#### Research Article

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# Darker shades of "fairness" in India: Male attractiveness and colorism in commercials

https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2020-0007 received August 25, 2019; accepted February 27, 2020

**Abstract:** The skin-lightening products for men in India and their mode of advertising have been shaping the concept of attractiveness for Indian men by portraying lighter skin tone as the most fundamental quality of being attractive, always desirable, and successful. Although women's skin-lightening products in India have received attention by a few scholars lately, men's products are still underresearched. Hence, this study aims to investigate the issue of colorism augmented by television commercials for men's "fairness" (light skin tone) products in India. The primary data for this study are six Hindi television commercials for men's skin-lightening products which were broadcast from 2005 to 2015 and were available on YouTube during data collection. The commercials are by one popular brand, Emami Fair and Handsome. The target commercials are significant for their categorical distinction in directness as well as for their nature of storytelling that helps facilitate the discourse of colorism itself. The methodology is a combination of multimodal analysis, critical discourse analysis, and advertisement analysis. The overall goal of this study is to bring visibility to this subtle and multilayered problem of colorism in Indian society which is being reinforced by the skin-lightening products for men.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, colorism, multimodal analysis, discrimination, India, skin-lightening products, men

### 1 Introduction

In the wake of the twenty-first century, television (TV) commercials became one of the major ways to advertise skin-lightening products for men in India. Before that, neither the commercials nor the existence of commercially produced skin-lightening products for men could be traced. The frequent telecast of several of such commercials on TV appears to be an every-day phenomenon. As a result, lighter skin tone ("fairness") has become one of defining properties of attractiveness (being "handsome") through the advertising of skin-lightening products. These products and their mode of advertising have been shaping the notion of attractiveness of Indian men by portraying light skin color as the most fundamental quality of being handsome, attractive, cool, and hence, always desirable and successful. These TV commercials indicate that the urban population of India does not seem to believe in the popularly uttered phrase of "tall, dark (skin tone), and handsome" in the West¹ to describe the criteria of a modern handsome man anymore. Although in the West "dark" stands for dark hair color, in India the integration of this phrase in popular usage denotes darkskin tone. However, such a change in the defining characteristics of modern

<sup>1</sup> The West indicates ideas commonly associated with the United States, especially Hollywood.

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Indian men is also in stark contrast to the cultural background of the Indian society. Historically, Lord Krishna² was a man of dark complexion. The name "Krishna" literally means black or dark in Sanskrit (Kanta, 1975: 159). Lord Krishna, traditionally, is revered as the epitome of and attractiveness in the Indian context (especially by the young women). Martin (2007: 241) depicts Lord Krishna as "the amorous Dark Lord" and Sethi and Jain (2007: 43) describe him as "[...] a beautiful cowherd boy with bluish hued skin." Lord Shiva³ is also dark complexioned and prayed to by young women to be blessed with a Shiva-like husband. Sethi and Jain (2007: 43) states that, "[...] unmarried women pray for a husband like Shiva, who is considered the ideal husband." At the end, the effects of this kind of commercials or campaigns are detrimental to the progress of a diverse culture. It creates and enforces the notion of colorism and discriminates against the people of color.

# 2 Aim of the study

Although women's beauty products in India have received attention in terms of the issue of lighter skin tone by a few scholars and researchers, such as Hussein (2010), Parameswaran (2011, 2015), Nagar (2018), and others lately, men's product is still underresearched. The main goal of this project is to investigate this issue of colorism augmented by the TV commercials for men's fairness4 products. Parameswaran and Cardoza (2009: 213) state that, "[...] skin-lightening or 'fairness' cosmetics in India is part of the larger context of escalating lifestyle consumerism in Asia's emerging market nations." Although Parameswaran and Cardoza's (2009) statement is mainly based on the skin-lightening products of women in India, men's skin-lightening products and the underlying ideology of colorism behind the promotion and circulation of those products are no less significant than women's products. Since colorism is an issue of marginalization and discrimination, it needs attention. Moreover, until and unless some visibility is brought to the subtle nature of this perpetuating problem, the assumed association of lighter skin tone and superiority cannot be detached. As Hunter (2007: 237) defines, "Colorism is a persistent problem for people of color. Colorism, or skin color stratification, is a process that privileges light-skinned people of color over dark in areas such as income, education, housing, and the marriage market." It is a problem which is often subtle and has serious consequences. Moreover, the commercials are using language to foreground the notion of attractive, smart, and desirable men by focusing and publicizing the fairness benchmark. This fairness is being upheld as the benchmark for a better and successful life. As Venkataswamy (2013: 136) states the "advertisements reinforce 'fairness' as a quality that enhances marriage prospects, career progress and confidence in oneself." Thus, this upholding of the fairness benchmark in turn devalues the life where men possess darkskin tone.

The skin-lighting products for men and the way these are promoted need more attention as far as the issue of discrimination based on skin color is concerned. As Rajesh (2013: para. 2) suggests, "In 2010, India's whitening-cream market was worth \$432 m, according to a report by market researchers ACNielsen, and was growing 18% per year." Unveiling the subtle linguistic usage, which is feeding into the discriminatory aspect of these commercials, makes this issue a concern for applied linguistics. Language as one of the main components of this practice situates this problem in the domain of critical linguistics. By studying relevant literature and critically studying the chosen TV commercials from 2005 to 2015, the aim of this article is to understand how the discourse of colorism is taking place in a set of Indian commercials. Further details to investigate are how some linguistic/semiotic/sociocultural (discourse) elements are naturalizing this notion of fairness; and how this problem can be foregrounded and unpacked as far as applied linguistics is concerned. It is important to mention that this is a research seeking to bring visibility to and unpack the problem that centers around the discourse of colorism in

<sup>2</sup> Lord Krishna is one of the human incarnations of Hindu god Vishnu (Pattanaik, 2003: 204).

<sup>3</sup> God of destruction in Hindu mythology (Pattanaik, 2003: 206).

<sup>4 &</sup>quot;Fairness" is the word commonly used as the alternative to "skin-lightening" as far as the Indian context is concerned.

Indian skin-lightening products and their proliferating market. If the findings are supported, this project can contribute to further research in this area.

# 3 Sociocultural background of fairness in India

As far as the sociocultural context of India is concerned, the astonishing thing is, love for fairness is prevalent in the world and lifestyle of women, both in rural and in urban areas. The lighter skin tone of women is highly desired when it comes to being a nice bride material (Thappa and Malathi 2014), which has a lot to do with the gender norms of the traditional Indian society. The darkskin carries sociocultural baggage. According to Thappa and Malathi (2014), in India, there is a long history behind the obsession with skin color, owing to caste and culture. The desire for lighter skin originated from the structure of Hinduism's social hierarchy, in which those belonging to higher castes typically had "fairer" (Thappa and Malathi 2014) complexions and are better placed in the political hierarchy. However, the relation between a darker skin tone and the caste hierarchy is not that simple. According to Mishra (2015: 2), "In India, acceptability in society does not solely rely upon skin color - though it forms an integral part of everyone's desire." The acceptability variables range from caste, classes within a caste, religion, region, to economic level, and skin color supersedes each of these categories as a virtue much sought after by one and all. Without exaggeration, it appears to be the most important factor.

Colorism, which marginalizes people with darker skin tone and advances the preference for lighter skin tone, is also intertwined with the history of the British colonial era. Since people from lower castes were mainly engaged in working out in the sun and the Brahmanical culture proliferated by suppressing the lower castes, the idea of "fair" skin became associated with the people who are from higher castes, leaving the darker skin tone a stigma to adhere to. The British and other European rulers were also fond of lighter skin tones, presumably because they thought light skin to be superior. Scholars like Mishra (2015) speaks about how British colonizers treated Indians like "black" slaves and boasted their right of doing so as they were white superiors that had the responsibility to rule. Mishra (2015: 731) notes that the British recruited indigenous people for the army in colonized India, and people with comparatively light skin received better placement opportunity and were hired more frequently than the nonlight ones. Thus, in the colonial era, people with lighter skin tone felt privileged, and people looked up to the lighter skin tone of the rulers, which created the divide based on skin tone. Hence, the legacy of colonialism perpetuated a national identity of subordinate Indians which still today expresses itself through images of "whiteness" as superior to "darkness" (Chakravarty, 1989).

