CONTRACEPTION ADVERTISING IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA: GENDER, CONSUMERISM, AND POWER

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Meghan L. Davison

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how Indian contraception advertising has changed over the last couple of decades, shifting from modest state sponsored family planning campaigns to more risqué campaigns from private companies in the 1990s. Looking at the KamaSutra brand as my prime example, I argue that these newer advertisements promote male domination of both sex and decisions about contraception. Interlaced with my reading of KamaSutra's advertisements are data from various public health surveys conducted in the 1990s. These surveys clearly show that Indian women often feel powerless when it comes to decisions about sex and contraception. Given the advertising and the data, I conclude that appealing to men's sense of aggression and domination is an important part of KamaSutra's marketing strategy—and one that we see in many other Indian contraception campaigns in the 1990s. In the final section of this paper, I discuss detrimental implications this advertising trend may have on women as citizens and on women's health and social services.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Meghan Davison received her M.A. from Cornell in Asian Studies in the summer of 2007. Before Attending Cornell, she received at B.A. from the College of William and Mary.

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INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1991, a new brand of condoms named KamaSutra was launched in India. The campaign quickly became well known in popular culture and marveled at by advertising executives. There was a general consensus that the both product, touted as India's only "premium" brand of condoms, and the advertisements, which were daringly risqué, represented something novel and exciting in India's newly liberalized market economy. Not all of the buzz was good, however. Members of Parliament blasted the advertisements as obscene and sexist (Mazzarella 2005).

Was this campaign a sign of more liberal attitudes about sex and the sexual woman, or was it just a vulgar attempt to use sex to make a profit? Was this campaign's promotion of sexual freedom entirely different from the more conservative propaganda used to promote India's family planning program, or were the two more alike that they might seem? This paper is an exploration of some of these tensions and contradictions and a suggestion of what they might mean in the larger context of contraception sales and family planning. While many analyses of this now notorious campaign focus on how extraordinarily daring and progressive it is, I am more interested in the way that tradition and anxieties about such progressiveness appear throughout the advertisements. While the campaign may be unabashedly frank about sex and depict sexually empowered women with tact and respect, there is also the clear message that men must dominate sex and contraception decision-making, reinforcing traditional gender roles.

Previously, contraception was thought to be an exclusively female burden, and most family planning advertisements were directed at women. It was generally assumed that men would act as gatekeepers, who, if involved in family planning programs, would thwart women's efforts to regulate their fertility. Numerous public health surveys confirmed men frequently resisted using contraception, often with violence. KamaSutra, however, attempted to woo this previously resistant audience. With an overtly hypermasculine tone and references to violence running throughout the advertisements, it appears as if KamaSutra advertisers attempted tap into the aggressiveness with which many men resisted contraception in an attempt to transform men who vehemently opposed using contraception into men who vehemently demand the KamaSutra brand. My main argument is not only that these advertisements are not as progressive as they might appear, but also that they set a dangerous precedent for how the male consumer can be enticed into using contraception.

I begin with an exploration of the 1991 KamaSutra condom advertising campaign, arguing that several recent analyses have overlooked the way that it encourages men to dominate contraception and sex. Next, I look at data from several reproductive health surveys conducted shortly after the KamaSutra's launch. The surveys clearly show that while men often resist using contraception, they generally still control the contraception decision-making process, often by using violence. Finally, given the data regarding violence and contraception use, I conclude that appealing to men's sense of aggression and domination is an important part of KamaSutra's marketing strategy—and one that we see in many other Indian contraception campaigns in the 1990s.

The fact that contraception advertising has so dramatically changed to resonate with men's attitudes shows that men have increasing consumer power in this market. Now many government sponsored family planning campaigns are beginning to more resemble KamaSutra's male-oriented campaign, evidencing that women not only lack consumer power in the market, but also power as citizens seen as deserving of government health and social services. In other words, women are less and less visible in family planning propaganda, suggesting that they are being overlooked by government health and social service programs.

This trend is alarming for those who view family planning as a source of empowerment for women. It has long been argued that improving women's social status, education, and employment opportunities go hand in hand with lowering fertility rates. My analysis here suggest that successful family planning programs can achieve their goal of increasing contraception use without improving the status of women and even though the encouragement of patriarchal, domineering male behavior. This makes it increasingly important for academics, family planning practitioners, and health officials to call attention to the social, economic, and cultural factors that make it difficult for women to buy and use contraception and to find ways to encourage men and women to engage in egalitarian discussions regarding contraception.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE ADVERTISING

In 1991 the Lintas advertising agency bought out every advertising space available in the October edition of the men's magazine *Debonair* to launch its new product KamaSutra condoms. The advertisements are black and white photographs featuring well-known actress Pooja Bedi with several other sultry models. Some photographs candidly capture a pair of lovers passionately entangled. Others show topless or scantily–clad women in fold-out spreads. These racy images are tempered by quotations from Vatsyayana's *KamaSutra*, the famous guide to aristocratic social behavior, which add a tinge of culture and refinement to the otherwise bold photographs. In a marketing executive's dream come true, the advertising campaign became a public sensation; the October edition of *Debonair* sold out in days and even became a collectors' item as readers actually bought the magazine for the advertising it contained. In both popular culture and the business of advertising, this campaign

Figure 1: Two of the provocative advertisements from KamaSutra's 1991 campaign.

achieved legendary status as one of the most daring and influential advertising campaigns of its time. Shortly after KamaSutra's launch, other similar campaigns followed.

