WOMEN AND MEDIA

Department of Gender & Women Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
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Course Team

Department Incharge           Mrs Atifa Nasir

Course Development Coordinator Ms.Maria Mustafa Malik

Unit Writers
Ms.Maria Mustafa Malik
Ms.Fatima Saleem Rashid

Unit Reviewer                  Ms.Sara Saeed Niazi

Course Coordinator            Ms.Maria Mustafa Malik
FOREWORD

Allama Iqbal Open University is one of the pioneers among the universities of Pakistan to introduce the discipline of Gender and Women’s Studies at the University level. This program draws on the strengths of many disciplines and has been instrumental in creating awareness about women’s critical issues and their changing status. Being a distance learning institution the university is serving the society by creating consciousness and providing sensitive study regarding women and gender issues through its Gender and Women’s Studies program.

This course “Women and Media” is located at the intersection of Gender studies and Communications Studies. The course provides in-depth analysis regarding the portrayal and participation of women in various forms of media in an international and regional context.

It is an attempt to introduce the critical theories and approaches used in the study of gender and media. The course is focused on recent scholarship that examines media representations of gender, audience interpretations of these representations, and their social context.

The course will also be beneficial in providing the students with understanding and analytical thinking required to develop a culture of critical media consumption by becoming a more informed and enlightened consumer.

Vice Chancellor
Dear Students,

Welcome to the BS level course, Women & Media (C-9165). This booklet is the study guide which will introduce you to the basic concepts and academic debates on the subject of women, gender and media.

Introduction the Course:

The course, “Women and Media (C-9165)” is one of the three credit hour courses offered for BS in Gender & Women Studies. This course comprises of nine units which deal with various issues related to the scholarly approaches to the study of women and mass media.

The mass media occupies a central place in the lives of women and men all over the world. Media are the most pervasive and one of the most powerful of many influences on how we view men, women and their social roles. Traditionally, men had been contributing and participating in the field of journalism and media. Therefore, related knowledge, issues and research was focused on men with some generalizations about women. Since women’s participation in media has gradually increased over the years, their contributions, concerns and issues are also emerging as an increasingly important area of academic study.

This course includes discourses such as Feminist theories on media, gender and media sociology, Portrayal of women in media, Gender discrimination in print and electronic media, Women as consumers of media, Use of Information and communication technologies in Women and Media censorship etc.
Course Objective:

After completing this course you should be able to:

- Provide an overview of women’s role as media participants and consumers.
- Explore the effects of media treatment of women on society and individuals.
- Examine the images and roles of women in media such as newspapers, magazines, television and cinema.
- Analyze women’s contribution at different levels and forms in media.
- Study the media regulation policy regarding women portrayal.

How to Study:

The study guide comprising of nine units, spreads over nine major topics. Each unit or chapter provides a basic explanation of the topic as well as reading references for further detailed study. Each unit requires one week’s study. If you spend two hours daily to study your course, you can complete the course in eighteen weeks. In mid of the study period an online or face to face workshop will also be held which is an effort to help you to prepare for examinations and interact with peer group and listen to the subject experts and exchange knowledge.

Please do not confine yourself to the materials, which are being supplied by the university. To enhance knowledge, the students are expected to extensively use library and the internet for latest educational resources.

Tutors Guidance:

In distance learning system basically the students have to study on their own. However, the university does appoint a part-time or a correspondence tutor who not only evaluates your assignments but also provides guidance regarding the course. The University organizes online and face to face workshops which the students need to attend regularly to enhance their understanding of the
subject and prepare for the final examination. You will be informed regarding
the tutor allocation, courses workshops and course assignment submission by
the university.

Assessment and Evaluation:

According to university system your performance in the course will be
evaluated through two modes that is:-

• Home Assignments
• Final Examination

You will be required to do two assignments for this course. The
assignments are spread over course units and according to the schedule provided
in your student kit each assignment is to be submitted to the tutor for checking.

The main objective of the assignment is to encourage you to study and
appraise your performance. The tutor’s assessment will guide you for the
preparation of your next assignment.

The marks obtained in assignments add up to the final examination. The
papers for final examinations are prepared based on the complete course. The
final examinations are held in specified examination centers. For passing a
course one has to pass both components of assessment that are take home
assignments and final examination.

Best of Luck with your studies!

MARIA MUSTAFA MALIK
Course Coordinator
OVERVIEW OF MEDIA
Study of Mass media through analytical feminist lens

Written by
Maria Mustafa Malik
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INTRODUCTION

What this unit is about?
- What is Mass communication?
- What is Mass Media?
- Effects and types of Mass Media.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?
- The process of communication.
- The various kinds of media and the roles they play.
- How media affects the process of socialization and construction of social reality?
- How images in media influence change in attitude and behavior?

1.1 MASS MEDIA AND ITS KINDS

Definition of Mass Communication
Mass Communication refers to the process by which a complex organization with the aid of one or two machines produce and transmit public messages that are targeted at large, heterogeneous and Scattered audiences (Dominick, J. R., 1993).

Definition of Mass media
A medium is the channel through which a message travels from the source to the receiver ("medium" is singular, "media" is plural). Mass Media uses these channels to carry the message. Our definition of mass media will include not only the mechanical devices that transmit and sometimes store the message (TV cameras, radio microphones, printing presses) but also the institutions that use these machines to transmit messages. When we talk about the mass media of television, radio, newspapers, magazine, sound recording, and film, we will be referring to the people, the policies, the organizations, and the technology that go into producing mass communication. (Dominick, J. R., 1993).

Banners, billboards, books, DVDs, CDs, Video cassettes, computer games, world wide web and mobile phones are also forms of Mass media.

Kinds of Mass Media; Print and Electronic Media
Mass media can be divided into two fundamental categories:
- Electronic Media
- Print Media

According to Shahid (1999) six major media of mass communication are newspapers, magazines, books, television, radio and films.
Although print and electronic media both play vital roles in mass communication yet with the changing times more and more people are turning to the electronic media which are sweeping aside the barrier of illiteracy, which has traditionally excluded vast populations from access to information and entertainment via the printed word. In a society like Pakistan, which has a low literacy rate; audio-visual media has very strong impact due to the limited scope of the print media.

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Please refer to the following reading for more information on the process of communication and its related factors:

Reading 1.1


1.2 ROLE OF MASS MEDIA

To Educate, Entertain and Inform

In most places throughout the world, the media have become crucial to the workings of the economic, political, social and cultural spheres; at the global, national and local levels, as well as for everyday life in the private sphere, where they are important sources of both information and entertainment. (Media & Gender Handbook, 2005)

According to Pervez (1984) Media has three societal roles:

1. The watchman, to provide information about the happenings and the events
2. The contributor, to the decision making process, to provide the material necessary for a dialogue on certain issues.
3. The modifier of attitude, during the process of decision making the media modifies attitudes, preferences and actions in the desired direction.

Many studies on mass media have proved that the media plays a vital role in conserving or reinforcing the existing views and attitudes of a society. Media acts as a strong force in maintaining the status quo in the roles of different segments of the society. The fictional characters portrayed through the popular media serve as a model or identificant object for a large number of people.

| SAQ | What are the functions performed by media? |

|---|---|
In a developing society, media has dual responsibilities of providing entertainment on one hand, while on the other hand it should educate the masses. Media is not only used as a campaigning tool to persuade people to get education. Instead, mass media can be used as a creative, practical and cost-effective vehicle to make educational opportunities accessible for the less privileged.

As quoted in a media handbook, the media provide spaces in which social, political and cultural issues are presented, debated and discussed. They play a significant role in determining which issues will be considered important and legitimate in a society and how they will be defined and discussed. The media do not simply disseminate particular messages to passive audiences. Instead, both through news and entertainment, they produce and disseminate many of the resources — information, ideas, ways of thinking, assumptions, frameworks, beliefs, values, narratives — which we actively and continuously use to understand and think about the world, others, our relationships and ourselves.

**Reading 1.2**


### 1.3 INFLUENCE OF MEDIA IN SOCIAL CHANGE:

**Opinion Making and Attitudinal Change**

Media resources shape our understandings, which guide our individual actions and activities, and also influence collective decision-making processes and policy formation in the public and political spheres. Thus, the media can play a role in bringing about social change.

Pervez (1986), a renowned psychologist articulates that media is a cultural force, which not only reflects the social reality, but also modifies it according to the demands of the age. The contents of the media serve as a model and source of identification and gratification of certain psychological needs.

Whereas Rider in her book “Our Voices” (2000) articulate that media images are powerful tools of socialization, shaping and reinforcing both positive and negative attitudes.

The relationship of media and reality is of a vicious cycle; media affects in constructing reality and thus the constructed reality provides content for media as it is said that “media mirrors reality”. The stereotypical portrayal of genders restricts the potential of humans and limits their capabilities because the media influences them to conform to the prevailing culture.
Reading 1.3(a)


Although it is an issue that is often neglected, the media play a significant role in providing many of the resources which we use to think about gender and gender related issues: about what it means to be a woman or a man, about gender roles in the public and private spheres, sexuality, parenthood, and what we consider to be (or not to be), natural, normal, acceptable, desirable and possible in relation to these aspects of our lives.

The media are also sites, or spaces, where gender and gender issues can be discussed and debated, both in news and in fiction, and they can play a significant role in determining whether or not gender issues will widely be considered important and legitimate social, political and cultural issues in a particular society.

In today’s world, the media are believed to have great power to influence society and the potential to challenge sexist and superficial views. By providing both such resources and spaces, the media can play a role in shaping how we think and feel about gender and gender issues. The Mass media occupies an increasingly central place in the lives of women and men all over the world.

However, the media, both commercial and public or state broadcasting can provide more diverse resources that can be used to challenge gender inequality or understandings of women as limited and subordinate entities. Such resources can include news items on a variety of women's individual and collective activities in the public sphere; the inclusion of female experts, discussions, and debates on various dimensions of gender inequality which include different points of view from different women; documentaries on gender issues, and female characters and narrative explorations of women's experiences in media fiction that are characterized by diversity, complexity, ambiguity.

Alternative media output produced by and for women in women's media can provide spaces in which a greater variety of women's voices and experiences, past and present, are made public and shared, where information and support can be provided on dealing with gender inequality and other issues relevant to different women's lives (The Gender and Media Handbook, 2005). Kindly refer to given reading for a detailed account of how media influences the shaping of our social attitudes and behaviors:

Reading 1.3(b)


1.4 MEDIA IMAGES AFFECT SOCIALIZATION AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Media is the most pervasive and one of the most powerful of many influences on how we view men, women and their social roles. Media insinuate their messages into our consciousness at every turn. All forms of media communicate images of the sexes, many of which perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical and limiting perceptions (Wood, 1996).

Socialization – the process whereby individuals are made aware of the behaviour that others expect of them as regards the norms, values and culture of their society. Agents of socialization include the family, school, friendship groups, religious institutions and the mass media (Wikipedia, 2006).

Social Construction of reality – in media studies, this idea emphasizes that there is no single 'reality', rather a range of definitions of 'reality'. Reality as presented by the mass media is therefore not a picture or reflection of 'reality', but, rather, a constructed interpretation of reality. In the view of 'radical' critics of the media in particular, the mass media play a crucial role in 'constructing reality' for the rest of us. In the view of many representatives of post-structuralism and post-modernism, just about every aspect of reality seems to be considered a social construction (Wikipedia, 2006).

In their classic treatise The Social Construction of Reality Berger and Luckman (1966) claim that society exists as both objective and subjective reality. While we perceive the world we live in as 'real', as something that exists beyond our own perceptions and beliefs and that will continue to exist when we are not there, we acknowledge at the same time that not everyone perceives reality in the same way. Still, it is not merely that people perceive reality in a particular way, their perception has consequences for their sense of self, relations with others, their mode of conduct and a whole range of other social practices. In these social interactions people produce, reproduce and adjust definitions of reality: “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas, 1928: 584). Reality is not merely something that exists ‘out there’, but it is also (re)constructed by the social and sense-making activities of human beings (as quoted in Zoonen 1996).

As we grow up, our culture influences us through these images, usually without us realizing it. Masculine and feminine images that are portrayed in media also project their own psychological mystiques. The way in which genders are portrayed in media constructs our perception of reality about these genders.

The stereotypical representation of women and men in media affects our socialization process, instead of perceiving how people are in the real world, we perceive people according to the stereotypically portrayed patterns in media. It can safely be said that people might construct their reality based on the interpretations of the information they gain from media and eventually the constructed reality become the actual reality.

According to Tuchman “symbolic annihilation” of women refers to the way cultural reproduction and media representations ignore, exclude, marginalize or trivialize women and their interests.
Women are either absent, or represented by stereotypes based upon sexual attractiveness and the performance of domestic labor. In short women are symbolically annihilated by the media through being absent, condemned or trivialized. One of most extensive statements of the regiment that the mass media ‘symbolically annihilate’ women has been made by Tuchman. She relates this notion to the “reflection hypothesis” which suggests that the mass media reflect the dominant social values in a society. These concerns, not the society as it really is, but its “Symbolic representation”, how it would like to see itself. Tuchman argues that if something is not represented in this affirmative manner it implies ‘symbolic annihilation: condemnation, trivialization, or “absence means symbolic annihilation”’.

The ‘symbolic annihilation of women’ practiced by the mass media confirms that the roles of wife, mother and house wife etc. are the fate of women in a patriarchal society. Moreover, they are usually young and beautiful, but not very well educated. Experimental research done in the tradition of cognitive psychology tends to support the hypothesis that media act as socialization agents-along with the family-teaching children in particular their appropriate sex roles and symbolically rewarding them for appropriate behavior..... It is thought that media perpetuate sex role stereotypes because they reflect dominant social values and also because male media producers are influenced by these stereotypes (as cited in Srinati 2004).

According to Tuchman (1978) television symbolically annihilates women and tells society women are not very important by showing an overwhelming majority of men in almost all kinds of television output. Only in soap operas do women dominate the screen. Not only does television tell us that women don’t matter very much except housewives and mothers, but also it symbolically denigrates them by portraying them as incompetent, inferior and always subservient to men. The symbolic annihilation of women will endanger social development for girls and mature women lack positive images on which to model their behavior: “girls exposed to “television women” may hope to be homemakers when they are adults but not workers outside the home. Indeed as adults, these girls may resist work outside the home unless necessary for economic well being of their families. Encouraging such an attitude in our nation’s girls can present a problem in the future ... the active participation of women in labor force is vital to the maintenance of American economy.” Tuchman’s analysis contains the basic elements of a functionalist feminist theory: Media reflects society’s dominant social values and symbolically denigrates women, either by not showing them at all or by depicting them in stereotypical roles. The models that media offers are restrictive and endanger the social development of girls and women into complete human beings and socially valuable workers (Tuchman’s Argument 1978 as cited in Zoonen).

To sum up Tuchman Apostrophe ‘s’ argument we can say that we form some social attitudes related to gender after consuming stereotypical projection of men and women in media. The gender socialization that takes place through media has strong roots in our mind’s subconscious. This kind of learning takes place at subliminal level and is difficult to unlearn. Therefore according to Tuchman gender discrimination in media especially TV socializes women in a negative way and hinders in exploration and realization of their full potential as individuals.

Cultivation theory:
Cultivation theory (sometimes referred to as the cultivation hypothesis or cultivation analysis) was an approach developed by Professor George Gerbner. This theory studies whether and how
watching television may influence viewers' ideas of what the everyday world is like. Cultivation research is in the 'effects' tradition. Cultivation theorists argue that television has long-term effects which are small, gradual, indirect but cumulative and significant.

They emphasize the effects of television viewing on the attitudes rather than the behaviour of viewers. Heavy watching of television is seen as 'cultivating' attitudes which are more consistent with the world of television programmes than with the everyday world. Watching television may tend to induce a general mindset about violence in the world, quite apart from any effects it might have in inducing violent behaviour. Cultivation theorists distinguish between 'first order' effects (general beliefs about the everyday world, such as about the prevalence of violence) and 'second order' effects (specific attitudes, such as to law and order or to personal safety).

Gerbner argues that the mass media cultivate attitudes and values which are already present in a culture: the media maintain and propagate these values amongst members of a culture, thus binding it together.

### SAQ: What is the basic concept of Gerbner’s cultivation theory?

Cultivation research looks at the mass media as a socializing agent and investigates whether television viewers come to believe the television version of reality the more they watch it. The focus is on 'heavy viewers'. People who watch a lot of television are likely to be more influenced by the ways in which the world is framed by television programs than are individuals who watch less, especially regarding topics of which the viewer has little first-hand experience.

#### Conceptual Model

![Conceptual Model Diagram]

#### Cultivation Theory

Many scientific researchers like Gerbner have come to the conclusion that the media has an effect on adolescents and young adults. TV viewing is associated with subsequent aggressive behavior. People do not seem to understand that the media is contributing to a more violent society. There have been numerous studies done that have come to suggest that media violence
exposure causes later aggressive acts. There has been a recent theory about human aggression that suggests two approaches to help reduce violent behavior. One states that there should be a reduction in exposure and the other involves changing children's attitudes toward violence.

According to Gerbner, through large scale content analysis carried out over several years, researchers working in communication studies have tried to show that American television as a whole carries consistent messages that devalue women, blacks and the poor by under representing them and by disproportionately making them the victims of violence.

Despite the alarming rates of men's violence against women in the United States, women and girls are frequently depicted in the media as victims of violence. Often, the violence is sexualized. Scenes of violent assaults against women are used continually in horror films for entertainment purposes, and some companies use violent images in their advertising campaigns for shock and aesthetic value to help sell their products. Because we see these images regularly and without serious commentary, they become normal and trivialize men's violence against women. Masculinity in media is often linked with violence, brutality and ruthlessness. Men are constantly portrayed as the perpetrators of violence.

The violence learned through heavy televiewing in childhood can have its repercussion on an individual's personality later in his life. The violence imbibed in the media ingrains its effects deeply on an individual's mind. The violence and aggression cultivated in media affects the attitudes on subliminal level, the content viewed does not directly affects our behavior but instead influences our attitudes without any realization. Therefore in order to eliminate the violence against women in society, the media contents should be made more gender friendly and gender balanced by portraying women in more positive and productive roles.

