CHAPTER I

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Status of Women in Society:

The position of women in a particular society reflects the value system of that society. This value system is the very pulsation of the vitality of that society. The "history" shows that most of the societies have been male-dominated societies. The women's role in the society from the micro level to the macro level, from family to the wider social systems - economic, political and cultural has been determined by the men and for the benefit of men. So the men remain in the centre of the circumference of the social activities. The women have been regarded no doubt the essential components but as supplements and on the conditions and terms decided by men either in the form of norms or values or responsibilities - no matter whatever greatness is attached to them or in the form of innumerable restrictions and taboos imposed on them.

The image of women in India has undergone many changes down the ages. In the ancient period, women enjoyed equal rights with men in society and were given preferential treatment. In the Vedas, there is ample evidence of women scholars (likewise Garge, Maitreyi) excelling in intellectual activities (Desai, 1987).

However, with the passage of time, and with the onslaught of western influence in our society, as also due to the process of modernisation, women have been accorded a lower status in our society. They have been downtrodden and neglected.
It is strange that despite our economic development over the last four decades and the quick changes in the fields of education and technology women are still accorded with lower status as it is evident from demographic factors. According to 1991 census, the sex ratio stood at 929 females to 1,000 males. This ratio in 1901 was 972 females for 1,000 males. The literacy rate is 39.42 percent for females and 63.86 percent for males. The female work participation rate is 23 percent and that of males is 51.62 percent. Figures regarding economic participation rate for women have very little meaning as the statistics still do not reflect the true picture of the large number of women working in the country. Even the work done by women in their own fields and home based industries (that bring monetary returns) is not considered as economically remunerative work. Women are largely found in low paid jobs and are engaged in manual labour.

According to UNIFEM (United Nations Organisation for Women), "Women are half the world's population; they work two thirds of the hours worked in the world, but only a third is registered as work; for all this women earn a tenth of the world's income and are registered as owners of a hundredth of the world's property."

These findings are very much true as far as Indian women are concerned. According to recent World Bank report, Gender and Poverty in India, "India invests far less in its women workers than in its men workers with women receiving less health care, less education and fewer productive assets. Women contribute heavily to the Indian economy, forming one third of the total labour force in India, one third of rural families are headed by
women, and women's economic productivity is critical for the 60 million Indian households below the poverty line" (Deccan Herald, 1991). The findings of this report speak volume for the status of women in India.

The history of Indian culture is replete with examples of systematic oppression of women in the forms of sati, devadasi system, molestation, dowry, bride-burning, female infanticide. Atrocities against women in the country are on the increase despite governmental agencies closely monitoring the implementation of constitutional and legal safeguards available to them. Official figures show that as many as 2448 cases of dowry deaths, 5916 of rape, 12,902 of molestation and 7116 of kidnapping and abduction were among the cases registered as a crimes against women in the year 1991 (Deccan Herald, 1991). This official figures may not give entirely correct picture for several cases go unreported. Nevertheless these figures provide some insight into the magnitude of crimes subjected on women. Recently a newspaper reported a case wherein a newly married woman was allegedly killed as a sacrifice to God by her in-laws for earning a treasure in one of the villages of Andra Pradesh (Indian Express, 1991). If a woman could be sacrificed to God like a sheep or a cow then one can very well understand the pathetic status of Indian women today.

Women have remained educationally, economically and socially backward. A major obstacle in improving the status of women lies in public attitude and values regarding women's roles in society. Analysis of women's status in society is therefore inseparable from analysis of the social-economic structure as a whole.
Realisation of the subordinate - and indeed largely unacknowledged role which women play within the socio-economic system gives rise to the question of how and why this role is broadly accepted by women themselves as inevitable and natural. The very placement of women within the personal rather than the public sphere is one answer. Their experiences may be contradictory to available explanations or to the world view, but it is not very easy to understand why this contradiction occurs. So despite the experience of contradiction, what is often 'felt' by women is the naturalness of the way things are.

In the battle for equal status and fair treatment of women, an important role is generally attributed to the media. The media on the one hand does reflect the status of women in society, on other it is an agent of social change by its intrinsic bias or lack of it.

The basic premise that the media are potentially powerful agent of socialization and social change - that present models, confer status, suggest appropriate behaviours, encourage stereotypes - underlies almost all past and current analysis of the women and media relationship. However, within the overall analysis two broad and separate approach can be identified. In the first place, there has been a call for an examination of the present influence of the media on the formation of attitudes, the development of self-concepts and social perceptions, and the creation of social values in both women and men. Secondly, stress has been laid on the need to search positive ways in which the media can be used to advance egalitarianism and to improve the status of women (Gallagher: 1981, p.22).
Women constitute the 'neglected half' of Indian society. Despite the constitutional guarantee of 'equality of status and opportunity' for women and about four decades of socio-economic development since independence, women are far behind men in many aspects of life. The status of women as reflected in the Indian mass media has been described by the Committee on status of women (1975) as:

"The content of communication at any given time reflects the pattern of values of the society. Moreover the way in which subjects dealing with women are treated indicate, to a great extent, the prevailing attitude of that society towards its women. The success or failure of development plans in education, family planning, community development, health and nutrition depends upon the involvement and participation of women. The investigation shows that compared to men, women are underprivileged in many ways and suffer from serious disabilities. Since formal education is a costly and long term process, it is essential to harness the influence of the mass media. However, incidental studies on the impact of mass media indicate that women's exposure to media is often marginal and unsatisfactory. It appears that the mass media has not been an effective instrument in informing and preparing women for their new role in society. The committee's investigations indicate a general lack of awareness of the rights, problems, opportunities and responsibilities among both men and women. Since the government controls a significant section of the mass media, it should set the pace" (Mass Media; 1986).

