The treatment meted to women and girls in different modes of human communication, mirror the prevailing attitudes and values towards women in a particular society. Image portrayal through communication reinforces reality. Any nation on the path of development cannot relegate nearly half its population to be “wasted assets” or to utilize their potential only by half measure. The success of all developmental plans and programmes depend upon the active involvement and participation of women. It is necessary to equip the women with information to facilitate their active involvement and participation in the nation’s development programmes and activities.

Since formal education is a costly and long term process, in a developing country like India it is practical to use mass media for educating masses and inculcating new values so as to facilitate national development.

Both common experience and several systematic research studies reveal that, the mass media so far have not been very effective instruments to inform and prepare society about women’s role in national development. The main reason behind this is the very limited reach of mass media among women especially in rural areas. Even that limited exposure is in the form of film and film based entertainment programmes providing little opportunity for education. The little educational programmes that are telecast are not meaningful or attractive enough for the common masses.

The national plan of Action for women drawn up in 1976 was clear about communication priorities and provided sufficient direction for subsequent media planning. Almost every section of the plan urged “vigorous campaigns of education and action” so that the plan goals could come within the reach of women everywhere. As a result the years that followed saw a quantum increase in programming for women but not so clearly a qualitative progress.

Policy enunciations in the Sixth Five year plan (1980-85) were more precise. A separate chapter on women & development was incorporated in the plan for the first time, it spoke out clearly the need to integrate objective for women’s development with broader national objectives. This also gave clear guidelines to state media services on what the content of their communication should be. The summary statement of the sixth plan chapter on women and development said “programmes relating to education, health, nutrition and employment would no doubt go a long way in the removal of social disabilities facing women.” The plan chapter on communications, Information and Broadcasting contained only an oblique promise to use research in order to provide more imaginative intermeshing of various programme elements.

The seventh five year plan (1985-90) went on to says that “the basic approach should be to inculcate confidence among women and bring about an
awareness of their own potential”. It goes on to list among key strategies ‘extensive utilization of various mass media’—The chapter on communication information and broadcasting referred to raising the level of peoples conciousness, enriching the social and cultural life and making them better informed citizens.

It commits to media being a ‘vehicle of education and extension to narrow information gaps faced by different target groups. It lists youth, women, children and weaker sections as key target groups for special programming.

Notwithstanding various directives, women’s image has gone through several unjust projection at the hands of the media. Women specific programmes on radio and televisions perputuate sex-sterotypes and cater to women as housewives and mother, rather than provide knowledge and skills for their roles and economic contributions.

A conflicting image of women dictated by centuries of rigid norm has been absorbed, internalized and perpetuated by generation of Indian women and men. It constrains them from equipping themselves for their own good as well as that of the community. It inhibits them from receiving and accepting knowledge that could lift them out of their present condition.

By the some token, it makes them receptive and responsive to communication that reinforces the image that our society has traditionally encouraged them to accept.

**OBJECTIVE**

The main objective of this study was to examine women’s programmes in a broader perspective as well as general programmes in women’s perspective. The main concerns ware:

1. The projection of women on T.V. news and fiction. Do they present stereotypes of women as housewife mother etc. or are newer roles brought out?
2. Subject of women’s programmes: Are the subjects still stereotyped like embroidery, cooking, child care etc. or do they embark upon larger issues pertaining to women?
3. Are only women’s programmes’ aimed at the education and development of women or are all other programmes looked at having women’s dimension, whether it is agriculture or sports or socioeconomic issues or entertainment programmes.

The objective of this study is to provide inputs from this perspective so that the real issues and problems are brought out and the programmes become need based. The aim is not to reinforce traditional beliefs and images or stereotypes but to bring out the women’s dimension in totality.

**CHOICE OF MEDIA**

This study mainly concerns itself with the electronic media and the electronic media means Radio and Television. *But today broadcast journalism*
Having taken backseat to television journalism, this study will mainly concern itself with Television programmes and the images of women on Television. However images of women and news about women in the press and broadcast journalism will also touched upon. Here we limit our study to India's governmental television network Doordarshan only the satellite channels are not taken into consideration.

SAMPLE SIZE
This study analyses the contents of Television news that are of special concern to women. It also analyses how women are projected on Television news and what are the percentages of women projected on TV. news.