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**Reading 1.4 (a)**


**Reading 1.4 (b)**

1.5 EXERCISES
1. What are the different roles performed by media?
3. Discuss in detail Gerbner’s Cultivation theory.
4. How does media affect the process of socialization?
5. Explain how Stereotypical representation of women is a form of violence against them.

1.6 REFERENCE


www.wikipedia.com
GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Written by
Fatima Saleem
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INTRODUCTION

What is this unit about?
- Media, Stereotypes and gender stereotyping.
- General effects of stereotyping.
- Gender and Media in Pakistan.
- Feminist critique/Critical analysis of mass media.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?
- What are stereotypes and the stereotypes of women perpetuated by the media?
- The negative impact of media gender discrimination on society
- The criticism of media coverage given/not given to women.

2.1 STEREOTYPICAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN MEDIA

Mass media became one of the main sources of popular culture in today’s society. Media, however, not only entertains and offers news to people, but also transfers the stereotypes, beliefs and values of the society to reproduce the existing order of social life. Althusser, in his theory of ideological state apparatuses say that, schools, families, religions play the role of the ideological state apparatuses. These institutions invisibly transfer and instruct the dominant ideology of the society into the minds of people in order to be able to control people. In today’s world, media has turned out to be yet another althusserian ideological apparatus that control the mind of masses. It seems like media creates the unique pieces of art: movies, documentaries, magazines, music, TV shows and others (Gataullina, 2003).

Adorno (2003), however, argues that all of these products of media contain zero level of uniqueness. According to him, what we see on TV screens or in newspapers are produced only with one purpose of being sold. Therefore, what is manufactured by media has to reflect the life of people, it needs to be on such level that people would understand and accept. This reflection, however, is created through reproduction of stereotypes, which fills the life of society and thus are known to everyone.

Stereotypes are generalizations about a group of people whereby we attribute a defined set of characteristics to this group. These classifications can be positive or negative, such as when various nationalities are stereotyped as friendly or unfriendly (Lippmann, 1922). It is easier to create stereotypes when there is a clearly visible and consistent attribute that can easily be recognized. This is why people of different background, police and women are so easily stereotyped. People from stereotyped groups can find this very disturbing as they experience an apprehension (stereotype threat) of being treated unfairly. We change our stereotypes infrequently. Even in the face of disconfirming evidence, we often cling to our obviously-wrong beliefs. When we do change the stereotypes, we do so in one of three ways (Allport, 1954)
- **Bookkeeping model**: As we learn new contradictory information, we incrementally adjust the stereotype to adapt to the new information. We usually need quite a lot of repeated information for each incremental change. Individual evidence is taken as the exception that proves the rule.

- **Conversion model**: We throw away the old stereotype and start again. This is often used when there is significant disconfirming evidence.

- **Subtyping model**: We create a new stereotype that is a sub-classification of the existing stereotype, particularly when we can draw a boundary around the sub-class. Thus if we have a stereotype for Pakistanis, a visit to Punjab may result in having a ‘Punjabis are different’ sub-type.

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<th>SAQ</th>
<th>What are Stereotypes?</th>
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Media stereotypes are inevitable, especially in the advertising, entertainment and news industries, which need as wide an audience as possible to quickly understand information. Stereotypes act like codes that give audiences a quick, common understanding of a person or group of people—usually relating to their class, ethnicity or race, gender, sexual orientation, social role or occupation.

But stereotypes can be problematic. They can:
- reduce a wide range of differences in people to simplistic categorizations
- transform assumptions about particular groups of people into "realities"
- be used to justify the position of those in power
- perpetuate social prejudice and inequality

Stereotypes exist both in the Portrayal (content) and the participation of gender in media. With respect to the symbolic representation of women, Tuchman argues that women are usually shown as being subordinate, passive, submission and marginal, performing a limited number of secondary and uninteresting tasks confined to their sexuality, their emotions and their domesticity which confirms the natural characters of sex roles and gender inequalities. Regarding Participation in the American media, She points out that although ‘women are 51 percent of the population and are well over 40 percent of the labor force’, ‘relatively few women are portrayed’ in this way: those working women who are portrayed are condemned others are trivialized: they are symbolized as child like adornments who need to be protected or they are dismissed to the protected confines of the home. In sum, they are subject to “symbolic annihilation”. The concern being voices here is that symbolic annihilation means that women, their life and their interests are not being accurately reflected in mass media (As cited in Srinati 2004).

More often than not, the groups being stereotyped have little to say about how they are represented. Stereotypes affect the manner in which people interact with others of a different race or ethnicity, age group, religious background, or sexual orientation. Gender stereotypes are also prevalent within mass media. According to a study conducted by Signorielli, McLeod, and
Healy (1994), female characters on MTV possessed beautiful bodies, wore skimp clothing, and were portrayed as objects. Considering that 60 percent of American households receive MTV as a part of their cable packages, it is important to analyze its content and the effect of such gender role stereotyping on its audience.

Reading 2.1(a)


Media decides the context in which a woman should be placed, and reinforces it constantly. The media loves to see women as home-makers. And it loves to see her as an avid consumer. The woman is the one who buys without end and her hair, her dress, her shoes, each bears the stamp of the latest, the most expensive products. Practically no woman in any of the serials repeats a dress. She makes sure that her house is decorated with the latest gadgets and that her family spends their holidays in places straight out of travel company brochures (Kulkarni, 2006). Though the media purports to project the modern, liberated woman, it is actually endorsing women as consumers. This is derogatory to the image of women and is only remotely linked with their real concerns (Bhattacharya, 2006).

**SAQ** | What problems can stereotypes cause?

It has been argued that there are two major traits to female stereotyping. Firstly, there is a severe under-representation of women in action-drama films in terms of actual numbers relative to the males. Secondly, even when women do appear, they tend to be portrayed only in a much-selected range of roles. An example is that of Pakistani movies where the male actor is the witty, handsome hero, while the female actress is portrayed as the helpless victim. Women are shown more often than men in the home, as housewives. The nature of the differences in the sex-role portrayal is common and in accordance with traditional sex roles. Men were typically portrayed as having and knowledgeable about reasons for buying particular products, as occupying roles with the practical consequences of product purchases (Gunter, 1986).

The media, in all forms, shapes our perception of what it means to be male or female. It is a reflection of the society and more than that, forms and moulds public opinion, reinforces certain traditional representations and helps pave the way for change. It has been noted that, for most parts, media in South Asia has contained itself to the role of information dissemination and entertainment. The negative portrayal and representation of women and the embedded stereotypes to be found in the media today in all South Asian countries and globally as well are a result of little or no national media codes. Further, women continue to have limited access and participation in decision-making in the media industries and governing authorities and bodies that oversee formulation and implementation of media policies. Research by Uks, a resource
centre solely working on Gender and Media issues, shows most newspaper and electronic media practitioners are clueless about the very concept of sensitization to gender issues (Burki, 2004).

Globalization, which makes the media a tool in the hands of a few corporate bodies, sexual harassment of women media practitioners, and the inability of women to shape programmes in the media lead us to the reasons behind this phenomenon of stereotyping in the media in South Asia. These may be narrowed down to (Burki, 2004)

- The shape of the society in our countries is extremely patriarchal.
- The ownership of the media Journalism curricula and teaching need to be gender sensitive as well and above all,
- Lack of women’s access to and growth in media institutions (These reasons are actually a result of traditional gender role playing actually reinforced by the media itself).

Media policies are lagging behind in targeting gender sensitive coverage. Harping on and focusing on lewdness, immorality and illicit sexual relations will not do much to make this kind of gender discrimination and harassment finish. An interesting idea would be to have a South Asian Gender Equality and Media Advocacy group or a regional body which could focus on the imagery and presentation and treatment of women by the media and within the media bodies themselves. While so much is spent by marketing research companies and advertisers on determining women’s consumer behavior, there is hardly any research on the stereotypical images of women being portrayed in our media. And the research which is to be found is not large or influential enough to have any bearing on the state of the media. In Pakistan, as in the rest of South Asia, it is the media houses that need to undergo this process of sensitization and awareness.

**SAQ** What are the causes of stereotyping in South Asian media?

As with media in other countries, in Pakistan too, in media sexualized images of women are used to sell everything from soft drinks to cars and even kitchen faucets. The media also sends a message to lower and middle class women to perform their reproductive duties rather than productive ones and to make physical beauty a top priority. Women are objects of beauty and if they lack it, they need to do everything to achieve what they lack (Ahmer, 2003).
Media plays an important role in bringing about change in society. The messages that are played and replayed through media go a long way in determining the mindsets of the reader, audience and viewer. This has seen the realization and implementation of gender-sensitizing projects in various sectors within Pakistan. One such project initiated and funded by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) was in partnership with the country's state-controlled television, i.e. the Pakistan Television or PTV. The Portrayal of Women in Media lasted for five years (two preparatory years and three years as a full-fledged project), ending in 2002. It aimed at sensitizing media professionals of the PTV and members of private media houses to end stereotype images on the screen. One criticism of the project was that despite its existence for five years, one could simultaneously see gender discrimination or portrayal of stereotypical roles on television. However, it must be realized that in terms of magnitude, the project was only a drop in the ocean and it was too much to expect that it alone would have eliminated gender discrimination in an organization comprising 7000 employees who produced dozens of programs every week (Haroon, 2004).

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<th>SAQ</th>
<th>What are the common stereotypes in Pakistani media?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

As has been the case in Pakistan, in Nepal too in spite of various national and international commitments, no significant policy change for programme has taken place in increasing women's participation in the media, or in bringing about change in the stereotypical role of women. Women have not gained parity with men in participation and decision-making with the management still being entirely male-dominated and patriarchal. The gender division of labor is highly pronounced in production, creative and technical departments. The media has mostly failed to understand an enormous range of visions to find women in new roles. Referring to the disproportionate representation of women in glamour, entertainment, crime and fashion pages, it is seen that there is a lack of truly gender-sensitive approach and analysis of women's issues by both men and women in media which has allowed exploitative derogatory images of women in media to continue (Rana, 2004).

Reading 2.1 (c)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rana, B</th>
<th><strong>Gender and Media: Nepal Perspective</strong> Gender and Media in South Asia&quot; in Kathmandu, Nepal, June 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Retrieved from http://www.southasianmedia.net/conference/Gender_and_Media/gender_and_media3.htm on 12/15/06

Similarly, in Bangladesh it has been observed that the mainstream media rarely addresses gender issues and this is due to the biased treatment of the decision-makers who are mostly men. The assignment on gender issues in newspapers is usually given to female journalists but after realizing the fact that they cannot promote the issue by themselves women loose interest due to stereotyping of their job. It can be stated that gender equality in print media can effectively help
reduce disparity and help gender empowerment, but the fact is that the ratio of women to men is regrettably low. Women are encouraged to take up desk jobs in newspapers rather than fieldwork such as reporting (Rahman, 2004). According to one study of students at a Mass Communication department, male students were found to be discouraging female students from taking up the profession. Further, not a single female student was found to be working as the university correspondent in any of the universities. The situation remains unchanged (Sultana, 2004).

It has also been observed that women become news in the Bangladesh media when they are raped, killed, kidnapped, tortured or are found to be involved in a criminal act. Very few stories portray them in a positive manner and in a language that is gender-sensitive. Even where their achievements are being reported, such as in sports, they are highlighted more from the point of view of sex appeal rather than being gender neutral. In development news, women are highlighted only to show the success of development organizations as there is donor money involved (Sultana, 2004).

![Reading 2.1 (d)](image)


**SAQ** | Are women and men portrayed equally by the mass media? |

In Sri Lanka women are under-represented at the higher management and decision-making levels in the mainstream press and statistics show that there is not a single woman editor in the mainstream press. In Sri Lanka it has been seen that the newsroom culture continues to be overwhelmingly male chauvinist. The printed word carries much weight, the literacy rate is high, at 91%, and the approach to gender in mainstream media still leaves much to be desired. There are no available studies of gender breakdown in Sri Lanka’s mainstream newspaper organizations. The concept of gender itself is still not widely acknowledged, and is only beginning to be incorporated into mainstream parlance and policy making. When considering issues relating to Sri Lankan media it must also be said that it is the question of media freedom that has taken center stage. With governmental control and manipulation of state media becoming the main site of contention, gender might even appear to be a non-issue. This is not to say it is not important (Kurukulasuriya, 2004).

It is evident that issues relating to women in all their complexity are not sufficiently explored in the press. Gender related issues need to be dealt with more thoroughly in the general news and feature pages of mainstream newspapers and not merely in columns or pages dedicated to
women. Most women’s issues have something to do with patriarchal attitudes or behavior, and problems can be traced to male-dominated bureaucracies and environments of one kind or another. So these discussions need to address both men and women (Kurukulasuriya, 2004).

Reading 2.1(e)


In India there is little participation of females in the media, low priority is given to gender issues by the mainstream media. The lack of balanced structure allows the media to selectively appropriate and represent gender issues in conjunction with the dominant socio-political norms. Also the vividly higher presence of women as broadcasters, anchors and soap artists than as journalists leads to the valid query whether the femininity is not only being used stereotyping women, but is also being used by the media to promote consumerism (Dagar, 2004). In India Gender representation in the media is open to the influence of competing tendencies, be it the market, cultural capital, communalism, electoral politics or women’s empowerment articulations. Physical imagery of the female form is used in subtle or in a more blatant manner as a product by the media itself. The acceptance of the ‘femininity product’ with the media can be further gauged through the minimal representation of gender interests (Kalyani & Shiva, 2001).

A media survey in 1994 of gender coverage in news found gender representation to be biased — men were portrayed in diverse roles, women almost always in traditional feminine roles. Women accounted for 7 per cent of the time in the hard news section and 14 per cent in all news programmes. In 1999 an analysis of two English newspapers found women occupying a marginal space. Coverage relegated to a weekly ‘gender page’. Female presence was more through advertisements, news of crime and social events. Cricket news occupied nearly 20 per cent more space than women’s issues (Kalyani & Shiva, 2001).

Reading 2.1(f)

| Dagar, R | Gender and Media: Indian Perspective Gender and Media in South Asia” in Kathmandu, Nepal, June 2004 | Retrieved from http://www.south asianmedia.net/conference/Gender_and_Media/gender_and_media.htm on 12/15/06 |
2.2 EFFECTS OF MEDIA GENDER DISCRIMINATION ON SOCIETY

Gender refers to the feminine or masculine role. It expresses a set of social and cultural perceptions of men and women (Allen, 1999). These perceptions change over time, just as gender roles themselves change. Over the past many years the media, although somewhat reflective of society, increasingly have become powerful image and value shaping forces in our culture (Rak & MacMullen, 1985; Reeves & Miller, 1978; Signorielli, 1989). It has a particularly powerful impact on reinforcing our gender-role attitudes, values, perceptions, beliefs and behaviors.

The models and techniques that researchers use to study the effects of media content on viewers are generally rather inept, compared to the complexity of the phenomena under study. Models that look for global impacts such as Gerbner's (1986) cultivation model, find very small effects, possibly because individual viewers vary in their response to media. More selective "laboratory" experiments, which incorporate personal and situational variables along with media content, may explain more of the variance in people's behavior, but they typically explain only the specific situation under study and do not lead easily to general theories of media effects (Seydegart & Spears, 1993).

Perhaps because the effects of media are not well understood, educational, political, and other institutions give the issue little real prominence. It is fair to say and certainly within the bounds of scientific respectability, that the media exert a profound influence on our lives. Our educational system often acts as though this were not the case, media studies are absent in many curricula, incidental add-ons in others. The fact that we cannot define precise details of the many ways in which media affect social attitudes and behavior should not excuse us from learning what we can about them (Seydegart & Spears, 1993).

Media Watch (1981) a feminist organization working for change in the media's treatment of women, identifies some of the most persistent trends of portrayal of women in media, especially in advertising, as follows:

- **Objectification** – Equating women with objects is dehumanizing and encourages the notion that women can be bought, owned and disposed of.

- **Irrelevant sexualization** – Using women’s bodies in a sexual way in order to attract attention, perpetuates the attitude that women's primary function is to serve men sexually.

- **Infanticization** – Presenting women as silly and childish, or passive and vulnerable, waiting to be rescued (especially in contrast to men, who are generally portrayed as strong, serious and assertive) undermines women's need for independence and reinforces the perception of women as victims. Even more disturbing is the presentation of children as made-up, sexually available adults.
• Domestication – Defining women and girls always in relationship to their husbands, children or parents, and showing them predominantly in a home environment, denies the complexity of women's lives and their contributions to society.

• Victimization – Portraying women as the natural victims of male brutality, either overtly or by implication, is particularly troubling given the incidence of violent acts experienced by women both within and outside their homes.

These trends have been identified both informally by women's groups, and through a wealth of content analyses research documenting that women in the media are, on average portrayed as: younger, more attractive and more nurturing than men; more likely to be victimized, married or involved in romantic activity; and, when married, less likely to work outside the home, or if they do, more likely to be employed in traditionally female occupations such as nurses or secretaries. Although aspects of this picture are improving somewhat, particularly in television, many troublesome trends remain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAQ</th>
<th>How are women portrayed in media?</th>
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Such distorted imagery reinforces sexist attitudes and exacerbate discriminatory conditions and behavior. For instance, hundreds of studies exploring the impact of television have found a correlation between heavy TV viewing in children and teens and stereotyping of occupational roles and domestic chores; increased agreement with statements such as "women are happiest at home raising children" and "men are born with more ambition than women"; and the exhibition of greater sex-typing behavior for gender related qualities and activities e.g. independence and an affinity for sports in boys; warmth and an interest in cooking for girls (Signorielli, 1992)

Teenagers are especially targeted by advertisers and therefore by the media they support. And the dominant messages embodied in the media most popular with kids — video games, movies, magazines — are often the most profoundly anti-social. This is doubly disturbing considering that teenagers are at an unusually vulnerable stage in their developmental process, making them more sensitive than ever to messages about physical appearance, identity and peer acceptance. For girls, in particular, these trends appear to have increasingly significant consequences. Appreciating what is known about the self-esteem issues faced by girls as they move through their teens to young adulthood, the preponderance of messages about the impossible-to-attain feminine ideal (constructed through the use of exceptionally thin models that have invariably been graphically enhanced), expected sexual availability, and limiting career opportunities need to be challenged and counteracted. And although the precise extent to which mainstream advertising and entertainment products exert a negative influence on young women's self esteem and body image is difficult to determine (and complicated by many other variables), health professionals, educators and parents readily recite the consequences observed anecdotally.