However, this is the history until the wake of the twentieth century. India was liberated and people had a wider opportunity for education after India's independence from British rule in 1947. The Indian constitution dictates that the democracy be run by the rationale of equality and not by the equation of caste, creed, and religion. Thus, colorism should not flourish anymore. However, the presence of skinlightening products and their flourishing market in India indicates otherwise. According to popular beliefs, the very concept of discrimination based on skin color is either nonexistent or extremely mild. It is so mild that educated upper-middle-class people do not believe it exists (Mishra, 2015: 725). For them, it is a history and may be an undercurrent in the rural areas of India. However, the skin-lightening-product industry is taking advantage of Indians' lack of overtly acknowledging the functional existence of colorism. The prejudice is so deep-rooted that people do not even see the products prosper.

As compared to the females' beauty products, males' skin-lightening product is historically younger. However, since the launch of "Fair and Handsome" in 2005, the skin-lightening products for men have used ample time to exploit and stoke skin-color discrimination. Therefore, the obsession of achieving a lighter skin tone has become a major life goal for urban men in India. The results found in the study by Mishra (2015) are also a reflection of the similar sense. Suggested in this study, the educated urban males, indirectly, still exhibit the preference for a lighter skin tone when it comes to their very social and personal relationship-related domains of life. The majority (77.77%) of the male participants described lighter skin tone as a benchmark for attractiveness. Moreover, 74% of the male participants preferred a

woman of lighter skin tone as date to a woman of darker skin tone. The participants of this survey were 20–25 years old. As Mishra (2015) also mentions that Indians have great love for fair skin. No one directly wants to talk about it but the love is so apparent that many actions reflect it. The commercials in the data set and the newspaper matrimonial advertisements in Appendix II rightly contextualize how the fairness standard has invaded the skin-color discourse of men's attractiveness standards in India.

# 4 Background of the commercials

Now the question arises as to why these commercials are significant for this critical investigation? Moreover, which part of them plays into the notion of colorism? These questions will be answered in Section 7. For now, knowing some information about the evolution of skin-lightening products and their TV commercials in India would be enlightening. In 1975, a skin-lightening product for women named Fair and Lovely was launched in India. It still exists and is flourishing in India. Rajesh (2013: para. 2) states that Indians reportedly consumed 233 tons of skin-whitening products in 2012, spending more money on them than Coca-Cola. This shows the growth in the demand at an alarming rate. However, it is for women. Since it has to do with lighter skin, it definitely feeds into colorism. But analyzing beauty products for women is beyond the scope of this article. Hence, the investigation of the article will concentrate on the men's fairness products instead.

In 2005, the launch of Fair and Handsome (the first to launch a fairness product for men) marked the dawn of men's skin-whitening products in India. Since then it has been ruling the industry. Back then, the TV commercial focused on the preference for lighter skin tone of men by overtly decrying the use of females' skin-lightening product as inappropriate for males in a derogatory way. It used the classical problem-solver technique to promote the product in the market. However, in so doing, like any other product, it might have created the problem of stigmatizing darkskin tone itself. Before 2005, there is no documentation of urban young men of India using any skin-lightening product. Thus, the launch of the product worked as an introduction of a luxury product that would gradually become a part of the day-to-day life for Indian young men.

According to Parameswaran (2011: 83), "The tide in semiotics of skin color in India's visual economy [...] ebbs and flows between the binaristic opposing poles of 'whiteness/lightness/fairness is generally positive' and 'blackness/darkness/brownness is generally negative'." TV commercials play a major role in contributing to this visual economy and the creation of the "binaristic poles". TV stars or models endorsing beauty products are nothing new. According to Rajesh (2013), "Cricket players and Bollywood stars regularly endorse these products." They get paid for what they do on screen. However, it is the concept of the commercials that is crucial for a researcher, because the concept of a commercial both influences and is influenced by the societal attitude toward a certain discriminatory act (such as colorism). According to Cook (2006: 10), there is a categorical distinction between the two major types of advertisements/commercials that are telecast on TV. One is called "hard sell" and the other is called "soft sell." Although the divide is not a watertight compartmentalization, the distinction helps to understand the nature of the commercials. The former category describes commercials that are direct and would overtly appeal for buying the products and may justify reliability, low cost, and benefits, whereas the latter type describes commercials that are indirect and would not overtly ask the viewers for a purchase. Here the data have both kinds.

# 5 Data and methodology

The primary data for this study are six popularly broadcast Hindi TV commercials that are promoting skin-lightening products for men. The commercials are by one major brand, Fair and Handsome.

These commercials were found after an exhaustive electronic search and were available on YouTube. For the electronic search key words such as "fair," "fairness," "darkskin," "fairness cream," "men," "India," "Emami Fair and Handsome," "South Asia," "commercials," etc. and various combinations of such words were used. Google search was also used to locate the online content like publicly available newspaper articles, blogs, web entries, etc. which could provide information about the commercials on YouTube. Fair and Handsome is the most popular fairness product brand in India and the one that introduced the first skin-lightening product for men in 2005. Because the commercials have evolved from 2005 in terms of their direct and indirect approaches to promoting the products, they are presented in a chronological manner from 2005 to 2015.

All these advertisements are (were) available on YouTube during data collection, and the transcriptions of their meaning-translated English version have been provided in Appendix I (along with the links at the time of research, in the endnotes). This is a culturally informed sense-for-sense translation (Wodak 2001, van Dijk 2016). The translation of every commercial is as close to the original as it could be. This translation endeavor demands a thorough knowledge of the Indian sociocultural situation along with the knowledge of Hindi. Since the advertisements are a combination of linguistic and paralinguistic elements and transcribing everything is beyond the scope of this article, the main story and the relevant information (i.e., number of participants, duration, jingle, the time stamp of when the product appears on the screen, etc.) along with screenshots of every commercial are presented in a table format in this section. As mentioned earlier, a descriptive version of every commercial is included in the corresponding appendix section (Tables 1-6).

The data are examined through the lens of a critical perspective, with a focus on the notion of colorism/shadeism. This critical perspective follows the conceptual framework of both Fairclough (1985, 1992, 1995, 2013) and van Dijk (1988/2013, 1997, 2003) to unpack the underlying ideology of colorism in the commercials. Like Fairclough, the methodology and analysis take into consideration the relation between social practices and inherent dominance. It also focuses on how norms or ideologies are naturalized in discursive practices. Like van Dijk, the focus of the investigation is based on the context. The discursive context shapes and is shaped by the social and cultural processes and calls for the foregrounding of working inequality and power in the process. While the critical orientation of the methodological framework of the article is informed by the two abovementioned scholars, the goal of the research necessitates incorporating some methodological tools for both advertisement analysis and multimodal analysis. The advertisement analysis framework is informed by O'Barr (1994), Cook (2006), and Ringrow (2016); and the multimodal analysis is informed by Norris (2004), van Leeuwen (2004), Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), and O'Halloran (2011).

