

CHAPTER – 3

**MASS MEDIA AND GENDER
STEREOTYPES**

Mass Media & UG Students



Mass Media & PG Students



Information is power. It is a source of knowledge. Modern age is the age of information. Information plays an important role in each and every sphere of life. It is rightly said that Iraq War was not a war between America and Iraq, but it was a war between two parties, one equipped with information and the other deprived of all information. Hence, the result was a natural outcome. We are living in an age of information revolution. Newspapers, radio and television are all well-known resources for getting information. Although mass media as a subject of study is not very old but its history is as old as the humanity itself. Mass media and journalism have evolved into a strong force, over the years. Print media was the first phase followed by radio and television and later on internet and websites. In fact in broader sense, media has two different segments. One is print media and the other is electronic media. Electronic media may be more popular than print media, due to its visual power. But, print media has lasting value. Journalism and mass media deal with a wider range of information comprising collection, writing, editing, proof reading and publication.

With the invention of new communication technologies, the power of mass media has grown in stature. The mass media shapes our perceptions and views of social reality by presenting only some aspects of reality and by continuation repetition of images and messages. We can say that the role and content of mass media has changed dramatically, playing decisive role in reinforcing gender stereotypes and patriarchal culture by constructing new images and meanings by setting agendas for public opinion through selective themes and views. In this chapter, we would like to understand a global picture of representation of women in mass media – films, television, serials, and advertisements on the basis of available Indian and international research literature on women and mass

media. It argues that women and their concerns are no longer invisible in the mass media. However, old sex stereotypes have continued by taking new forms. On the other hand, progressive discourse on women's issues often co-opted and re-constructed in the mainstream media to establish the hegemony of dominant social classes. Hence, the task of changing media images of women has become more in the context of market economy.

What is Media

The media is instrumental in defining what we think, how we look and our social place and issues in the society. The term mass media is defined as a means of communication that operates on a large scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in the society to a greater or lesser degree. Mass media has been influencing the social, cultural, economic, spiritual, political and religious aspects of society as well as personal level thinking, feeling and acting. Media feed the people with the latest information and create the need for change in contemporary society. Mass media have both positive and negative role in the society. Media is all pervasive; its functioning is very subtle. Media plays a vital role in dissemination of information. It is called the fourth pillar of democratic policy. Radio, television, films and the printed word reach all of us in this age of information and each strives to perfect its modes of communications to become more effective as a medium. By gradually shaping public opinion on personal beliefs, and even people's self-perceptions, media influences the process of socialization and shapes ideology and thinking.

The term mass media denotes various forms of entertainment; television, films, music, newspaper, magazines, internet, advertising, etc disseminating information and it is used by media organization to target and impact youth. Idealized beauty standards, irrelevant sexualization and domestication are only some of the ways that women in media are portrayed today.[Indian journal of women and development, Oct 2008:45]

The study provides a general overview of how we perceive things and states that these give a negative image to young people. Radio, television, newspaper, magazines and films play a vital role in spreading information, propagating, educating and enlightening, strengthening national integration, creating national identity etc. Mass communication essentially means dissemination of information, ideas and entertainment by the communication media. If one was to ask what is today's most powerful vehicle in molding of beliefs, attitudes, values and lifestyles, one would say it is media. By becoming more gender aware in content and language, media can present a clearer and more accurate picture of the roles and responsibilities of both men and women in the society. The need for mass media to cover the entire population is widely admitted. Developing countries give priority to broadcast media, radio and television, even though the people's access is not always equitable and balanced. (Aggarwal 1994, Rao and Annanta, 2000). Mass media has been influencing the social, cultural, economic and religious aspects of the society. The impact of mass media especially the television on the society has been compared with the effect of water dripping steadily on a stone imperceptibly eroding old values and attitudes in favor of new ones. It gives the people latest information and creates the need for change in contemporary society.

The press is not the most important means of communication in a country like India, because of its large illiterate population. Yet because of the existing power structure, which is dominated by the educated people, the written records carry much value. Hence its capability to influence the attitudes of both ordinary readers and policy makers are inevitable on large scale. The significance of printed media initiated from the India's struggle for independence. Only press was the important weapon used by the great leaders of national movement such as Lokmanya Tilak, who founded the Marathi newspaper Kesari and Mahatma Gandhi with his Hind Swaraj, Young India, Harijan and many more publications. These newspapers were used as a vehicle to communicate their ideas to the rulers as well as to fellow citizens. Repressive press laws during the British raj gave the indigenous press what M. Chalapathi Rau veteran journalist, terms as "reforming and crusading zeal" (Chalapathi Rau, press in India, Allied Publications, New Delhi, 1986). After independence, the crusading anti British nationalist press assumed by, and large, a supportive attitude towards the state. A congenial relationship between the press and the state continued to govern the nature of Indian journalism for several years after independence, continued. A major break in 1975, imposing of Internal Emergency restrictions, including Press censorship, brought revolution for the first time in free India. The imposing of censorship laws, were considered antipathetic during the independence movement. Yet the response to censorship was not resistance seen during the British rule, but created some initial protest and brave resistance for a few small publications. It also paved the way for greater courage of human rights issues, and the condition of marginalized social groups. This period also coincided with increased awareness about women's oppression globally and nationally. The years following the

emergency witnessed the beginning of nationwide campaigns by women's groups who protested for the change in laws, of special concern to women, relating to dowry. A number of these campaigns received fairly prominent coverage in the press.

While these changes could be perceived throughout the print media, they were particularly evident in the English language press. According to a readership survey by the operations Research group, just 5% of the adults in India read English language newspaper. For e.g., the highest literacy state of Kerala, 57.8% read Malayalam newspaper and magazines while only 5.8% read English publications. The highest readership for English publications is in four metropolitan cities of Mumbai, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. But even in these cities the readership of local language publications is at least twice as high (Centre for Media Studies, Media Scene in India: Highlights from ORG-NRS 1989-90, New Delhi, 1990). This is really a legacy on India's colonization experience which made English the language of the ruling class and the elite. The situation remains the same even after nearly six decades after independence. The important consideration is assessing media coverage of the press, to a large extent, determines what constitutes 'news'. The traditional definition of news conforms to the general liberal, yet elitist, upwardly mobile, university educated, and upper caste urban male. While these newspapers accept that the interest of minorities and other marginalized groups should not be entirely ignored. Similarly in relation to women's issues, most mainstream newspaper do not pursue an openly anti women line. This is least partly because the ideal of equality of the sexes is enshrined in the Indian constitution. Measures to ensure equal participation in national life as well as eliminate discrimination and oppression are among the accepted social goals of the country.

However, it does not necessarily follow that the press does not neglect or trivialize women and many women issues.

The Problem

Ever since the human society has developed, people have been communicating with each other through gestures, sound and body language. Later on, sounds were transferred into objects and ideas to develop oral language and for the development of written language, written scripts and symbols were evolved locating ideas and objects. The amazing fact to note is the intense and deep influence of oral tradition over centuries through myths, epics, legends, sagas, folk songs etc from one generation to another. Speaking historically, communication developed from simple interpersonal note to globally transmitted phenomenon which is portrayed by sophisticated technology, huge capital investment, vest designed organizations, legal frameworks prepared by professionals and experts to pop up into an unstructured and formless mass of audience, consumers of capitalism.

In the present information period, we have noticed printing technology against a revolution in communication technology. Communication satellites, cable networks, computer systems, and their usages and ideas have become a central feature of modern life. The mass media always have their basis on the prevailing economic structures comprising specific mode of production at a given point of time, simultaneously the forms of communication in society and the level of development of productive forces are also accompanied. As a part of the socio-cultural reproduction the institutions of mass communication are essential to be analyzed.

The aim of the present study is to understand the impact of electronic medium i.e. television, cable and satellite on young generation under specific economic and geographic conditions. Accordingly we tried to develop the relationship between the state, media and capital influenced by the multinational capital in the present chapter. Apart from this we also attempt the relation of the state to capital and its significance in sustenance and conservation of capitalism, the priority of the transnational cooperation's and the role of mass media in the expansion and the authorization of capitalism in its current form of globalization. We can initiate by saying that the state is the push factor and forces in the perpetuation of capitalism. The state does not only acts as an active agent in deciding the economic pattern, but also performs as a neutral arbitrator in the society. The states control the means of production by showing paths and ways for specific classes to perform or act. In this conflict the dominant classes enjoys the supremacy by ensuring its survival and perpetuation. In pre capitalism the dominant class pervasively sustains unequal distribution by different institutions such as religion, education, family etc. among the institutions that contribute to the makeup of a public sphere in society, the mass media performs the most critical function. In the society the mass media legitimizes the status quo or innovators of the existing social equilibrium. The neutral relationship between the state and the mass media is oppositional or complimentary, as such influenced by others. During the last two decades, the media have undergone a sea change, particularly in their intellectual context and cultural ambience. There are two sources from which the transformation draws sustenance and inspiration: one emanating from outside and the other internally generated. The state which seeks to subordinate the media to global control, comes with a variety of promises of development, technology, and extremely appealing to the modernizing quest of the middle class. It leads to an intellectual climate in favor

of a mode of development. After eighties, the transnational corporations not only created a strong hold over the economy but also on mass media, telecommunications and information technology as well as fiber optics and the internet. Their oligopoly propagates capitalist ideology leading to the strengthening of the global capitalist system (Hermen and Machesney, 1977). Capitalism leads by suppressing humanity. Suppression in society can be noticed in race, class or gender, for example: Women labour not considered for equal wage, marginalized castes not given equal standards or rights, etc. Currently, capitalism has found a powerful tool in the mass media, especially satellite and cable television and advertisements for reinforcing the patriarchal value system and reinforcement of gender and economic inequalities.

Talking of women in society; the male ownership of private property in society transformed women's social labour into labour for an individual and ultimately served capital. The latent maleness that existed in the vicious and brutal stage manifested as control of women's labour, their sexuality, and fertility also, which resulted in the oppression of women. The patriarchal value system itself reveals the truth and oppression of women by class, caste and gender. Media content creates needs primarily and then transforms into consumer needs. Women are treated as consumers and as commodities to be exploited in the advertising television, film and pornographic industry. Women even have faced the marginalization in economic labour force, in the post 1980s globalization women have been regarded as subordinate classes who bears the onslaught of globalization. The media, especially television reinforces the conservative and pathetic role of women as the upholders of a value system by reinforcing consumer culture.

Our prime effort in the present exercise is to comprehend the effect of media, especially cable television, advertisements and satellite televisions on women under globalization. As cable and satellite television broadcasting i.e. media which is closely

Advertisements



129

and formally bound to the state our study concentrates and highlights on the segment. Initially, television in India was a state owned medium project founded by Ford foundation in 1959 in Delhi. The project was implemented for the development and education purpose, but further it went commercial and advertising including films and film based programs and serials. This pattern of commercialization continued till early 1990s and these channels merged with its cable distribution, which brought a revolution in consumerism. Since 1970s (SITE) satellite instructional television experiment and their commercial potential was tapped by global conglomerates only in 1990s in the third world. The economic crisis in the United States and Western Europe in the 1980s was the main reasons for this which discovered new forms of organizations which led to production and capital to overcome the crisis of the respective economies. Multinational corporations entered the third world countries in search for the markets comprising convenient laws and tariffs. This new ideological propagation and new form of capitalism was termed as globalization by the World Bank. This gained maximum profit and capital accumulation process made it into a branch of industrial activity for only the sake of maximizing profit in the guise of democratic principles. The idea behind this principle is that multinational corporations and advertisers should be allowed to deal globally without the interruption of the government. Media globalization has tremendously facilitated the globalization of trade and finance. This is characterized by centralization and concentration of the media industry leading to the emergence of giant global operating media conglomerates increased transnational flows of media products and consequent spread and intensification of the commercialization of media output (Herman and Machesney, 1997). International monetary fund (IMF) and World Bank loan of 15 billion

introduced globalization in the name of economic liberalization. In the 1990s the amalgamation and integration of economy with the global market aroused. This integration of India into the world capitalist system clearly reflects further subjugation and suppression of the economy, media, politics and cultural traditions in the interests of global capital. The print media which includes books, pamphlets, journals, newspapers etc. facilitated the growth of consciousness based on liberalism particularly among the capitalists. Even the earlier communication technology like the telephone, telegraph, printing and radio broadcasting came to the colonies shortly along with road and railways networks. Cinema is considered as the mass media of the monopoly phase of industrial capitalism of the 20th century. Currently electronic media and modern communication technologies have become the facilitations of financial markets as international corporations and financial institutions in their bid for monopoly and hegemony. The commercial international media and communication creates the cultural basis for world imperialist system with the help of new and modern economic tools and communications technologies. By promoting and legitimizing the interests of western corporate industry the mass media leads as chief cultural institution which mediates the culture and the value system. From this we can say that mass media are the chief agents of cultural colonization of the current modern society and capital in the arms of the state molding people's thoughts and thinking. The major channels of ideological control connected are institutions like the education systems, mass media, sports and other recreational activities. Globalization with regard to media acts as a powerful arm of corporate houses which results in the possession of big chunks of media and communications systems through direct investment, equity shares, joint ventures, collaborations etc. capitalism

Advertisements


A black and white advertisement for Super Surf washing powder. It features a woman with dark hair, wearing a white shirt, holding a box of Super Surf. The box has the brand name 'Super Surf' prominently displayed. The background is a dark, textured pattern. Below the image, there is a block of text in English and Hindi.

