INTRODUCTION

1.1 Women magazines in general

In the recent times, print media has seen an expansive development in niche areas; one of which is women magazines. Women magazines have become very popular and much sought after due to various reasons. They are changes in lifestyle, better education for women; financial independence of women and many more. Within the niche there are a variety of magazines available for varied readership on different themes. Women magazines can be divided on various lines according to the content in them or according to the prices or perhaps the kind of readership. There are commercially driven fashion magazines like Elle, Cosmopolitan etc, some serious magazines like Housekeeping and some health related magazines like Know your Body etc. Out of the variety available, fashion magazines are supposedly the most in style and most popular. These magazines are usually glossy, flamboyant and full of glamour. Such glossy fashion magazines over the years have come to occupy a special place in print media. They have become very popular owing to various reasons and one of them is promoting consumerist culture.

Commercially oriented fashion magazines offer a glamorous display of products that help to change the lifestyle of women. Certain luxury products are portrayed as necessary commodities and in this way mass markets are created for lifestyle products. The desire for lifestyle products encourages consumerism. Consumerism provides a form of escape from the real world. Consumerism according to (Miles, 1998:65) actually provides no form of escape in the real sense and is just an illusion. However, consumer culture dominates because consumers want reality to be distorted; they want to believe that they are escaping the routine activities of everyday life. Readers feel that by using certain products, they will perhaps achieve the perfect image of beauty but in reality this does not happen. Perhaps, the readers only get an illusionary mental satisfaction and a false feeling of escape by using the variety of products that are portrayed in popular glossy magazines. Feelings of insecurity and
self dissatisfaction, which are the main features of the commercial promotional industry and which fuel consumerism are induced by ubiquitous glossy images of perfect looking ideal woman (Mc Cracken, 1993).

With the increasing capital and the availability of international brands in India, glossy fashion magazines have become a good source of publicising luxury products and igniting consumerism. The business houses market their products in glossy magazines through sensational celebrity brand ambassadors. Anderson (1995:88) says that advertising agencies create an array of mythic associations and arbitrary meanings for products. A world of fantasy is created by the extensive use of visuals and pictures. In this world, the pleasure obtained from a product cannot be separated from the images and ideas with which it is linked, for example, eating caviar or drinking champagne is associated with luxurious living. Campbell (2000: 59) mentions that these images are as much a ‘real’ part of the product as its constituent ingredients. Featherstone, (1991:85) makes a similar observation that mundane products, like dish soap or coffee, “become associated with luxury, exotica, beauty and romance with their original or functional use increasingly difficult to decipher.” Thus, magazines are full of content that promote consumerism.

Glossy fashion women magazines play a variety of roles; besides promoting consumerism, they are sources of social education and journals of advice and instruction. They are a unique form of media acting as guidebooks for women on matters relating to feminine gender roles. They are a corpus of societal discourses, which frame our understandings of what it means to be a woman. These magazines overwhelmingly focus on themes of personal change and self-improvement. Women are given tips and advices on healthy relationships, mothering, skin care, hair care, fashion and trends. They are given advice on sexual etiquettes and gender roles. A female community is constructed in women magazines and the target audience is addressed simply by virtue of its femaleness as a single community. Ferguson (1983:6) says that the picture of the world presented by women’s magazines is that the individual woman is a member not so much of society as a whole, but of her society, the world of women. It is to this separate community that these periodicals
address themselves. Their spotlight is directed not so much at the wider host society but to the host society’s largest minority group i.e. females. Within this female community, which appears to ghettoize women, magazines are targetted for different socio-economic groups. Leiss et al. (1985) observes that in advertising, the actual individuals addressed are being offered membership of some specific consumption community.

The contents in such magazines help to arouse market consciousness and at the same time offer consumers’ membership of imaginary communities. The consumers only need to buy and use products to belong to the imaginary communities. In such magazines, a woman’s body is regarded as permanently flawed and always in need of remedial work. Women are given advice—on how to maintain their youth and how to be good wives, mothers etc.

