

IMPACT OF T.V. COMMERCIALS ON INVESTMENT BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract

The research explores the influence of TV commercials on the investment behavior of women in India. It acknowledges the evolving role of women in the workforce, with a focus on the 51.44% employability rate in 2022. The article highlights factors affecting women's investment choices, such as risk aversion, reliance on others for decisions, and financial literacy gaps. It discusses the impact of TV commercials on shaping consumer behavior, noting a historical bias in investment-related ads favouring men. Despite positive changes, the research emphasizes the importance of encouraging women in financial activities for achieving gender equality in India.

Keywords: TV commercials, investment behavior, women, India, gender bias, financial literacy

INTRODUCTION

The world is rapidly evolving each day and it has witnessed several changes over the past few decades. The role of women in society has been a part of such change and we can now see them stepping into the economic world and earning money for their family or become financially independent. As observed with every passing year, women are now acquiring key managerial and decision-making roles in giant corporations, are successful entrepreneurs or are in political roles. Through access to education and increasing awareness about the financial independence of women, their participation in the workforce has increased over a period of time. In the year 2022, women employability rate stands at 51.44% which is greater than the employability rate for 2021 that stood at 41.25%. According to the governmental data, more than 1.87 crore women are employed in urban India and the amount of employable and skilful women in the country might reach to 7.8 crores in the year 2022. As per a survey by the Consumer Pyramids the rural sector is also improving as the percentage of employed women in this sector increased to 11% in December 2021 from 7% in September 2021. Following is the graphical representation of employability rate from the year 2014 to 2022.

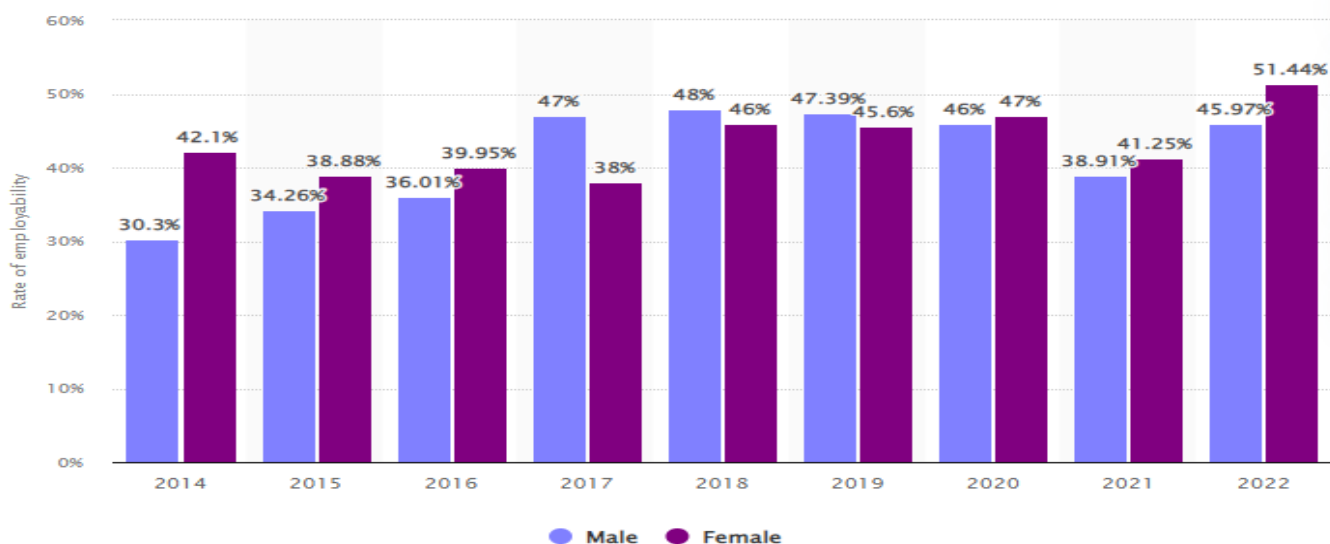


Image source - <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1043310/india-employability-rate-by-gender/>

