GENDER BIAS
AND INCLUSION
IN ADVERTISING
IN INDIA

Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) teamed up with **The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media** to conduct the first public study to systematically analyze gender representations in ads in India.

The purpose of this study was to assess the role of advertising media in reinforcing and challenging harmful gender roles that shape the lives of girls and women in India.

It will serve as a benchmark for making advertising more gender sensitive in the country.

METHODOLOGY

HUMAN EXPERT CODING

- Analyzed 3,416 of visually prominent speaking and non-speaking characters in the top 1,000 most viewed ads in India across 19 market segments
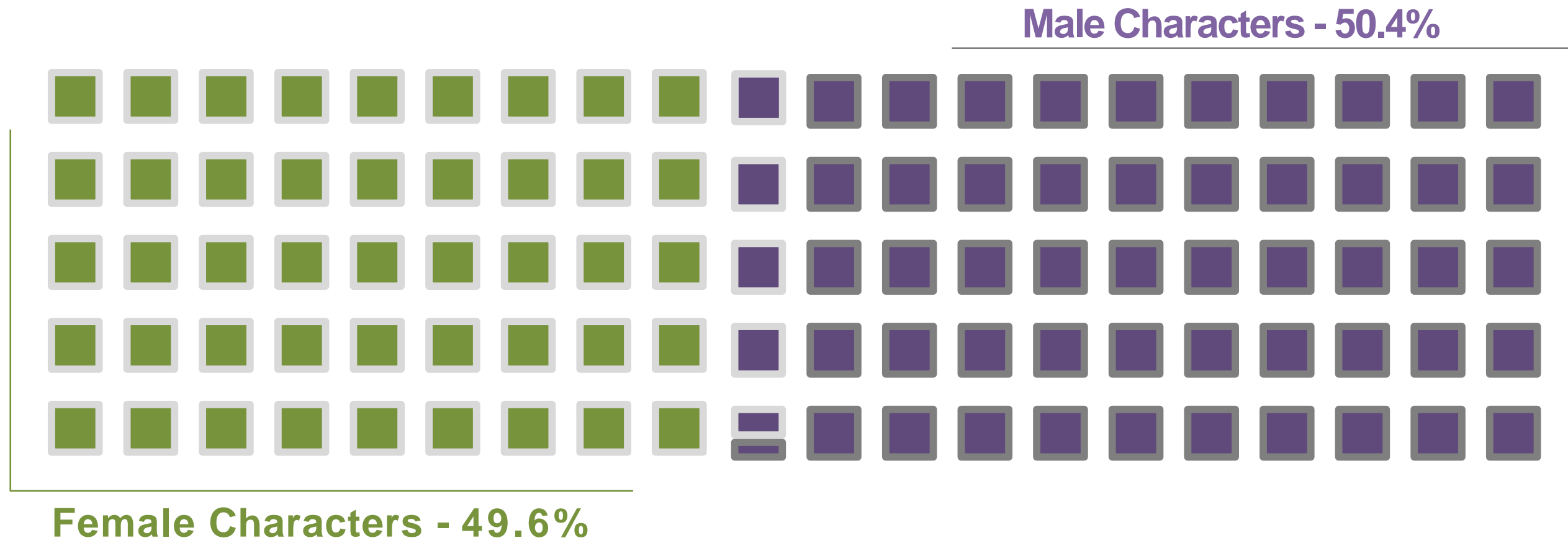
AUTOMATED CODING (GD-IQ)

- Geena Davis Inclusion Quotient (GD-IQ)

