

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF MEDIA'S IMPACT ON GENDER REPRESENTATION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract

The mass media has consistently served as a potent platform for communicating ideas, either reflecting existing societal values or contributing to the evolution and reinforcement of prevailing norms. Unfortunately, the media's portrayal of women as equals in society continues to be a low-priority issue, persisting in a pattern that has endured over time. Even in the era of globalization, the media has fallen short of adequately repositioning women's image and status, instead often amplifying and legitimizing misunderstandings, misconceptions, and misrepresentations of their roles and standing in society. To a considerable extent, the media has sidestepped the critical and profound aspects of women's empowerment, equality, and justice, often perpetuating the notion of "commodification of women." This paper contends that the media fulfills a dual role in shaping the image of women. On the one hand, it persistently constructs and promotes sexist portrayals of women and their bodies for entertainment and marketing purposes. On the other hand, it has made limited efforts to challenge traditional depictions of women, which tend to confine them within rigid role frameworks emphasizing control and conformity. Even when the media introduces novel portrayals of women, these representations often lack constructive depth. The research findings indicate that women perceive the media's portrayal of women as unrealistic. However, they also acknowledge that the media has played a significant role in their personal development.

Keywords: *Impact, Market, Media, Portrayal, Women.*

Mass Media and Audiences

The proliferation of electronic media has a pervasive effect on society, and hence it has been studied by scholars from various disciplines. The media not only provides information but also symbols, myths, values, beliefs, and the like that members of society internalize. The exact relationship between the media and their audiences has been the subject of debate since the media were first seriously studied, which emphasizes the importance of the audience and their relationship with the media. The entire study of mass media is based on the premise that it has certain effects on its audiences. McQuail (1994) divides the history of the media's effect on its audiences into four stages. From the twentieth century to the late 1930s, the first stage was dominated by experiences with strategic propaganda during World War I, which led to a growing fear of the influence of media messages on attitudes. The Frankfurt School, set up in 1923, was concerned about the possible effects of mass media. They proposed the 'effects model', which considered society to be composed

of isolated individuals who were susceptible to media messages. The Frankfurt School envisioned that the contents of the media were injected into the thoughts of the audience, who accepted the attitudes, opinions, and beliefs expressed by the medium without question.

However, another set of theorists since then have thought that the media could not have such direct effects on the audiences they serve and consider the media to be comparatively weak at molding individual beliefs, opinions, and attitudes. Other factors present in society, such as personal contact and religion, were more likely to be thought of as influencers of people's opinions. The effects model was considered to be an inadequate representation of the communication between media and the public, as it did not take into account the audience as individuals with their own beliefs, opinions, ideals, and attitudes. The second stage, which ended in the 1960s, revised the earlier opinions on the influences of the media that personal influence was the main factor behind attitude change rather than media campaigning. The **limited effects theory** in this direction argues that because people generally choose what to watch or read based on what they already believe, the media exerts a negligible influence.

The third stage began and became popular in the 1970s, focusing more on studying the cognitive effects of mass media than the attitudinal (Noelle-Neumann, 1973; Beniger and Gusek, 1995). The class-dominant **theory** argues that the media reflects and projects the view of the minority elite, which controls it. In the early 1980s, the fourth stage, characterized by social constructivism, began. The **culturalist theory** that developed in the 1980s and 1990s combines the other two theories and claims that people interact with media to create their own meanings out of the images and messages they receive. This theory sees audiences as playing an active rather than passive role in relation to mass media. The description of media and recipients in this stage combines elements of the strong and limited effects of mass media. The main theoretical formulations that relate mass communication to society can therefore be seen as functional, sociological, and psychological. Functionalists visualize media as a social reality that permeates structure and function. According to them, the media performs the basic functions of providing information, cultural promotion, and integration. On the other hand, sociological theories see that there is a definite relationship between mass communication and social change. It encompasses four theoretical formulations: cultivation theory, agenda-setting theory, gratification theory, and dependency theory. Gebner (c.f. Howitt, 1982) assumes that media has a subtle effect on its audiences, who knowingly absorb the dominant symbols, images, and messages of media that lead to the cultivation and reinforcement of particular beliefs about the world around them. According to Max Well et al. (1972), media not only provides the agenda for ideology but, on the other hand, is also an expression of people's perception, selecting previously held beliefs, values, and interests. So, the focus of media shifts from 'what media do to the people' to 'what people do to the media'.

