

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The First Chapter deals with the Framework of the study. The introduction furnishes an inquiry into the age old oppressions on and suppressions of women from the historical point of view. Women have been generally oppressed by the Patriarchal society in which men are the dominant figures. The Indian society is no exception.. So, with a view to investigate the Indian scenario the chapter examines various socio-cultural institutions. In Stating the Problem, in terms of Media's role towards women in modern digitalized world, this chapter employs meticulous assessment.

Historically, 'Woman' as a category has been subordinated and oppressed for the ages in all parts of the globe. The oppressions that come from the Patriarchal power structure being based on *dominance, hierarchy and competition* lead women to be called the 'First Oppressed Group in the History'. The following quote describes it perfectly:

Male control of the public and private worlds maintains patriarchy; male control must be eliminated if women are to be liberated. But this is no easy task. To eliminate male control, men and women have to eliminate gender—specifically, sexual status, role, and temperament—as it has been constructed under patriarchy. (Tong: 2009, p.78)¹

The socio-economic and political institutions across the world favour men to exercise their control and authority over women. Being Patriarchal in nature these institutions and social relations related to these, bequeath an inferior or secondary status on women. Hence, women experience subordination, regardless of class or religion, in a number of ways—discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, and violence—in the family, at work place, in society over the centuries. Historically, women were kept excluded from major institutions such as the church, the state and

¹ Tong Rosemarie (2009). *Feminist Thought: A more comprehensive Introduction*. USA: Westview Press.

the university. When, finally, they were allowed to participate, it would generally be at a subordinate and second class level.

According to Engels as cited in his book *Origin of Family, Private Property and the State*, women's oppressions began with the development of private property in the Neo-Lithic Revolution. From that particular period "Mother Right" had been withdrawn and with the property passing through generation to generation, the Father Right had grown for the attainment of the inheritance which culminated in the gender equality of the primitive community and took the form of male dominance throwing women in the domestic spheres, confining them in domestic works and their sexuality went under the strict control of the males. Hence, women's footing in public field—social, economic and political, had been restricted further to domesticate them to be inferior in regard to men. Gradually, male dominance, male centeredness and male identification—all made women identity-less, disrespectful, and subordinate. This subordinate status led women to have no access in the resources and decision making and made them dependent on the males for everything. It is well stated in the following:

The feeling of powerlessness, discrimination and experience of limited self-esteem and self-confidence jointly contribute to the subordination of women. Thus, women's subordination is a situation, where a power relationship exists and men dominate women. The subordination of women is a central feature of all structures of interpersonal domination, but feminists choose different locations and causes of subordination. (Millet: 1977 as quoted in Sultana A.:2011, p.7)²

Hence, as a collective movement, Feminism had started to formulate and theorize women's oppressions in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, the concept began to take shape in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It was then this theoretical formulation took the shape of a political organization to oppose the age old oppressions against women in socio-cultural, political and economic realms and started opposing the laws and opinions based on inequality and discrepancies. The

² Sultana A (2010) Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis. *The Arts Faculty Journal*. 1-18. Retrieved from http://www.bdresearch.org/home/attachments/article/nArt/A5_12929-47213-1-PB.pdf on 24.07.2016.

early Feminists maintained that the concepts of gender and sex were constructed historically and culturally. It was not that the nature made women inferior and subordinate.

Defining Feminism, Ivy Singh in her “Feminism: Various Approaches and Its Values³” says, “Feminism is an awareness of women’s oppression and exploitation at work, within the family and society and is a struggle for achieving women’s equality, dignity and freedom of choice to control their lives and bodies within and outside the home”. (p.1)

Feminism emerges with the battle for women’s rights with Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) where Wollstonecraft radically and controversially proposed that it was society’s false belief that women were less intellectual than men. Rather women should have as much chance to participate in the public realm as men have. According to Wollstonecraft, women ought to make more use of their intellect than what they did as mothers and wives. She also said that women had not been treated as human beings, but as women. (Gornick: 1978, p.32, quoted in Handal: 2013, p.11)⁴

From that point on, the Feminist Movement fought for democratic rights such as the right to education and employment, right to vote, the right to property, and access to politics, employment, raises the female sexuality, and women’s place within and outside the household. These early affairs regarding women’s suffrage and equality are termed as “First Wave Feminism (1860-1920)”.

Two significant women who are strongly connected to this ‘First Wave’ are—*Virginia Woolf* and *Simone de Beauvoir*. Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (1928) and *The Second Sex* (1949) by Beauvoir served as the foundation for the further movement for the emancipation and upliftment of women. Both of them were intellectually committed to change the traditional concept of women in a culture saturated with social conventions regarding what it meant to be women. Handal states:

³ Singh I (n.d). “Feminism: Various Approaches and Its Values”. *Indian Journal of Theology*. Retrieved from http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ijt/37-1_058.pdf on 6.07.2016.

⁴ Handal, M. (2013). *What do Women want?: Writing the Female self* (Master’s Thesis in Literary Studies, University of Stavanger). Retrieved from <https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/185436/Handal.pdf> on 12.07.2016.

Through her feminist polemic *A Room of One's Own* (1928) she attempts to reclaim a female tradition of writing. The other prominent figure from this period is the French feminist Simone de Beauvoir, whose ground-breaking and provocative study *The Second Sex* (1949) is seen as the initial effort to challenge human history from a feminist perspective. (Handal: 2013, p.47)⁵

It was *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), which marked the 'Second Wave' Feminism. Being influenced by de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), Friedan got upset with stratifications made on gender and sex, the problems women faced for being women, cultural and social institutions energizing imbalanced power relations, the media objectifying women as objects of sex and entertainment of the male and protested against the mainstream media image which reduced women's identity to wife and mother. With the popularisation of the phrase "*Personal is political*" or "*Private is political*" during 19760-70, 'Second Wave' Feminists opened women's private or personal matters for political analysis and discussion and started systematic analysis of the nature and causes of women's suppression and oppressions, which differentiated the Second Wave from First Wave Feminism, which was concerned with achieving the rights of vote for women.

With the popularisation of this slogan in 1960s and 70s Feminists organised themselves to theorise women's sufferings and included these theorizations in the discussions of politics and politicised women's problems in an organised manner. It is well stated in the following:

The Second wave of feminism came forth with the saying 'personal is political'. Women fought for equal rights in all battle fields. They pointed out that equal rights were not acted upon. Women demanded to be evaluated in their true worth both inside and outside home. (Johannsdottir: 2009, p.7)⁶

The Radical Feminists used this slogan to redefine women's sufferings in political set-up settling link between the private life and the political structures. The following will clear it:

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Johannsdottir, N.K. (2009). *Patriarchy and subordination of women: From Radical Feminist point of view*. Haskoli Islands. Retrieved from http://skemman.is/stream/get/1946/3017/9955/1/Nina_Katrin_Johannsdottir_fixed.pdf on 10.07.2016.

If the lives of the women were to be changed in any fundamental way, the social structures that constrained women's choices would have to be changed first. Such change required collective actions in the political arena, not individual actions in each person's private life (Adamson et al.:1988, p.201)⁷

This wave continued till the 90's and in this particular phase debate continued on a wide range of issues on women in a radical tone. Handal quoted Rampton thus:

In this phase, sexuality and reproductive rights were principal issues along with a fight against the current ideology that reduced women to objects of beauty dominated by patriarchy to keep them in the home or in dismal, low-paying jobs. The movement also concerned itself with women's role within the family (Rampton: 2008, Handal:2013, p.12)⁸.

The 'Third Wave' of Feminism has begun in the mid-90s and is continuing in the present. Feminists in this wave are still working for women's liberation and emancipation from all sorts of oppressions ensuing from the Patriarchic culture of the society expressed in male domination, selfishness, aggression and violence. Most recently, Feminist empirical works have focussed on the relationship between women and media. Feminists are still continuing with their researches measuring media's role towards the portrayal and representation of women and the social change.

1.1 LIBERAL FEMINISM

Mary Wollstonecraft⁹ (1719-1797) as a liberal thinker is well-known for her ardent support for woman's cause, who was the first to say women are first and foremost human beings, not sexual beings. She was the founder of Modern Feminism. Her work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* published in 1792 is possibly the first, serious and systematic work towards Feminism. The basic idea of it is that: women are rational

⁷ Strutt, S. M. (1994). Framing Feminisms: Feminist Critiques of Patriarchal News Media (Doctoral Thesis, Simon Fraser University). Retrieved from <https://www.google.co.in/search?q=Suzzane+Monique+Strutt+%281994%29> on 13.07.2016.

⁸ Handal, M. (2013). *What do Women want?: Writing the Female self.*(Master Thesis in Literary Studies. University of Stavanger). Retrieved from <https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/Handal.pdf> on 12.07.2016.

⁹Modern Feminism begins with Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). This work was emerged from the social and political turbulence caused by French Revolution. Her emphasis was on the need to make women rational: till women are more rationally educated, she argued, 'the progress of human virtue and improvement in knowledge must receive continual checks. (Valerie Sanders, 'First Wave Feminism' in Sarah Gamble (ed), *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Post-Feminism*, 1998.

creatures; they are capable of governing themselves by reason. Hence, if women are to be denied natural right it must be proved that they have no rational capacity. She wanted “personhood” for women to be free from the shackles of bondages as “Toys of man”, “objects” to amuse the men and fulfil their desires.

In this regard, if one tries to give arguments in support of women for having equal status with men, it seems germane to include those names who posited several rational questions about the age-old oppressions and discrepancies suffered by women. In determining the equal place and status of women with men Feminists like Marry Wollstonecraft, and J.S. Mill, who joined later, celebrated rationality in order to settle back and free women from the clutches of men. Rosemary Tong quotes:

He (J.S. Mill) argued in “The Subjection of Women” that if women’s rational powers were recognized as equal to men’s, then society would reap significant benefits: public-spirited citizens for society itself, intellectually stimulating spouses for husbands, a doubling of the “mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity,” and a multitude of very happy women¹⁰.

Liberal Feminists’ conception of freedom as personal autonomy for both men and women would be to let people live freely on their own according to their own choices. This is an important hard rock for Feminism upon which gender equality has been attributed. Tong (2009, p-16) quotes Wollstonecraft thus:

In other words, a woman is not a “mere means,” or instrument, to one or more man’s pleasure or happiness. Rather, she is an “end-in-herself,” a rational agent whose dignity consists in having the capacity for self-determination¹¹.

Though the Liberals supported common arrangement of the given society where men would earn for the family and the wives would superintend the domestic spending, if the wife would go out to work she would not be able to perform the tasks of child rearing and house management well. Therefore, she should contribute to the family by her manual labour. The Liberals accept these sex role differences only with a provision that both are considered equal.

¹⁰ Tong, Rosemarie (2009). *Feminist Thought: A more comprehensive Introduction*. USA: Westview Press.

¹¹ Ibid.

Liberal Feminism holds that the oppression of women is in the form of denial of their equal rights, representation and access to opportunities. Liberal Feminism takes a gender-neutral approach holds that all men and women are created equal and should be treated equally and seeks to reform oppressive systems. Liberal Feminism focuses strongly on fixing women's exclusion from political power¹². Hence, women should have civil rights, they must have the right to vote and they must be given education. Indian social reformers of the nineteenth century talked practically in the same vein as giving the right of education to women so that they could become better wives and mothers. They also voted for the removal of such social customs as 'sati', child marriage, ban on widow remarriage etc.

1.2 RADICAL FEMINISM

Radical Feminists approach gender inequality quite differently from how Liberals articulate the same. Rather than insisting on ideology that women are same as men, they glorify feminine traits and argue that men should adopt those. One of the first Radical Feminists, Kate Millet insists that the foundation of women oppressions is buried deep in Patriarchal sex/gender system as Patriarchy, according to her exaggerates biological differences between male and females, making certain that man always has the dominant or masculine role and that women always have the subordinate or feminine roles. Radical Feminists, demand not only the Patriarchy's legal and political structures but the social and cultural institutions to be overturned to liberate the women from the bondages of illogical environment. It is rightly said that:

In order to be liberated, women must reject femininity as it has been constructed for them and give it an entirely new meaning. Femininity should no longer be understood as those traits that deviate from masculinity. On the contrary, femininity should be understood as a way of being that needs no reference point external to it. Full personal freedom for a woman consists,

¹² Compare and contrast liberal feminism and Radical Feminism (Women and Society, Core Course, B.A., Sixth Semester, University of Calicut. Retrieved from http://www.answers.com/Q/Compare_and_contrastliberal_feminism_and_radical_feminism on 12.07.2016.

then, in her ability to renounce her false feminine self in favour of her true female self. (Tong: 2009, p.3)¹³

Radical Feminist Kate Millet in her work *The Sexual Politics*, putting emphasis on Patriarchy, remarked that patriarchy itself exaggerates differences between men and women on biological basis that men always are dominant and masculine where women would always be subservient and feminine—in other words Patriarchy cultures the generations with this ideology over the ages. This ideological presumption of patriarchy gets generated and endorsed by the so-called socialising institutions, such as—the family, the academic institutions, the churches and so forth each of which justifies the oppressions and injustice upon women influenced by patriarchy.