- Automated analysis of screen time and speaking time

MAJOR FINDINGS:
QUANTITY OF REPRESENTATION

SCREEN & SPEAKING TIME

FEMALE CHARACTERS DOMINATE
SCREEN & SPEAKING TIME

59.7%
Screen Time

56.3%
Speaking Time

GLOBAL COMPARISON

FEMALE CHARACTERS DOMINATE
SCREEN & SPEAKING TIME

India — 59.7%

Global — 44.0%

India — 56.3%

Global — 39.0%
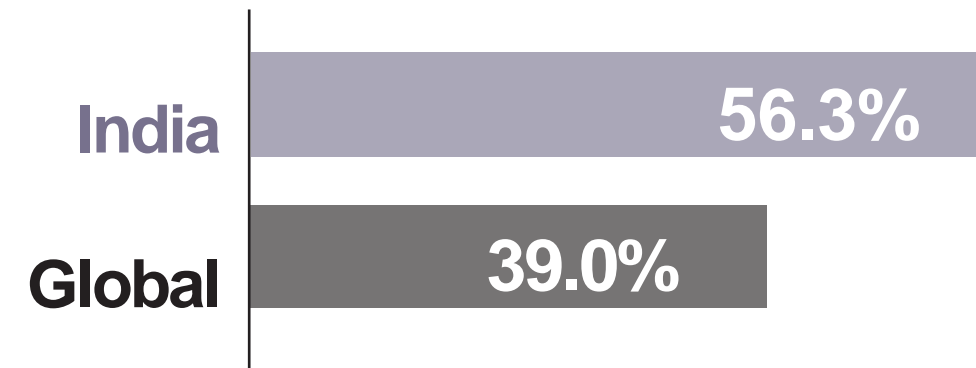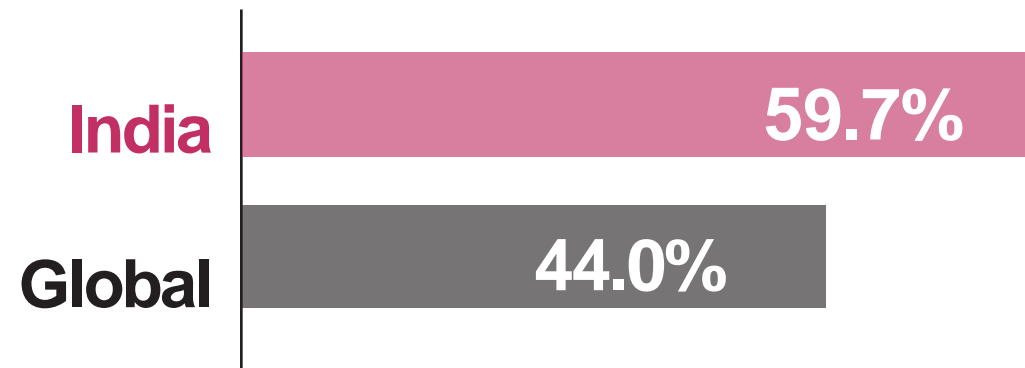
SEE JANE TEST

MOST ADS PASSED THE SEE JANE TEST

IN ORDER TO PASS, AN AD MUST HAVE:

✓ At least one prominent character (leading, co-leading, supporting character) who is a woman who;

✓ Is not depicted with gender stereotypes or tropes.

PASSED

77.8% Ads Passed

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MARKET SECTORS

FEMALE CHARACTERS ARE

UNDERREPRESENTED IN	OVERREPRESENTED IN
• **Banking & Finance**	• **Personal Care**
• **Home Decor & Infrastructure**	• **Fashion and Accessories**
• **Media & Entertainment**	• **Corporate**
• **Travel & Tourism**	
• **Sports**	

REINFORCING GENDER ROLES

WHILE GIRLS & WOMEN HAVE A STRONG PRESENCE IN ADVERTISING,

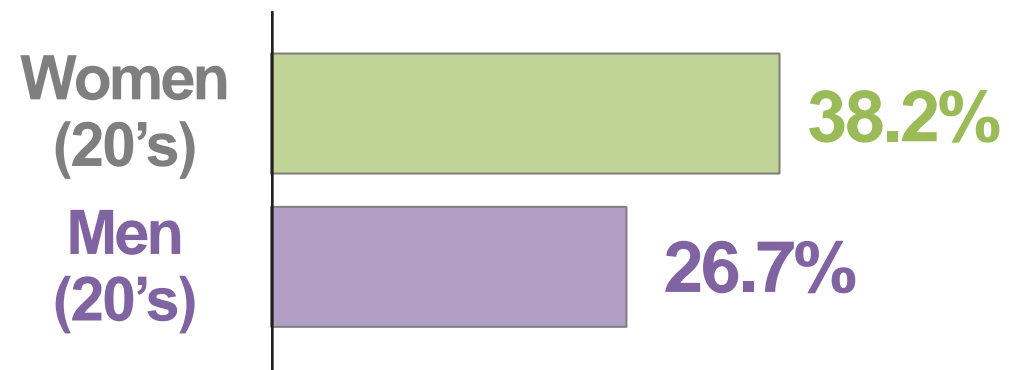THEY ARE MOSTLY SELLING DOMESTIC & BEAUTY PRODUCTS TO FEMALE CONSUMERS.
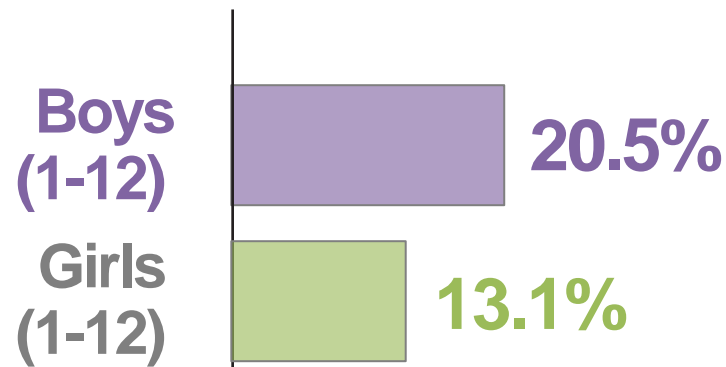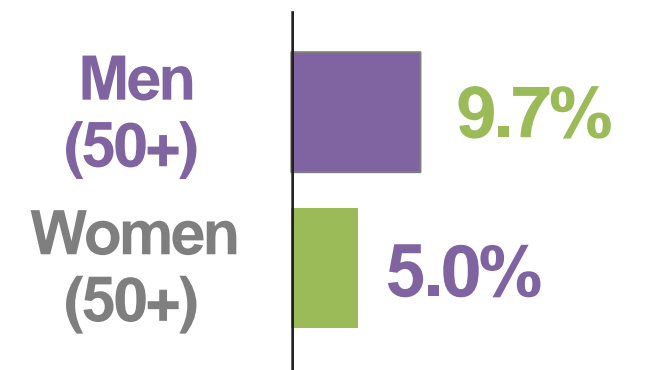
SKIN TONE