The media are one among many influences that contribute to gender role acquisition. Researchers studying the effects of stereotyping in the media typically begin with some general assumptions of gender role acquisition and apply it to the issue of media. Three approaches to
gender role acquisition predominate in the literature on the effects of media on gender learning. These are the Psychoanalytic theory, Social learning theory and Cognitive developmental theory.

Reading 2.2


| SAQ | How has the media affected us? |

The absence of women in the media is closely tied to our ideas about social success and social status. Generally, women are perceived as having less social status. Hence women and their views are seen as less important. To be even more correct, women often do not see themselves as important or as having high status. For instance, it sometimes happens that when the programme producer has found a female expert or spokesperson, she refers to a male colleague who she thinks has higher status or more interesting views on the subject. This is just one of the many reasons why women are not portrayed and interviewed as often as men. It is a complicated process which involves both the programme Producers and their subjects. No wonder that research over time shows that men appear more often in roles with a higher status, e.g. as experts and authorities, while women appear principally in lower-status roles as e.g. victims and passersby (Dijck, 2002).

2.3 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN MEDIA

Gender imbalance in the mass media is a stable, worldwide phenomenon. Numerous analyses of media in many countries have documented the fact that, for the past several decades, men have dominated the mass media. This is true of both radio and television, and of various types of programming drama, news, sports, children's programs, and so on. The research data that document this vary only slightly from country to country and from year to year. Numerous writers (e.g., Gallagher, 1981) have noted that, when few women appear on screen, the range of roles occupied by women will be narrower than the range of roles occupied by men.

Pervaiz (1985) content analyzed the part of media that appeals to urban women of Pakistan. The main objective of the analysis was to look into images of women portrayed through media. Five most popular Urdu novels, TV drama serials, Urdu magazines, feature films and radio dramas were analyzed. She found that media projects an image of devalued, inferior and emotionally dependant women. In spite of being the central character of fiction in most of the cases she has no real human value. The media tries to put too much emphasis on her beauty, clothes and physical appearance.
For further detail of the content analysis of media please refer to the following reading in the allied material.

**Reading 2.3(a)**


Ahmar (2004) analyzed the participation and position of women in the Pakistani media and the impact of those positions on women’s development. She pointed out major impediments in the way of a gender-friendly media, particularly in covering crime, reinforcing stereotypical images of both men and women, women’s portrayal in advertisements, and the use of derogatory language and concluded that in spite of the dismal picture there is hope, the capacity is there and through proactive efforts decent and humane sensibilities can be brought to the fore. The result will be media that advance women and people’s creativity; media that reaffirm women’s wisdom and knowledge; and that makes people into subjects rather than objects or targets of communication.

For further detail please refer to

**Reading 2.3(b)**


### 2.4 FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF MEDIA

The role of mass media and women image has been highly criticized by Feminists and researchers. The survey of literature on women brings out the fact that there has been an agreement all over the world that the image of women projected through media intend to reinforce the traditional attitudes and often presents a degrading and humiliating picture of women (Raja, 2002). Although some critics attempt to minimize concerns about media portrayal of women as a serious issue because they consider this an outcome of women’s sexual liberty. They also believe that media provides emancipation to women.
One common line of reasoning is that media portrayal of gender roles is, for the most part, inconsequential. It is a feminist issue, of little concern to the majority of people. Only the hard-core fringe of pornography and sadistic violence should be seen as a social problem, and regulation, if used at all, should be reserved for curbing the worst levels of degrading violence (Seydegart & Spears, 1993).

Many who study gender and media take the opposite view. They argue that every portrayal of women and men is important in that it contributes some increment to our overall model of social reality. In addition, major dynamics of gender portrayal, such as male power and dominance, are much the same in "inconsequential" situations where no "violence" in the ordinary sense is involved in acts of violence (Seydegart & Spears, 1993).

It has been seen that very little women's information is conveyed by the mass media. The information that is conveyed in the male owned media is men's information, including their information about women, and this information has the male characteristics of emphasis on violence, conflict and sex. Mass media define "news" using these criteria and do not convey much other information. The fact that the mass media do not allow people to speak for themselves, but rather try to speak for them, results in inaccuracies, distortions, and violation of privacy, and leads people who act on the basis of this inaccurate information to make judgments that are not viable, do harm, or waste time and energies.

Since the mass media can not and do not present the information of the majority of individuals, the public as a whole lacks the information it needs for self-government. As a result, because people make their judgment on the basis of the information they have at a given time, the public comes to the mass media owners' conclusions. Therefore, mass media function as a means of governing rather than as a means of communication for the nation's information (Allen & Densmore, 1977).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SAQ</th>
<th>Why the mass media are so heavily criticized?</th>
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</table>

**Reading 2.4**


It has further been argued that there are five essential categories of women's news not reported at all in the mass media. They are (Allen, 1991):

1) **Health and safety information**, such as where to go to find shelter from abuse, information on devices or drugs that are dangerous to women, such as DES, Dalkon Shield, psychosurgery; where to find the women who are working on health and safety problems to work with them.
2) Economic information, such as what to do when you experience discrimination; location of child care centers and their costs; income sources such as welfare, pensions, educational opportunities, training, scholarships, loans, and fellowships available to women; how to go into business, and how women have handled special problems that arise.

3) Political information, such as legislation with special effect on women; positions on issues of special concern to women and the record of women in office; information about judgeships, court decisions, cases coming up; information on political injustices to women and where to offer support and assistance; and planned political actions on women's issues such as abortion, world peace, pornography, rape, etc., long enough in advance to permit participation.

4) Global information, such as information about the organizations of Muslim women against discrimination and what women in other countries are doing or can do to help; what the United Nations is planning for future World Conferences of Women and what progress has been made for women in the world since the last one; how many (and which) organizations are working against trafficking in women and the facts they have uncovered; refugee conditions of women and children worldwide.

5) Media information, where can women find out about the hundreds of women's periodicals and other media that report on the above issues, national and international women's news services and how many (and which) mass media subscribe to them or use them; and how women can reach the public with information they feel is needed for more viable and democratic decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAQ</th>
<th>What issues related to women are not reported at all in the mass media?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2.5 EXERCISES
1. Elaborate the Stereotypical representation of Women in Media?

2. Identify the stereotypical ways in which women are portrayed in Pakistani media?

3. Discuss in detail the effects of media gender discrimination on society?

4. Elaborate the most persistent trends of portrayal of women in media?

5. Explain feminist critique of media?
2.6 REFERENCES


*Stereotypes in Media* http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/local/scisoc/sports03/papers/lgataullina.html

Media Stereotyping http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotypin g/index.cfm


Publication Media: Defining Roles http://www.chowk.com/show_article.cgi?aid=00004274&chan nel=gulberg
The Eight Characteristics of Women's Media that are different in our Media from Men's Media and the Five Categories of Women's News The Quill Magazine article entitled "Women News" (May 1991 issue, pp. 36-37) by Dr. Donna Allen http://www.wifp.org/reportwomensmedia.html

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE
AND
MEDIA THEORIES

Written by
Maria Mustafa Malik
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INTRODUCTION

What this unit is about?

- The unit is about various feminist perspectives and their relationship with media theories.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?

- You will learn about various feminist Approaches.
- You will learn about feminist perspectives and various media theories.
- You will learn about various feminist perspectives about representation of women in media.

Feminism and Media

Feminism is a collection of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies, largely motivated or concerned with the liberation of women. Most feminists are especially concerned with social, political and economic inequality between men and women (in the context of it being to the disadvantage of women); some have argued that gendered and sexed identities, such as "man" and "woman", are socially constructed. Feminists differ over the sources of inequality, how to attain equality, and the extent to which gender and gender-based identities should be questioned and critiqued. In simple terms, feminism is the belief in social, political and economic equality of the sexes, and the movement organized around the belief that gender should not be the pre-determinant factor shaping a person's social identity, or socio-political or economic rights (Wikipedia 2006).

Feminism and Media

Many feminists express concern about how the media has contributed to the cultural conversation about feminism at different historical moments over the past twenty-five years. Feminist theory is vital to explaining the rhetoric of media production.

According to Zoonen (1999), a feminist viewpoint on the media implies a univocal, confident and unswerving denunciation of popular culture, both for its sexist and oppressive portrayal of women and for the devastating effects it is supposed to have on women and men.

As Quoted in Carolyn Moss (2006), “the ways in which women are routinely portrayed in mass media have been the focus of feminist media scholarship over the past thirty years.

Like in Tuchman et al. (1978)’s work, Ceulemans and Fauconnier (1979) found that advertising, televisions, films, news and other genres in Western nations as well as those in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Disproportionately emphasized women’s traditional domestic roles or treated them as sex objects.

Media representations thus became a major front for both popular and academic feminist struggle, continuing up to the present time with contemporary concerns such as bride sites on the
Internet and pornography downloads via cell phones. In fact feminists could argue now than before, with 24/7 news channels, hundreds of satellite and digital.

**Feminist Media**

Feminist media is a piece of media that addresses gender inequality by providing representations that can be analyzed to consider how patriarchy, constructed gender roles, racism, and sexual stereotyping affect a cultural society.

What makes a piece of media a feminist media is if it looks through a theoretical lens of analysis at gender, race, class and sexuality of women and aims to re-establish roles of women in a social or political context. A feminist piece of media also must consider the impact of intersectionality such as religion, age, class, and gender experiences in order to more completely analyze the oppression of women not just in terms of gender.

As cited in Internet article Kerry Braye argues that feminists from varied philosophical and theoretical positions approached their analyses of women's problems and solutions with the media sharing at least two goals.
- Firstly, they tried to explain whether and how the media tried to perpetuate women's secondary status in societies.
- The second was to explore how the media might be used as a vehicle to advance their ideas, status, and political power (Steeves, 1987).

Although most feminist writers began their work by acknowledging issues of women's differences such as race and class, the vast majority of books and articles, according to Valdiva, focus primarily on the white, middle-class, heterosexual, Western woman (1995). Some feminist writers believe it is this absence of multicultural issues, particularly concerning women and the media that divides women instead of uniting them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SAQ</strong></th>
<th>Which two goals do various feminist perspectives hold regarding women's problems in media?</th>
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**Reading 3(a)**


Tuchman et al's (1978) studies revealed many ways in which women were misrepresented (symbolic annihilation) in the media in the late 1970s however they did not provide many tools with which feminists were able to develop actual theories.

Within the following decade, several approaches began to emerge such as liberal feminism, radical feminism and socialist feminism (Jones and Jones, 1999).
3.1 LIBERAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Liberal feminism is a form of feminism that argues that equality for women can be achieved through legal means and social reform, and that men as a group need not be challenged. (Wikipedia, 2006)

Liberal feminism is essentially a reformist approach, which tends to see more equal gender relations being brought about by equal opportunities policies and affirmative action programmes. It does not appear to question the power dimensions in society that maintain male superiority of status and female inferiority. Instead it concentrates on sex role stereotypes, prescriptions of sex-appropriate behaviour, appearance, interests, skills and self-perceptions (Zoonen, L. V. 1991). This perspective maintains that over time the media will 'catch up' with actual social positions and they will present a more accurate view.

3.2 RADICAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Radical feminism is a branch of feminism that views women's oppression (which radical feminists refer to as "Patriarchy") as a basic system of power upon which human relationships in society are arranged. It seeks to challenge this arrangement by rejecting standard gender roles and male oppression.

Radical feminists focus on how women are misrepresented in the media however they investigate the effects of patriarchy on women that is, the system whereby all men directly or indirectly dominate and oppress all women. They are particularly concerned about the media's role in the construction of consciousness and gender identities instead of specific stereotypes. The analysis of male dominance in the media and other social institutions identified the need for women to separate themselves from male-controlled systems and create their own organizations and structures (Donovan, 1985).

| SAQ | What is the basic assumption of Radical Feminist Perspective? |

3.3 SOCIALIST FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Socialist feminism is a branch of feminism that focuses upon both the public and private spheres of a woman's life and argues that liberation can only be achieved by working to end both the economic and cultural sources of women's oppression. Socialist feminism is a dualist theory that broadens Marxist feminism's argument for the role of capitalism in the oppression of women and radical feminism's theory of the role of gender and the patriarchy. Socialist feminism, unlike the previous approaches, does not concentrate exclusively upon gender, but incorporates analyses of social class, ethnicity, sexual preference, age and disability into the discourse. This theory appears embedded in socioeconomic conditions to which the above and other factors take second place. The media are perceived as ideological apparatuses that represent the essential rightness of
capitalism as a social system and socialist feminists concentrate on the ways in which gender is constructed through language and imagery that is semiology.

3.4 CULTURAL (ISLAMIC / PAKISTANI) FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Islamic feminist is a discourse and practice articulated within an Islamic paradigm, which derives its understanding and mandate from the Quran, seeks rights and justice for women, and for men, in the totality of their existence. Islamic feminism is both highly contested and firmly embraced. There has been much misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and mischief concerning Islamic feminism. This new feminism has given rise simultaneously to hopes and fears. An Islamic feminist is one who adopts a worldview in which Islam can be contextualized and reinterpreted in order to promote concepts of equity and equality between men and women; and for whom freedom of choice plays an important part in expression of faith. Islamic feminism advocates women's rights, gender equality, and social justice using Islamic discourse as its paramount discourse, though not necessarily its only one so basically Islamic feminists advocate the implementation of the rights, given to women by Islam fourteen hundred years ago, in today’s contemporary scenario.

Islamic feminism transcends and destroys old binaries that have been constructed. These included polarities between "religious" and "secular" and between "East" and "West." Islamic feminist discourse does precisely the opposite; it closes gaps and demonstrates common concerns and goals, starting with the basic affirmation of gender equality and social justice. Suggestions or allegations of a supposed "clash" between "secular feminism" and "religious feminism" may either be the product of lack of historical knowledge or, as in many cases, a politically motivated attempt to hinder broader solidarities among women (As quoted in Margot Badran, 2006).

A renowned Pakistani feminist Kishwer Naheed in an attempt to describe the difference between international and Pakistani feminism, relates that the objectives of American and Pakistani feminists are more different than similar. We have to fight on the ground of our existence and basic human rights. They have to fight for higher levels of recognition. We in Pakistan are accepted and respected through our relationship with our men, whereas Americans women are dealing with problems such as whether to have abortion. We have the fundamental problems of whether we should be educated, to be allowed to participate in political process, to become a senator or a minister, or to appear veiled or unveiled on television. We have the basic problem of being accepted as a person. (As cited in Shahla Haeri, 2002).

The Pakistani media scenario is not all that different regarding the projection of women but being a Muslim majority country, complete nudity or pornographic media content is not really present in Pakistani media. Although some forms of media like films and theatre vulgarity and semi nudity is prevalent. Pakistani women are also represented in stereotypical ways as is related by Pervez (1984) the female in our media is shown to be beautiful, passive, romantic, nurturing, sacrificing, dominated, humble, modest, irrational, indecisive economically unproductive and resigned to fate. She has a low self-concept and narrow interests. She has a strong need for affiliation and is in search of “He”. About the portrayal of women in media, Zia (1985)
expressed that cinematic images of women in Pakistan are crude stereotypes churned out for an overwhelming male-orientated “public viewing”.

Refer to the following reading about cinema in Muslim countries, it will provide you with some knowledge on the subject:

**Reading 3(b)**


As far as Islamic feminist media theories are concerned there is not sufficient research on the topic but as we all know since the dawn of Islam, women have been appointed the role of a giver and have been viewed and respected as human beings. Her position is of pious and purity under Islam. Islam believes in the equality of genders and favors women’s contribution in society in various capacities. We see in the Islamic history that there have been women of great knowledge and enterprise. Muslim women were traders, scholars, warriors and historians other than being mothers, wives and daughters. Islam does not restrict the potential of any human being rather it encourages even women to play their equal part in life, Islam has defined complimentary roles of men and women, both should accommodate each other and live in harmony.

**Reading 3.4(a)**


The stereotypical and degrading projection of women in Pakistani media these days is against the principles of Islam i.e. human equality and dignity. Oppression of women in terms of their objectification or commoditization in media for viewing pleasure of the men is not in accordance with Islamic principles. Yet we being an Islamic country are not fulfilling the roles given to us by Islam. What we have made of a woman, in the name of enlightened moderation and liberal policies, is only a sex symbol or a sex object. Women are portrayed only as a commodity, and this objectification is why the crime and violence against women is at an increase because men view them as their need only and do not give them the respect that they deserve.
SAQ Which principles of Islam are mentioned in reference with women’s portrayal?

To learn in detail about various feminisms and media theories you can refer to the following reading:

Reading 3(c)


Although the above perspectives may provide relevant arguments concerning the relationship between women and the media, research tends to show that women are still largely oppressed. In other words, it appears that women remain in what is essentially a man's world and as Dow points out, ‘in the 1990s patriarchy is still alive and well while women's attempts at self-definition and self-determination continues to be marginalised and silenced. Popular culture and media play key roles in that process'.

Please refer to the following reading for a criticism of feminist media theories:

Reading 3 (d)

3.5 EXERCISES
1. Define Feminist media?

2. Compare and contrast liberal and radical feminist perspective regarding the women’s portrayal in media.

3. What is the Pakistani feminist perspective about women’s portrayal in media according to your opinion.

4. What is the fundamental concept of Socialist feminist perspective?

3.6 REFERENCES


www.Wikipedia.com
WOMEN AS MEDIA AUDIENCE

Written by
Fatima Saleem
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INTRODUCTION

What this unit is about?
- Women as media audience.
- Viewer Identification with characters in media.
- Women influencing media content.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?
- What is media audience?
- The process of identification with characters in media.
- The number of ways by which women make use, make sense of, understand, and interact with media.

4.1 CONCEPT OF MEDIA AUDIENCE

It is impossible these days to go through a day without encountering the media in some form such as the sound of the radio, passing billboards in the street and watching television or going to a film in the evening. We are all part of the audience for these different kinds of media products, but what does this statement actually mean?

Since the early days of the media this question has been discussed widely throughout the world. Some people have seen media audiences as being easily manipulated masses of people who can be persuaded to buy products through advertising, or to follow corrupt leaders through propaganda. There have also been fears that the contents of media can make their audiences behave in different ways, for example become more violent. On the other hand there have been other critics who have seen the media as having much less influence and working in more subtle ways.