Like Millet Shulamith Firestone in her work, *The Dialectic Sex*, critiquing Patriarchy says that women's submissiveness and men's dominance is rooted in the Patriarchy based reproductive roles. In her own words:

The elimination of the sexual double standard that permits men but not women to experiment with sex, and the inauguration of a dual-parenting system that gives fathers and mothers equal child-rearing responsibilities—was inadequate. It would, in her estimation, take far more than such modest reforms in the sex/gender system to free women's (and men's) sexuality from the biological imperatives of procreation and to liberate women's (and men's) personalities from the socially constructed, Procrustean prisons of femininity and masculinity¹⁴.

According to Radical Feminism neither lack of Political Rights nor Civil Rights causes women's oppressions, rather they insisted on the biological causes behind women's oppression. They raise that physical subordination of women by men is the primary form of oppression—so they demand biological revolution to liberate women. For that Patriarchy should have to be rooted out in all its forms—they regard family as the primary form of Patriarchy which promotes Patriarchy in the society, so these systems need to be abolished. The following quote describes it perfectly:

¹³ Tong Rosemarie (2009). *Feminist Thought: A more comprehensive Introduction*. USA: Westview Press.

¹⁴ Tong Rosemarie (2009). *Feminist Thought: A more comprehensive Introduction*. USA: Westview Press.

Freedom for women means that women must be free to have close relationship with children without having to give birth to them. Radical feminism contains many" interesting claims such as pregnancy and child birth are painful and unpleasant experiences. They believe that the technology should be used to eliminate all kinds of pain particularly from the fundamental inequality of the bearing and raising of the children. (Singh: n.d, p.63)¹⁵

1.3 SOCIALIST FEMINISM

Combining the insights of Radical feminism and Marxist Feminism, Socialist Feminism is committed to overthrow the gender and the class—as these are the major causes for the women’s oppressions. Socialist Feminists challenge the ideologies of Capitalism and Patriarchy. So, the Socialist Feminists designate the family and the economy as the sources of women's oppression and exploitation as these promotes and endorse Patriarchy and Capitalism respectively. It rejects the idea that liberation for women requires the abolition of child birth. Socialist Feminists are interested in undermining the power-over system of Capitalist Patriarchy through empowerment. However, they believe that this can be accomplished best by a societal and global redistribution of power, as opposed to placing their hopes in the empowering capacity of feminine traits. As a result, Socialist Feminists are most active in socialist revolutions and women’s economic movements, on welfare, women in development, and women in the ‘global factory’ (as cited in ‘Analysing Structures of Patriarchy¹⁶). Woman’s unpaid work at home establishes Capitalism to be continued from generation to generation as it signifies the bosses and workers which are important actors for the perpetuation of Capitalism and women’s suppression. Judith Butler remarks:

If a woman works for her family in the home, she has to be supported, and so she is economically dependent on the "man of the house," like her children. If she works outside the home, she is still expected to fulfil her domestic duties,

¹⁵ Singh I (n.d) “Feminism: Various Approaches and Its Values”. *Indian Journal of Theology*. Retrieved from http://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ijt/37-1_058.pdf on 6.07.2016.

¹⁶ ‘Analysing Structures of Patriarchy’ (n.d). Retrieved from <http://sol.du.ac.in/mod/book/view.php?id=1474> on 8.7.2016 on 7.07.2016.

and so she ends up working twice as hard as a man, and usually for a lot less pay¹⁷.

Marxist and Socialist Feminists emphasizing the class, illustrated that it is impossible to liberate women from all forms of oppressions in a class-based society where the wealth produced by the powerless many ends up in the hands of the powerful few—Patriarchy takes the shape of Capitalist Patriarchy where private property and private ownership systems suppress women to be secondary. Socialist Feminist Sylvia Walby criticises Patriarchy as being more oppressive in the private sphere in the nineteenth century and in both private and public sphere in the twentieth century as being taking the shape of “*Capitalist Patriarchy*”. As a matter of fact, women have to work in domestic life to attaining the qualities of a good mother or wife and making the home; and in public sphere division of labour disadvantage them to be paid higher as men—which make women to be economically dependent on men and this leads the women to the inferior and subservient status in the family as well as in the society/state.

Contemporary Feminist theory begins with Simone De Beauvoir’s argument that as men view women to be different from themselves; women are reduced to a “second sex” and the “other”. Simone De Beauvoir in her book “*The Second Sex*”¹⁸ says that ‘women are not born, but rather they are made’. She explains that gender differences in the society make the man superior through his role as bread-winner. It gives him a position of supreme power in the family as well as in the society: they become superior and women the subservient. She is treated as the “Other”. By this self-denying word, de Beauvoir means that the entire social, political and cultural structures rest on the assumptions that the world is male. Humanity is judged according to the male perspective. Women on the other hand are excluded from these constructions as woman is the ‘other’ or ‘inessential’. It is rightly stated in the following:

¹⁷ Butler J. (n.d) “The Variety of Feminisms and their Contribution to Gender Equality”. Retrieved from <http://diglib.bis.uni-oldenburg.de/pub/unireden/ur97/kap1.pdf> on 7.7.2016.

¹⁸ Simone de Beauvoir’s work “*The Second Sex*” was published in 1949 which forms a foundation for much sought feminist analysis. This work focuses on different approaches to the question of gender justice and its significance in relation to the emancipation of women. The subject matter of this work revolves around the concept of women being treated as the ‘other’ (sex). (H.Parshley:1989)

“She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her: she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute – she is the other.”¹⁹

So, Simone de Beauvoir once asked herself what is a woman? And answered instantly that “she is nothing, but the womb”. Through these self-degrading words Beauvoir painstakingly reveals the harsh reality and the plights of a woman’s life. Beden observes:

Throughout history, women have been generally oppressed and repressed by the patriarchal society in which men are dominants. They were denied the right to live in the same kind of freedom as men and to get their share of education and career. Instead they were forced to stay at home and raise the family. Marriage was considered important for women to ensure their security, but then they were forced to obey their patriarchal husbands without any objection. (Beden: 2011, p.2)²⁰

Beauvoir maintained that “otherness is a fundamental category of human thought”—which is deep rooted in the interpretation of role assigned to the women by the society and the culture. The following perfectly describes:

Beauvoir refers to Hegel's master-slave dialectic as analogous, in many respects, to the relationship of man and woman. This proposition treats woman as the ‘Other’ in relation to man. [...] Therefore, on the basis of her analysis the entire category called ‘women’ or the ‘Other’ is marginalized because of structural and systemic discrimination prevalent in the society²¹.

Women are defined and differentiated with reference to man and not the man with reference to her; she is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. Regarding this Judith Butler highlights that the surrounding culture teaches women from infancy to perform and behave according to their sex. It is an important factor

¹⁹ Beauvoir, S. (1949). *The Second Sex*. (Clark Richard L.W Trans).(n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.rlwclarke.net/courses/LITS3303/2005-2006/09ADeBeauvoirSecondSex.pdf> on 8.07.2016.

²⁰ Beden Nadja (2011). Femininity and Masculinity in *Bridget Jones’s Diary* by Helen Fielding [on line]. Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:422735/FULLTEXT02> 08.07.2016.

²¹ Shalu, Nigam (2014). From The Margins: Revisiting The Concept Of ‘Marginalized Women’ retrieved from <http://www.countercurrents.org/nigam030914.html> on 11.07.2016.

that the concept of men and women revolves around the concepts of gender and sex. The following quote describes it perfectly:

“To society, the word ‘woman’ means powerlessness, which gives men positions higher up in the hierarchy and more power...” (2011, p.9)²²

So, differentiating sex from gender has been a key principle in Feminist and Social Equality Theories. As a matter of fact, to clearly visualise this thesis it is necessary to clarify some central theoretical terms and concepts. The terms sex and gender are often seen as used to demarcate the concepts of men and women. According to June (1997, quoted in Decker J.T: 2010), where sex is determined by biology and anatomy, Gender, on the other hand, is the conceptualization of what it means to be male and female, and what are “*appropriate*” attitudes and behaviours for each to have (p.1). Lorber (2007) argues that gender is not innate, but is socially constructed; in other words it is “constantly created and recreated out of human interaction” (p. 276). Gender is learned and solidified by tradition, observation, and imitation. Boys and girls learn to act based on what their social group (including parents, teachers, religious leaders, and other children) teaches them about their gender (p. 278). While sex is generally classified by what sexual organs a person is born with, gender is a culturally-prescribed manner of assigning expected roles and behaviours to men and women (Scott, 1986). While sex is innate and biological, gender is a “societal construct” (Li-Vollmer and Lapointe: 2003, p. 90) that is learned and passed along. (Decker: 2010, p.7)²³

Similarly, Elaine Showalter cites four models of differences between man and woman. They are: biological, linguistic, psychological and cultural. In biological approach, we find many texts having explanation of woman’s body. It means that if someone mirrors the body, he reduced it to a woman’s body. Women usually have been featured as ‘desired’ rather than ‘desiring.’ On the linguistic, psychological and cultural ground, women are considered to be subordinate. Women were not allowed to

²² Beden Nadja (2011). Femininity and Masculinity in *Bridget Jones’s Diary* by Helen Fielding [online]. Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:422735/FULLTEXT02> on 8.07.2016.

²³ Decker, J.T. (2010). The Portrayal of Gender in the Feature-Length Films of Pixar Animation Studios: A Content Analysis. Master of Science. Auburn University. Retrieved from <https://etd.auburn.edu/bitstream/handle/10415/2100/Jonathan%20Decker%20Thesis%20Final.pdf?sequence=2> on 12.07.2016.

write and speak publicly because they were always considered inferior in the society. (Rohini:2012, p.2)²⁴

Refusing the traditional notion on sex and gender, Judith Butler, instead, stuck to her opinion that gender is something one performs or acts, which forms one's identity, is mostly created and recreated throughout one's everyday life: it's a repetitive process as Simone De Beauvoir once said "one is not born a woman but rather becomes one"—the entire society, the institutions or organisation, cultures or rituals teach a woman what its mean to be a woman. Mere, binary categorization as men and women on sex or gender cannot just perturb the women's position as inferior or deformed sort of humanity. Butler says:

“There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender...identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (Butler: 1990, p. 233, as quoted in Neilson: 2008, p.13).

Thus, on biological sex, gender has been formed as masculine and feminine, which both men and women feel to be and with that, gender roles have been put forwarded on them in a culturally and socially male saturated environment. Where men and masculinity are the hard-rock of a given patriarchal society, women and femininity should have to be the “secondary sex” with secondary characteristics based on myths and stereotypes.

India is the land of diversity in terms of geography, race, caste, creed and religion and all these contribute to its quite a peculiar nature. Geographically, India is divided in to several parts— mountain ranges, vast seas, large river-irrigated lands, countless rivers and streams, dark forests and sandy deserts, which have had a major impact in the formation of the divergent culture among people—some people live in the plains, some in the hilly area, some in the coastal areas and some in the deserts. Hence, the socio-cultural and political environment of India is quite different from the other parts of the world. But, the hard rock characteristics of the whole Indian society is defined in the existence of Patriarchy in different forms—Brahminical or main stream, Tribal and Dalit etc.

²⁴ Walse Rohini G. (2012). Indian Feminism. *International Multidisciplinary e-Journal*.1(8), 1-5, 2277 – 4262. Retrieved from <http://www.shreeprakashan.com/Documents/201282719115669.1.Walse%20feminism.pdf> on 8.07.2016.