So what is needed is the building of a positive man-woman
relationship based on equality, dignity and mutual respect. The often neglected 'women's dimension' should be taken note of and made an inherent part of all media output.

**Women and Media:**

To convey a message one needs medium, whether it is literature, folklore or mass media. The mass media like T.V, radio & newspapers are interested in conveying to the public a particular kind of message about women. One needs to only flip through the pages of popular magazines and newspapers, watch television programmes and commercial films to get the content of them loud and clear - Women's major concern is domesticity, they are capable of limited and highly stereotypical behaviour, they are for sexual exploitation and are safe and easy targets of male violence and abuse.

The mass communication media have a great potential as a vehicle for social change and could exercise a significant influence in helping to remove prejudices and stereotypes and promoting their integration into the development process as equal partners.

At the present time the media tend to reinforce traditional attitudes, often portraying an image of women that is degrading and humiliating, and fail to reflect the changing roles of the genders. One has to be more concerned about not merely the direct reach of media but its indirect influence. By gradually shaping public opinion, personal beliefs and even people's self perceptions, media influences the process of socialization and shapes ideology and thinking.

Media does not only influence the social image of women but
also their self-image. Most women are themselves uncritical consumers of anti-women media. Media affects their socialisation process, it influences their choices regarding what they learn, dream, aspire, to how they behave and what they ultimately become.

Media has therefore not only not helped women and society to redefine their own and men's roles; it has also ignored, even trivialised whatever attempts women have made to redefine their roles, to create alternative behaviour patterns and life styles. By so doing media has clearly discouraged the emergence of a new woman, a new man and a new relationship between them. Therefore media often acts as a conservative force in society - one which wants to maintain the status quo and avoid major changes whether in relation to class or sex (Bhasin, 1985).

It is often held in defence of media that media reflects social reality. But this is only partially true. Media has a two way relationship with social reality. On the one hand it reflects what exists but on the other, it affects social reality. By being selective in what it shows, and how it shows it interpretes and creates its own reality. Thus, by always perpetuating the view that the male is in every way superior to the female, media misrepresents the roles women play (Ibid, 1985).

The presentation of women and men in media is contradictory to reality. It misrepresents the real proportion of men versus women in the population or in the work force, or the extent to which social, class, age, occupational status are ascribed to the genders. However, it is not expected that media should always represent reality accurately and faithfully. In many ways media
deal with fantasy and this is recognised as such by the public. But consistently and systematically women are being exploited to the advantage of men's self esteem. One important reason, one can assume is that men dominate the media scene both as producers and consumers. Readers of newspapers and magazines are mostly men (Akhileswari, 1989). 90 percent of film and TV viewers are men (Desai, 1980). Similar is the case with radio listeners too (Rosalind, 1976). Women constitute only 2 percent of class - I officers in government owned AIR. Women journalists in print media are a microscopic number (UNESCO, 1987).

It is assumed that by increasing the number of women employees in the media organizations their output will change, so as to reflect more adequately women's interests and point of view, minimising negative or demeaning images of women. Yet, women in media themselves have often been found to reproduce sexist content. There is little hard evidence to support the proposition that the portrayal of women in media differs when a woman is producing the images. But there is no doubt that women can certainly understand women's dimensions better than men and can make an attempt to set the things in right direction.

Mass media products whether television or radio programmes, news, films - are in general, required to make an immediate and vivid impact and to be quickly and easily absorbed by their audience. For this very reason considerable reliance is placed on the use of simplified, recognizable and standardized characterisations in media output. So media present a social reality which if not demonstrably false - feeds on the most conservative forces in society, ignoring new trends until they
have become established and thus they fulfill a primarily reinforcing role rather than a transforming one - in the culture.

To take, for example, the 'standardized characterisations' or stereotypes through which much media output can be seen to depict both men and women. These do not, it must be clear, originate within a vacuum in media organizations. Rather, they arise from fundamental beliefs in the wider society concerning behavioural and psychological differences between men and women. Even if the validity of such belief is open to question, it might be seen unrealistic to expect the media - whose appeal is to a mass audience - to deviate from accepted norms. For these reasons, media feeds the most conservative force in society ignoring new trends (Gallagher: 1981, P.36).

Images of Women in Media:

There has been unanimous agreement that the images of women projected by the media constitute a main obstacle in eliminating discrimination against women throughout the world and a main factor in preserving traditional sexist attitudes towards them.

A consistent picture emerges from those research studies (Busby, 1974; Courtney and Whipple, 1974; Toeplitz, 1980; Weibel, 1977) which have investigated the media's portrayal of women. At the very best, that portrayal is narrow; at worst, it is unrealistic demeaning and damaging. There are no notable differences between the mass media in this respect, although it is clear that small local media are more likely to present a positive picture. In terms of functional roles, although advertising has generally been found most reactionary. Women's portrayal in news and entertainment has been little better. Even
educational media have been found wanting. Certain cultural differences have been noted and media portrayals have been found to be most positive in those countries with a firm commitment to the social and economic integration of women. With few exceptions, however, research has shown that the media present women as a subordinate sex. Some of the most recent studies indicate the beginnings of changes, which although slight, do provide some evidence that the mass media are not inescapably locked into a particular mode of presentation (Gallagher: 1981, p.105).