Some of the popular serials telecast on Doordarshan are also analysed. Among these some serials which were specially woman oriented or had a woman as the main character, are also analysed.

METHODOLOGY
The traditional method of media analysis is that of content analysis wherein the manifest content of the message is regarded as the most important area for scientific-social analyses. According to Berelson, content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.

In studies of media content it is not possible to examine all the relevant data as a result of which only a sample may be analysed. Findings can then be used too make inferences about the larger universe from which it was selected. Generally three characteristics are observed for the purpose of content analysis.

1. Comprehensive analysis and analysis of sample
2. The preliminary choice of categories
3. Classifying and processing the results.

But the shortcoming of content analyses is that it is not concerned with the questions of quality of responses or of interpretation. Janus (1997) notes that the results of content analysis need to be interpreted with care, otherwise they may lead to the males versus females perspectives in which all males are counted together as a general category which is then contrasted with a all female category, without reference to class race or cultural divisions. Instead they should be distinguished on the basis of visible personal traits, such as marital status and age, which a according to Janus are both a political and historical. Only then can we hope to break the so called female stereotypes and strive towards a more realistic future.

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE PRESS
The sanctity of the written word has been established ever since it came into being. Though the maximum percentage of the population in India is illiterate, the credibility of the press is the maximum because of the prevailing power structure dominated by the privilaged class with access to
education. Therefore one cannot underestimate the influence of the print media both on ordinary readers and the policymakers.

This influence of press dates back to the time of India’s struggle for independence when it was used to communicate their ideas to the then rulers as well as to fellow citizens.

Since the press has such a strong influence on society it is evident that the image of women as projected in the press will directly and indirectly influence the society’s attitude towards women. According to the Indian constitution equal participation of men and women in national life and elimination of discrimination and oppression are among the accepted social goals of the country. Hence the newspapers do not pursue an openly anti-woman line, but there is an invisible glass shield which blocks away most of the women's issues or gives them a tinted hue.

The absence of women from the news pages is what Gaye Tuchman terms 'symbolic annihilation, a combination or condemnation, trivialisation and erasure. The invisibility and inaudibility of women in society is thus further perpetuated and enhanced by the media. In the rare event of women's issues receiving attention from the media, violent atrocities against women provoke far more coverage than developmental news.

Issues related to women's work, health, position in society and experiences within the family—the everyday conditions of their lives and the deprivation and tyranny are routinely subjected to prompt far less coverage.

At a two day seminar held in Mumbai in 1997 on women and media two key questions emerged.

1. Does 'commerce' now determine the space given to women's issues?
2. Why the fact that there are more women at senior journalistic positions than ever before not resulted in wider coverage to the real problems of women?

"What Miss world has for breakfast is featured at great length, but we have yet to read about what happened to Geeta, the girl who was locked up for years by her brother and recently rescued in a semi sane condition."

"Today which brand of lipstick women should use is considered more important in the media than rape."

In the past the women's section of a newspaper ran stories on recipies, social gossip, tips on housecleaning, parenting and the like.

But today they are different from their predecessors. They follow the model of working women's magazines. They contain inspirational stories of women breaking gender barriers at workplace and elsewhere, and articles that talk about balancing those things that compete for a woman's time and energy. For example "The Telegraph from Calcutta publishes this kind of women's page that has done away with the conventional cookery, cosmetics and cleaning up routine. This section is also participatory where women express their views about issues and exchange ideas with one another.
WOMEN’S MAGAZINES

Women’s magazines occupy a peculiar position in the media world. Though they are precursors of the special interest magazines they are treated as less equals. They are ignored by serious media professionals and looked down upon by other special interest magazines except may be the show biz magazines which also cater mainly to women.

The publishers of these magazines view these chiefly as money spinners which deliver a valuable captive audience to cater to advertisers. The staff is divided between two categories

a) those who treat their jobs as any other job.

b) those committed feminists who aim for the betterment of women thereby helping them to improve their lives and social status.

The readers on the other hand coontinue to patronise these magazines because of their combination of utility and entertaintment values.

The women’s magazines are also divided into two categories.

The totally feminest magazines whose main aim is to promote feminism and they militantly promote feminism. Magazines like ‘Manushi’ and ‘Vama’ fall in the category.

