The idea of Western brands as status symbols is even stronger in India than in many other developing countries, because Indians have a lot of exposure to the West. This exposure comes in varying forms: relatives who live abroad; travel in the Western world; exposure to Western tourists; a relatively common understanding of English and comprehension of English media; the influence of TV depicting Western lifestyles via satellite and cable channels; and recent social and cultural changes that reflect Western morals (e.g. increasing rights for women). Exposure via visiting foreign countries and tourists coming to India is increasing. The number of tourists coming to India in 2007 was 5 million, which was an increase of 12.35% from the previous year, and by May of 2008, 2.31 million tourists had already visited India. In 2006, 8.34 million Indians left India an increase of 16.15% from the year before with affordability being the key determinant in choosing of holiday locations. The most popular Indian tourist destinations are North American, Europe, and South East Asia. This makes the Western lifestyle easily adopted by Indians, but it also means that this lifestyle is based largely on observations and impressions instead of direct experience concerning that lifestyle in its original context.

In a study on the effects of brand origin on consumer’s in developing countries opinions of that brand that used only Indian participants, Rajeev Batra et al. found that for many consumers a western country of origin positively effects ones attitude towards that brand. Specifically, the more foreign a brand was perceived to be the more positive the attitude was of the consumer towards the brand. This effect of foreignness of a brand was significantly more positive for consumers that admire the lifestyle in economically developed countries. They also found that individuals are more likely to like a brand that were high social symbols due to the brand’s foreignness if they are highly susceptible to normative influences, or they were more

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111 Rajeev Batra et al., “Effects of Brand Local,” 86.
likely to like a brand for its foreignness if they admired the economically developed world’s lifestyle and were highly susceptible to normative influences. This study indicates that part of what is appealing about foreign brands is the lifestyle of the country of the brands origin.

Certain brands and products in India that are bought as status symbols, and India is a culture where the status is gained when these items are displayed to others. Western brands are easily used as status symbols in because of the manner in which they are sold and displayed. Material objects are used to measure status because “the American merchandising system ensures that the same possessions will be known to people in many communities and status positions…. Material possessions [are] an objective correlate of status.” For Indians, the concept of using material objects as status symbols was not a new concept. Indians have traditionally had visible signs to distinguish class (e.g. Brahman males has a piece of uncut hair at back of head) and have also used possessions to ostentatiously display status, which is one of the reasons credited to India’s easy adaptation of western goods as status symbols. In India, the products with the best combination of status enhancement and utility are cars, two-wheelers, and cell phones. Individuals utilize their cars and two-wheels to optimize not only cost but also status visibility. Between 1995-6 and 2003-2004, sales of cell phones increased by over five times while the sales of cars and two-wheelers more than doubled. These three categories have also been making a constant effort to lower prices to make the products more affordable to more people, and their target consumer is not just limited to individuals in the metros. Other more personal products that are symbols of status are jewelry and watches. India’s jewelry market is approximately Rs. 77-80,000 crores. The watch market in India is Rs. 3,000 crores.

113 Rajeev Batra et al., “Effects of Brand Local,” 92-93.
115 Rajeev Batra et al., “Effects of Brand Local,” 85.
116 Rama Bijapurkar, We Are Like This Only, 44-45.
117 Rama Bijapurkar, We Are Like This Only, 187.
118 Rama Bijapurkar, We Are Like This Only, 44-45.
Premium and luxury watches make up Rs. 500 crore of the overall watch market, but is expected to rise to Rs. 2,500 crore while the total size of the watch market is expected to be up to Rs. 8,500 crores within the next 5-6 years. These products have become symbols of status that are easily displayed to maximize the effects of one’s status and are expected to grow.