CHARACTERS WITH DARK SKIN TONES ARE UNDERREPRESENTED

Light Skin Tones — 59.6%

Dark Skin Tones — 4.0%

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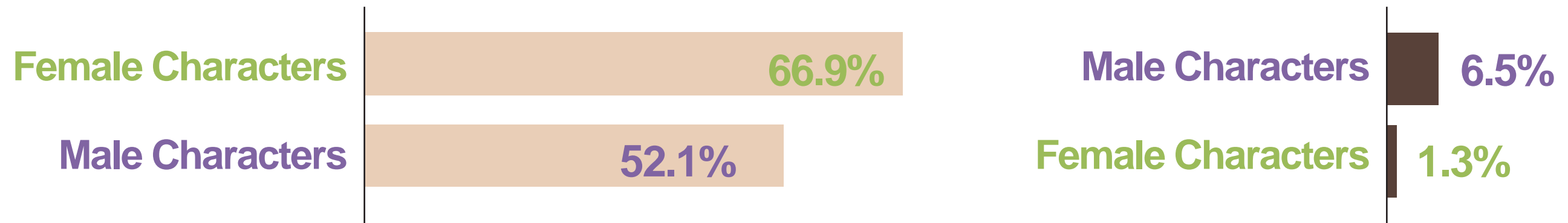*If she can see it, she can be it.*™

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GENDER & SKIN TONE
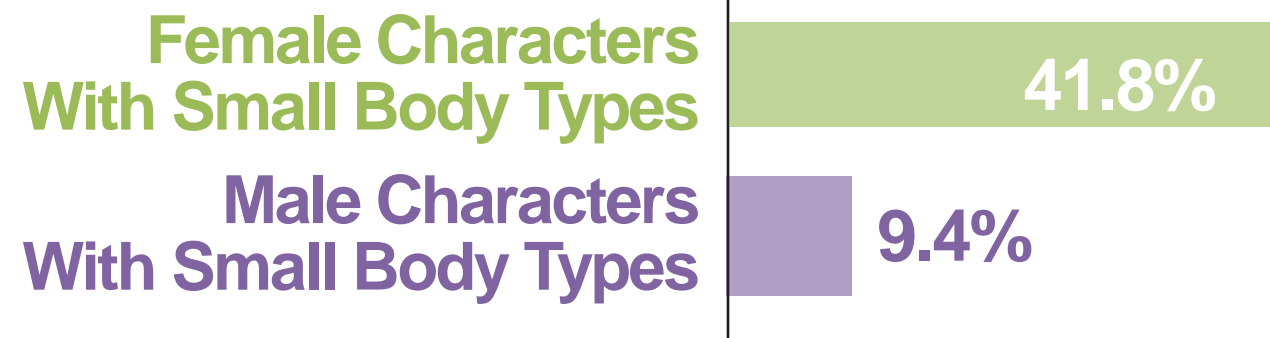
FEMALE CHARACTERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE LIGHT/MEDIUM-LIGHT SKIN WHILE MALE CHARACTERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE DARK SKIN

Female Characters 66.9%

Male Characters 52.1%

Male Characters 6.5%

Female Characters 1.3%

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GENDER & BODY SIZE

FEMALE CHARACTERS ARE FOUR TIMES
MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A SMALL BODY TYPE

Female Characters With Small Body Types — 41.8%

Male Characters With Small Body Types — 9.4%

MAJOR FINDINGS:
QUALITY OF REPRESENTATION

APPEARANCE & GENDER

FEMALE CHARACTERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE SHOWN AS:

"STUNNING/VERY ATTRACTIVE"
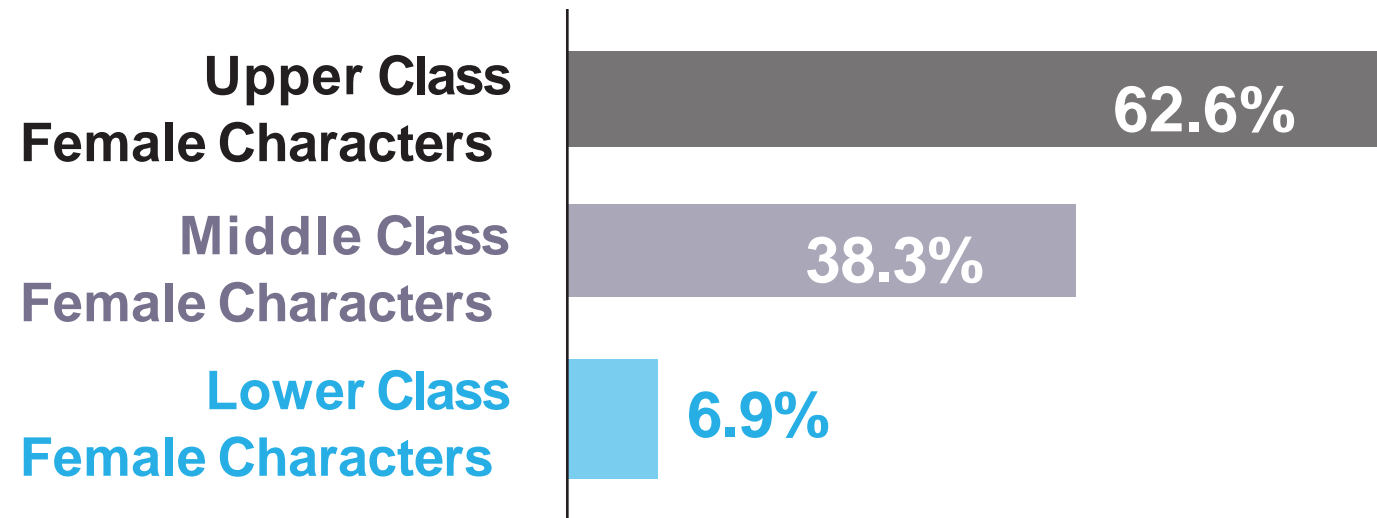
Female Characters — 5.9%

Male Characters — 0.6%

"BETTER THAN AVERAGE LOOKING"

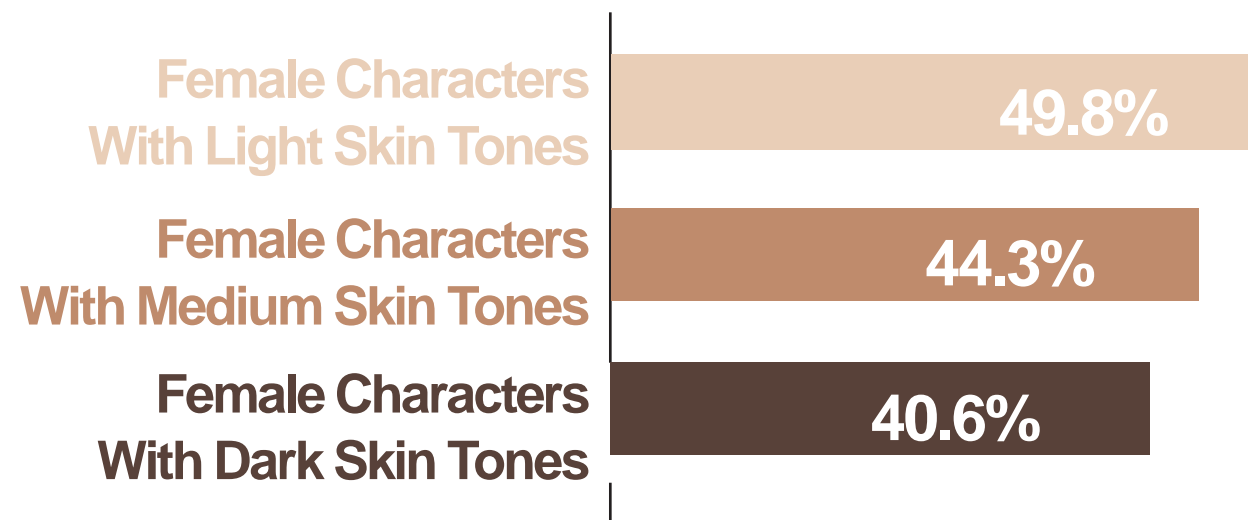Female Characters — 33.6%

Male Characters — 16.8%

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SEXUALIZATION

FEMALE CHARACTERS ARE:

| 6X MORE LIKELY | TO BE IN REVEALING CLOTHING |

(11.2% compared with 1.7%)

| 5X MORE LIKELY | TO BE SEXUALLY OBJECTIFIED |

(4.7% compared with 0.9%)

| 4X MORE LIKELY | TO BE PARTIALLY NUDE |

(7.6% compared with 1.6%)