# 6 Corpus

The following corpus consists of informative tables of six YouTube commercials that promote different variations of a men's skin-lightening product Fair and Handsome dating from 2005 to 2015. These commercials are mainly in Hindi, but frequent use of English can be observed as well. Since English is one of the official and most commonly used languages in India, the frequent use of English is not surprising to connect with the general masses. Moreover, the sections wherein the English language is originally used in the commercials are italicized in the transcriptions. All the commercials have been extracted off-line for research purposes. The total duration of the commercials is 10 min and 7 s. Broad transcription of the English translation for every commercial is in Appendix I. Moreover, some Indian matrimonial advertisements from two majorly circulated English newspapers have also been included in Appendix II to show how the term fair frequently appears to describe attractiveness or desirability in the context of matrimonial newspaper advertisements, which is indicative of how fairness is a must-have quality to conform to the culturally enforced attractiveness standards of contemporary Indian society.

| Brand           | Fair and Handsome  |
|-----------------|--|
| Year            | 2005   |
| Length          | 40 s   |
| Summary         | The formerly dark-skinned young man is rewarded with a lighter skin tone using the product. He has now gained popularity among the women.  |
| Jingle          | There is a Hindi jingle being played in the background. It has a fast rhythmic tempo (Indian pop) of Indian Bollywood (Hindi film industry)-type songs. The lyrics ask a question whether the character wants to be light complexioned by stealthily using females' skin-lightening product. Female chorus singers sing the phrase "stealthily" with a rising intonation. The lyrics say females' product is inappropriate. It is very shameful to do so. Men need to use men's skin-lightening cream. At the end, the voice-over of multiple female singers plays the chorus of the phrase "hi handsome, hi handsome, hi handsome".           |
| Characters      | 1. Main model (P1) who is undergoing the entire process of changing from being darkskinned to light skinned. 2. Another male model (P2) who helps the main darkskinned model run away and hide, while the latter is being chased by a group of girls for trying to steal women's product from a dorm. This model is light complexioned and scolds the main model for using women's beauty product. 3. A group of young women (W+) who initially chase the main model for stealthily grabbing and using their skin cream. This same group of young women flock around the main model when he gains a lighter skin tone. 4. Male voice-over (VO) |
| Product appears | Twice; at the 23rd and 36th second of the 40-second commercial. The first appearance is to introduce the product and the second one to describe the unique qualities of the product to build ethos.  |

#### Before using the product



#### After using the product



Table 2: Commercial 2

|                 | er lu l   |
|-----------------|---|
| Brand           | Fair and Handsome   |
| Year            | 2009  |
| Length          | 60 s  |
| Summary         | A young man who dreams of a lifestyle of a Bollywood star, especially the popularity, is being rewarded with that kind of life after achieving a lighter skin tone by the use of the particular product.  |
| Jingle          | There is no jingle. However, different kinds of music are played throughout the commercial.   |
| Characters      | <ol> <li>The celebrity endorser Shahrukh Khan (SK)</li> <li>The main protagonist (P1) who is a struggler and who later on benefits from the product</li> <li>A young woman (W) who plays the heroine for SK's stunt sequence</li> <li>Male voice-over (VO)</li> </ol> |
| Product appears | Thrice; at the 35th second when SK introduces the product to show it to the protagonist, at the 44th second to show how the product works on men's skin, and at the 59th second when SK endorses the product for the final time in the commercial.                    |

#### Before using the product



#### After using the product



Table 3: Commercial 3

| Brand      | Fair and Handsome   |
|------------|---|
| Year       | 2013  |
| Length     | 45 s  |
| Summary    | Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan narrating his life journey and emphasizing the success because of his struggle and good looks. The latter is not inherited but achieved by using the fairness product. |
| Jingle     | There is no jingle. However, a slow-paced instrumental music is played throughout the commercial.   |
| Characters | <ol> <li>The celebrity endorser Shahrukh khan (SK)</li> <li>The struggling young man (P1) standing in the crowd and who receives the product from SK.</li> </ol>                                    |

**Product appears** 

Twice; at the 21st second when SK puts a tube of the product while packing his bag, and at the 36th second when SK throws the product toward the young man and after that the product remains on the screen until the final screen appears with the product and its title at the bottom.

Before using the product: NA (The story starts with the already existing "fair" protagonist and his narration of the journey to success.)

#### After using the product



After using the product



Table 4: Commercial 4

| Brand  | Fair and Handsome  |
|--|--|
| Year   | 2015   |
| Length   | 2 min and 46 s   |
| Summary A young man sells his favorite motorbike in order to gather money for a crucial purpose wife/girlfriend's career and passion.  |  |
| Jingle A Hindi jingle is being played in the background. It has a soft rhythmic tempo to invoke a motivation and happiness. The beginning of the jingle has a soft tone and low pitch, and a the jingle has a raised pitch to indicate accomplishment.  The first part  The lyrics start as if the young man is singing in his head – "thousands of dreams lie in the guitar plays in the heart of aspirations. life does not have moments, moments have life, moment should be life []"  The final part of the jingle is as follows |  |
| Characters   | "live every color, sing every song/this is how handsome life should be."  1. Movie star Hrithik Roshan (HR) who at the beginning of the main narrative defines the notion of a   |
| Characters   | "handsome life" and at end of the narrative urges people to share their stories of success and get a chance to be "groomed" by the product's stylists/experts and, also, get a chance to meet the star himself.  2. A young man (P1) who sells his motorbike to arrange for the needed money for his wife/beloved.           |
|  | 3. <b>The woman, Sim,</b> who was initially upset for the lack of money needed for her career.   |
| Product appears  | Never appears during the narrative. However, <b>#HandsomeLife</b> is used throughout the commercial (see the screenshots below) in the lower right corner of the screen.  The product's logo appears at 2 min and 21s when the movie star talks about the "grooming" opportunity and 2 min and 41s when the commercial ends. |





2 min 21 s

2 min 41 s

Before using the product N.A. (The product is not being sold in the commercial at all.)

After using the product N.A. (The product is not being sold in the commercial at all.)

#### Before the accomplishment



#### After the accomplishment



Table 5: Commercial 5

| Brand      | nd Fair and Handsome   |  |
|------------|--|--|
| Year       | 2015   |  |
| Length     | 2 min and 37 s   |  |
| Summary    | A young man quitting his high-paying job to open a rock-climbing academy, where he accommodates a poor little girl who wants to learn rock climbing.   |  |
| Jingle     | A Hindi jingle is being played in the background. It has a soft rhythmic tempo to invoke a feeling of motivation and happiness. The beginning of the jingle has a soft tone and low pitch, and at the end, the jingle has a raised pitch to indicate accomplishment.  The first part  The lyrics start as if the young man is singing in his head – "Thousands of dreams lie in the eyes/the guitar plays in the heart of aspirations. Take that special flight (leap) in life/which the entire world will remember forever."  The final part of the jingle is as follows  "Give wings to your aspirations/listen to your heart this time/listen to your heart. Live the handsome life, be carefree. This is how handsome life should be." |  |
| Characters | <ol> <li>Movie star Hrithik Roshan (HR) who at the beginning of the main narrative defines the notion of a "handsome life" and at end of the narrative urges people to share their stories of success and get a chance to be "groomed" by the product's stylists/experts and also get a chance to meet the star himself.</li> <li>The young male protagonist (P1) who runs the rock-climbing academy after quitting his high-paying job.</li> <li>The very young woman (P2) who joins the rock-climbing academy because of the protagonist.</li> <li>The watchman (P3) who is also the uncle of the young girl.</li> </ol>   |  |

Product appears

Never appears during the narrative. However, **#HandsomeLife** is used throughout the commercial (see the screenshots below) in the lower right corner of the screen.

The product's logo appears at 2 min and 24 s when the movie star talks about the "grooming" opportunity and at 2 min and 35 s when the commercial ends.





2 min 24 s

2 min 35 s

Before using the product

N.A. (The product is not being sold in the commercial at all.)

After using the product

N.A. (The product is not being sold in the commercial at all.)

**Skin tone before the accomplishment:** NA (the story starts with the already existing "fair" protagonist and his narration of the life of passion and helping others live theirs'.)