Secondly are the middle of the road magazines which are mainly conventional women’s magazines dealing with cookery, cosmetics, cleaning and child rearing but have some serious articles dealing with women achivers as well as various articles dealing with the problems of modern women, viz. Femina & Savvy. These magazines invite a lot of criticism from the feminists who suggest that these magazines play an integral part in a grand conspiracy to keep women in their lowly place.

HISTORY OF WOMEN’S MAGAZINES

Masik Patrika in Bengali was the first woman’s magazine in an Indian language, published from Calcutta in 1854 and edited by Peary Chand Mitra and Radhanath Sikdar. Other women’s magazines were Bamabodhini (1803) and Paricharika (1878) of the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal. Here articles discussed the role of women in ancient Hindu society and women’s education. Stri Bodh of the Parsi Community was published in 1857 in Mumbai.

Later women themselves took on the task of publishing and editing women’s magazines. In Madras, the wife of an Indian christian – social reformer Kamala Ratnan Satthinadhan edited the Indian Ladies Magazine (1901-1938) which focussed on the achievement of women. Sarojini Naidu’s poems were also first published in this magazine.

‘Bharati’ edited by Swarnakumari Devi, Hiranmayee Devi and Sarala Kumari Devi was published in Bengal between 1884-1912.

Savithri (Telegu) was edited by Pulugurti Lakshmi - Nara samba in the early part of the century.
In North India Rameshwar Nehru edited a Hindi Magazine called Sri Darpan (1909-1925)

Karnataka Nandini (Kannada) was edited by Nanjanagudu Thirumalamba between 1917 and 1922. She also started a publishing company (Sathihitaishini) (women’s well wisher) Hemant Kumari (b1868) was the first woman a journalist in Hindi, who was also the editor of a journal. She published Sugrihini, a journal for women in 1888, which was published in Allahabad.

Bharat Bhagini was another Hindi journal brought out from Allahabad by Hari Devi in 1889.

Other early women’s magazines include Sundari Subodh (Gujrati), Kahatoon (Urdu), Hindu Sundari (Telegu), Tehzib Niswan (Urdu) and Ismat (Urdu).

Manushi a journal about women and society is the first feminist publication of its kind in the country. Founded in 1978 ‘Manushi’ is edited in Delhi by Madhu Kishwar and brought out in both Hindi and English. It is totally self funded. Eves weekly is the oldest English language, nationally circulated women’s magazine in India. It was launched under a male editor and then taken over by Gulshan Ewing until 1989. In 1990 the magazine was closed down and relaunched in 1992 as a monthly. It began as a socialites magazine covering fashionable people and events, in addition to providing tips on clothes, grooming, cooking, needle craft, although it moved beyond that profile in the late 70s and 80s.

Femina, the other prominent fortnightly women’s magazine by Bennett Coleman Pvt. Ltd. was a year younger than Eves weekly but soon overtook it in circulation. It was initially edited by a male and then taken over by Vimla Patil. At present it is edited by Satya Saran. While it has always had the usual ingredients of a traditional women’s magazine it has also carried some noteworthy regular features at various times.

Today the market is flooded with women’s magazines with new one coming up every now and then.

Among these are those in regional languages like Manorajyam (Malayalam)Vanitha (Malayalam) Sananda (Bengali) Manorama (Hindi & Bengali) Sarita (Hindi) Grihasobha (Hindi) Femina (Gujrati) Meri Saheli (hindi).

Among the other English language magazines are Savy, New woman, women’s Era and the newest entrants in the market are the international magazines cosmopolitan and Elle.

THE WOMEN’S MAGAZINE COMES OF AGE

The woman’s movement in India, impelled by the United Nations-declared International women’s Decade and by Indian women’s own observations and experiences within their particular context gathered momentum. These efforts generated public interest and helped create an environment in which
at least some women's issues—notably atrocities against women were deemed worthy of media attention. The involvement of women journalist in the movement contributed to the visibility to these issues in newspapers and magazine coverage in the mainstream press not only increased public awareness of both the issues and the movement, but also made it easier for interested editorial staff within women's magazines to orient their publications towards issues of serious concern to women.