Western brands appeal to Indian consumers for other reasons besides their position as status symbols. Western brands hold an important place in non-Western country’s. R.W. Belk states, “Besides the brands themselves, the consumer desire for these brands is one of the developed worlds’ chief exports.” The developed world causes the lesser-developed world to want its products, and there are multiple reasons why the lesser-developed countries purchase developed country’s goods. One of the main reason western brands are in some instances preferred to local brands or are coveted as status symbols is due to the brand’s novelty and the consumer’s lack of knowledge about products and thus the desire to pick one that are the most known and trustworthy, but if good are purchased for this reason, the more knowledgeable the consumer becomes the more often they are to return to purchasing local goods in certain sectors. Batra et al., found that the less familiar the Indian consumer is with a product, the more likely he is to use foreignness as a positive attribute towards that products because of perceived quality of the product due to its foreignness. This is consistent with the belief held by many that Western goods are modern and sophisticated. In a study on country of origin stereotypes, Durairaj Maheswaran found that consumers who have a strong knowledge of a product will dismiss country of origin in evaluating that type of product when unambiguous information is provided on the specific product; people who are not familiar with, or do not have

121 Rajeev Batra et al., “Effects of Brand Local,” 86.
122 “Effects of Brand Local,” 93.
a strong understanding of, a certain type of product will use stereotypes surrounding country of origin to evaluate a product if unambiguous information on the product is provided.\footnote{Durairaj Maheswaran, “Country of Origin as a Stereotype: Effects of Consumer Expertise and Attribute Strength on Product Evaluations,” \textit{The Journal of Consumer Research} 21, no. 2 (1994): 357.} Individuals unfamiliar with the products focus less on attribution information and elaborate more on country of origin information.\footnote{Durairaj Maheswaran, “Country of Origin,” 359-360.} Maheswaran’s findings supports Batra et al.’s findings, which indicates that country of origin is used as an indicator of the quality of a brand when a consumer is unfamiliar with a product.

In addition, a positive opinion of the country of origin can cause a consumer’s attitude towards products from that country to be positive. Maheswaran found that individuals unfamiliar with the type of product rate neutral or strong attributes of the product more favorably if they had a favorable opinion of the country of origin.\footnote{“Country of Origin,” 362.} Maheswaran also found that even experts on a product in certain situations will be influenced by their personal opinions of the country of origin. When presented with ambiguous product information, experts rely more on country of origin and recall more favorable product attributes if they have a positive feeling towards the country of origin.\footnote{Martin S. Roth and Jean B. Romeo, “Matching Product Category and Country Image Perceptions: A Framework for Managing Country-of-Origin Effects,” \textit{Journal of International Business Studies} 23, no. 3 (1992): 493.} In another study, Martin S. Roth and Jean B. Romeo, found that if the perception of a country was positive with respect to a relevant characteristic of an given product type than a consumers will prefer to buy brands from that country in that product category (e.g. Germany has good manufacturing capabilities and thus German cars will be good). The perception of a country can be extended to products from that country, which explains why Indians that perceive the Western world as modern and sophisticated would want Western products.
These studies findings are supported by what is known as the inclusion effect. The inclusion effect means that individuals are more likely to take attributes relating to a specific category (e.g. America) and to then associate that attribute with a general category (e.g. brands from America).\textsuperscript{129} This effect helps to explain why consumers are likely to base their attitude towards brands on their attitude the country of origin.

\textit{What India is Told it Wants: Television & Magazines Setting the Trends}

Individuals rely on television and magazines not only for entertainment but also to gain a sense of trends and style. The images displayed television and magazines also dictate a certain type of lifestyle that they claim are fashionable. Christiane Brosius states, "The image becomes the motif and the call for people to assemble under a specific notion of imagined community who will do so (or not) out of different concerns and needs."\textsuperscript{130} Images attempt to appeal to a group that is diverse but also attempt to convey one sense of 'community.' In the instances of television and magazines, the sense of community is one of a Indian community living a Western lifestyle.

