

# Gender Marketing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Azwa Ansar<sup>1</sup>, Analisa De Noronha<sup>2</sup>, Saisravani Viswanadham<sup>3</sup>, Sanandita Dasgupta<sup>4</sup>  
<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Student, Department of Business, Christ University, Bengaluru, India

**Abstract:** The research paper focuses on the role of gender in the arena of marketing and how it changes the marketer's perception in the creation of advertisements. The paper explores the various possible relationship between the gender divided advertisements and the exceeding demand of the product and their dependence on it. Through the research we also unearth the evolving marketing strategy technique in the 21st century and how the gender and age plays the role of catalyst in the advancing phenomena. The research majorly aims to study the demographical opinion on the gender marketing and their influence on the process of decision making.

**Keywords:** International marketing

## 1. Objectives

The paper aims to discover tangible data to support the gender bias and its influence on the present market. The main objectives of the research could be alienated down into the following points.

- To ascertain the correlation between the two variables- gender and marketing strategies.
- To discover the difference in scale in the process of decision-making with gender in prospect.
- To finalize the gender marketing influence in the 21st century marketing and predict its future diversion.
- To see the cataclysm between age and gender and their effect on marketing.

## 2. History of gender marketing

Gender marketing is different techniques used by marketers that depict stereotype. From the time we are born stereotypes are drilled into us for example we are told all men like cars and sports and all woman like shopping and reality TV. Companies use this construct of society for marketing and advertising hence it comes in no surprise that most car commercials are aired during a football game and all cosmetics advertisements are seen during Miss India. Gender marketing was established in the United States in the 1970s and since then it was continued to grow and gain ground globally. Gender advertising started by advertising pictures, women were often seen in the kitchen and washing clothes in the advertisement pictures. However, it is often argued that it was not stereotypes that led to gender advertising but advertisements that led to gender stereotypes. Men and women are portrayed in advertisements according to the constructed definition of femininity and masculinity. Men for example are expected to be masculine and hence have a

good body, stand up right, be dominant while women are expected to feminine hence vulnerable, have a good body, wear makeup and so on. Since the 1980s, men's bodies have been used more frequently in advertising, depicting a similarly idealized body image to that portrayed of women. On the other hand, Women are urged to pursue beauty and sex appeal, and part of the sex appeal is submission.



## 3. Gender in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Through feminism, the Me-Too Movement and many actions all around the world, it is safe to say that the definition of gender has changed in the 21st Century. Now, there are many levels to defining and understanding gender. Some say it is dividing to Male and Females and males are superior; some say it is divided into Males and Females and both are equal parts sharing different roles; and some say gender is a spectrum and that there is no such thing as categorization.

In the social world, gender has played a major role. How much has it played as an important factor in marketing? Has the recent change in trends of gender affected marketers? Or is it the other way around?

Stories of many companies' marketing and advertising strategies show that gender stereotyping and gendered marketing is a vicious cycle. Existing gender stereotypes led to gender-biased advertisements which led to further gender stereotypes, norms and conformations.

With growing gender utility in the consumer market and growth in social issues, it is safe than sorry for advertisers to not consider gender as a factor for marketing. However, another

perspective to this would be the undeniable existence of a gender bias. So even though it might be 'immoral' for marketers to target a specific gender hence increasing sales in a specific gender market and increasing gender stereotypes, it is an easy way for marketers to increase their sales through conforming to gender roles. This raises an ethical dilemma.

#### 4. Future of gender marketing

The trend of marketing in terms of its advertising appeal towards 'gender' is changing in today's scenario. The society as a whole is moving towards a genderless notion. The need to create a distinction on gender in terms of gender roles and other stereotypes is deemed futile as the society today aims at imposing judgment based on how an individual portrays themselves in terms of their competencies, behavior, personality and not just gender. Marketing strives to be a reflection of the society and has changed from specifically targeting genders to moving towards a common objective of appealing to both genders.



The future is gender neutral. Marketers are now moving towards this agenda by advertising their products and services outside the gender bubble. Most of the brands nowadays have a specified gendered audience and are attentive to the colors chosen for advertising. Studies have shown that women prefer softer colors and men prefer bolder colors but this does not truly reflect each and everyone's preferences in the society and many exist who prefer the opposite therefore brands cannot generalize their vision. For instance, for a makeup brand it would be disadvantageous to block male audiences as a large number of male makeup artists and Youtubers are heavy influencers of makeup or if a kitchen appliances company wants to sell its products it would be harmful for them to only focus on females as a lot males are involved with cooking and other household work. Marketing is changing its focus from Millennials to Generation Z and this new generation completely rejects gender norms. According to a study in 2015 around 82% of Gen-Zers think that 'gender does not define a person as much as it used' and 56% of them say that they know someone who uses gender-neutral pronouns such as they, them etc.

The makeup company 'Covergirl' has expanded its business from mainly targeting its female audience by always maintaining a female brand ambassador to completely revolutionizing itself and proclaiming a male as their brand ambassador. James Charles, a teenager with a wide following on YouTube for his makeup expertise was chosen as the new ambassador in the year 2016. By doing so, Covergirl managed to appeal to a larger group of people and functions as a more expansive and inclusive business.