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GENDER TROPES

MALE & FEMALE CHARACTERS ARE EQUALLY LIKELY TO BE REDUCED TO A GENDER TROPE

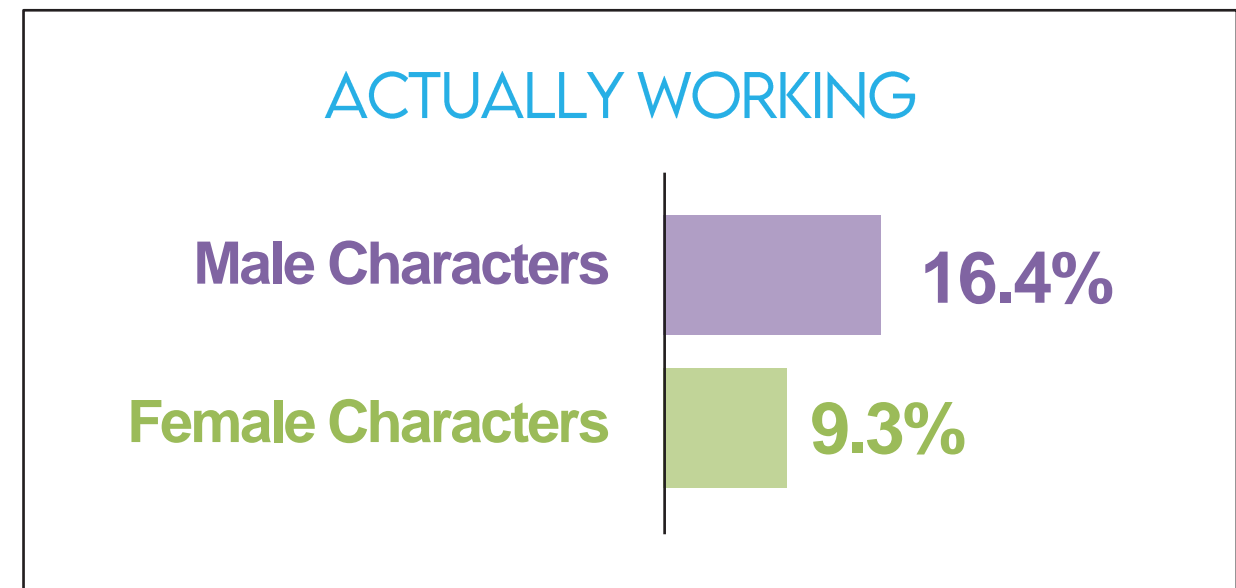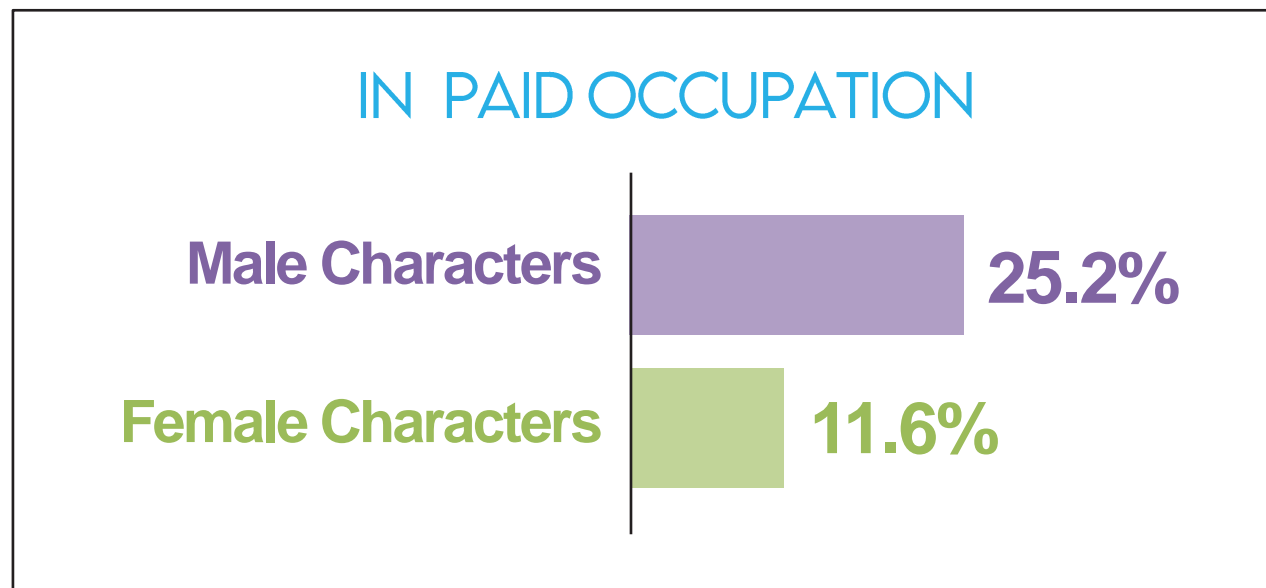**Female Characters** | **2.9%**
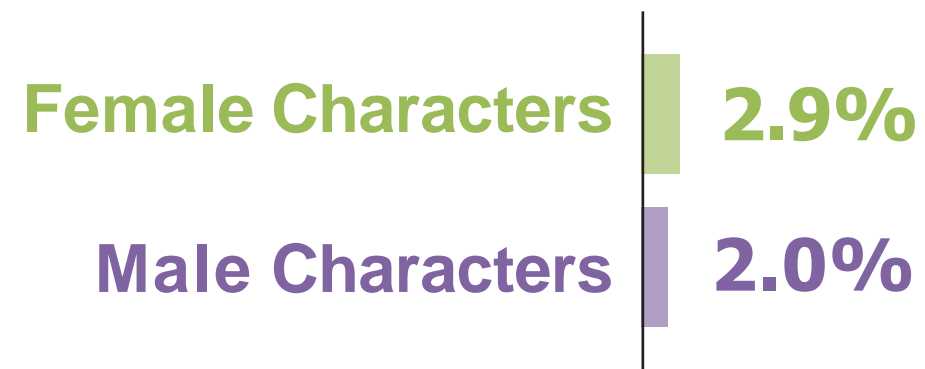
Male Characters | **2.0%**

Most Common Gender Tropes & Stereotypes:

"The Subservient Wife," "The Pushy Aunt," "The Domineering/Controlling Male," and a man who does not help with domestic activities.