#### After the accomplishment

#### After the accomplishment



Table 6: Commercial 6

| Brand  | Fair and Handsome   |
|--|---|
| Year   | 2015  |
| Length   | 2 min and 19 s  |
| Summary  | A young man is finally refusing a job offer to open a dream project of his garage-mechanic father and ultimately making his father happy and proud. |
| Jingle A Hindi jingle being played in the background. It has a soft rhythmic tempo to invoke a fe motivation and happiness. The beginning of the jingle has a soft tone and low pitch, and at the jingle has a raised pitch to indicate accomplishment.  The first part  The lyrics start as if the young man is singing in his head – "The moment is very close to a ly will write my own fate. (I) will try forever/will not accept defeat so easily."  The final part of the jingle is as follows:  "Do not let the time elapse/you too live a handsome life. Live the handsome life, be carefree how handsome life should be." |   |
| Characters  1. Movie star Hrithik Roshan (HR) who at the beginning of the main narrative defines the "handsome life" and at end of the narrative urges people to share their stories of succession chance to be "groomed" by the product's stylists/experts and also get a chance to make himself.   |   |

- 2. A young male protagonist (P1) who becomes successful by working hard, giving up a job offer, and achieving funding for a dream project.
- 3. The father (P2) of the young man who is a garage mechanic at the beginning becomes one of the founding members of a company at the end.

Product appears

4. A group of people (P3 +) wearing blue uniform of workers and headed to a building. Never appears during the narrative. However, #HandsomeLife is used throughout the commercial (see the screenshots below) in the lower right corner of the screen.

The product's logo appears at 1 min and 57 s when the movie star talks about the "grooming" opportunity and at 2 min and 19 s when the commercial ends.





1 min 57 s

Before using the product

N.A. (The product is not being sold in the commercial at all.)

After using the product

N.A. (The product is not being sold in the commercial at all.)

#### Before the accomplishment



After the accomplishment



# 7 Analysis

From 2005 to 2013, commercials 1-3 have been promoting the product as a method to achieve a better life. It could be in terms getting a job, popularity among female members, gaining confidence, getting a promotion, etc. The commercials are very explicit. These are of the "hard-sell" type. They have a particular pattern. At the end, the discrimination is encouraged by making fairness a necessary attribute in a modern man's life. The commercials are, thus, relatively straightforward. As far as the linguistic elements are concerned, colorism is bolstered through overtly establishing a connection between the words and phrases such as being fair is being "handsome," a special kind of fairness product and "men's tough skin," using "women's product" is "stealthy," etc. in the content of the commercials. Also, using women's product is ridiculed or looked down upon. So, once the dark-skinned protagonists in commercials start using the particular product, life becomes better.

One more notable thing is that most of these commercials are targeted toward modern, urban population. There is hardly any portrayal of rural life, and all the characters and their lifestyle traits in the commercials are urban in nature. Although the commercials do not overtly specify the socioeconomic class, no character from a lower socioeconomic class seems have found place in any of these commercials. Both the father-son duo in commercial 8 and the very young woman in commercial 7 depict the lack of money in some sense, but neither the material possession nor their dressing styles indicate the glimpse of poverty and/or rural background as far as Indian society is concerned. These advertisements can be said to function and pattern like the following diagram.

These commercials (e.g., commercials 1, 2, and 3), like Figure 1, show that the first stage is the problem associated with the darkskin and social status. Eventually, by the use of the fairness product, the problem is solved and the men get a lighter skin tone. Both versions of life are portrayed in most of the commercials themselves. The better life is achieved only after using the skin-lightening product. Thus, the process shows an upward movement in terms of the lifestyle and social status of the users/consumers.

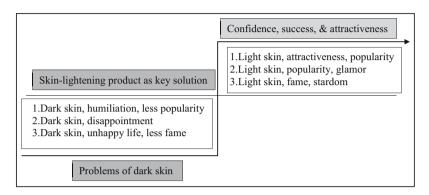


Figure 1: Type one (hard sell).

Now comes the second type of the commercials that have been produced in 2015. These are the "soft-sell" type and demand further analysis. When it comes to this type, there is a huge shift in terms of the pattern and linguistic usage. After much research and investigation, it can be suggested that the charter issued by the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI, cited in Pathak 2015) may have been the reason of this shift from direct discrimination to a circumvented way of subtler implications of the same color-biased discrimination. These commercials, 4–6, are significantly different than the previous ones, though they are produced by the same company. In these, there is no overt usage of the linguistic terms that relates lighter skin tone to success. There is nothing that denounces a darkskin tone. To the audience and general masses, this looks neutral on the surface. Moreover, to the heights of their subtlety, none of these three commercials even overtly promote the product itself by articulating that they are selling a product. In these commercials, the celebrity endorser does not come forward to tell the audiences certain benefits of using the fairness product; instead, he chooses to interactively celebrate "handsome life." There is no punch line dictating black/dark is bad or dis-preferred. There is not even a single instance that tells the audience directly that the particular skin-lightening product has given someone a girlfriend or popularity.

However, the logo of the product does appear toward the end of the commercial, and the celebrity endorser requests the audience on sharing the similar handsome stories. There is also a mention about a free "grooming" session by an expert team for some lucky winners. These commercials are much subtler than their predecessors because of some crucial reason which need(s) attention. While the type-one commercials have an ostentation of two explicit stages of life, the description of the product and the ethos-building strategies and the uniqueness of the product custom-made to men's usage only, the type-two ones do not have all these. This is often done through the use of "scientific-sounding" (Ringrow 2016) terms like "lumino peptide" to make the product appear effective in type-one commercials. However, in the case of type-two commercials, not the entire product but only the logo appears.

Moreover, the "# HandsomeLife" is always on the screen. The jingle played in the background has the last part of the lyrics singing "Live the handsome life/be carefree. This is the fashion/disposition of a handsome life." Companies make commercials that suit the target audience. Commercials that best fit one's outlook are best persuasive. If one looks closely at these commercials (4, 5, and 6), she or he will find a different kind of portrayal of life. A life that is dedicated to a parent's happiness, a life that is dedicated to a beloved's happiness, and a life that is dedicated to living the passion and helping others living their passion. On the surface, these concepts are as noble as these could be. These commercials are

calling for a change and showing a life that is for the greater good and that is not for one's selfish and mundane achievements. Rather, these advertisements are showing small, material sacrifice to gain a better, peaceful life. In these three advertisements – the boy sells his favorite bike to gather money for his partner; the young man quits his job to live a life of his passion of rock climbing and help people like the little girl fulfill their dreams; and finally, the son of the garage mechanic refuses to accept the muchawaited job offer to lead a life of happiness with his father.

Then what are these commercials (soft-sell) achieving, and what are the impacts of these commercials on the urban Indian population? The answer to the first part is that the company has seen a huge increase in its sale, augmenting the profit day by day. The second part of the question needs a more in-depth explanation. To do that, a diagram of this type would be helpful. As shown in Figure 2, these commercials are foregrounding a better life. Moreover, the story of a better life is woven against the unspoken backdrop of urban men being fair and "handsome." These men are never shown to be using the skin-lightening product, but astonishingly, in their better part of the life, they appear happy, well-dressed, and have a lighter skin tone (clearly visible in commercial 6).

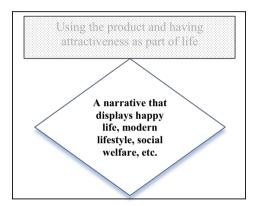


Figure 2: Type two (soft sell).

In all these type-two commercials, the main protagonist seems to either look at or accompany the candidate for whom the small sacrifice has been done, with tender and confident eyes. This appearance of two characters is captured at such a camera angle that the audience is witnessing the moment of joy. The eye gaze of the main protagonist plays a major role in conveying the success and satisfaction post sacrifice. In all such instances, the semiotic modes other than language are utilized to convey meaning communicatively (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

The concept of a handsome life is always present throughout the commercials. And this handsome life is a metonymic representation (i.e., close association between two concepts) of a life which is presumed to be handsome because of the particular skin-lightening product – Fair and Handsome. These are so subtle that the masses do not even realize these commercials' effect of feeding into colorism and benefiting enormously from it. The growing sales of the skin-lightening products (Rajesh 2013, Srivastava 2017), the need for ASCI to release a charter (Pathak, 2015), and the reported incidents of people using harmful chemicals to bleach their skin into a lighter tone (Shroff et al. 2018) are warrants to such reinforcement of colorism in India. The sugarcoating of a self-less life plays into that equation.