However in the later half of eighties with the opening of skies and the advent of private television channels, a large chunk of the advertising lucre diverted to the electronic media. These developments led to pressure on the editorial staff to lighten their content.

Thus while 10-15 years ago issues like violence against women and reports on empowerment of women in rural areas got more coverage in mainstream newspapers today not only has the space declined but even in women's magazines it is almost non-existent.

On the other hand with the birth of the new woman of the 90's and the air of liberalisation, women's magazines do publish occasional articles on current women issues but as Femina editor Satya Saran said "one has to look for them" which is a difficult task given that, even serious articles end up looking like glossy ads.

Today women's magazines are paying more attention to women's role as consumers or the women in a consumerist culture, as a result of which the positioning of articles have also changed. Today advertisements are on the right side page, a reversal to the norm 20 years ago, when editorial matter occupied this prime space.

The publisher of the Elle magazine went so far as to say that since both the editorial and advertising wings of her publication regarded 'today's woman' as a decision maker the two wings supported each other. New forms of advertising such as tie up for events and editorial pages sponsored by advertisers worked better than direct advertising.

Today there appears to be less room for serious attempts to understand the poor status of women, irrespective of class, caste, creed and other division, to look at gender as a major factor in determining social cultural, economic and political power, to keep in view the ground realities faced by the majority of Indian women, and so on. The focus now seems to be on helping middle and upper-class readers become superwomen-cum-little women the entrepreneur or professional par excellence who is also a super hostess, the super efficient housekeeper, the smart and decorative wife as well as the loving and attentive mother".

WOMEN IN NEWS : A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS :
Content analysis has been the most effective way of studying the mass media and a number of studies have been conducted world wide on how women are projected in the press.
As far as India is concerned these kind of studies in the past have been few and far between. It was found that Asian newspapers had sparse coverage on women's movement (Kulkarni 1976). In Indian newspapers women and children had the lowest coverage (UNICEF report 1986). One of the pioneering works was by Neelam Bhardwaj and B. Kumar. They produced a paper "Women in newspapers : A study of four leading Indian dailies" : Its objective was to find out the relative coverage given to women and women's issues by elite Indian dailies.

For this, four leading news papers published from Delhi, two in Hindi and two in English were selected. Hindustan Times & Indian Express in English and Nav Bharat Times and Hindustan in Hindi, for three consecutive months i.e. April May & June 1987, were selected.

The second study was by Nandini Prasad published as "Women in press (1992)". This was a quantitative as well as qualitative content analysis of 'The Hindu', 'The Hindustan Times', 'Indian Express' and 'The Times of India' for 15 consecutive days i.e. July 1 to 15-1992. This was a much more detailed study than the former one.

The quantitative aspects included the number of items carried by the newspaper on women's issues during the period and also space accorded to these items. The qualitative aspects emphasised the format of coverage, source of information, placement of stories, context etc. It basically reflected the effort of the press, its involvement and commitment to the cause of women.

Another study was undertaken by NAMEDIA foundation for a period of six months – February 1990 to July 1990 and studied the coverage given to women's issues by nine English dailies spread all over India and five Hindi dailies.

THE PRESENT STUDY
The present study aims to make a comparative analysis of these previous studies. It's objective to find out the change in coverage of women's issues both qualitative and quantitative from 1987 to 1992. Since the Indian Express and Hindustan Times were common in the first two studies a comparison will be made only between these newspapers. Similarly the Hindustan Times, The Times of India and the Hindu is common in the second and the third study and hence they will be compared.

FORMAT OF COVERAGE
Firstly the format of coverage will be analysed.
It is unfortunate to note that in spite of all the hype about women and media in spite of seminars, conferences and committees being set up to review the position of women in media, in spite of the fact that there are more and more women entering into media, and in spite of volumes of research being conducted all over the world on gender bias and feminism in media, there has been a positive decline of the coverage given to women today than it was about 5 years ago.

Whereas in 1987 there were 76% articles published on national level on women's issues in 1992 it drastically declined to 31.03% in the Hindustan Times. Similarly in the case of Indian Express, 65.2% in 1987 as compared to 22.58% in 1992.

Whereas the Hindustan Times had 24% International articles on women in 1987, they declined to 3.45% in 1992. Similarly there were only 6.45% international articles in 1992 as opposed to 34.75% in 1987 in the Indian Express.