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OCCUPATIONS

MALE CHARACTERS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN FEMALE CHARACTERS TO BE SHOWN:

IN PAID OCCUPATION

Male Characters — 25.2%

Female Characters — 11.6%

ACTUALLY WORKING

Male Characters — 16.4%

Female Characters — 9.3%

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LEADERSHIP

MALE CHARACTERS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO BE LEADERS

Male Characters — 26.3%

Female Characters — 19.3%

DECISION MAKING

FEMALE CHARACTERS ARE:

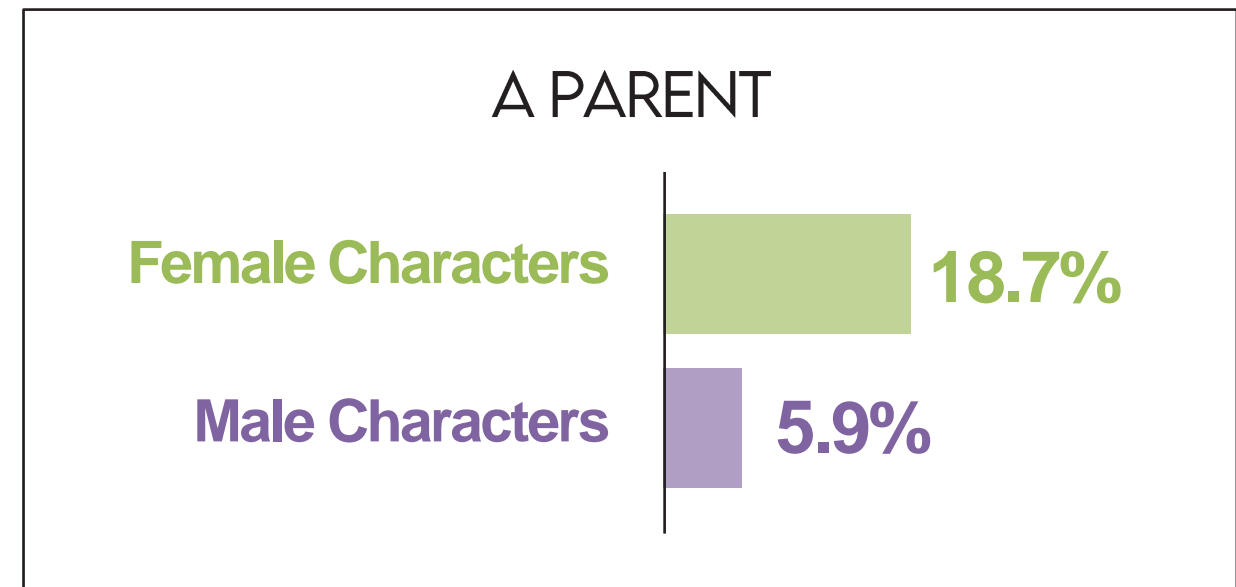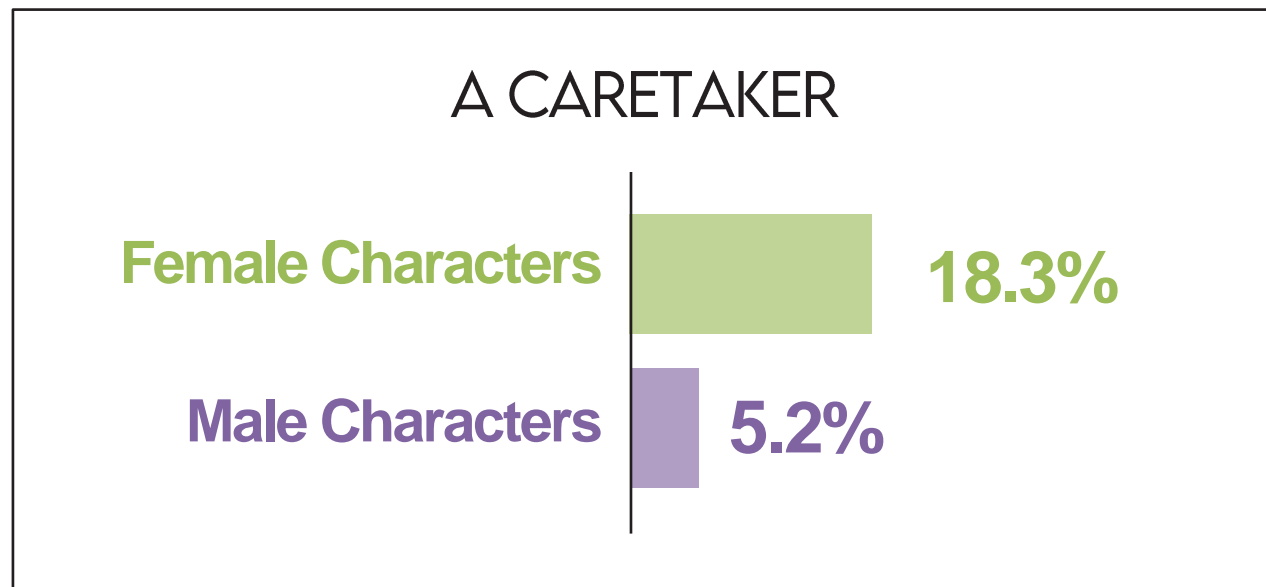**MORE LIKELY** TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR HOUSEHOLD