A single wash with SUPER SURF gives more whiteness than any other washing powder!

Super Surf has super cleaning power. Removes even stubborn dirt, gives your clothes the super whiteness that's easy to wonder it's India's leading brand Super Surf!

SUPER SURF washes whitest of all
(and no need to add any whitening agent)

A Quality Product by HINDUSTAN LEVER

LR/RS-101 107-402

needs market to survive and for existence new consumer forums and patterns are reinforced in the society. And in this situation the television media fits perfectly. Cable network invention along with television broadcast through satellite television became a powerful medium for the propagation of corporate capitalism. Daily soap operas, serials and other film based fictions entertainment make up the bulk of popular television fare. Apparently, the current study makes an attempt to comprehend and grasp this form of mass media content and its subsequent bearings on young generation especially women and culture particularly cultural notions in society. Thus the exercise aims to survey the impact of T.V. serials and advertisements and cable television on women cutting across different geographical locations and areas and to investigate if serial and advertisements on television reinforce conservative and regressive values among women and encourage consumerism. It also attempts to examine the level of acceptance and awareness of women and college students.

Functionalist Perspective

Functionalism explains social practices and institutions in terms of the structures and functions of society and its institutions. Society and individuals have needs that are fulfilled by institutions. Thus mass media fulfills needs of individuals regarding information, motivation, adaptation, socialization, continuity, social order, integration, and so on. Relatively, functionalist approach holds that society is system of which media is a sub system that contributes to the maintenance of continuity. It also uniformly orders the assumption that social life requires social integration, status quo maintenance, and harmony, consistent and complete picture of society and of social environment. Lasswell (1948) delineated the main functions of mass communication in society as surveillance of

environment, correlation of the parts of society in responding to its environment and transmission of cultural heritage. The functionalist thought also argues that entertainment and mobilization are the other key media functions for the social integration in the society emphasizing social agreement (Wright, 1960). Apart from this, it is also opined that media tend to support the values of not only society as a whole but also its various segments. Several researchers have pointed that the media reinforces the values of the community and the maintenance of a local order (Jackson, 1971; Cox and Urgan, 1973; Murphy, 1976). The fact is institutions are not the product of decisions made by individuals since them prior to these individuals. For it is the people who decide what is functional for them and not few classes or individuals possess the authority. A basic symmetry is seen to exist between media institution and their audiences, since “the relationship is generally entered into voluntarily and on apparently equal terms” (McQuail, 1977: 91) and audiences are seen as capable of manipulating the media in an infinite variety of ways according to their prior needs and disposition and having access to the plural values of society enabling them to conform, accommodate and challenge or reject them.

Functionalism points out that social customs, relationships and institutions persist because they have some social function that is an ongoing utility. The utility of social arrangements are taken for granted. Functionalism school of thought is a mere manifestation of the properties in a given system of relation and reduces complex phenomenon into simple description of function of systems. Accordingly, the mass media becomes the determining part as an element of the system discharging a specific function, denying contradiction and historical processes.

Empiricism

Initially, mass media research in United States and Western Europe was first established in order to fulfill the needs of the media industries in accordance of improving the influence and potentiality of media which is always regarded as a powerful tool in achieving the commercial objectives. Henceforth where advertising revenue was very much important it became necessary to consist detailed information about the size, composition, reaction of media audience research, circulation studies, viewer ship studies, advertising research, public opinion polls and so on. Understanding the media problem, question and methodologies were formulated and functionalized within the narrow media oriented parameters; we can find thousands of projects and piles of data working on it. The issue is that there has been no attempt to relate data to any theoretical approach. Hence most of the research enhances improving methods to facilitate and promote the achievements of specific goals rather than on clarifying concepts and developing theories. The extract of empiricism seizes upon one juncture in the process of work and allows it to dominate the mind. The approach is bounded to the statistical analysis of social issues by describing them in formulas and structures. Even then not statistical tools are used established relations. Philosophies of natural sciences and canons for work in social science are the two factors which are adopted in abstracted empiricism, and hence the issue of blindness of data without theory ultimately results in psychologism.

Structural Perspective

The structural perspective of media analysis enhances dominance to the ideological role of the media independent of the economic structure. As structural

perspective analyses the form and content of cultural artifacts and then it links to the economic base. In this approach emphasis lies on ideas rather than on material structure, analyzing the ideological effects of media in the interest of ruling class. Thus, it proves that mass media reproduce essentially exploitative relations while sanctioning the dominance of capitalism and the subordination of the working class. Correspondingly, the main contribution of the media is to stimulate and then to satisfy the false needs, leading to the assimilation of groups who have no material interest in general society. Instead of starting from a concrete analysis of economic relations and the ways in which they structure both the processes and results of cultural production, structuralism starts by analyzing the form and content of cultural artifacts and then working backwards to describe their economic base. The characteristic outcome is a top heavy base analysis in which an elaborate autonomy of cultural forms balances insecurely on a schematic account of economic forces shaping their production (Mudock and Golding, 1977). A structuralism emphasize its relative autonomy with cultural sphere and its irrespectively to class interests but tries to be connected power structure capitalist state through its relations. In precise, the emphasis is on semiological analysis and not on the material practices. The concept of hegemony refers to a ubiquitous and internally consistent culture and ideology which are openly and implicitly favorable to a dominant class or elite, although less closely and consciously organized (Gramsci, 1971).

Any sort of analysis in which mass media operates as ideological agencies, is bound to be partial. Likewise in India, the centre of gravity lays significantly with the communication conglomerates. Structuralists concern in with the system reducing media research to a textual analysis; television programme and literary text. Accordingly,

structuralism shows a concern to establish the autonomy and effectiveness of film and television form, enhancing (promoting) the idea that ideology embodied in film and television is an important and necessary area of ideological struggle.

Marxist Perspective

Marxist perspective being a theory of history is rather more concerned with the whole of people's social life compared to the above perspectives as it symmetrically discerns the stages in the stages of history and social life. According to this approach, under capitalism media is the ideological tool for propaganda. Thus transnational corporations use media to serve the interests of the capitalists by circulating their ideas and world view. The net result is there is a large concentration of media ownership by capitalist entrepreneurs (Bag di kian, 1988). Besides media studies reveal correlative evidence of conservative tendencies in content of media so organized (Hermen and Chomsky, 1988). The larger part of economic infrastructure and power base are controlled by the economic dimensions of media institutions where as the integral part of culture in capitalism is formed by images, ideas and information circulated by the media. In true words, media is related to the prevailing structure of political and economic power. Simultaneously media is observed as an effective instrument of power to reinforce and apply influence in various ways. The real potentiality of media can be observed in its context of ideas and values. The Marxist approach emphasizes on control of media and its way media market forces operate because the primary focus is on the relationship between economic structure and the ideological content of media. Concluding, we can state that amongst the rest, media ranks the highest position in the commercial organizations that produce and distribute the commodities with in capitalist economic

framework. As media is an economic interface between producers of goods and services, they form integral part of the strategy for the circulation of economic commodities within capitalist economy through advertising. Thus we can conclude that as a whole media is a large scale commercial enterprise in capitalism. Economic interests of multinational corporations are fed by media. Media creates enhancement of structural inequalities in wealth and power for the interest of class which is owned and controlled by media itself. Thus, their central function is, “to maintain the financial equilibrium of a deeply institutionalized social system which is highly integrated with the economic institutions” (Defleus, 1970). The content of media then depends on “the exchange value of different content, under pressure to expand markets and by the underlying economic interests of owners and decision makers” (Garnham, 1979). Media has its own ideology with regard to profit making business .i.e. low investment in less profitable media tasks and consequently neglects the economically poorer section who is neither subscribers nor advertisers. Never ever media reflects and concentrates the concerns of the marginalized in the society, and if so, they must be profit hidden stunt behind it. Meanwhile media highlights only those celebrities and politicians which return them with crores of profit. Media already establish the position of groups of those whose market is consolidated and exclude those who lack capital base required for the successful entry.

Another perspective highlighted by Smith (1977) is that of the primary product of the media being the audience attention, which is sold to advertisers. People spend hours and all their leisure time watching television, which includes use value and exchange value. Television creates interest and power of an audience is reproduced in the necessary time and surplus watching time of the audience works for capital. Capitalism first creates

the dichotomy between work time and leisure time and then it exploits the leisure time. Audience watches advertisements which become an activity for consumer economy that is crucial for the market economy. In the same way attention to advertisements in the print media can not be controlled and measured accurately, while attention of radio and television can be measured and sold to gain profit in advertising. Smythe considers the huge advertising industry (in India it was rupees 102.30 billion in the year 2002. Kohli, 2003: 4) as a creation of the exchange value with the audience being one element of the labour that creates it. The attachment of people's time creates advertising value. The manner in which media exploits, traps the audience as the market is very dehumanizing and therefore their world view, lifestyles and need are further manipulated accordingly. The Marxist approach examines the relationship between media and structures of power and dominance, and thus it is necessary to analyze the ownership of multinational media with regard to globalization to study media critically and its impact on the society. Hence, these theoretical base .i.e. functionalism, empiricism and structuralism will help for approaching mass media in a different way.

Media and Advertising

The relationship between institutions and advertisers is best described as a symbolic one. The central issue raised is about the degree to which the media depends on advertising revenue. There are some of the comments which relate and proves, "Media institutions and finance". Quality newspapers rely on advertising for about two- third of their revenue; the tabloid press for about one-third magazine producers rely on advertising for 50% and more of their income. Broadcasters rely entirely on advertising, excepting a proportion made from programme sales and turn over. Movies vary- low

budget films rely on box office and T.V. sales for their income, big budget and mainstream movies rely more. But in both the cases box office relies a great deal on the amount spent on promotion, advertising and publicity which adds additional 20% to the production for a low budget movie, and to about 50% for a big movie. Advertising as an activity stands for the ideology of the market place – commercial competition, company expansion, promotion of product, pleasing consumers, and maximizing benefits at any price. It effectively underwrites the tendency of media owners to support the dominant ideology, the security of the status quo and conservative values (Garnham, 2000:19).

Soap Operas

The essence of soaps is the reflection of personal problems and the emphasis is on talks not actions, on slow development rather than the immediate response, on delayed retribution rather than immediate effect (Geraghty, 1996-b-253). Soap operas are real life but not real: soaps invoke a reality experience through elements such as naturalistic sets, probable situations and the authentic appearance of characters. And for commercial television the crucial factor is that the pulling power makes the advertisers happy. Gauntlett and Hill (1999) ask whether we should still classify soap operas as women's programme. In the survey, students in the 1990s reject these gender divided approaches completely, finding them laughable. They say that it is questionable how far gender differences are significant in terms of understanding audiences and their responses to soaps (Cited from Media and Society by Graeme Burton, 252). Issues rose about female viewing and pleasures are held in soap operas.