Although the images of women as reflected by the mass media throughout the world are not very different, it will be an interesting exercise to study each medium and pinpoint the characteristics of the portrayals and also study how these images feed and reinforce the stereotypes propogated by these media.

Print Medium:
Newspapers:

There is a general apathy among the newspapers to women and their problems. Usually women’s’ problems never figure on the front page of a newspaper unless it is a gruesome murder or a case of bride-burning. Even bride-burning has ceased to be ‘news’ now-a-days. Further these issues are reported in the version received from the police department. Rarely do any newspaper organization investigate into any case of bride burning. The struggle of the ordinary woman - of a housewife against exploitation in and outside the house hardly make it to the columns of a newspaper (Akhileshwari, 1988).
A systematic analysis of two months issues of the 'Hindustan Times', the 'Hindu & Telegraph' (Ninan, 1984) revealed that, women were saleable subjects only when they were good disaster stories. Women had to be either victims or criminals other than politicians and actresses to get coverage in the papers. Women politicians got coverage but the more glamorous one got more. Ordinary women - the wage labourer, the factory worker, the bonded labourer or the housewife were invisible from mainstream media.

In a yet another story which studied the three months issues (July to September 1989) of the 'Hindustan Times' and 'The Hindu' (Vijayalaxmi, 1990) found these papers to be lending support to the stereotypical images of women as an ideal, less competent and as an instrument of exploitation; women who played important and crucial roles in the national development were hardly mentioned. A number of items found with headlines related to women's issues but the body of the copy did not say anything about it. The Hindustan Times in its one of the issues gave a bold caption on the front page; Women's role in Family Planning - P.M" but in the copy there was no mention of the women's role. In the yet another issue, under the headlines 'Sindoor Shield' the greatness of Sindoor - how it could be used as a weapon to protect from the evils of society was elaborately discussed. It was no doubt, the responsibility of a newspaper to educate women on how to protect themselves in this male dominated society and how to develop self confidence, self respect but not surely through 'Sindoor'.

The portrayal of women in British newspapers is documented in a number of studies from 1974 (Butcher) to 1978 (Smith) as
Well as part of a study of papers published in other European countries (ISIS, 1976). Most newspapers devote more than 80% of their entire coverage to men (NUJ, 1978). Apart from a handful of women politicians the only category of women regularly considered newsworthy is that comprising celebrities. The treatment of women in 'hard' news involves the use of a series of stereotypes concerning physical appearance, domestic role, marital status, so that women are portrayed as perpetual dependants. On the positive side, Barr (1977) notes that stereotypes of women are slowly being recognized as such by the press and that coverage of issues related to women's position in society is increasing.

Magazines:

A study (Women in Media, 1984) carried out for the Second Press Commission on the contents and performance of women's journals says that most of women's journals consistently seek to direct women's energies into a narrow channel and to define their concerns, preoccupations and aspirations within an arbitrarily imposed 'feminine' framework. The covers of women's magazines have a certain uniformity about them; each of them features a brightly dressed doll of a woman, barring some part of her body. Apart from women's looks and dresses, there is stress on development of women's mental faculties and behaviour in a way that they can fit into a male-dominated social relationship. These journals create impression that the outside world belongs to men and that the issues which arise these do not affect women except indirectly through the men related to them.

Taken in their entirety, the women's magazines as also other magazines project a value system that is discouraging to the
women's struggle to find their identity and to claim their rights. The editors allow their magazine to be used for a debate on issues concerning women. There is always delicate side stepping of the harsh realities of life. They prefer featuring the latest line of winter wear promoted by semi-nude women to featuring the plight of shivering half-clad women who freeze to death. For them, cookery or the unpronounceable French names that make the jet-set cuisine is more important than the stark truth of starvation (Asha, 1984).

An analysis of Hindi periodicals over the past thirty years actually showed a decline in the discussion of women's issues; and an almost exclusive emphasis on traditional concerns such as food, fashion and beauty (Press Institute of India, 1975). This is attributed to the same dependence on advertising, found in magazines in the west, paralleled by a similar orientation towards consumption.

On a yet another study conducted by Manushi collective (1980), all issues of 'Femina', Eve's Weekly (both English language) and Sarita (Hindi) were analysed over a period of a year. Despite their claim to be 'concerned, involved, alive' the magazines are found, without exception, to foster traditional patterns of female subordination although wrapped in deceptively modern trappings. Half the pages in 'Eve's Weekly and over half in Femina are taken up by advertisements. Of these, about 95 percent are for cosmetics, women's clothing, household goods and children's product suggesting an 'ideal' role for women as alluring housekeeper. Fiction dominates 'Sarita', where the necessity of defence and submission to the husband is
consistently underlined; stories in the English magazines too, inevitably uphold the status quo after temporarily criticizing it.