(4.9% compared with 2.0%)

MALE CHARACTERS ARE:

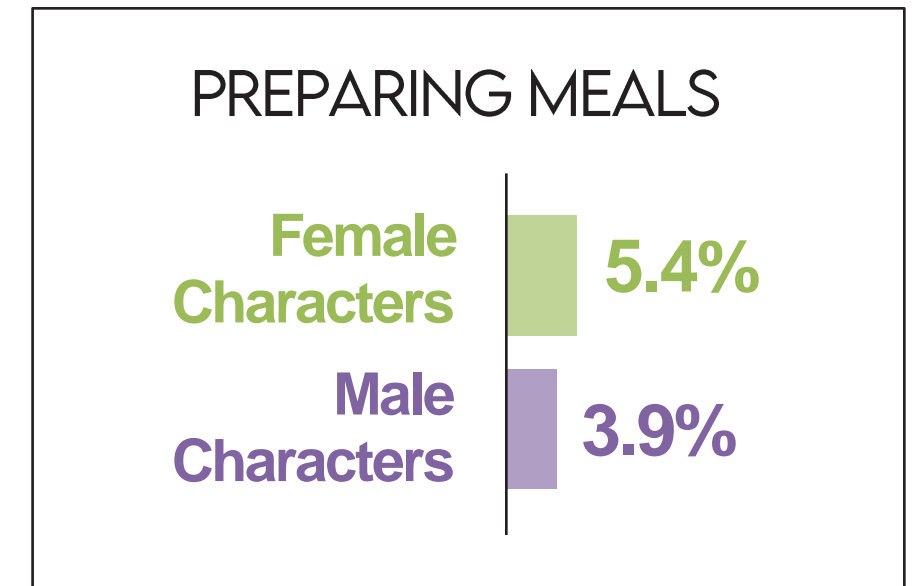**MORE LIKELY** TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE

(7.3% compared with 4.8%)

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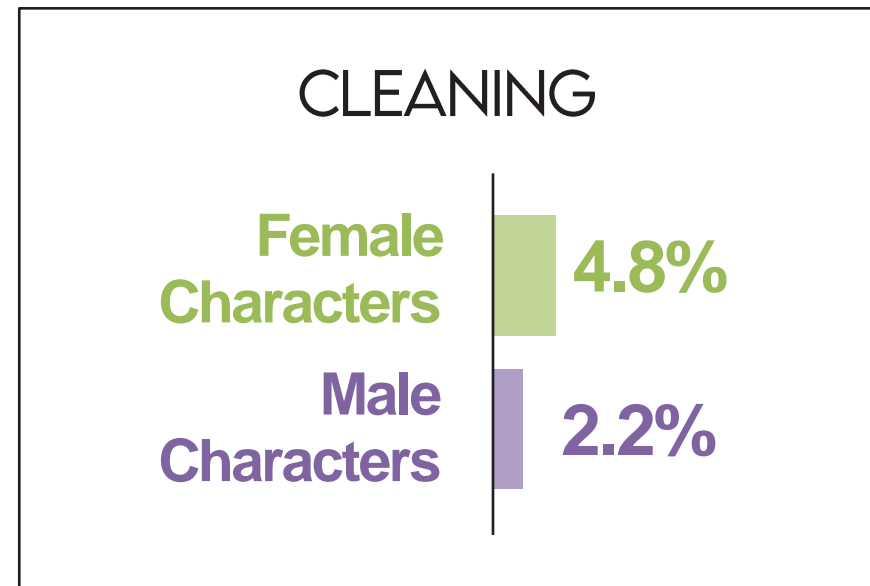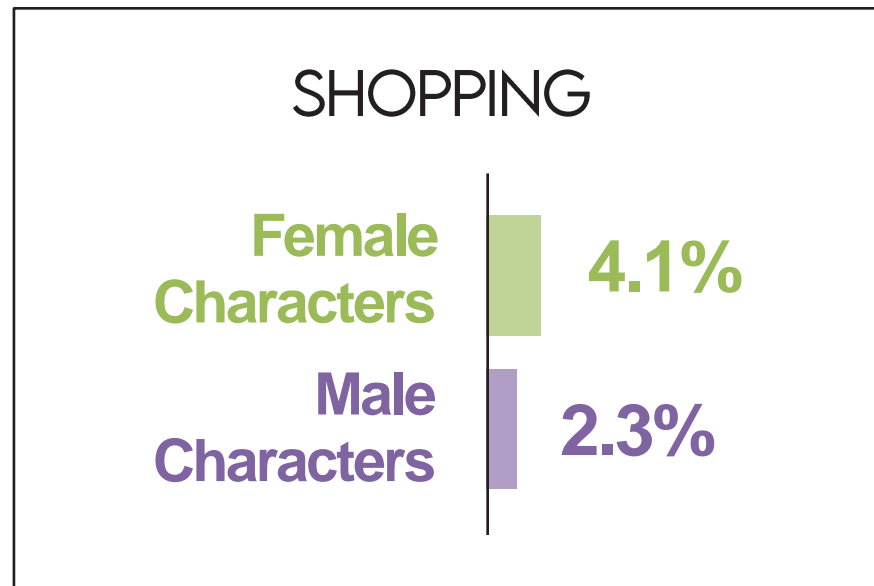
MALE-DOMINATED SETTINGS

