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**IMAGE OF WOMEN IN MEDIA TODAY**
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**Abstract:** This is the Age of Information which makes communication very easy. The speedy, larger way of communication is mass media; this growing trend has made the involvement of youth, men, women, children in shaping their life style as well as providing a better outlook of socialization. Media is not only a mirror of the society but also an instrument of political, economical, cultural, social change. Its main aim is to spread noble ideas of the people and the expression, thought, perception, feelings and other aspects. The importance of media has gone to a wider extend of providing basic information knowledge, reality, shaping the perception of the individual as well as gain a way leading the country towards developments. It exposes social evils and helps for the obliteration of discrimination, inequality, race, color, gender and other sources of violence. The ongoing communication revolution in the form Mass Media has opened possibilities of accelerating development especially for the upliftment of women and children. But if it remains uncontrolled and unguided, this revolution will have adverse effect on the life of women. Every day, one comes across reports of one or the other group of women activists protesting against what they describe as wrong “exploitative” projection of women in Mass media.

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*'Figure out who you are separate from your family, and the man or woman you're in a relationship with. Find who you are in this world and what you need to feel good alone. I think that's the most important thing in life. Find a sense of self because with that, you can do anything else.'* --Angelina Jolie

Present decade, women are proving their work as an

**Introduction:** Women contribute half of the total population in our country, 35% work in media. Women are gradually providing this worth making and indelible mark in the media world sweeping out in various roles as reporters, writers, news analyzers in print and broadcast media, anchoring, compeering programmers and conducting effective discussions. 20% of our country population are youths they are fully mobilized by media, but coming to women they don't know how women are shown the representation of them in media is wrongly shown as sexual objects, glamour dolls, skimpily dressed, villains and shown violent which may lead the society to intimate relationships as well as make gaze over media.<sup>1</sup> In this context television is massively projected as an effective role of depicting and distorting women in the fold of commoditization of her body parts which is growing trend. And it is the biggest violation of human rights. Women are considered as an object sexual harassment, glamour doll, oppressed, depicted and distorted one. She has been portrayed daily in the media as commoditized object of advertising her body to sell the products of all MNC.s and local companies. Due to various efforts of Feminists they are coming forward to make the issues come out of from them and struggle for their freedom.

**Early Women entry into Media:** The role of women in media started from 1960s onwards when television becomes the part of the society. From that period onwards women who were shown in the newspapers, films and television got much positive importance. Most of the media corporations are owned by big MNCs as well as big business men.<sup>2</sup> So, they are not conscious about women so they started exploiting them as a weapon of attracting their audience and to improve their ratings. It may also sand the image which shown in media was stereo-typical in nature where she is not given importance and under-represented as inferior sex. She is being commodities as an idol of sensational hum.

important means of indelible mark in the media world; they are shown as news readers, analyzers in print and broadcast media, anchoring, compeering radio jockeys, and in films.

**Women's Adversity in Paper Media:** The Paper media such as newspapers, periodicals, newsletters and other channels are relied upon by the people as credible source of information, education and entertainment. The print media are known for courageous criticism and service. It is expected that those working in this print media is about 15 to 20 % of the total coverage on women's issues and about half of these are related to sex, prostitution, glamour, entertainment and crime. In this there has been an improved and increased reportage of issues related to women<sup>3</sup> News related to women though still marginal have started to occasionally occupy important slots like the editorial, feature news, front-page news etc. However, women's visibility in the news is still dominated by sensational stories of glamour, sex, domestic violence and other forms of violence.

Incidents like women coping with adversity or building their lives are largely missing. Issues affecting women, their vast experiences and their lives, barely find their way into the mainstream media. Likewise, very few informative pieces or feature columns are published for women informing them about their legal rights, or about their potential for political activity. Many other studies have also established that when women appear in the news, they are mostly projected as passive victims or passive reactors to public events in news media. They hardly appear as speakers or participants in public event. The Print Media has also seen a growth spurt in the recent years particularly with regard to women and development magazines.