The key indicator of any subtle bias is a neutral element that masks an underlying negative stereotype (Coates 2008). Here the self-less life of lighter skinned (and therefore attractive and successful) men plays the role of the neutral element to mask the stereotype dark-complexioned men to be unhappy or unsuccessful. If one looks closely, she or he will find that all the men represented here are shown more attractive and successful in their better part of the life, just like the type-one commercials. However, here fairness is not promoted as something that one still needs to achieve and be told to be achieved by the advertisements. Apparently, this unspoken and implied part speaks volumes. Rather than showing the skin-lightening product as a commodity that one needs to buy for a better life, these type-two advertisements are making it the fundamental of a happier life. It is thus, necessarily, normalizing the usage of a skin-lightening product in urban

men's daily life. This normalizing of skin-lightening product usage reinforces ideological biases against darkskinned people and works at the level of cultural implications.

#### 8 Discussion and conclusions

Both types of the commercials discussed and analyzed above feed into the discriminatory ideology of colorism in the Indian society. One does it much more overtly than the other. The target audience is always the urban middle-class population who incorporate the skin-lightening product as part of their lives. The frequent use of English words (Piller 2001) by the participants in the commercials may indicate this modern urban identity of the target audience. Thus, the commercials are always based on the wants, desires, and even the failures of the urban population. The commercials of the first type foreground themselves as a key to a happier life bestowed by a skin-lightening product. However, the second kind foregrounds a happy life and underplays the commercials' overt endorsement. Crucial to mention, the happy life still presupposes the use of or the association of the product in its content. The second type, which is the most recent type as well, is more befitting to the modern, educated, urban-class's psyche. From the outfits to the material possessions, the daily necessities to the accomplishments, and setting the stage for the narrative with some past information about the characters to the climax of the narrative, these commercials are tailored to the urban population of India - the population that appreciates the opportunity of "grooming" and meeting with a film star, unlike wanting to lead a popular life like a film star as described in some of the type-one commercials.

This study, thus, aims to unfold this subtle yet consequential bourgeoning of colorism in India. The present study has demonstrated ideologies surrounding skin color in India are no less significant for men's skin-lightening products than the ones for women's. It suggests that modern Indian society is indeed encouraging discrimination based on skin color as far as the TV commercials for skin-lightening products and the matrimonial advertisements are concerned. The term fair also connotes some sort of moral/social privilege which is typical of the Indian context. Further research in this specific area can help unpack more about how contemporary Indian society is supporting colorism through the use of skin-lightening product and the surrounding discursive practices. Moreover, examining the use of technology, focus of camera on particular faces, personal belongings of the characters shown in the commercials, the particular kind of music, the style of jingles, etc. of these advertisements can help serve as better resources for multimodal and critical investigation of the issue of colorism as a whole. Future research can benefit from conducting interviews and surveys that can help gather data about the consumers' perspectives on this issue. Finally, a comparative study of women's and men's skin care products may gain valuable insight in terms of the heteronormative portrayal of gender in Indian TV commercials.

# Appendix I

Transcription: Jefferson's (2004) transcription method has been used to broadly transcribe these eight commercials. The meaning-translated English version for each commercial has been cross-checked with a native speaker of Hindi whose English proficiency is near native. Two main adjustments have been used to meet the requirements of this multimodal texts here: (1) numbered superscript has been added to square brackets ([x]) to indicate two simultaneous units because the commercials do have spoken units and description of some sort of action going on parallel on many occasions and (2) Slashes (/) followed by single space have been used within the jingles to separate one line from the another to maintain the original verse pattern. Also, italics are used to transcribe words that are originally mentioned in English in the content of the commercials.

Commercials

1. (Fair and Handsome 2005)

Duration: 40 s

Participants: The young man with darkskin tone (P1), the male model (P2) who helps P1 hide, a group of young women (W+), and male voice-over (VO).

Jingle: A Hindi Jingle is played throughout in the commercial.

Story: In this commercial, a young man is portrayed to have a darkskin tone and sneaks into a women's hostel to find a skin-lightening cream. He almost gets caught and faces insult for even thinking of using females' skin-lightening product. Finally, the men's product is introduced and the young man gets a lighter skin tone. The problem is solved, and the man is rewarded with attractiveness and popularity among the young women.

| 01 | P1: | [¹((with a portable staircase, sneaks into a women's hostel/dormitory)) |
|----|-----|---|
| 02 |     | [¹((Jingle: (male voice) stealthy (.)                                   |
| 03 |     | oh (.) you want to have a fair skin tone/stealthily                     |
| 04 |     | (voice-over & male chorus voice))/you use women's fairness              |
| 05 |     | cream))]  |
| 06 | W+: | HEY (.)   |
| 07 |     | [ <sup>2</sup> stealthily ((female chorus in same tune of jingle))      |
| 08 |     | [²((the women almost catch P1=  |
| 09 | P1: | =P1 starts running on the street))                                      |
| 10 | P2: | ((sees P1 and understands the entire situation                          |
| 11 |     | [ <sup>3</sup> helps P1 hide behind a flower/plant pot))                |
| 12 | W+: | [ <sup>3</sup> ((women run past empty-handed))                          |
| 13 | P2: | despite being a man(.)[4you use women's fairness cream?                 |
| 14 |     | [4((jingle: stealthily (male voice))                                    |
| 15 | VO: | exposure to the sun and shaving make a man's skin thick and             |
| 16 |     | tough (.)[5and women's fairness cream is futile on that.                |
| 17 | P1: | [5((P1 is shown to be using some women's product                        |
| 18 |     | and there is no effect on his skin as the visual effects show))         |
| 19 | VO: | here comes Emami Fair and Handsome fairness cream for men               |
| 20 |     | its double-strand peptide and rare herbs go deep under                  |
| 21 |     | the tough skin of men(.) and makes them fair and handsome.              |
| 22 |     | ((the product is shown on the screen along with P1 using                |
| 23 |     | it, and the visual effects show P1 achieves a lighter skin tone))       |
| 24 | P1: | ((walks by with his newfound looks and=                                 |
| 25 | W+: | =all the young women sing the following staring at him                  |
| 26 |     | one finally grabs him as well))   |
| 27 | W+: | hi handsome ((in same rhythm of the jingle))                            |
| 28 | VO: | [6Emami Fair and Handsome (.) fairness cream for men.                   |
| 29 |     | [6((the product appears on the screen followed by a scene))=            |
| 30 |     | =((P1, surrounded by the young women, looks at the                      |
| 31 |     | camera/audience))   |

#### 2. (Fair and Handsome 2009)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqXiPCIOOTs&nohtml5=False

Duration: 60 s

Participants: The celebrity endorser Shahrukh Khan (SK), the struggler protagonist (P1), a male voice-over (VO), and a young woman (W) as the heroine in the shooting scene with SK.