MALE CHARACTERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE SHOWN IN

AN OFFICE

Male Characters 7.1%

Female Characters 4.7%

OUTDOORS

Male Characters 28.7%

Female Characters 21.7%

A SPORTING EVENT

Male Characters 8.1%

Female Characters 3.3%

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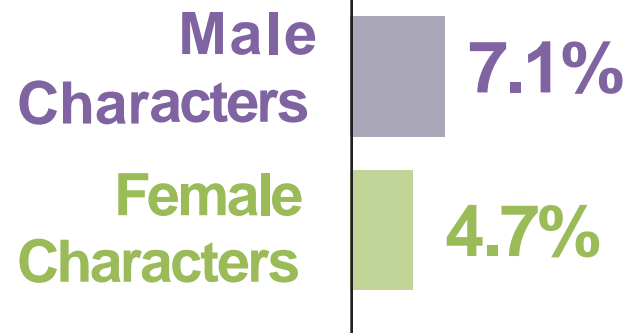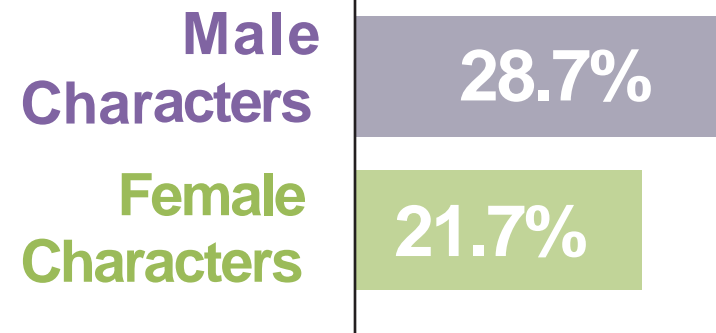
INTERVENTIONS FOR ADVERTISING GOVERNING BODIES

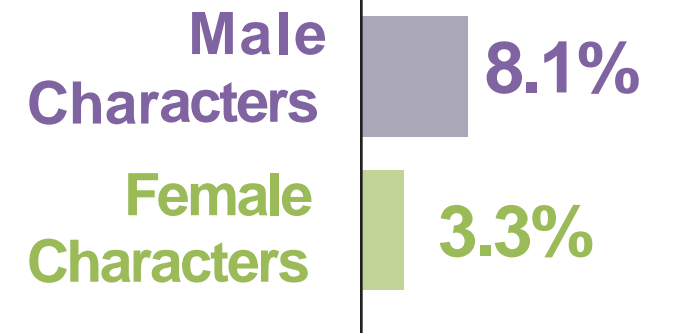- **Establish gender guidelines** for advertising with benchmarks for the quantity and quality of representation for girls and women.

- **Establish skin color guidelines** for advertising with benchmarks for the quantity and quality of representation for characters with dark skin tones.

- **Establish caste/class guidelines** for advertising with benchmarks for the quantity and quality of representation for people from marginalized castes/classes.

- **Provide financial incentives** to advertisers to meet and achieve gender, skin tone, and caste/class benchmarks.

Write & Cast:

- girls and women at equitable rates to boys and men in advertising.

- more girls in ads (ages 1 – 12).

- women of all ages (not just young women).

- more female characters ages 50+.

- characters across the skin tone spectrum, but especially female characters.

- characters across the body size spectrum, but especially female characters.

- female characters with diverse appearances.

- more female characters in occupations and show them working.

- more female characters in formal and informal positions of leadership.

- more female characters as funny and intelligent.

- more female characters in public roles (e.g., working or hiking) and more male characters in domestic activities (e.g., cooking or cleaning).

- more female characters in public spaces (e.g., in the workplace or at a sporting events) and more male characters in private spaces (e.g., in a living room or a kitchen).

INTERVENTIONS FOR CONTENT CREATORS

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