Socio-economic, cultural and political structure of a particular society can stimulate certain kinds of change in the societal fabric. At the same time, it can also prove to be impediments in that path. This resembles the situation of greater Indian diversified societies, where women, under Patriarchy, which either operates as an ideology or a practice, are suppressed and oppressed. Besides, existences of caste and class distinctions, and the other human organizations based on the same, also suppress women folk to voice against the oppressions. The following quotes perfectly depict the position of women in India:

In *Ramcharitmanas*, sanctified Bhakti poet, Tulsidas says, ‘a woman like a shudra, a drum, a boor and an animal, is fit for beating only’—as cited in Rama Jha²⁵

“[...] it would be cliché talking of the subordinate role of women in India and the stereotypical images of woman living two contraries, almost simultaneously—that of Shakti (power) the primeval power, the origin of power itself, and the helpless, helpless woman without any identity except that of a wife, or the mother who has no voice in anything, has nothing by way of her own basic choices.”—as cited in Rama Jha²⁶

“By a girl, by a young woman or even by an aged one nothing must be done independently, even in her own house”. —as quoted in Rambachan A.:2002, p.19²⁷

The plights and sufferings of an Indian woman are being rooted in the patriarchal society of India itself where andro-centric views are cherished and insist the value and significance of women only in relation to men. Indian women, being a meager part of the population of global women, are no way different from their counterpart, in terms of status and position. In spite of their numerical strength in India, women occupy a marginalized position due to various socio-cultural constraints being based on patriarchy, women become victims of dowry deaths, rape, child marriage, forced prostitution, polygamy, female infanticide and other severe crimes which are still not

²⁵Jha, Rama (1992). *Women and the Indian Media: Portrayal and Performance*. New Delhi: Chanakya Publication.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Rambachan A. (2010). A Hindu Perspective. Retrieved from <http://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/60256.pdf> on 8.07.2016.

uprooted from Indian society but increasing with the time passing by. Indian women have neither been adored as human similar to men nor have the equal footing inside or outside the home. Instead, they have become toys at the hand of men and man-made everything. Uma Chakravarti states:

We have been aware that while the subordination of women is a visible feature of most stages of recorded history, and is prevalent in large parts of the world, the extent and form of that subordination has been conditioned by the social, economic and cultural environment in which women have been placed. (Chakravarti:2003, p.25)²⁸

The very diversity in India in terms of geography, the varying cultures, behaviours, food habits, rituals, customs on the basis of geographical diversities, on one hand gives India a peculiar position in world culture but raises some problems, too, in terms of dividing interests, aspirations and desires. On the other hand, especially it divides the women in to several groups which restrict them to come united against the age old oppressions being faced by them. In India, there exists among men various categories and sub-categories which are made on the basis of birth, wealth, geography, religion and so on—all these determine the fate of women in India. Hinduism, the most followed religion of the world, prevail predominantly in the Indian subcontinent.

Prehistorically, though there is lack of sufficient evidence, what we have just the tools, pottery and the cave shelters of that period, still many of the scholars stick to the point, from gender point of view, that gender stratification cannot be presumed to have existed in those less stratified societies in this subcontinent. Trying to describe the prehistoric condition of women in this Indian subcontinent, Prof. Uma Chakravarti (2003) has penned down the work of Gerda Lerner thus:

[...] we may deduce that there was no rigid sexual division of labour, and that the role of women in the food economy was equal if not more than that of men. Lerner has argued that the most egalitarian societies are found among hunting-gathering groups and are characterised by interdependency. The

²⁸ Chakravarti, Uma (2003). Gendering Caste: Through A Feminist Lens. Kolkatta: stree.

relative status of men and women can at the most be characterised as ‘separate but equal’. (Chakravarti:2003, p.40)²⁹

Historically, the Rig Vedic³⁰ society though most of the nineteenth century Hindu nationalists romanticised this period as congenial in respects of women’s perspective, there is lack of evidences to prove so. According to Kumkum Roy (2002), if one analyses the hymns of rig period it will show the prevalence of strong Patriarchal society in that period also. Most of the hymns were written valorizing the male heroes while a few were devoted to adore the female deities. Women’s sexuality was fully under the control of the Patriarchal leadership as warfare was one of the most visible characteristics of that period. The practice of Niyoga³¹ also symbolizes the women as being the resource of the men’s hand.

So, Patriarchy and the customs, cultures, stratifications formed on the base of Patriarchy are imbibed in such a manner that no one can think of a life without these, especially in India. Stratifications such as caste and class made on the basis of birth and wealth are two giants which providing fuel to the preservation of patriarchy—make women inferior and secondary. Among patriarchy, caste, class and gender—there is a close relationship towards shaping the life of women in India. Where caste is determined by birth, class is determined by wealth.

To understand the relationship between Caste/Class and women it is important to recognise that these hierarchies are operative in Indian society: one according to ritual purity with the Brahmana at the top and the untouchables at the bottom, the other according to the political and economic status with the landlords at the top and the landless at the bottom. The Caste/Class system has shaped the lives of women of all castes, whether high or low, they are linked with each other through the structure of marriage, sexuality and reproduction.

In India marriage occupies an important role to carry on the Caste System, on one hand, and to control women’s life, on the other. Marriages are made so that man may start his own line or *vansa*. Practically, women of different *vansas* or lines are

²⁹ Chakravarti, Uma (2003). *Gendering Caste: Through A Feminist Lens*. Kolkatta: stree.

³⁰ Historians have divided the Vedic age into two: The Early Vedic or k g Vedic age which begins from 1500 B.C. and the post-Vedic age which extends from 1000 B.C. to 500 B.C.

³¹ It was prevalent in that particular period which was meant for women. According to this a woman can marry her brother-in-law whose husband is dead.

transferred to other or husbands' *vansas* to make alive a permanent *vansa* i.e. husbands' line. The incoming of wives maintains all rules of purity and pollution of their husbands' *vansas*. So, women's sexuality is strictly guarded and controlled in India. Based on these concepts, Endogamous marriage (the rule enjoining marriage within a specified group) has been given priority in Indian caste system. This marriage system does not contaminate the castes, particularly the upper castes.

Caste as a system of discrete units within a larger system of production makes endogamy a crucial element of the caste system and this in turn affects gender. The purity of Caste cannot be produced and maintained without endogamy and it is for this reason that endogamy is regarded as a tool for the manifestation and perpetuation of caste and gender subordination. It is endogamy that enables also the expansion of a certain kind of production relation and provides it with flexibility to incorporate other pre-caste communities, maintaining the cultural discreteness of each new community that becomes a part of the caste system. (Chakravarti: 2003)³²

With marriage there is maintained a sacred custom of "*Kanyadaan*" (to gift one's daughter to her husband) in a Indian Hindu family according to which a father has to gift her daughter to the husband with an adequate bride price which include money, jewellery, furniture, television, freeze etc. In other words, although it may appear strange to one, through *Kanyadaan* a father not only gifts the daughter, but her qualities, her femaleness, her procreative powers too—all these make a girl leave her own *gotra* and *vansa* they are born into to enter another line, which designates her as receptacle transmitter or carrier of the husband's line and not her father's.

The social structure in the Vedic period was set up predominantly in the joint family system. As it is patriarchal in nature it tended to keep women subordinate to men giving the special property rights for men reinforcing the male dominance, male centeredness and male identification. It is well stated in the following:

Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. Mediating between the individual and the social structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient. Serving as an agent of the larger

³² Ibid.

society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads. (Millett:1969)³³

Besides, in this particular period women were denied education, right to remarriage, right to social mobility and so on—women became the birds without wings. The power to govern the home and the authority still rests in the hands of male head of the household—most of the decisions of the household—from purchasing daily household items to decide about the education and marriage of their children—are taken by father/husband. There is no significant change in the attitude of the males even in the families where females are working outside the home. The following quote states it perfectly:

Men in our families are like the sun, they have a light of their own, (they own resources, are mobile, have the freedom to take decisions). Women on the other hand are like satellites, without any light of their own. They shine, if and only if, when the sun's light touches them. This is why women have to constantly compete with each other for a bigger share of sunlight, because without this light there is no life. (Status of women in India: n.d, para 34)³⁴

Religion has been a dominant factor in the subordination and subjectivity of women in the Indian society. Certain Hindu Religious scriptures claim women being created out of the unification of all sinful creatures having the qualities of fires, snake and poison. It is well stated in the following:

Hinduism, as a religion opposes the fundamental rights of the female clan. The *Vedas*, Scripture of Hindus is quite hostile to its women no matter what. According to it, women happen to be inhuman and are subject to no primary civil liberties. The society, thus, ignored all kinds of rights owned by the women and thus, in ancient era all led a hopeless life. (Basharat:2009, p.243)³⁵

³³ Kate, Millett (1969). *Sexual Politics*. Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/subject/women/authors/millett-kate/theory.htm> on 8.07.2016.

³⁴ *Status of Women in India* (n.d). Retrieved from <http://natrss.gov.in/pdf/reading/women%20in%20india.pdf> on 9.07.2016.

³⁵ Basharat Tahira (2009). The Contemporary Hindu Women of India: An Overview. *South Asian Studies A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*.24(2), 241-249. Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/5-Dr.%20Tahira.pdf> on 9.07.2016.

Religion and [...] have always catered to the interests of the dominant masculine group to perpetuate the notion of feminine subjugation. No matter to which religion a woman may belong, she is denied opportunities for growth and the development of her selfhood and is excluded from many spheres of life.

Most of the Hindu religious scriptures delineate women's nature thus:

“According to Mahabharata women have been sinful from very beginning when the creator first made the five gross elements, and he gave shape to men and women.”

“Satapatha Brahmana held that a woman, a sudra, and a crow are the embodiments of untruth, sin and darkness.”

In the name of caste, certain constraints and restrictions are imposed on women who cannot go out of these even if one does wish so whereas men are set free. Pativrata dharma³⁶, stridharma, strisvabhava have been delineated by the *Dharamashastra*³⁷ written by Manu, the first law giver of the Hindus. To tame women for the house and not for outer world Manu says,

“In childhood a female must be subject to her family, in youth to her husband, when lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent.”
(Chakravarti: 2003)³⁸

“Though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere), or devoid of good qualities, (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife.”(ibid)

In this regard the Ramayana is the most ideologically coherent of normative texts which created role models for men and women. The *pativrata*dharma was shown by the character of Sita where Sita worshipped her Husband Rama as god as she was *pativrata*, dutiful, long-suffering, patient, chaste, loving and faithful. With this it was established that the wife like Sita is good and such wives are sinless and pure. So, it is rightly said:

³⁶ The duties of a chaste woman who fulfils the wishes of her husband without questioning.

³⁷ Law Books of Hinduism.

³⁸ Chakravarti Uma (2003). *Gendering Caste: Through A Feminist Lens*. Kolkatta: Stree.

The rules prescribed for "pativrata" prevented her from eating even with her husband. This custom prevails even now in many parts of India. Almost a master-slave relationship began to develop between the husband and the wife. She was in fact trapped in the "Pativrata image" and she continues to be trapped in this miasma. (Nair: 1980, p.43)³⁹

In the same way the *Dharmashastra* also tell us what happens to the errant women who are not capable of sustaining their devotion to their husbands. They are, as Manu dictates, beaten by their husbands.

In this way the whole women folk had gone under the control of the males and the patriarchal caste/class system had begun to affect women's sexuality, social structure, relation between the production and reproduction and other institutions of the society. Nair writes:

This gradually destroyed her self-confidence and in turn destroyed her self-concept. The roles began to get stereotyped. She began to suppress her real feelings and it became difficult for her to untangle her true self from the existing social roles. There arose a firm-rooted belief among the majority of women that they were only capable of producing children and managing the household affairs⁴⁰.

In the post Vedic period Indian women had been given a symbolised personhood in respect to men that defined their nature of silence, suppressed feelings, and occlusion of their sufferings. Gradually, she became the property of a man's home which led oppressions in the form of sati, rape, battering, deaths related to dowry, female infanticide, child marriage and so on.