Tannenbaum (1970–71) and Zillman (1971, 73, 74) propose the arousal theory to explain that films create a state of emotional arousal, and the consequence of this emotive arousal is an increased probability that some form of behavior will occur. There would be attitude formation and changes that would get incorporated into the lives of people. Kapller (1960) discusses how media serves as a source of gratification and provides people with ideas of emotional release, thereby acting as an agency of control. It sees that audiences use the

media for a raft of reasons, and the audience is active. The audience uses the media, rather than the media manipulating the audience. The complex set of explanations from different schools of thought therefore makes it important to understand the functions of media as viewed by its audiences, as media cannot be studied in isolation from the social context, which includes the diverse population.

At the most basic level, audiences are vital to communication. Andrew (1991) identifies and values the existence of the audience in relation to the media. It is for the audience that the media construct and convey information, and if it were not for the audiences, the media would not exist. There have been many different theories on how audiences respond to and interact with the media, some of which have been discussed above and show clearly the complexities of focusing on the audience and the ways in which audiences can be visualized. Focusing on the audience enables one to see the complex process of the construction of meaning by the audience as a response to media texts and images. Comparatively to western feminist scholarship, communication research among women in the third world has remained, to an extent, fragmentary and descriptive. Hence, empirical and theoretical work in the area of women and mass media in developing countries is limited and uneven across regions. As a result, media research on women in developing countries has relied heavily on the West.

Television and the Representation of Women

No doubt, the media reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs, and the like of the people, but of late, especially from 1960 onwards, the emphasis of the media has shifted more specifically on women. Nevertheless, women have been projected as the main source of disseminating information in the print media as well as in electronic media, and the receiving audiences were also largely women. The latter assumes greater importance with the advent of television, which has made inroads into every household. With this, women became the main focus of projection as a symbol to attract the attention of the masses through their participation in serials, advertisements, fiction, films, etc. The rise of the women's consciousness movement in the 1960s probably made it inevitable that the media's treatment of women could be focused on. Since the 1960s and 1970s, feminist scholars have increasingly been looking into the positioning of women in the media. There are three popular stands in feminist research on media that revolve around the content, images, and representation of women in media. Mass media deals with symbols, and this symbolism of media provides a constant reminder of the immediate position of women in society. Of all forms of media, television has become one of the most important and powerful agents of transmission of knowledge, values, attitudes, worldwide aspiration, and perception and has surpassed the role of other mediums of media. Some of the most watched and perhaps influential genres of television viewing are advertisements and soap operas, and it is these two forms of television that will be largely the focus of this paper in relation to women.

Television is widely known to represent and reinforce mainstream patriarchal ideology. While television representations of women have changed greatly in the last few years, in order to accommodate the changes that are taking place at the societal level, which have also led to changes in the role of women in society, one is led to ask how much ideological change television has portrayed in context to the more modern

representations of women. It is hence important for us to question how real the representations of women are on television and how this affects the attitudes of those who watch them. The current level of media saturation has not always existed as much as it does today. With globalization, there has been an increase in the number of channels, programs, and advertisements on television. With the expansion of markets on local, national, and global scales, mass media corporations have grown bigger and stronger than ever before.

Gallagher (1981), on the portrayal of women in the mass media, finds that demeaning and derogatory media images of women prevail all 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, the United Kingdom, and the developing countries of China, Columbia, Brazil, Iran, Jamaica, the 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 underrepresent or misrepresent women and their concerns, use them in advertising as commodities, and present traditional stereotyped images of women as passive, dependent, and subordinate to men.