Jingle: There is no jingle. However, different kinds of music are played throughout the commercial. Story: A young man stares at a famous Bollywood star and aspires to have the same kind of life of popularity (among the female fans) and success. However, the man has a darkskin tone. Then the star walks up to this person and shares the secret of the fairness with him. The star also emphasizes that this man might not get an exact life of the star but the popularity part is assured if he uses the fairness cream. Finally, the young man is shown to be using the fairness product and benefiting out of it. He is shown off as being surrounded by several young women and cameras.

| 01 | SK: | [¹((walks on the carpet of the function venue, the crowd                 |
|----|-----|--|
| 02 |     | (both sides of the aisle) was cheering))                                 |
| 03 |     | [¹((music plays))  |
| 04 | P1: | ((staring at SK with a gloomy face he thinks to himself))                |
| 05 |     | what if (.) I was also Shahrukh.   |
| 06 | SK: | ((stares at the young man (P1) standing by the aisle                     |
| 07 |     | comes toward him and asks))  |
| 08 |     | do you want to live my life?   |
| 09 | P1: | ((nods yes))   |
| 10 | P1: | ((P1 is shown to be on the sets of SK's shooting location                |
| 11 |     | he observes everything very closely))                                    |
| 12 | SK: | ((shooting an action scene starts; SK and W jump out of the              |
| 13 |     | explosion))=   |
| 14 | SK: | =((SK asks W)) are you all right?  |
| 16 | SK: | ((in another scene, SK shoots a sword fight, ends the shot               |
| 17 |     | with an exhaustion on his face))   |
| 18 | P1: | ((thinks))[2how is SK <i>handsome</i> even after all these?              |
| 19 | SK: | [²((comes toward P1 after the shoot is over))                            |
| 20 | SK: | even though becoming Shahrukh is impossible (.)                          |
| 21 |     | anybody can become handsome (.) use Fair and Handsome (.)                |
| 22 | SK: | [³like I do  |
| 23 | SK: | [ <sup>3</sup> ((shows the product in his hand))                         |
| 24 | P1: | ((takes the product in his hand with dark skin tone and                  |
| 25 |     | the product is on the screen for a very short while))                    |
| 26 | SK: | ((the moment he turns back from P1 and starts walking, a                 |
| 27 |     | group of young women flock around him cheering and he                    |
| 28 |     | turns his head back toward P1, he points his hand to the                 |
| 29 |     | women and tells P1))   |
| 30 | SK: | but never ever use the women's fairness cream                            |
| 31 |     | ((the product appears on the screen))                                    |
| 32 | VO: | [ <sup>4</sup> Emami Fair and Handsome (.)                               |
| 33 |     | [4((a muscular right arm introduces the product by slamming              |
| 34 |     | the package hard on the surface))  |
| 35 | VO: | [ <sup>5</sup> specifically made for men's tough skin                    |
| 36 | P1: | [ <sup>5</sup> ((P1's face (rotate clockwise horizontally) is used to    |
| 37 |     | show how the product works through visual effects))                      |
| 38 | VO: | its unique <i>five-power fairness system</i> gives much better fairness. |
| 39 | P1: | ((is shown to have been transformed to a "handsome" man                  |
| 40 |     | standing at the same venue where SK appeared earlier                     |
| 41 |     | and surrounded by young women cheering at him and cameras))              |
| 42 | SK: | [ <sup>5</sup> ((looks at the camera with the product in hand))          |
| 43 |     | [5told you already (.) anybody can become handsome (.)                   |
| 44 |     | Emami Fair and Handsome (.) world's number one fairness cream (.)        |
| 45 |     | for men.   |

#### 3. (Fair and Handsome 2013)

https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=NN7jC7HdTME&nohtml5=False

Duration: 45 s

Participants: The celebrity endorser Shahrukh Khan (SK) and the struggling actor and the darkskinned protagonist (P1).

Jingle: There is no Hindi jingle here. However, a continuous musical instrumental tune plays in the background throughout the commercial.

Story: The commercial starts off by showing a Bollywood superstar narrating his life story. He simply narrates how he eventually became a superstar from a struggler. He tells the audience that he only inherited blessings, implying that the good look has been achieved later in his life. He gives huge credit to his carrying and using the fairness product for a long time, like a life companion. At an event, he stares at a struggler with a darkskin tone and instantly realizes his problem, without even the struggler saying anything to the superstar. He gives a tube of the same product to the struggler with darkskin. Finally, the superstar emphasizes that using this product is a must because men need more, and this is the key to success.

| SK: | I only inherited blessings (.) not a big name or fame (.)               |
|-----|---|
|     | ((a scene appears where people are cheering and whistling at            |
|     | SK at an event while SK waves at them))                                 |
| SK: | but I needed more (.) more reputation (.) more respect (.)              |
|     | more fame (.) hence (.) when the rest of the world is asleep            |
|     | [ <sup>1</sup> I would be awake (.) self-motivating (.) self-critiquing |
|     | [1((SK is shown to be rehearsing all by himself at night))              |
| SK: | since I needed more (.) I made stunts my passion (.) acting             |
|     | my life (.) and Fair and Handsome my life partner (.)                   |
|     | ((segments of SK's stunt scenes from movies are played))                |
|     | ((SK is shown to be getting ready and putting a tube of                 |
|     | the product in his bag for his upcoming travels))                       |
| SK: | and I became (.) the emperor  |
| SK: | ((arrives at a function venue, gets out of his car; the                 |
|     | energetic crowd cheers))=   |
|     | =((while SK waves his hand, he sees a young man (P1) with a             |
|     | darker skin tone standing in the crowd))                                |
|     | ((SK throws a tube of the product toward him, indicating                |
|     | that to be the solution of P1's unhappy life))                          |
|     | [ <sup>2</sup> ((the product appears on the screen;                     |
|     | SK endorses it with his voice-over))                                    |
| SK: | [2the all new Fair and Handsome cream (.) because men need              |
|     | more.]  |
|     | SK: SK: SK: SK:   |

#### 4. (Fair and Handsome 2015)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vbfn-1Ofow&list=WL&index=9&nohtml5=False

Duration: 2 min and 46 s

Participants: the celebrity endorser Hrithik Roshan (HR), the male protagonist (P1), and the female protagonist Sim.

Jingle: A Hindi jingle plays in the background throughout the commercial.

Story: This commercial shows a modern-day urban couple. The young woman is a little upset. The young man finally comes home with a smile on his face and seeming to have found a solution for the woman's upset mood. He hands over some much-needed money to the young woman, so that she can use it for some very important purpose. The need for money is not explained. However, it is indirectly shown that the man sells his favorite motorbike to gather the money. Now the man is portrayed as a fair and handsome guy and leading a handsome [this is the phrase used in the commercial itself] life. At the very beginning of the commercial, one Bollywood superstar asks the audience about the definition of a handsome life. At the end, the same superstar urges people to share their stories with him and get an exclusive chance to meet him.

| 01 | HR:  | hi friends (.)[¹have you ever thought what <i>handsome life</i> is?           |
|----|------|---|
| 02 |      | [¹((Jingle's rhythm starts))  |
| 03 | P1:  | good morning (.)[²breakfast?  |
| 04 |      | [²((Jingle: thousands of dreams lie in the                                    |
| 05 |      | eyes/ the guitar plays in the heart of aspirations))                          |
| 06 | P1:  | Sim (.) one tea please?   |
| 07 | Sim: | [ <sup>3</sup> ((nods yes))   |
| 08 |      | [ <sup>3</sup> ((jingle: life does not have moments, moments have life        |
| 09 |      | /every moment should be life))  |
| 10 | P1:  | wow Sim! congratulations (.) you have been selected                           |
| 11 | Sim: | at least read the $e$ -mail right (.) [ $^4$ where will that extra money come |
| 12 |      | from?   |
| 13 |      | [ <sup>4</sup> Jingle: what is the excuse now and                             |
| 14 |      | what is the regret/life has given another chance                              |
| 15 | P1:  | [5((thinks about some the bike-related fond memories, like                    |
| 16 |      | P2 gifting him a key ring))   |
| 17 |      | [5] Jingle continues: live every color, sing every song/this is how           |
| 18 |      | handsome life should be   |
| 19 | P1:  | ((thinks about hugging Sim in the past, taking care of the                    |
| 20 |      | bike, riding the bike along with Sim, and randomly clicking                   |
| 21 |      | photographs of places))   |
| 22 | P1:  | [6((comes back to the present time, grabs the bike key,                       |
| 23 |      | and rides to somewhere))  |
| 24 |      | [6Jingle: live <i>handsome</i> , be carefree/this is how                      |
| 25 |      | handsome life should be   |
| 26 | P1:  | ((comes back home with a bundle of money in hand))                            |
| 27 | P1:  | ((to Sim)) now there is no need to worry.                                     |
| 28 | Sim: | ((delighted and on the verge of breaking into tears                           |
| 29 |      | suddenly look at P1's pocket only to figure out the                           |
| 30 |      | bike has been sold and the empty key ring is there))                          |
| 31 | Sim: | ((steps forward, pulls the key ring out, and realizes it))                    |
| 32 | Sim: | [ <sup>7</sup> where is your bike?  |
| 33 |      | [ <sup>7</sup> Jingle: live every color, sing every song                      |
| 34 | P1:  | [8((embraces Sim and kisses her on the forehead))                             |
| 35 |      | [8Jingle: this is how handsome life should be                                 |
| 36 | HR:  | hello friends (.) I am sure you all are living your passion                   |
| 37 |      | in all possible ways (.) big and small (.)                                    |
| 38 |      | Fair and Handsome celebrates the spirit of living your                        |
| 39 |      | passion and following your dreams (.)   |
| 40 | HR:  | if you too are living a handsome life (.) share your story                    |
| 41 |      | with us (.) Fair and Handsome is now giving opportunity to                    |
| 42 |      | ten lucky people to meet me and be groomed in a program                       |
| 43 |      | which is personally designed by us for you (.) also (.) get                   |
| 44 |      | an exclusive chance to meet my F.C. Pune City Team and                        |
|    |      | ······································  |