All three, in different ways, repeatedly deny women's sexuality, intellectuality, independence and political situation. All in all, the survey concludes the aim of these magazines seems to be to daze readers into becoming passive spectators rather than to activate them. Because an active equation with readers would threaten the flimsy structure of 'happy womanhood' sought to be upheld by these magazines.

Radio:

Covering 89.65 percent of the population with its network, radio indeed is a mass medium in India. In radio, all stations broadcast two to three times a week programmes on women in regional languages. They form 1.4 percent of total broadcasting time. Half an hour or a hour devoted to women's programmes is filled in with 60 percent for entertainment through songs, drama, skits etc., 20 percent education and 20 percent information (Desai, 1987).

Songs selected are by and large on religious themes or depict themes of coy young women waiting to be married; plays conveying the message of the ideal woman who is a housewife and mother. If she is employed then surely she must be neglecting her home and children; often in the guise of making a programme light and entertaining, some of the stereotypes are reinforced - a women is a gossip monger, she cannot hold secret; she is a flippant creature who loves to go to 'sales' and ultimately get duped. In short these programmes seem to be for the education of women; but
focus on issues of women which are limited to imparting instructions on sewing, cooking, knitting and the like. Advice is generally given as to how to become a good wife, good mother and improve one's looks (Desai and Maithreyi: 1987, p.284).

Two British studies (Ross: 1977; Kart: 1980) point to the important role which radio plays in the lives of many women, particularly those who are housebound. Women account for two-third of the British radio audience, and individual women generally listen more to radio than individual men (Ross, 1977). Women are under-represented as contributors in most areas of radio especially in daytime network programmes, which are designed to maintain the illusion of housewifely contentment (Karf, 1980).

Films:

Motion pictures perhaps are the worst offenders as far as portrayal of women is concerned. They also do most damage as films are highly insidious in their influence on viewer's attitudes and thought process. Also, films command enviable popularity among the masses.

The films are most popular form of mass communication in India. The Committee on Portrayal of women in Media noted the following characteristics in the image of women projected in films.

* a woman's place is in the home.

* the most important and valuable asset of a woman is physical beauty.

* a woman's energies and intellectual must be directed at finding the right man and keeping them.
* Women are dependent, coy and submissive; they are masochistic in their response to indignities, humiliations and even to physical violence inflicted on them.

* The good woman is the traditional housewife, long suffering, pious and submissive; the modern woman who asserts herself and her independence is undesirable and can never bring happiness to anybody or find happiness herself.

* Women are their own worst enemies.

* The working woman is undesirable exception who must be brought into the marriage fold and be made to submit to the prevalent norms of the society.

Expanding on the portrayal of women in films the report says, "Middle class ideologies of women's roles as wives and mothers provide the underlying basis for most programmes. In a country where 36 per cent of the agriculture workforce is female, women continue to be projected as predominantly non-producers and, as playing a limited role outside the home. Women are basically seen as performing a decorative function and as being marginal to national growth and development. Their primary place is seen as being within the home..." (Indian Women in Media, 1987).

Among several studies of the commercial films, the most comprehensive to date has been a systematic analysis of twelve Hindi and six Gujarati films released and shown in 1976 (Pathak, 1977). Among the main findings, the following trends were found across all films - an emphasis on young, beautiful and sexually attractive women; portrayal of women primarily in terms of their relationship to men; of the 46 female characters portrayed only 12 were shown to be in gainful employment and of these 9 were in
traditional female occupations prediction of women as overwhelmingly emotional, dependent, superstitious, timid and irrational creatures incapable of rational actions and decisions; an emphasis on marriage as the only important goal for women; the presence of a double standard of morality for men and women and frequent portrayal of women's submissive acceptance of physical violence and cruelty by men. On the positive side, most women were shown as literate and some as self-confident.

Overall, this and other analysis (Anu and Joshi, 1979; Hegde and Dasgupta, 1984) find a fundamental double image of women in the Indian films which mirrors an ambivalence noted in other cultures; she is either the 'mother' (or sister, daughter, wife) who is demure, submissive, passive, self-sacrificing; or the 'whore' who is immoral, smokes - drinks and is highly sexual.

The studies of films in North America (Hakell, 1973; Mellen, 1973; Rose, 1973) pointed out that though films in the late 1960s and 1970, reflected some of the new feminist consciousness, yet women who rejected traditional roles tended to be shown as emotionally dis-integrated and unfulfilled.

Advertising:

Advertising has acquired a very powerful role in the present situation. It includes those activities by which visual, oral or written messages are addressed to the public for the purpose of influencing either sale of goods or to mould opinion in favour of certain items, ideas or persons. Advertising is more influential as it provides models of behaviours and conveys particular attitudes towards living.

The advertisement medium is very blatant and openly anti
woman, treating her only as a sex symbol. A number of advertisements try to romanticise women, thus working to 'compensate' (although not intentionally) for lack of opportunities in more 'real' public spheres. The romanticisation of motherhood is a well-known feature of acts for household products. She is shown as the focus of ideal family (Dyer, 1987; p.10). The study conducted by Indian Institute of Mass Communication entitled Advertising and social Responsibility (1983) highlights that the perception of woman presented is either as a sex symbol or as a dud. One out of every five advertisements features a woman irrespective of her relevance to the product being sold. It is interesting to note that an equal number of respondents agree with both views - one that woman is represented as sex object and the other as a progressive and modern person. This in itself is a pointer to the ambivalence of views about the image of women in society. When, about 48 percent respondents feel that there is no specific role portrayal of women, it really is a very sad commentary on status of women in society (Yadav & Mohnet, 1983).