Thus, women magazines serve to socialize women and girls in the society (Gurddiero and Weston 1985, S. Douglas 1994; Wolf 1990). The portrayal of women in these magazines trigger the importance of achieving self-esteem mainly through beauty and glamour downplaying other important aspects in a woman’s life such as professional achievements or struggle for gender equality. Readers of these magazines are the enterprising consumers; it is a marketing technique, which has gained immense popularity in the modern times.

On average magazines have issues like how to look great, how to be good in bed, how to make boyfriend, how to keep husband happy, and ways to become a good mother, top eyeliners and lipsticks and how to have a good career. These issues send a very important message of how to be feminine. Apparently an impression is given that women are encouraged to break the social ills but in reality the contents in such magazines encourage women to be perfect in looks and household chores and this is something which is stereotypical. Such kind of content constitutes a discourse of feminism. Discourses in magazines that discuss about what is right or wrong for women are responsible for setting up a criterion to judge women. Or else they can be discourses about the empowerment of women. Kaplan (1987:216) calls such discourse as “radical feminism” that is the designation of women as different from men and the desire to establish female communities to forward women’s needs. All these
discourses related to women in some way are discourses of feminism. Since this study is marginally related to feminism, I will briefly discuss it here.

1.2 Feminism

The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women. Although the terms "feminism" and "feminist" did not gain widespread use until the 1970s but they were already being used in the public parlance much earlier; for instance, Katherine Hepburn speaks of the "feminist movement" in the 1942 film Woman of the Year. Thus, feminism exists for over three decades now.

The history of feminism can be divided into three waves. The first wave of feminism refers to a period of a lot of activity during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. In the initial stages feminism focused on the basic equal rights for women. However, the movement kept on attaining different shapes across the globe. By the end of nineteenth century, feminism focussed on gaining political power. In Britain the suffragettes campaigned for women’s vote. The suffragists promoted the right of women to vote. The movement included the economic and political reforms which aimed at extending suffrage to women, on an equal basis to those for men and without any restrictions or qualifications such as property ownership, payment of tax or marital status. The movement's modern origins are attributed to 18th century France. Of currently existing independent countries, New Zealand was the first to give women the right to vote in 1893. Feminism was theorised in a totally different way in India as compared to the West.

The second wave of feminism was in the 1960s and 1970s, which came in response to the first one. It was an era not only characterised by an exceptional economic growth of capital and a age marked by a consistent effort to re-establish pre-war patriarchal social trends. This was clearly illustrated by the media of that
time. Television shows such as ‘Father knows Best’ and ‘Leave it to Beaver’ idealized domesticity, and placed women in a closed sphere where they only had to fulfill the roles of housewives and mothers. Women were supposed to stick to the social paradigms of good and bad.

The third wave of feminism began in the 1990’s and came as a response to the second wave. In the third phase feminism took a new turn, women were allowed to make identities for themselves. The third wave feminism challenged any universal definition of feminism. It dealt with the marginalised identities of women. The third wave is a continuation of the present feminism which has attained different faces now days.

Taking the case in India, the first wave of feminism in India dates back to 1850 -1915 during which there was a rise of democracy and equality. Before this period feminism in India can be said to have not prevailed at all because of the stringent social systems and norms in which Indian women were considered as inferior. The first phase of feminism in 19th century was initiated by men in India to uproot social evils in India like sati (widow immolation), allowing widow remarriage, forbid child marriage etc. Then slowly feminism in India started growing to new heights in the 80’s when women started becoming career conscious. Women started to make an effort to free themselves from the shackles of male dominance by attaining economic independence.

Feminism has altered predominant perspectives in a wide range of areas especially within Western society, ranging from culture to law. Activists have campaigned for women's legal rights (rights of contract, property rights, voting rights); for women's right to bodily integrity and autonomy, for abortion rights, and for reproductive rights (including access to birth control and quality prenatal care); for protection of women from domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape: for workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; against misogyny; and against other forms of gender-specific discrimination against women. Feminism refers to ideas or views that are related to women empowerment in terms of finances, social value or domestic status. It can be seen widely now in the society, in the literature of today and various other modes of life.
Feminism can be found in the various forms of media. Women fashion magazines are a repository where feminism can be found. Views about social, economic and moral independence are amply found in this genre of print media. But the most interesting fact is that, feminism is implicit in these magazines. On the one hand, women are encouraged to use certain beauty products and gain freedom whereas the freedom is just an illusion because by using the products women actually confine to the stereotypical ideologies of looking beautiful. This juxtaposition of feminist and anti feminist ideas at the same time makes these magazines popular for readers and at the same time complex for researchers. Thus, these magazines disseminate significant ideas of feminism. The issues of oppression, repression and other social issues are debated and negotiated in the texts of these fashion magazines. Smith (1990) mentions that these texts function as ostensibly authoritative texts of feminism.