Over the past several decades, numerous studies have examined the portrayal of women in advertising. Belkaoui and Belkaoui, 1976; Gunner, 1978; Hennessee and Nicholson, 1972; Courtney and Whipple, 1974, reviewed TV commercials and found that these commercials do nothing to show that the structure of the family is changing or that women are capable of holding responsibilities outside the home. Researchers detected that women were far more likely than men to be shown in the home and involved with household chores. Men were far more likely than women to be portrayed outside the home as involved with sports or professional activities. Even in the 1980s, content analysis indicated similar biases existed (Blackwood, 1983; Bretl and Cantor, 1988; Jolliffe, 1989; Luebke, 1989). Women continued to be depicted in traditional roles far more often than men. Men continued to be depicted in primarily traditional roles involved with sports and professional activities. No suggestions were given that housewifely and professional roles can coexist without severe problems of adjustment for women. The first international review of research and action, initiated by UNESCO, drew our attention to the striking similarities between the negative portrayal of women in mass media and women's lack of decision-making power in media organizations throughout the world. In developing countries, feminist communication research on media content, images, and representation has grown since the early 1980s.

Although the objectification of women was not as direct earlier in the 1990s, it continued with stronger approaches to the objectification of women, like when women's bodies are used in the product itself (Zimmerman, 2008). Once again, women were seen more as objects and less as consumers, which emphasizes the fact that women are still seen as having less value than men. Women continued to be portrayed as feather-brained consumers and sex objects in advertisements on television. Such a role portrayal creates mystification, misinformation, and misrepresentation about the role and status of women in society. The prime objective of television in promoting women's development and presenting them as progressive and successful therefore remains bracketed. The commercials largely follow a stereotypical and often very derogatory pattern of presenting the women. Although the Advertising Standards Council of India has clear guidelines on the way

the media should report on or depict women in advertisements, there is a lot of controversy when tackling such sensitive issues.

On the other hand, there is also a sphere of public service or social awareness advertising on television that mainly focuses on social issues like family planning, care and concern for the elderly and disabled, awareness campaigns against smoking, drugs, alcohol, women's empowerment, etc. The primary purpose of such advertising is to educate the masses through a hard-hitting didactic message by not selling some products but rather effective messages and ideas. However, the amount of well-drafted and well-meaning public service advertisements is much less as compared to the other commercials, which are sexualized and reinforce negative images of women. Advertisements are one of the most powerful and strongest mediums of mass communication, and when authentic and unbiased messages are delivered through this medium, there is an instant positive response from the audience.

Soap operas were developed taking into account the female audiences, who, being then largely housewives, had enough time to spend watching television. The pattern of media use of women in serials and fiction even today remains, to a large extent, the same. These serials present the life course events of women's lives, consisting of premarital sex, premarital pregnancy, rape, molestation, divorce, familial maladjustment, extramarital affairs, physical liberty, and leud jokes, and present both an essentialist as well as a deconstructionist meaning of women (Gupta, 2004). Kalia (2005) argues that the problem of women who work regularly for more than 15 hours is not highlighted as much as their sexuality is. The effect of sex role portrayal in mass media has been so heavily stereotyped in the past that it is indeed difficult to work out its causal influence on already highly stereotyped sex role perceptions. There has been a change in the psychology and framing of modern conceptions of women with the projection of changing images of women in the media. For instance, the meaning of obscene or vulgar has changed. What in the 1960s was considered cheap, vulgar, or obscene is today considered essential in films and serials. Violence, crime, and sex form the trinity of media.

Roy (2012), in her analyses of two popular Indian TV serials (one focusing on rural women and the other on modern women) scoring high on the charts, both of which have their respective target audiences, concludes that these serials fail to tread beyond the common constructs of ideology that typify a woman as good or bad and fall short of presenting the wide range of reality that envelops modern existence. The deliberate presentations and calculated deformations in these two serials highlight that no matter what, free-spirited women will always be labeled as transgressors; that is the notion society is entrenched with, and that is the reality people will expect the media to portray. The studies and the concerns raised in them continue to suggest that advertisements as well as *serials* continue to pedal backward.