Being a woman in an Indian society where Patriarchy is the prevalent norm entails providing household service to her family, serving her husband, children and the in-laws. The dominant concept here is she has to serve the man she is dependent on. Men lead and have control over women's labour not only inside the home but outside, as well. Indian women are being exploited by men in the work places. Low wages, gender biases in the work places, extended hours and poor conditions – these are the

³⁹Nair L.R (n.d) Indian Women Gown the Ages. Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/226/6/06_chapter2.pdf on 12.07.2016.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

common features of women's economic condition in India, and, thus, women are becoming the properties of men. It is well stated in the following quotations:

They (women) are normally sent back to their parental villages where they have to support themselves and their children by working as labourers without rights in either the house or land of their natal family. Their situation reflects the social condition of women within the Hindu patriarchal family system, as essentially landless, homeless and without support. (Omvedt: n.d)⁴¹

Gender inequalities rob women and hamper their capacity for income and survival [...] if the male head of the household dies, a woman with limited skills can barely cope. She must rely on subsistence work and charity from her family. Gender discriminations feminize women's labour⁴².

In this regard, Indian women are no way different from that of the women of other parts of the world. Historically, Indian women could never have a share of the property of their fathers. However, in modern period, the Indian state and the government, though paternalistic in nature, have made laws acknowledging the right to inheritance, but due to lack of enforcement of the laws women are left in the lurch in a miserable situation. The following will throw light on it:

The Hindu personal laws of mid-1956s (applied to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains) gave women rights to inheritance. However, the sons had an independent share in the ancestral property, while the daughters' shares were based on the share received by their father. Hence, a father could effectively disinherit a daughter by renouncing his share of the ancestral property, but the son will continue to have a share in his own right⁴³.

In India, it is general belief that women have a lower status with reference to power and influence than men in all spheres of life, may it be family, community, religion or politics. In India, due to practices of Patriarchal ideologies and customs,

⁴¹ Shalu Nigam (2014). From The Margins: Revisiting The Concept Of 'Marginalized Women' retrieved from <http://www.countercurrents.org/nigam030914.html>. 3 rd sep. on 11.07.2016.

⁴² Meena Razvi & Gene L. Roth (2004). Socio-economic Development and Gender Inequality in India. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED492144.pdf> on 8.07.2016.

⁴³ Gandhre A.(2015). The Socio-Economic Status of Women in India: Ancient to Modern Era. Retrieved from <http://www.legalservicesindia.com/article/article/the-socio-economic-status-of-women-in-india-ancient-to-modern-era-1867-1.html> on 8.07.2016.

discriminatory laws, paradoxes and stereotyped gender roles women's participation in politics is lower than that of men. It is well stated in the following:

[...] domestic responsibilities, lack of financial clout, rising criminalization of politics and the threat of character assassination” are making it increasingly difficult for women to be part of the political framework. Moreover, women politicians point out that even within the political parties, women are rarely found in leadership positions. In fact, “women candidates are usually fielded from 'losing' constituencies where the party does not want to 'waste' a male candidate⁴⁴.

Besides these, there are Personal Laws which have made Indian women's life miserable by imposing illogical restrictions on women. In these laws there are several discriminatory laws which delimit the chances to be equal for women. In “Status of Women in India” (n.d, p.2) it's been stated thus⁴⁵:

There are certain features common in all personal laws, including the reformed Hindu Personal Laws, which perpetuate inequality between women and men:

- Under all the personal laws it is the man who is the head of the family in all circumstances (however, now mother's name can also be mentioned in school's admission form).
- The line of succession is through the male line.
- The woman, normally, has to live wherever the man decides after marriage.
- The right to divorce is far more lenient with the man under the Christian and the Muslim laws but in interpreting the law Hindu women also face the same difficulties.
- Women often do not get equal right to property.

All these indicate the worsening condition of Indian women as a whole. Its social-economic, political and cultural manifestations can be seen in the increasing incidents of dowry, rape, declining sex ratio, low political participation, discriminations in the work force and work places, discriminated gender roles, secondary roles in rituals and

⁴⁴ Rai Shirin (2002). Class, Caste and Gender: Women in Parliament in India. Retrieved from http://www.idea.int/publications/wip/upload/cs_india.pdf on 8.07.2016.

⁴⁵ *Status of Women in India* (n.d) . Retrieved from <http://natrass.gov.in/pdf/reading/women%20in%20india.pdf> on 09.07.2016.

rites and son preferences. In brief, she has no personality of her own, but is defined only in relation to men. So, the scholars say that the Patriarchal code of living, the rigid codes of behaviour as outlined for women in the brahmanical texts and religious scriptures are mainly responsible for the inferior status of women in the Indian society. Now, it has become a harsh reality that Indian women are denied the basic social, economic and political rights and those who have got it are struggling to maintain their acquired positions. It is well in the following:

[...] they (women) are beginning to acquire the features of minority community by the three recognized dimensions....economic situation...social position and political power. If this trend is allowed to continue the large masses of women in India may well emerge as the only surviving minority continuously exposed to injustice⁴⁶.

Women's lives in India and all over the world are circumscribed by what can be termed as the five 'Ps' i.e. Patriarchy, Productive resources access inadequacy, Poverty, Promotion advancement insufficiency and powerlessness. (Swraup:1993)⁴⁷

Having been loathed because of Patriarchy coupled with Capitalism, India, according to the western perspective, is an impenetrable place—where women are the victims of Patriarchal and religious control. The historical instances of “Sati” and the stories of wide-scale “foeticide” have formed in the western mind an awareness of backwardness and stereotypical negligence towards the Indian women. It is well stated in the following:

The fundamentalists, today, desire to protect the idea of the ‘Hindu family’ and go back to such a life when women were mere animals without tongue. In order to achieve so, return to the old disdainful and barbarian customs is must. The most common of which being ‘sati’, i.e. the wife jumping into the funeral of his deceased husband so as to finish off the family name with respect. Other returns to old customs, include the conventional idea of Hindu divorce,

⁴⁶ Shalu Nigam (2014). *From the Margins: Revisiting The Concept Of `Marginalized Women*. (n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.countercurrents.org/nigam030914.htm> on 11.07.2016.

⁴⁷ Georgekutty M.V. (2010). *Political Participation and Women in India*. (n.d) Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/189/3/12_chapter2.pdf on 9.07.2016.

remarriage, banishment from life, etc. (Allen: 1982, p.16-17, as quoted in Basharat:2009)⁴⁸

The dichotomy between “private” and “public” sphere, imposed by the religious practices in India, project Indian women as the spiritual being, confined in the household and protector of spiritual domain of the “*Ghar*”, the home. The following extract by Young describes it perfectly:

Their (Indian women) stages of life revolved around maidenhood (eligible for marriage); wifhood (the married life), and widowhood (having been married). (Young: 1994, p.69, as quoted in Basharat: 2009)⁴⁹

[...] after man had successfully established his rights to private property, he took woman as a wife into household. This enabled him both to enlist her services to protect his property and supply him with progeny, and to lay exclusive sexual claims to her person. (V. Geeta: 2009, p.89)⁵⁰

Regarding the subordinate position of the Indian women, the Feminists interpret the state of being oppressed through different concepts: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. It is well stated in the following:

We women are crores [280,000,000] of slaves and along with Dalits and Adivasis “scheduled tribal populations” or “untouchables” we make up 70-80 per cent of the people... We are battling for equality with the men in the war for human liberation.”(Narayan:1999, as cited in Basharat:2009, p.246)

The Feminist endeavour of India got momentum with Phule and Ambedkar who viewed cast hierarchies and Patriarchy as intrinsically linked in regard to the oppression and suppressions of Indian women. Sharmila Rege drawing upon Ambedkar’s analysis on caste remarks:

Caste ideology is the very basis of the regulation and organization of women’s sexuality. Hence, caste determines the division of labour, both sexual division of labour and division of sexual labour. Brahminisation is a two way process

⁴⁸ Basharat Tahira (2009). The Contemporary Hindu Women of India: An Overview. *South Asian Studies A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*.24(2), 241-249.Retrieved from <http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/5-Dr.%20Tahira.pdf> on 9.07.2016.

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Geeta, V. (2009). *Theorizing Feminism*. Kolkatta: Stree.

of accumulation and assimilation and throughout history [...] thus, the existence of multiple patriarchies is a result of both Brahmanical conspiracy and of the relation of the caste group to the means of production. (Rege: 2003, p.95)⁵¹

In 1970s, Indian Feminism, confined in the areas such as the categorization of women, experience and personal politics, declared women as the oppressed group as far as their womanhood was concerned. From that period, the discussion on women's oppressions once again had been given space and feminists insisted on the point that Indian men wield power over women in the form of fathers, husbands, noble men or king which make them perceive women as objects lacking the power to express themselves under the patriarchal practices, mated with socio-cultural and religious constraints. It is well stated in the following:

[...] femininity in the Indian context may be understood as an ethic that women have to practice. If they do not, they fail to achieve transcendence, they remain locked in their low, given natures⁵².

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women's participation, performance and portrayal in media became great areas of concern for the feminists as the media is one of the influential socio-cultural organizations where concepts and ideologies about men and women are formed and disseminated. There exists a deep rooted complex relationship between media and Patriarchal structure of the society. Over the years, the media industry has developed extensive communication infrastructure. Media in its various forms, whether in Print, Electronic or New media, have a constant presence in everyday life and result in a mediated world. It plays a vital role in setting opinion, influencing our behaviour, attitudes, social interactions through construction and presentation of images.

The impact of media on society has received greater theoretical, legal and social focus over the last couple of decades. Started with "The Feminist Mystique", Feminists of this era are not only mapping out women's problematic relationship with media as media have a deep connection to women's status in real world, but also in a position

⁵¹ Rege Sharmila (2003). A Dalit Feminist Standpoint. In Rao, Anupama (eds.) *Gender and Caste* (pp.90-101). New Delhi: Women Unlimited.

⁵² Geeta V (2009). *Theorizing Feminism*. Kolkatta:stree.

to question media because of its negative approach towards women that reflect in the restricting and unrealistic themes of womanhood or femininity. Feminists do object the omission of women or symbolic annihilation from media and the ways in which women are stereotyped. The concept of sex—which sexual organ is a human born with, is the measure of the gender roles to attribute the qualities to become men and women, on which, researchers say, media through its contents and language—be it latent or manifest, are nothing but the artificial articulation of what it means to be women.

Feminism though has a long history, in regard to conceptualizing the problems of women that have no name as feminists say. But, from as recent as 1960s, Feminism began to focus on media and its representation of women in a systematic manner. At that time, media was understood to be an intricate part of the socializing processes as media was instrumental in communicating ideologies. From that particular point of time, media contents were called for continued analysis by the feminists. Liberal, Radical and Social Feminists argued that through the media contents, be it films or magazines or advertisement, women were continued to be portrayed as mere images created by the patriarchal ideologies and norms and emphasized the redefinition of the gender roles. All these made Feminists to study the media portrayals of women in a systematic manner.

Liberal Feminists support more equal representation of women with men with a view to get the society changed in a direction that would lead to the positive portrayals of women, whereas the Radicals, acknowledging the differences between the two sexes, emphasized revision and publicity of the unequal treatment towards women. It is well stated in the following:

Mabandla (1991) argued that significant change would be a result of existing power relations and ideology being addressed and held accountable as the driving force behind the existing place of women in society and within their specific cultural contexts. (Pillay:2008, p.19)⁵³

⁵³ Pillay, Nerisa (2008). The Portrayal of Women in Television Advertisements on Sabc3: A Reflection on Stereotypical Representation. Faculty of Humanities. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Retrieved from <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/8264/Corrections%20final%20draft%20copy.pdf?sequence=1> on 9.07.2016.

Feminists insist that media content to some extent is an extension or projection of existing ideological power relations that operated and institutionalised consistently and continuously on social and cultural level. As a result, women are being projected in the manner what patriarchy produces. So, Feminists regarding stereotypical or negative representation of women in media, criticise media for being under the ownership and control of males who perpetuate stereotyped gender roles making contradictions between the “real” and the “ideal” women to maintain the *status-quo*. The following describes it perfectly:

The mass media function in the larger system of patriarchy and capitalism that controls media structures and organisations and represents women as subordinates. The recent debate of mass media vis-a-vis gender produces much more complex understandings of the cultural dimensions of power and equality, and more specifically feminist analyses of the media, culture and society. (Gallagher:1992)⁵⁴

Feminists believe that the continuation of sex role stereotypes and negative portrayal in the visual, as well as, print media is the signal of the patriarchy being embedded in media. Whereas women are shown having the stereotypical qualities like caring, nurturing, emotional, needing guidance and support lacking rationality, men, on the other hand, shown as decision maker, strong, hard-working and responsible. As a matter of fact, Feminists being aware of the contents and languages produced in media towards women question media for copying the Patriarchal notion on women and womanhood and regenerating the concept of popularity of male gaze. It is well stated in the following:

The media are hypothesized to fulfil the structural needs of a patriarchal and capitalist society by reinforcing gender differences and inequalities”. Media reflect society’s dominant social values and symbolically denigrate women,

⁵⁴ Vagdevi H.S & Shantaraju S. (2014) The Changing Paradigm in Gender Constructed Texts in Media: A Semiotic Perspective. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 2278-6236, 3(7). Retrieved from <http://www.garph.co.uk/IJARMSS/July2014/13.pdf> on 09.07.2016.

either by not showing them at all, or by depicting them in stereotypical roles.
(Van Zoonen :1996)⁵⁵

So, Feminists have been trying to focus on the contents published in media and kept on criticising the role of media. As a result, Feminist Media Studies have emerged as one of the richest⁵⁶ and most challenging intellectual projects within the field of media and cultural studies over the past twenty-five years.