People who work for women empowerment and promotion of feminism can get in touch with diverse readers through this genre of media. Women magazines have covered most of the critical feminist issues of recent years. Women magazines contain racy and complex texts. These texts are intricate because they promote feminism. Feminism gives rise to femininity which is responsible for setting discourses about women. A brief about femininity is must before proceeding further.

Femininity is a particular structuring of social space which spans across social institutions and which is a key factor in the constitution of women’s identities. Femininity refers to a vague conglomeration of concepts and themes, social relations and practices. It discursively organises women’s lives and even impinges on their bodies. This discursively produced social space called femininity can be seen in commercial and mass media discourses of the magazine, clothing and cosmetics industries. These discourses shape social practices which further help in forming subjects and social relations. Social conditions bestow upon women feminine social identities, specific kinds of social relationship with other women, and with men. Consumer femininity enters into women’s daily lives in the M.R (member resources) they draw upon in their involvement in spoken and written discourses, and in non-
linguistic social practices. Thus, femininity is a discourse which shapes certain social practices and conditions for women.

For an approach to femininity as discourse, I refer to a study by Dorothy Smith (1988:9). Smith uses the concept of femininity as discourse to connect together diverse phenomena in the economic and symbolic world: resources, women’s work and standards of appearance. Femininity informs the production and distribution of resources (such as clothes and cosmetics particularly, but also non-material resources). Part of femininity as discourse relates to women’s skills and work i.e. beauty work and the activities surrounding it (planning, shopping for materials etc.). Most women are non-professional practitioners; their work, on themselves, has the status of a hobby which is inspired by social practices. According to Smith, femininity is a mass media construction: “a social organization of relations among women and between women and men which is mediated by texts, that is, by the materially fixed forms of printed writing and images.”

This textually mediated discourse is realised through women’s bodies. Smith stresses that femininity is not simply imposed on women by the mass media or by patriarchal social relations, but it is something in which they actively and creatively participate. It is apparent in women’s activities, that is in practical skills cultivated, expenditure of money and free time, and also in patterns of friendship, especially among adolescents McRobbie (1978), Cohen (1984). Women are actively involved in the construction of femininity; manufacturers and the mass media must be responsive to them. Mass media targets this creation of subjects. Women are impressed by the kind of images that are created by mass media.

Smith (1988) mentions that women aren’t just the passive products of socialization; they are active; they create themselves. At the same time, their self-creation, their work, the uses of their skills, are coordinated with the market for clothes, make-up, shoes, accessories, etc., through print media, film, etc. This dialectic between the active and creative subject and the organization of female activity in and by texts coordinating it with the market is captured here using the concept of a textually-mediated discourse. Manufacturing, advertising, fashion and
magazine industries between them shape the paradigms for women’s production of appearances. These industries produce discourses of what is right and good for women. These symbolic materials are the fashion and beauty standards set in images of women in the mass media. A woman active in the discourse works within its interpretive circles, attempting to create in her own body the displays which appeal to the public textual images as their authority depends upon the doctrines of femininity for their interpretation.

Women’s bodies, as Smith says, always need fixing, since they cannot fix the kinds of appearance offered by images in the mass media without work. Femininity constructs the feminine social subject’s relation to self as an object of work: “Participation in the discourse of femininity is a practical relation of a woman to herself as an object.” In the process of her practical efforts, the woman becomes the object defined by the image. She feminizes herself. In participating in feminine discourse, women are constructing their identities as women, not sex objects for the male gaze. Thus, the ‘feminine discourse’ is a collection of activities and social relations, concepts and themes, which shape women’s experience in diverse institutions (in their daily domestic activities, their friendship relations, in the workplace etc.).