One instance of a company's poor marketing strategy based on gender stereotyping is: Bic's tagline that stated: 'Look like a girl, Act like a lady, Think like a man, Work like a boss'. The tagline received huge backlash because of the evident sexism and Bic apologized and immediately removed the #happywomensday ad from Facebook in South Africa. The company is also ridiculed for marketing its sexist pink pens that were designed to fit in a woman's hand. This ideology is senseless and companies like these are on the edge of running out of business. A company must be sensitive to issues regarding the society and must not promote such baseless facts it would only lead to out lash and would harm the profitability of the company.

#### 5. Hypothesis

- Hypothesis 1

H0: Advertisements used in the marketing mix for electronic goods are gender biased in the Indian context.

H1: Advertisements used in the marketing mix for electronic goods are not gender biased in the Indian context.

- Hypothesis 2

H0: In the Indian context for the technology sector, male family members play a dominant role in the decision-making process.

H1: In the Indian context for the technology sector, male family members do not play a dominant role in the decision-making process.

#### 6. Methodology

In order to truly understand the reality of the presence and importance of gender marketing in the Indian context, we need to hear from the consumers in the Indian market. The research was done on a small scale from a selected sample.

The sample selected for this study was done through convenience sampling. The sample consists of the connections

of the authors of this research paper.

The data was collected through an online survey covering a thorough understanding of Gender Marketing across generations in the technology sector. The survey was passed along through WhatsApp. The sample size is - people.

The questions asked on the survey are:

- 1) Full name
- 2) Age
- 3) Gender
- 4) Marital status
- 5) Employment status
- 6) Rate your interest on electronics
- 7) Rate your knowledge on electronics
- 8) Who in your family makes decisions on the budget of electronics?
- 9) Who in your family (generally) makes decisions on the electronic products?
- 10) On the basis of price, how would you rate the influence of a male family member in the final decision?
- 11) On the basis of product, how would you rate the influence of a male family member in the final decision?
- 12) Do you believe that advertisements towards electronic product are biased towards male or female?

### 7. Results

The results for the above survey are as follows.