Television has been an essential means of conveying this message due to its widespread availability. Television not only reaches the metro populations but the rural areas as well. From 1990 to 1999 in India, television penetration increased 20\% while in the lowest income groups in urban areas, it increased 24\%.\textsuperscript{131} Hundreds of channels are offered at low cost throughout India.\textsuperscript{132} Out of 5 media outlets (press, TV, satellite, radio, and the cinema) TV reaches the most people across metros, key urban towns, and rural areas and the number of people exposed to

\textsuperscript{131} Rama Bijapurkar, \textit{We Are Like This Only}, 45.
\textsuperscript{132} Rama Bijapurkar, \textit{We Are Like This Only}, 5.
television increased every year from 2004 to 2006. This medium of entertainment has been particularly adept at reaching the Indian population.

Audio-visual media is also credited with being a particularly influential medium. According to Dilip Kandelwalkar, "Watching [audio-visual] media is a crucial way of forming the ideas and ideals of the people. There is more power in this media than in any other media." The messages that television is perpetuating to the Indian viewers are in theory the most effective in conveying lifestyles and trends. Television is one of the mediums that has been attributed with increasing aspiration in the past decade. This is because television has depicted resources (e.g. goods), which enable individuals to imagine a life involving those goods, but before the goods were depicted, there was nothing to base one's imagined lifestyle on. Television has proved individuals with powerful images of what is to be desired.

Although these powerful images reach the masses, they are images generated for the middle class, and reflect the middle class desires, which include Western lifestyle and products. Television is in the process of representing the middle class instead of the masses. The introduction of international channels was an attempt to appeal to the middle class. In response, the Indian television network Doordarshan attempted to appeal to the Indian middle class by integrating Western programs into their schedule. This reflects a desire of the Indian middle class' desire to consume the Western lifestyle.

In addition to Western channels in India, television also shows many commercials for Western company's products or for multinational companies that originate in a Western country.

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134 Christiane Brosius, "Is This the Real," 99.
135 Rama Bijapurkar, *We Are Like This Only*, 49.
but have an Indian division. Out of the top ten advertisers per volume, eight of the companies are multinationals with Western origins including Coca Cola India Ltd., Pepsi Co., Proctor & Gamble... etc. The company with the largest commercial volume is Hindustan Unilever Ltd., which is a multinational company that originated in England.\textsuperscript{138} Western companies are advertising more aggressively on television.

Magazines also are reaching an increasing number of consumers. The volume of magazines printed rose by 10.3% in 2007 from 2006. Magazine advertising is 74% of magazine publishing and grew by 17% in 2007. Magazine advertising was an estimated size of Rs. 14 billion in 2007. Magazines are also predominantly in English with 69% of magazines are in English while only 6% are in Hindi. The rest are in regional languages.\textsuperscript{139} The magazines that are primarily circulating are in English and automatically exclude a large portion of consumers. These magazines that are targeting select consumers are becoming increasingly circulated, and the messages in these magazines are also reaching more consumers.

English magazines are exclusive and so are the goods advertised and promoted. The types of brands that advertising in magazines are predominantly luxury brand, especially when in the Indian market many brands that other countries do not consider luxury brands due to the prices are considered luxuries in India. For example, prices for products in magazines are often much higher than most Indians can afford to spend. In an article entitled “What’s Hot,” the prices of products featured range from Rs. 14,000 (Kenzo Calf Leather Belts) to Rs. 24,88,000 (IWC DV Digital Rose Gold Watch).\textsuperscript{140} In another magazine, an article listed products with prices that ranged from Rs. 24,057 (BMW Street Carver, a skateboard) - Rs. 1,45,80,000 (Goldmund Full Epilogue, a home entertainment system).\textsuperscript{141} However, magazines target

\textsuperscript{138} Bussinessworld, The Marketing, 228.
\textsuperscript{139} Bussinessworld, The Marketing, 210-211.
\textsuperscript{140} “What’s Hot.” India Today, November 9, 2009.
\textsuperscript{141} “High Rollin’.” Maxim: The Luxury Issue (India), November 2009.
consumers who are unlikely to be concerned with prices. These magazines also feature many Western ads for expensive Western brands. Certain Western luxury brands are different then other Western brands in India in that they do not have to modify their products for India. Louis Vuiton is a prime example of a multinational Western company that uses the same print ads in Indian magazines as Indian magazines. It is also an example of one of only nine out of the top five hundred multinational companies that can be considered truly multinational in terms of sales distributions. Some brands in magazines may be so exclusive that they represent the Western lifestyle at its utmost desirable.