Characteristics of Soap Operas

According to Brown (1994) (Soap opera and Women's talk) and Allen (1995) (Soap operas around the world) one may summarize the characteristics of soaps, stories are mainly dominated by the female characters, some of them are strong women such as "The Matriarch or the bitch", male characters who are 'sensitive men' or 'who are weak or lacking in social skills and articulacy; a large cast of characters polarized round a few core families, stories located in places which allow for social interactions and which include occupations which positively require conversation, e.g. homes, pubs, cafes, garden, etc. Soaps are all about the present and have multiple storyline rapidly cross out through parallel editing, stories which implicitly recognize a class system and are often located within working class culture. A serial form in which the narrative resists closure: indeed encourages continuity and viewer anticipation from episode to episode and week to week. Soap operas have the capacity for reversing events. It refers most obviously to instances where dead characters have been brought back to life through some plot device (*ibid.*, 253-254). Hobson (2003, soap operas) says that "The concept of a strong women who copes with problems, brings up her family, supports and enjoys life with her friends, survives when men betray her and sometimes lives happily with a male partner, has become a major tenet of the soap operas since its inception". In terms of audience identification, Geraghty (1996 women in soap opera, in J. Corner and S. Harvey, Television times) refers to the centrality of mother as characters, as a property for others in the face emotional or practical crises. These characters often have close female friends who also acts as props to them in the times of crises, not least problems which involve weak men. If there is a pleasure of identification for the female viewers, then from this

point of view it is one that is ideologically naturalized. Soap operas never reveal women's work, nor the final meal is ever cooked, the floor never stays clean. It is no part of women's genetic inheritance to become cleaners and cooks. If such gendered roles are part of the social realism of soaps, then the realism is also an expression of ideology.

Role of Mass Media in New World Order

In 1989, the National Front government came out first with a cabinet paper and then introduced the 'PRASAR BHARTI BILL' in December 1989. The death of Rajiv Gandhi and the advent of Congress rule June 1991, under P.V. Narsimha Rao put an end to many hopes about the issues, meanwhile, the question of broadcasting autonomy has become irrelevant as other sources of information and entertainment viz. Star Television, CNN and BBC have burst into view in the wake of the Gulf War. The invasion from the sky has begun. Today the rapid expansion of television in India in terms of availability 7 channels and the sheer expansion 545 Television stations speaks of unqualified success by any standards. Television has often reached a high degree of professional excellence in its new coverage. The 32 hour continuous election telecast in MAY-JUNE 1991 involving on the spot reporting from the counting booths even in the remote corners of the country and the swift shutting between the national network and the local centre was a refreshing dramatic experience for the viewers. But the barring and isolated instance, it has steadily developed an urban bias an elitist approach, popularizing, in the process, an alien lifestyle and culture far removed from the realities of Indian life.

The Doordarshan has always suffered from the dichotomy between policy pronouncements (which emphasize the use of mass media for social progress) and the continuous drift and departure from them in actual practice. In a developing and

democratic country like India, access to television and social benefit accruing from it, is a crucial test of the social relevance of such an expensive medium. The reason to the establishment of the Doordarshan's in India, according to official statements, is to create a sense of participation in own efforts to usher in a new social order. As early as February 1973, a seminar on software objectives sponsored by the government recommended, "Television must be used in the development process as an instrument of social change and national cohesion by unhesitatingly upholding progressive values and involving the community in a free dialogue. Indian Television has to shun an elitist approach and consumer value system and evolve a truly national model". Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who played a leading role in the growth of Television in Indian, saw its role primarily as affirmed the national importance of utilizing. Television not just for the idle entertainment of the elite but for the uplift of the poor, especially in the inaccessible.

Mass Media: Types and Influences

Mass media has become an integral part of our lives and cannot be separated from our lives. Particularly for the urban people, the need for information is more important than ever. Our values and way of life in the society in this information era are strongly influenced by mass media like newspaper, Television, radio, video, and the internet. Mass media's influence on people's lives is even greater and deeper than many kinds of state indoctrination or priest's sermons from the pulpit in the church. The full range of unfiltered is now available to most of us by using a parabola and satellite transmission. We can buy many kinds of videos freely and access to the internet is easy and inexpensive almost everywhere. We can find many kinds of information using the internet technology. It is worth remembering that there have been three recent revolutions

in the history, i.e. agrarian revolution in farming, industry revolution & mass production and information revolution that provides global access. We are now in the midst of information revolution. Due to continuing developments in media technology, we are flooded by a huge volume of non-stop information. Most of this information comes to us without a filter or censor. The information can be positive or negative. It is important for all of us and particularly teenagers, to be able to look critically at the information and the sources and make positive choices. Having a critical attitude means that we can distinguish between positive and negative information and make choices that will give us information that will benefit us and our society.

The research from the US tells us how many teenagers' lives are troubled. The results of the research show that 43% of teens in the US have used drugs and alcohol at least once. Around 1 million teens have left their homes and half of them live as delinquent (naughty) boys and girls and other half users are drug users. About 2000 teenagers from the age of 10 to 19 years old commit suicide each year. Most of them come from wealthy families that are not harmonious. There is no love, care and acceptance in those families. Many make their all of their own choices about the media they use. No one guides them or restricts them from accessing any type of information that they choose. Everything is allowed and then the kids grow up and become people who are out of control. They feel mature enough to make decisions on their own. Many forms of authority, rules and norms are seen as an obstacle to their freedom and so on, should not be followed. Ethics and morality are not really important for them. For many of them violence, crimes and sex are their daily life and concern. The research from 1980s in the US shows us that teenagers between 16 and 18 years old are wasting up to

16,000 hours of their time per year watching Television. In the same period, the violence and crime in US grew by 293%. Times weekly magazine reported that the frequency of crimes committed by students in New York per month was the same as that committed by Japanese teenagers of the same age in a year. Here are some positive and negative influences of mass media in our lives.

Media technology reduces the distance between human beings. The world is smaller due to increased communication and access to information. It makes human being closer to each other in terms of space and thinking. We are exposed to a broad range of ideas and thoughts from across the world. Media technologies allow us to take part ‘virtually ‘in occasions and activities in other parts of the world. Information is power and those who control the media empires have great power and a great responsibility to use that power positively. Those who have power over the media have real power in the modern world. Media could create new cultures which change the old and original ones from the community. This could be both either good or bad. Media is business and in order to exist, media providers must make a profit. The owners and sponsors tend to create a media environment that is driven by materialism, consumerism, and hedonism. Media can create the wrong perception of prosperity. Prosperity is made out to be having an excess of material goods (cars, houses, jewelleries, etc.) men are not measured by their character and dedication but by what things they have in life. It is promoted by advertising in most kinds of media. Media can create stereotypes of beauty and which is then imitated by citizens, like fashion and hairstyles, for instance. Media can create a sensation of sex, violence, and horror which may be popular with the audience. The owner, ruler and media sponsor can make up any trick for their own business and

politics interest. People's daily schedules and work schedules can be interrupted if most of our time is used by listening to music or watching Television shows, movies and chatting via internet or HP. The trend towards urbanization creates a constant flow of people coming from the villages to the city and is at least partly caused by the unrealistic glamour of urban life as shown on Television.

News

Dominant perceptions of what constitutes news are among the most important determinants of coverage. According to general accepted definitions, events rather than processes make "News". The activities of the wealthy and powerful rate more highly than those of the poor and marginalized, including women. Most issues of special concern to women do not fit into the traditional concepts of what constitutes news. First most women in India are neither affluent, influential nor in position of authority and dominance. The invisibility and inaudibility of women in society is thus further perpetuated and enhanced by the media. (Gaye Tuchman, 'The Symbolic Annihilation of women by the mass media' in *ibid.*) A number of serious women's issues are not overtly violent or dramatic although often involving large numbers. The affected persons are not necessarily part of a readily identifiable group or concentrated in a particular geographical area. Further many aspects of women's oppression are not so common place and widely accepted that they are not considered sufficiently extraordinary to merit coverage (Joseph, 1994: 19, Whose news).

Issues related to women's work, health, position in society and experiences within the family-the everyday conditions of their lives and the degradation and autocracy they

are routinely subjected to- prompted less far coverage. When such issues are infrequently made in media, it is because they are referred by the government, the Police, Parliament, the courts, well-known personalities, specially politicians, conferences etc. Dowry deaths, rape and sati also happen to be the issues on which some of the most active campaigns by women's groups were based. Events and issues involving politics, economics, law, religion, in that order are invariably at the top of the ladder of newspaper. The reach of mass media among women is much less due to reasons like illiteracy, inaccessibility, inconvenient program timing etc. which restricts their movements. Last few decades the government has taken special campaigns against illiteracy, ill-health and expression of exploited through Radio and Television. In spite of granting equality of status as freedom to enter diverse walks of life, more so among women in the lower stratum is invisible. Despite the many positive developments in securing women's rights patriarchy continues to be embedded in the social system in India. Thus media play an extremely significant role in spreading awareness, promoting alternative-empowered images of women, breaking down stereotypes and shaping mindset. Women entering the labour market are at its peak, there is increase in the number of educated women, and heightened awareness of their mobilization to fight against the unjust and discrimination. The role of women in the family has undergone significant changes. As an educated housewife or as a working woman she has acquired a respectable place in society. Today's women are increasingly conscious of the change in the civil society and magazines especially women's issue carry a lot of information on social issues and personal family issues. Mass media now plays an important role in affecting, changing, molding and shaping the lifestyle and patterns of behaviors of women. It also helps interest in acquiring knowledge, sports,

national and international politics and engaging them towards more effective participation in national affairs. Some of the gender issues that have been highlighted by the media, off late, are human rights violations against women, domestic violence and reservation of seats for women in the parliament and state legislative assemblies.

The role and status of women in relation to men have gradually changed since the beginning of this country. The mass media have played a efficient role in perpetuating gender stereotypes and in maintaining the status quo. In the 1960's and 1970's the mass media in developing countries were assigned the role of modernizing traditional societies. Exposure to mass media was perceived as an important indicator of modernity. The mass media continuously worked and is engaged in redefinition on modernity and individuals. The influence of mass media on society is in two ways. On one hand, the mass media provide a large population of society with the dominant leisure time activity. On the other hand, the mass media in contemporary society are increasingly responsible for the construction and consumption of social knowledge and meanings which people draw on to make sense of their world and act upon their social reality (Patel, 1995: 1).

Earlier communication research argued that the way in which men and women are portrayed in the mass media represents reality. The media, however, does not represent as it is lived. It draws upon social reality but selectively picks up certain existing values, behaviors and images, while censoring the others. By highlighting only selected aspects of reality in a particular context, by projecting them as larger than life, and by continuation of repeated media images and messages, the media influences reality (*ibid.* 2). the mass media function in the larger system of patriarchy and capitalism that controls media structures and organizations which represents women as dependent and

subordinates. The recent debate of mass media vis-à-vis gender produces much more complex understandings of the cultural dimensions of power and equality, and more specifically feminist analyses of the media, culture and society (Gallager, 1992: 1-15). With the proliferation of “women’s genres” soap operas, melodramas, women’s magazines and so on women has emerged as an important consumers of mass entertainment. The mass media also set the agenda for public opinion by selecting themes, items and points of views that tend to reinforce the patriarchal culture. But media does not reveal the real picture of the cultural society, but it shows only one side of the construction of women’s marginality in culture.

The relationship between media and reality is logical and argumentative. Culture is not static system, but an ever evolving process that constantly changes to accommodate emergent, alternative and oppositional meanings, values and practices (Williams Raymond, 1977) Marxism and literature. The mass media, particularly print and broadcasting media i.e. television and radio also provides some space for construction of new meanings and images. Although the progressive discourse is often co-opted in the mass media and reconstructed again to create the hegemony of dominant social classes and reproduces gender relations. The larger system of patriarchy and capitalism that controls the mass media and subordinate women challenges women’s groups often. Many of the feminist activists and academicians who are concerned regarding the women’s issues have also critically analyzed negative portrayal of women in media. This is even found in the developing countries across regions. Indian scholarship has been given far more attention than any other country. Some research is reported from Asian countries, but scholarship from Latin America and Africa is hardly represented. This is partly due to

in availability of international research literature on women and mass media in India. It is assumed that despite apparent in societal context with which the media function, there are notable similarities in the portrayal of women in mass media across divergent media systems in developing countries. Although the images of women and types of messages transmitted through various mass media, such as print media i.e. newspaper and magazines, electronic media i.e. television and films are not very different, it would be necessary to examine the specificity of media in reinforcing existing gender ideology. Discussion in this chapter is divided into four sessions. The first section highlights feminist approaches to the study of media content. Continuity and changes in the portrayal of women in the mass media are examined in the second section. The third section highlights strategies for changing the images of women in the mass media. The final section summarizes emerging trends in the portrayal of women in the context of current media developments.