The attention generated by the '91 campaign is somewhat puzzling. Some of the models used in the campaign had been featured in *Debonair* spreads before; a quick glance through the pages shows that risqué pictures and topless women are the magazine's staples. Amrita Shah, the editor of *Debonair* in 1991, admits, "I was completely taken aback. I couldn't work out why this was happening. I mean, it wasn't as if we were featuring anything more explicit than what we had run before" (Mazzarella 2005: 63). It is natural to assume that the controversy stems from the explicit content of the ads; after all, women's bodies are conventionally not their own. They belong to their communities and nations and are inscribed with larger notions of purity, honor and tradition. However, if we see in these photographs nothing more than the naked female body, it is difficult to understand why these photographs, in particular, are so sensational. If we see in them nothing more than sex, we ignore the fact that these ads speak volumes about sex, but also gender relations, social norms, and legitimate/illegitimate desires.

Several recent analyses of the advertisements have tried to situation them within this bigger picture (Mazzarella 2005; John, 1999; Bhaskaran, 2004). Common among all of these analyses is an emphasis on the unprecedented freedom that KamaSutra campaign represents. For example, William Mazzarella argues the KamaSutra campaign ushered in a new era of consumer choice and service, liberating the Indian consumer from earlier economic policies that paid homage to Gandhi's

swadeshi boycotts[1] (Mazzarella 2005: 5). Mary E. John argues that the advertisements, along with the new television series, soap operas, and talking shows of the 90s, show women as ambitiously career-oriented and sexually aggressive, shattering the traditional portrayal of the Indian woman as chaste wife and mother (John 1999).

These two analyses treat the KamaSutra campaign as an eruption which destroyed previous economic and social conventions and ignited a new era in which consumerism and sexuality reign free. In terms of the style of photography[2], the dress and demeanor of the female models[3], and the unabashed way that the advertisements refer to sex and pleasure, these advertisements are incredibly novel, and Mazzarella and John are justified in their assessments of the ads as new, even liberating. However, portraying these advertisements as completely novel ignores the way that sexuality and erotics have always been present in India, from the *KamaSutra* to bhakti poetry to Bollywood films wrought with sexual tension. As Purnima Mankekar argues, genealogies of erotics have always existed in Indian public culture; insisting that they are something new suggests that they only arrived in India as a result of Westernization (Mankekar 2004: 406). Furthermore, portraying these ads as entirely new and progressive ignores the way that anxieties about sex, especially the sexual woman, have been carried over into this new era of supposed sexual freedom.

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[1] Under swadeshi, Gandhi encouraged his followers to spin their own cloth and manufacture their own salt instead of relying on foreign-made alternatives. Mazzarella argues that this austere movement colored economic policies and attitudes about consumerism for several decades.

[2] Mazzarella argues that photographer Pradbuddha Das Gupta was hired to snap photographs that had a distinctively Western style to them (Mazzarella 2005: 122).

[3] Compared to the normal fold out spreads that appear in Debonair and other men's magazines, KamaSutra's models appear strikingly simple and natural. See image 2.

I now take a closer look at John and Mazzarella's arguments to show how they portray the KamaSutra advertising campaign as a sudden break with the past and to offer an alternative analysis. In *Shoveling Smoke*, an exploration of Indian advertising, Mazzarella lays out the history of Indian advertising to show how the KamaSutra campaign represents something completely new. Mazzarella spends several chapters laying out the foundation of Indian advertising, arguing that early advertisements had the ring of public service so as not to be in discord with the widespread distrust of consumerism stemming from Gandhi's swadeshi boycotts and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's national development plans which promoted community needs over individual desire (Mazzarella 2005: 5). This "public service advertising" justified consumption based on the idea that it would lead to economic growth that would benefit everyone (Mazzarella 2005: 85). However, this interest in public service quickly faded when India opened its markets to foreign brands in 1991. According to Mazzarella, pleasure, choice, and individual desire were no longer disparaged as consumerism replaced austerity as the new form of nationalism. Pritish Nandy, a Bombay publicist for the Hindu-nationalist Shiv Sen explains, "Only a nation that lacks dignity and self-respect preaches swadeshi. Because swadeshi means acknowledging one's inability to compete with the worlds." No longer an anathema, Mazzarella argues that consumerism is now an expression of national of pride (Mazzarella 2005: 9).