Media's Influence on Society

Television has transformed our social and cultural environment. It has transformed the relationships between public and private spheres and between physical and social spaces. Women are an important component of

our society, and so the issue of women's empowerment is a matter of serious concern and thought. The soap operas affect women more simply because women watch more serials than men. Men spend the most time outside, whereas women are confined to the household (Jyotin 2002). Media with its unrealistic vision draws upon social reality but selectively picks up certain existing values, behaviors, and images, censoring the others. By highlighting only selected aspects of reality in a particular context, by projecting them as larger than life, and by the continuation of repeated media images and messages, media influences reality and functions in the larger system to promote patriarchy and capitalism that control media structures and organizations, which represent women as dependent on men, powerless, and brainless.

Most of the programs, if we look, are mitigated by crime and violence (Payne and Payne; c.f. Howitt, 1982). Opinions on the matter of media violence's effects are wide-ranging. Some scholars claim that media violence effects have been conclusively demonstrated, while others claim that the entire media, violence, and crime research has been mismanaged and overrated. Since 1950, more than 3500 studies in the US and around the world using investigative methods have examined this association, and all but 18 have shown a positive relationship between media exposure and violent behavior (Cook, 2000). However, there are many instances of news stories inspired by films and serials about how people resort to crime. In recent years, if we see, not only the number of men committing crimes against women but also the number of women committing crimes has been on the rise. While it may seem harmless, daily exposure to violent images and messages can normalize and perpetuate violence against women. Of all the states in India, Maharashtra tops the list in the number of crimes committed by women (timesofindia.indiatimes.com). This may be one of the instances (other factors might be responsible too) of how media is distorting the psychological set-up of its viewers.

In recent years, there has also been a sudden and dramatic rise in the exposure of people to vulgarity. Globalization has, in this direction, lowered the image and status of women in terms of their body meanings. Although it has opened new vistas for role mobility the role of women as depicted in the media has undergone change as compared to the past. Yet, overemphasizing glorification and the greater sensuousness of women's character is being used as a weapon to denigrate her position in society. On the one hand, media is generating sexual meaning for her body, which combined with songs creates an erotic meaning for women's bodies, further heightened by the focus on certain body movements and body parts. This view of the body as erotically beautiful leads to an increase in demand for it and creates a market force that generates supply and demand among people for articles that expose the body in the image of media presentation. The media has contributed in this way to the commodification of women by creating cynicism in the minds of people by emphasizing certain body images and frames, creating an obsession with looking beautiful.

According to the Times of India (2013), rapid growth in India's hair maintenance industry highlights the fact that India's cosmetics market is reportedly growing at 15 to 20 percent (www.indianprwire.com). Body dissatisfaction and disturbance have reached normative levels among women of all ages, regions, and races. When constantly exposed to unrealistic sexualized images, women and girls often become critical of their own bodies. According to communication theories, repeated exposure to media content leads its viewers to accept its portrayals as representations of reality (Grabe and Ward, 2008). *Cosmetic surgery has gained*

popularity over the years. According to a global survey conducted by the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery in 2012, India was ranked fourth in the list of the top five countries in the world for the number of people going for surgical and non-surgical procedures to enhance their features (www.modernmedicare.co.in). Media thrives on saleability, not significance; on market forces, not morals; on sensuality, not significance.

Though electronic *media* in most countries do not yet provide a balanced picture of *women's* diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world, it has been working positively in certain aspects by creating awareness with regard to certain social issues concerning women. Those issues of social importance are covered through advertisements, propaganda, and creating awareness and conscientization among the masses. It has increased the participation and access of women to self-expression and decision-making. The programs that largely relate to women's health, empowerment, employment, and education and are directed at women and their families, at home or at work, help provide women with some clues on how to manage their lives. In a way, it has also contributed to empowering women and aims to inspire women with the courage to break free from the chains of limiting self-belief patterns and societal or religious conditioning that have traditionally kept women suppressed and unable to see their true beauty and power.