The journals are mostly qualified for modern society and could be said to be positively harmful to the

development of women as conscious individuals aware of themselves and aware of the society around them. If a woman wins a beauty contest, magazines or newspapers in particular give much importance to the news and even take her photographs on cover page but, at the same time if a woman gets the Nobel Prize she gets limited coverage. Here the difference of judgment in women's issues is quite marked in our media. Similarly the daily newspapers rarely put women's news and their development. Rather they prefer reporting on rape, atrocities, crime, sexual harassment and abuse of women prominently in their columns. Besides Sunday and Saturday special glossy editions on women's leisure, fashion, beauty and other luxurious news items with erotic photographs are issued from time to time by daily newspapers.

However the advent of women reporters and the presence of some senior women journalists in positions of responsibility have made a significant difference to the coverage of women's issues in the press. They have observed a decade, women's issues have increasingly, though sporadically begun to make news and to be considered worthy of comment. This is due to the growth of the contemporary, women's movement in India, with women's groups becoming steadily more active and vocal.<sup>4</sup> The English press and the language papers in India have been doing well as far as the coverage of women is concerned. Lead reports, articles, editorials, features and news analysis have been published on women's issues. Nonetheless the last decade has seen the setting up of women's publishing houses, some of which publish exclusively on women. The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced in the failure to eliminate gender based discrimination. 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 society.

#### **Unjust projections of Women Images in Magazines :**

Women's image has gone through several unjust projections at the hands of the media. Generally the respondents themselves felt that there is a need to change women's portrayal in magazines as they were shown more in subdued roles. Indecent posters and boarding displayed everywhere are the crude reminders of distorted images and attitudes to women. Popular magazines with large circulations 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 object.<sup>5</sup> The image of the educated woman is typecast as insensitive, self-centered and uncaring. The economically independent woman is shown as domineering and ruthless. The woman is considered ideal only when she is in her nurturing roles and as a supportive supplement to man.

#### **Fashion shows in TV Channels: Women and Beauty Pageant:**

Fashion channels fully focus women as

indistinct done only thing this owned by big MNCs they involve in the role of comodification where they make women to contest in Miss World and Miss Universe. They are used as advertisers for their products when they win these contests for one year. The winners of this contest are not allowed to marry but can travel all over the world, dress, speak as per the directives given by the MNCs. These fashion channels do these programmers for live telecast and make the audience to make use of the products and make their body trim, externally beautiful shaping and managing etc.<sup>6</sup> So the women showed in these channels on being exploited to wear colorful dazzling clothes, transparent naked clothes, half naked suits, skimpily dressed costumes in the name of fashion. Moreover applying many costumes, bleaching pigments and other sorts of things make them to be attractable and audience is considered as one of the major counterpart.

Advertisements contain a message of a specific life style of specific strata of society. The life styles of upper-class are mostly portrayed in the entertainment contents to create a sense of desire and aspiration amongst the viewing public towards such life styles. Advertisements have played important role in manipulating and manufacturing ideological transformation and transmission in the public domain. Advertisements use women in decorative poses more frequently. Advertisers have also been accused of objectifying women's bodies. There is growing concern that photographs of slim, flat stomach models in advertisements promote an unhealthy view of young women that could encourage disorders. Cosmetic ads like fair and lovely, medimix etc. define beauty for the women as big breasts, slim legs and fair skin. Short skirts with noodle straps and colored hair, impossibly slim and dizzyingly tall, a go-getter, hard drinking and partying career girl with snazzy mobile phone is what advertisements pictures of a young girl. Advertisements use women in every product/brand that is being advertised irrespective whether a female model is required or not. Advertising directors argue that women are far more aesthetically beautiful than men and since in India, men have the main purchasing power, the image of a scantily-clad woman will make them buy anything. Out of 10 advertisements that feature in a magazine or run on television, 8 of them have women.

**Women depiction in TV serials:** All serials wrapped in tradition of male chauvinism discourage women to aim for more than a loving husband, happy children and a modern home. She is portrayed as a glamorous doll whose physical beauty is her only asset. The sacrificing role of women in every serial is highlighted, as it poses no threat to the patriarchal structure. Women are all the time compromising and negotiating. Today there is an overdose of serials and focuses women as ruthless, brut less, ignoring characters. Regional channels telecast umpteen numbers of serials; reality shows where portraying women as commercial objects.