In terms of contraception advertising, Mazzarella argues this meant a severe break with the previous model of government sponsored family planning advertisements which emphasized responsibility and restriction and encouraged

women “ek ya do bacche—bus” (one or two children—enough). Previously, free and subsidized condoms distributed by the government under the brand name Nirodh had tainted the product category as a whole. Non-lubricated, thick, and yellow, they were less than appealing. Nirodh’s advertising was equally unappealing; focusing on government encouraged family planning, it conjured up memories of forced sterilization under Indira Gandhi. In contrast, KamaSutra condoms were visually appealing in their product form, packaging, and advertising (Mazzarella 2005: 65). Every aspect of KamaSutra was meant to be sexual and pleasurable, as this 1991 advertisement explains:

> The fact is that KamaSutra condoms are created for love-making. Pure fact. And that KamaSutra condoms are especially textured. Contoured. Dotted. On the outside. Also ultra thin. And that attraction begins with the aura around the KamaSutra condom itself…. However, a lot will depend on you. And the ambiance which you open the pack. And the manner in which you decide to wear KamaSutra. Or let some on else put it on for you. It’s just the beginning of the desire called KamaSutra.

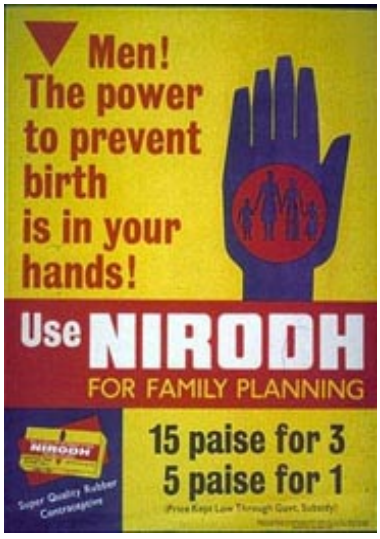

Figure 2: A Nirodh advertisement promoting restraint.

Every aspect of the product is meant to elicit desire, from its texture to its packaging. Even the text is meant to arouse the reader. The playful, fragmented text is flirty; the periods give the reader time to pause and to imagine. Each fragment outdoes the last one as the reader is allured by the text as much as by the pictures.

In *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics,* Wolfgang Haug notes that pleasure is increasingly associated with products, advertising, and even packaging. He argues that "commodities borrow their aesthetic language from human courtship" and draws a parallel between advertising and dating: "Whoever goes courting makes themselves attractive and desirable. All manner of jewelry, fabrics, scents and colours offer themselves as a means of presenting beauty and desirability" (Haug 1987: 19). Ultimately, the product becomes secondary to the packaging or the advertising, which is glossy, catchy, and sexualized in order to attract customers. Mazzarella's addition to Haug's argument is that KamaSutra advertisements don't just have the power to seduce mass audiences, rather they also have the ability to engage the consumer on a more personal, intimate level (Mazzarella 2005: 99). Even as the advertisements tout the product's amazing ability to produce pleasure, there is a repeated insistence that it is the consumer who is the key to pleasure: One advertisement explains, "However, a lot will depend on you. And the ambiance which you open the pack. And the manner in which you decide to wear KamaSutra." Another assures the consumer, "KamaSutra is not an aphrodisiac. Because finally, it's you who starts the fire." Yet another advertisement urges, "It's your revolution. It's your condom. It's KamaSutra." According to Mazzarella, the real power of these advertisements is the way that they

seem to target the individual and his or her own personal desires like never before (Mazzarella 2005: 99).

In another analysis, similarly focused on the revolutionary nature of the campaign, Mary E. John argues that KamaSutra advertising helped usher in a new era of unprecedented acceptance of sex and the sexual woman. While members of the Indian Parliament filed complaints that the advertisements were "objectionable," "indecent," and "voyeuristic," John argues that they actually show positive depictions of female sexuality. Government family planning advertisements paint contraception as the burden of the impoverished, uneducated woman. By placing the burden exclusively on women, these advertisements rob women of their sexuality; women are expected to resist sex, not to enjoy it. In contrast, the KamaSutra advertisements allow women to be sexual but still tasteful, fulfilled but still dignified. While many of the advertisements display topless or scantily-clad models appealing to the male voyeur, others depict a couple in a passionate embrace, both male and female clearly in a state of pleasure. The text underlines this emphasis on mutual pleasure. One brags, "Its texture gives the woman extra pleasure. Because the exquisite contoured, dotted designs are on the outside of the condom. So, at the climax of your passions, the two partners are in no way losing out on their individual pleasure." Such bold promises are accompanied by quotations from the *Kamasutra* about how to best please a woman: "The man should do whatever the girl takes most delight in, and he should get for her whatever she may have a desire to possess." John argues that these advertisements, along with expanded roles for women in film and television, signal a new public legitimating of consensual, mutual, safe sex. Moreover, she claims that

they mark the growing confidence of middleclass men, "whereby masculine desire can be displayed in the full expectation of consent and reciprocity" (John & Nair 1998: 380).[4]

Mazzarella and John do an excellent job of capturing the provocativeness and novelty of advertising and the media in the 1990s. One problem with this approach is that by insisting that KamaSutra ushered in a new era of economic and social liberty, these authors tend to ignore how such liberalization has been contested and resisted. What I hope to contribute to the literature on KamaSutra is the idea that these advertisements are a legacy of the past as much as they are a break from it, and that in the pages of KamaSutra advertising we can see the conventional as well as the progressive.