In this direction, alternative media have played a significant role. The main function of alternative media is to offer a different perspective than what is presented in the media that is under the control of a government or a big business. Alternative media often aim to challenge existing powers to represent marginalized groups of women and foster horizontal linkages among communities of interest. It is dedicated to the democratization of communication, and these media provide an alternative viewpoint, different information, and interpretations of the world that cannot be found in the mainstream. Alternative media shoulder a greater responsibility towards women's empowerment by supporting social struggles, awakening women's consciousness to their subordination, and advocating and defending rights. It also aims to promote various groups reflection and popular communication. Kaul and Sahni (2010) analyzed the portrayal of women in TV serials and the impact of these serials on the viewers of Jammu. The researchers selected the interview method to collect the data. Their findings suggest that very little variety of realism was found in the projection of women by Indian media. The qualitative analysis revealed that many women respondents agreed that serials had a great impact on their thinking. Respondents in her study also admitted that they gained confidence and learned how to organize their homes. This paper is based on the Author's MA Dissertation in Sociology at GNDU

Objectives and Methodology

The objective of the study is to explicate the impact of media on women and to see what role media plays in empowerment of women by acting as an intervention agent in the life of the respondents. The study also aims to examine the perception of women on the portly of women in media. Herein, the term media particularly is being refereed to television. For this study, Amritsar city was chosen as the universe of the study. The city has five women colleges located in different areas of the city. As for the respondents, college lecturers (permanent) as well as housewives (i.e, 50 from each) were interviewed with the help of an interview

schedule selected though simple random sampling. Total size of sample was 100. For college lecturers a list of college lecturers working on regular basis was prepared and desired number was selected by using tippets method. The data collected was tabulated after coding and decoding and was processed, interpreted and analysed.

Findings

The data indicates that majority of the respondents were between the age group 25-35 years and were Hindus, followed by Sikhs and a few Christians. All lecturers were Post Graduates (which is the condition of employment at college level) while most of the housewives were Under Graduates and a few were Graduates. Most of the Lecturers hailed from nuclear household while, housewives largely were living in joint household. The average family size was 4 for lecturers and 5-8 for housewives. The family income of the two also showed a variation, i.e., monthly family income of housewives was lower than the working lecturers. Likewise, the number of earning members was more in the family of lecturers as compared to the women who were mere housewives. Therefore, the profile of respondents (Table, 1.1) shows difference in the socio-economic background.

Table 1.1:Socio-Economic Profile

| Variable | Category | Lecturers | Housewives |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age | 25-35 | 27 (54) | 22 (44) |
| | 26-45 | 18 (36) | 24(48) |
| | 46-55 | 5(10) | 4(8) |
| Religion | Hindu | 28 (56) | 30 (60) |
| | Sikh | 20 (40) | 16(32) |
| | Christian | 2(4) | 4 (8) |
| Qualifications | Under Graduation | - | 24(48) |
| | Graduation | - | 18 (36) |
| | Post Graduation | 50 (100) | 8(16) |
| Family Type | Nuclear | 40 (80) | 29 (58) |
| | Joint | 8 (16) | 26 (52) |
| | Extended | 2(4) | 5 (10) |
| Size of Family | Upto 4 | 12 (24) | 16 (32) |
| | 5-8 | 31 (62) | 19 (38) |
| | 9 and above | 7 (14) | 15 (30) |
| | Upto 10000 | - | 15 (30) |
| | 10001-25000 | 2 (4) | 18 (36) |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| Monthly family income | 25001-50000 | 40 (80) | 11 (22) |
| | 50001+ | 8 (16) | 6 (12) |
| Number of Earning Members | 1 | 3 (6) | 4 (8) |
| | 2-3 | 37 (74) | 27 (54) |
| | Above 4 | 10 (20) | 19 (38) |

Duration and TV Usage:

Television acts as a means for disseminating information, ideas and messages so as to bring some kind of change in the lives of people. People use it differently for different purposes. Before knowing about its use, it is important for us to know the time spent by respondents in viewing television. It was seen that colleges lecturers largely stated that they spent almost an hour on watching television. The reason might be that a little more of their time is spent outside the home, i.e., at work. While, 73.0 percent housewives stated that they spend almost 2-3 hours watching TV (Table, 1.2).