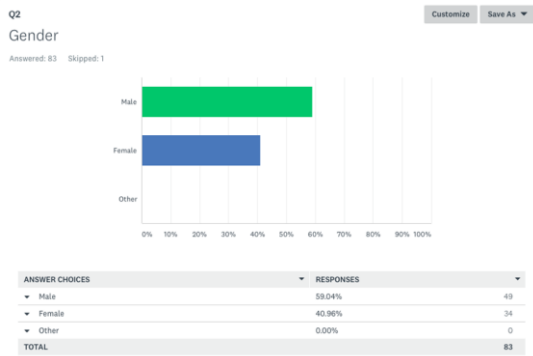


Fig. 1. Gender

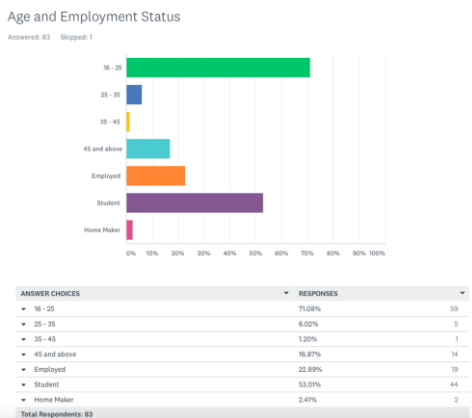


Fig. 2. Age and employment status

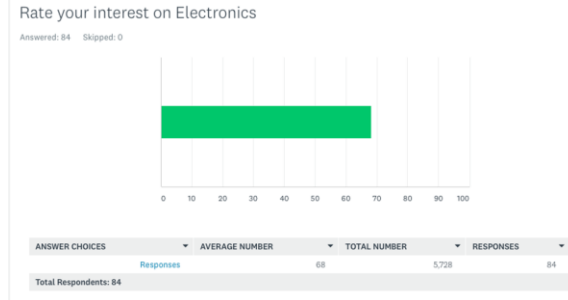


Fig. 3. Interest on electronics

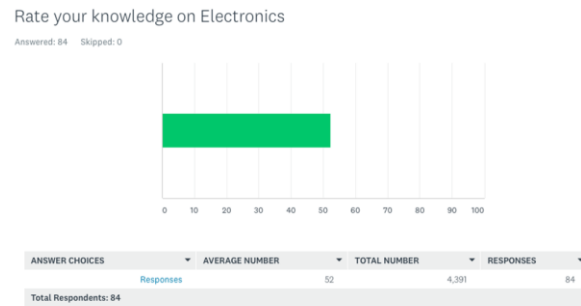


Fig. 4. Knowledge on electronics

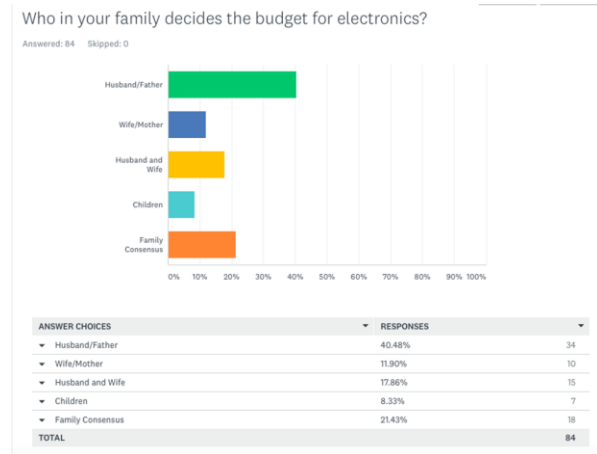


Fig. 5. Decision on budget

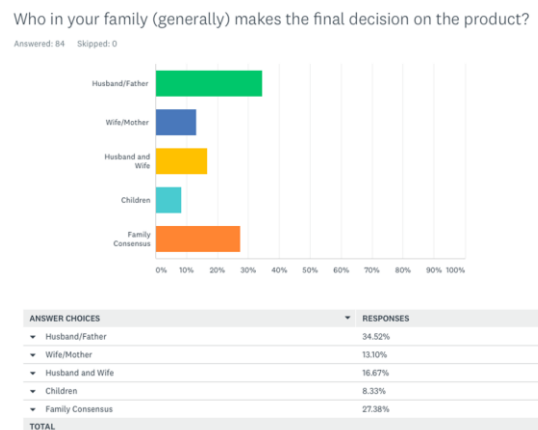
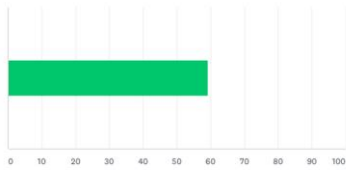


Fig. 6. Decision on product

On the basis of price, how would you rate the influence of a male family member in the final decision?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
Responses	59	4,912	83

Total Respondents: 83

Fig. 7. Influence of a male family member

• Gender bias of Advertisements of Electronics

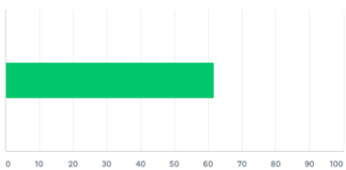
Under this question, we understood people’s stand on the gender bias of advertisements for electronics for which we received mixed views.

The main answers we received were:

- No, they are not biased.
- Yes, they are biased towards males
- Partially biased
- They used to be biased but now they are not.
- Depends on the type of product

On the basis of product, how would you rate the influence of a male family member in the final decision?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER	RESPONSES
Responses	62	5,117	83

Total Respondents: 83

Fig. 8. Male family member in the final decision

- They are biased towards the younger generation as a whole in which gender is not a factor.

**8. Data analysis**

Our first hypothesis questions the gender bias in the advertisements of electronics in India. Through our survey, we can conclude that there is no such bias in the advertisements. Therefore, the null hypothesis (1) is rejected.

Once upon a time, there used to exist a gender bias; however,

now, through the survey, we can also state that advertisements are targeting different generations regardless of gender.

Our second hypothesis questions the decision-making role in the family. Through our survey, we can conclude that till date, the Husbands/Fathers play a dominant role in the decision-making process both in terms of price and product.

In terms of price, men have a say of 59%. In terms of product, men have a say of 62%. Therefore, our hypothesis is accepted.

A majority of our survey was taken by people between the ages 16 and 25. Given that the younger population conforms to the gender bias in decision making and marketing shows that the majority of the market is stuck in the state of gender bias and patriarchy. We can state that it will take generations or forever for a completely gender - neutral marketplace.

**9. Conclusion**

Gender marketing has been a prominent part of the nature of marketing in past and its presence can still be found in the current scenario in the Indian market. Though the nature of marketing is taking steps toward the gender-neutral scenario, the steps are still too small to overcome years of base constructions of gender bias. The age factor proved that even the coming few decades will be mostly dominated by gender bias marketing strategies since most of our survey was done by the crowd between 16-25 who believes the presence of male domination in the market.

Through the research we were also able to pinpoint that product quality plays a more important role than it’s pricing in the majority of the responses. Though pricing is a close runner up in the race, the different winner can be noted as the crowned winner. Through this we could observe the changing price sensitive nature of Indian marketplace and its customer towards its product.

As a result, we can conclude that gender marketing still has a strong withhold over the Indian market place and probably going to rule for the coming decades. We can also conclude that the customer inquiries about a product is getting more knowledge based than price based, though a major shift still has years left for us researcher to see an effective change.

**References**

[1] [https://www.cosmeticsbusiness.com/news/article\\_page/Do\\_we\\_need\\_gendered\\_marketing\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_century/127540](https://www.cosmeticsbusiness.com/news/article_page/Do_we_need_gendered_marketing_in_the_21st_century/127540)  
 [2] <https://www.momentumww.com/news/blog/2014/1/29/the-wall-the-increasing-irrelevance-of-gender-based-marketing>