Ultimately, I argue that these ads aren't as subversive as they originally seem. While the advertisements had a modern styling, the product name evidences that the advertiser felt it necessary to ground their campaign in Indian tradition. One KamaSutra advertising executive explains, "We came up with the idea of using 'KamaSutra' as the brand name, since that's part of Indian heritage and Indian culture. It legitimated it" (Mazzarella 2005: 117). The tension between modernity and tradition that runs throughout the advertising campaign is demonstrative of larger anxieties about India's place in an increasingly globalized world. As Partha Chatterjee argues, the project of modernizing India has been highly contested throughout recent

[4] Others have echoed John in her characterization of the media as an empowering force for women. Arjun Appadurai sees the media as a democratizing force that allows universal participation (Appaduria 1996). Tanika Sarkar argues that the media and advertising create a new consumerist individualism that undermines the idea of the traditional, self-effacing woman who devotes herself to her family and her nation (Sarkar 1999). However, Purnima Mankekar finds the media as it exists in India to be far less democratic. She argues that Indian television, especially the *Ramayan* serial on Doordarshan, strives to create a collective identity, but one based on a masculine upper caste Hindu identity (Mankekar 1999).

history, as modernization was often conflated with the colonial powers of the West (Chatterjee 1993). Therefore, constructing a uniquely Indian form of modernity becomes extremely important. India's supposed unique attributes of spirituality, tradition, and religion must be guarded as the nation modernizes.

Therefore, behind the racy images and rhetoric of freedom, we can see elements of the conventional: the advertisements reinforce traditional gender roles and champion hypermasculine behavior. It has been argued that the difference between the objectified woman and the empowered woman is in the gaze, who is the object and who is the viewer (John & Nair 1998). In the vast majority of these advertisements, the models' eyes are closed. In the only advertisement in which the model's eyes are open, her gaze is partially blocked by tendrils of hair falling in her face; she is crouching, looking up submissively. These photographs suggest that women are meant to be looked at but never to return the gaze. In fact, it appears as if women are not meant to view the advertisements at all. They first appeared exclusively in *Debonair*, a men's magazine, and they send the message that anyone not displaying the most masculine characteristics has no business buying the condoms; as one advertisement deplores: "Nervous giggles, sweaty palms, hoarse whispers ought to be banned. Especially when buying KamaSutra condoms."

Figure 3: Similarities between these two photographs suggest that KamaSutra's advertisements aren't much different from the normal photographs that run in *Debonair*. On the left, a photograph from KamaSutra's 1991 campaign captures a semi-nude model whose face is obscured by tendrils of hair. On the right, a fold out spread from the same edition of *Debonair* features a topless model wearing a mask.

More than just excluding women as consumers, I argue that these advertisements assert a hypermasculinity that encourages men to aggressively dominate sex. The choice of *Debonair* as the product's launch pad reveals this the campaign was meant to appeal to an audience acclimated to such a message. The magazine is full of foldout pornographic spreads and misogynistic writing. In the article "To Be a Man," the author recounts the dilemmas of a young boy who finds that growing up means taking care of helpless women. He concludes, "'You've got to be a man,' my grandmother said. That brief advice was responsible for more unhappiness, guilt and trauma than I could wish on any human being."

This style of writing is echoed in KamaSutra's campaign. One advertisement explains:

> Over 3000 years ago, the Egyptians used linen sheaths. Casanova used condoms made out of animal intestines. World Wars I & II saw condoms

> issued in standard service kits for men in the armed forces. The Beatles and Rock 'n Roll and the sexual revolution ignored the condoms to the dark side of the moon. And for years, there was an uncomfortable silence. And then came KamaSutra.

This timeline is dominated by male subjects; if women are at all included it is as conquests or groupies. The text laments the 1960s and the sexual revolution as the dark ages. Despite being thought of as one of the most sexually liberated periods in recent history, it is painted as an unfortunate lapse because the encouragement of sexual freedom did not inspire condom sales. This is an uneasy characterization as the KamaSutra advertising campaign is built around sexual liberation and freedom. One possible explanation for this characterization is that rise of the birth control pill and women's liberation in the 1960s threatened male power and compromised traditional views about women as mothers. In response, KamaSutra advertising stirs men to reclaim an inheritance that was lost during the sexual revolution in which condoms were passed over for the pill.