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<th>SAQ</th>
<th>What media encounters did you have this morning?</th>
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Audiences are socially constituted and institutionally-produced categories or groupings of people, television viewers, film-goers, newspaper and magazine readers, radio listeners, theatre-goers etc. We can simultaneously be an individual member of an audience, and part of a broad, undifferentiated audience (Lealand, 2005). Audience remains an essential item for any media communicator who envisages some collective human destination for their message (Denis McQuail, *Mass Communication Theory*).

For further detail, please read the following:

Reading 4.1(a)

4.2 WOMEN AS CONSUMERS OF MEDIA

Research evidence suggests that the characters that populate the programs play a key role in generating and maintaining audiences (Hoffner & Cantor, 1991). Many television executives believe that the presence of likable, intriguing characters is a key component of a successful program (Gitlin, 1983). People have a fundamental need to form connections with other people, and television offers audience members access to a wide range of other human beings. Over time, viewers become familiar with characters and performers on continuing series and often feel as though they know these individuals as well as they know their friends and neighbors. The importance of characters to viewers frequently extends beyond the viewing situation to include the sense of having personal relationships with the characters, deep concern about what happens in their “lives,” and/or a desire to become like them in significant ways (Giles, 2002; Hoffner & Cantor, 1991).

Directors and writers create characters with which audiences are meant to interact to enjoy books, films, or television programs. Unlike identification with parents, leaders, or nations, identification with media characters is a result of a carefully constructed situation. Thus, media studies of identification must account for the production of identification targets as well as the identification of audiences with them. Finally, it is important to note that identification is a response to communication by others that is marked by internalizing a point of view rather than a process of projecting one’s own identity onto someone or something else.

| SAQ | What motivates individuals to watch a television series regularly and to care what happens from week to week? |

Identification with media characters is one outcome of television viewing that is believed to mediate audience responses. However, the concept of identification has been defined in many different ways. Theorists as diverse as Sigmund Freud, Kenneth Burke, and Herbert Kelman have employed identification in their work. Each of these theorists applied the concept in different contexts, but their definitions share common elements. All of the definitions involve a bond or connection between an individual and another person (or entity), such that the individual adopts traits, attitudes, or behaviors of the other person, or incorporates other’s characteristics into his or her sense of self (see Basil, 1996; Wright, 1994; Zillmann, 1994). In his Social
Cognitive Theory, Albert Bandura (1986, 2001) similarly described “psychological matching processes,” through which an observer changes his or her thought patterns, emotional responses, and/or behaviors to match those of another person. This process clearly has a motivational component (Bandura, 2001). People identify with other individuals (or groups), in part, in an effort to achieve rewards or other valued outcomes—such as forming interpersonal connections, maximizing their own potential, or enhancing their self-esteem. Identification with others can provide a range of benefits, although there are risks as well, because the outcomes depend, in part, on the choice of identification figure (Basil, 1996; Mael & Ashforth, 2001; Wright, 1994).

In the mass media literature, the term identification with a character has been used in many ways, with some authors equating identification with related but distinct responses to characters such as liking and perceived similarity. However, two definitions of identification seem to have been explicated and employed most often. First, identification sometimes refers to the process by which an individual puts him- or herself in the place of a character and vicariously participates in the character’s experiences during a program. Cohen (2001) employed this definition, arguing that, through identification; a viewer loses his or her own identity and assumes the identity of a media character. Rosengren and Windahl (1972) called this process “capture.” Zillmann (1994) contended that true identification with a character during a media presentation (in the sense of sharing his or her identity) is rare, because a viewer typically has information about the plot that is unavailable to the character and thus cannot share the character’s perspective. However, Cohen (2001) argued that this form of identification is temporary and fleeting and may vary in intensity during a program. Rosengren, Windahl, Hakansson, and Johnsson-Smaragdi (1976) developed a short self-report scale to measure this type of response, using such items as “Sometimes when I’m watching this program, I believe that I’m really one of the people in the story.”

Second, many scholars have recognized that the process of identification can extend beyond the viewing situation. After describing responses to characters while viewing, Rosengren et al. (1976) noted that “equally or even more important are those relationships which extend beyond the moment of viewing, most important, perhaps, is identification regarded as a more durable phenomenon ‘long-term identification’ with one or more of the personae of the media world” (p. 349). They measured this type of identification with items such as “I would really love to be like the people in this programme.” The phrase wishful identification has been used to describe this type of response a psychological process through which an individual desires or attempts to become like another person (Feiltenen & Linne, 1975; Hoffner, 1996). For example, Adams-Price and Greene (1990) found that the most common form of celebrity attachment reported by was “identificatory attachment,” or the desire to be like or become the celebrity. Bandura (1986, 2001) contended that the modeling process goes far beyond simple imitation of behavior, to include the changing of attitudes, values, aspirations, and other characteristics to match those of a model. These two definitions of identification probably represent separate components of a complex process, with one describing a response that audience members have during a media presentation, and the other describing a long-term consequence of media exposure.

Research indicates that identification with media characters can have significant social and psychological consequences. Caughey (1986) and Boone and Lomore (2001) reported that audience members made changes in their appearance, attitudes, values, activities, and other
characteristics to become more like admired celebrities. In a study of online fans of the television show *My So-Called Life*, Murray (1999) found that teen girls frequently attempted to emulate the lead character, Angela, by dressing like her, dyeing their hair red (like hers), or acting in similar ways. Research has also shown that identification with media characters affects adoption or rejection of specific behaviors or life goals. Austin and her colleagues reported that identification with characters in advertisements was related to children’s expectancies about alcohol use, which in turn was associated with actual drinking behavior (e.g., Austin & Meili, 1994; Austin, Pinkelton, & Fujioka, 2000). Harrison (1997) found that identification with thin media characters was associated with higher levels of disordered eating behaviors. Television role models also influence young people’s occupational aspirations (e.g., Christiansen, 1979; Hoffner et al., in press; King & Multon, 1996). Finally, fictional programs designed to educate as well as entertain have been shown to promote positive social and behavioral change, in part because audience members are motivated to emulate characters with whom they have developed close relationships (e.g., Brown & Cody, 1991; Papa et al., 2000).

### Reading 4.2

| Bénéden, P. V. | 1996 | Viewer 'Identification' with Characters in Television and Film Fiction. Retrieved from http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Students/pjv9801.html on 12/20/06 |

### SAQ What is Identification?

Outcomes of identification may include increased liking or imitation but can also include negative feelings. Identifying with extremely negative characters that are evil or very violent may evoke some understanding or even sympathy for them during reading or viewing but strongly identifying with such a character is likely to cause dissonance, guilt, or even fear.

Four dimensions of identification (Cohen, 2002)

- The first is empathy or sharing the feelings of the character (i.e., being happy; sad; or scared, not for the character, but with the character).

- The second is a cognitive aspect that is manifest in sharing the perspective of the character. Operationally this can be measured by the degree to which an audience member feels he or she understands the character and the motivations for his or her behavior.

- The third indicator of identification is motivational, and this addresses the degree to which the audience member internalizes and shares the goals of the character.

- Finally, the fourth component of identification is absorption or the degree to which self-awareness is lost during exposure to the text.
Factors that make television characters appealing as role models
1. Similarity
2. Character attributes
3. Intelligence
4. Success
5. Attractiveness
6. Humor
7. Admirability by Other Characters

1. Similarity
The interpersonal research literature documents a strong positive association between similarity and interpersonal attraction. People expect that similar individuals will provide rewarding interactions and that they are likely to convey personally relevant information. Research has also shown that perceived similarity is related to the desire to emulate the behavior and characteristics of others (Bandura, 1986; Hoffner & Cantor, 1991). Yet this association may seem somewhat counterintuitive, because people often want to be like others whom they perceive as dissimilar to themselves in important ways—for example, others whom they regard as more successful, more talented, or wealthier than themselves. Apparently, perceiving similarity to another person in some ways seems to promote the desire to be like that individual in other ways—especially ways that are perceived as favorable or rewarding. Based on the work of Bandura (1969), Hoffner and Cantor (1991) argued that “some degree of similarity to media characters seems to promote a desire to be like them, possibly because certain similarities signal that it is both possible and appropriate for the viewer to become like the character in additional ways”.

Viewers tend to feel similar to characters that are like themselves in terms of demographic characteristics such as gender, race, and age (Appiah, 2001; Austin, Roberts, & Nass, 1990; Harwood, 1999; Reeves & Miller, 1978). Individuals may also perceive similarities in deeper, less obvious personal characteristics such as personality, behavioral tendencies, or life experiences (Feilizten & Linne, 1975; Murray, 1999; Turner, 1993). Perceived similarities in these types of fundamental characteristics seem to facilitate the desire to become more like a character in other ways—for example, by emulating the character’s attitudes, appearance, behavior, or other characteristics.

| SAQ | What kinds of similarity is important in a mass media context? |

2. Character Attributes
Identification is also influenced by the manner in which characters are portrayed. Research has shown that viewers evaluate media characters in much the same way they evaluate real people in their social networks. Viewers assess characters’ personality traits and develop impressions and expectations of their behaviors. Television programs are carefully cast, with the characters’ physical appearance, speech patterns, manner of dress, and other characteristics chosen as a “shorthand” method of character development (Hoffner & Cantor, 1991; Turow, 1978). Moreover, the information viewers receive about the characters is scripted, designed specifically to produce a particular impression in an
efficient manner. Camera angles, close-ups, and editing techniques influence viewers' selection and interpretation of character-relevant information (Meyrowitz, 1982).

3. **Intelligence**
Perceived intelligence is a characteristic that is commonly used when forming impressions of others. Intelligence is associated with many positive characteristics, such as problem-solving ability, social competence, and achievement (Paulhus, 2000; Sternberg, 2000). Reeves and Lometti (1979), however, found no evidence that being smart made characters appealing as role models. Although intelligence is often linked to success (Sternberg, 2000) these two constructs are distinct, and intelligent individuals are not necessarily successful. On television, for example, Livingstone (1987, 1989) found that the perceived intelligence of soap opera characters was unrelated to the extent to which they were viewed as dominant and powerful within the narrative.

4. **Success**
Whereas intelligence is a personal trait, success involves the achievement of a desired goal or reward, often as the result of one's own actions. Much evidence shows that people strive to be like successful models (Bandura, 1986; Hoffner & Cantor, 1991). Over the years, there has been concern about the more limited and less powerful portrayals of women on television. Despite positive changes in recent years, women are still depicted less often and in less powerful and prestigious roles than men (Elasmara, Hasegawa, & Brain, 1999; Signorielli & Bacue, 1999).

5. **Attractiveness**
Physical appearance has a strong influence on evaluations of and attraction to others (Langlois et al., 2000). Hoffner (1996) found that attractiveness was the only predictor of women's identification with female characters. This outcome may have been partially due to differences in the women who selected female versus male favorites but may also reflect gender differences in television portrayals. Specifically, different traits tend to be emphasized or rewarded for males and females, with men rewarded more often for assertiveness and achievement and women rewarded more often for having an attractive, youthful appearance (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999). Both male and female characters on television are generally better looking than the average person, but this is especially true for females, who are typically young, thin, and physically attractive (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000; Signorielli, 2001). This pattern of television portrayals may convey the message that, for females, appearance is of primary importance.

6. **Humor**
Humor is an important attribute that viewers use to differentiate characters across television series (Reeves & Greenberg, 1977; Reeves & Lometti, 1979). Humor is generally considered an appealing personality trait in friends and romantic partners (Bippus, 2000) and even increases the likeability of a computer persona (Morkes, Nass, & Kernal, 1999). One of the key characteristics of humor is the disparagement and embarrassment of characters, with humorous characters often portrayed in a negative light (Zillmann, 2000). Hoffner (1996) found no association between humor and identification with same-gender characters, although women did identify with funny male characters.

45
7. **Admiration by Other characters**
Finally, as Reeves and Greenberg (1977) argued, feedback or support from other characters should also have an important influence on viewers’ desire to be like media characters. Clearly characters are not evaluated in isolation but are considered within the context of their interactions with others in a program (Hoffner & Cantor, 1991; Livingstone, 1987, 1989). How characters are treated by others—for example, the extent to which they are admired, respected, well liked—should serve as a cue regarding the worth or appeal of the characters or their behavior (Fouts & Burggraf, 2000). Specifically, the positive regard that characters receive from others can be interpreted as a form of reinforcement, which should influence viewers’ desire to model characters’ behaviors or attributes (Bandura, 1986).

From Barbie to Victoria’s Secret, women are exposed to media images of “the thin ideal” from a very early age. Television, movies, and magazines all perpetuate the idea that an ultra thin woman is the ideal. This striving for an unattainable ideal has had a negative effect upon a woman’s body image. Body image is the way people perceive themselves, and the way they believe others perceive them (Cash, 1990). Why is “the thin ideal” so sought after? Why does society perpetuate this unrealistic body type? What effect is this ideal having upon women today?

Social Comparison theory claims that people compare themselves and their significant others with other people and images that they see as being representative of realistically attainable goals. What happens when the influence of media images has women now making the comparison of themselves and unrealistic goals? Why has society placed such importance upon physical beauty so much so that women begin to see their self worth as dependent upon the physical? (Dorian, 2002).

For example, societal values changed drastically in Fiji when satellites and television was introduced. After 38 months of exposure to these media images, females, of average age 17, changed their societal values and body image to reflect the western values of which they had been exposed. The girls were now more body conscious and more into dieting whereas before there was little talk of dieting and body satisfaction was much higher. Similarly, the same effect was found in Iran where western television was banned. Women were only shown on television with almost all of their bodies covered. It was found that Iranian women had higher body satisfaction than their American counterparts (Dorian, 2002).

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<th>SAQ</th>
<th>What other factors do you think would make television characters appealing as role models?</th>
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### 4.3 WOMEN’S INFLUENCE ON MEDIA CONTENTS AS MEDIA AUDIENCE

There are a number of ways by which women make use, make sense of, understand, and interact with media such as television, films, magazines and the internet. It is through the exploration of the social context and women’s lived experiences that we can comprehend how women negotiate their position as audience against the realities of their own lives. It is not possible to position women as an archetypical female audience but that women bring their own experiences and
lifestyles to viewing, listening, watching and the interactive context. Women audiences use cultural products for gratification and pleasures. Their media habits are hard to generalize which suggest that research should continue to examine trends and shifts in female media audience attitudes and behaviors.

For detail please read

**Reading 4.3**


4.4 **EXERCISES**

1. Explain in detail the concept of media audience.

2. Elaborate identification and explain why and how individuals identify with characters in television and film fiction?

3. How can women and audience influence the content of media?

4. Explain the factors that make television characters appealing as role models.

4.5 **REFERENCES**


WOMEN IN PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Written by Fatima Saleem
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INTRODUCTION

What this unit is about?
- Portrayal of women in different forms of mass media.
- The victimization of women in all forms of print and electronic media.
- The negative effects of portrayal of women on women.
- The work of women in radio, cinema and theatre.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?
- Forms of portrayal of women in mass media.
- The representation of women as victims and objects of sexual desire.
- The role of media in Pakistan in terms of improving the status of women.

5.1 WOMEN’S PORTRAYAL IN NEWSPAPERS

Amidst the diversity in political, economic and cultural systems in the region, media’s portrayal of women, then and now, has been characteristically consistent across Asia – that of being victims, subservient, dependent, nurturing, selfless, sacrificing mother and wife, heterosexual, sex object, prostitute, mistress. Women are hardly presented as contributors to the development process as laborers, farmers and professionals. Worse, some members of media tend to underestimate the efforts of women’s organizations.

Women’s visibility in the news is often in relation to sensational stories of rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence and other forms of violence. The core message that women are victims or prone to abuse has been more pronounced over condemning men’s continued violation of women’s rights. Such portrayal has only served to reinforce rather than challenge men’s oppression of women. Continued exposure to media reports on violence against women has only created more fear among many women. This in turn has affected their self-confidence and mobility.

The reception of media, the kind of medium most effective, can be concluded by analysis of a country’s literacy rate and economic stability that exists within. A closer look at Pakistan’s history reveals that politics governs every sphere, the legislature, judiciary, and economics among others. The absence of national integrity causes a great deal of damage to the country. The situation of women in Pakistan varies considerably depending on the geographical location and class. As Ayesha Jalal reports, seventy percent of the country’s female population is however rural where they are beset with the “crippling handicaps of illiteracy, constant motherhood, poor health” and poverty.

Newspapers which are supposed to provide factual information, print statistics of the victimized women majority as an ever-decreasing minority and those which do appear within the paper are placed in the less important corners of the newspapers. The language used to report the
“unfortunate” treatment of these women, who are raped, molested, publicly “disgraced” are reported as those losing their honor, and their morality was taken from them, stripped of all that matters in life. Leading to the conclusion that after such a “fateful” accident, the woman has lost all respect, esteem, any hope of superiority in everyday life is ruined and they will remain deprived of respect within the society, they have been stripped naked off their right to be respected in the society. They have dishonored the family and the community. The literacy rate is as low as 36% where the definition of literacy is age 15 and above can read and write their names along with a few other words. Among those the female literacy rate is as low as 26% (Jang Newspaper Group).

**SAQ**

**How are women portrayed in newspapers?**

Considering the current rate of literacy and keeping in mind what is considered literate, it is only obvious that the more popular medium of communication is either direct communication, by word of mouth or the electronic media which does not require the presence of the ability to read and write. Most of the male population reads the newspapers, which further conforms and strengthens their perspective of the light women, should be seen in. The woman who suffers the ill fortune of sustaining violence against them has to be treated guilty until proven innocent, totally the opposite of how it should be in any society irrespective of the gender, creed or beliefs. For further detail please refer to reading 2.3(b) of unit 2 namely *Gender and Media: Pakistan Perspective*.

It is often said that news provides a mirror on the world. Women are over half - 52% - of the world’s population. Yet on the monitoring day, men were 79% of news subjects - the people who are interviewed, or whom the news is about. For every woman who appears in the news, there are five men.