WOMEN AND INVESTMENT

Investing is an activity wherein the acquisition of a particular asset in the form of stocks, mutual funds, bonds, fixed deposit, precious metals take place with the expectation of gaining returns out of them in the future. It has recently gained popularity amongst the youth and the middle-aged population in India as people are becoming more and more aware about multiple sources of income and having a stable earning for long-term. As per a finding by Nitin Kamath, Chief Executive Officer - Zerodha Brokerage Ltd. (one of India's largest online brokerage platforms) there are about 10-12 million trades recorded on his platform each day with most of the investors having the age below 30. However, the disparity between the number of male and female investors is huge in India as only 21% of women participate in investing in the stock exchange. There are various factors that influence the investment behaviour or pattern of women, some of which are mentioned as under -

1) **Nature** - According to a DSP Blackrock study men have a nature of taking risks and therefore they are much likely to invest in high-yielding and risky investment options like equity shares, cryptocurrencies, mutual funds, whereas women have a tendency to invest in less-risky investment tools that may or may not generate higher-returns such as fixed deposit schemes, gold and silver, post office saving schemes and real estate. It is the risk-averse and conservative nature of women that leads them to investing in long-term yet less-risky investment tools. This is because of the fact that women have their basic goal of long-term financial stability (saving for retirement) through safe maintenance of money. The factors responsible for the conservative nature of women towards investment accounts majorly for a secured retirement, children's education

2) **Reliability** - As per a study conducted by Boston Consultancy Group (BCG) in the suburbs of Mumbai city in India within 100 married working women, it was found that 75% of these women have their own personal investment but they had to take the investment decisions by depending on their husbands, fathers or in-laws. A survey by Nielson on investors concluded that women have 25% higher chances than men for taking investment decisions through their family or friends. The crux of this factor is that women are majorly reliable or dependent on others for taking decisions regarding investment. This may be due to the inequality between male and female at their homes, workplace or society. Male dominance still exists in families even after women have gained knowledge and are self-sufficient. This becomes a key reason for women to rely on the male members or friends for taking investment decisions as in many households the female members are either less preferred than the male ones or are not allowed to take financial decisions at all.

3) **Financial literacy** - Financial literacy is an important tool for taking wise investment decisions. The knowledge about return generation capacity, time value of money, multiple investment tools is less amongst women. The causes for the same accounts for lack of free time to consume financial knowledge, finding financial information complex, lack of interest in investing in the stock exchange due to low income and low experience in investing in the stock market. This also brings low-confidence amongst the female population to invest in different assets as they have lesser knowledge about investment options than men.

4) **Funds** - A survey conducted by Groww (one of India's biggest online stocks and derivatives trading app) in the year 2022 from March 8 to March -15 on 2000 women (who were not investing) found that 32% of women had doubts regarding investing owing to the thought that they lack sufficient funds for the same. This creates a myth inside the mind of other women that large sums of money are required for investing in financial products which eventually prevents them from investing.

T.V COMMERCIALS AND THEIR IMPACT -

Advertisements play a huge role in shaping the lifestyle, thinking and buying behaviour of a person. We often see these on newspapers, television, radio, banners and even on social-media platforms like YouTube, Google, Facebook etc. Advertising is a part of marketing wherein the goal of the organization is to creatively inform about their product to a large number of consumers. Sometimes small T.V commercials have a huge impact on people's minds. It can actually change the mindset of consumers apart from the goal of promoting a product and therefore it was found in a study conducted in 2019 that about 34% is spent by an organization for advertising out of the total expenses of making a product. This is done to create strategic and creative advertisement so it can easily reach the masses, largely impacting their mind.

A study conducted in 2020 stated that the Indian advertising industry is valued at Rs. 564 billion which may reach up to Rs. 700 billion by the end of the year 2022. The first television commercial to be aired in India was for a company called Gwalior Suitings in the year 1978 and the first coloured T.V commercial was launched in the year 1983 for Bombay Dyeing. As decades passed, we witnessed several advertisements on T.V that have not only impacted our childhood but in some way have a significant influence on our way of thinking as adults. The portrayal of men and women in the Indian advertisement has been rapidly changing. Earlier women were only featured for representing domestic products like kitchen utensils, cooking ingredients, household utility items in the traditional role of a mother or wife or they were only presented to promote beauty products. Research led by UNICEF in 2019, concluded that Indian women were represented in a better way and had more screen presence

than men, yet they were in some way stereotyped or not shown in a public or powerful position. Similarly, the ads for investing in different avenues like life insurance policy, stocks, crypto-trading platforms majorly feature men in their advertisements. Even if women are present in these T.V commercials, they are mostly shown as playing a relative or an acquaintance of the male character who does not participate in taking investment decisions. On a personal observation, it was found that out of every 4 short-ads of a famous online stock trading platform, only one ad featured a female character promoting buying and selling of stocks on the app. The key reason for this biasness in investment advertising could be the following (based on research conducted by UNICEF on the topic 'Gender Biasness in Advertisements in India -2021' -

1) **Intellectual Capacity** - An observation was made by the UNICEF stating that in 32% advertisements show male characters smarter than female characters as only 26% advertisements show female characters smarter than male characters. This can be a contributing factor towards featuring men in investment avenue advertising more than women in the same as women are considered to be less intellectual than men for taking wise investment decisions.