Others have noted this weaving together of seemingly progressive messages about sexuality with conservative rhetoric about gender roles. Purnima Mankekar has noted several commercials, soap operas, and music videos that show sexual and assertive women (Mankekar 2004). She notes that in contrast to Bollywood films and early television, television in the 1990s displayed an "unprecedented fascination with intimate relationships—particularly marital, premarital, and extramarital relationships—and contained new and varied representations of erotics" (Mankekar, 2004: 418). However, far from endorsing these television programs as completely progressive, Mankekar insists that they endorse traditional gender roles. In the end,

most of the female characters choose to leave behind their careers and sexual pursuits to return to traditional roles as wives and mothers. Likewise, in Rupal Oza's exploration of the 1996 Miss World Pageant held in Bangalore, India, the author agues that the pageant was an attempt to show that Indian women are educated and modern, and that India should be considered among the most modern and developed nations (2001). However, the competition also represented anxiety about globalization and Westernization, as the swimsuit competition was moved outside of India to the Seychelles to protect the national borders from Westernization.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE CONSUMER

Thus far I have focused almost exclusively on the advertising; indeed, in most of the critiques of KamaSutra, even those that try to reflect on the motives of advertising executives or to subsume the advertisements into larger political and social trends, the advertising remains central. Perhaps this is due to the recognition that the media is an increasingly powerful force in modern life. Mary E. John has argued that in recent years in India, the media have played a disproportionate role in organizing our visual field (John & Nair 1998: 212). One drawback to this approach is that the media appears as a sort of anonymous entity that influences society but is impervious to society's influence. We can see this view reflected in both John and Mazzarella's analyses, which focus on the media but pay little attention to the consumer. The authors' declarations that the advertisements are entirely new and progressive ring hallow when we do not hear the voice of the consumer. Furthermore, the idea that the progressiveness of these advertisements is uncontested seems artificial and denies that consumers are capable of reflecting on and resisting the seduction of the media.

In her study of erotics in Indian consumerism, Purnima Mankekar depicts the media as extremely powerful, but also notes the way that ordinary women interact with and influence the media. She explains, "In the course of doing fieldwork, I glimpsed just how deeply media texts were embedding in the subjectivities, imaginaries, and fantasies of my informants. I also learned that my informants inhabited the texts with which they engaged in profound and intimate ways" (2004:

404). With this in mind, I would like to go beyond the advertising campaign itself, although it is rich and complex enough to inspire many interpretations, and turn my attention to the consumer.

Several recent studies give insight into Indian consumers' attitudes and behaviors regarding contraception. The 1995-6 PERFORM System of Indicators Survey (PSIS) contains contraceptive use histories from 45,262 women living in Uttar Pradesh. Its companion study, the 1995 Male Reproductive Health Survey (MRHS), provides information about husbands' knowledge and behavior related to contraception use and reproductive health. A third study, *Domestic Violence and Contraceptive Adoption in Uttar Pradesh, India* analyzes the above two surveys to examine the association between domestic violence and the subsequent adoption of contraception.

Complications arise from these surveys because of their intimate subject matter. Contraception, sex, and marital relations are private matters, and informants may be hesitant to discuss them with strangers. Getting men to discuss domestic violence or sexual violence is also difficult, and the studies admit that there is likely an underreporting of the two. Additionally, collecting data on domestic violence may have harmful repercussions for informants and their families; therefore, in the surveys asking about domestic violence, only men were interviewed. There are no results regarding women's experience with or perception of domestic violence.

All three studies focus on Uttar Pradesh, which simplifies things greatly as there is tremendous variety in contraception use and knowledge by region (and also by class, education level, and religion). Data from Uttar Pradesh frequently stands out

from national averages: the fertility rate there is 40 percent higher than the national average and the use of modern methods of contraception is much lower (NFHS 1995). Many researchers attribute these extremes to the low level of female autonomy in the state (Sathar 1998). As is true for several other north Indian states, Uttar Pradesh ranks very low on almost all indicators of women's autonomy and status, including women's median age at first marriage, literacy, exposure to the media and education, autonomy in decision making, freedom of motion, and the ability to control finances (Stephenson et al. 2006).

Domestic violence is also an indicator of female status. Physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual coercion, threats, isolation and controlling access to information and services are various forms of domestic violence (WHO 1997). Recent research has increased awareness of the scope and significance of domestic violence in the developing world. Evidence suggests that from 10 to 60 percent of married women in developing countries have experienced some form of domestic violence, with some of the highest levels coming from South Asia (Shuler et al. 1997). The MRHS confirms that domestic violence in its various forms is prevalent in Uttar Pradesh. 30 percent of husbands admitted to abusing their wives; the same percentage reported seeing their fathers abuse their mothers. 30 percent of husbands also reported having sex with when their wives were not willing (MRHS 1995).