**Reading 5.1**


### 5.2 WOMEN’S PORTRAYAL IN MAGAZINES

A typical women’s magazine has a front cover blazing with flawless models and luring promises: lose weight, get a raise, improve your memory, sleep soundly, get and stay happy. Fashion magazines promote beauty. Every page is filled with images of gorgeous models and texts make constant references to appearance. The message is that looks are more important than the mind or accomplishments. The pictures in magazines represent an ideal body image. The standard set by this image is that women must be under-weight, young, and have a flawless complexion to be considered beautiful and accomplished.
In Pakistan there is a marked increase in women’s magazines that are home, kitchen and fashion-based. These magazines are focusing heavily on the domestic side of women and trying to prove that every woman needs to be a perfect cook, a tailor, and housekeeper and also be beautiful. The intellectual qualities of women are mentioned nowhere. Their abilities as equal partners in developments are lost between cooking oils and fairness creams. This is a dangerous trend especially because the clientele are across board. The lower to middle and upper class women are being brainwashed to either perform their reproductive duties rather than productive ones or put their physical beauty on top priority. Some of these magazines and digests are also supporting the reactionary views that if women remain within the confines of their homes and stay out of public life, so many of our social ills would be overcome.

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<th>What important aspects that women should possess are being ignored by magazines?</th>
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According to Gauntlett (2002), magazines of yesteryear placed their “emphasis on home, beauty, finding a husband and keeping him”. These were the principal things that mattered to women so magazines made full use of this by drawing on this need. Today, even though some magazines also confront these issues, they are more geared towards beauty and sex. From “Cosmopolitan” to “Vogue” to “Glamour”, magazines focus on being pretty, popular and proud. Gauntlett added that these magazines “represent a not-very-subtle and relentless insistence that women of all ages must do their best, and go to considerable expense, to look as glamorous as possible”. This reduces the quality of life of women in the writer’s opinion. Females are seen as solely focused of looking pretty to get and keep a man. These magazines are not facing real life and the real woman who works the 9-5 shift, comes home to cook, clean and care for the house and members of it. This is the woman who has real problems and cannot look pretty all the time. These magazines also, whether intently or not, inflict low self-esteem on the regular woman. She views these picture perfect images of women and feels inferior to the models in the magazines. The models are also victims whose body, face and hair are exploited to sell products and services that are geared toward perfection.

These effects are highly unethical. The magazines that are marketed to younger women like “More”, often feature sex lessons. What this is implying that women are inadequate in bed and always need to learn something extra to please their men. Not only do these articles promote promiscuity, but they render women sexually inferior to the men who they are trying to please. Another “common assumption of women’s magazines is that they are all about how to get a man” (Gauntlett, 2002). This implies that having a man is the way to achieve happiness. Women’s magazines are typical examples of the degradation of the female image.

Reading 5.2

5.3 WOMEN'S PORTRAYAL IN CINEMA

The Cinema, Television and Radio broadcasts within Pakistan reflect the taste and perspective of the illiterate masses. The women are portrayed as the good ones who will take care of the household, and their attires reveal that if they wear clothes other than the traditional dresses, they will have to face the consequences in the form of either harassment or prejudice at the hands of the community. They must remain “obedient” to their husbands, and should indulge in household affairs more than work places.

The Cinema portrays women as an object of sexual desire. The men who harass the heroine are villains but the one man who harasses her and the movie depicting how she enjoys the attention, she falls in love with him and he becomes the hero. The woman is clothed in revealing clothes, with sexual gestures attached to their every move. The bosoms are stacked with padding and the necklines low. The woman’s place is depicted as that of a subordinate of the men. The woman who smokes, drinks, speaks up, maintains the need to rise as an individual is often termed as a vamp. In most cases the girl who is rebellious against the system is subdued by being termed as misguided and thus when she finds the so called ‘love of her life’, she settles down to accept the norms of the society and the propagated status she has as a female and thus in the end turns out to be the heroine. The one, who maintains her life style, not in accordance of the mundane image of a “good” girl, is often sorry as she suffers great loss never to be recovered or invariably dies. Movies project that the woman who receives beatings from a man, will learn in due time that, it was for her own benefit and thus is justified. The mother, sister, wife, love interest of the man is always shown as the weak and one which holds back the positivism that could have been.

The media and intellectuals may have paid insufficient attention to the tension between the rights of the family and the rights of those who make it up. While the family is seen as a unit worthy of protection in Pakistan, children and women currently lose their rights within the family in contemporary (but) tradition-dominated Pakistani society; the need to balance these different sets of rights has not been fully recognized and addressed. The portrayal of women being negative and is projected as the crux of every problem. What is projected by the media is accepted by the masses as the morally correct thing to be done. The women in the media related profession are rarely treated with respect.

Sex and violence are the two usual targets for anyone to take on the film industry. With every controversial film, whether it is ‘Girlfriend’ or ‘fire’, the debate once again comes to the fore as to where to draw a line between ‘freedom’ and ‘license’. ‘Liberals’ and ‘nationalists’ take positions for their ‘ideological’ war with no solution in sight. Ultimately, the ire will be directed against the toothless Censor Board and the matter ends there. Until another controversial film hits the screen. Now, the focus is shifting. It is no longer the excessive sex or vulgarity in films, but how the women are portrayed in films and other mass media. Of course, obscenity is the issue and its scope and definition have been extended to examine the portrayal of women itself in the media.

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<th>What is most commonly portrayed in cinema?</th>
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53
Women's organizations are up in arms against the exploitation of women in films. They don't approve of women being shown either on stereotyped role of a pious mother, obedient wife or obliging sister etc., or as a sex symbol. The appearance of women in cinema, which is often derided as a vulgar medium, reinforces stereotypes through the creation of female characters as either helpless damsels lacking agency or vulgar, immoral adherents of 'Western' modernity. In the words of the Uks report, "The vamp or saint image perpetuated by the Pakistani film industry caters to a world of lurid male fantasy", which has helped to reinforce gender prejudice at a time of rising sexual violence.

Please refer to the same reading, read article no. 3(b) in the allied material for unit 3

Reading 5.3


5.4 WOMEN'S PORTRAYAL IN TELEVISION

Television informs and entertains. It is a powerful influence in determining the roles of men and women in society. Young people are especially influenced by its portrayal of gender roles. Although television has improved its portrayal of gender, women are still typecast in traditional roles, and under represented, while men are portrayed as dominant figures. Women are stereotypically represented as dependent, emotional. Women are the mothers, and men are the breadwinners. Women are under represented in television about 3:1. The fact that a majority of voice-overs on television are male, that there are more male news readers on television and that many of the major film directors are men indicates that it is the male who has the authority and the control of the world of television.

During the 2004-2005 primetime television seasons:
- Females accounted for 39% and males 61% of all characters. (Last season: 41% and 59%, respectively.)
- Viewers were much more likely to see female characters on programs airing on the newer networks such as UPN (52%) and WB (50%) than on FOX (39%), ABC (39%), NBC (39%), and CBS (37%).
- Overall, female characters were younger than males. Women 40 and older comprised 12% of all characters. In contrast, men 40 and older accounted for 27% of all characters.
- Females in prime-time are overwhelmingly white (77%). 14% are African American, 4% are Latina and 3% are Asian. (Professor Martha Lauzen, San Diego State University, 2005).
The number of sexual scenes on television has nearly doubled since 1998. The study examined a representative sample of more than 1,000 hours of programming including all genres other than daily newscasts, sports events, and children’s shows. All sexual content was measured, including talk about sex and sexual behavior. The study found that 70% of all shows include some sexual content, and that these shows average 5.0 sexual scenes per hour, compared to 56% and 3.2 scenes per hour respectively in 1998, and 64% and 4.4 scenes per hour in 2002. These increases combined represent nearly twice as many scenes of sexual content on TV since 1998 (going from 1,930 to 3,780 scenes in the program sample totaling a 96% increase between 1998 and 2005). But despite these overall increases in sexual content, the number of shows in which sexual intercourse is either depicted or strongly implied is down slightly in recent years, 7% in 1998, 14% in 2002, and 11% in 2005 (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005).

The role of media in Pakistan has also been lethargic in terms of improving the status of women. Pakistan television (PTV) plays have a crosscutting viewership, especially among women. However, plays mostly revolve around formula-based story lines, which cast women in either submissive roles or at the other extreme as westernized glamour girls. A recently conducted survey (2001) by a United Nations Development Programme on 'Portrayal of women in media' indicates that the viewers' preferences are now tilting in favour of more gender-balanced portraying of women. The respondents of the survey feel that the negative stereotypical images of highly emotional and suppressed women should be reduced and downplayed. This is a sure sign of improvement in women's status, as it would leave a positive impact on the male members of our society regarding the productive role of women and who might then stop considering them as mere vegetables who have no say of their own. Thus, revolution is required in the thinking pattern of the male members to change the existing notion of power. The requirement in the present scenario is not to empower one gender over the other but a balance between the two genders towards achievement of joint goals, better society and better future for the upcoming generations by being proud of one's own culture.

**Reading 5.4**


### 5.5 WOMEN'S PORTRAYAL IN RADIO

Radio is the ideal medium to spread the UKS message. Pakistan's illiteracy rate is high and 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas with limited access to television. Women journalists in Pakistan have begun producing the country's first independent syndicated radio programs that feature women as both producers and subjects under a unique training project developed by Internews and the Uks Foundation, a Pakistani organization promoting balanced coverage of women in the media. The radio show is called "Meri Awaz Suno" ("Hear My Voice") and has
agreements to air on five of the six new independent radio stations reaching across Pakistan. A recently produced program discussed educational opportunities for girls and women in Pakistan. Another is about HIV/AIDS and includes the first ever broadcast in Pakistan of an HIV positive person's own words and story. The practice of suara, an old tradition that continues to this day in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan, is covered in a third program. Suara is the practice whereby a daughter is given away to one's enemy to end a rivalry.

Tasneem Ahmar, Director of the Uks Foundation and Executive Producer of the Uks Radio Project, has worked for many years to improve the coverage and participation of women in Pakistani media. "This project is geared towards playing an important role in changing attitudes for a positive and better future of women in Pakistan," she said. Internews' projects in Pakistan are funded by a grant from the United States Agency for International Development.

The Drum Beat (Issue 344, 24 April, 2006) states that "According to the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, only 3% of Pakistan's journalists are women. Launched in connection with International Women's Day, "Meri Awaz Suno" is an Urdu-language radio programme produced by Pakistani women journalists to raise issues affecting both women and children. Produced entirely by a team of 5 young women, the magazine-style programme covers a diverse range of issues, including women parliamentarians, women in sports, honour killing, child labour, HIV/AIDS, girls' education, and daycare for working mothers. High-profile women such as Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, have appeared on the programme."


### 5.6 WOMEN'S PORTRAYAL IN THEATRE

Throughout history, theater has both entertained and educated. The range of theatrical genres—comedy, drama, opera, musical theater, and more have been mediums for audiences and artists to bring new experiences and understandings to their worlds. Along with dance, theater has sometimes been disapproved by the government of Pakistan and has rarely been given economic support. Regardless, it has continued to thrive in the culture.

In the early years after independence, the urban theater was limited to dramas in colleges and universities and occasional visiting troupes, performing mostly Shakespeare's plays, which later led to original adaptations. Inspired by the oratory tradition of poetry in the Moghul courts and the growing radio medium, a style of performance grounded in the musicality of the spoken word
continued in new forums like The Arts Council in Lahore—set up by radio celebrities like Imtiaz Ali Taj and Rafi Peer. In Karachi, Khwaja Moenuddin wrote a number of original satires, which are still performed today.

Folk theater (tamasha, swaang and nautaunki) and surviving folk genres, including storytelling (dastaan-goh) and puppetry, continued outside the cities. In South Asia, as throughout the world, traditionally most public performers have been men. In Pakistan some of the most famous theater celebrities have been women, like Bali Jatti, who ran her own theater company and was loved by audiences.

Since the 1980s, artists have used the form of alternative, or protest theater to examine contemporary issues and encourage social change. Many playwrights, directors, and actors, including many women, have used theater to hold a mirror up to society, presenting taboo-breaking works on stages and in other settings, including rural villages, city streets, and in schools. Ashfaq Ahmad, who died in 2004, was a playwright who often highlighted thought-provoking issues in his plays and stories, using humor and satire to touch on the social and political concerns of the first Pakistani generation to grow up after Partition. Another contemporary author, Shahid Nadeem, the in-house playwright for Lahore’s Ajoka Theater, has written plays that directly confronted some of Pakistan’s important social issues. Other protest theater groups which still operate today are Karachi-based Tehrik-e-Niswan and Lahore’s Lok Rehas.

The general complaint in conservative circles is that commercial theatre is lowbrow and thrives on obscene dialogue and dances. The fact is that at least three departments are tasked with monitoring the activities of commercial theatre. From the Punjab Arts Council, which is responsible for vetting the scripts to District Coordination Officers, who are authorized to monitor the screening of plays, to the Home Department that actually takes action against producers, directors, artistes and theatre owners, the dice is loaded against entertainment at every step.

Theatre in Pakistan has been given a professional and commercial face by private production companies that attempt to infuse theatre as a cultural norm in the country. In this respect, the Capital has been exceptionally successful, through the support of the Government and Private Investors, to give a platform to the youth to showcase their talent. 2006 alone saw around eight lavish theatrical productions, and was touted as the year of comedy, as residents of the Capital were treated to a liberal dose of humor and farce. The year 2007 kick-started with two comedy plays, and March 2007 will see a change in genre, as a new production company by the name of Living Picture Productions brings a contemporary dance musical to the stage.

The biggest problem is the mentality of the people of this country. The mindsets are very diverse thus what is decent to one group of people falls under the realms of indecency for the next. Some cities like Gujranwala, Gujrat and Faisalabad have had a history of gate crashing of theatres, attacking artistes and even get actors arrested. Police officials believe they have a moral obligation to prevent artistes from spreading obscenity.
Recently, in a TV program, some participants accused commercial theatre of not following scripts or staging plays without any script. However, as one observer highlighted to Daily Times no one cared to point out that having a script means getting it approved at seven steps from bureaucrats none of whom is qualified to approve a script. Besides, one reason for the popularity of commercial theatre is its spontaneity. In some cases, artistes exchange barbs and putdowns with the audience. “This livens up the play for everyone,” says a regular theatregoer.

The accusation that the dialogue is obscene eschews the fact that commercial theatre normally enacts real-life situations. “That is the way most of us speak Punjabi. Does not the Punjabi love burlesque,” asks a theatre critic. Since we live in a capitalist environment when there is a demand for something it must be supplied. This form of service should be available if there are people willing to be entertained. Especially for the masses who are generally poor and frustrated with struggling for survival. They get attracted to the local theatre which may be categorized as cheap and obscene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAQ</th>
<th>What problems are being faced by theatre in Pakistan?</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Although, theoretically we are a moral society who is consciously aware of its values, corruption that has crept into the crevices of the business making bribing of officials widespread. Exploitation of female artistes by the producers and directors of the plays as well as by the government officials tasked with monitoring the theatre is rampant. An observer commented that there is need to protect the rights and interests of artistes. This can only be achieved through the regulation of theatre in a positive way. But our closed minded society stigmatizes this activity as immoral. Until and unless this form of art is not accepted, quality in this field of art cannot be achieved nor can it be expected.

Because of the problems mentioned above the governments of the past did not utilize resources into this area by building auditoriums and providing facilities in this regard. This may be one of the reasons that street theatre has been so popular. Although many actors who were part of this were arrangement were rounded up and jailed. This is because the government was criticized through this medium.

5.7 **EXERCISES**

1. What are the statistics of men and women being portrayed in newspapers?

2. How are women portrayed by different magazines?

3. What changes can be brought about in Pakistani cinema regarding portrayal of women in films?

4. Explain typical roles depicted by women on Television.

5. Explain in detail the accomplishments of women in print and electronic media.
5.8 REFERENCES


Pakistani Women Get Their Voices Heard from http://www.whomakesthenews.org/research/latest_news_gender_media/pakistani_women_get_their Voices_heard

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN ADVERTISING

Written by
Maria Mustafa Malik
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INTRODUCTION

What this unit is about?
- Portrayal of women in advertisements.
- Exploitation of women by advertisers.
- Effects of sexualized projection of women in media.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?
- How women are objectified in Advertisements?
- Why and how women are exploited by the advertisers and the producers?
- The impact of the sexualized portrayal of women on the psyche of men and women.
- The objectification of women and the culture of thinness.

6.1. ANALYSIS OF THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN ADVERTISEMENT

Advertising is paid communication through a non-personal medium in which the sponsor is identified and the message is controlled. Variations include publicity, public relations, product placement, sponsorship, underwriting, and sales promotion. Every medium is used to deliver these messages: television, radio, movies, magazines, newspapers, the internet, and billboards. (Wikipedia, 2006)

Kindly refer to the following reading in your Allied material to know in detail about the definition of Advertising.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading 6.1 (a)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominick, J.R.</td>
<td>1993</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Kindly refer to the following reading in your Allied material to know in detail about the definition, types, role and impact of Advertising.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading 6.1(b)</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wikipedia</td>
<td>2006</td>
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</table>
In this century Advertising has become less concerned with the communication of essential information about goods and services and more involved in the manipulation of social values and attitudes (Zubair, S. and Sheikh, A., 2004)

**Women in Advertising**
As a cultural form, advertising displays a preoccupation with gender that is hardly matched in any other genre. "In modern advertising, gender is probably the social resource that is used most by advertisers. Thousands of images surround us everyday of our lives that address us along gender lines. Advertising seems to be obsessed with gender and sexuality (Zoonen, L.V.).

In *Killing Us Softly, Advertising's Image of Women* Kilbourne says that advertising is the foundation of the mass media. The primary purpose of the mass media is to sell products. Advertising sells products, but also values, images, concepts of love and sexuality, romance, success and normalcy. The effects of advertising are inescapable, they sell images, values and goals, they shape our attitudes and our attitudes shape our behavior" (Kilbourne, J.)

Advertising and its representation of women are areas which have attracted the attention of feminists. Baehr Comments: "from its very beginning the women’s movement has responded critically, often angrily, to what it has rather loosely called “Sexism in the media”. Advertisements were an obvious first target and Betty Freidan devoted a large part of “The feminist mystique” to a content analysis of women’s magazines and to a critique of advertising and market research technique. This critical analysis has unearthed the gender stereotypes (as cited in Srinati, 2004).