Table 1.2: Duration and Purpose of Watching TV

| Variable | Category | Lecturers | Housewives | Total |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------|------------|-------|
| Duration of time Spent | Upto 1 hour | 25 (83.3) | 5(16.6) | 30 |
| | 1-2 | 14(56) | 11(44) | 25 |
| | 2-3 | 8(26) | 22(73) | 30 |
| | More than 3 | 3(20) | 12(80) | 15 |
| Purpose | Time Pass | 26 (41.7) | 35(58.3) | 60 |
| | Socially relevant/revolves around life | 3(16.7) | 15(83.3) | 18 |
| | Glamour+ Personality Development | 3(50) | 3(50) | 6 |
| | Stress Release | 6(100) | - | 6 |
| | Curiosity | 6(46.1) | 7(53.9) | 13 |

The table suggests that 58.3 per cent of the housewives and 41.7 per cent of the lecturers watch soap operas to just pass off their time. The respondents also stated that the serials they watch are close to their life and depict the social issues and issues among them (83.3 per cent housewives and 16.7 per cent lecturers). Huge number of housewives stated this as compared to lecturers. The remaining respondents stated other reasons such as; the serials carry glamour with them and provide audiences clues of fashion, hoe interiors as

well as exteriors and adds to their personality development. For still others, television was a source of releasing stress and curiosity. While, women have their own reasons which may look simple enough, it might have a deeper psychological meaning.

Ascertaining Impact on Respondents

Importance of media in social life cannot be undermined. In the present times, media becomes a cradle of socialization as it provides people with new models of behaviour and norms particularly, in the cases wherein, people are not well integrated into the family or social groups and so rely heavily upon media for advice and meanings of the things. Media contributes to people differently. The Fig 1 shows the impact respondents stated on how television has changed their lives.

Fig 1: Impact of Television Serials

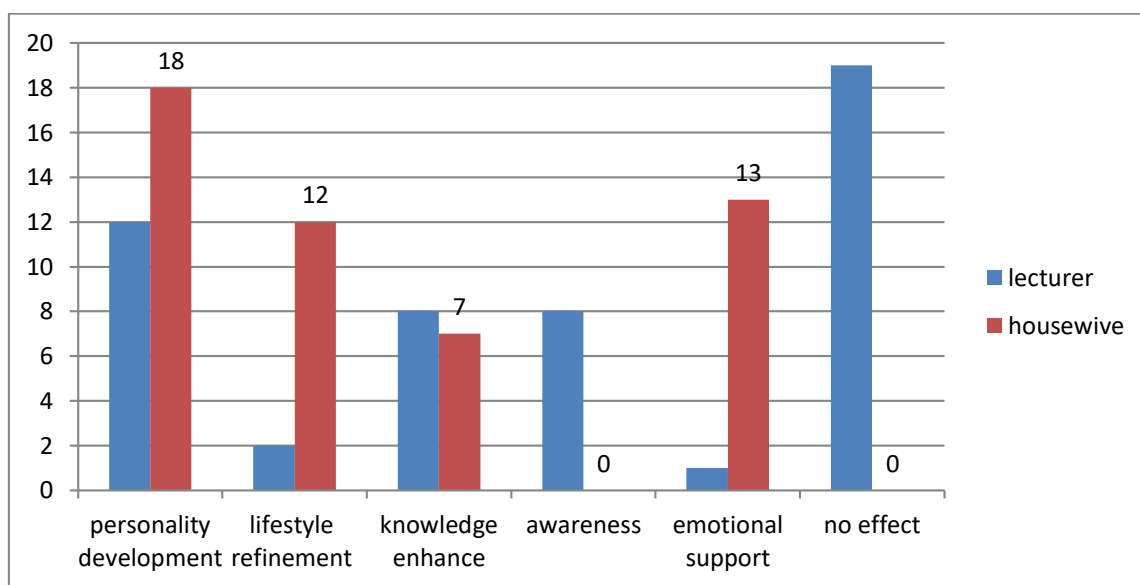


Figure given shows that Tv serials help them in personality development (30 per cent). They teach appropriate speech stylisation, fitness mantras etc which have helped them in developing their personality. Also fourteen per cent of the respondents stated that TV has lead to refinement in their life style. It is equally a source of awareness (80 per cent) and enhancing ones knowledge (14 per cent) and such view was held by majority of housewives. Interestingly, 19 per cent of the respondents (lecturers) find that TV has no impact on them. Most of the housewives find that TV impacts their personality (36 per cent) and change in the life style (24 per cent). On the other hand, many lecturers consider it a source creating awareness and enhancing world view.