The range, complexity and transdisciplinarity of feminist media studies today bear little resemblance to the fledgling body of work that began to appear in the 1970s. The world wide feminist movement has pointed out three basic important dimensions regarding women's participation, performance and portrayal in media. (Gallagher: 2005)⁵⁷

Gallagher says in "Feminist Media Perspectives" that it was indeed a political impetus that first shaped the academic agenda of Feminist Media Analysis (Gallagher). The tradition was started with Betty Friedan who was dead against the media's role towards women. She observes:

One starting point for Western feminists was Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), with its clear critique of the mass media. At a global level the United Nations International Decade for Women (1975–85) was a catalyst for debate about the probable factors of women's subordination, while the media's role as a specific source of oppression was documented in reviews initiated by UNESCO. (Ceulemans & Fauconnier: 1979; Gallagher: 1981)⁵⁸

In this regard, it should be mentioned that Tuchman had added the concept of "Symbolic Annihilation"⁵⁹ noticed in the media's role towards women as they were

⁵⁵ *Media Portrayal of Women And Social Change: A Case Study of Women of China (n.d)*. retrieved from

http://www.wunrn.org/news/2009/02_09/02_16_09/021609_china_files/Media%pdf on 8.07.2016.

⁵⁶ In "Feminist Media Perspective" Gallagher discussing about feminism as a theory, politics and activism says that it's an intellectual project within which media and cultural studies took shapes.

⁵⁷ Gallagher, M. (2003). *Feminist Media Perspectives*. Retrieved from http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/BPL_Images/Content_store/Sample_chapter/9780631226017/Valdivia_001.pdf on 9.07.2016.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The concept of 'Symbolic Annihilation' was first introduced by George Gerbner in 1972. He first briefly referenced the concept without going elaborately as: representation in the fictional world signifies social existence; absence means symbolic annihilation. Gerbner used this concept to reveal how representations in the media cultivate dominant assumptions regarding how the world works and,

deeply implicated in the patterns of discrimination, operating against women in society – patterns which, through the absence, trivialization or condemnation of women suppress the real picture of women. It is discussed well by Gallagher thus:

[...] the overall media treatment of women can best be described as narrow...women are rarely portrayed as rational active or decisive...Underlying practically all media images is a dichotomous motif which defines women as either perfectly good wholly evil , mother or whore, virgin or call girl, even tradition or modern. (Parvez & Roshan: 2010, p.134)⁶⁰

The continuing debate on mass media and gender produces much more complex understandings of the social, cultural dimensions of power and inequality existed between men and women in the society, and more specifically feminist analyses of the media, culture and society. According to Gallagher (1992), “..... *the mass media function in the larger system of patriarchy and capitalism that controls media structures and organisations and represents women as subordinates.*” Tomar observes:

[...] the role of women in media-decision making is reflected in the poor representation of women issues and concerns. The drastically changing media (print) can be seen through years or especially in post-liberalization period, media has become market-oriented. (Tomar Ranu: 2009)⁶¹

The mass media are being challenged for its involvement in the hegemony of the dominant social classes and reproducing gender relations in the context of a larger system of patriarchy and capitalism which control the mass media and subordinate women. So, different women's groups and media professionals get along to challenge them.

as a result, where power resides. Later this concept was further elaborated by Gaye Tuchman and expanded the concept from Gerbner's simple definition from 'absence' to include 'condemnation' and 'Trivialisation'.

⁶⁰ Parvez A. M. & Roshan R. (2010). Mass Media and Women: A Study on Portrayal of Status and Violence. *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences*.30(1)133-140. Retrieved from http://www.bzu.edu.pk/PJSS/Vol30No12010/Final_PJSS-30-1-12.pdf on 9.08.2016.

⁶¹ Patowary, H. (2015). Media and its role towards women: A feminist perspective. *International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences*. 5(11). 2249-7382. Retrieved from <http://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:ijress&volume=5&issue=11&article=016> on 9.07.2016.

At global level a major study was done known as Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) in 2005. This study was co-coordinated by World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) an international NGO that promoted communication for social change. This study was conducted in 76 countries across the globe. (Bharadwaj, D. et al: 2014)⁶²

This study found that:

- i) There has been a steady increase in the percentage of news items reported by women from 28% in 1995, to 31% in 2000, reaching 37% in 2005. Female reporters have gained more ground in radio and television than in newspapers. The press lags far behind the electronic media, with only 29% of stories written by female reporters in 2005.
- ii) As news presenters, women are more likely to be found in television than radio. With 57% of television items presented by women in 2005, this is the only area in which female outnumber males. In radio 49% of items were presented by women.
- iii) The on-screen presence of women decreases with age. Up to the age of 34 women are in the majority as both news presenters and reporters on television. By the age of 50, only 17% of reporters and 7% of presenters are female. For women in the profession, a youthful appearance is more highly valued than experience. Male presenters and reporters continue to appear on-screen well into their 50s and even 60s.
- iv) In most news organizations, local news is deemed less prestigious than national or international news. Female reporters are more likely to work on local stories (44%) than on national (34%) or international stories (32%).
- v) Female reporters predominate in only two topics weather reports on television and radio (52%) and stories on poverty, housing and welfare (51%). There is a 50-50 gender balance among reporters in celebrity news, and in stories on consumer issues. In all other topics, male reporters are in the majority. Sports

⁶² *Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 National Report.* (n.d). Retrieved from <http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Reports/Malta.pdf> on 8.07.2016.

news is the least likely to be reported by women, with just 21% of female reporters.

- vi) Overall, male journalists report at the so-called 'hard' end of the news spectrum such as politics and government (where women report only 32% of stories). Females are more likely to work on the so-called 'soft' stories such as social and legal issues (40% reported by women). Although many 'soft' news stories are important, they are not always perceived as such in the hierarchy of news values. As a result, the work of female journalists is sometimes undervalued, and women reporters are frequently assigned to stories that are downright trivial—celebrity news (50% reported by women), or arts and entertainment (48%).
- vii) There are more female news subjects in stories reported by female journalists (25%) than in stories reported by male journalists (20%).

Regarding the conclusion of the Global Monitoring Projects, Gallagher (2005) says that women have made great strides in the news media over the past decade. But, they still struggle to achieve equal treatment. Older female professionals are rarely seen on television: for women appearance is valued more highly than experience. Female reporters frequently work in local news beats and on stories at the 'soft' end of the news spectrum. This could be one of the reasons why there are more female news subjects in stories reported by female journalists. But, irrespective of who reports the news, the fundamental question is: why do so few women make the news at all.

Similarly, in 2000 the Association of Women Journalist (AFJ) studied news coverage of women and women's issues in 70 countries. It reported that only 18% of stories quote women, and that the number of women-related stories came to barely 10% of total news coverage.

One of the major problems of the recent Feminists with media is the objectification of women. Objectification is symbolised through those ways and contents of media which suggests that women are the objects to be own, play things to be shown of and treasures to be touched. This leads to the categorisation of women as sex objects or objects of entertainment and hence, women become the victim of sexual harassment by the men. The dangerous consequence of objectifying women has been highlighted

by Dr. Jean Kilbourne who notes that, “Turning a human being into a thing is almost always the first step in justifying violence against that person.” It has been criticised that media, being a part of the patriarchal society show women always as puppets or in other words toys for men. She has the identity as long as the man is happy with her, otherwise she is nothing. It well stated in the following:

The objectification of women in mass media has a long sorted history. Critics, however, argue is that such an analysis is an exaggeration, which they dismiss along with most feminist critiques of society. The representation of women in the media has always been exploitative and derogatory as well. It has, throughout the years, reduced women’s position to just mere objects which can be won, prizes to be shown off, and playthings to be abused. (Berberick: 2010)⁶³

In 2010, following a set of three studies that “examined the associations among sexist beliefs, objectification of others, media exposure and three distinct beauty ideals and practices,” Researcher Viren Swami and colleagues, found that sexism exists where beauty ideals and practices are rigidly consumed and followed. (Swami et al. 2010:367, as cited in Berberick: 2010)⁶⁴.

In patriarchal societies, the roles and privileges accorded to women are inferior to those assigned to men, and as such, sexism plays a central role in the continuing oppression of women. Moreover, and as predicted by the “beauty ideals are oppressive (BIO) hypothesis (Forbes et al., 2007), the existence of patriarchal structures and attitudes should result in significant relationships between sexist attitudes and the endorsement of beauty ideals and practices, (Swami et al.: 2010, p.366, as cited in Berberick: 2010, p.2)⁶⁵.

The women’s issues get a fallback position and are kept away from the mainstream reportage in media even though the entire world society is plagued with burning women’s issues like female feticide, sexual harassment, discrimination in work places, women empowerment, maternal health, unemployment and illiteracy. Mass

⁶³ Patowary, Himashree. (2015). Media and its role towards women: A feminist perspective. *International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences*. 5(11). 2249-7382. Retrieved from <http://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:ijress&volume=5&issue=11&article=016> on 9.07.2016.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Media, one of the world's largest databases, as well as, agents of influencing public opinion, reflect opinion and perceptions through reporting what other people, companies and organizations are saying and doing. Media reports reflect the happenings of the society but unfortunately media are wavering from its actual role of disseminating factual information instead presenting biased information which obstructs the development of the society, especially women. It is well stated in the following:

Media is the mirror of society and media reports are reflection of happenings in the society. Media has immense power to influence the masses and communication and IT revolution has further increased its importance. Unfortunately, nowadays media is wavering from its actual role and giving biased information which makes development of the society more difficult⁶⁶.

Besides, women are rarely given professional coverage in fields like economic, social, political and business. The most disquieting trend in media is that women are either poorly or negatively covered. The under representation of women in media in the west but paramount of gender based studies in mass media is relatively less in India. Media needs to be sensitized in addressing the positive portray of women.

Feminists critique media as these put forth the body of women as 'blank screen' which is open for the construction and reconstruction of socially and culturally given meaning to women. Neilsen (2008, p.5) states thus:

In addition to presenting highly stylized and idealized imagery of the body, contemporary popular media are replete with messages that emphasize the desirability of a well-maintained body i.e. thin and toned, and that promote consumer products designed to assist in the achievement of such a body. In this cultural context, the body has assumed a sort of malleability in that it has been constructed as an object open to ready transformation through body

⁶⁶ Purnima (2011). Women Issues in India: Role and importance of Media. *Global Media Journal*, 4(1), 2070-2469. Retrieved from http://www.aiou.edu.pk/gmj/Womens_issues_in_india.asp on 09.07.2016.

projects of dress, diet, exercise, and surgery. (Bordo: 1993; Featherstone: 1991; Foucault: 1977; Shilling: 1993; Turner: 1991)⁶⁷

According to Sheffield (2002) at some time or other, it makes us so stigmatic to think that women are the incarnations of male gaze. Simone De Beauvoir highlighting on the “otherness” and “inessentialness” of women says through the male gaze woman is defined and differentiated according to the judgment of men. This gaze makes women objects and strips them of liberty. Male audience members are encouraged to gain erotic pleasure from looking at beautiful women on screen. This practice labeled as scopophilia has encouraged the objectification of women and the development of narrow criteria for sexual desire (Decker: 2010, p.11⁶⁸). Many feminists have considered this “as a form of violence against women as it is a reminder of women’s object status, sexualisation, lack of power, as well as, violation. (Johannsdottir: 2009, p.21)⁶⁹. Rosemary Tong illustrates Wollstonecraft thus:

What Wollstonecraft most wanted for women is personhood. She claimed that a woman should not be reduced to the “toy of man, his rattle,” which “must jingle in his ears whenever, dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused.” In other words, a woman is not a “mere means,” or instrument, to one or more man’s pleasure or happiness. Rather, she is an “end-in-herself,” a rational agent whose dignity consists in having the capacity for self-determination. (Tong: 2009, p.16)⁷⁰

Danya Espinosa (2010) says in some other ways it can be said that media are deeply implicated in the process of defining boy and girl or man and woman. The media messages imbibe in the mind of people what it means to be men and women. It is a general consensus among the media to portray or project women as sex object, there are myriads of unnecessary displays of women bodies in films, magazines,

⁶⁷ Nielsen C.T. (2008). Women’s Magazines & Body Images :An empirical case study of the Danish fashion magazine Costume. Media and Cultural Studies. Hogskola. Retrieved from <http://dspace.mah.se/bitstream/handle/2043/6209/?sequence=1>

⁶⁸ Decker J.T (2010). The Portrayal of Gender in the Feature-Length Films of Pixar Animation Studios: A Content Analysis. Master of Science. Auburn University. Retrieved from <https://etd.auburn.edu/bitstream/handle/10415/2100/Jonathan%20Decker%20Thesis%20Final.pdf?sequence=2>.