Women and Television:

Television is a very powerful medium of mass communication. It can disseminate information with lightning speed and impact. With the incredible advancement made in the field of communication and information technology, TV today is playing a pivotal role in the society in tutoring and moulding of opinion, value system and life-style.

The importance and coverage of TV is constantly growing. More people are giving it more time and attention. The impact of
television is greater since it is a audio-visual medium. Unlike the print media it doesn't require literacy. In fact those who do not read are slowly coming to depend on television as a major source of information as they once did on the radio.

Television presents its message to a heterogeneous audience. People without distinction of age, sex, race, social or economic strata all respond to the same message and absorb it non-selectively. Television teaches its viewer a lesson about the social constructs of their world and acts as a medium of socialization. Regular viewers are exposed daily to value systems acted out within the framework of entertainment. People can and do learn from television what roles they play and are expected to play in society, what types of behaviour are socially acceptable and what are the approved characteristics which are rewarded. A value enacted through audio-visual has a strong unconscious influence upon the viewers who in different degrees identify themselves with the characters on the screen. The first change even though one is unaware, occurs on mental plane and socialization level before it gets gradually expressed in action. Hence, one should not lose sight of this aspect whenever one talks about the impact of TV on audience.

In this context, the treatment of women in Television assumes utmost significance as the values projected by it have immense effect on the self and social perception of women. The female viewer who is bombarded with television's derogatory, stereotypical images of women can feel she has very few role options available for redefining her role in the society. Thus TV acts as a cultural force which does not simply reflect, but subtly and
indirectly helps in shaping social reality. Men and women in turn adopt social attitudes and behaviours through a complex process of imitation and comparison with the attitudes and behaviours presented by Television.

Several studies have been conducted on the representation of women in television. Their findings, could be presented under common statements as, there is lot of similarity among them.

Women are under represented in general and occupy less central roles than men in television programmes.

Research findings substantiate this statement in case of every category of television programming except day-time 'soap-operas', where, men and women appear in roughly equal proportions (Katzman, 1972; Turow, 1974). News programmes on the NBC, CBS and ABC networks in 1974-75 (United states Commission on Civil Rights, 1977) showed that only 14 per cent of newsmakers were women, while an update of this study in 1977 revealed a decrease in the percentage of women in newsmaking roles. They then represented only 7 percent of the newsmakers (United States Commission on Civil Rights 1979).

Perhaps more surprising is women's low visibility in other types of programming. Analyses of various types of prime-time network dramatic programming (situation comedies, family drama drama-adventure indicate female characters, percentage varying from 39 percent to 26 percent (Miles, 1975). In Children's television, the picture is similar with the research indicating percentages of female characters varying from 15 per cent (O'Kelly, 1974) to 25 percent (Dohrman, 1975) Across all these
studies the ratio of males to females was found to be about 2 to 1.

Marriage and parenthood are considered more important to women than to men; the traditional division of labour is shown as typical in marriage.

Marital status is more crucial in identifying women than in identifying men and that parenthood is more frequently associated with women than with men (Ceulemans and Fauconnier, 1979). Although women tended to be represented as wives and mothers, men were rarely presented as husbands and rarely as fathers (Raices, 1976). Advertising, in particular places women firmly in the home, and identifies housework as a woman's special responsibility. (O'Donnell and O'Donnell, 1978; Courtney and whipple, 1974) Various studies of television advertising in the United States (for example, Maracek et al., 1978) Task Force on Women and Advertising, 1977) have underlined the extent to which advertising associates domestic tasks and products with women. While men tend to be depicted in advertisements outside the home, in a wider range of settings.

Employed women are shown in traditionally female occupations, as subordinates to men, with little status or power.

An overwhelming body of research indicates that, in relation to women's actual participation in the work force, television programmes of all kinds, as well as television advertising, under represent women workers (McNeil 1975, Tedesco, 1975, Downing, 1974). Studies also show a concentration of women who are shown as employed in a limited number of jobs and in predominantly female fields and roles; men are seen as doctors while women are
nurses; men are managers while women are secretaries (Northcott, 1975; Signorielli and Gerbner, 1978).

**Women on Television are more passive than men**

Women's absence from action adventure programmes and from decision-making roles, their tendency to be depicted as victims rather than aggressors, their financial and emotional dependence on men are interpreted by Tedesco (1975). It was demonstrated that the focus of men's concerns was more often selfish than that of women's. Men's concerns most often resulted from their professional activities while, women's concerns stemmed more from personal needs. Women often participated in solving their problems, but were more likely than men to leave it entirely up to others.

**Television ignores or distorts the women's movement**

Studies carried out in the early 1970s, find an absence of feminist characters and themes in television programmes. In the few programmes featuring independent, talented women, their personalities and action tended to be ridiculed (Miles, 1975). Some later studies report a certain amount of progress in the treatment of women's issues. In a content analysis of dramatic programmes between 1971 and 1973. Northcott (1975) noted increasingly non-traditional portrayals of women; this is attributed to an awareness of and response to the growing feminist movement as women's liberation became a household word in the early 1970's. Weibel (1977) accounts for minor positive developments— an increasing acceptability of women's issues as themes for situation comedies, and the portrayal of women as more
responsible individuals. However, the trend seems to have declined in the mid-1970's. As the initial ardour of the women's movement subsided in the mid-1970's, the dominant image of women as housewife, sex object re-emerged (Tuchman, 1978; Newland, 1979).