Feminism

The word 'feminism' itself originated from the French word *feminisme* in the nineteenth century, either as a medical term to describe the feminization of a male body, or to describe with masculine traits. When it was used in the United States in the early part of twentieth century it was only used to refer to one group of women: namely that group which asserted the uniqueness of women, the mystical experience of motherhood and women's special purity (Jaggar, 1983: 5) it soon came to denote as a political stance of someone committed to changing the social position of women. Since then the term has taken on the sense of one who believes that women are subjugated because of their sex and that women deserve at least formal equality in the eyes of law. Feminist writers and

activists, even those who were in existence long before the term feminism came into popular usage, shared the will to imagine a world where women were able to realize their potential as individuals. In doing this, they had to conceptualize ideas that were, when women had no legal identity as individuals, literally knowledgeable. And when feminist knowledge was introduced then it became important to make feminist ideas legitimate by circulating own ideas and inviting their contributions and responses.

Since the 1980's it has become common to use the plural form when talking about feminism in order to signify that although all feminists may share a basic commitment to end female oppression. We can say that all feminists agree that women suffer or material inequities simply because of their biological identity and are committed to challenge this. But the means by which such challenges are made are many and various. This inevitably means that feminism as a term becomes rather over burdened with meaning. Even all feminists agree on the central fact of women's subordination, but some feel feminism's heterogeneity as a sign of healthy debate and many feminist try to see it as a sign of feminism's inbuilt weakness. Although some critics are associated with fragmentation with modern feminism, but feminism have always emerged from diverse cultural and political perspectives and hence focused on issues germane to the time and location they inhabit.

Liberal feminism draws on the diversity of liberal thought dominant in western society since the enlightenment, and affirms that existing political processes under democracy can address women's subordinate social position. For liberals the key battle is access to education, following Mary Wollstonecraft, it is argued that they will get equal access to society (Pilcher and Imelda, 2005: 49). Radical would favor liberal feminists

and socialist, as democracy itself is naturally adaptable to equality for both sexes. This liberal feminism is broadly dominant and applicable to majority of women who identify as feminist in some way, but don't want to overturn the social status quo in order to achieve better social condition for women. In addition, liberal feminists would be more likely to accept in limited terms that women and men might be shifted to separate spheres of home and workplace and simply lobby for greater reorganization of housework and caring. Whelhem 1995 has given a good detail in changes in women's social condition with the overthrow of industrial capitalism and changing relations of the worker to the means of production. Nonetheless socialist and Marxist feminist are always mindful of the ways society is driven by class and race distinctions as well as those of gender and that it is more useful to consider oppression as multi-pronged and inter-related rather than arguing that one form is more destructive than others. In common, with liberal feminism, socialist feminism, because of its links to Marxist thought, suggests a necessary link with men and an acceptance perhaps that men are part of any movement for change.

Feminism is thus a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration in their social position. Even many of the women's rights organization in the late 1960s and early 1970s did not call themselves feminist. The term feminism had a restricted use in relation to specific concerns and specific groups (Delmar, 1986: 1). There are those sociologists who argue for a much stronger definition of feminism and as per Delmar (1986: 13) points out, "There are those who claim that feminism does have a complex of ideas about women, specific to or emanating from feminists". This means that it should be possible to separate out feminism and feminist from the multiplicity of those concerned with women's issues. It is

by no means absurd to suggest that you don't you have to be feminist to support women's right to equal treatment and that not all those supportive of women's demands are feminists. In this feminism can claim its own history, its own practices, its own ideas, but feminist can make no claim to an exclusive interest in or copyright over problems affecting women. Feminism can thus be established as a field (and even is skepticism is still needed in the face of claim or demands for a unified feminism) but cannot claim women as its domain. In an attempt at some kind of classification, histories of feminism have talked about the historical appearance of strong feminists movements at different moments as a series of 'waves'. Thus first wave feminism is used to refer to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century feminist movements that were concerned with gaining equal rights for women particularly the right of suffrage. 'Second-wave feminism refers to the resurgence of feminist activity in the late 1960s and 1970s, when protest again centered around women's inequality, although this time not only in terms of women's lack of equal political rights but in the areas of family, sexuality and work.

A basic version of this categorization would divide feminism and feminist into three loose groups: Liberal feminism, Marxist or Socialist feminism and Radical feminism. A brief and rough summary of this typology could be stated as follows, liberal feminist include all those who campaign for equal rights for women within the framework of liberal state, arguing that the theoretical basis on which this state is built is sound but that the rights and privileges it confers must be extended to women to give them equal citizenship with men. Marxist and socialist feminist link gender inequality and women's oppression to the capitalist system of production and the division of labour consistent with this system; and radical feminist see men's domination on women as the

result of the patriarchy, which is independent of all other social structures- that is, it is not a product of capitalism.

Liberal feminism draws on the diversity of liberal thought dominant in western society since the enlightenment, and affirms that existing political processes under democracy can address women subordinate social position. For liberals, the key battle is access to education, following Mary Wollstonecraft, it is argued that if men and women are educated equally, then it follows that they will get equal access to society. This liberal position is broadly held to be the dominant, common stance which is applicable to majority of women, who identify themselves as feminist, but they do not want to overturn the social status quo in order to achieve better social condition for women. Liberal feminists would be more likely to accept in limited terms that women and men might be well suited to separate spheres of home and the workplace. Socialist/ Marxist feminists are always mindful of the ways society is driven by class and race distinction as well as those of gender and that it is more useful to consider oppression as multi-pronged and inter-related rather than arguing that one form is more destructive than others. In common liberal feminism and socialist feminism links to Marxist thought, suggest a necessary link with men and an acceptance perhaps that men are part of any movement for change. Even though radical feminism is usually associated with separatism and man-hating, the assumption that man as part of the problem should be part of the solution was a theme in early radical feminism. Radical feminist from USA emerged from new left and civil rights political groupings. Their politics was broadly radical left, but they became hugely disenchanted with the male dominated power, which resulted and formed the Women's liberation. This movement aroused in order to allow a space for the consideration of

women's oppression outside of the confines of male-oriented knowledge and politics. There conviction, that a woman-centered politics could only be devised in a woman's space, resulted in a policy of separation. This politics of radicalism wanted a political formation freed from the taint of maleness, evoked in leaderless groupings, job sharing and structurelessness, well beyond the parameters of contemporary democracy. Many of their aspirations have been misunderstood by others and so radical feminists are all too often sent up as man-hating lesbians, totally obsessed with the correct politically part in order to shape their own movement that smacked of the male political imperative.

Equal or Different

The idea between equality and difference may seem to be attractive in that it promises to rid feminism of on its perennial conflicts. However some feminist believe that to stay here in any practical discussion of women's position in society equality and difference has to be there, there is no escaping the divide in discussion on how to treat women's claims maternity rights for example, feminists are divided between those who think that maternity benefits should be special rights granted to women on the basis of their specific biological capacity to have children and the particular social role of maternity that they have been assigned, whereas others argue that maternity benefits should be subsumed under general category of sickness benefits so that pregnant women are treated the same as men who have an illness which prevents them from working for a period of time (Bacchi, 1991; Bock and Thane, 1991: 43). As per Segal (1987: VII) contends, "There has always been a danger that in re-valuing our notions of the female and appealing to the experiences of women, we are reinforcing the ideas of sexual polarity which feminism originally aimed to challenge" So what do we mean by sexual

difference? Many feminist have struggled hard and stated a natural difference between men and women was assumed and also have analyzed the ways in which this difference was given various social, political and economic meanings in different societies and civilizations. And because of this assumed sexual difference, women have been given an inferior or secondary status in societies.

As Sherry Ortner (1998: 21) argues, “the secondary status of woman in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact.” And as she goes on to explain, this secondary status of women can be explained by the fact that within the multiplicity of cultural conceptions and symbolizations of women that exist in society, there is constant that women are seen as being ‘closer to nature’ in their physiology. And men have been ‘closure to culture’, which are more suited for public roles and political association. And this is the reason why women are neglected to secondary status in society, i.e. roles in the home rather than able to accede to powerful public positions. A key problem that feminists identify in this continuing perception of difference is that it is almost impossible to escape the formation of social hierarchies based on these perceptions and representations of difference. Although some people argue that men and women are equal but different it seems impossible to argue for difference without creating some kind of hierarchy. This debate over equality and difference has been couched in various terms over the history of feminist activism. Ann Snitow poses the questions as a tension between needing an identity not over determined by gender (1990: 9). She further describes this tension as a divide between minimizers and maximizers, where the minimizers are those who wish to reclaim the category of women and revalue it in order to empower women; between radical and cultural feminists, between essentialists and

social constructionists; between cultural feminists and poststructuralists; and between modernists and feminist” (Freedman, 2002: 12). Women were judged to be less reasonable than men, more ruled by emotion and thus incapable of political decision making, for example, these types of assertions by philosophers and political theorists were supported by anatomists and biologists who, who as scientific of the knowledge of human body advanced in the nineteenth centuries, began to use such data for measurements of brain size to establish a difference in intelligence between men and women.

As Lynne Segal (1999) points out the late 1980s and 1990s saw a resurgence out social Darwinism, scientific theories that seek to explain male and female behavior in terms of demand of human evolution and survival and that therefore dismiss the idea that masculinity and femininity are social constructs in favor of purely biological explanations. This has led to a distinction in much feminist theory between physiological ‘sex’ and social ‘gender’. This distinction we can express by the terms ‘female’ and ‘feminine’, female being the biological category to which women belong and feminine behavior and roles being the social constructions based on this biological category.(cited in feminisms: 13). One of the difficulties has been that although as Delphy (1996: 16-17) argued the concept of gender opens up the possibility of an analysis of hierarchy, gender analysis may lead to the neglect of the power inequalities that exist between men and women. Gender is seen as the content with sex as the container (Delphy, 1996: 33) and although gender is perceived as variable, the container of sex is perceived to be universal and unchanging because it is natural. Sex is seen as a primary division on which gender is predicted. The distinction between sex and gender was first used by feminists to move the

focus away from ‘natural’ and universal differences between men and women and to put the emphasis on the way in which society created so. We find these differences whether to minimize the relevance of difference and to claim that men and women should be treated alike, or to insist that differences do matter and even to valorize these differences. This chapter has highlighted some of the ways in which feminists have talked about difference and the means with which they have tried to overcome traditional views of sexual difference in order to promote women’s emancipation.

Feminists Approaches to Media Content

Contemporary women’s movements in North America and Western Europe have played an important role in shaping the academic agenda of feminist communication research. An important part of feminist cultural politics is a feminist critique of media content and its implications in the construction of gender. The first international review of research and action, initiated by the UNESCO, drew our attention to the striking similarities in the negative portrayal of women in mass media (Ceulemans and Fauconnier, 1979, reports and papers on mass com. No-84, Gallagher, 1983) and women’s lack decision making power in media organizations throughout the world (Gallagher, 1981: The case of women and the Media). In the developing countries, feminist communication research on media content, images and representation has grown since the early 1980s. It was the United Nations International Decade for Women (1975-85) that provided political impetus worldwide to initiate research and action for changing women’s portrayal and participation in the mass media. Comparatively to the Western feminist scholarship communication research in the Third World Women has

communication remained fragmentary and descriptive. Despite proliferation of women in development literature in the last two decades, gender in the field of mass communication has remained a marginal area of inquiry among feminist scholars (Sleeves, 1993, *Journal of Communication*, 43: 3, Summer, 218-229). Hence, empirical and theoretical work in the area of women and mass media in developing countries is limited and uneven across region. As a result, media research on women in developing countries has relied heavily on the West.