⁶⁹ Johannsdottir N.K (2009). *Patriarchy and subordination of women: From Radical Feminist point of view*. Haskoli Islands. Retrieved from http://skemman.is/stream/get/1946/3017/9955/1/Nina_Katrin_Johannsdottir_fixed.pdf.

⁷⁰ Tong Rosemarie (2009). *Feminist Thought: A more comprehensive Introduction*. USA: Westview Press.

newspapers or in advertisements as if women's body is for just the medium of entertainment for the male centered society. This situation itself create an unrealistic environment for women to become beautiful for entertain the male gaze and always been in a competition for beautifying themselves as the body or beauty shown in media (p-4).

The continuous presentation of women as inferior or sex objects or distressed would normalize the cultural indictment of men's superiority which had been solidified through the ages in the religious writings, rites and rituals, customs and so on. Women would become the victims of the harassment which might be in the shape of wife battering, rape, witch craft, dowry death or many more.

In recent time, the most regular image of women in media is a woman having slim figure, stylish get-up and independent care free minded, indulged in entertaining the viewers as being objects of entertainment and sex. Neilson quoted:

According to the feminist philosopher Susan Bordo (2003) the idealization of slimness in women is a very recent phenomenon, dating from the 1920s. It is often argued that the thin ideal is the outcome of successful marketing by the fashion industry, which has become the standard of cultural beauty in the industrialized affluent societies of the twentieth century. (Grogan: 1999, as quoted in Neilson: 2008, p.9)⁷¹

These constructions, unfortunately, delimit the reality of what men and women think, feel and how they behave. Wiersma argued:

Constructions of reality take on subjective meaning for individuals. Socially constructed reality may become a self-fulfilling prophecy...once people have ideas or beliefs of what it means to be appropriately male or female; they will behave or engage in activities in accordance with these beliefs. They have thus turned their subjective meanings into objective reality. (as quoted in Decker: 2010, p.6)⁷²

⁷¹ Nielsen C.T. (2008). Women's Magazines & Body Images :An empirical case study of the Danish fashion magazine Costume. Media and Cultural Studies. Hogskola. Retrieved from <http://dspace.mah.se/bitstream/handle/2043/6209/?sequence=1>

⁷² Ibid.

Media, in constructing a subjective perspective on gender, play a very crucial role providing with role models, scripts and behaviours or activities given to the male-female characters. Viewers being active receptors and copiers everyday try to imitate the behaviour and lifestyle given to the characters or any description given in both print and visual media. So, Decker writes:

In other words, viewers who heavily watch television and movies are more likely to perceive the world as being similar to the programs viewed than those who view TV and films sparingly. These cultivation effects combine with “accessibility effects,” which are the recalling of moments, messages, dialogue, narrative, and other details in media. Thus frequent consumers more readily recall specific details from what they watch, which are then converted via cultivation effects into schemas for understanding the world. (p.9)⁷³

The role models shown in both print and visual media, through contents or pictures, are becoming the “ideal” women for the viewers and even they try to compare the women of their lives with the role models shown in the films or advertisements in terms of body, beauty, style and so on. In recent time many scholars of gender studies fear the consequences of these portrayals of women as this will definitely create a situation of identity crisis for the women folk. Such portrayals will do nothing but reduce women into mere objects, a socially institutionalised concept about women which personify women as inferior to men. Tong quotes like this:

What Wollstonecraft most wanted for women is personhood. She claimed that a woman should not be reduced to the “toy of man, his rattle,” which “must jingle in his ears whenever, dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused.” In other words, a woman is not a “mere means,” or instrument, to one or more man’s pleasure or happiness. Rather, she is an “end-in-herself,” a rational agent whose dignity consists in having the capacity for self-determination. (2009, p.16)⁷⁴

In fact, this harmful “ideal” put forth by the media restricting women to show off their originality as human beings having equal footing with men, put women in the cage of

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Tong Rosemarie (2009) *Feminist Thought: A more comprehensive Introduction*. USA: Westview Press.

patriarchy, globalisation, capitalism and the other modern systems born out on the basis of patriarchy. The standard set forth by the media bringing in aspiration, among women to become one, ultimately rejuvenates and generates Patriarchy neglecting altogether the emotions and thinking of a real woman. Tong (2009, p.4) observes:

Socialist feminists agree with Marxist feminists that capitalism is the source of women's oppression, and with radical feminists that patriarchy is the source of women's oppression. Therefore, the way to end women's oppression, in socialist feminists' estimation, is to kill the two-headed beast of capitalist patriarchy or patriarchal capitalism (take your pick)⁷⁵.

In determining the equal place and status of women with men Feminists like Marry Wollstonecraft, and later joined J.S. Mill, celebrated the rationality, which according to them was to settle back and free women from the clutches of men. So, Rosemary Tong quotes:

He (J.S. Mill) argued in "The Subjection of Women" that if women's rational powers were recognized as equal to men's, then society would reap significant benefits: public-spirited citizens for society itself, intellectually stimulating spouses for husbands, a doubling of the "mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity," and a multitude of very happy women⁷⁶.

Valerie (1998) writing about the First wave Feminism mentioned that in *Vindication of Rights of Women* Wollstonecraft pens it down that an ideal woman is a woman who is active and intelligent blending civic and familial responsibilities, freed from drudgery and debasing frugality. She also focuses on Wollstonecraft's articulation on women and men relationship thus:

[...] show that elegance is inferior to virtue', and the 'first object of laudable ambition is to obtain a character as a human being, regardless of the distinction of sex'. She saw women as degraded by the flirtatious and chivalrous behaviour of their male companions.... (p.16)

So, being a part of the Patriarchal mechanism Media are supposed to patronise maleness everywhere and set men as the standard of judging women—the truth, once

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

said by Simone De Beauvoir that women are the 'others' or 'inessential' while men are the 'self' or 'essential'. So, it is rightly stated in the following:

The category 'woman' has thus no substance, being merely a projection of male fantasies (the 'myth of the eternal feminine') and fears. But since all cultural representations of the world presently available to us—whether in myth, religion, literature or popular culture—are the work of men, women too have internalised these definitions and learned to 'dream through the dreams of men'. Indeed, a 'true woman' is *required* to accept herself as Other for man: she must 'make herself object...renounce her autonomy'. (Saman & Yaqoob:2013, p.564)⁷⁷

So, the clash between the real and the ideal, which has been created by media for the marketing purpose, to sometime sell the products, starting from beauty range to men's under wear, from shaving cream to car, is the sign of male dominance, male centeredness and male identification where women are trapped as caged birds and media-produced fake ideal women, and most importantly, whatever women achieve are judged and compared with men by the men, because of the prevalent notion of women. Hence, women are becoming toys in the hand of men in all the structures, systems (socio-political and economic), institutions of patriarchy, be it family, marriage, religion, rituals, government or media. Women, through their continuing struggle, over the couple of centuries, are trying get rid of the prevailing discrepancies and oppressions, which are taking the forms of violation and crimes against them in the forms of rape, dowry or dowry deaths, witchcraft, honour killings, sexual harassment, battering and so on. However, these hardly get any positive representation and coverage in the media.

For these reasons, the Assamese Media need to be studied in terms of portrayals of women in its contents with a Feminist Perspective.

⁷⁷ Saman A. & Yaqoob M. (2013). Constructing the Feminist Identity, subversion and Diversivness: Some Insights of Literature. *Social Sciences and Humanities*.4(3),559-566. Retrieved from <http://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.4%283%29/2013%284.3-57%29.pdf> on 09.07.2016.

1.5 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Review of Related Literature is an important part of a Research work as it clears the path which is full of hurdles, to translate a research work into reality. Such reviews by and large bring about a deep and clear perspective of the field. In this study, the Review of Literature and previous studies carried out in relation to the field of women and media are categorized in different headings—Basic Concepts and Theories of Communication, Feminism and Portrayals of women in Media, Media and Social Change, Women Issues and Media, Assamese Media and Women and Women in Indian society. The Literatures were reviewed with a view to explore the theoretical frameworks that govern or guide social norms and understanding of gender roles in society. This is important in creating a background and understanding how people interpret and relate to media portrayals and the significance that these frameworks play. It focuses on similar studies that had been carried out on the issues of women representation by the media. This helps in understanding and giving justification to the research goals and objectives.

1.5.1 Basic Concepts and Theories of Communication

Cultural myths which exist in every society may be viewed as the backbone to every social structure. These may be defined as a system of beliefs that exists and pertain to specific cultural contexts. Rivers (1993) explained that cultural myths do not die easily since they are rooted in years, and even centuries, of belief, tradition, and fear, and that they have been largely created by men. She wrote that there had long been a general cultural assumption that women were not the natural protagonists of stories or histories, but that humanity's story was essentially that of men. This illustrates how media perceptions and coverage of women by the print media may be subject to pre-existing cultural myths and social thought patterns that may be dominant in society.

Rivers (1996) pointed out that there are two major myths on women existent in society: "The Myth of Female Weakness and The Myth of Female Strength" (p.17). She noted that media coverage of women often tend to bounce from one myth to the other. This had its own effects especially in the interpretation of the representations. Rivers observed that women's strength rarely would become the focus of media attention, except in distorted ways, such as when women would be seen as too strong.

Rivers (2006) illustrated the negative representation of working women by media based on myths existent in society in her writing:

“Hardly a month goes by without some major publication offering a dire portent for working women: they are going to start having heart attacks, they are never going to get husbands, they’ll send their kids running to shrink’s couches, they’ll be such bundles of nerves that they need a mommy track to keep working at all”. (p.61)

Cultivation analysis theory provides an understanding of the influence and effect of one’s exposure to media. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1993) stated that what was most popular tended to reflect and cultivate dominant cultural ideologies. In their research and study on the effect of prolonged exposure to television, they found that long-term exposure had certain effects on the overall thought pattern and assumptions made by individuals. This in turn was what developed into stereotypes and biases. This is illustrated in one of their case studies:

We have found that long-term exposure to television, in which frequent violence is virtually inescapable, tends to cultivate the image of a relatively mean and dangerous world. Responses of heavier compared to matching groups of lighter viewers suggest that the conception of reality in which greater protection is needed, most people ‘cannot be trusted,’ and most people are ‘just looking out for themselves’. (Gerbner:1993)

In the analysis of their study in support of cultivation theory, Gerbner (1993) revealed that the television, for example, has become a primary common source of socialization and everyday information, mostly in the form of entertainment, which in turn has become part of a shared national culture. To this effect, they emphasize that “the exposure to the total pattern rather than only to specific genres or programs is what accounts for the historically new and distinct consequences of living with television: the cultivation of shared conceptions of reality among otherwise diverse publics” (p. 18). This illustrates the process and development of the cultivation theory. (Gerbner:1993)

Newspapers just like television are a media source and thus equally play similar role of informing and influencing its audience’s attitudes and thought patterns, especially those who are regularly exposed to it. For example, it is not uncommon to find certain

biases existent in society and specific to certain individuals which may be different from those not exposed to a particular form of media. Examples include political biases, sports news, educational information etc. which may be of interest to newspaper readers and thus are more likely to have certain attitudes and biases due to exposure to certain information in newspapers. This begins to explain how newspapers may play a part in Gerbner's cultivation theory.