**Women's portrayal in children's programmes**

Long and Simon (1974) have examined the roles and statuses of women in children's and family TV programmes. They found women were usually portrayed as silly, over-emotional and dependent on husbands and boyfriends, none of the married women worked at jobs outside the home and of the single women who did, only two occupied positions of prestige and authority. The authors concluded; "The young people to whom these shows are largely or primarily aimed are not likely to gain any insights into the new roles and perceptions that many have of themselves or want for their daughters."

Women on Words and Images in their 1975 publication 'Channeling Children', present in three sections, a review of the research on children and television, with an analysis of sex stereotyping in prime-time programmes. The study observed that male major/minor characters outnumbered female major/minor characters; television males had much broader occupational roles than did females; females were shown as incompetent and as the butt of comedy.

**Daytime and Prime Time:**

Sex roles in the daytime serials have been examined by Downing (1974) and Turow (1974). Downing monitored 300 episodes of 15 daytime serials in the summer of 1973. Downing found; 129
of the characters in the serials were women; 127 were men; Women tended to be younger than men; for every age group past youth (20-24), men outnumbered women. The author noted; "This is the opposite of the actual situation, wherein females outnumbered males consistently after the age of 15"; Marital status of women was more crucial than marital status of men (based on the fact that 85 percent of women and only 73 percent of men had marital status identified); The three top-ranking occupations for females were; full-time housewives (30 percent), professionals (19 percent), clerical (9 percent); The three top-ranking occupations for males were; professionals (58 percent), proprietors and managers (10 percent); law enforcement personnel (10 percent). The surprising finding of the Downing study is that the female character of the daytime serial is perhaps the strongest female characterization on television.

Joseph Turow studied the process of "advising and ordering" in prime-time and daytime television (Turow, 1974). In a sample of 12 hours of daytime and 12 hours of prime time. "every advising and ordering interaction between the sexes was systematically observed and coded" into one of three categories (1) traditionally feminine categories such as love, the family, the home, personal problems, and the arts; (2) traditionally masculine categories like business, law, government, crime and coping with danger; and (3) neutral categories such as "close the door".

Turow concluded; "The world of the evening dramas was an urban landscape peopled mostly (70 percent) by men, in which most of the directives (53%) revolved around 'masculine' subjects.
Men gave directives in 70 percent, women in 30 percent of the episodes”. Concerning the daytime serials, Turow concluded; "In views of the domestic environment of the daytime dramas and the small percentage of advising and ordering episodes that deal with 'masculine' subjects, it may seem surprising that men should still control most of the action. Control they did, however, giving 56 percent of all advice and orders..."

Sharon Churnin Nash (1975) has surveyed the portrayal of women in three areas of television commercials, soap operas and prime time programmes. The Commercials, the study concludes, most successfully portray women as passive, emotional and non-intellectual. On TV commercials, "the world for women" is domestic Men are the voice of authority... "These commercials depict women as homemakers with cleanliness compulsions, forever sniffing the kitchen floor or the family wash" (Vidura, 1976)

As for soap operas "the often-repeated themes of these daytime dramas involved women trying to catch or keep a man. Men are portrayed as rational, independent, advice-giving professionals. Women are depicted as emotional housewives, mothers and girl friends, who seek and receive advice from men. The situation on prime-time comedies and dramas is very much the same. The overwhelming majority of characters on these shows are males. Women are younger and less professional, and are more often depicted as over-emotional and dependent than their male counterparts" (Vidura, 1976).

The Indian TV is no different from other mass media regarding the image it reflects. The Joshi Committee Report (Report of the Working Group on Software for Doordarshan) has condemned
Doordarshan for its failure in furthering the stated national objective of women's equality, and the lack of proper perspective of the issues concerning women on the part of policy makers, programmers and producers (Mainstream, 1984.)

The TV programmes aimed at women audiences rarely are relevant to the lives and needs of most women. The programmes are generally restricted to traditionally 'feminine' topics like beauty tips, interior decoration, recipes and making toys and dolls. There is an overall effort to look at women's entertainment, educational needs strictly from the middle class point of view which favours the, 'status quo' of women.

The programmes telecast by Delhi Doordarshan, in July 1986 including the national programme and commercials are analysed by Vidura which point out revealing findings (Vidura, 1988). The study that was both quantitative and qualitative showed that in news, men were predominantly newsmakers. As for women's programmes, the emphasis was on the home as the focus of women's lives. In the sample period, the only programme was a discussion on AIDS. In that programme too, the slant was on women as responsible for community morals.

In the farmer's programmes, only two raised the question of livelihood for women. It was assumed that women were not resource generators. The programmes turned a blind eye to the contribution of women to agriculture and rural economy. In the programmes for children and youth, women appeared as compere in non-technical areas whereas technical topics such as aero-modelling and sports invariably had men comperes. Men overwhelmingly featured as comperes and exports, out numbering women in all categories of
enrichment programmes (i.e. programmes in which information and educational components predominated). Even in the field of health, commonly considered to be women's domain, male experts outnumbered women. Women did not feature as comperes or experts in programmes on political affairs.