| 45 | hang out with them (.) so (.) what are you waiting for?  |
|----|--|
| 46 | [9log on to www.handsomelife.in                          |
| 47 | [ <sup>9</sup> Jingle: handsome life should be this way] |

#### 5. (Fair and Handsome 2015)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJ\_QG26mqPw&list=WL&index=10&nohtml5=False

Duration: 2 min and 37 s

Participants: the celebrity endorser Hrithik Roshan (HR), the male protagonist (P1), the very young female protagonist (P2), and the watchman (P3).

Jingle: A Hindi jingle plays in the background throughout the commercial.

Story: This commercial starts off by showing a handsome and fair-skinned young man's life story. He quits his high-paying job and position to start a rock-climbing academy. Now, he visits the academy after driving his expensive jeep and finds everyone is happy, except one little girl. She looks at all the other students and her eyes are full of aspiration. Next comes the security guard/watchman of the academy and tells our protagonist, the handsome man that the little girl is his niece. She wants to join the academy but does not have the money to pay the fees. Our protagonist, with a smile and a nod, happily arranges for the little girl to fulfill her dreams. At the very beginning of the commercial, one Bollywood superstar asks the audience about the definition of a handsome life. At the end, the same superstar urges people to share their stories with him and get an exclusive chance to meet him.

| 01 | HR: | hi friends (.)[1have you ever thought what handsome life is?                          |
|----|-----|---|
| 02 |     | [¹((Jingle's rhythm starts))  |
| 03 | P1: | [²((looks at his achievements (as vice president) on                                  |
| 04 |     | newspaper cutouts, medals, trophies, etc. at home; then drives up to                  |
| 05 |     | the rock-climbing academy))   |
| 06 |     | [ <sup>2</sup> Jingle: thousands of dreams lie in the eyes/the guitar plays in the    |
| 07 |     | heart of aspirations]   |
| 08 | P1: | [3((grabs his rucksack and stares at the training space))                             |
| 09 |     | [ <sup>3</sup> Jingle: take that special flight (leap) in life/which the entire world |
| 10 |     | will remember forever]  |
| 11 | P1: | ((stops awhile at the admission desk, cash section))                                  |
| 12 |     | [4((spends time with a group of children))  |
| 13 |     | [4Jingle: live handsome, be carefree/this is how handsome life should                 |
| 14 |     | be]   |
| 15 | P1: | ((sees a very young woman(P2) afar; follows her and finds                             |
| 16 |     | her playing with an unattended rock-climbing harness))                                |
| 17 |     | ((the owner comes back and snatches it back from P2))                                 |
| 18 | P2: | [ <sup>5</sup> ((stands disappointed))  |
| 19 |     | [5 ((Jingle's tune plays without the words))  |
| 20 | P1: | ((presumably (since there is no actual spoken utterance),                             |
| 21 |     | asks a person nearby about the identity of P2 and the                                 |
| 22 |     | person points in the direction of the watchman afar))                                 |
| 23 | P3: | [ <sup>6</sup> ((the watchman (P3) comes to P1 running))                              |
| 24 |     | [ <sup>6</sup> ((Jingle: give wings to your aspirations))]                            |
| 25 | P1: | ((holds hand of P2 and looks at P3))  |
| 26 | P3: | [ <sup>7</sup> this (. )um (.) this is my niece.                                      |
| 27 |     | [ <sup>7</sup> Jingle continues: listen to your heart this time]                      |
| 28 | P1: | ((presumably (there is no actual spoken utterance), asks                              |
| 29 |     | P2 if she wants to join the training program))  |
|    |     |   |

| 30 | P2: | ((with an extremely happy face)) absolutely!                            |
|----|-----|---|
| 31 |     | ((P1 and P2 give "hi five" to each other))                              |
| 32 | P3: | but (.) but sir (.) the fees? ((with a hesitant voice))                 |
| 33 | P1: | that I will take care of.   |
| 34 | P3: | ((puts his palms together as a gesture of gratitude))                   |
| 35 | P1: | [8((helps P2 to suit up in the gears))                                  |
| 36 |     | [8Jingle: give wings to your aspirations/listen to your heart this time |
| 37 |     | /listen to your heart))]  |
| 38 | P1: | [9((guides P2 through her first climb onto the rock))                   |
| 39 |     | [9Jingle: live handsome, live carefree/this is how handsome life        |
| 40 |     | should be]  |
| 41 | P1: | [10((gives more direction to P2 as to how to navigate))                 |
| 42 |     | [10]Jingle: live every color, sing every song/this is how handsome      |
| 43 |     | life should be))]   |
| 44 | P2: | ((climbs down the rock successfully; holds hand with P1))               |
| 45 |     | ((P1 and P2 start walking and look at P3 ))                             |
| 46 | P3: | ((P3 salutes back to P1 as a gesture of gratitude))                     |
| 47 |     | [11((P1, P2, and many other participants come forward; they             |
| 48 |     | all look happy and are smiling))  |
| 49 |     | [11]Jingle: live handsome, live carefree/this is how handsome life      |
| 50 |     | should be]  |
| 51 | HR: | hello friends (.) I am sure you all are living your passion             |
| 52 |     | in all possible ways (.) big and small (.)                              |
| 53 |     | Fair and Handsome celebrates the spirit of living your                  |
| 54 |     | passion and following your dreams (.)                                   |
| 55 | HR: | if you too are living a handsome life (.) share your story              |
| 56 |     | with us (.) Fair and Handsome is now giving opportunity to              |
| 57 |     | ten lucky people to meet me and be groomed in a program                 |
| 58 |     | which is personally designed by us for you (.) also (.) get             |
| 59 |     | an exclusive chance to meet my F.C. Pune City Team and                  |
| 60 |     | hang out with them (.) so (.) what are you waiting for?                 |
| 61 |     | [ <sup>12</sup> log on to www.handsomelife.in                           |
| 62 |     | [ <sup>12</sup> Jingle: <i>handsome life</i> should be this way))]      |
|    |     | 22  |

#### 6. (Fair and Handsome 2015)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEHzRhojUlY&nohtml5=False

Duration: 2 min and 19 s

Participants: The celebrity endorser Hrithik Roshan (HR), the male protagonist son (P1) and the male protagonist father (P2), and group of workers to the newly established building (P3+).

Jingle: A Hindi jingle that plays in the background throughout the commercial.