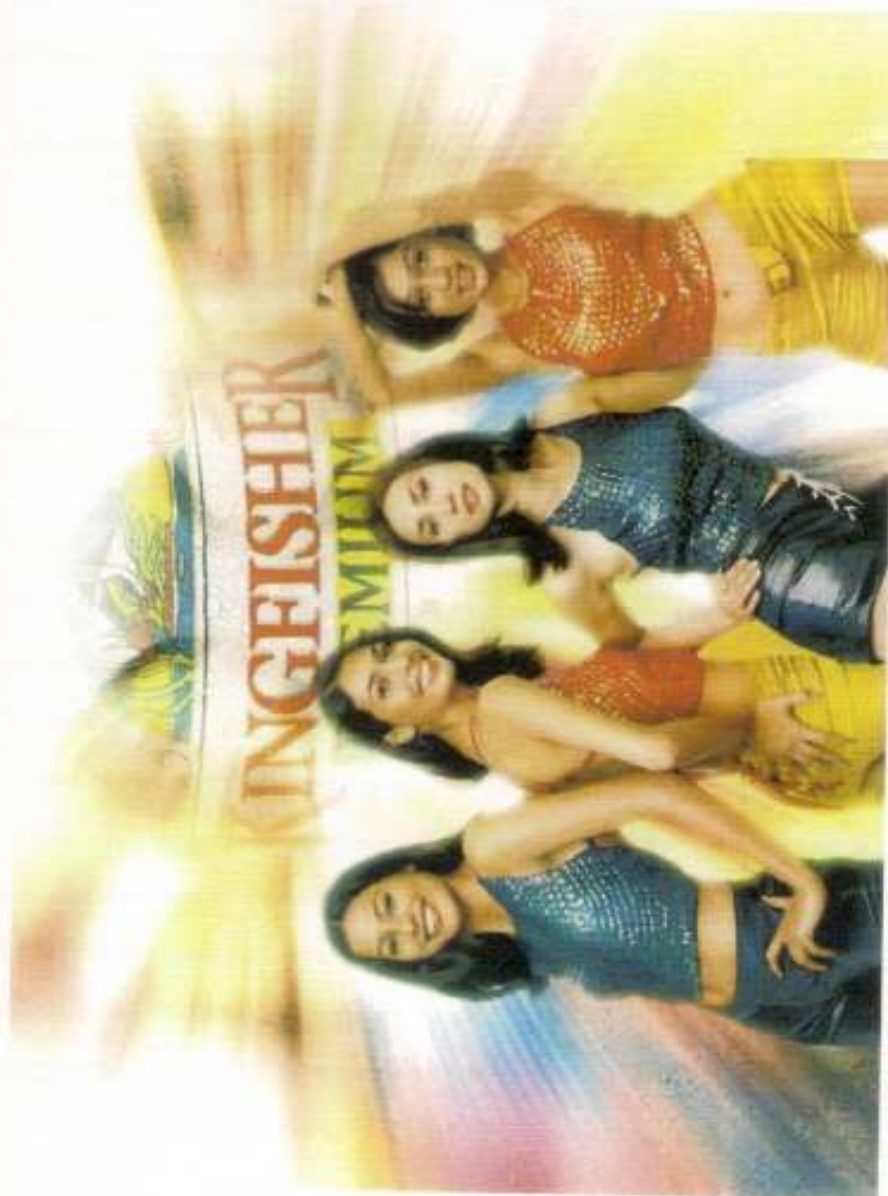
Gallagher (1992: 4-7) highlights three stands in feminist research on media content, images and representation. The focus of feminist scholarship in the 1970s conducted mostly in North America and Asia (Japan, Korea and Philippines) was quantitative content analyses of sex roles media stereotypes. This research documented invisibility of women in various media forms and highlighted how media images reinforce negative portrayal of women in terms of behaviors, aspirations, physiological traits and so on. Gallagher argues that such juxtaposition of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ media images of men and women is problematic. It is difficult to approach to define positive image of women in masculine terms, such as showing women as authoritative, autonomous, self-fulfilled and successful etc, while ignoring the ways in which the audience read and reinterpret media content. In 1980s, feminist film criticism based on qualitative European perspectives and methodology which use psychoanalytical, semiotic, and post-cultural frameworks in analysis, contributed to broadening our understanding “representation of women through the study of text and textual mechanisms” (Patel, 1995: 5). The question is not to examine whether media reflect or distort images of women, but to explore how this images and meaning of femininity and

masculinity in media are socially constructed within the context of patriarchal social relations. Gallagher argues that in the recent years feminist media criticism, heavily influenced by post-structuralist and post modern theory, places far more emphasis on autonomy of audience reading of the text and validating audience “pleasures and ignores the fact that women as audience are positioned within a cultural system which reproduces particular representation of “femininity” and “masculinity” In summary, Gallagher (1992, *ibid.* 1-15) concludes that the recent feminist media research and criticism gives us very useful insights in understanding cultural dimension of power and equality. However she expresses caution against the apolitical trend in current feminist media studies that focuses on the micro-level while ignoring the issue of power and broader political and economic concerns. She argues that feminist action and politics is important to situate micro-level work in political economic concerns of media development. We all are aware of some commonalities of women’s oppression around the world and women’s position in cultural and communication, adaption of analytical frameworks of Western feminist can be useful to some extent. However, recent discourse of feminist media criticism, based on “post-modern” view of society is conceptually ethnocentric and inappropriate for most of the Third World women, who have not yet experienced the modern life (Gallagher, 1992: 14). Furthermore, in the changing global context of new communication technologies and rapid commercialization of mass media, it is far more important to explore the issue of power and critically examine political-economic forces that impinge on media development and media content in the developing countries.

Portrayal of Women in Mass Media

The reach of mass media among a majority of the Third World War is much less due to the factors such as illiteracy, inaccessibility, lack of respite from household chores, inconvenient program timings, and traditional restrictions that inhabit their mobility to go out to the theatre or cinema hall. The ways in which women are portrayed in media has emerged as an important area of research and action among feminist researchers and activists in developing countries since the 1980s. It was the comprehensive study of Gallagher 1983 on the portrayal of women in the mass media that drew our attention to demeaning and derogatory media images of women across the world. (The study was conducted in several developed countries such as Australia, Austria, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, Finland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and developing countries of China, Columbia, Brazil, Iran, Jamaica, Philippines, Puerto, Rico, Senegal and Venezuela). The study concluded that except in the case of government controlled media in “socialist” countries (for e.g. China) media under represent or misrepresent women and their concerns use them in advertising as a commodity and present traditional stereotyped images of women as passive, dependent and subordinate to men. Subsequently, how media in different countries portray women have been discussed by women’s group and researchers in various forms in the 1980s. Although periodically efforts are made to highlight the existing trends in the portrayal in media, most of the countries have remained fragmentary and essentially descriptive in nature. After Gallagher’s study, probably no systematic review of literature on media portrayal of women has been undertaken in a large number of developing countries. It is against the gap in systematic and critical

Advertisements



media research in developing countries that this session attempts to highlight continuity and changes in the portrayal of women in films, television and print media (newspaper and magazines) In spite of shortage of media content in divergent societal context, the Indian situation throws light on how media reinforces gender and social relations, while at times challenging them.

Television Research in India

Television expansion, both in magnitude and multiplicity, seems to be phenomenal in the eighties by any stretch on imagination. Earlier, it reflected a sad saga of extremes caution and was considered a luxury. Mid-seventies saw the Satellite Television experimentation which opened the flood gate of an operational Satellite Television system capable of covering the entire country. In less than seven years, there is a conscious effort at all levels within the government for rapid and large scale expansion of Television research on the one hand and towards having a multi-channel television system for the selected urban viewers on the other. The entire effort is towards providing Television signals in the technical sense to a large number of potential Television viewers. Also in this scheme, as of now, little effort seems to have been devoted to provide messages and programs relevant to a given region or linguistic group, leaving aside special target groups like the poor, women and children. Somehow technological expansion of television has followed the creation of audience research units and production facilities. Experience is that communication research production planning should follow the technological expansion of Television (Chitnis, 1977). Within the audience research units of doordarshan, one observes two kind of communication research approaches being followed, one for rural viewers and the other for urban

viewers, in which the urban Television research has an upper hand. At present administratively and academically the research in Doordarshan is replica of audience research unit of All India Radio except the Research and Evaluation Cells located in Cuttack, Delhi and Hyderabad. Major research planning and execution is conducted from its headquarters and suggestion for its research in most cases is initiated by the production of the administrative staff. Such audience research plays the 'audit' and 'faultfinding' with little positive function towards improving the quality of program production or enhancing the media utilization. The communication research which is turned from "sender oriented" to "receiver oriented" makes significant organizational change and arguments with the audience research unit both by money and manpower.

Television Research on Women

A research was enhanced during Satellite Industrial Television Experiment (SITE) both women and children were treated as separate social categories for measuring the impact or effect of Television viewing on them. After the completion of SITE, social impact survey on adults, it became evident that the difference between men and women were so significant in a variety of areas that separate analysis for men and women should be essential (Agrawal, et.al. 1977). Results of the study indicated that women's participation in Television viewing was significantly smaller than men (Agrawal, et.al., 1977: 45). But the research revealed that those women who viewed Television gained more than men in areas like family planning, health and nutrition. Another significant finding of the study was that illiterate women, more than literate women gained knowledge from Television viewing in the same areas thereby indicating that literacy was no barrier for learning from Television (Agrawal, 1981). A detailed and in depth study

conducted during the same period indicated that information needs and the viewing behavior of women were different from men (Agrawal and Rai, 1980). In a recent paper Chandiram and Agrawal (1982) indicated that the proportion of telecast time for women had been not more than 5%. What emerges from these analyses is in general very little effort have been made to understand how best a medium of television can be utilized for the development. The few studies conducted so far clearly indicate that television as a medium of communication breaks the barrier of literacy and in certain social situations can act as a catalyst of the development of the women. "Telecast language was a single most important factor that affected the comprehension of the program in spite of the fact that four languages were used in the programs" (Agrawal, 1981: 27). Some of these observations as also research studies are indicative of the need for communication research if Television is to be used meaningfully for the development of women.

India is one of the few countries in the world where female species has had a declining sex ratio over the century- only marginally reversed in the last decade. This has been the result of higher male mortality at practically all ages including from birth to the age of 9, and unconsciously high rate of maternal mortality, regards to a pervasive neglect ion of the female child and female necessities. The factors such as poorer nutrition, lesser health care, despite higher levels of morbidity, lower education and skill formation are some aspects which women are deprived of. The problem of universal education has been long identified as one mainly of women, scheduled castes and tribes. The progress in female education literacy has reached only in 1 in 4 women as against 1 in 2 men and absolute numbers are 100 million more illiterate women and girls today that there were in fifties. The planning process has finally come to recognize that the

enormous economic contribution of women both within the family and to society has remained largely submerged. Hence government is providing support services to women to be more productive in fulfilling their multiple roles. Even more heartbreaking than the low priority television seems to have attached to the subject of women's status and betterment, is completely impunity which uses itself for the detriment of women. A seminar on Doordarshan's role in Women's Equality and Development conducted in the year 1988 by, Centre for Women's Development Studies and the committee for the portrayal of women in media made two major points:

- 1) A very wide distance existed between the national policy objectives vis-à-vis women's equality and development and Doordarshan's present role and programming
- 2) The general tenor of Doordarshan's program counters to its stray efforts to be purposive on women's behalf (Media Utilization for Development of Women & Children. (Thakur & Agrawal, 1989: 72).

In any case films and film-based material continue to constitute substantial chunks of Doordarshan's output and as the report on Doordarshan's Role in Women's Equality and Development highlighted, "These program me are loaded with derogatory images of women and are usually explicitly or implicitly exist. They play a significant role in reinforcing negative stereotypes" (*Ibid.*, 73). These stereotypes are nothing but basically drawn from a middle class vision of women that sees her and glorifies her solely in the role of wife, mother and home-maker. Stereotypes fail to expose the richness of women's total dimension and her critical larger role within the community and the country. Thus, the medium instead of widening the women's horizon and taking her

further up the road of partnership is now carrying women into a narrow niche and makes it more difficult, indeed dangerous.

In India, there is “Unity in Diversity” in terms of languages, religion, climate, people and its cultural entity. Nevertheless, women in our country, seldom enjoy equality with men. The ancient law givers like Manu and Kautilya assigned a lower status of women to so much that women were often grouped with dogs and chandals (i.e. the lowest caste). According to Jawaharlal Nehru, “If our nation is to rise, how can it do so if half of the nation i.e. our woman lag behind and remain ignorant and uneducated? Our civilizations, our customs, our laws have all been made by men and he was taken good care to keep himself in a superior position to treat women as the chattel and a play thing to be exploited for his own advantage and amusement. Under this continuous pressure woman has been unable to grow and develop her capacities to her fullest and then man has blamed her for her backwardness”. “The women of India have to free themselves from the tyranny of manmade customs and laws. They will have to carry on his second struggle (along with their participation in the first struggle for freedom) by themselves, for man is not likely to help them. There is a significant section of social scientists and media researchers engaged in studies related to women in mass media. These studies cover all continents and show how media have been biased against women. The International Association for Mass Communication Research has a separate work which deals with this subject. The first meeting of this working group was held in Paris 1992. The focus on women implies identifying the structural constraints which inhibit their fullest growth and development. There are major issues related to women in media and the other about the image of women projected through these media. Worldwide

feminist's movement of women has pointed out that the employment of women in media is low and particularly so in decision making levels. The worlds are dominated by men, who not only lead women but also constitute the bulk of the management on top editorial ranks. We can hardly avoid the obvious male domination from their earliest history to the present time. It does not require much logic to prove that women have been and continue to be victims of poverty and under-developed on the hand and socio-economic injustice and exploitation on the other hand. As the MacBride Commission pg 18 has pointed out, "journalists dealing with serious issues and political events are seldom women, and few women become editors or holds directing positions. In the USA, out of 3000 films directors, only 23 are women. Although extensively employed as production and continuity assistants, women rarely have the responsibility for taking broad decisions." In India, the dominant stereotype images of women and girls are that of:

- 1) Less competent human being,
- 2) Key to commercial success in this age of advertising,
- 3) Instruments for exploitation by men.