Various discourses-types exist in society and these discourse types reflect femininity in various ways. Popular fashion magazines are one such discourse type but before I discuss magazine as discourse type, I will briefly discuss how this genre called women magazines emerged, developed and became well accepted.

1.3 Emergence and development of the genre of women magazines

Women magazines have a direct relation with the kind of position and status women occupy in a society. Over a period of time women magazines have evolved and developed in various ways. Women had an inferior status globally in the early twentieth centuries, they were regarded as less intelligent and it was considered that domestic chores were the only things they could excel in. They did not have much access to education and could not join the world of work. They were considered inferior to men in many ways. They did not have enough rights to fulfill their desires.
Consequently, publications for women were not so common. But with changing times publications for women became admired and well accepted. What follows is a brief review of how women magazines emerged as a genre in the Indian and English context.

In Ancient India, women received hardly any education, although in the Vedic period women had access to education, they had gradually lost this right. However, after the 500 B.C the status of women began to decline due to the Islamic invasions in India. A radical change attended and there was a terrific constraint on the education of women in India. The women were supposed to follow the purdah system and were meant to do only domestic chores. In the British period, there was a revival of interest in women's education in India. However, women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947. Since then India started witnessing a boom in women education. Women stepped out in the world of work and entered the fields of professionalism. They started becoming aware about their health, looks, hairstyles, fashion and trends. Thus, the need for publications came to be realized and women magazines came to be published.

The earlier publications were mostly in Hindi language. As more and more Indians got education, English became more popular. Thus, women magazines in English found a place in the Indian society. These publications have however increased manifold in terms of variety in topics, cost and genres. As I mentioned before, these magazines cater to different needs of women. Out of the available variety fashion magazines are the most popular and widely read because women now have keen interests in keeping the body fit and maintaining one’s look. These things have triggered the growth of the publications dealing in fashion and trends. In India, women magazine date back to the 50’s. Femina a famous Indian English magazine had its first issue in 1959. Before this, the publications for women appeared in regional languages. Thus, the sixties witnessed the birth of Women magazines in English. The population of this genre kept on increasing gradually.

Prior to World War II, this genre was a lesser known one globally and especially in the Asian continent. But by 1950’s the scenario changed. There was a
sudden need of lifestyle products and the need was fulfilled by industrialization. The expansion of mass consumer markets especially those oriented around women’s expenditure brought a significant increase in women’s magazines share of total advertising expenditure Elliott (1962:209). This was the scenario globally in Europe, U.K., and U.S.A etc. What follows is a brief outline of the historical development and characteristics of women magazines as a discourse-type in England.

A mixture of instruction and entertainment in publications specifically for women goes back to the late 17th century. Ladies' Mercury, which first appeared in 1693 in England was a precursor of the modern women’s fashion magazine. This publication is generally named as the first women's magazine White (1970), Ferguson (1983), Winship (1987). It contained a range of elements like fiction, readers' letters with editorial response, fashion articles and plates, educational tracts etc. In the mid-nineteenth century, magazines aimed at a middle-class audience were produced. As Ferguson (1983:16) remarks, these publications “offered their readers the socially climbing wives and daughters of the professional and business classes and guidance about what to buy wear and do to further fulfill their aspirations”.

The first women's magazine for a middle-class readership was The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, which came in 1852. It contained a mixture of fiction and non-fiction, written text and illustration. Unlike then, it dealt with activities and topics relating to women's unpaid work in the domestic domain of home. The non-fiction element consisted of informative and facilitating features like recipes, instructions for knitting their husband’s socks, articles on the management of servants, and so on. Another element was the presence of advertisements. White (1970:66) observes that women periodicals in 1800 carried very few advertisements. But by the end of the century, advertising was the main economic support of the magazine industry. “The expansion of the women's periodical press was in fact being underwritten by advertisers from the 1880s onwards, and this dependency greatly enhanced the status of the advertising industry and modified editorial attitudes to advertising copy. The older generation of publishers had consistently frowned on advertising as an obnoxious nuisance and treated it with suspicion and contempt.”
As magazines became dependent on advertising revenue, editors were forced into a position first of neutrality, then of agreement, and finally of involvement. In the late 1930s magazines began to carry consumer features, in which advertising was presented as part of the editorial content. Thus, the women's magazine as a discourse type has emerged in patriarchal and capitalist social relations.