Fashion is a particularly important means of conveying trends in magazines; however, even Indian fashion and lifestyle magazines promote Western fashion. In a men’s lifestyle magazine, new York was listed as “govern[ing] the trends for all things commercial worldwide.” A Indian based Women’s lifestyle magazine ran a section with the catch phrase, “SAVVY’ catches celebs flaunting their favorite brands!” However, all celebrities are Western celebrities, and all the brands are Western brands. This same fashion magazine had a sections entitled “High fashion” with two pages entitles “Global Catwalk” and “Party Booties,” and on these two pages, all the prices were either given in US dollars or British pounds. With relation to fashion, both men’s and women’s lifestyle magazines either directly promote the Western world as the fashion capital or indirectly promote it by defining ‘celebrities’ and ‘brands’ in terms of Western ‘celebrities’ and ‘brands’ while also using US dollar prices, which

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142 Sulina Menon.
143 Edwin Colyer, “India: A Hot.”
145 “Top Couture,” Maxim Style (India), November 2009.
implies an exclusivity due to the fact that those goods would likely have to be custom ordered and imported.

To further exemplify the extent to which Western lifestyles are promoted even within Indian contexts, an Indian woman’s magazine ran a male supplement that had a section on different styles for Indian men. The article first listed men whose styles the article was attempting to emulate. Only one of the five stylish men is Western (George Clooney) who represents the “Retro-Vintage” style (which associates Hollywood and Western sophisticated men as being classic and classy. This vintage is not an Indian vintage). The other four categories of style were: Indie Stylish, Preppy Artistic, Stately Formal, and Sporty Cool. However, out of 39 products listed that would help one embody these five personalities Indian companies make only five of the products and four of these products are listed under the “Stately Formal” style category. The other is listed under the “Sporty Cool” style. The majority of brands listed are luxury brands (e.g. Mont Blanc, Bentley, Titan, Louis Vuitton, Audi, Odyssey Yacht, Rolex, Dolce & Gabbana, Jaguar, Dior... etc) and prices were not listed. Louis Vuitton products are listed three times under “Retro-Vintage,” “Indie Stylish,” and “Stately Formal.” The products were the Louis Vuitton Watch Box, which contained six different watches for both men and women, Kanye West for Louis Vuitton’s Don sneakers, and Louis Vuitton scarves. Gogio Armani was the only other brand with more than one product listed. Those items were under the “Sporty Cool” and “Indie Stylish” sections. The message from this article was that although Indian men can be stylish, most style types require the purchase of Western brands to not only achieve that style but that lifestyle as well.

Images and suggestions in television and magazines have a clear Western message. This message is well circulated due to the vast diverse networks of Indians these two mediums reach.

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Television and magazines are promoting the Western lifestyle, and in particular, the desirability and exclusivity of that lifestyle.

**English: Targeting Your Consumer**

As mentioned earlier, English has long been a status symbol and is used consciously by advertisers to target an upper class segment of the Indian population. According to Sulina Menon, a woman with twenty-three years of experience in media planning and working with multinational companies on marketing campaigns, premium luxury brands that target individuals in socio-economic classes of A and B will automatically advertising in English. In addition, English advertising is successful in appealing to young professionals and middle aged to upper aged individuals who have experienced the cultural transition in India in the past few decades. Although more people speak English today than when it first became a status symbol during the East India Company rule, English maintains its association with the elite classes.