To break the vicious circle of existing undesirable images and project the reality of the lives of women and girls would need an overhaul of the content of existing communication message through a well thought out National Communication policy on women. A number of studies conclude that the overall effect of the portrayal of women in media is to reinforce rather than reduce prejudices and stereotypes. This distortion tends to justify and perpetuate existing inequalities. The exploitation of the women's image for commercial purposes has been noted and criticized varies widely. But the emancipation of women poses the most formidable problems in such values and practices of social,

economic and cultural oppression and domination of women which evade attention. This is because their values and practices are a part of the "normal" social life of millions and millions of Indian people in day to day interaction between husband and wives, mother and children, brother and sisters, parents and daughters, wives and their in laws, employers and their women employees and so on. In these very ordinary relations, men and women are constantly violating in practices which they profess in words. Men are more often unconscious of what is being done to them. Whether in matters relating to distribution of food or other items of consumption, or of work or leisure, of property or income, women are subjected to discrimination and oppression which assume innumerable forms. Far from bringing these to light, the media, specially the feature films, are all the time idealizing and rationalizing them. In fact, myths, legends, images and symbols are derived from the vast treasures of Indian mythology and folklore which are injurious to women's personality and antagonistic to their emancipation and equality. Women constitute half of the population in India, as indeed in most other countries of the world. Women are also among the most under-developed, illiterate and exploited segments of the society. The role of women is ignored not just in India but even in developed and advanced countries. Women remain backward educationally and socially. However, women are slowly emerging out of their centuries old darkness, shaking off their traditions and man-imposed roles and are increasingly raising their voice to demand their rightful place in society and their due from it in economic, political and social. Television, the most pervasive medium and master of image and illusion, results that both programs and commercials are highly biased against women. In India the situation as seen by feminist organizations has been summarized by the Joshi Working Group, on

software for Doordarshan, “Middle class ideologies of women’s roles as wives and mother’s provide the underlying basis for most programs. In a country where 36 percent of the agricultural workforce is female, women continue to be projected as predominantly non-producers and as playing a limited role outside the home.” The plural nature of Indian culture and diverse role that women play is neither acknowledged for communication. This results in a reinforcing of the stereotyped images and role specifications of women in unidimensional projections of their reality. The negative stereotypes have been identified as:

- A women’s place is in the home,
- The most important and valuable asset of a women is physical beauty
- A woman’s energies and intellect must be directed to finding the right man in “keeping” him.
- Women are dependent, coy, and submissive; they are masochistic in their indignities, humiliations and even to physical violence inflicted on them.
- A good woman is the traditional housewife, long suffering pious and submissive, the modern woman who asserts herself and her independence is undesirable and can never bring happiness to anybody nor find happiness herself;
- Woman are woman’s worst enemies.
- The working woman is the undesirable exception who must be brought into the marriage fold and made to conform to social norms etc.

In this new age children are born into homes with Television and viewing as infants. Most of the stories they hear are not told by the parents, the school, the church or neighbours. Today they are told by a handful of conglomerates that have something to

sell which has a powerful effect. Gerbener's comment reflects the concern of many media experts in western countries who continue to be deeply related about the commercial context of television programming and the impact of television advertising on society. Many advertisement broadcast on television are masterpieces. They are the creations of brilliant minds and wonderful talented people who have nothing but only one mission in life that is to persuade us to buy and only buy their products. However advertisers argue that consumption is limited, always exciting and is also the key to happiness. Over the last decade television in India has undergone a complete transformation moving from a single channel, government controlled service to a multi-channel, multi-optioned and transnational programming. In this process, advertising on television has blossomed and became fragmented adapting itself to diktas in market.

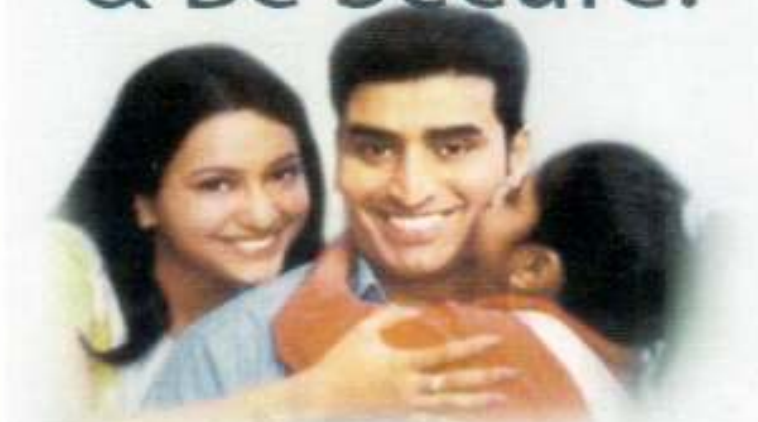
In this Television study we have concentrated upon the impact of Television advertising and serials on college students. Accordingly the included some of the important questions in the Interview Schedule such as:

- Do Television serials and advertisements make college students want to look and live in a certain way image shaping;
- If so, does it suggest how they can achieve that certain image and lifestyle;
- Does it enforce a social responsibility;
- Does it evoke and give rise to gender stereotypes;
- Does it create a true picture of adult world;
- In the other words, does it influence the college student's values, attitudes and aspirations; etc.

Advertisements



Insure & Be Secure!



LIC (International) BSC (c) is a subsidiary of LIC of India, a Corporation established through an Act of Govt. of India

Premium Status of LIC of India Policy



©2009 Ted Szukalski hts

Advertisements



Any study of the impact of Television advertising on college girls or women, must take into the account the relationship between the women and television, which in India, is still evolving. After all the success of ads and serials shown on Television depends on who catches them, i.e. audiences, how often they are watched (by the women) and whether their messages are indeed absorbed and utilize sufficiently to attract the audience to eventually purchase a product. Eric Barnouw in *The Sponsor* says, “Television clearly represents one form of communication which is tied up with a world-view that promotes a material culture the basis, relevance and future of which needs to be debated”. Television and advertising together present a lethal combination. Television offers the advertiser the most effective way of reaching the consumer’s mind. Advertising, on the other hand, exerts an influence on Television which is no less significant- it plays a vital role in shaping the priorities and quality of television programming. Advertising has affected the fortunes of the media the world over. Today we cannot imagine television without advertising, it seems unrealistic. But few of the exceptions are BBC News and once it was Doordarshan. Jerry Mander in the case of U.S. says, ‘Since virtually all media in this country depend upon advertising for survival, it ought to be obvious that these one hundred corporations, themselves dominated by a handful of wealthy people, can largely be determined by magazines, newspapers, radio stations and television stations can continue to exist and which cannot.’

It is not difficult for a regular Television watcher in India to identify the major competitors for Doordarshan’s commercial time. The list includes the companies which produce brands such as Aerial, Pepsi, Nirma, Surf Excel, Nescafe, Titan, Colgate, Pepsodent and many more. According to the best brand equity in 1992, out of 34 hair

oils, only three made it to the national network and in washing powder i.e. detergent five out of 34 made it to big time. The really successful brands which were included were Nirma detergent, Rasna and Colgate toothpaste. Television advertising came to be dominated by the war between detergent ads such as Rin, Nirma, Wheel, Surf; later on Aerial competed vigorously as highest ad spending on television. Television companies stand to gain more advertisement the huge revenues they earn off it. The broadcasting suggests that advertising support to Television, while benefiting the advertising industry and it does not encourage an improvement in the content or quality of programming. A former secretary of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, S.S. Gill, wrote in 'The Times of India' (7th march 1994) "It is a sad commentary on our times that instead of establishing our benchmarks of good taste and excellence, Doordarshan is aping those who should be emulating its high standards." He further argues that good films like Padosi, Devdas, and others did exceedingly well at the box office while retaining high aesthetic standards.' Then we corrupted the people's taste by exposing them to excessive violence, crime and sex. And now we argue that is what the viewers want.'

Commercialization paves the way for longer hours of broadcasting. Advertising costs skyrocket and commercials expensive to make strive to be technologically superior to regular Television programming. And the reason for this is in order to stand out from all other forms of programming; television advertising must be qualitatively different so as to catch viewer attention and to make lasting impact. With so much shown on television, advertisements should be able to successfully squeeze its way through audiovisual fare. And if it fails to do so, advertising would not be able to survive or exist and would not have proper justification for the vast amounts of money which they have

invested in Television. Advertisers than have to withdraw support to television and hence the survival of television would be at stake. We see that advertising is cluttered and unrelated ads have to compete for viewer attention in high density clusters, advertisers have to work more harder to ensure that their advertisements stands out in a crowd. Advertisements merely act as a bait to attract viewer attention for a few seconds during which they implant their message in people's minds. A Television network's loft aims are educating, informing and generating social awareness, but these all are easily pushed aside by aggressive players in the selling games. In this context television advertising comes to represent future investments, a process aimed at changing attitude and altering mass perceptions. Indeed, one might ask, is the choice between drinking Bournvita and Horlicks really fundamental? Likewise, is Television advertising democratic when it represents a set of options to all Indians although only a segment can afford them? And what about the alternative options which never get advertised? We feel that the society is leasing to accept the ideals imposed on them by television and advertising codes which are not capable enough to evaluate the real worth of products and their priorities. One example of this can be from nutritional learning acquired from Television ads by children an issue that has astonished parents and researchers, concerned with what children learn from Television advertisements.

Charles K. Aktin from National Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Sciences (NIMHANS) reports that not only does food advertising influence food preferences, but also can shape the basic nutritional beliefs and attitudes of the child. In India, a large number of Television viewers are becoming visually literate although being illiterate they cannot have access to vast amounts of important information that could be

vital to their personal and social development. Mass media plays an important role in affecting, changing, molding and shaping the life style and pattern of behaviors of the women. They also help in generating interest in acquiring knowledge, sports, national and international politics and engaging them towards more effective participation in national affairs. Gender issues are being given increasingly importance in the media, especially after the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing).” The strategic objectives of the Beijing platform are- Increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision making in and through the media and new technologies of communication; promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in media. (Cited in Indian Journal Women and Development, Oct, 2008: 50, pg.12). The Central Board of Film Certification has also been previewing films for public release and permits over three thousand Indian and foreign feature films for certification for public release. The film preview consists of themes and picturization, especially dance sequences, which continue to be strongly sex oriented “Commercial Cinema” also, has presentation of violence and horror which seems to be an inevitable formula.

Portrayal of Women in Mass Media

The main highlight of media critics in the present times is the subject of portrayal of women in Indian media. Women are shown and portrayed according to male desires like beautiful creatures, submissive mothers of children, efficient housekeepers, cruel and deceptive vamps but nothing else. The positive roles of women’s progress and their contribution for national development have a largely been neglected in the media of

communication. The emphasis on stories about women about their struggle for recognition is only the surface trimming.

Electronic Media

The film industry is one that has a major effect on how young women are viewed in society. Young women often have roles as passive and vulnerable characters, which tend to leave the tough, strong and assertive roles to men. Women's roles are written with irrelevant sexualization their characters primary function is to please men, dance and sing in skimpy costumes. The music industry is very similar to the film industry, which exhibits the use of irrelevant sexualization, and their aim is to attract an audience of young people. Music videos showcase behavior is just as promiscuous as shown in the films. Women's bodies are constantly displayed in a sexual way and this behavior is imitated by young girls in and across the country who idolize them. Another negative portrayal of women depicted in media is domestication. The majority of commercials about house products or childcare are still aimed at women. This reinforces the sexist and outdated stereotypes of women only working inside the home, whereas, men are never shown contributing to housework or childcare. It is very true that images of young women in the media have a tremendous impact on young people everywhere. Whether it is through film, music, Television serials, advertisements or any other mass media format, the public is constantly pressured to fit into today of what beauty is. Young people and even children are interested to act like the characters they watch on Television. There is no better way to describe what really matters than with the age old saying's sells.' The ad for a certain shampoo on the television portraying two of the most sensuous and physically attractive star models, (who also are on off-screen pair) as an

indicator of how sex roles have changed in Indian advertising. Many advertisements which are cinematographed in monochrome with the right shades of darkness and mood lighting, and are very hot ad, but have no direct relationship with the product being advertise. Such kind of ads in media raises relevant questions about perspectives on gender in media representations of men and women. Ads for instance, underscore how men in Indian ads are being presented in a much more macho dominant manner than they were before. Another ad for male underwear shows a number of females with pseudo-coy expressions on their faces coming out of a toilet. The camera cuts to a shot inside the toilet where a handsome male model prostate lies with telltale lipstick marks across his body. Again the product advertised does not really have a direct relationship with the message on the script. Secondly few Indian males would be caught dead before females catch them in their underwear and in a public toilet. These all are Western concepts which are imposed on Indian ad scripts and prove that visuals need not necessarily represent the social norms of a society.