Winship made some observations on the tone of early publications and threw light on the changes in the kind of addresser-addressee relationship constructed in women magazines. She describes The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine as coolly formal and distant in tone and contrasts it with the more relaxed and less intimidating style in publications in the 1890's which were aimed at the lower middle class end of the market. It is more than a matter of level of formality, however. The aim of achieving “an active and intimate relationship” with readers became specific editorial policy in a new publication in 1910 called ‘My Weekly’. Thus, magazines for women have been undergoing a lot of change in the method of production. There has been a change in the producer-audience relationship spread across mass media and it is now a defining characteristic of women's magazines. As Leman (1980) observed that direct address, commanding both intimacy and identification constituted the principal tone of women's magazines in Britain. The tone of intimacy and confidentiality attempted to establish some kind of sisterly relationship between magazine and reader.

Women magazines in the post war years covered the demography of women as domestic dolls and housewives and the males as house heads. From the late 1950’s onwards, however, there had been some attempts by the women’s magazine industry to shift away from this doll image of women towards attitude and self respect. As women realized the needs of freedom and independence the magazine industry also targeted the new needs and started focusing on the ‘new woman’ who was believed to be different from the traditional housewife. In the late 1970’s the emphasis shifted towards lifestyle. This mixing of ‘new woman’ and ‘lifestyle technique’ brought about the beginning of glossy women magazines from 1980 onwards.
The glossy fashion magazines of the new age are a reflection of the changing views of women’s role in the society. These glossy fashion magazines encompass in them issues of the post modern era; right from career to motherhood, fashion and trends to gynecological healthcare and relationships. In the 18th century when women were expected to participate in social and political life the magazines aimed at simulating content. Examples are La Belle assemblée, or, Court and fashionable Magazine and The Christian Lady's Magazine, London. In the 19th century when domesticity became the ideal the magazines were inspired to be insipid and humourless.

The new women’s magazines as a genre are complex and cannot be easily classified as they appear to be holding a middle path i.e. something in between a homemaking magazine and a fashion magazine. These magazines are complex mix of the classic and new. The contemporary glossy fashion magazines are tailored for the new self-independent woman. They appear to be prepared for women who have been affected by the ideas of liberation and feminist movement and for those who are not very comfortable with only home making and cooking. These new ambitious women magazines cover a plethora of issues related to health tips, fitness, home making and newer topics like single motherhood etc. Today, there are endless numbers of these glossy fashion magazines available around the world. Some of these are domestic whereas some other international. Wikipedia has a long list of them given at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion_magazine

- Allure
- Bitch
- Bust
- Cosmopolitan
- Cleo (magazine)
- Curve
- Elle
- Femina
- Filament
- First for Women
• Glamour
• Harper's Bazaar
• In Style
• Marie Claire
• Ms.
• O, The Oprah Magazine
• Pink
• Shape Magazine
• Vogue
• W

These magazines listed above can be divided on the basis of the style, the price or contents. However out of all of them, glossy fashion magazines are the most popular and sought after. They are read by millions of readers around the world. These magazines are trendy, well accepted, admired and liked by not just the women readers but men too.

Popular women magazines are the ones that enjoy a large readership because of either their content or layout. These have a wide variety depending on the price, the content and type, social and cultural factors. In response to the present consumer sophistication needs, women magazines have become advanced in style, content and layout. Producers now choose metaphors according to the needs of the contemporary society and cater to the demands of the modern woman. Some of the salient features of popular women magazines are:

• They are consumer friendly and have contents which meet the needs of the consumers.
• The fantasy world dominates and the costs of acquiring the products are hidden.
• The products in these magazines meet the emotional demands more than the physical demands.
• The products advertised create an array of mythic associations and carry signs of a luxurious lifestyle.
Commodity culture is promoted. Consumer culture in these magazines suggests to women that they have a room for self-improvement and self-expression. Products seem to offer a possibility of realization of the dreams women nurture. Illusionary images are created that by spending money on one’s bodies and looks, one can achieve independence and freedom.