English education has become a prime focus of education, which keeps perpetuating English and the Western world as powerful. English remains the dominant language of government and business; only 30% of India speaks Hindi and according to a study on India, "English is the major language of the people." The younger generation is particularly interested in learning English. More Indians between the age of twenty and twenty-five read English then have graduated college (34% read English in urban area and 13% in rural areas). The numbers are similar for individuals between the ages 12 and 19 (37% urban teens and 15% rural teens). According to the company English Express’ research, in India, English language courses compose approximately 33% of all vocational courses, and the market for English

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148 Sulina Menon.
152 Rama Bijapurkar, *We Are Like This Only*, 202.
training is worth just under US$1.4 billion per year.\textsuperscript{153} The process of English education begins early. There are numerous preschools and nursery schools that are focused on setting up franchise chains across India. These schools have names that associate themselves with the Western world, such as: Euro Kids, An American Alliance ABC Montessori, and British Orchard Nursery.\textsuperscript{154} Not all Indians can afford an English education, but even if it is not affordable, many Indians will make sacrifices to educate their children in English. Specifically, the company Rediffusion DY&R developed a psychographic classification of Indian consumers. One of the groups is known as the ‘strivers’ who are characterized by a desire for improvement and freedom from hardship: “They value hope and luck and especially look for ‘escape velocity’... for their children.”\textsuperscript{155} This group may sacrifice money on food to send their children to English medium schools.\textsuperscript{156}

English is important not only because of its growing prominence in India, but it is also particularly important to gain employment in multinational companies and to work abroad. Fifty-three countries have declared English as their official language. According to Preeti Malik, Senior Vice-President and Head of English Express, states “[English] can be termed as the lingua franca of contemporary times.”\textsuperscript{157} English education companies in India are promoting the idea of English as a powerful language, which perpetuates the association between the West and a desired lifestyle and success.

\textit{Western Exposure: Sexuality in Advertising}

Western brands have also subjected Indian consumers to Western values, in particular the value of open sexuality. Sexuality can be a useful tool in advertising. Slight sexual arousal can
be used productively in commercials to attract our attention and be constructive to the purpose of the ad. However, many people find even moderate sexuality in commercials offensive and challenging to their moral view of decency. The challenge of utilizing sexuality becomes greater when entering into a market that is not used to Western standards of sexuality.

Western sexuality tends to be open in nature. The French clothing brand Sisley has a print advertisement with a Caucasian woman wearing blue low cut panties and a long sweater jacket that is beneath her as she pulls at the neck of it. Her thighs, stomach, and ribcage are exposed, and she is looking at the viewer with a look of sexual tension (see Figure 6). This woman is exposing more of herself than even Western women do in public, but by Indian standards, this exposure is even more extreme. Axe body spray also has a commercial where the act of sex is strongly implied. In the ad, a sexily disheveled Caucasian man walks into an elevator and sprays himself with Axe. A younger geeky Caucasian male in a suit walks in as the other man leaves, and then a slightly older blond Caucasian woman walks in to the elevator and smells the Axe. She begins to look seductively at the young man and then presses the emergency stop button. The next scene is her leaving the elevator adjusting her dress, and the young man is standing there looking disheveled. An even older Caucasian woman then enters the elevator and gives the young man a seductive look again. This commercial implies that by wearing Axe one can have sex with women. This once again is not only a fallacy in India but also America, and yet since the product is Western and the actors are Caucasian, this commercial is supposed to reflect the Western world’s relaxed attitude towards sex. Both this ad and the Sisley ad, use Caucasian women as sex objects and are openly sexual in nature, and because of the models race, this is associated with the West. The only difference in the ads is that the target consumer for one product is male and for the other, it is female. However, regardless of which gender is being

targeted, advertisements are not afraid to display sexuality, especially female sexuality and objectivity.