Though the percentage of news and features were comparable, still there was a decline in numbers in 1996 as compared to 1987. As far as editorials are concerned the scenario is very bleak. Except for about 6 editorials (4.25%) published in 1987, no editorials were published in Hindustan Times as well as Indian Express in 1992. Hence an overall decline in the number of news about women is noted within a span of five years.

**KIND OF COVERAGE**

In this section a comparative analysis will be made from the three studies conducted in 1987, 1990 and 1992 respectively. The newspapers considered are the ‘Indian Express,’ ‘Hindustan Times,’ The Times of India and the ‘Hindu’. The newspaper content were categories under different topics and articles were divided according to these categories evolved on the basis of priority areas on women’s issues, and the number of stories determined the relative significance attached to these issues.
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<td>11.6</td>
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<td>19.53</td>
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All figures are in percentages.

Table 18.2

A woman’s news is defined as news, feature or editorial in which a woman or women is focussed, or any item which is of primary significance to women. According to these the items were divided into the following categories.

**Development**: It refers to development programmes, organisation technologies and activities for upliftment of women and women in development. It also includes public policies & social environment stories.

**Health**: Refers to the articles dealing with different aspects of women’s health and nutrition.

**Education**: Includes items on educational activities, women in education and their performance. Also income generating schemes for women, transformation of rural women and mobilising public opinion of women through media.

**Social problems and legal rights**: Conditions of women in rural & urban society, their plight, law & legal rights related to women’s inheritance, social problems etc.

**Roles & images**: Includes items on images and varied roles of women as projected on the media.

**Multiple topics**: Includes items on women in theatre, arts, cinema, sports, politics, their profile, works, views awards and honours.

**Crime against women**: Includes crime, done on women like rape, dowry, Sati, sexual harrassment etc.

**Miscellaneous**: These are items which are related to women and can not be categorized under any of the above categories.

**ANALYSIS**

It is important to note that there were very few development items in the two newspapers in 1987, then there was a significant increase in 1990 in all the four papers and again a crash in 1992.

**Health**: The coverage of health issues remained more or less constant throughout the span of time with a slight increase in 1992.

**Education**: Here also there was little coverage of education in 1987 with a gradual increase in 1990 and a sharp crash in 1992 in all the papers with the exception of ‘The Times of India’ not featureing any stories at all.

**Social problems & legal rights**: In 1987 there were a significant number of social problems and legal rites stories (16.55 and 12.76) which gradually declined to about 5% in 1990 and hit an all-time low of 3% in 1992.

**Roles & Images**: The stories about roles and images were more or less comparable in 1987 and 1992 with a low during the 90s.

**Multiple topics**: Here there was a significant coverage of women in Arts, sports & politics in 1987 about 45%, which declined to about 20% on an average but during 1990s hit an all time low of about 2%.
Crime against women: There has been a significant increase in the reporting of crime against women with the advancing years. Whereas in 1987 only 20% crimes were covered by the newspaper, today the percentage has risen to 60-65% approx.

Miscellaneous: The reporting of Miscellaneous stories have also declined as compared to 1987.

CONCLUSION

Though this comparative study is not conclusive because of certain discrepancies, it gives us a fair picture. One of the major shortcomings was the fact that the time periods of these three studies were different. In the first study by Neelam Bhardwaj and B. Kumar, three consecutive months of 1987 were taken into consideration. In the second study by NAMEDIA foundation a period of six-months ‘February 90 to July 90’ were studied whereas in the study by Nandini Prasad the newspaper of 15 consecutive days–July 1-15 1992 were selected. Hence the data gathered in the last study is decidedly less than the previously two. To overcome this drawback the percentage reading were taken into consideration.

The picture that emerges shows, that instead of increase there has been a decrease in the number of women’s articles covered by the mainstream press. Though in 1987 there was some coverage in the development, health, education and social problems, it increased significantly in 1990 but there was a sharp decrease in 1992. Though this is the general trend, only one category ie. Crime against women got more and more coverage with the passing of time. Though there has always been crime against women, today they are being reported in more numbers because women have become conscious of their rights and have realised that media is an important tool to fight against crime which has been done on women since time immemorial.

But the overall trend is disheartening and women need more coverage on the mainstream press.

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