

SJIF 2014 = 3.189

ISSN: 2348-3083

An International Peer Reviewed & Referred

**SCHOLARLY RESEARCH JOURNAL FOR
HUMANITY SCIENCE & ENGLISH LANGUAGE**



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT BY INDIAN MEDIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Owais Khan

IEC Consultant, Directorate of Panchayati Raj, Shimla-9

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यंते रामनते तत्र देवता

“मनुस्मृति”

Abstract

All developing countries are emphasizing on the need for development of women. This is a burning issue for discussions and debates on TV channels or writing columns and articles in News Papers. Today woman as a potent part of society has proven her abilities and also demanding her stand and standards in our patriarchal society. But here the matter of concern is what role our fourth pillar of democracy is playing to provide the voice to the hidden plight of women and to assert their life? Is Indian Print Media making any efforts to bring change for them????????????????? Every women have right to live a dignified life. As women a potent part of world always struggle to establish their identity, their perceptions are heavily influenced by mass media that many times objectify them. The main reason for a women's low self-esteem is the reflections of women she is experiencing all around her in the media, and the movies. Wherever she glances, she sees images of females that are completely unrealistic. They are presented to her as ideals to emulate while being out of her reach. It's no secret that women compare themselves to the female images they see portrayed on television, film, and advertising. At both the conscious and subconscious level, these media images of women lowers self-esteem and affect behavior at every age and stage of life. Although it is clear that the media influences

the way women view themselves, these perspectives also give some explanation for why some women show resilience to the negative effects of the media, while others are dramatically impacted. "Gender stereotyping presents a serious obstacle in the process of achieving real gender equality and feeds into gender discrimination, which not only limits the fulfillment of the full potential of women, but is also one of the root causes of violence against women and girls. According to the UNESCO report in 2009, revealed, it will take another 75 years to achieve gender equality in the media. The present research paper is based on the premise that continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media and it must provide a balanced picture of her positive contribution to society.



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Introduction

The perverseness the media exerts on our society has an important influence on our attitudes, values and behavior. The image of women as portrayed in the media deserves serious consideration because the way the women are presented in the media can be an important factor in shaping the next generation's attitudes and behavior towards women.

The ways in which women are routinely portrayed in mass media have been on continuous focus. The main aspect of this is the stereo typing of women by Media. The reason for concern with stereotyping of women in media is for the reason that the Media has potentially powerful agents of social change. The popular media such as films, television, newspaper and magazines continue to frame woman within a narrow repertoire of type that bear little or no relation how real women live there real lives. Besides this women have always been portrayed by media as embodiment of discipline and self sacrifice to the glory of God and country or where female body were sexual image object of man's gaze.

Besides the tremendous successes women have made in all aspects of life and acquiring rights from the jaws of the State and society the modern women has somewhat struck in the stereotype image that women see of themselves in the popular media, where she is asked to perform and lead a very stereotype life to be termed as a socially accepted, in other words she has to follow a

fixed pattern of behavior, social life, etc. where she has to compromise at every stage and every step of life, leading to a life of no dignity, low self esteem, and also domestic violence against them. It is also very surprising to find that women are also ready to emulate the projection of women in media they can't even understand that the slandered set by media is impossible to be achieved in real life when it comes to the portrayal of image of women in media. Coming into the pressure of the beauty industry and continuous lobbying by them, the media have been projecting an ideal women starting from her physical appearance, complexion, to her social behavior, her relationship with her family, to how she meets her social responsibilities etc. In this the ordinary woman is lost somewhere to find her own identity. Due to this stereotyping she has to fit herself in her whole life within those parameters fixed for ideal women by the society which always see her as an object having no rights but only duties. The most painful aspect of this is that the modern woman who is well educated and professional is also accepting the stereotyping of women in media and trying to emulate it.

Projection of women in Media

Images in the media today project an unrealistic and even dangerous standard of feminine beauty that can have a powerful influence on the way women view themselves and how society forms its attitudes towards them. From the perspective of the mass media, thinness is idealized and expected for women to be considered "attractive." Images in advertisements, television, and music usually portray the "ideal woman" as tall, white, and thin, with a "tubular" body.

The mass media's depiction of women portrays a standard of beauty that is unrealistic and unattainable for a majority of women in society. Models shown in all forms of popular media are often underweight what is considered healthy body weight, which sends a powerful message that women must sacrifice their health to be considered attractive by societal standards. The negative effects of ultra-thin media images of women have been well documented; research has shown that females who are repeatedly exposed to and internalize the thin ideal are at greater risk to develop body image disturbance and eating pathology. The advent of new technologies such as the internet or social networks has in no way changed this. In addition, violent and degrading or pornographic media products are also negatively affecting women and their participation in society. Programming that reinforces women's traditional roles can be equally limiting. The world-wide trend towards consumerism has created a climate in which

advertisements and commercial messages often portray women primarily as consumers and target girls and women of all ages inappropriately.

Socio-cultural standards of feminine beauty are presented in almost all forms of popular media, barraging women with images that portray what is considered to be the "ideal body." Such standards of beauty are almost completely unattainable for most women; a majority of the models displayed on television and in advertisements are well below what is considered healthy body weight. Mass media's use of such unrealistic models sends an implicit message that in order for a woman to be considered beautiful, she must be unhealthy. There has been a plethora of research to indicate that women are negatively affected by constant exposure to models that fulfill the unrealistic media ideal of beauty.