Florian Arendt (2010) carried out a study aimed at investigating the existence of cultivation effects arising from exposure to newspapers in the reader's social perceptions and attitudes, based on Gerbner's cultivation theory. He justified the study by revealing several other studies that have used the theory before in newspaper analysis:

Although the original formulation of the cultivation hypothesis and much of the subsequent research focused on television, several studies have investigated the cultivation effect of newspapers (Arendt, 2008, 2009; Bauer, 2005; Grabe & Drew, 2007; Guo, Zhu, & Chen, 2001; Hicks & Lee, 2004; Nisbet & Wang, 2004; Reber & Chang, 2000; Reimer & Rosengren, 1990; Stroman & Seltzer, 1985; Vergeer, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2000). (p.147)

Arendt (2010) carried out a study which set out to investigate the cultivation effects of a newspaper on reality estimates and explicit and implicit attitudes among newspaper readers. He carried out a four month content analysis of news coverage by a certain newspaper which had the tendency to over represent foreigners as offenders, as well as, carry a negative view of the EU. In the study, Arendt (2010) found that those who read the particular newspaper chosen for the study were more likely to overestimate the frequency of foreigners as offenders and they also were inclined to have negative implicit attitudes toward the EU than those who did not (Arendt, 2010, p. 156).

1.5.2 Feminism and Portrayals of women in Media

Feminism as a change of movements and ideologies, in its varieties, share common goal to define, establish and achieve equal, political, social, cultural and personal rights for women. It advocates and in other words supports the rights and equality of women. The root of the feminist movement lies in the fight for the suffrage for women. It may be mentioned that Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of*

Women (1792) a pioneering and torch-bearing text argued for higher education for women, economic independency for women and also attacked the patriarchy supremacy in the society.

Feminist writer Simone de Beauvoir in her book, *The Second Sex* (1949), asserts women as a biological creature and implicit expression of femininity is socially constructed. She says.... “A man would never get the notion of writing on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: “I AM A WOMAN”; on this truth must be based all further discussion. A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex, it goes without saying that he is a man. The terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form”. The book mentioned about the constructed images of women in media which was influenced by the social and cultural consensus. The other aspect of the book was gender difference, the hierarchical frameworks, patriarchal society, positioning patriarchy in the top order; polarization evoked the outbreak of equality and liberty. It is the response to the particular problems faced by the women which gets affected the third world countries. Implications for incorporation of women’s issues were recommended.

Danica Minik in her article “Feminist Media Theory and Activism: Different Worlds or Possible Cooperation” terms feminism as ‘social change of unequal power relation between men and women.’ She advocated for the wide media space for women to eradicate the difference between men and women. The realistic representation of women in media cannot be rejected on the ground that it is not possible because of the public interest about the concept of good and bad women that has also been deep rooted in the politics of representation. The unrealistic portrayal of women as sexual objects in media, the “distorted mirror” as she mentioned, has an impact on people since this socializes violence against women.

Camille Paglia in her article “Feminism Past and Present: Ideology, Action and Reform” asserts that media should portray women as human beings having identity of their own; women should be presented as actors not as objects of actions. They should be presented in all shapes, sizes, colors, ages and roles—just as the women of the real world. She criticizes media about its portrayal of women as the way of the existing “Cultural Codes”. She made question...if adult women are the primary consumers of

prime time network television, why does programming continue to emphasize masculine genres and outdated stereotypes of women and families? Why don't women's issues receive more wide-spread, serious portrayal in plots? According to her there should be real women protagonists dealing with the women issues. She proposes a “female Friendly” media and to put women in the decision making.

Margaret Gallagher in “Feminist Media Perspective” discusses about the role played by feminist movement in the emancipation of women around the world. She emphasizes on the oppression on women in terms of class, age, sexuality, religion, race and nation. She has addressed two concerns of feminist media studies—“women in the profession” and “images of women in media”. She says, “The question of how women are “spoken for” or “spoken about” is at the heart of the feminist critique of media content and its implication in the construction of gender. Within feminist scholarship the debate has moved on since the quantitative content analyses of “sex-roles and stereotypes” that typified the mainly North American research of the 1970s (Gallagher).

Liesbet Van Zoonen in *Feminist Media Studies* explores the ways through which feminist theory and research contribute to the fuller understanding of the multiple roles of the media in gender construction in contemporary societies. The book analyses the media representations through content analysis and semiotics. She says that media as a tool for gender sensitization can only be utilized when the full influence of media on gender construction is understood.

Dwight E. Brooks and Lisa P. Hebert in “Gender, Race, and Media Representation” assert that just as gender is social construct through which society defines masculinity and femininity, race also is a social construction through which differentiations are made among human beings. These differentiations get articulated into reality through some social institutions such as media. The media culture shapes our gendered and racialized culture.

The Global Media Monitoring Project Reports (GMPP, 2015) reveal the persistent and emerging gaps in Gender portrayal and representation in not only the traditional (print and broadcast media) but also in modern electronic media. It highlights on the gender inequalities perpetuated by the news media. The Report shows the slow progress in bringing women’s voices to bear in public discourse taking place through

the news media. Not only does the news present a male-centric view of the world, it is also marked by gender bias and extensive stereotyping that underpin marginalisation, discrimination and violence against girls and women.

The WACC (2016) analysing the media contents over 100 countries of the world reveals the fact of prevailing under-representation and misrepresentations of women. It found clear evidence of the prevalence of stereotyped portrayals of women as victims, sexual objects or non-workers where men are stereotyped as macho roles, shaping the mind-set of the mind-set of societies that perpetuate stereotypes and inequalities and inhibits the full contribution women and men can make.

Rege (2013) states that from the sociological point of view the feminist perspectives were categorized into four stages, first is seen as one of the underlying absence of women in the cognitive structure of the discipline. Second stage focuses on the gender inequalities prevalent in the society. The third stage is seen as one moving towards the conceptualization of gender as a social structure while the fourth stage is as the time realization of the intrinsic linkages between gender and other matrices of structural inequalities. The feminist critiques categorized these changes into different genre rather than cumulative assumptions. The different disciplines of categorizations were—inclusion, separatism and re-conceptualization. While the first is the inclusion of women in various cognitive structures leaving the mainstream unchallenged. The second kind of response from women's standpoint is that there are marginalization, exploitation and deprivation in a patriarchal society. The third position of re-conceptualization leads to inclusion of women in dichotomies like public vs. private but are with the attitude of taken for granted. Thus, it is concluded from the study that the structural inequality in women's representation is the outcome of patriarchal society.

Martha A. Fineman and Martha McClusky in their book entitled *Feminism, Media and the Law* (1997) discussed about the influences of the media power on the popular opinion. Deborah L. Rhodes in the said book puts up a significant analysis of the feminism and feminist issues'. The analysis begins with the absence or less women in media, their under representation in the important decision making body, how the press coverage caricatures, polarizes, sensationalize the various feminist movements and struggle. The writer further says that realities of the feminist objectives could be

better apprehended by understanding how media construct and constrain the issues. The press coverage have undergone dramatic change in the coverage as many gender related topic, including the domestic and the sexual violence against women are covered. These movements elevated the feminist perspectives which gave a new dimension to the gender related issues. It heightened the awareness on the burning issues and how press reflects or refracts the feminist issues/feminism.

Maitryee Choudhury (2000) in 'Feminism in Print Media' laid emphasis on two important aspects of the social process in Indian popular media and feminism which augmented women's movement and the process of economic liberalization and how the economic liberalization affects the media. The writer analyzed some magazines like *Femina*, *Savvy*, *Cosmopolitan* and came to the conclusion that liberalization increased media market and also the various market needs, distinct target audiences. The scenario in the Indian context is different from the backlash of US or UK. In India, the women's movement has emerged as strength and also possesses a vocal opposition. The writer is under the notion that economic liberalization bears a direct impact on the coverage of print media as it intertwines popular media and feminism. The writer criticized that the intellectual paradigm has replaced the traditional system of identifying the middle class and this shift has also introduced the policies of representation.

Sonia Bathla (1998) in her book titled *Women, Democracy and Media* dilated on that woman's issues are predominantly event oriented in print media. Moreover a major percentage of the news stories focused on violence/crime against women, where women are shown as victims. The study implied that such stories are not carried because of any sensitivity towards women; rather they fit nearly into the media's routinisation as it is easy to obtain from regular sources. The researcher further stated that the implication of violence /crime stories serve two purposes i) add to the social consensus and ii) help to keep women in a subordinate place. The study further provided an insight into the relationship between media and social movements. The study concluded that the government support patriarchy but live up to rhetoric of being liberal and accessible and that women's movements are used by the government as instrumental in political constituency. It stressed that media plays a crucial role in constructing the image of the women's movement either in positive or negative light.

Rashmi Luthra (1987) studied the gender portrayal of women's issues in the print media. According to her the critical analysis of the women's issues with prior tone and treatment revealed that the crime issues were covered the most. The study observed that stories related to an event or an issue was considered newsworthy. It pointed on the tactics adopted by the reporters to present the women's news/stories with feminist perspective to gain prominence. The study concluded that the patriarchal system of society is responsible for less visibility of the women's issues or movements and attributes it to the 'symbolic annihilation' of women in news.

Geeta Bharati and Kamalesh Kumar (2016) in 'Portrayal of Women in Indian Cinema and Print Media: Socio-Psychological Perspective' states that media portrayal of women in Indian media reveals that Indian women are less accepted and less respected beings in Indian society who are fighting for creating a space of freedom for their development and empowerment. For the realisation of dignity of women, and for the improvement of status of women, positive portrayal of women in media is very much needed. According to the writers, women should be given respects not only as mothers, wives or sisters but as dignified human beings.

Steeves (1986) in "Feminism, Communication and Development: Complementary Goals in the Context of East Africa" discusses about the socialist feminists and the ideology of the same. He says that the Socialist Feminists assume that media and popular culture perpetuate and develop cultural ideology, and if women's status is to improve, these structures must change. They further argue that transforming mass media and popular culture can make difference even in absence of socialist revolution. In this they differ from Marxist feminists who believe that change in women's status is predicted on changes in the economic structure of the state.

Regarding the portrayal of women in mass media, an analysis surveyed by Prabha Krishnan and Anita Dighe (1990) on fictional programs and cinema, television serials reveals that most of the male characters were attributed the characters like self-centered, decisive, self-confident, seeking a place in larger world, convincing, dignified, dominant, ruthless, ambitious, unprincipled, assertive, Loyal. Female characters were shown Sacrificing, dependent, emotional, sentimental, anxious to please, defining the world through family relations.

Joke Hermes (2007) in his “Media Representations of Social Structure: Gender” discusses about the media representation of gender. He asserts that gender is cultural term which is imbibed in the society in terms of differentiation between men and women, masculinity and femininity and unbalanced power relation between the both. The media have been, and can again be, part of an authoritative and totalitarian gender regime. Regarding representation gender in media he says,

“It is as if the representation of gender follows the logic of playing an accordion. As easily as it unfolds, it will fold again to the tune of dominant ideologies. This entails that as media scholars we need to understand generic rules in relation to specific contexts. We need to unearth what gender meanings are embedded in both fiction and non-fiction media content to recognize when and where they may be actualized and where they remain dormant. Second, we need to understand how, for audiences, it is dependent on their (local) knowledge, what meanings and layers in a media text are ‘activated’ and what meaning they are given.”

Rukshnanda Pervez (2009) studied representation of women in print media with content Analysis as a method. The methodology adopted was content analysis of English and Urdu newspapers. The study inferred that top women’s issues were fully covered in the daily newspaper like crime, politics, education, health, fashion, advertisements and pictorial representation of women. Studies showed that sports, literature, environment, law and religion are area which got less coverage. News report on sport and religion was more of photographic representation with single line description. Analysis showed that the Urdu newspapers are dominated by sensational stories of glamour, crime (rape, domestic violence), political issues and religion whereas the English newspapers highlighted on fashion, Art and craft, health and literature.