Television has made a huge impact in the last two

decade. Serials have been moved a great deal on portraying strong characters of women. The concept clearly says that women could be only as a homemaker maintains the households, being a good wife and good mother to her kids. But she is exploited in the means of serials like characters which are unrealistic, ignoring characters where she is not represented in a right position at all. Most of the television serials which are shown are fully stereotypically in nature where men go to the office and women are shown are light of approval and disapproved that she stays on home which means that they don't have work at all.<sup>7</sup> Women are shown as billions who go for power of hunger in the role of stereotyping which comprises full of vices. This is the vamp of anti-heroine where women portrayed as ultra modern women while she works as a plunging neckline, bold, shorthair, ruthless, and villains.

**Women and Cinema:** It could be said without women there is no cinema at all. From the early beginning of cinema she is own as on centre part of attraction. Most of women shown in India films are depicted as gently, heartless, ruthless, subservient, often women are used a village girl or a city dweller. Women in cinema start with an object of love and ends in marriage. All films which as shown are oriented with her and she is used as a colorful splash to the storyline. From the 1980s this trend is ongoing and showing women as glamorous.<sup>8</sup> They are all used as sexual objects in India cinema that are expressing their lips and wiggle their hips to the audience. A commercial film is also often loaded with songs and dances where women should dance with rain soaked dresses, tighter and skimpily dressed, seductive scenes, showing their breasts.

Women's body in considered as an attractive one so the films and shots taken are all oriented with sexual passion in order to cover male and audience. Naturally to show them bright and colorful before the camera women are distorted with push-up inner garments to heavier their breasts or bullock paddling is used. The actions which are carried are mimic and sexual movements in order to sexualizing the women's body in benefit of the male. Moreover our aged heroes act only with the 18 year old heroines which is a biggest trend going where our old heroes may kiss the heroines, dance with them, sing with them what a crucial one it is how women are considered an old man who is a father status to that women are made and exploited in the of cinema.<sup>9</sup> The 58 year old hero acting with young woman who is just 19 to 25 years seems to be the exploitation against women.

The romantic hero of the 1960s and early 1970s has been replaced by the angry young man who takes up the cause of fighting for the downtrodden against the corrupt social system. The gory violence by the hero is often romanticized as the reaction to injustices to the women (mother, sister, lover) in his life. The heroine's role in such narratives is made secondary to the hero's fight against society. The vamp that was used in earlier films to represent the dark side of modernity has more

or less disappeared from popular Hindi cinema.<sup>10</sup> The heroine is now portrayed as both a seductive dancer-singer enticing the hero and as a "good" modern woman upholding patriarchal traditions.

Illustrating female victimization through rape or attempted rape scenes has become a new form of exploitation of the female body. In creating new archetypes of modern Indian women, commercial films also draw upon the progressive films and the women's movement. The new woman is shown as a "strong" character- educated, independent, and capable of taking the initiative in a relationship with a man. She signifies "good" modernity. However, the bright new image of "modern" women in the popular Indian films is superficial. To keep the audience emotionally involved, commercial cinema has created certain gender stereotypes with considerable ambiguity: underlying the spurious concerns for women's oppression in the mainstream cinema, deeply entrenched ideals of femininity are disguised in the glossy images of "liberated" women.

**Women and Music Videos:** This is also a part of television which involves young boys and girls to make videos and music albums which are now days very popular. The most popular songs of the olden decades are remained by mindless and heartless people by nostalgic melodies giving vulgar and violent twists for the youth now days. The music videos where women who involve in it are shown as bare and half naked bodies to attract men with a role purpose of selling it. So, whenever a video is released its subscription and the dealership go high.<sup>12</sup> The music industry has such an impact on youth by making women as a sexual object in touching her privacy as well as making out a tantalizing choreography which is a low level degradation of sexual abuse. These kinds of music albums would just mislead the youth to have intimate relationships and indulge in casual sex. Most of these albums make women skimpily dressed and make them turn and twist their body to make males gaze and cover the audience to hold their seats.