This unrealistic attitude has created some myths and perceptions in the minds of the society to name some:

Myth 1 Certain product use will result in a happy and fulfilling love life.

Myth 2 Women must be thin.

Myth 3 Women must remain youthful.

Myth 4 Women is submissive and accepts violence.

Myth 5 Sex sells.

Reason based approach of Projecting women in media

Women need media to impart messages and bridge connections, and media desperately need women in order to market and sell products. So each side moves rhythmically in a dance that flirts with the danger of dependence and a fight for power, and thus a social cultural phenomenon thrives. The tension between "the gentler sex" and media encompasses multiple perspectives. Most notable of these perspectives is the portrayal and representation of images of women in media as symbols of sex. The term media is broad in nature, encompassing visual/still images and words in addition to those viewed in active outlets such as television and movies. Mass media target a woman's sexuality by reducing her to bodily parts and appearance, thereby degrading and dehumanizing her. Now more than ever before, young females are experiencing the tremendous task of learning to become women in the context of media and their scrutiny. The difficulties in this process are surfacing, including the attempt to overcome a divided self, the importance of value of the self beyond aesthetics, the portrayal of women as passive targets of

violence, the proliferation of negative body image and eating disorders, and ultimately the vision toward the future as women continue to struggle to find their voice and their place in the world. Even more detrimental is the dangerous reality that women internalize the association of physical attractiveness and power. Social and cultural elements reinforce messages that reward those who are physically attractive, in particular those who attain a perceived ideal body type. So females begin to see beauty as a gateway to success both socially and economically given that women learn awareness of the influence of their attractiveness, it stands to reason that they learn to judge their own appeal as a predictor of future success. Essentially, a female's reflection of her own body becomes the basis of how she believes others will respond to her. Eventually a woman becomes a habitual surveyor of her outward appearance, resulting in steadfast convictions guiding her movement through the world. Ultimately, internalized objectification alienates and distances a woman from her body and its mechanisms. Internal being becomes a separate entity from external physicality, thereby minimizing a female's ability to recognize true physiological cues such as hunger and sexual arousal. Women thus become strangers to their own internal physical experiences in assuming a third person perspective, or becoming an externally mediated self. Moreover, objectification theory proposes that this disconnectedness from one's own body is the basis for heightened mental health risks to women, including depression, body dysmorphia, low self-esteem, eating disorders, and more

Thus, the reduction of a woman's essence to merely physical parts results in a woman creating self-meaning grounded in the idea that her body represents her state of being in the world. Clearly, this process of reduction does not promote psychological well-being. The true problem arises, however, when a woman internalizes the messages resulting from objectification. When females internalize these messages, they begin to view themselves as objects, reaffirming and reinforcing the cycle of objectification.

Conclusions

As the women of Modern times seeks to establish her identity in the fast changing society every section of the society including media have a distinct and positive role to play so that the self esteem and dignity of women is established and also not compromised. For this to happen this work suggests following measures:

1. The expansion of media education, training, and employment opportunities for women to insure their adequate representation at all organizational levels and in all areas of employment,

particularly in traditionally male-dominated areas such as media management and policy-making.

2. Continued pressure from women within the industry for better opportunities, particularly in traditionally male-dominated areas, and for the enforcement of existing anti-discrimination laws through policing and litigation.
3. Publicity campaigns sponsored by these organizations to expose discrimination against women in the media, to notify women about their legal rights, and to heighten the public's awareness of media images which are insulting and demeaning to women
4. The development of independent feminist media for the dissemination of information which contributes to a positive image of women.
5. Spontaneous as well as organized action on the part of consumers to protest against sex-stereotyped portrayals in mass media via letter-writing campaigns, product boycotts, etc.
6. introduce the concept of "sexism" into their legislation and condemn it to the same degree as "racism";
7. Adopt a law on gender equality in the media;
8. Make the ombudsperson responsible for issues relating to gender equality to create direct links between the ombudsperson's office and the population as a whole;
9. Draw a distinction between the situation in the privately owned and publicly owned media;
10. Give media associations the right to complain to the courts in the event of a violation of human rights;
11. Finance and start new equality projects in the media;
12. Encourage, within their national systems, the setting up and financing of centres to monitor national media, including the new information and communications technologies;
13. Encourage advertisers to increase self-regulation through their own system of professional ethics, in so far as freedom of expression permits;
14. Use positive discrimination measures or quota systems to guarantee a balance between women and men at every level of decision-making;
15. Encourage women to participate at every level of decision-making in the media and to take posts of responsibility in the technological sector and on public advisory bodies;
16. Assign resources and implement programmes to increase women's access to communications resources and knowledge, particularly the new communications technologies;

17. Make substantial efforts to release the necessary funds for the provision of equality training for women and men, inter alia at schools of journalism;
18. To have finance comparative studies with a view to ensuring that policy-makers have a better image of gender equality.

References

See Cyrolin M.Byerly And Karen Ross, Women and Media: A critical Introduction (2006)

See Jonathan Maccnoll at. all. Interpreting Tramua Radiographs (2004)

See Allan Wells Ernest and A. Hakanen Mass Media and Society by (First Edition)

Theresa Carrilli and Jane Campbell, Women and the Media : Diverse Perespectives (2005)

See <http://udini.proquest.com/view/effects-of-highly-sexualized-images-goid:304770402/>