Story: The commercial starts off by showing a very ordinary young man walking toward his father's garage. His father is coughing and hands the boy a letter of appointment with a happy face. The commercial then shows how much the boy has worked for this day. Ultimately, the boy tears the letter apart and tells his father that their business plan has been approved and would get funding. The father—son duo then is shown to own a company. When this happens, both of them look healthy and well-dressed, and the boy has a lighter skin tone. At the very beginning of the commercial, one Bollywood superstar asks the audience the definition of a handsome life. At the end, the same superstar urges people to share their stories with him and get an exclusive chance to meet him.

| 01       | HR:  | hi friends (.) [1have you ever thought what handsome life is?                             |
|----------|------|---|
| 02       |      | [¹((Jingle's rhythm starts))  |
| 03       | P1:  | [²((walks toward and enters shady "Mehra Garage"  |
| 04       |      | [ <sup>2</sup> Jingle: the moment is close to my heart/I will write my own fate           |
| 05       | P2:  | [ <sup>3</sup> ((is working in the garage and coughing intermittently))                   |
| 06       |      | [ <sup>3</sup> Jingle: rhythm continues with no words]                                    |
| 07       | P1:  | ((picks the glass of water and proceeds to hand it over))                                 |
| 08       | P1:  | dad (.) water (.)   |
| 09       | P2:  | ((surprised)) hey (.) where have you been since morning? (.)                              |
| 10       |      | you know how many times I have tried calling you?   |
| 11       |      | ((takes the glass and drinks the water))  |
| 12       | P1:  | dad (.) um (.) me (.) outside   |
| 13       | P2:  | oh yes (.) your appointment letter (.)  |
| 14       |      | Congratulations (.) son!((pats on P1'S shoulder))   |
| 15       | P1:  | ((looks at the letter from the envelope))   |
| 16       |      | ((makes a facial gesture of going into flash back))                                       |
| 17       |      | [4((recalls his sleepless nights of working relentlessly on a car                         |
| 18       |      | project))   |
| 19       |      | [ <sup>4</sup> Jingle: will try forever/will not accept defeat so easily                  |
| 20       | P1:  | [5((is shown to be falling asleep in the chair tired))                                    |
| 21       |      | [5] Ingle: never accept, never accept, never accept defeat                                |
| 22       | P1:  | ((comes back to present time; tears up the letter))                                       |
| 23       | P2:  | what! (.) what does it mean?  |
| 24       | P1:  | dad (.) our <i>business plan</i> has been approved (.) we do have                         |
| 25       | 11.  | funding now (.) our dream will come true  |
| 26       | P2:  | dream (.) which dream?  |
| 27       | 1 2. | ((scene changes abruptly))  |
| 28       |      | ((it is not clear whether it is dream or reality))  |
| 29       |      | [6((P1 and P2 appear well-dressed, standing in front of a                                 |
| 30       |      | building, which has a banner that reads, "Mehra and Sons                                  |
| 31       |      | Auto Motors Pvt. Ltd."))  |
| 32       |      | [ <sup>6</sup> Jingle: these moments are extremely special/my heart is pounding           |
| 33       |      | with joy these days))]  |
| 34       | P2:  | ((looks happy and content; pats on P1's shoulder))  |
| 35       | P1:  | ((looks delighted; tries to touch P2's feet to show respect))                             |
| 36       | P2:  | [ $^{7}$ ((stops P1 and embraces him with warmth in his eyes))                            |
| 37       | 1 2. | [ <sup>7</sup> Jingle: do not let the time elapse/you too live a <i>handsome life</i> now |
| 38       |      | [8((a group of workers/mechanics, P1, and P2 walk toward                                  |
| 39       |      | the newly founded office))  |
| 40       |      | [8] Single: <i>live handsome</i> , be carefree/ this is how <i>handsome life</i> should   |
| 41       |      | be]   |
| 42       | HR:  | hello friends (.) I am sure you all are living your passion                               |
| 43       | IIX. |   |
|          |      | in all possible ways (.) big and small (.)  |
| 44<br>45 |      | Fair and Handsome celebrates the spirit of living your                                    |
| 45<br>46 | IID. | passion and following your dreams (.)   |
| 46<br>47 | HR:  | if you too are living a handsome life (.) share your story                                |
| 47<br>49 |      | with us (.) Fair and Handsome is now giving opportunity to                                |
| 48       |      | ten lucky people to meet me and be groomed in a program                                   |
| 49<br>50 |      | which is personally designed by us for you (.) also (.) get                               |
| 50       |      | an exclusive chance to meet my F.C. Pune City Team and                                    |

| 51                                   | hang out with them (.) so (.) what are you waiting for?  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 52                                   | [9log on to www.handsomelife.in  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 53                                   | [ <sup>9</sup> Jingle: <i>handsome life</i> should be this way]  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Appendix II                          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| The following are newspape in India. | er matrimonial advertisements from two majorly circulated English newspapers   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I. The Hindu (Matrimonial)           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| http://www.thehindu.c                | om/classifieds/matrimonial/  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. EZHAVA 30/167 BDS ow              | n clinic <b>fair</b> Thiruvonam seeks same profession suitable bride.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DUDI ICHED. MAY 22                   | 2 2017 00.00 ICT   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PUBLISHED: MAY 22                    | PVT, Salary 60,000 Pm, <b>Fair</b> . Wants suitable Bride  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PUBLISHED: MAY 22                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. CHRISTIAN 26/175, Born            | again, Fair, Good Looking, Software, Tamil, Chennai. Now in USA. Seeking   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| fair, good looking, work             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PUBLISHED: MAY 22                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                      | ncipal Associate in International Law Firm, Salary Rs.18 Lakhs Per Annum.<br>Elean Habits, Rich, 176cms 31yrs Seeks Well Educated, <b>Very Fair</b> Bride from CSI |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| or Catholic Nadar Famil              |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PUBLISHED: MAY 22                    | <i>,</i> ————  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Nair BE 30/                       | /162cm Actor <b>Fair</b> seeks R.C. <b>fair</b> looking girl. Contact:   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PUBLISHED: MAY 22                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. HINDU NADAR 36/ <b>Fair</b> ,     | MBA/MNC/Visagam reputed family Chennai. Seeks Professional Nadar Bride.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PUBLISHED: MAY 22, 2                 | 2016 00:00 IST   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| II. The Tribune (Brides/Gro          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Published between Feb                |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                      | in com/nowe/eleccified adute/  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/classified-advts/

- 1. Well settled Specialist Doctor in New York USA, Punjabi Brahmin boy, **fair**, 5 feet and one inch, 1980 born US citizen seeking a qualified match. Visiting India in Call:
- 2. Affluent Jat Sikh family of professionals, very well-established in Canada from last 45 years, seek match for their Canadian born son 37 years never married, **fair**, handsome 6 feet, LL.B., LL.M. from a prestigious Canadian Law School and presently partner with a law firm. North American match preferred. Divorcees please excuse. Please respond with biodata and photograph at Email:
- 3. Suitable match for **fair** handsome Khatri boy 5'-7", December 1976, MBBS MRCP UK citizen working Canada Doctors family very short marriage divorce seeks beautiful educated girl age 30 to 34, caste no bar.
- 4. Army Officer Captain 26/5'-11', Teetotaller, Non-trimmer Handsome boy seeks Well Educated tall, slim, **fair** b'ful only Gursikh match. Father Retd. Army Officer. Whatt app. bio-data, latest Photo.
- 5. Jat Sikh family well established in U.K. is seeking professionally qualified strictly Jat Sikh tall, clean shaven/trimmed match for their MBBS Dr. daughter born and brought up in U.K., 34, 5'-3", **fair**, pretty, sharp featured, attractive, intelligent and has good balance of East-West values. The boy should be

| family  | oriented, | respectful | Jat | Sikh. | All | strea | am of | matching  | g qua | alification | can | be co  | nsidered. | Only    |
|---------|-----------|------------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----------|-------|-------------|-----|--------|-----------|---------|
| serious | inquiries | welcome f  | rom | Cana  | da, | U.K., | India | . Contact | with  | Bio-Data    | and | recent | picture a | t first |
| instanc | e:        |            |     | or c  | all |       |       |           |       |             |     |        |           |         |

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