These tenets are directly related to the economic independence women have achieved today. Nevertheless, the basis of the new Woman magazine lies in the changing discursive practices in the society and media.

As a media genre, women magazines offer unique opportunity to women to share a whole world of identities. As mentioned before this genre has been witnessing transformation with change in social set up in the society. The discursive practices in a society directly influence the ideologies existent in it. These changing ideologies can be found hidden in the discourses of mass media; print, TV, internet, newspapers etc. As I am dealing with women magazines and they are a constituent of the mass media I will now briefly review the discourse in mass media.

1.4 Discourse in the mass media

The interest in mass media discourse is important not only because media are a rich source of readily accessible data for research and teaching, but because of the fact that mass media usage influences and represents people’s use of and attitudes towards language in a community. Thus, media use can tell us a great deal about social meanings and stereotypes projected through language and communication, as well as reflect and influence the formation and expression of culture, politics and social life Bell & Garrett(1998: 3-4).

Mass media influences and expresses culture and thoughts in many ways. It involves a lot of participants in doing so. Producers and readers have a major role in print mass media. Cavalcanti (1983: 47-48), citing Widdowson (1979), describes reading as a non-reciprocal discourse. The process of discourse takes place on the reader's terms; a reader can stop whenever he/she wants to, skip over fragments, re-read others etc. The reader is in control of the discourse. Hodge & Kress (1993: 50-
51) make a similar observation about mass media discourse. A television viewer is in the same sense in control of the discourse, being free to switch off, talk over it or listen silently. However, in spite of the importance of the reader, the interesting fact is that the mass media bestow a position of power on producers.

Media discourse is one-sided. Producer and interpreter are sharply divided and distant from one another. Therefore, even though mass media texts are always read or viewed by actual people, there is still a distance; producers cannot create a text for limited readership. As Fairclough (1989:51) observes, producers cannot “design their contributions for the particular people they are interacting with”. Thus, the best possible point is to create an ideal subject position. Addressing a mass audience imposes:

i) The need to construct an ideal subject as addressee;

ii) On the side of mass media interpreters, the need to negotiate with the position offered in the ideal subject, since all discourse producers must produce with some interpreters in mind, what media producers do is address an ideal subject, be it viewer, or listener, or reader. Media discourse has built into it a subject position for an ideal subject, and actual viewers listeners or readers have to negotiate a relationship with the ideal subject.

The need to construct an ideal subject bestows a position of power on the producers of mass media texts. They have the right to total control over production, including over what (and how) kinds of representations of events are included. In the construction of an ideal subject as addressee, they are in a position to place assumed shared experiences and commonsense attitudes as given to a mass audience. Actual addressees, in the targeted audience, are likely to take up the position of an ideal subject sharing these experiences, attitudes etc. In addition, the producers of mass media texts, unlike their addressees, are professional practitioners. Producers do not work blindly in assuming subjects as addressees; mass media discourse is targeted for specific audiences. These have been measured by market research practices and discourse practices, which shape subjects.
The non-reciprocal discourse between producers and audience is not the only form of discourse in the mass media. Producers of mass media texts are involved in two-way discourses in the production process. For example magazines are produced in a complex of interactions within the institution of journalism (between editor, staff, company management, printers, etc.), and between publisher and financial backers. Other two-way discourses in the production of magazines involve readers as active participants. The ideal subjects put forward by mass media producers are constructed as members of communities. As I am dealing only with women magazines I will briefly mention here about the kinds of community constructed in women's magazines and the kind of texts in them.