Domestic violence is recognized as having adverse consequences for a range of reproductive health issues. It is associated with low birth weights, elevated levels prematurity, perinatal and early childhood mortality, and sexually transmitted diseases. It also constrains a woman's ability to use contraception. A study of

husbands in north India demonstrated a positive association between spousal physical abuse and men's reports that their wives had one or more unplanned pregnancy. A primary explanation for this is that the experience of domestic violence makes women fearful to negotiate or effectively use contraception with their partners.

There is strong evidence for this link between domestic violence and contraception use from Ghana, South Africa, and India. Men interviewed in Ghana reported that a woman's clandestine use of contraception was justification for beating her (Ezeh 1993). In another Ghanaian study, the threat of violence was found to be sufficient to deter women from raising the issue of contraception with their partners (Bawah et al. 1999). In a South Africa study Wood and Jewkes reported that young women who attended family planning clinics often faced physical abuse from partners or family members (1997). A similar study found that women who report domestic violence had lower rates of contraception use than women who did not report instances of domestic violence (Stephenson et al. 2006: 76-77).[5]

Domestic violence is a major constraint on a woman's ability to use contraception; however, there are other more systematic and public constraints as well. Husbands in Uttar Pradesh are significantly more informed than their wives about where to buy contraceptives; they are see family planning messages more often than their wives do. This is surprising as family planning advertisements have traditionally targeted women who are seen as the primary beneficiaries of contraception.[6] Only

[5] Not limited to the developing world, studies from the United States Ghana show that domestic violence constrains a woman's ability to use contraception (Kalichman et al. 1998).
[6] Because smaller families often translate into fewer health problems and less drudgery for women, it is assumed that women will naturally use contraception if possible while men might resist or be unconcerned with what is thought to be a female issue.

since the advent of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the recognition that most female methods of contraception do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases have men been significantly targeted. Even when family planning messages were exclusively geared towards women, women often remained in the dark about contraception; particularly in patriarchal areas women can have little access to the media or sexual education materials and rely on their husbands and other family members for health-related decisions (Stephenson et al. 2006).

Whether through interspousal relations or due to men's better access to family planning messages, men effectively control contraceptive decision making. A study from Uttar Pradesh found that most women felt they had little control over their reproductive decision making (Stephenson et al. 2006), and 33 percent of men surveyed in the MRHS admitted that their wives would have difficulty negotiating contraception with them (MRHS 1995). From an advertising perspective, it seems this makes men a better target for contraception as they have fewer obstacles preventing them from purchasing contraception. One problem with approaching men as the ideal contraception customer is that, as the above data shows, men tend to resist contraception use, sometimes violently. However, KamaSutra seem to have managed to capitalize on this violence by evoking the aggression with which some men resist contraception and transforming it into an aggression to control contraception.

In the previous section on advertising, I outlined many of the ways such violence is evoked. There are the references to soldiers, the call for men to take back something that has been stolen from them, and the submissive, veiled women figures. There is no doubt that these advertisements also show images of intimacy and

pleasure, but there is always an undercurrent of male domination, urging men to violently demand what previously that had vehemently resisted.

We see KamaSutra's approach imitated in several other condom advertisements of the 1990s. India's major brands of condoms, including Durex, Moods, and Kohinoor, all run advertisements which aren't just oriented at men, but share the same masculine tone. For example, a Moods advertisement juxtaposes a shy, effeminate man struggling to ask for a condom with a good looking, confident man who demands, "Moods, please." A recent Kohinoor advertisement shows an old man walking around a large, creepy estate at night. He is awoken several times during the night by a creaking sound, suggesting an intruder. In the morning, a man walks out smiling with a veiled woman as the old man realized the sound came from a creaking bed. Again we see a woman with her gaze blocked, this time with a more conventional symbol: a veil. Also thinly veiled is the commercials disturbing association of violence with sex, which the advertisers try to cover with humor.

This kind of strategy isn't limited to the private sector; it can also be found in government sponsored family planning initiatives. The United Nations Program on AIDS (UNAIDS) and India's National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) recently produced several advertisements featuring the national cricket team. One television advertisement shows a group of men intensely watching a cricket match when suddenly a player gets hurt; a voiceover explains the importance of using protection on and off the field. In 2005 UNAIDS also produced a curriculum for cricket coaches to educate young players. It explains the unprecedented risk today's youth face and urges:

> This is why you—a father, a son, a brother, a worker, and sometimes a cricket coach—are being called on to play your part in the response against HIV and AIDS. As a cricket coach, you play a special role in the lives of a number of young men. These young men are on the verge of discovering themselves, including their sexuality, and the world around them. These are young men who are searching for their own way to live and are trying to find answers to questions such as "Who am I?" and "What is it to be a man? (UNAIDS AIDS curriculum, 2005).