Depiction of Life in TV

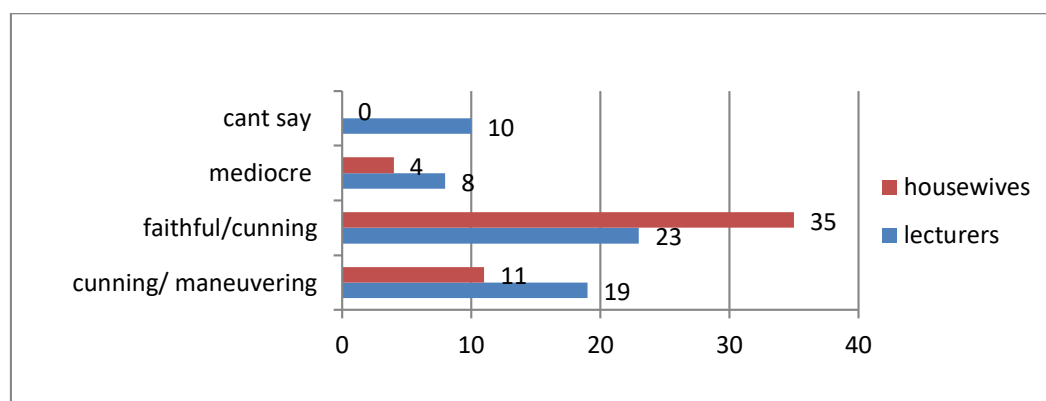
It was also seen that 52 percent of the total respondents find the reality on TV unrealistic (28 housewives and 24 lecturers). Also, twenty five percent in total find it realistic (14 housewives and 11 lecturers). Lastly, mere twenty three percent respondents, i.e. 15 lecturers and 8 housewives gave a mixed opinion. It can be said that perception of the viewers on how they conceive contents of the programmes, i.e. whether they think these programmes, serials etc are depicting the real life or presenting an elusive account of reality varies.

Portrayal and Levels of Portrayals of Women

Looking at the contents of the different programs on the various channels, one can easily realize that women are the central characters in almost all the serials and advertisements. They are portrayed in different shades, such as negative, positive, superwoman, etc. However, they have not been presented in a non-partial manner. When Hochschild (1989) had working women examine advertising images of the superwoman, many responded negatively. His research has suggested that some women find the portrayal of superwoman in serials and advertisements unrealistic. In the present study, it was also seen that the respondents gave different opinions on the role portrayal of women in television serials as well as advertisements. It was seen that among the college lecturers, nearly 15 (53.7%) stated the portrayal as justified and 35 (48.6%) stated it as non-justifiable. Among the housewives, 37 (51.3 percent) stated it as non-justified, and 12 (46.4 percent) stated it as justified. The remaining respondents gave no opinion. All in all, the role depicted or portrayed in serials and advertisements was thought of as nonjustifiable by the majority.

Women in media and their roles are presented in an exaggerated manner; this may be a reflection of women's subordinate status in society. The role of women is confined to the extremes of good and bad. The traditional roles of women are inclined towards family values such as faith, care, sympathy, too much goodness, and being highly supportive. The new roles acquired with a market-oriented approach are manipulative, exploitative, and self-oriented.

Fig.2: Levels of Portrayal



The respondents find that majority of the serials show women in their traditional role (58 per cent) in which she is faithful, family oriented, non progressive and caring (Fig 2). The proportion of respondents having such a belief is high among the housewives as compared to lecturers. Women are equally shown as maneuvering and manipulative (30 per cent). Such an opinion is largely held by the college lecturers.