According to Dyer Analysis of ads suggests that the gender is routinely portrayed according to traditional cultural stereotypes: women are shown as very feminine, as “sex object”, as housewives, mothers, homemakers’ and men in situations of authority and dominance over women. Dyer therefore concluded that the treatment of women in ads amounts to what an American researcher has called the ‘symbolic’ annihilation’ of women. In other words ads reflect the dominant social values; women are not important, except in the home, and even there men know best, as the male voice over for the female products suggest (As quoted in Srinati, 2004).

Regarding women’s images in advertising, Preston emphasizes that advertising is a powerful tool used by the media to portray an image, change an idea or shape an attitude. Although society usually considers advertising a medium to sell products, it can also sell a person, or, in this case, a gender role (Preston, P.).

According to Kilbourne’s reflection on impact of objectification of women in advertising, "Women are constantly turned into things, into objects. And of course this has very serious consequences. For one thing it creates a climate in which there is widespread violence against women. Now I’m not at all saying that an ad… directly causes violence. It’s not that simple, but it is part of a cultural climate in which women are seen as things, as objects, and certainly turning a human being into a thing is almost always the first step toward justifying violence against that person."

**ACTIVITY**
Look through popular magazines and see if you can find advertisements that objectify women in order to sell a product.
As quoted in Pervez, Cantor (1972) found that women in T.V. commercials were mostly shown in domestic roles while men were mostly portrayed in occupational roles. If women are shown as employed they are shown in traditionally feminine occupation.

In a content analysis of advertisements carried out by Dominick and Rauch it is revealed that in advertisements women were depicted in a smaller variety of occupational roles than men, with most of them working as housewives. In addition 75 percent of all commercials in which women appeared promoted kitchen or bathroom products. In commercials for cosmetics and personal hygiene women dominated as well, while men were shown holding high status jobs or purchasing high ticket items like cars. Voiceovers or product representatives were predominantly male.

Reading 6.1 b


6.2 IMPACT OF WOMEN’S PORTRAYAL IN ADVERTISEMENT ON SOCIETY
(Media Images Affect How We Think and Feel)

Images of Female Body in Mass Media
A core element of patriarchal culture is a display of woman as a spectacle to be looked at subjected to the gaze of the male audience. Many feminists have pointed to the devastating effects that this ‘to-be-looked-at-ness’ might have on ordinary women. Wendy Chapkis for instance discussed how cultural messages about beauty and slimness negatively affected her own and other women’s sense of well being in general, and of being truly feminine in particular. More recently, feminist Naomi Wolff (1990) has made similar arguments in her bestselling book “The Beauty Myth” that the beauty myth isn’t good for men or women. “It prevents (men) from actually seeing women...in suggesting a vision in place of a woman, it has a numbing effect, reducing all sense but the visual...” (cited in Zoonen).

In her video Killing us softly, Jean Kilbourne argues that the overwhelming presence of media images of painfully thin women means that real woman’s bodies have become invisible in the mass media. The real tragedy, Kilbourne concludes, is that many women internalize these stereotypes, and judge themselves by the beauty industry’s standards.

According to Cirkena and Cuklanz (1992) images of the ideal female body reproduced in advertisement, films, television, and other texts serve to create a conception of the female body against which real people measure themselves and others.

According to Rider unfortunately there is a large gap between reality and the ideal portrayed by the media. In fact the media images of female beauty are impossible to attain for most of the women who are naturally larger than the models.
According to Striegel-Moore, Silberstein, & Rodin (1986) More females than males express dissatisfaction with the way they look, and they use body shape and thinness as measures of their appearance.

Mintz & Betz (1986) found that for women, dissatisfaction with their bodies more generally influences their overall self-esteem. The media are significant in setting the standard for female appearance. Advertisements, television and movies reinforce the importance of a thin body as a measure of a woman’s worth.

The Obsession with Thinness
In many societies thinness is associated with attractiveness. The media reflect images of thinness and link this image to other symbols of prestige, happiness, love and success for women. “...the omnipresent media consistently portrays desirable women as thin...even as real women grow heavier, models and beautiful women are portrayed as thinner. In the last two decades we have developed a national cult of thinness. What is considered beautiful has become slimmer and slimmer. For example, in 1950 the White Rock mineral water girl was 5 feet 4 inches tall and weighed 140 pounds. Today she is 5 feet 10 inches and weighs 110 pounds. Girls dieting and dissatisfaction with bodies have become normal reactions to puberty. Girls developed eating disorders when our culture developed a standard of beauty that they couldn’t obtain by being healthy. When unnatural thinness became attractive, girls did unnatural things to be thin.” (Mary Pipher cited in Jean Kilbourne)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAQ</th>
<th>Define the culture of Thinness.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The media promote and reflect the current mainstream culture’s standards for body shape or size and importance of beauty. Women compare their own bodies to our cultural ideals and find them wanting. Repeated exposure to the thin ideal via the various media can lead to the internalization of this ideal. It also renders these images achievable and real. Until women are confronted with their own mirror images they will continue to measure themselves against an inhuman ideal.”(Jean Kilbourne)

Reading 6.2 a


Media and Eating disorders
Tiggeman and Pickering (1996) found that the total amount of television watched (about 20–25 hours per week) is not associated with perceived body weight, body dissatisfaction, or with a
desire for thinness, but the type of programs (advertisements, soaps, movies, music videos, sports programs) watched is associated.

Another finding of their research is that, on average, the adolescent girls in their study bordered on being underweight based on objective measures, but most perceived themselves as somewhat overweight and were dissatisfied with their weight.

Jean Kilbourne states in her research that
- At least 1 in 5 young women in America today has an eating disorder.
- One recent study of fourth grade girls found that 80% of them were on diets.
- Only 5% of women have the supposedly ideal body type (tall, genetically thin, broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped, long-legged and usually small-breasted) seen in almost all advertising.
- 4 out of 5 women are dissatisfied with their appearance.
- Twenty years ago, the average model weighed 8% less than the average woman. Today, the average model weighs 23% less than the average woman.
- Almost half of the American women are on diet on any given day.
- 5–10 million women are struggling with serious eating disorders.

According to a report in the Teen Magazine 2003
- 50 to 70% of normal weight girls believe they are overweight.
- 35% of girls 6 to 12 years old have been on at least one diet.

**ACTIVITY**
Watch an hour of prime-time television and record what commercials, music videos, or shows come on. As you watch, count (and record) how many thin and non-thin women you see. In addition, make a chart of the clothes worn and roles played by the thin women versus the non-thin women. (You could also do this activity by looking through fashion magazines.)

According to Wolff, the cultural industry’s prescription for women to be beautiful and surrender – a pleasure to look at – has produced a generation of American girls and women who suffer from eating disorders like bulimia and anorexia nervosa.

Girls dieting and dissatisfaction with bodies have become normal reactions to puberty. Girls developed eating disorders when our culture developed a standard of beauty that they couldn’t obtain by being healthy. When unnatural thinness became attractive, girls did unnatural things to be thin.” (Mary Pipher cited in Jean Kilbourne)

The American research group Anorexia nervosa & Related Eating Disorders, Inc. says that one out of every four college aged women uses unhealthy methods of weight control including fasting, skipping meals, excessive exercise, laxative abuse and self induces vomiting.

“Encouraging the media to present more diverse and real images of people with positive messages about health and self-esteem may not eliminate eating disorders entirely, but it will
help reduce the pressures many people feel to make their bodies conform to one ideal, and in the process, reduce feelings of body dissatisfaction and ultimately decrease the potential for eating disorders.” (E.D.A.P. website, 2002)

To read more about media consumption and eating disorders kindly refer to this reading:

Reading 6.2 (b)


Reading 6.2 (c)


The Fair Colour Complex

Besides the thinness culture another very prevalent problem regarding attractiveness is the complexion or the colour of one’s skin although the obsession with fair complexion is more common in eastern countries yet the Black community in the west also faces discrimination of colour.

In ad after ad we see that black colour of the skin becomes a continuous source of worry and inferiority complex not only for the girl, but for her parents and everyone around.

The use of a particular cream suddenly transforms you into a fair, magical girl and, lo and behold- all your problems are solved instantly! You can get what you want - any job, promotion in a job, a would-be groom and what not. Mind you - no other qualification is needed!

In these ads, fairness is equated with beauty and beauty is related with success in personal and private lives. Women’s beauty and appearance are given importance than their capabilities.

This unnecessary glorification of fair skin not only promotes false notions of beauty based on skin tones, it is highly insulting to worldwide struggles against colour discrimination. We cannot forget leaders like Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in jail, protesting against racial discrimination and apartheid which sought to impose the supremacy of white colour over black (quoted in Rathi).
Social scientists, researchers and international agencies working for the emancipation and welfare of the women are aware of the fact that the image of women projected by the media constitutes a major obstacle to eliminate the discrimination against women through out the worlds, and is a main factor in preserving the traditional sexist attitude towards them (Pervez et al, 1984). Therefore it is necessary for the media and the related stake holder to ensure that women are portrayed in a positive and realistic manner in order to eliminate sexual discrimination and acknowledge women’s role and contribution in all areas of life.

| SAQ | Why is the fair colour complex more prevalent in south Asian society? |

6.3 EXPLOITATION OF IMAGES OF FEMALE BODIES BY COMMERCIAL MEDIA
(The Triad of Producer/Audience/Advertiser)

Modern society is obsessed with physical appearance. Attractiveness is a key element of how women view themselves and how others view them. Women continue to be depicted in all forms and postures in advertisements and elsewhere. The incorporation of women’s bodies as decorative ingredients in advertisements are everywhere trying to sell, whether it is cosmetics, cars, motorbikes, mobile phones, domestic appliances, and insurance policies. Hence, everything and anything that is advertised usually has a picture of a woman in different poses and postures. The exploitation and discrimination of women has been multifaceted, all-round and all-pervading.

The problem is that the multinational companies and big capital involved in advertising are either guided by market norms or they try to exploit patriarchal and traditional popular sentiments for their own vested interests. It suits their needs to offer mindless titillation, to reinforce women’s subjugation and at the same time to promote a consumerist culture to create more demands for their products.

Kindly refer to the following reading in your Allied material to know in detail about the Triad of Producer/Audience/Advertiser:

Reading 6.3 (a)


Women are considered as the major consumers and advertising manipulates the female image in order to persuade to buy; at the same time women are used as the bait to attract the opposite sex.
Studies by Gallagher (1979) shows that much media advertising directed at women as consumers is condescending in tone and manipulative in intention as the bait through which products are advertised. Women are exploited in terms of their sexuality and physical appearance.

Gallagher quotes the study by Dispenza (1975) which concludes that women are primarily used by the advertisers to sell products to both women and men on the basis of their sexual appeal. In Female oriented ads women are invited to identify with the subjects in the advertisements, who is offered the ultimate reward i.e. success with the male as a result of buying and using the product. Whereas in male oriented ads males are promised the portrayed female as the bonus that comes with the product.

Therefore it can be safely concluded that producers and advertisers use women the promotion of the product by on one hand using them as bait to attract the fellow women and men and o the other hand by targeting women as consumers.

Please refer to the following reading for a detailed explanation of the triad of producer/audience/advertiser:

Reading 6.3 (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rathi, M.</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Voices of Working Women article “The Portrayal of Women In Advertisements” retrieved from <a href="http://citu.org.in/wwomen_jan">http://citu.org.in/wwomen_jan</a> 06_ed.htm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women’s bodies continue to be dismembered in advertising. Over and over again just one part of the body is used to sell products, which is, of course, the most dehumanizing thing you can do to someone. Not only is she a thing, but just one part of that thing is focused on.” (Jean Kilbourne). The advertising industry is influencing people especially women to identify and compare themselves with the models of these advertisements. That standard of beauty, with which people try to match themselves, is simply unattainable. Therefore people end up spending their capital on the products that are propagated to make them prettier, fairer, thinner or better in any way. The people are so brainwashed about the concept of beauty that they think of the money being spent in purchasing these so called beauty enhancing products as an investment.

According to an estimate Americans spend more than $36 billion dollars on dieting and diet-related products each year thanks to the culture of thinness prevalent in media and now even in real life. Women’s magazines are full of ads urging women that if they can lose those last twenty pounds, they will have it all-the perfect marriage, loving children and a rewarding career (cited in Rider).
Similarly people also splurge money on expensive makeup, hair care products, dresses and accessories in order to identify with their favorite models or celebrities. Therefore, the capitalistic societies benefit from this mindset of improving the real self and trying to match it with the ideal self through means of using unrealistically beautiful and perfects models.

In a newspaper article Umm-e-Laila Azhar argues that media today, due to rampant commercialization, urbanization, intervention and influence of multinationals, is making full use of the women as a major component of their media campaigns, forgetting that Pakistan is an Islamic country. There is no harm in giving projection to women but it shouldn’t be on the cost of their body language or physical traits only. Empowerment of media does not at all lie in the projection of women as commodities, it surely lies in the authenticity and decency of the issues projected and addressed.

One should never forget that the media has a very significant role to play in shaping social attitudes. Hence it cannot cater to the interest of a miniscule section only. It certainly does have a social obligation and responsibility in the development and reinforcement of opinions which lead to a better and more equitable society.

| SAQ | Who benefits most by projecting women as sex objects? |

6.4 EXERCISES

1. Eating disorder specialists regard the media as an influential factor in the development of eating disorders in young women. In what ways do you think the media supports eating-disordered attitudes and behaviors?

2. Regarding the Objectification of women in advertising, Jean Kilbourne states that “turning a human being into a thing is almost always the first step toward justifying violence against that person.”

Do you agree or disagree with her? Support your answer with reasons.

3. What is the culture of thinness and the concept of unattainable beauty and how does it affect people especially women.

4. What strategies do producer and advertiser use to promote the sale of their products?
6.5 REFERENCES


WOMEN AND MEDIA SOCIOLOGY

Written by
Fatima Saleem

72
INTRODUCTION

What this unit is about?
- Women in the news media.
- Women in the role of producers and directors.
- Women in decision-making positions.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?
- Negative attitudes towards women journalists.
- Obstacles being faced by women in the news media.
- Challenges being faced by women directors and producers
- Women holding decision making positions.

7.1 WOMEN AND JOURNALISM

"No press is truly free unless women share an equal voice."
— International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF)

"Fighting for women's human rights is a positive struggle which recognizes the quality of a woman's contribution in every aspect of the community: in politics, industry, commerce, education, media, agriculture and the home." Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

In today's societies women's claim for equal rights has been widely recognized as valid and women have entered all professions and spheres of public life. The number of women in journalism has grown steadily over the last ten years and today, women can be found in all newsrooms. They work in newspapers and magazines, broadcasting and on-line media and they cover every issue from education to war. But this is only a start. Women are still a long way from the commanding heights of equality with men, who dominate the executive and managerial class of modern media. Today, we know the fight for women's rights is a permanent struggle.

"I see the journalist's role as both reporter and crusader. In a civilization that seems to be regressing into new holocausts, we must seek and speak the truth, for we are the voice of voiceless millions. Having chosen this profession, we cannot be afraid to speak the truth no matter what the cost. And by speaking, I personally believe we can change the world." Razia Bhatti (IWMF Courage in Journalism award ceremony, 1994).

Less than fifty years ago, journalism was an almost exclusively male profession. Female journalists were the exception and women were discouraged to enter the journalism. Today more and more women are employed as journalists. In some countries, for instance in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, women make up the majority of working journalists.
The number of female journalists’ students worldwide confirms the trend towards more women in journalism. A study carried out in 26 countries in 1993 found that women in some cases account for up to 70% (USA, Bulgaria, Mexico) of the journalism students. The average percentage of female students of journalism is about 40% (Sparks & Splichal, 1994).

In spite of great improvements achieved by and for women in journalism, many problems remain that must be addressed by journalists’ unions at national, regional and global level. Women journalists are aware that because their movement has been successful in many areas there is the danger that journalists’ unions may feel that enough has been done to ensure equality in media even though inequalities remain.

The number of women in decision-making positions in media is still shockingly low. Even where women represent around 40% of working journalists, they only make up 3% — 5% of editors, heads of departments or directors. The list of obstacles faced by women who want to get ahead in journalism is long and it is the same whether drawn up by women journalists in Asia Pacific, the Americas, Africa or Europe (UNESCO, 1994)

- stereotypes, cultural attitudes expecting women to be sub-ordinate and subservient,
- negative attitudes towards women journalists;
- employment conditions, lack of equal pay, lack of access to further training, lack of fair promotion procedures, lack of access to decision-making positions (glass ceiling), sexual harassment, age limits, job segregation;
- social and personal obstacles, conflicting family and career demands, lack of support
- Facilities (day care centers), lack of self-esteem.

Please refer to the following reading in your allied material for more information

**Reading 7.1(a)**


**SAQ** What sort of obstacles do women journalist face in order to excel in their field?

The role of women in the news both as correspondent and as newsmakers is a rich and enduring source of debate, discussion, and scholarly research. The continuing and wide-ranging nature of the discussion about women as correspondents and newsmakers was among the important issues in international communication that helped give rise to an ambitious, collaborative, and ongoing multinational analysis of the variety and nature of international news in the closing years of the 20th century. This multinational analysis called the Cooperative Study of Foreign News and International News Flow in the 1990s was organized by international communication scholars in the United States and Britain, and includes contributors from nearly seventy countries in the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.
The International News Flow Study expanded on earlier investigations, notably the UNESCO Foreign Images study of 1978, produced a detailed, up-to-date portrait of foreign and international news, and the flow of foreign news. The centerpiece of the International New Flow Study is a quantitative content analysis of foreign and international news published or broadcast during two weeks in September 1995. The study included leading print and broadcast media in more than seventy countries (Campbell, Stevenson & Jackson, 1996).

The significant finding in this exploratory study was that the gender-empowerment index is linked to women as important figures, or "actors," in foreign and international news certainly deserves further attention. Also meriting additional analysis is the more general issue of the roles of women as correspondents, and as figures in foreign and international news. This exploratory study found significant results in that female correspondents were more common in broadcast media than in print. The two-way interaction of media type and level of press freedom also was significant for female correspondents (Campbell, Stevenson & Jackson, 1996).