On the other hand, while sports and athletics are concerned more man is sported than women in the past India and in the West. But today real achievers like Sania Mirza and Sania Nihaal have changed all that. We may find Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Sachin Tendulkar more often compared to them no matter the product they are advertising for. Women in Indian advertisements are being presented in less dependent roles then they were before. An advertisement for a leading women's fortnightly recently carried a delightful image of an aging woman in bridal attire. It later transpires that her daughter is getting her married again. This is an example of positive advertising that subtly carries a social message. Many mother and daughter advertisements in recent times bear out

female bonding and marginalizing the role of men by cutting them out completely from such advertisements. Yet, women do not appear in ads for ‘solid’ products such as steel and cement and even if they do, they all side-tracked within the script.

Print Media

The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced in the failure to eliminate gender based stereotyping. Generally the media do not provide a balanced portrayal of women’s diverse lives and their contributions to society in a changing world, often reinforcing stereotyped images of women and their roles in the society. It is a common practice to assess the professional success of a woman through questions and claims about her related to being a good mother and a wife. The prevailing portrayal of women in mainstream daily newspapers has the following characteristics (Cited in Indian Journal of Women and Development, Oct, 2008: 54). Positive images of women have a narrow scope and are based on new stereotypes of women’s success: a popstar, a beauty queen, and a sports woman with an outstanding result. There is an absence of image of an active, assertive working woman, or a successful businesswoman, or a positive image of a woman politician. Average women are nearly always portrayed as victims of poverty, social injustice, domestic violence and organized crime.

Popular magazines with large circulations like the ‘Sunday’ and ‘India Today’ flash vulgar and obscene glossy photographs on their cover pages. The advertising world continues to use women to peddle its products and to present women as sexual objects. Advertising also reinforces housework as the sole responsibility of the women, with household equipments ads addressed only to women. The passivity of female characters in film and television is a major cause of concern. Barring few prime time serials like

Adhikar, Udaan, Humrahi and Aur bhi hain rahein which focused on issues concerning women and have women as their central character, rarely women is shown as capable of solving her problems, standing up to dignities or violence, facing challenges on her own, or taking decisions. Even many serials and ads telecasted at present i.e. Bidai, Balika Vadhu, Jyoti etc. reveals the dependency of women. The image of educated women is typecast as insensitive, self-centered and uncaring. The economically independent woman is shown as domineering and ruthless. Women are considered ideal only when she is in her nurturing roles and as a supportive supplement to man. Women specific programs on radio and television perpetuate sex stereotypes and cater to women as housewives and mothers, rather than provide knowledge and skills for their role as economic contributors. Several systematic research studies reveal that the mass media so far have not been effective instrument to inform and prepare society about women's new roles in national development. This is largely due to the very limited reach of mass media among women and girls, especially in rural areas. Even the limited exposure is mainly in the form of entertainment films or film based programs providing little opportunity for education about new values, tasks or skills. The expansion of media facilities especially of electronic mass media like television is both an opportunity and a risk in the case of women and girls. Widely basis, of a well thought of communication policy for women and girls, mass media like television can be a great instrument for social transformation towards women's greater participation and equality. The National Plan of Action for Women draw up in 1976 was the first major step towards fixing communication priorities and providing sufficient direction for subsequent media planning. The Sixth Plan focused on employment, economic dependence, education and health, whereas the Seventh Plan

moves on to an essential intangible of the desired change. The long term objective of the development programs for women would be to raise their economic and social status in order to bring them into the mainstream of national development” (Media Image of Women, J.S. Yadava / Pradeep Mathur, 2008: 300-301).

It is an established fact that virtually throughout the world; women are portrayed in the media either in terms of their sexual appeals to males. This two dimensional image is not sufficiently counteracted by alternative contribution to contemporary society. This is in part the result of women’s lack of access to and control over the communication media. On the other hand, Gallagher has shown that the depiction of women in the mass media is remarkably consistent throughout the world. Baring media controlled by governments with a strong commitment to social change, the overall picture highlighted the negative features of media under representation of women and women’s concern; the use of women as a commodity in advertising; an ambivalent attitude to women evident in certain stereotyped images in which women were exclusively and unalterably “good” and “pure” or definitely and unchangeably “bad” and “immortal” (Gallagher, 1983). *The Portrayal and participation of women in the media, Paris, UNESCO, cited in Prabha Krishnan and Anita Dighe*). An annotated bibliography brought out by Signorelli (1986) *Role Portrayal and Stereotyping on Television*, London, and Greenwood Press revealed that as far as media content was concerned, men outnumbered women by two or three to one, in addition, women were generally younger than the men and were cast in very traditional and stereotypical roles. Less than half the countries surveyed have carried out any research on women and media content, while globally, very little was known about women’s employment in media industries. As a response to the drastic growth of

criticism shown on television programs with respect to women's concern, many countries have set up committees to intervene on behalf of women's citizens. For example, the Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) established a task force on sex role stereotyping in the broadcast media. Williams research on sex roles on Canadian and US television was designed to reveal this," that although there were some minor changes in the portrayal of women, the Canadian and US television networks were still fundamentally conservative and traditional with regard to sex role portrayals. Males still pre-dominated on all networks and almost all the people portrayed as powerful, authoritative and knowledgeable were male (Tannis Williams, 1986). The portrayal of sex role on Canadian and US television, paper presented at the conference of the International Association for mass communication research, New Delhi, showed that although in the fictional world of television, men still hold the better professional positions. On the Indian scene we found a multiple of articles and papers on the relationship between women and media. The working group on Software for Doordarshan's set up in 1982, published its report in 1985, popularly known as Joshi Committee Report, it condemns television heavy reliance on feature films and film related programs, emphasizing the middle class orientation of the programs output and the near eclipse of working class women (*ibid*: 14).

Chandiram and Agrawal (1982) noted that in general, women characters continue to be portrayed in an inferior position relative to men. In this, asymmetrical relationship, the 'wife and the other' image is predominant. They further add that there seems to be a tendency to construct a pan Indian character of women, which is difficult to identify with

any one region of India. (Chandiram, Jai and Agrawal, Binod, 1982. "Towards Equality, Women in Indian Television", June, 161-164).

A study of women viewers in Madras city (Krishnaswamy, 1986) pointed out that respondents felt women's programs to be superficial in their treatment of various issues. Some respondents appreciated the inclusion of male concerns in women's programs, like the one on male impotency. Others felt that women were aware of their own plight and that such programs should be addressed to men. (Krishnaswamy, Chitra, 1986, Indian Women and Television Viewers of Madras, Paper presented at the International Television Studies Conference, London (cited in Prabha Krishnan and Anita Dighe) Joshi 1986, who studied the participation of women at the higher decision making levels of Doordarshan's, reported that of his respondents, a large number of women felt that increasing the proportion of women employees in the structure would improve program quality and bring about a more balanced perspective. Hence the area is wide open to both empirical and theoretical work.

Researches generally found that women are expressed as occupational roles mostly on television. Even middle class women are almost invariably shown as reveling in housework. Many researchers have voiced their anguish over the inclusion of violence and sex in programs and their effects on child viewers. Especially for children, television plays an important role in their socialization it determines in the matter of attitudes, values, culture, ethics, etc. children cannot restrict to watch the programs related to them; and so it becomes necessary to examine the stereotypical notions of gender roles presented to children in programs. In order to establish how women are projected through the television programs, it is not important to critically look at only special programs

related to them but also general programs which are presumed to of marginal interest of women. Unfortunately, when descriptive analyses of television program have been attempted on a limited basis, no systematic quantitative study of this aspect of television programs has been undertaken. The present study therefore aims to provide a systematic understanding about the manner in which women and their concerns are projected through television programs, advertisements, media, television serials.

The initial approach to communication was based on simple pattern of the transfer of a message from the source to the receiver. According to White Robert A. (1983) 33(3) 279-301 'Mass Communication and Culture, Transition to a New Paradigm believes this marked the early phase of mass media studies during which there was an initiative belief that the media could shape opinion, mould behavior and even serve as a panacea for a host of individual and social problems. Culture was regarded as an important intervening, variable between the source and individual effects. During the 1960s the importance of structural factors was underscored as American and European researches started questioning the supposedly benign (beneficial) intention of mass media and began interpreting media, messages as exploitative ideologies of elites. "For them" patterns of communication and media organization were inherent in a given social structure and thus change could not be effected simply by changing the messages of powerful media but required a more equitable distribution of social power (Colute, 1983).

The traditional method of media analysis is that of content analysis, wherein the noticeable content of the message is regarded as the most important era for scientific social analysis. While content analysis is very helpful for a systematic investigation of a wide range of material, its short coming is that it is not concerned with questions of

quality, of responses or of interaction (Janus, 1977) notes and feels that the result of content analysis need to be interpreted with care, elsewhere they may lead to the 'males versus female' perspective in which all males are counted together as general category, which is then contrasted with a all female category without reference to class, race or cultural divisions. Janus, Noreen (1977) *Research on Sex Roles in the Mass Media. Towards a critical Approach*, Insurgent Sociologists, and Summer: 19-32.

Semiotics or semiology, the science of signs, is concerned primarily with how meaning is generated in 'texts' (films, television programs and other works of art) It deals with what signs are and how they function. (Berger, 1982) *Media Analysis Techniques*, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications). Studies of gender in the field of mass communication have been done mainly from feminist liberal and Marxist feminist perspectives (Janus, 1977 and Sayers, 1982) According to these perspectives; society organizes itself according to expectations about the place men and women should occupy in keeping with their biological functions. The social regulation of these functions has restricted women to domestic sphere whereas it has facilitated men's participation in the public sphere. Socialist feminists assume that media and popular culture perpetuate and develop cultural ideology, and if women's status is to improve, these structures must change. They further argue that transforming mass media and popular culture can make difference even in absence of socialist revolution. In this they differ from Marxist feminists who believe that change in women's status is predicted on changes in the economic structure of the state (Steeves, 1986 *Feminism, Communication and Development. Complementary Goals in the Context of East Africa*).

The feminine self-consciousness sees the female body as the object of another's attention. As Berger (1972) puts in, "men look at women. Women watch themselves at. The surveyor of women in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object and most particularly, an object of vision, a sight." The women holding this consciousness of herself is defined by the male gaze, construct and desire. She is typically the sex object of masculinity pornography (*ibid.* pg. 32 cited in Prabha Krishnan and Anita Dighe).

Mayne (1985) quoted Laura Mulvey (1975) on the power of male gaze." In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active /male and passive/female.

In Indian context, the feminine and the female categories as distinguished by Keohane and Gelphi blur and merge. For though the dutiful wife and mother earth archetype belong to the female category, yet in addition to their nurturing services, they have to provide visual pleasure (Keohane-Gelphi (1982) *ibid.* pg.41 cited in P. Kridhnan).

The female self-consciousness is less inanimate, but still at the service of patriarchy giving and preserving life, nurturing and sustaining. She is either politically powerless and emotionally passive or imbued with mythic powers. But she is never self-defined. On the other hand, the feminist self-consciousness reflects the asymmetries of power, opportunity and situations in women's experience. The consciousness reveals omnipresence patterns of women's subordination, limitation and confinement in society. This results in non-oppressive ways of living. This is because women's experiences have neither provided the grounding for any of these, nor generated problems which these theories attempt to resolve, nor have they served as a test of adequacy for any of them.