**Legal Regime pertaining on Women issues in Media:** Image of women in media has been big concern. It was noted in 1975 by the Committee on the Status of Women, it insisted certain recommendation to avoid the bad portrayal of women in media. Later in 1986 the indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act was introduced, its main aim is to provide proper regulation of representation of women in media. It prohibits indecent representation of women through advertisements, books, writing, paints, and figures or in any other manner. Section 4 prohibits the sale, hire, production, distribution, circulation, sending by post any book, pamphlet, slide, film, writing, drawing, painting, etc which contains indecent representation of women in any forms.<sup>13</sup>

The National perspective plan for women (1988-2000) explain that the media should project women in unorganized sectors as workers not merely performing

duties of mother or daughter. Advertisements displaying women as women as sex symbols and using them for sales promotion should be seriously discouraged. It either felt that it was equality necessary not to convey sex linked division of labor or women's predilections with feminine per suit through conventional and traditional stereotypes women's programmes should be telecasted at least one hour in a day. Awareness with regard to problems of women in unorganized section is necessary for both men and women. Media and the programmers should be a flexible one.

PrasarBharathi (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act 1990 lays down its powers and functions, the need to inform and stimulate the national consciousness in regard to the status and problem of women, paying special attention to the upliftment of women. Doordarshan plays an important role and a powerful instrument to speed the message of and assist in the overall improvement in the status of women, the government used this facility wisely and well. Beijing platform for action, It was highlighted in Beijing conference that lack of gender issues and can find stereotyping gender can be found in public and private, local, national and international media.<sup>14</sup> Print and electronic media in most confines do not provide a balance picture of woman's deserve life and contribution to society in a changing world.

**The Global Media Monitoring Project –GMMP:** It is the representation of women and men in mass-media. On 16 February 2005, hundreds of women and men in 76 countries around the world participated in the third GMMP, 13000 news items on TV, radio and in magazines were monitored various professionals in media where involved. The report submitted on 2005 stated out that the survey which was taken in 76 countries from 1995 till now 17% of news devoted to women and marginally during 2000 it became 18% and in 2000 to 2005 it has increased from 18% to 21%. The overall representation of women is low participation is due to the news which are linked with perceptions of women's status in the society as a whole. Women's view is not considered was important as men. in India 35% of anchors are women its compared with 21% of overall countries specifically in television its 14% 17% of women in news are projected as women shown in news doesn't have specified occupation that women in education and Government employees. Only 5% have gender challenging, stereotypes and 91% do not highlight either gender equality or in equality.

**NCW -National Women Commission's views on images of Women in Media:** National Commission for women has suggested modifications in the Act and elaborates upon ways to strengthen, and to make it workable so that the objectives can be achieved. The NCW recommended that section 2 (b) of the act be modified to read as Derogatory representation of women means the depiction in any manner of the figure of a women, has form of body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being derogatory to, or

denigrating, women and is also likely to deprive, corrupt or endanger public more bitsy or morals. This definition says depiction of women in, any manner of her body or any part thereof would amount to indecent or derogatory representation if it has the tendency to make women as a sexual object. The tendency to present a woman as a sexual commodity for men's pleasure or to glorify women's subordination to man as an attribute to womanhood or the effect of being indecent or being derogatory, to order igniting a women or it is likely, to deprave, corrupt or injure public morality or morals.<sup>15</sup> The latest reports of NCW has accomplished that women who are abused in media are now days increasing a lot.

To provide a more sanitised atmosphere for women, the government plans to draw up a set of guidelines for portrayal of women in mass media like films, television programmes, advertisements, radio and print. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has begun consultations with all stakeholders in the media industry to evolve an agreement on how to stop the depiction of women as sex objects. As a first step, the Censor Board has decided to give 'A' rating to all so-called 'item songs', thereby banning them from being shown on TV.<sup>16</sup> Following the gang rape of a 23-year-old student in Delhi last December, all the ministries had been asked to act within their respective domains to promote gender sensitivity and gender equality.

Officials in the I&B ministry have held separate rounds of informal discussions with representatives of regulatory bodies, including Central Board of Film Certification, Advertising Standards Council of India, News Broadcasters Association, Indian Broadcasting Foundation, private FM radio channels and PrasarBharati on steps to be taken to curb commodification and stereotyping of women in soap operas, advertisements, films. Private FM stations have been told to run public interest campaigns highlighting these aspects as well as safety of women. Sources said the ministry can direct the FM channels to air public interest programmes under licence conditions. They said the ministry was willing to financially support them and provide the content, if needed. Nudged by the ministry, the Censor Board has agreed to organise a seminar on portrayal of women in films during the week-long celebrations marking the 100 years of Indian cinema in Delhi.