The targeted audience of women's magazines is addressed, simply by virtue of its femaleness, as a single community. As Ferguson (1983:6) says “that the picture of the world presented by women's magazines is that the individual woman is a member not so much of society as a whole but of her female society which is the world of women. It is to this separate community that these periodicals address themselves. Their spotlight is directed not so much at the wider host society, but to that host society's largest minority group: females.” Various writers have described this bogus social group as a kind of surrogate sisterhood (eg. McRobbie (1978), Ferguson (1983); Winship (1987)). Within this female community, which appears to ghettoise women, magazines use various techniques for targeting different socio-economic groups. Advertising is one of the most common and popular technique to target consumers.

In advertising, the actual individuals addressed are being offered membership of some specific 'consumption community' (Leiss et al. (1985)) or 'totemic group' (Williamson (1978)). Advertisements serve to cultivate market consciousness, so that the products themselves are commodities asking for consumption, which are however silent about the material processes and conditions of their production. They serve to inform consumers about what is available and they also present to audiences the concept of communities based on the consumption of commodities. They offer consumers membership of imaginary communities; to belong, the consumers only need to buy and use products. Boorstin (1973:53), Leiss et al. explain that in the
transition from industrial to consumer culture people forget their ethnicity and start relating each other on the basis of material commodities and Boorstin quotes (1973:53) “Consumption communities, formed by popular styles and expenditure patterns among consumers, became a principal force for social cohesion in the twentieth century, replacing the ethnic bonds that people had brought with them to the industrial city.”

According to Williamson, mass audiences are interpellated as members of these groups by assuming direct address in advertisements for eg. Are you controlling under eye circles. Her observations are similar to Fairclough's on the synthetic personalisation practiced in a variety of types of discourse used to address mass audiences. These discourses are responsible for producing specific discourse types.

1.5 Women's magazine as discourse type

In the institutional order of journalistic discourse, the mass media is structured into a range of discourse-types. One of these is the women's magazine. A brief description of women magazines as a discourse type is mandatory to understand the relation of mass audiences in the discourse of mass media.

The women's magazine is a discourse-type with historical continuity in an accumulated repertoire of practices. White (1970:299) describes women's magazine as: “a nationwide ‘Women's Institute’, providing an arena in which women can zest, exchange ideas, views and experiences, and derive from it mutual help and support.” Thus, women are given hints on how should they work on their bodies etc. According to Smith (1988) the kinds of appearance offered to women as ideals to work towards are constructed in the mass media. Through mass media texts, the 'feminizing' practices of the film, cosmetics and fashion industries influence women standards of appearance. An important element of feminizing practices is the concept of a woman as a visible object requiring work. In magazines for women, their bodies are frequently itemized as areas requiring separate attention with separate products. This itemization has been intensified by an endless proliferation of products by manufacturers and accompanying discrimination of colors, skin types, hair types, and so on.
The women's magazine as discourse-type sets up subject positions for the individuals it impinges on. The interaction through mass media texts is asymmetrical and puts producers in the powerful position of setting up addresser and addressee. But it is difficult to determine who this empowered producer really is. Who is it that actually wields the power inhering in the construction of ideal subjects in magazines? It is the employees who put the pages together work under some specific editorial control. Any directives from the editor will have been shaped in a more general way by company policies shaping the production of the magazine. Leman (1980:66) observes “A set of professional routines is established which are seen as essential, defining characteristics inherited and operated by those involved directly in the production of the magazines. The routines are assumed as 'given' in terms of journalistic practice, constituting the very fabric of 'woman's magazine' and are rarely acknowledged as the bearers of a particular value system. Decisions made or inherited by those in the front line of production of the magazine are unlikely to challenge the defining conventions which shape the product and structure its ideological message.”

The women's magazine as a discourse-type does not mean that they have any one particular type of discourse. In common with advertising, they are shaped by discourses of the social sciences. Publishers offer manufacturers profiles of readerships as consumption groups, for which they have access to sophisticated market research methods. Magazine production is economically dependent on advertising revenue and the women's magazine has developed as a discourse-type hand in hand with the discourse of advertising. Content is planned with an eye on what will best serve the interests of the advertiser.