What is noteworthy about these initiatives is how they exclusively target males and portray joining the fight against AIDS as an important part of "what it is to be a man."[7]

It has long been argued that men must be involved in family planning programs. The growing AIDS epidemic in India provides urgent evidence for the need to involve men, as most female methods of contraception don't protect against AIDS or other STDS. Furthermore, despite negative assumptions about men's resistance to contraception, recent evidence suggests that the most successful family planning programs target men as well as women (Karra et al. 1997). While it may seem obvious that men should be involved in family planning and reproductive health programs, a more provocative question issues is *how* they should be involved. The same studies that indicated that the most successful family planning programs involve men also indicate that increased interposal communication or changes in gender relations were not generated from male involvement. To the contrary, men who became involved in family planning tended to dominate contraception decision-making without much communication with their spouses. This is particularly alarming for those who view family planning as a source of empowerment for women.

[7] The women's national cricket team has not been included in anti-AIDS campaigns. For more on the male domination of the sport, see Arjun Appadurai's *Playing with Modernity*.

It has long been argued that improving women's social status, education, and employment opportunities go hand in hand with lowering fertility rates. If lower fertility rates and increased contraception can be achieved without making broader changers to the family structure or gender relations, will family planning organizations which previously championed women's rights forgo this struggle and instead target men, who can quite effectively be involved without addressing these intimate and complicated gender issues?

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONSUMER-CITIZEN

My final argument is that my analysis suggests that women lack consumer power in contraceptive marketing and lack power as citizens who are seen as deserving of government health and social services. In this section I argue that the ability to purchase goods is necessary for people to be seen a desired consumers and deserving citizens.

The common idea of citizenship emphasizes equality in political participation and government services. However, services such as family planning and public health programs have always been applied selectively, with participation being based either on race, gender, and class (Shah 2001). For example, during the Emergency, low caste and poor men and women were disproportionately targets of forced sterilizations (Chatterjee and Riley 2001) and urban epidemics are often linked to racial minorities or poor communities (Shah 2001: 8). These two examples resonate with dozens of other instances of family planning or public health programs being applied exclusively to subordinate groups defined by gender, race, and class (Shat 2001).

India's family planning program has a notorious history of targeting subordinate groups. In its early years, the program focused on increasing the contraception supply to the general public and increasing knowledge and education. When these strategies failed to provide the desired results, efforts were intensified. Targets and incentives were adopted to encourage couples to limit their fertility;

however, they were disproportionately applied to poor populations and women who were seen as most vulnerable to economic and social pressure (Chatterjee and Riley 2001). However, since the Emergency, successive governments have tried to distance family planning from its coercive roots. The national family planning policy is now advertised under a different name, the Family Welfare Program and voluntary participation is emphasized (Panandiker and Umashankar 1994). Upon the name change, the Minster of the Family Welfare Program announced, "Compulsion in the area of family welfare must be ruled out for all times to come. Our approach is educational and wholly voluntary" (Chatterjee and Riley 2001: 825). Especially in the 1980s and 1990s, the policy was touted as "pro-woman" for linking family planning to broader social changes in health, education, poverty, and the general empowerment of women (Chatterjee and Riley 2001: 827).

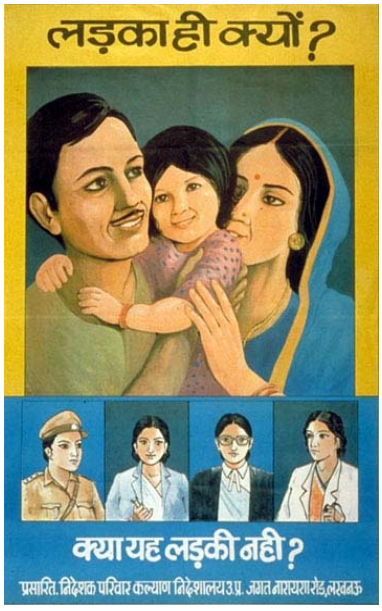

Figure 4: An advertisement from the early 1990s encourages a change in the way women and daughters are perceived. English translation: Why only a boy? Are these not girls?

As my earlier analysis of both private and public campaigns indicates, women are becoming less visible in family planning advertising. Furthermore, the push for broader social changes that might benefit women is absent in this advertising. If women were previously seen as both deserving of family planning and social services and as a necessary part of the solution, what has happened in recent years to so dramatically change their status in the eyes of the government?

I offer one possible explanation that argues that links women's status as citizens to their status as consumers. Contemporary family planning programs are scrutinized more than ever for evidence of cost efficiency and maximization of the investment of public funds; health economics has become its own field as planners struggle to make health and human service programs cost effective or even profitable (Tsui 2003). Meanwhile, private companies like KamaStura have found much success targeting men who aren't impeded from buying contraption the way women are.[8] KamaSutra is the second leading condom provider in India, distributes its products to over 50 countries worldwide, and has achieved a popularity and appeal that government brands never managed (Mazzarella 2003). Painini has argued that the liberalization of the Indian economy and the success of companies like Kamasutra led to the privatization of public sector enterprises, the reduction of public sector investments, and the decreasing government expenditures on poverty and social services and have generally not served women well (1995). This indicates that what makes women an unappealing audience for KamaSutra advertisers also makes them underserved citizens by their national government.