PrasarBharati is working on putting together a campaign highlighting these issues to be broadcast on Doordarshan and All India Radio. Union Ministry of Women and Child Development on 19 June 2013 constituted a panel to examine aspects related indecent portrayal of women in mass media. The Additional Secretary and Mission Director (National Mission for Empowerment of Women) K Ratnaprabha was appointed as the head of the constituted panel. The constituted panel will have a check on all types of indecent representation of women in Mass Media.<sup>17</sup> The decision of constituting a panel was taken after the



Ministry received complaints related to indecent portrayal of women in mass media.

**Conclusion:** It is a fact that the Indian society generally considers women as weak and as a liability. As a result, a woman undergoes tremendous traumas from birth to death. This negative attitude towards women in real life is very much reflected in way media represents them as well. Media representations of Indian women reveal that they are less accepted and respected as persons and more looked upon as objects. She has three projected roles-biological, domestic and decorative. Media hardly challenges the gender attitudes promoted and perpetuated by the society. The present study entitled "portrayal of women in TV serials was conducted with a view to ascertain the responses of men and women in TV serials and to study the impact of these serials on them. The sample comprised of 120 respondents which consisted of 60 men and women purposively in the age group of 35-50 years who were the regular viewers of the selected TV serials. An interview schedule was used to elicit the required information.

Regarding the image of women shown in serials, majority of both the respondents felt that as women are mostly projected as housewives and glamorous. They reported that when "women's issues" or a "women's story" is presented, two archetypes tend to emerge. The stereotype is either a quite young, professional, beautiful super woman or a relatively passive and traditional woman living mostly according to the rules set by her man. They further claimed that very little variety of realism is found in projection of women.

A key issue raised by many females was that the serials should present the survival a story of women, struggling between the many roles and obligations that today's society imposes on them. Both the respondents agreed that women are projected according to the stereotypical image existing in the society leading to reinforcement of stereotypical role. Popular Indian soaps are traditionally Indian and are very stereotypical only such themes keep the TRPs of serials high. Majority of both men and women believed that women are negatively stereotyped. Most of the serials are not version of social reality. Most of the men revealed that serials themes are centered on large extended families and also depicts image of infidelity, conspiracies which keep the audiences tied up to their TV sets. Many women respondents agreed that

serials so have impact on their mind setup. Women revealed that serials help them in organizing their homes and work place, whereas majority of men revealed that women are gaining confidence and are developing leadership qualities. Both the respondents felt that serials do not empower women in playing their rightful role in the society as real life is quite different from what it is otherwise shown. Majority of men and women revealed that media should portray women in multiple roles and also as a real character and not as manipulator. Today's woman is already imbibed to tools like TV ,films etc it is therefore necessary that serials should relate to the realistic part of life which could help the woman in particular to come out of the old shell and appreciate the changes necessary for her future prosperity, essentially economic.

The media professionals need to be sensitized on gender issues and a system of rewards may be developed for those who are able to portray women in positive manner. Likewise, stringent punitive action should be taken against those who defy the norms. A multipronged strategy for sensitization, creating awareness and mobilization of public opinion is needed for developing a positive image of women in media. It is also necessary to draw a fine line between what constitutes morality and the define boundaries of obscenity. In the era of globalization and with revolution in means of communication and information technology, the media role has become more crucial for women empowerment in India. The Indian media now must focus on women issues in a decisive way as their role is detrimental for the women empowerment in India. It is essential that media should devote a good percentage of their programmes to create awareness among women and the society at large, give information about women's rights and machineries to approach for their all round development . Programmes to strengthen women development should be enforced and news adversely affecting their development should be censored or banned. Thus, the distant dream of women empowerment in India can be realized with the support of media, government and NGOs. As Swami Vivekananda rightly said that "The nation which doesn't respect women will never become great". Therefore, in pursuit of making India a great nation, media should work towards giving women their much deserved status.

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