Women, who have a lifelong concern with the marketplace as wives, mothers etc., are placed in the subject position of consumer in diverse discourses. This subject position of consumer is part of the femininity offered in women's magazines, since 'feminizing practices' involve the use of products. The definition of femininity as a mode of consumption has intensified in these publications since the consumer boom of the 1950's. As Winship (1987:39) says “……women reading the ads consumer features in their magazines have been caught up in defining their own feminity, inextricable, through consumption.” Consequently, one area of expansion is the
cosmetics industry. Another is the magazine industry itself. The above description of magazines as a discourse type validates the reason for the choice of data.

1.6 Study Plan

In the present study I purpose to investigate contents of women magazines. The aim is to study the language used in the write-ups of the following magazines: ‘Elle’, ‘Woman’s Era’, ‘Femina’, and ‘Cosmopolitan’. A number of texts have been collected randomly from the selected magazines. The collected data has been numbered 4.1 to 4.16 for analysis.

I have proposed to study the following features of the data. The discourse practices as portrayed in these write-ups and the power relations, if any, will be studied. The aim is to analyze campaigns on beauty, skin-care, health and fitness in the above-mentioned glossy women magazines.

The women’s emancipation will be investigated which can be studied by understanding the social construction of gender. Masculine and feminine gendered identities are not simply pre-given but one constructed in social relations between people in their enactments of social practices. I propose to study these social practices using the tools of C.D.A. The aim is to inculcate critical awareness of consumer femininity to make women aware about the manipulation techniques adopted by fashion and publishing industries. Such an investigation will unleash how discourse shapes women as feminine in social subjects.

A detail investigation of the collected data will be done to study the generic features. This will include studying in detail if the articles belong to any particular genre e.g. advertising, counseling etc. This implies examining their production, distribution and consumption techniques. The researcher will look for the various discourses that have been drawn into the production of the texts. If there are discourses drawn from various fields then the motive behind drawing them will be investigated. The style of the feature articles will be studied as to whether they are conventional or have something new in terms of genre, content, lexical items and discourses.
An investigation of the sort of intertextual chains the samples enter into will be carried out. The analysis of the intertextuality will give an insight into whether the samples subvert or conjoin a particular discourse. Intertextuality means to study any history or ideology in the texts or any prior texts cued in the sample text. The samples will be investigated for any presuppositions cued in the text. By investigating many of these features, it will be clear as to what are the types of target audience of these features.

The consumption of the sample text will be investigated to study the sort of impact such texts have on readers. Such an analysis will include the study of the readers’ response, readers’ awareness, readers’ interpretation regarding the text and any resistant readings if any. Keeping all this in view, text population will also be analysed. Text population implies studying the participants the interactions, sort of characters and subject positions in the text. Such an investigation will give an insight into the motives of the people who are involved in a text’s production.

The researcher aims to carry textual grammatical analysis that includes studying the kind of discourse representation in the sample texts i.e. whether the discourse is direct/indirect. Such an investigation also includes examining the kind of relationships that emerge between the reader and the writer. The researcher will study as to who is the information provider in the text and whether the text contains statements, questions, instructions or orders. The samples will be analysed for the functional relations formed in the text. The researcher will investigate the cohesive markers like conjunctions, references, ellipsis etc. in the text. The process types in the clauses will be searched for. Features of nominalization and grammatical metaphor will be studied. The thematic structure of the clauses will be investigated. The samples will also be analysed for any features of modality used by the text producer. The key wording and lexical items will be studied from the aspect of whether they are new or obsolete and what cultural and ideological significance they hold.

The collected data will be studied for power relations if any in the text and hegemony in the sample texts. The discursive strategies adopted if any to legitimate the power relations will be studied for. These goals have been selected to unveil the
underlying discursive practices, social practices and social relations in the society. The features of gendered discourses in the sample if any will be examined. To analyze the above aspects in the collected feature articles, I have chosen Critical Discourse Analysis and particularly Fairclough (1989) model as tool for carrying out the practical analysis. This model is comprehensive and useful as it includes not just the textual analysis but the social and cultural analysis as well.

Before carrying out the practical analysis, a detail review of the different approaches to discourse Analysis and detail explanation of critical discourse analysis is crucial. The chapter that follows covers a range of different methods available in discourse analysis and a detail discussion of C.D.A. and the model I have chosen for the present study.