Media and Communication Within Family

To know attitudinal changes (if any) with regards to conversation with spouse and children on health and sexual problems, the respondents were asked questions. It was found that 83.7 per cent of the respondents (45 per cent lecturers and 54.4 per cent housewives) do talk freely with their spouse on health issues. In this

regard, housewives were found to be more open in conversation with their husbands than the other respondents (Table 1.3)

Table 1.3: Communication on Health Issues

| Variable | Category | Lecturer | housewives |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Conversation with spouse | Yes | 35 (70) | 42(4) |
| | No | 7 (14) | 15 (30) |
| Conversation with children | Yes | 15 (30) | 14(28) |
| | No | 24(4) | 28(56) |

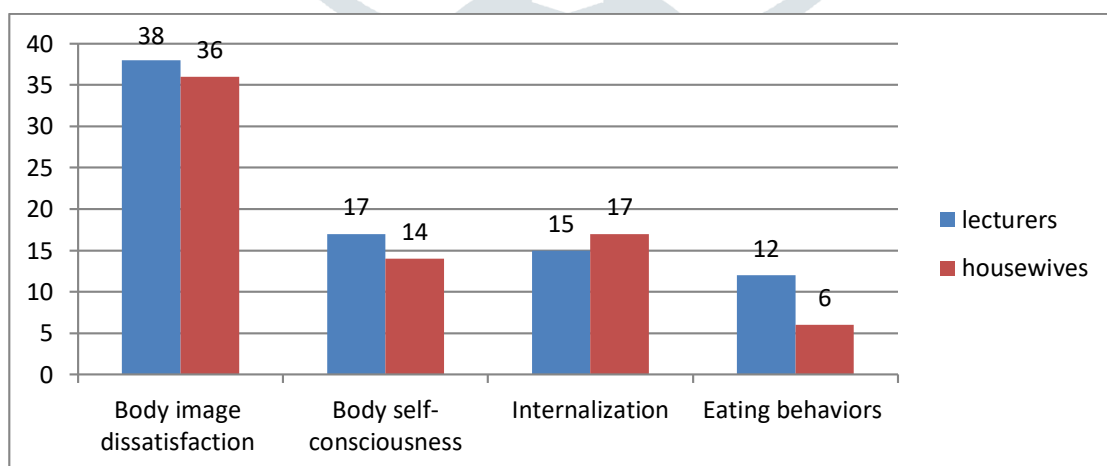
- Remaining =Not applicable

It in this regard it was also seen that most of the respondents do not even converse with the children that much on health issues (especially, housewives).

Body Image

Research suggests that exposure to mass media depicting the thin-ideal body may be linked to body image disturbance in women. The respondents were also asked how media images interferes in their perception about their own body. It was seen that the responses sought were no different in both the cases. The responses were sought in multiples (Fig.3). It was seen that media images lead women to re-think about their own images. Across movies, magazines, and television programs, thinness and flawlessness is consistently emphasized and promoted as rewarded for women. Even brief exposure to media images depicting the thin-ideal body often leads to short-term adverse outcomes in women's body image and related concerns. Women often adopt number of ways to re-construct their notion of own body.

Fig 3:Body Dissatisfaction



Conclusion:

Based on the aforementioned findings, it is evident that television is akin to a sharp, double-edged sword, capable of serving crucial and meaningful purposes when used judiciously and with care. Its effectiveness as a

communication tool, especially concerning women, is remarkably high. Television plays a pivotal role in shaping and influencing their perspectives, opinions, and attitudes. In today's society, it stands as the most compelling and pervasive medium for disseminating information.

Television possesses the potential and power to function as a modern information multiplier, facilitating the smooth progression of national development, economic growth, women's empowerment, and, on a broader scale, social development. Its role as a catalyst for change should not be underestimated or disregarded. What is imperative at this juncture is the deliberate harnessing of its potential so that it can actively contribute to the advancement of women and the betterment of humanity as a whole.

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