2) **Earning potential** - In Indian advertising, the traditional thought process of showing men in the earning position continues even today. The research concluded that about 25 % advertisements show men in actual paid occupation than women, who have been shown in the similar way in only 11% advertisements. This can be a big contributor towards the gender biasness shown in the investment advertising sector because women have been stereotyped as the 'non-earning' member of the family and who might not be experienced enough for making the right decision regarding investing her money.

3) **Decisions regarding the future** - The report made by UNICEF also statistically concluded that on an average, Indian advertisements show male characters in about 7% of their total ads. taking decisions related to their future whereas this figure is lower for the female characters having only 5% of similar ads. As investment plans are made for getting returns in the near or foreseeable future, the lack of women in Indian investing-related advertisements does not get the due attention of women towards the multiple investing avenues. This is because such ads. stereotype them into believing that investment and financial literacy is not necessary for women since the major decisions regarding the future plans are taken by men. It might be a major reason for lack of interest of women in financial literacy and investing options.

4) **Activities** - A crucial point for the lack of female involvement in investing is owing to the gender roles assigned to them in these commercials. The report found by UNICEF and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender & Media stated that women are majorly shown doing activities like shopping, household chores or self-care (around 5% of the total ads.) as compared to the male characters doing similar activities (in around 2-3% of the total ads.) These commercials put an impact on female consumers' minds that activities like investing in stocks, derivatives or different plans does not come within their scope and that the same is an activity to be performed by men.

➤ **The Positives**

Apart from the data and the figures given for the non-participation of majority of women and the impact of T.V commercials on the mind of female population towards investing, there can still be seen some positive changes towards the number of women investors in India. Also, these positive changes curb the steps that are necessary to be taken for encouraging women towards investing and diversifying their portfolio. These changes are mentioned below-

1. **Better education and work environment** - According to a report by McKinsey Global Institute, working women in India contribute around 18% to the GDP. With better access to education and improvement in the working conditions, even if 50% of women join the workforce then this figure can increase from 18% to 27% in the year 2025. According to a study conducted in 2019, women can increase India's National Income by 27% if they are allowed to work and get proper education.

2. **Prior knowledge of investment** - According to research by World Gold Council 2017, Indian housewives hold around 21,000 metric tones of gold, which makes up to 11% of the total gold in the world. This implies that Indian women are not completely unaware about investing and have the capability of making the right investment decision because it is evident that they can make right choices while investing in precious metals.

3. **Rise in participation by young women** - Investing in young women, aging between 18-25 is increasing each day. A survey conducted by Groww one of the leading stock-trading apps in India, these young women are becoming the most independent group for making independent financial decisions as 60% of women in this age group make all the investment decisions alone. This is a great initiative taken by the younger female population to break stereotypes and simplify investing as a woman for future generations.

4. **Educating about different assets** - Apart from the already existing asset class, women are also interested in investing in crypto-currencies and similar assets. A study by Grayscale provided that 93% of women agreed to buy and sell crypto-currencies if they are properly educated about such asset. Therefore, through proper information about various investment tools and encouraging women to participate in investing through T.V commercials by featuring more women in investment advertising and by motivating them to indulge in discussions regarding investing and financial literacy, we can increase the number of women investors in the country and help in growing the national income, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and position of Indian women in India and amongst the world.

CONCLUSION

The world has been dealing with the disparity between the roles assigned to men and women. Through many of its projects like the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations (U.N) and the schemes taken by the Indian government like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Mahila Shakti Kendra, steps are taken to bring equal opportunities in terms of education, work and lifestyle to both urban and rural women/ girl child, yet we cannot see women like the areas of investing and finance. Leaving the central levels programs aside, if women are encouraged for these activities from their home, school or workplace, then we can increase the number of women investors and help in fulfilling the goal of gender equality.

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