Cinema has been considered together with television fiction rather as a separate category. A visual pictorial can be seen in both commercials and fiction, a sharp polarization of roles along gender lines is noticed. For instance, a serial that depicted women exclusively within the home, with men controlling the action all the commercials and advertisements preceded it (for soap, detergent, refrigerators, and after shave lotion) reflected the same polarization. Toilet soap commercials featuring glamorous, light-skinned women sponsored a serial for depicting women as a desirable princess. Advertisements for health and energy drinks featured mothers serving young sons and appreciating the reflected glory of their son's achievements. Majorly most of the advertisements of energy drinks and malts the child depicted are boys only. This also goes with the serial that contrasted with 'feminine' girls engaged in household activity and boys and 'boyish' girls exploring the world and engaging in action. "In several commercials films and fiction programs women were presented as being home-bound, serving man and children and seeking male approval, while men were located in the world outside. Thus, commercials served to underscore and emphasize the message contained in the fiction programs" (*ibid.* 49).

In the 27 programs that covered Television fiction and cinema, men were principal characters in much larger numbers than women (105 principal male characters as opposed to 55 female characters). In terms of occupation 34 women were depicted as housewives. The rest comprised stray cases of a dress designer, school teacher, flight attendant and office workers occupations that are basically female oriented and extensions of female roles. In the male characters, however, the range of occupations represented was very wide. They were industrialists, bureaucrats, businessman,

journalists, executives, police officers, farmers, scientists and defense personnel. There appeared to be a distinct preference for 'white collar' jobs and 'blue collar' workers were seldom principal characters (*ibid.* 50).

Hence, though both men and women appeared to seek peer group approval in large numbers, men acknowledged as peer figures from the larger world, while women drew theirs from within the home. An analysis surveyed by Prabha Krishnan and Anita Dighe (1990) on fictional programs and cinema television serials depicted the most common attributes that could be ascribed to the male and female characters were:

Most Common Attributes found in Male characters were self centered, decisive, self-confident, seeking a place in larger world, convincing, dignified, dominant, ruthless, ambitious, unprincipled, assertive, Loyal.

Female characters were shown Sacrificing, dependent, emotional, sentimental, anxious to please, defining the world through family relations.

Several studies have indicated that women are stereotyped on television. R. Stephen Craig (1992) took this line of inquiry one step further to examine the portrayal of both men and women during different periods of television programming. To study gender stereotyping in television, commercials, Craig selected a sample of 2,209 network commercials during several periods between January 6 and 14, 1990. The weekday part (in this sample, Monday-Friday, 2-4 pm) consisted exclusively of soap operas and was chosen for its high percentage of women viewers. The weekend part (two Saturday and Sunday afternoon during sports telecasts) was selected for its high percentage of men viewers. Evening "prime time" (Monday-Friday, 9-11 pm) was chosen as a basis for

comparison with past studies and the other day parts (1992-199) each of the commercials was coded in several ways. “Characters” were coded as:

All male adults

All female adults

All adults, mixed gender

Male adults with children or teens (no women)

Female adults with children or teens (no men)

Mixtures of ages and gender

In addition, Craig’s coders noted which character was the longest during the commercial-the “primary visual character” as well as the roles played by the characters (such as spouse, celebrity, parents) the type of product advertised (such as body product, alcohol) the setting (such as kitchen, school, business) and the voice over narrator.

Table 3.1

**Percentage of Adult Primary Visual Characters by Sex appearing in
Commercials in three day parts**

	Daytime	Evening	Weekend
Adult Male	40	52	80
Adult Female	60	48	20

Source: R.Stephen Craig, “The Effect of Television Day part on Gender Portrayals in Television Commercials: A Content Analysis” Sex Roles 26, nos 5/6 (1992) 204.

Table 3.1 indicates the differences in the times when men and women appeared in commercials. Women appeared most during the daytime (with its soap operas) men predominated during the weekend commercials (with its sports programming) and men and women were equally represented during evening prime time. Craig found other

differences in the ways men and women were portrayed. Further analysis indicated that male primary characters were proportionately more likely than females to be portrayed as celebrities and professionals in every day part, while women were proportionately more likely to be portrayed as interviewer/demonstrators, parent/spouses, or sex object/model in everyday part.... Women were proportionately more likely to appear as sex object/models during the weekend than during the day (1992: 204).

The research also showed that different products were advertised during different time periods. As we know, almost all the daytime commercials dealt with body, food or home products. These products accounted for only one in three on the weekends. Instead, weekend commercials stressed automotive products 29%, business products or services 27%, or alcohol 10%. There were virtually no alcohol ads during evenings and daytime. As we might suspect, women were most likely to be portrayed in home settings, men most likely to be shown away from home. Other findings dealt with the different roles played by men and women. The women who appeared in weekend ads were almost never portrayed without men and seldom as the commercial's primary character. They were generally seen in roles subservient to men e.g. hotel receptionist, secretary, or stewardess or as sex objects or models in which their only function seemed to be to lend an aspect of eroticism to the add (Craig, 1992: 208).

Women activities and concerned citizens have been rightly clamoring for a National media policy to curb the portrayal of women, to set right the historic distribution of the fair sex and to highlight women's proper role in the society. Any action plan to have the desired effect should combine both defence and aggression, while on one hand,

attempts should be made to introduce statutory regulations to curb negative portrayal of women, positive reporting and coverage of women and their achievements should be promoted. This also will help change the existing archetypes in portraying women. In International scenario Asia is in the grip of a media revolution. Transitional media co-operations and barons are busy rewriting the communication system and broadcast norms in Asia. But the tragedy is that the problems of women have been only confounded as they care no longer take out effective protest against biased media projections. Women can now only pity the biased media portrayals in a male prejudice society. Only concerted action of international level can put breaks on the unlimited freedom of the skies. Government should come together to ensure that due respect is given to the fair sex by the entertainment industry in the global village.

Role of women as mothers, as sisters and as wives is regarded as secondary as they are meant only to serve men and family and fulfill their material needs. This aspect is so much ingrained in our day-to-day life that a woman does not reach her real role as a citizen until she comes across a particular situation in her life. When she is distressed or exploited, her plight is decided by the community or the court of law. This might lead her to utter isolation and hence being rejected by her family and the society thereby forcing her to land up in a rescue home or a brothel. The overall scenario of the present state about women is amply clear from the date of atrocities against women and girls in the first six months of 1992 and 1993 in the Union Territory of Delhi alone. They are:

	JAN-JUNE (1992)	JAN-JUNE (1993)
1) Rape of women and minor girls	172	154
2) Rape of minor girls	100	122
3) Rape of women	72	32
4) Molestation of women	134	107
5) Cruelty by husband & in laws	350	285
6) Cases of dowry	155	86
7) Eve-teasing	1050	1086

The above-mentioned figures would show that women and girls are not safe even in the Union Territory of Delhi, because of abnormal conduct of men and boys who play a positive role in harassment and sexual assault on women in Indian society.

To quote Dr. Upendra Baxi, (then the Vice-chancellor of the University of Delhi), who gave guidelines to Research Scholars some year back: “Action must begin with an end of the crime of silence. We cannot be built on the administration of dignified silences concerning raped bodies of women. Aggression against women should not just become raw empirical data for Ph.D. in women’s studies. I know of a number of young social scientists, men and women, who have been able to pursue their dissertation on aggression against women in India without being moved to articulate a gesture of even simple protest. Such mere scientific pursuit generates no capabilities for the comprehension of patriarchal structures let alone for effective intervention or social action.” The distance between women and media not only deprives the women of their right to information and knowledge but also keeps the women in the dark regarding the blatant misuse of the female and the distortion of the truth. Although the images of women as reflected by the different mass media in the country are not very different, it will be an interesting

exercise to study how these images feed and reinforce the stereotypes propagated by these media (Craig, 25).

According to Feroze Rangoonwala, there was little effort on the part of popular cinema to show women in a little more liberated, assertive, independent and progressive form. If she did anything unconventional, it was within the bounds of a moralizing drama, bringing her round finally to the second class status, or worse still, what was ordained by fate? The mass media in India not only tend to reflect the prevailing and well entrenched, attitudes towards; women strengthen and reinforce the stereotypes but also destruct the image. The channels of communication do not generally portray the reality about labouring women in poverty. The fact that works for these women is a permanent necessity as they are the sole breadwinners, but that truth is not brought out. Neither their hard realities are exposed, i.e. long hours of work, low nor discriminatory wages and total lack of social support services is given much attention. The distortion of realities by the media has increased the gap of understanding between the different sections of society. Yet communication is one of the most important channels for the growth and development of women in the informal sector, as without information regarding services and benefits available through legislation, government schemes, banks and voluntary organizations, women can hardly take advantage of them. Most development programmes, which visualize the self-employed women as the potential beneficiary would need to accord a broader orientation to communication support systems. Overall, the reach of mass media in India is rather limited especially in rural areas, among women and slum dwellers. This is mainly due to four mutually reinforcing factors. These are: Low literacy rate (35%); Low purchasing power (about 40% of the population lives

below poverty line); Poor means of transportation for timely delivery of newspaper, or maintenance of radio/Television sets; Lack of relevant information, if purposive communication is the aim of mass media (*ibid.* 25).

The oppression which limits their capabilities, both in the conventional roles of home-maker, wife and mother and in the wider roles of productive resources and responsible citizens of a free nation, poor access to knowledge, social and cultural barriers to a choice of option and a low level of confidence in seeking and using knowledge have continue to inhibit, women's potential to overcome these limitations.

Television

“The Joshi Committee report (report of the working group on software for Doordarshan) has condemned Doordarshan for its failure in furthering the stated national objective of women's equality and the lack of proper perspectives of the issues concerning women on the part of the policy makers, programmes and producers.” With its reach extended to rural areas, television can play a crucial role in instilling confidence and self-respect in rural women (and urban women) and help them in securing their dignified and rightful place in the society. The mass media are guilty of promoting the status quo of women; they have taken on the role of fundamentalist. There is singular lack of social consciousness. Media have to change and play a positive role. The media has the capability to restore the self-esteem to women and go a long way in promoting the cause of women by the gross misuse and exploitation of the much glorified sacrificing wife/ mother/sister.

Since the sixth plan there is a definite move on the part of the government to give higher findings to the communication sector. Now the question arises has the higher

allocation to this sector been achieved at the cost of other basic sectors, such as health, education, water and sanitation? The fundamental issue is whether the government is morally justifies in diverting huge funds to the communication sector in the face of growing poverty in the country. The seventh plan clearly states that over 300 million people in India lie below the poverty line. It is very sad that over Rs. 12,000 crore have earmarked to develop a network, which benefits less than 25% of the population thus depriving hundreds of millions of people of their basic right to food clothing and shelter (Government of India, 36 and 82).

The bias against women now getting jobs in media is increased but perhaps not to the satisfaction of the feminists. But the ratio of number of jobs given to women looking for such jobs is still small compared to men. The problem is itself the society, not just with media alone. The media are not the fundamental cause of the subordinate status of women nor can it be remedied by the media alone. There are many other factors which are responsible for this situation and should not be ignored while considering these issues. Saida Bano, who was the first women amour at the Luck now station of AIR and who compared the children's programmes in the early forties, recalls the strong opposition of her orthodox family to her working at a place where she might come into contact with 'immortal professional singing girls'. She was able to get her way only when she assured them that such persons used separate entrance to the studios. She later became the first women newspaper of AIR. The national policies would still require considerable affirmative and special attention to the special needs of girls and women; without contradicting the fundamental point of equality in development and thus in motivation of development. Nor does it ignore the social challenges posed by culture,

religion and the allocation of duties and activities to one or the other sex. In other words, mass media has not any concerted efforts to discuss serious issues that concern women and prepare the women to play their rightful and equal role in the society. To change the situation, we will have to regularly monitor the media and point out the merit as well as the demerits on continuous basis. Perhaps the women's organizations could create a media-monitoring cell for the purpose.

Thus to conclude we believe that as a shaper of ideology and public opinion, media influences all sections of society in a major way. As has been shown, it affects all aspects of women's lives including their self-image and influences most decisions regarding women's development. Thus it would be nothing short of tragic if women and men activists concentrated only on economic and political issues and neglected to grapple with such a powerful and insidious force such as media. It is important to note the manipulative role and the class and gender bias of media and it is therefore essential to challenge it. Women must create alternatives in different media and use them to inform and empower women, to get women out of their isolation. We must make ourselves more visible and audible so that our concerns do not remain unarticulated and unattended. Not only must women create alternative methods of working together; methods which are more democratic and participatory and which break the divide between 'media makers' and 'media takers'. It is heartening to see many women making feminist films, publishing magazines, writing plays, songs, children's poems, etc., to express themselves and to initiate a dialogue with other women, to challenge stereotypes and myths. The struggle is long and complex as the patriarchal society is very strong. But according to me there is no alternative but to struggle.