Axe brand is particularly prevalent in utilizing sex in a variety of marketing strategies. Besides the television commercials, Axe also publishes a monthly magazine on Delhi. The magazine displays the typical sexuality seen in commercials: one issues has outlines of women in provocative positions while another issues has outlines with women with targets on their bodies (see Appendix Fig. 7). In addition, Axe makes postcards that are free at local social places. These postcards also depict evocatively dress women and are intended to promote a game website Axe has created, www.axegames.in. Each postcard has something special about it. One has the stickers of the targets that are used in one of the games and the other has a target over a woman’s chest that says “rub here to smell me,” the smell is of Axe Instinct (see Appendix Fig. 8). The game website features a series of games where you target women and shot them with a variety of items. In response the girls make a moaning noise or say, “I’ve waited for this all day.” In addition, to play the games you chose a real woman. There are five women to chose from, which reflective the typical male fantasies: biker chick, waitress, sporty girl, businesswoman, and student. These women do not look Caucasian, but do not look Indian either. After playing a game, you get to go to the selected girl’s room and type in commands for her to perform. Many of the actions are repetitive for multiple commands, but if you type in sex with the biker chick, Natalie, she will get down on her hands and knees and move her shoulders. This is an action that she does not appear to do for any other command. The fact that the designers of this game thought of a specific action for sex shows that they have created this website with the intension of evoking sexual arousal from Indian males.

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159 Axe Instinct Games, www.axegames.in (December 10, 2009).
However, the sexuality of the images in the magazines and television ads is not reflective of what sexuality is actually like in India. For instance, in the Axe magazine there is a quiz entitled “Are You Hot or Not?” where if you reply with the most promiscuous answer options you will be told, “Be careful! You wouldn’t want to be mistaken for some pervert on the loose!” Compared to Western standards, the promiscuous reply options are not perverted at. However, the massage that is being sent to readers of the magazines is that you should control your sexuality. In addition, magazines that feature evocative ads such as the Sisley one, still promote waiting to have sex until marriage and assume that most readers have waited. While advertisements continue to display sexually evocative images, the Indian consumers remain sexually restricted based on liberal Western standards. When advertising utilizes or appeals to sexuality, it causes sexual preoccupation, dissatisfaction, and promotes pornography according to Kuhns and Slater.

However, this does not mean that Indians are unaware of the sexual imagery in advertising. When advertising utilizes or appeals to sexuality, it causes sexual preoccupation, dissatisfaction, and promotes pornography according to Philip E. Slater. Liberal Western sexuality in advertising may not have changed people’s cultural norms, but it is presenting itself as a new norm due to its prevalence in advertising, which could eventually cause a change in attitudes towards sex in India.

Images of Western Lifestyle: The Context of the Advertisement

Advertising does not just attempt to sell a product but a lifestyle. This is a lifestyle that is centered around consumption. Daniel J. Boorstin explains, “Advertising has fostered a ‘community of consumption’ in which our simultaneous possession of the same popular brands

and styles in all that remains to bind us together as a people.” Advertising promotes these brands while also telling us what lifestyle those brands reflect. Advertising is a visual guide to manners and lifestyle, and advertising becomes this guide by putting brands into contexts. Background objects and background information in advertisements that are not the product being advertised also effect viewer’s ideas of lifestyle by showing the viewer how to live and consumers are not as suspicious of background information as they are of the object being sold and what that lifestyle that object represents. The background information in advertisements can be essential in providing social cues as to what is popular or attractive, which in turn can provide the viewer honor and acceptance among peers even if they cannot afford the brands. In many advertisements in India, background information can fuel aspiration and knowledge about what is popular.

The background information in Indian advertisements are focused on modernity and a Western lifestyle. In an interview with Ishan Kala, the Regional Category Manger for Whirlpool Refrigerators, he claimed that Whirlpool commercials reflect a modern lifestyle and actresses in the commercials are supposed to reflect their target consumer group of newly married young (25-35 year old) women who are knowledgeable about the latest technology. Besides the appearance of modern lifestyle through technology, the modern and Western lifestyle is defined in terms of social context in other print ads such as Levi’s Diva Rule! series (see Appendix Fig. 9) and the Bacardi miXxology: The Fine Art of Mixing series (see Appendix Fig. 10). The Levi’s ads depicts the actress Priyanka Chopra and three other models of seemingly non-Indian heritage on the streets late at night dressed in flesh baring non-Indian clothing. The ad gives a time and what the girls are doing; for instance, there is one that says “miles to go, fri. 2.45 am.”

166 Ishan Kala (Regional Category Manager for Whirlpool Refrigerators), interviewed by Alissa Goddard. November 23, 2009.