All programmes of art and entertainment, except sports event, tended to entrench the view that dependency and subordination for women, and aggression and dominance for men were culturally 'ideal' women were invariably shown as incomplete without men. Men conquered and bestowed their affection on women who were deemed 'suitable' by the existing cultural standards.

In the programmes of TV fiction and cinema, men were principal characters in much larger numbers than women. In other cases, they were shown as dress-designers, school teachers, flight attendants and office workers—occupations that are basically female-oriented and extensions of female roles. For men, the range of occupations was very wide. These included industrialists, bureaucrats, journalists, executive and scientists. While the home was the focus of women's existence, in the case of men it was the world outside it.

In a majority of commercials, women sought male approval and sought to appeal (sexually) to men. Girls cooked, sewed, ironed and looked beautiful, imitating their mothers, whereas boys sought adventure, discovered new things and solved problems like their fathers.

The findings of the above study are further substantiated by various other studies such as 'Women Dimension on Television' (Joshi, 1991); 'Affirmation and Denial' (Kirshnan & Dighe, 1990);
'Gender Role Biases on Indian Television (Behra, 1988).

Ila Joshi (1990) has made an attempt to study treatment of Women in Television through content analysis of programmes telecast from Doordarshan, Ahmedabad and ISRO's Pij station over a eight weeks period. The study takes note of appropriate provisions of the constitution and the guidelines formulated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with regard to wide variety of information and entertainment programmes. The study also analyses the attitudes and predictions of the staff against the background of state policies. Although, a number of relevant questions were posed including the one regarding the 'need for change in the present situation', the mental and psychological inadequacy of the staff has not been clearly brought out.

The chief value of the study lies in developing the basic design of data collection and interpretation out of which emerges the distressing conclusion that Indian television is definitely caught in a dangerous flux which indicates transition from a traditional value system to a modern one, without achieving modernity in the true sense of the word, because of lack of fuller commitment on the part of policy makers and programme personnel. Ila Joshi reports occurrence of stereotype situations and roles in television fiction which seldom project a woman in a dignified or non-sexist fashion. She further remarks that overall low proportion of women employed in broadcasting might be a factor responsible for inadequate representation of true and proper image of the Indian women.

Krishnan and Dighe (1990) make a serious attempt to decode women's images on television and to supplement theoretical
understanding on this issue in their study 'Affirmation and Denial Construction of Feminity on Indian Television'. The total sample consisted of every alternate day of Delhi Doordarshan programmes over a month's period (July, 1986). They found women were under represented in general, and occupied less central roles than men; Marriage and parenthood were considered more important to women than to men; Employed women were shown in traditionally female occupations, as subordinate to men, with little status or power; women on television were more passive than men; Television ignored or distorted the women's movement; In terms of content and adequacy of treatment, television programmes were a historical and succeeded in representing woman as a construct, that is, everywhere and eternally the same.

In his 'Gender Role Biases on Indian Television' Behera has analysed the pattern of women's representation on television programmes (inclusive of commercials and news) in terms of their functions and roles. For this purpose, programmes including 20 episodes of various television fiction serials, 20 news bulletins and 100 commercials telecast over three weeks from 4-29 January, 1988 were sampled. The findings of this study were as followed: Men were newsmakers in 81 percent of the cases, while women were newsmakers in 8.5 percent of the cases (10.5 percent were unspecified). In the serials sampled, the female characters' aspirations, activities and goals revolve round their home and family whereas the men's chief activities took place outside their homes.

The results also disclosed that women were portrayed as far less career oriented than their male counterparts. A higher
percentage of women were concerned with their personal well-being, families and homes while the majority of men were depicted as being concerned about their profession and social problems.

A stereotyped notion of gender roles was very explicit in casting for the commercials. The primary roles of men in advertisements were as demonstrators or clients of commodities while women tended to take commodity service or auxiliary roles. The notion of male superiority over women was particularly apparent in commercials. Behera concluded, "In general, the gender role biases in Indian TV programmes have caused an alarming degradation of the image of womanhood, denying viewers an insight into the on-going struggles of women to achieve economic and political autonomy".

Chandiram and Agrawal (1982) note that, in general, women characters continue to be portrayed in their inferior position compared to men. In this asymmetrical relationship, the 'wife and mother' image is predominant. They further add that there seems to be a tendency to construct a pan-Indian character of women, which is difficult to identify with any one region of India.

The study of women viewers in Madras city (Krishnaswamy, 1986) pointed out that the respondents felt women's programmes to be superficial in their treatment of various issues. Respondents felt that women were aware of their own plight and that such programmes should be addressed to men.

Darwani (1984) who studied the roles and behaviour patterns offered by television by way of examining television programmes and interviewing TV women viewers notes that the main trend in the portrayal of women in most Indian TV programmes is that women
are always in secondary roles to men. Further most women themselves are so used to the TV or film representation of their roles that they do not perceive anything wrong in television output.