[8] Indian men are more likely than women to be exposed to a family planning message, and many women express that they have little control over contraception decision making (MRHS 1995).

The advertisement below illustrates my point. Family planning has long been tied up with the idea of material prosperity: most economists and demographers agree that economic stability is related to population size (Chatterjee & Riley 2001: 817). Indian postcolonial discourse promised that through family planning and other measures of state planning, citizens could achieve a higher standard of living. This promise is made explicit in below.

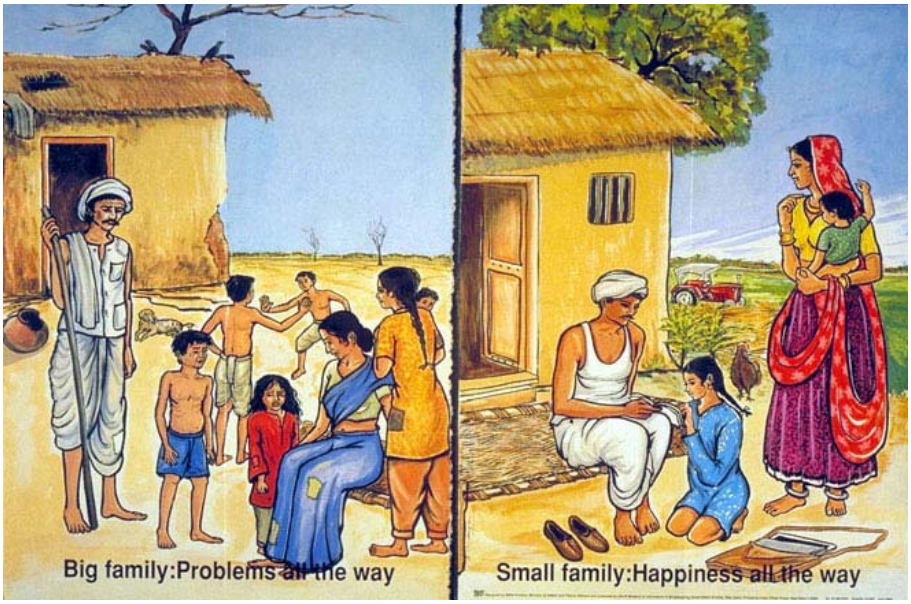

Figure 5: Family planning poster from 1996.

In the advertisement, the large family has raggedy clothes and a dilapidated house. The father, an exhausted and apathetic looking man, stands idle as his children play. In contrast, the small family circles around the father who is reading a story. They wear nicer clothes and have extra amenities: a pair of shoes and a bag filled with books. In the background, there is a red car. This advertisement reveals several important messages. First, poor families appear to be responsible for their poverty

because they choose not to limit their family size. Second, the advertisement suggests that in order for a family to be successful and organized, the father must be the head of the house. Finally, the advertisement promises that family planning leads to material prosperity. By placing blame on impoverished families, the ad reveals that middle class families are favored. Because the main difference between the two families is the amount of goods they have on display, it appears that the difference between "good" citizens and "problem" citizens is their ability to purchase goods.

As services are doled out, not on the basis of citizenship but on consumerism, the distinction between private corporations and government family planning programs blurs. The distinction becomes more obscure as governments and international donors heavily subsidize the sale of contraceptives through private retailers (Tsui 2003). In an effort to snag part of this market, KamaSutra has recently abandoned its rhetoric of sexual freedom and teamed up with Australian company, Ansell, to form Ansell-Raymond. Ansell has made sweeping changes to the condoms designed to make them better at preventing pregnancy and the transmission of HIV and other diseases making the more popular amongst public health officials.

It seems that the current trends in contraception initiatives, both public and private, simultaneously and paradoxically offer progressive images of women and sexuality while also sidestepping the question of gender equality. The failure of the government to serve its female citizens underscores how globalization and commercial trends impact men and women differently, often in unforeseen ways: the liberalizing of the Indian economy has not necessarily brought women greater freedoms but rather has led to the demise of many pro-woman services. The disavowal of women in both

public and private advertising illuminates the need for academics and public health officials to intervene where the government has failed and to all attention to the social, economic, and cultural reasons that prevent women from accessing contraception. Furthermore, instead of continually trading men and women as the target population of family planning messages, it is necessary to reevaluate the best way to involve men in contraception initiatives. Feminists have long called on the involvement of men in family planning programs, arguing that exclusively targeting women places an unfair burden on women and decreases male accountability. What the recent advertising campaigns explored in this paper show, however, is that while male involvement may increase the efficiency or effectiveness of a program, it can come at the expense of women. Therefore, family planning practitioners must create new rubrics for family planning program that include issues of gender equality as a measure of success.

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