Women, moreover, appeared more likely to be treated as important news figures or actors by broadcast outlets than by print media. Similarly, the comparative levels of press freedom free, partly free, or not free were not found in this study to be significant indicators of whether women are more likely to be newsmakers. Nonetheless, the data collected for this exploratory study were clear and consistent in showing that women were more likely to be correspondents, as well as important news figures, in countries where political, economic, and legal restrictions on press freedom are comparatively few. That element certainly deserves additional examination and analysis. Press freedom may very well prove to be tied inextricably to the advancement of women as reporters and as makers of foreign and international news. Open media systems particularly broadcast outlets may be more receptive to female correspondents and female news figures (Campbell, Stevenson & Jackson, 1996).

Please refer to the following reading in your allied material for more information

**Reading 7.1(b)**


For a woman in Pakistan, holding a job as a journalist comes with all of the challenges that women reporters everywhere face trying to balance responsibilities of the home with those of the newsroom while proving themselves on the job in ways male colleagues do not seem to need to do. This can push one into being sterner than one might like. It needs additional courage to do all of this in the traditionally male-dominated atmosphere that exists most noticeably in local language publications. There the newsroom environment is often hostile to the presence of women; Urdu newspapers, for example, persist in using bylines such as "By Our Lady Reporter" despite protests by journalists' organizations. Women in the local language media are also often underpaid, have little or no job security, and no health coverage. For those of us who work in the English language
press the situation is relatively better, given the more progressive atmosphere there. However, with the rise of private television stations and newspapers, the number of women journalists is increasing, even in more conservative small towns throughout the country (Sarwar, 2006).

In Pakistan there are more women in media than ever before, particularly in the English print media as well as in the relatively new TV channels. Women journalists have specifically contributed to an increase in the reporting of issues relating to violence, particularly Karo-Kari (so-called ‘honor killings’), besides education, health, sports, entertainment and economics.

But women journalists are up against more odds than their male colleagues, in terms of having to prove themselves more, as in other fields. They face a major problem when covering conflict areas, lack of access to information, lack of access to the physical area under conflict, lack of access to those affected by the conflict. In addition, women have to overcome gender biases and prove themselves more than male colleagues need to in the same situation. One advantage that women may have is access to female victims of conflict, particularly in traditional areas where women might not feel comfortable talking to a male reporter (Sarwar, 2004).

A common problem for both is often being under-trained, under-paid, and having little or no job security or health cover. According to a recent study by the Karachi Union of Journalists, “Women doing daily reporting are few and exceptional, which while disproving that women do not do daily reporting, also show that there are structural barriers such as working late nights.” The KUJ study finds that “even those women who are ready to work as reporters are not encouraged by their editors or managers. Similarly, there are very few women news photographers in Pakistan.”

Male colleagues still resist the integration of female colleagues, and women’s own preference tends to be working in magazine sections or on ‘soft’ features. Interestingly, the KUJ report observed, “there have been very few complaints against women journalists regarding corruption or blackmailing. But the findings suggest they still avoid reporting on general crime and politics.”

Please refer to the following reading in your allied material for more information

Reading 7.1 (c)


SAQ

What challenges are being faced by Pakistani women journalists?

7.2  FEMALE WAR JOURNALIST

World War II opened a new chapter in the lives of many women. It offered new professional opportunities. Talented and determined, dozens of women fought for and won the right to cover the biggest story of their lives. By war’s end, at least 127 American women had secured official military
accreditation as war correspondents, if not actual front-line assignments. Other women journalists remained on the home front to document the ways in which the country changed dramatically under wartime conditions. Women reporting news today from Baghdad, Bosnia or any other place is not unusual. But 60 years ago, women war correspondents were unheard. Pioneers like Martha Gellhorn paved the way for CNN’s Christiane Amanpour and others (Kozaryn, 1998).

Please refer to the following reading in your allied material for more information

### Reading 7.2


| SAQ | What work is carried out by female war correspondents? |

### 7.3 WOMEN AS TALK SHOW HOSTS

A talk show or chat show is a television or radio program where a group of people come together to discuss various topics put forth by a talk show host. Often, talk shows feature a panel of guests, usually consisting of a group of people who are learned or who have great experience in relation to whatever issue is being discussed on the show for that episode. A call-in show takes live phone calls from callers listening at home, in their cars, etc. Oprah Winfrey, known primarily as the nationally and internationally syndicated American talk show host of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, has successfully charted and navigated a career that has built on the television industry as a form of public therapy. The proliferation of talk-show programs in 1980s and 1990s that have been constructed around the public airing of private trials can be directly attributed to the success of Oprah Winfrey and, a decade earlier, Phil Donahue. It is a genre of television that blends the private and the public into a public confessional. On *Oprah Winfrey* both ordinary people and guest celebrities are there to reveal their inner truths. And it is these revelations which create in the audience the dual sentiments that have been critical to the success of Oprah: there is a voyeuristic pleasure in hearing about what is normally hidden by others, and there is the cathartic sensation that the public revelation will lead to social betterment.

In Pakistan there are a number of channels now operating and every channel has a number of talk shows out of which many have women as their hosts. Some of the very famous are uljhan suljhan on geo hosted by Hina Bayat. The show, the first of its kind in Pakistan, started at the end of the summer 2004 and the majority of viewers, about 70 percent are female, most between 18 and 40. The show’s producers hope the program help people think and talk more freely about familial, marital or financial problems and that it will help lift the silence that surrounds taboo topics such as impotence, rape and infidelity. Also there are a number of other talk shows hosted by women on other channels in which discussions are held on social issues and such.

| SAQ | Which talk shows and women talk show hosts are famous in Pakistan? |

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7.4 WOMEN DIRECTORS AND PRODUCERS OF TV DRAMA AND FILMS

Hollywood in the early 1900's was a magnet for creative and entrepreneurial misfits and with few taking filmmaking seriously as a business, the doors were wide open to women. Movies were an idea one week, before the cameras the next and in the theaters within a month. There were no paths to follow and no rules to break. Women wouldn't be "given" the right to vote until 1920, yet before then they were thriving at every level of movie making, as directors, producers, editors, and writers. While writers' names often did not appear in the credits of the early films, from the copyright records in the Library of Congress we know that almost half of all films written between 1912 and 1925 were written by women (Beauchanp, 2006).

Only about 5% of television writers, executives, and producers are women. (Lichter, Lichter, & Rothman, 1986) Ironically, while two-thirds of journalism graduates are women, they make up less than 2% of those in corporate managements of newspaper publishers (Women and media, 1988). Female film directors are even scarcer, as are executives in charge of MTV. It is probably not coincidental that so few women are behind the scenes of an industry that so consistently portrays women negatively. Some media analysts (Mills, 1988) believe that if more women had positions of authority at executive levels, media would offer more positive portrayals of women. (As cited in Wood, 1996).

In Pakistan just like most of the sectors in the country, women remain underrepresented in all areas of the electronic media. In 1989 women had a representation of 0.3% in the Ministry of Information, and only 3% for Pakistan Television Corporation. Despite the efforts of PTV it was difficult to attract women to work because of the social stigma attached to this field. Though women producers attempted to highlight women’s issues, women writers mostly focused on portraying women within the approved context of patriarchy. Although commercial Pakistani films remain largely unpopular in the mainstream, several independent filmmakers have emerged in recent years, such as, Shireen Pasha, Farjad Nabi, Hasan Zaidi, Sabiha Samar and Mehrreen Jabbar herself, who seem to be breathing a new life into the Pakistani art film scene.

Mehreen Jabbar is a filmmaker who, at a young age, has an extensive portfolio. Most of her work has been for the television. Unfortunately, the Pakistani commercial film industry has experienced a sharp decline in popularity during the past two to three decades. Due to the low quality of films being produced and the shady atmosphere at cinema houses, going to a theater is not a viable form of entertainment for the mainstream public. Thus, television remains by far the most popular source of family entertainment. So that has been the industry to which vast majority of writers, producers, directors, as well as, actors turn who wish to create work with depth and meaning for the audience. Much of Mehreen’s work has focused on the everyday lives of average Pakistani women and the conflicts they experience from day to day. “I have focused mainly on women, maybe just because I find that I can relate to their stories on a much more personal level,” says Mehreen when describing her work. While other directors have created fine plays which are obvious in their attempts to raise awareness of women’s rights, Mehreen enjoys the challenge of applying subtlety to get her message across. Her viewers often find themselves immersed in the minds of her characters in order to fully understand the characters’ motives. Similarly Sabiha Sumar, has earned much acclaim for her films which deal with political and social issues such as the effects of religious fundamentalism on society and especially on women.
Reading 7.4


SAQ | What issues are being focused upon by Pakistani women directors and producers? |

7.5 WOMEN AND MEDIA POLICY MAKING; FEMALE EXECUTIVE; DECISION MAKING AT THE TOP

There has been a considerable increase in the number of women entering the media profession in the recent years. Moreover, more women are now holding senior positions in print as well as in the broadcast media. However, there is also a general observation that a balance has not yet been reached. There is still a clear gender imbalance in senior decision-making and policy-making positions. Studies show that a difference can be made when women hold positions of power. In 2000, women editors and journalists took over the newsroom for one day at a newspaper in Wichita Falls, Texas. For the day's top story a choice had to be made between a crime-stopper's story about a peeping tom and an item about local women fighting for equal rights. When the women opted for the latter story, a heated argument erupted. Journalist Laurence Pantin reports that "the women finally won, but only because they held the key positions on that day. All other times, the peeping tom and stories like it would have prevailed."

The 2001 study conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Centre at the University of Pennsylvania of American is damming. The center reports that only 13 percent of the top executives of American media, telecommunications and e-companies are females and that 13 percent is not concentrated at the top: women constitute only 9 percent of the boards of directors for these companies, and they hold only 3 percent of the most powerful positions.

While women as victims is by far the most frequent type of gender framing in the news, the slow and steady progress of women decision makers, parliamentarians and other senior professional women has prompted interest in studying the ways in which these women, especially politicians are portrayed in the news media. For detail please read the following topic.

Please refer to the following reading in your allied material for more information

Reading 7.5

Division of advancement of women (2002) outlined the following factors that contribute to the inadequate representation of women in the media:

1. Lack or inadequate professional education of many women;
2. Women's fear of the risks involved in the media practice, especially journalism;
3. Ownership of numerous media organizations by men;
4. Women's lack of funds to invest in media businesses;
5. Lack of parents' interest in female education in traditional and primitive society;
6. Men's remote control and interest to dominate the scene; and
7. Lack of government policies to indicate the percentage of men and women that should own or work in the media organizations.

7.6 EXERCISES

1. Give a detailed account of obstacles being faced by women who want to get ahead in journalism.

2. What challenges are being faced by Pakistani women directors and producers?

3. Why is the number of women in decision-making positions in media all over the world still less compared to those of men?

4. Can women at the policy-making positions in mass media bring about a change in the way women are represented in media?

5. Elaborate factors contributing to the inadequate representation of women in the media.

7.6 REFERENCES


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INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND WOMEN

Written by
Maria Mustafa Malik

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INTRODUCTION

What this unit is about?
- Various kinds of ICTS.
- Use and skill of women of these ICTs.
- Cyber Feminism and Cyberspace.
- Sexual harassment and gender discrimination.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?
- Different ICTs and their scope and usage in women.
- The concept of Cyberfeminism.
- Prevalence of sexual harassment and gender discrimination against women in the cyberspace.
- The effects of sexual harassment and discrimination on women.
- Empowerment and progress of women through the use of ICTs.

8.1 WOMEN AND ICTS: COMPUTER ACCESS, USE AND SKILL

In 2003, more women than men used a computer at home by a small margin, reversing the computer use “gender gap” exhibited during the 1980s and 1990s. In 1984, men’s home computer use was 20 percentage points higher than that of women. This gap decreased to 3 percentage points in 1997 and reversed in 2001, favoring women by 2 percentage points. Similarly, women’s Internet use at home exceeded men’s in 2003.

At work, women have had higher rates of computer use than men since the CPS first collected data on computer use in 1984, when 29 percent of working women used a computer on the job, compared with 21 percent of working men. In 2003, 63 percent of women and 51 percent of men used a computer at work. Forty-seven percent of women and 39 percent of men used the Internet on the job in 2003.

Some of the historically higher rates of women’s computer use at work may derive in part from the type of jobs they have held. In 2003, the technology use-intensive office and administrative support occupations accounted for 23 percent of all working women and 6 percent of working men. While office and administrative support occupations accounted for 7 percent of men using computers on the job, this category accounted for 29 percent of all women using computers at work.

The percentages of women and men who use computers at work also differ by occupation group. Among men, the group with the highest percentage of workers using a computer was professional occupations. For women, the most computer users were in the management, business, and financial occupations. (As cited in facts from U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration – U.S. Census Bureau 2003)
Information Communication Technologies ICTs

The omniscient presence of Information Communication Technologies, or ICTs as they are popularly called, is now a reality that people are beginning to accept — irrespective of their nationality, class, caste or sex. ICTs can contribute to strengthen and fortify new strategies for gender equality and women's empowerment and it is time to recognise that they can suitably be integrated through government policies, laws, and other institutions to bring forth change.

ICTs include both traditional and modern methods of communication. They can enable women to access important information about:

- Rights and services, about different support systems such as shelter homes, hospitals, créches, micro-credit groups, police stations, lawyers, counsellors and so on.
- Government schemes and services, education and training opportunities, funding and scholarships.
- Opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship and networking.

ICTs can provide a shared space to exchange solutions to problem situations (Bhardwaj, G.N., 2005)

SAQ | How do ICTs benefit women?

8.2 CYBERFEMINISM

Cyberfeminism is a sub-movement of feminism that deals with female identity and feminist theory in the domain of 'cyberspace', i.e. computers, the internet and information technology. Women who choose to use communication technology as a means of organizing or activism. Definition as a political strategy Linking the terms "cyber" and "feminism" produces a crucial new formation in the history of feminism(s) and of the e-media. Each part of the term necessarily modifies the meaning of the other. "Feminism" (or more properly, "feminisms") has been understood as a historical and contemporary—transnational movement for justice and freedom for women, which depends on women's activist participation in networked local, national, and international groups (Wikipedia, 2006).

Cyberfeminism takes feminism as its starting point, and turns its focus upon contemporary technologies, exploring the intersections between gender identity, the body, culture and technology. The coming of the internet as the greatest information system promised a world of democracy and equality, where gender difference is ignored. However, this assumption could not
be any further from reality. The truth of the matter is that gender inequality and differentiation exists largely in cyberspace, just as it does in real life. Primarily, this is because cyberspace is a male dominated environment, which presents serious consequences for women. These consequences include that women are somewhat excluded or denied access from the new information technologies, or when they do participate, they are bombarded with sexual discrimination, abuse and pornography (Spender, p. 190, 1995).

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In terms of gender domination, cyberspace is undeniably male territory. There are many explanations for the truth, however the obvious rationalization is that “men have more to do with computers, and spend more time on them than women” (Spender, 1995, p. 116). It is suggested that males have a greater interest in computers because they have many more opportunities to develop their skills when they are children. A study conducted in the UK, found that “six times as many boys as girls have computers bought for them” (Cole, Conlon, Jackson, Welch, 1994, p. 78). Not only are women less advantaged as children, the same trend continues in to their later lives. In a survey of the World Wide Web conducted by James Pitkow and Mimi Recker of Georgia Institute of Technology, 4700 people responded about their Internet use. 56% of users were between the ages of 21 and 30, and 94% of those were male (as cited in Carli, 2000, p. 27). Naturally, with figures as diverse as those, it is easy to understand why cyberspace is typically called male territory.

A principal reason for the lack of women’s participation in cyberspace can be attributed to the fact that women are often presented with many difficult barriers to overcome. These barriers can often result in denied access or exclusion from the new information technologies, and generally include the cost of purchasing a computer; training and time on the internet. On average, women have less money than men do and this difference can disadvantage them when they can’t get into the medium. (Wylie, 1995, p. 4). When women do eventually get past the initial barriers into cyberspace, they are often barred from electronic networks and other technological work.

Reading 8.2


8.3 IMPEDEMENTS IN WOMEN USING ICTS
Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and sexual exploitation of women in cyberspace

Women also have to deal with gender related discrimination in cyberspace, just as they do in real life. These problems exist in a broad sense of sexual harassment and pornography. In many cases women experience extremely sexist jokes, limericks, hostile comments, and numerous forms of pornography, which can be quite confronting for women. Not only do these problems provide a means for silencing women, it can also affect the attitudes of men towards women. Dale Spender
(1995, p. 203) states that sexual harassment has often been referred to as "the systematic means of keeping women out of male territory – this is certainly the case in cyberspace."

Cabrera-Balleza of Isis International, a non-government group that works on issues around women and communication, states that "while women are often found as data collectors or word processors, very few are employed in hardware design, leaving them the bottom of the pile in the lucrative industry" and "this is a result of employers’ perceptions that women were unable to work long hours due to domestic responsibilities (as cited in IPS Correspondents, 2003, p. 2).

Please refer to the given reading for more information on the subject.

**Reading 8.3(a)**


The statistics for women in the computer science field are dismal, revealing that only a small percentage of computer scientists and computer professionals are female. In the most recent years, for which statistics are available, women received a third of the bachelor’s degrees in computer science, 27% of master’s degrees, and 13% of PhDs. Women comprise a mere 7.8% of computer science and computer engineering faculties, and only 2.7% of these are tenured. (Frenkel 1990, 38). Put another way, "92% of CS and engineering faculties – and 97% of the tenured faculty – are male. And about one-third of the computer science departments polled employ no women faculty at all" [Cottrell, 1992]. (As cited in Leslie Regan Shade’s talk at Community Networking: the International Free-Net Conference 1993.)

The reality that cyberspace presents that many gender inequality issues, is indeed a problem that needs to be resolved in the future. It is no revelation that women have just as much intellectual capacity and initiative as men to share the progress and development in new information technologies, however as long as their current problems of exclusion, denied access, sexual discrimination and pornography exist, the prospects of gender equality appear to be dismal.

Kindly refer to the following reading in the allied material for a more elaborate account of Gender Discrimination in Cyberspace.

**Reading 8.3(b)**

8.4 USE OF ICTs TO EDUCATE AND EMPOWER POOR WOMEN

Biswa (2003) explains in research study Mass Media and Women’s Empowerment in Bangladesh that “efforts made to women’s empowerment and development in the country tends much to rely on the mass media and resultantly media feels responsibility to share its power to influence the dynamics of women’s liberation. But media in its functioning in favor of women’s empowerment imagine confrontation from diverse forces and for its own profit it compromises with patriarchy, political parties, religion and market. Consequently it fails to fight the evils that cause women’s subordination.”