A seminar on Doordarshan's role in Women's Equality and Development conducted in the year 1984 by the centre for Women's Development studies and the committee for the portrayal of women in the Media made some revealing remark. "Films and film-based material continue to constitute substantial chunks of Doordarshan's output. These programmes are loaded with derogatory images of women and are usually explicitly or implicitly sexist. They play a significant role in reinforcing negative stereotypes. Both the commercial films and the film song programmes contain long sequences with semi-clad women dancing for men either in cabaret scenes or supposedly rural settings. There is also a trend of growing violence in commercial cinema. The observed rising incidence of violence towards women in real life cannot be delinked from the depiction of such sequences in Doordarshan...In fact, the commercial cinema today is the prime medium through which negative and derogatory images of women in our society are both created and reinforced. The films consume over 20 percent of total viewing time leaving little time for more significant programmes that can contribute to social and cultural development".

There is, therefore, need to press the government to announce that it considers the improvement of women's condition, status and image as a primary objective of Doordarshan. Towards this end Dooradarshan must formulate clearcut guidelines regarding the
positive portrayal of women on television.

It will be appropriate here to study the recommendations made by the Joshi Committee on Software for Doordarshan (1984) in its report 'An Indian Personality for Television' regarding positive portrayal of women on TV.

P.C.Joshi Committee Recommendations:

The women's issue is one of utmost significance to the country as a whole and the nation cannot progress as long as women are left behind. Therefore, the improvement of women's conditions, status and image must be defined to be a major objective for Doordarshan.

The government must at the earliest formulate clear guidelines regarding the positive portrayal of women on television. This portrayal must take note of women in all facts of their lives as workers and significant contributors to family survival and the national economy, it must further endeavour to integrate women on terms of equality on all sectors of national life and the development process. These guidelines must emphasise that the "women's dimension" must form an integral part of all Doordarshan programmes and not merely be confined to women's programmes, nor to isolated attempts to discuss women's issues.

Portrayal of men on television must include them as sensitive, caring individuals, acting as full partners in household and child care responsibilities, also, as fully responsible in shouldering contraceptive responsibilities.

Women must not be portrayed in stereotyped images that emphasise passive. Submissive qualities and encourage them to play a subordinate secondary role in the family and society. All
advertisements shown on television must be scrutinized carefully by a special committee to ensure that they do not portray women in derogatory stereotyped ways.

In order to promote a positive ideology that is sensitive of women's needs, and permeates the total programming and also to have a co-ordinated. Consistent policy it would be necessary for all Doordarshan policy makers, programming and production staff to have regular orientation courses that sensitize them to the social issues with particular reference to women's issues and their implications to society.

In the light of these recommendations and past research findings, if one views the TV programmes it is evident that Doordarshan is immune to the weight of such recommendations. TV programmes continue with their negative projection of women. There is a disparity between realities of women's lives and that shown on TV.

Present research is addressed to examining the extent to which the projection of women in television influences the social image as well as the self image of women, how far television reinforces the conservative view of women and to what extent it recognises or ignores their economic participation and contribution to the developmental processes in our society. This research is carried out in two phases. In the first phase television programmes including news and commercials were viewed and critically analysed by me from a feminist perspective. In the second phase a group of television audience was interviewed to solicit their reactions to the television programmes.

In India, systematic studies on gender equality and women's
development through television have been very few (Chandiram and Agrawal, 1982; Krishnaswamy, 1986; Behra, 1988; Joshi, 1990; Dighe Krishnan, 1991). So this research is aimed at making a content analysis of television programmes in relation to women and to examine the impact of television programmes on TV audience through the study of their attitudes. The objectives and hypothesis of my research have been formed in the background of past research findings & recommendations.

Research Objectives and Hypothesis:

As the research is conducted in two phases two different sets of objectives and hypothesis are set forth.

With regard to the first phase viz. content analysis of the programmes the objectives are:

1. To examine how women and their concerns are reflected in the television programmes;
2. To study the distribution pattern of these programmes for men and women;
3. To analyse the portrayal and projection of women in the television programmes including commercials;
4. To ascertain the pattern of women's representation in regional and national newscasts
5. To analyse the role of Doordarshan in promoting positive and negative images of women.

Hypotheses:

This research has following hypotheses:

1. Women are least visible in news.
2. Women in advertisement are prey to blatant sensationalism where commercial interests are promoted by exploiting womanhood
and sex.

3. Women's dimension is not integral part or all programmes shown on Doordarshan but is merely confined to the 'women's programmes'.

4. Women are under represented in general and occupy less central roles than men in television programmes.

With regard to the second phase of research wherein viewers reactions to television programmes are analysed the objectives and hypotheses are:

Objectives:
1. To analyse audience responses and reactions to television programmes.
2. To examine the present influence of the television on the formation of attitudes, the development of self-concepts and social perception and the creation of alternative social values among audience.

Hypotheses:
1. News is least watched by women than men.
2. Awareness of female stereotypes is positively related to high socio-economic status and educational level.

India experienced television for the first time in September 1959. From its modest beginning of one hour experimental service twice a week, Indian television has made significant strides both qualitatively and quantitatively. It would not be an exaggeration to maintain that Indian television has grown as one of the biggest networks in the world in its three decades of evolution.
Through its vast network of 520 TV transmitters, the Indian TV today reaches an estimated population of 76 percent.

As TV has a role to play as a catalyst of social change, the first step towards achieving this goal would be to have a clear understanding about the type of representation women get and in what role models women are projected. Further even if television can not expected to project only positive images of women, it can certainly make realistic projection of their real life situations.

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