communicating them it has a massive impact on people, people usually watch their advertisement because these advertisements tends audience to start comparing them and try the product at least once. Sometimes the portrayal can build a long lasting impact either positive or negative, be it an adolescent or females.

In present advertisements, content is not good in every advertisements, some of them portray women as sex object , some as decorative object etc there is no meaning to the content of these advertisements.

Advertisements usually revolves around promoting the brand so as to increase sales in one or the other way and for this advertisers tend to destroy all the ethics like portraying a women character in a very awful manner.

Last but not the least advertisement content is changing day by day and it's a high time for the advertisers to portray women in a positive way which could change the mentality and opinions of the people towards women portrayal in advertisement.

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