In a developing society, media has dual responsibilities of providing entertainment on one hand, while on the other hand it should educate the masses. Media is not only used as a campaigning tool to persuade people to get education. Infact mass media can be used as a creative, practical and cost-effective vehicle to make to educational opportunities accessible for rural poor and women. For instance in the case of province of Quezon in Philippines, mass media specifically community based radio broadcasting model is being effectively used to promote sustainable agriculture. This community based radio (CBR) broadcasting for long distance education brings knowledge within the reach of poor rural households and to simultaneously promote the empowerment of women and strengthen community development through.

Please refer to the following reading for a detailed account on the role of media and ICTS in the empowerment of women.

### Reading 8.4


Please refer to the following reading an in depth account of Muslim women availing the latest ICTs

### Reading 8.5

8.5 EXERCISES
1. What are the ICTs?
2. Explain the concepts of Cyber feminism and cyberspace
3. Explain how gender discrimination and sexual harassment in cyberspace discourage women to use the ICTs.
4. Elaborate on how the ICTs can contribute to the empowerment of women.

8.6 REFERENCES


Cole, Anne; Conlon, Tom; Jackson, Sylvia, Jackson; Welch, Dorothy (1994) Information Technology and Gender; Problems and Proposals, Gender and Education, 6, 1, p. 78.


PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN AND MEDIA REGULATION

Written by
Fatima Saleem
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INTRODUCTION

What is this unit about?
- The ethics applying to portrayal of women in mass media.
- Issues related to censorship in mass media.
- The importance of media literacy and advocacy.

OBJECTIVES

What will you learn?
- Existing media codes and guidelines.
- Pros and cons of media censorship and media control.
- Media change and literacy.

9.1 LAWS AND ETHICS APPLYING PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN MEDIA

Media ethics is the subdivision of applied ethics dealing with the particular ethical principles and standards of media, including broadcast media, film, theatre, the arts, print media and the internet. The field covers many varied and highly controversial topics, ranging from war journalism to advertising. (Wikipedia, 2006)

Media generally has an interesting dual nature. Firstly, it is a commercial product just like a suit of clothing is a commercial product. As such they have the responsibility of being only what they represent themselves to be. Secondly, media is also a social product and has the moral obligation of accepting the responsibility that comes with such a significant role (Shahid, 2003).

There are elements of sensationalism in the media just as there are elements in every aspect of society. Unfortunately Pakistani media is not an exemplary ethical institution because of poor democracy, less discerning public, weak economic conditions, fewer resources and government influence and control over all sections of media (Shahid, 2003).

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<th>What are media ethics?</th>
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Many would agree that some strides have been made in how the media portray women in film, television and magazines, and that the last 20 years has also seen a growth in the presence and influence of women in media behind the scenes. Nevertheless, female stereotypes continue to thrive in the media we consume every day. Consistently throughout Asia, women have been portrayed in the media as victims, subservient, dependent, nurturing, selfless, sacrificing mother and wife, heterosexual, sex object, prostitute, mistress. Women are hardly presented as contributors to the development process as laborers, farmers and professionals. Worse, some members of media tend to trivialize or caricature the efforts of women's organizations. This not only inaccurately represents the diversity of women's lives, roles and experiences within this
complex and rich region, women’s contributions to the socio-political and economic development of society are often neglected (Tiongson, 1999).

Women’s visibility in the news is often in relation to sensational stories of rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence and other forms of violence. The core message that women are victims or prone to abuse has been more pronounced over condemning men’s continued violation of women’s rights. Such portrayal has only served to reinforce rather than challenge men’s oppression of women. Continued exposure to media reports on violence against women has only created more fear among many women. This in turn has affected their self-confidence and mobility. Sensational and unethical approach of a section of print and electronic media towards reporting of rape cases reduces chances of getting justice for these victims. The media should go by universal ethics and avoid publishing or transmitting the names or photos of rape victims to protect them against different possible pressures, which hamper legal aid and cause humiliation to the victims (Mehvish, 2004).

The perpetuation of stereotypes in images and representation solidifies women’s traditional roles and unequal gender relations in multiple ways. Most visibly, women are seen as mourners at tragedies or as victims of violence. The Global Media Monitoring Project found that out of the small number of women who were interviewees in news stories (14%), 29% of them were as victims of accidents, crimes or other events. This does not only represent women as helpless subjects without agency, it also fails to emphasize men’s role as perpetrators in instances of violence against women. Further, the dissemination of these messages affects women’s self-confidence, mobility and subsequently access and participation in public spaces for fear of assault (Kee, 2005).

The Uks, a research, resource and publication centre on women and media has called upon newspapers owners and other stakeholders in the newspaper industry to adopt a gender-sensitive code of ethics for print media. The code stresses on caution against the victim’s identification in rape cases, abduction, acid-throwing, sexual abuse of a child, etc. Participants of the meeting were of the view that victims of such incident must not be identified through print media and a similar approach should be adopted while publishing reports about VIPs' and other officials' visits, who would meet such victims (Uks Research, Resource and Publication Centre on Women and Media, 2005).

Please refer to the following reading for a more detailed view of this topic:

**Reading 9.1**

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In most Asian countries, existing media codes and guidelines acts are principally concerned with lewd, obscene, indecent exposure of human bodies, immoral sexual relations, sexually provocative material, and pornographic content. These are framed around questions of morality, rather than recognizing sexual violence against women as a violation of human rights. In spite of these explicit policies, sexualized images of women proliferate in print, broadcast and film because they sell. Media policy against sexist and stereotyped coverage, representation and portrayal of women remains as a big gap. Where there exist provisions that promote gender sensitivity, these have been hardly enforced. Some improvements have been noted though in dealing with rape and sexual assault cases, especially in regard to withholding the identity of the survivors (Tiongson, 1999).

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### 9.2 CENSORSHIP: A DETERRENT OR A DESTRUCTION TOOL

Censorship refers to supervision and control of the information and ideas that are circulated among the people within a society. It is the editing, removing, or otherwise changing of speech and other forms of human expression. In some cases, it is exercised by governing bodies but it is always and continuously carried out by the mass media. The visible motive of censorship is often to stabilize, improve or persuade the society group that the censoring organization would have control over. It is most commonly applied to acts that occur in public circumstances, and most formally involves the suppression of ideas by criminalizing or regulating expression. Furthermore, discussion of censorship often includes less formal means of controlling perceptions by excluding various ideas from mass communication. What is censored may range from specific words to entire concepts and it may be influenced by value systems; but currently, the most common reasons for censoring ("omitting") information are the particular interests of the distribution companies of news and entertainment, their owners, and their commercial and political connections (Wikipedia, 2006).

Increasingly, electronic media—including television, music video, videotape, film, radio, compact disk, and hypertext for personal computers have become primary sources of information and recreation, as well as emotional and artistic experiences for everyone. In present day times, Censorship refers to the assessment of books, periodicals, plays, films, television and radio programs, news reports, and other communication media for the purpose of changing or hold back parts thought to be offensive or unpleasant. The objectionable material may be considered immoral or obscene, unorthodox or blasphemous, seditious or subversive, or injurious to the national security. Thus, the rationale for Censorship is that it is necessary for the protection of our society (Kamath, 2000).

Media is undeniably a very powerful source used to communicate. It can be used for bad as well as good purposes. It can be used to inform the world of important events, or to publish pornography and mindless tabloids. Newspapers and forms of reading material are one of the largest forms of news that we use today. Every morning people can get out of bed, walk outside and pick up a piece of paper that informs them of important events that are occurring though out
the world. However there is some published information that we never hear about. The government as well as several private distributors of print media censor several forms of printed information. Violence in the media has become a big issue for many politicians and national leaders. They feel that there are certain topics that should not be allowed to be talked about.

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In Pakistan, freedom of the press has always been provided constitutionally, censorship was imposed on the press by the martial law governments. Between 1979 and 1982, local censors reviewed items prior to publication and some books and periodicals were confiscated. Even after the lifting of censorship, the government continued to influence press coverage by controlling the availability of newsprint, which must be imported, and the placement of government advertising, which is a source of newspapers' revenue. There are no longer restrictions on the importation of newsprint. There is a constitutional prohibition on the ridicule of Islam, the armed forces, or the judiciary (Shahid, 2003).

In the past, even supposedly democratic governments have used various means to control the press, through tax cases, withholding newsprint imported through government channels or pulling out official tenders, notices and advertisements which the smaller newspapers rely on for revenue. In 1998, when the country’s largest publication house, the Jang Group, tried to break Pakistan Television’s monopoly on news and current affairs by planning a satellite channel, it became clear how far the government would go to stop this. The democratically elected but dictatorially inclined Nawaz Sharif accused the Group of tax evasion, revived old tax cases, and withheld newsprint, forcing the Group to reduce the size of some of its daily papers from twenty-four to eight pages. Sharif’s henchmen personally pressurized the Group’s owner to support the government on various policy issues and fire, or at least sideline, several journalists. He refused, but the stand-off ended only after the idea of the satellite channel was quietly dropped (Sarwar, 2001).

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<th>Should the government be allowed to regulate what people can and cannot publish?</th>
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Freedom House, which monitors the state of freedom around the world every year, has placed Pakistan among countries where the press is “Not Free”. According to Freedom House, “Pakistan dropped from Partly Free to Not Free because of increased official harassment of journalists and media outlets, in addition to passage of a bill that increased penalties for defamation. The moves followed other aggressive measures taken over the last two years by military authorities to silence critical or investigative voices in the media. A number of journalists have been pressured to resign from prominent publications, charged with sedition, or arrested and intimidated by intelligence officials while in custody.” Only two countries, Pakistan and Kenya, registered a negative category shift in 2004, moving from Partly Free to Not Free. Pakistan was also among countries where Freedom House said “notable setbacks” had taken place. Others so listed were Kenya, Mexico, Venezuela, and in the United States itself (Hassan, 2005).

In early March 2006, the Pakistani government had all websites hosted at the popular blogging service Blogger.com blocked. Millions of websites from all over the world are hosted at blogspot, along with thousands of Pakistani ones. This step by the government is possibly due to the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy, as some blogspot websites put up copies of the cartoons.
The word censored is like a magnet that draws people to it. When someone hears that a book, song, music video, magazine article, or the like has been banned, everyone immediately wants to know why. Was it banned for sexual content, profane language, racism or ethnic slurs? These questions arise at the back of everyone's mind. We all want to know. This need to know stimulates the sale of whatever item has been banned. Profits immediately increase when a work is challenged (Agee, 1999).

In order to know more about gender and media censorship, please refer to the following readings:


9.3 HIERARCHY OF MEDIA CONTROL

In Asia, most of the radio and television stations remain government-owned, military controlled or publicly funded. However, an increasing number of entities are in the process of incorporation and commercialization even as some are already being taken over by private enterprises. The print media are mostly private-controlled in many of the countries except for countries such as China and Burma that have kept state control of the mass media largely intact (Tionsgan, 1999). The high costs of setting up a publishing firm or broadcast station have left the field to big business corporations that have clearly placed a premium on profit over public service.

Freedom of expression and state control of media remain a highly contentious issue amidst a growing critical media, i.e., openly critical of government, and incursion of foreign or transnational capital in major media institutions. Women media practitioners have generally expressed preference for self-regulation of media institutions, e.g., establishing codes of conduct on media's portrayal of women, over state regulation that is deemed as a threat to freedom of expression and women's rights. Government control of media institutions pertains more to its ownership and licensing, but fails to look into structures and practices that continue to discriminate against women and limit women's perspectives from being articulated or incorporated. These include but are not limited to areas such as programming content, gender division of labor, participation of women in decision-making, sexual harassment.

The rapid development of the information-communications technology has put pressure on the authoritarian states to loosen its traditional grip on the dissemination of information. The Internet
and cable television in particular have rendered state regulation almost obsolete as information is disseminated across national borders with very limited or no control. Although governments can enact laws and policies, the geographical limits of their authority and their own economic and political limitations have effectively placed transborder media beyond their control.

There are government and non-government monitoring groups and agencies in Asia. Some non-government networks and groups have representatives from the media and government bodies. While most official monitoring mechanisms are meant to address general media issues (such as unfair reporting, respect of privacy, decency, morality) and hardly pay attention to media’s portrayal of women, there exists independent women’s monitoring groups in countries such as Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand that look into media’s treatment of women and children, especially as it relates to issues on violence against women.

Some of these women’s groups are considered government partners in media monitoring as in the case of Cambodia where its Ministry of Information and the Women’s Media Centre, an NGO, have launched a campaign against pornography (though the latter does not support the closure or suspension of newspapers). In India, the Bombay-based Women and Media Group has initiated action against trivialising women’s image in the media. These initiatives have resulted in changes in legislation, withdrawal of offensive advertisements, discontinuation of television serials, among others.

In Pakistan, radio broadcasting is conducted by a public corporation under the control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Radio and television broadcasting are provided as a public service by the government, financed through a combination of receiver license fees, the sale of advertising time, and government budget appropriation (Haque, 1994).

The major newspapers and magazines are published by a handful of private publishing houses. The government-owned National Press Trust has owned and controlled 11 major publications since 1964. But in November 1991, the government made a decision to divest itself of all the publications, except for a major newspaper, The Pakistan Times. The film industry is privately run, but the federal government has a Department of Films and Publications under the Ministry of Information and broadcasting that produces newsreels and documentary films portraying various aspects of national life with a fairly heavy propaganda overtone. These are made mostly in Pakistani languages, but some are also made in foreign languages for exhibition abroad. The provincial governments also produce newsreels and documentaries for exhibition in the provinces (Haque, 1994).

Article 19 of the Pakistani Constitution provides for free speech and expression, yet it allows for restrictions of these rights for a variety of reasons. The government enjoys unlimited power in curbing press activities. Under the laws, a person in possession of a printing press or desirous of publishing a newspaper must obtain a permit, which the government may refuse for reasons involving moral turpitude, insufficient financial resources, inadequate educational qualifications, and activities prejudicial to defense, foreign relations, or public order (Haque, 1994).

The government license once granted may become null and void if the publisher changes the language, place, or periodicity of the publication. Even failure to publish regularly may void the license for publication, requiring a fresh permit. The laws allow for various forms of punishment
including forfeiture of the published material, and the security deposits a publisher is required to furnish to the government, along with closing down a publication. In 1978, the military government awarded fines, rigorous imprisonment, and floggings to journalists who launched a countrywide movement against government orders that allowed banning and fining of newspapers (Niazi, 1986).

In 1979, press censorship was imposed, and publication of opposition papers was suspended. In 1985, with the restoration of the constitution and repeal of martial law, the principle of freedom of the press was restored; subsequently, the government adopted a more liberal press policy. In addition to the regulatory framework of the government, the press is also subject to extralegal formal and informal actions of the government. But equally important, the press is subject to intimidation by the political parties, religious groups, and various other interest groups as well. Journalists have been murdered, kidnapped, and beaten; newspaper offices have been ransacked and burned, and distribution of newspapers has been stopped forcibly in recent years. There have also been numerous reports of mob violence and police brutality against reporters and photographers. This form of intimidation of the press by various interest groups leads to self-censorship and what is referred to in Pakistan as censorship in the street ("Penalties of Truth," 1991; Niazi, 1992).

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Since the electronic media of radio and television are government agencies, the contents of broadcasts are subject to more stringent and direct control of the government. There are detailed codes that broadcasters are required to follow. For regulating the film industry, the government has a Central Board of Film Censors in Islamabad, with two regional offices in Lahore and Karachi. Every film needs to be certified by the board as fit for exhibition before it can be publicly screened. A film is regarded unsuitable for exhibition if it directly or indirectly, undermines Islam, or disparages any other religion; brings into contempt any aspect of national ideology or objectives; distorts historical facts such as maligning Pakistan, its traditions or heroes, or fans racial, sectarian, parochial, linguistic or class hatred (Akhtar, 1992).

In judging films, the censor board is supposed to consider what impression a film is likely to create on an average viewer, which includes "children and young persons of immature judgment and impressionable age". The breadth and vagueness of standards for certification of a film are striking, and since the board is supposed to consider what is suitable for children and impressionable young people before certifying a film, mature adults may be limited to seeing what is suitable for children.

Reading 9.3

Media advocacy is the proactive use of media in combination with other actions to advance your advocacy goals. In other words, instead of sitting back and waiting for something to happen that attracts the media and then reacting, media advocacy views the media as a force than can help to create change. It can be defined as "the strategic use of mass media to support community organizing to advance a social or policy initiative," (Dorfman and Wallack, 1996). Social change often depends on broader public support and sustained pressure on public officials to act. Through the media, you can frame the issue, increase public awareness, shape public opinion, and create public pressure.

According to the Prevention Research Center, "media advocacy is the purposeful and planned use of mass media to bring problems and policy solutions to the attention of the community and local decision-makers. Media advocacy seeks to broaden the "frame" of the news presentations in the public debate. Media advocacy acknowledges and accepts that the mass media creates simple pictures of real events in the minds of the audience. Individuals using media advocacy do so believing that the picture that the press presents can be improved, altered, and used to redefine the understanding of an important issue. To accomplish this requires that community members become skilled in working with the mass media to present a clear 'frame' of the issue so as to focus on the public health problem and solutions," (Evaluation for Media Advocacy within a National Community Prevention Trial to Reduce Alcohol-Involved Trauma: Theory, Design and Methods, Treno, AJ, Breed, L, Holder, HD, and Roeper, P, Prevention Research Center, March 1, 1995).

Lori Dorfman and Lawrence Wallack of the Berkeley Media Studies Group at the University of California, Berkeley state that media advocacy is not about media for media’s sake; rather, "the assumption is that the effort it takes to attract media attention should be applied carefully and strategically toward specific ends that are clearly articulated...... this usually means a policy-focused objective," (Dorfman and Wallack, 1996).

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Media literacy education and advocacy can help people understand the nature of media change and develop a more rational response to the disruption it can cause. Otherwise, as a culture, we are susceptible to moral panics and irrational expectations. Besides this what of the future? What ought to be done? Here are a few possible lines of action and comments on the directions and possibilities of change.

**Reading 9.4 (b)**