Jack Demarest and Jeanette Garner in ‘The Representation of Women’s Role in Women’s Magazines over the thirty years studied two women’s Magazines such as Ladies Home Journal and Good Housekeeping over the period from 1954 to 1982. In the study both the authors focused on the increasing trend of publishing articles of political, social and economic themes and to reveal the gradual decline of women as wives, mothers, and house-makers or the traditional role models. The results show that during the period from 1954 to 1982 most of the articles were published showing

women as house-makers and being confined to marriage and family. They reveal that-

...in the period from 1954 to 1962 the themes of marriage and family and efficient homemaker accounted for 70% of the articles in the Ladies Home Journal and 66% articles in good Housekeeping. Between 1964 and 1972 this dropped to 61% in both magazines and between 1974 and 1982 only 58% were found having these themes. In contrast themes related to political and social awareness increased from approximately 3% in the Ladies Home Journal articles between 1954 and 1962, to 10% between 1964 and 1972 and 18% between 1974 and 1982.

Sudeep Paul (2011) writes in his book which is a collection of articles from eminent writers and gives detail report on national seminar on a) representation of women in media and b) portrayal of women and coverage of issues/events concerning women that in the world of media women reporters are subjected to danger and difficulties. It highlights issues regarding women's access to media how they are related to the media, their right to information and communication, analysis and how they disseminate their perception through the knowledge, opinion and perspectives through the organization. Finally, the laws and policies e.g. (The Broadcast Bill, content code) in relation to media and communications give least importance to women's issues, even the age of ICTs or the media and even in macro level media developments (e.g. media globalization) the coverage women's issues is still far less.

These days, as a visual media, advertisements play important role in promoting different products. Every day we are exposed to a number of advertisements through various media vehicles like newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet and various outdoor media. But there has been much criticisms against advertisements as these are portraying women as sex objects. Women's physical attraction has been used as a whole, or in parts, to market everything from brassieres, male under garments to automobiles. These ubiquitous images encourage people to think of sex and women as commodity, and these may contribute to violence against women. For example, there is an advertisement of a premium whisky that shows one man is taking first sip of that particular whisky and the lady sitting in front of him appears to be losing some inches of her dress, after every drink the process is going on up to three drinks. After three sips of the drink he finds that the breasts of the previously over

clad lady have become quick visible and half-clad and his own shirt has slipped from his shoulders. And the voice whispers *kuchh bhi ho sakta hain* (Anything can happen).

The depiction of women in advertisements is actually an insult to women in general because these advertisements are destroying the real status and dignity of women. According to a United Nations Research Report (1975) on Advertising and the Portrayal of Women, advertisements have been held responsible for projecting women in a derogatory light, and as inferior class of beings (National Advertising Review Board, 1975). Shrivastava's (1992:7) research on the Indian media has shown that the dominant negative stereotypes in connection to the portrayal of women are:

1. A woman's place is in the home.
2. The most important and valuable asset of a woman is her physical beauty.
3. A woman's energy and intellect must be directed toward finding the right man.
4. Women are dependent, coy and submissive; they are masochistic in their response to indignities humiliations, and even to physical violence inflicted upon them.
5. The good woman is the traditional house wife long suffering, pious and submissive; the modern woman who asserts herself and her independence is undesirable and can never bring happiness to anybody nor find happiness for herself.
6. Women are women's worst enemies.
7. The working woman is the undesirable exception who must be brought in to the marriage fold and made to conform to traditional social norms.

S.S. Roy (2012) states that today globalization has left deep impact upon the Indian nation. With the passage of time with globalization there occurred profound changes in economic, cultural, social and political arena. In economic system public sector has been ignored and private sector has been glorified. Open market system and privatization have become the mantras behind the development of a particular country like India. The writer focuses that the state relegates vast power on the hand of the private players. Of this, competition is going to be a usual thing among the producers of different markets. Everyone is trying to sale their products as soon as possible. So,

they are busy with various manipulating activities to sale their products. That's why they are taking the help of advertisements.

According to the writer the companies busy with competition are using the faces and bodies of beautiful women to popularize their products. These producers always producing lots of products every day and there is competition everywhere to become the best seller. For this they are using women in a cheap manner whether necessary or not. For example, they are using women in the advertisements of cigarette, man, s underwear, man's shaving cream etc. They are portraying women wrongly for their own purpose.

The 1974 Report of the Committee on the Status of Women (Joshi Committee Report) found that 'women are represented as wives and mothers in most TV and other media programmes. Although 36% of them are agricultural workers, women are predominantly projected as non-producers, with a decorative function, being marginal to national growth and development. Plural nature of Indian culture and the diverse roles women play is neither acknowledged nor communicated. These result in stereotyped images and role specifications of women in unidimensional projection of their reality'.

Schaffer, Sharada J. (2006) attacks not only the stereotyping but also the unethical and offensive representation of women in advertisement that work to their detriment and perpetuates an undesirable gender hierarchy.

The author places her detailed analysis of individual advertisement--- a whopping 2,000--- against the backdrop of Indian societal, cultural and religious norms that reinforce patriarchy and the inherent violence in Indian society against women, be it through bride burning, rape, or a number of other ways.

The author has reviewed advertisements over a period of twelve years from 1994 to 2005, but she admits that the majority of the advertisements are from the 1990s. Her critical analysis raises some crucial questions that have troubled not only women but also social scientists cutting across gender. Unsparing in her observations, the author asks: "Does a woman need to be always tall and slim, young and light-skinned with silken skin and mop of gloriously shining hair?"

In the concluding chapter, the author presents a new code of ethics, challenging advertisers to re-examine their notions of gender in order to uphold women's inviolable right to be treated with respect and dignity.

Media monitoring as a tool for change was officially recognised by the United Nations in 1995, in Section 'J' of the Beijing Platform for Action (Global Media Monitoring Projects, 2005 report) better known as GMMP. The idea of GMMP one-day study of the representation and portrayal of women in the media worldwide has been conceived in 1994 at the 'women Empowering Communication' conference in Bangkok organised by the World Association for Christian Communication' (WACC), Isis International-Manila and International Women's Tribune Centre (IWTC). The GMMP has grown to be the largest, longest-running study on gender and media and remains an important source of data on the status of gender on media across the world.

The nineteenth issue of Media and Gender Monitor attempts to capture key discussions on Gender and media at WACC's Congress held in October (2008) in Capetown. The congress experience re-affirmed the importance of continued engagement with a thematic area that despite its significance for gender equity and women's struggles, has been overshadowed by other, equality crucial thematic areas of concern. The network of gender and communication groups has however not wavered in understanding the importance of media as a source of cultural production, as a site through which material gender inequalities and injustices are reinforced and reproduced. The unshaken commitment is visible through the case studies feature in the current issue of MGM.

Gallagher Margaret (2001) in *Gender Setting: New Agendas for Media Monitoring and Advocacy* raised questions such as in an age of global information structures, what scope exists for independent citizen to take action in media and cultural policy formation. How can audiences effectively voice critiques of media content? In an increasingly market-centered and consumer-oriented media world, what is the potential for monitoring, lobbying and advocacy? This book focuses on media portrayals of gender, more particularly the media's role of in reproducing and reinforcing patterns of discrimination against women in society. The book further aims to unify the hitherto disparate strands of academic research and feminist activism

in the form of gender media monitoring aimed at policy critique and practical change. Research findings and monitoring experiences from both North and South are taken together to demonstrate how, with varying levels of resources and expertise. Women's groups have developed monitoring models that can be effective in widely different media contexts. Drawn from countries as diverse as Canada, India, Spain, Jamaica, Austria and South Africa, these approaches will have lessons for everyone concerned about media democracy and diversity in the new information age.

The conferences and deliberations have failed to bring about greater awareness among women folk in regard to their rights, privileges, roles and responsibilities. We find the articulation of the women's point of view through conferences, rallies and other events. At the end both the girl child and the women themselves are inextricably located in mesh of values and aspirations that have little meaning outside the context of value and culture. Women are not thoroughly organised in our country.

Our experience reveals that mass media in India are male-centered, male-dominated and male-biased. When it comes to projecting the image of women, all types of mass media are guilty of portraying negative images. There has been a failure in identifying the problems of women and there is a continued projection of women through men's eyes. In the process, their needs have been overlooked and they have been discriminated against. An exploration of this material reveals this bitter reality in India. The findings have been evolved in three fronts, namely, 1) Participation of women, 2) Portrayal of women, 3) Discrimination against women in mass media in India.

Women are not seen as important constituents in decision making positions in government, the media, academia or traditional development agencies. The role that women play in the media, their professional status in them (media) and the images of women projected by the media are inextricably linked.

According to Klapper (1960), the mass media play a vital role in disseminating information, conducting propaganda, educating and enlightening people, strengthening national integration and accelerating social development. The communication media are potent instruments of social change, contributing substantially to national development. When we talk of national development, we mean of women and men, and we talk of women development and the media role in

their development, we have to identify the two dimensions of the term “development”. Firstly, it is the development of women and the role of the mass media in this process. Secondly, it is the development of the society and the nation through the development of its women.

The role of the media in development of women is twofold—

- a) Development through exposure to media by way of programmes and printed material. This is a consumer-oriented function, and by the consumer, we mean women.
- b) Development through the active participation of women in the production of media messages by participating in the decision-making process regarding programme content, policies and the projection of a balanced image of women.

A preliminary examination of the literature concerning the image, role and social condition of women in mass media showed that any study of the image of women in the mass media and women’s association in the production of messages will have to be viewed in the socio-economic, political and cultural context.

In the ultimate analysis, the presentation of women in the mass media depends on the interplay of forces that shape social reality and one of these forces is the media itself. “The communication media produce messages and symbols which create on structure prevailing image of social reality, thus affecting the process of social change”.

In *Women and the Indian Print Media* (Jha, Rama, 1992), Rama Jha describes about the performance and portrayal of women in media. Firstly, she talks about the women journalists who deal with the women’s problems, and also mentions that there are some male journalists who turn the problems viewed by the female journalists into jokes. The male journalists are dominating the whole field of media in such a way that the female journalists cannot be concerned about the real problems of women and so their issues do not get proper limelight to be focused of. The writer also mentions some problems faced by the Indian women such as rape, burning of women by their in-laws, beating by husbands, witch burning, illiteracy and portrayal of women in print media. But, those problems never got proper importance because of the negative role played by the male journalists. So, the portrayal of women sometime will not

positive. According to Jha, to portray women properly importance should be given on to publish the realistic problems faced by them, without which some wrong pictures of women will be portrayed.

So, the writer urges the Indian women to become concerned about their main problems relating to society, economy, culture and politics otherwise their male counterpart will portray wrong pictures of women in front of the whole world.

In his article “Depiction of Women in Indian Media – A Case of Introspection for Media Planners” Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma criticizes the ways how Indian media, both print and electronic, are portraying women in the era of globalization. The issues relating to women are not discussed in the media; the fact that women are used as commodities and sex objects are not discussed in the media. Newspapers give no place to rape, crime, politics, scandals, serious debates and discussions on issues related to women. Most of the newspapers publish only the gossips about the TV serials or film actresses.

The writer also states that magazines, as well as, newspapers have sections for females where the reader is left only with the option of reading some personal gynaecological problems of married women or personal love hick-ups of young girls. In Television also there are various serials where women are shown involved in conspiracy, premarital, extra-marital affairs, wearing costly, heavy golden and diamond jewellery, caring little about anything else than their individual matters, and not at all about the outside world. He also mentions about the advertisements where women are used to show their body. In most of the advertisements in India be it newspapers or television or magazines, the main ingredient is women and these depict the picture of women as vulgar and cheap.

Sudarsanam, Jawhari, (2005), in “Representation of Women in Media: The Legal Debate” discusses about the important points raised at the Being Conference (1995) regarding the role of mass media to curb the evil of depicting women in a derogatory manner. According to him, women should be empowered by enhancing their skills, knowledge and access to information technology. This ensures to curb the negative portrayal of women internationally and to challenge instances of abuse of power in an increasingly important industry, the mass media.

The Beijing Platform of Action further suggests that the self-regulatory mechanisms for the media need to be created and strengthened and approaches developed to eliminate gender-biased programming. There is a need to develop, by the media and advertising organizations, professional guidelines and codes of conduct and other forms of self-regulation to promote the presentation of non-stereotyped images of women. Therefore, there is a need to establish, consistent with freedom of expression, professional guidelines and codes of conduct that address violent, degrading or pornographic materials concerning women in the media, including advertising. The national governments and the international organisations have to play a role here. They should encourage the media to refrain from presenting women as inferior beings and exploiting them as sexual objects and present them as creative human beings.

HariPriya, M. (2005) states that liberalisation and privatisation have definitely invaded the today's consumer market in India. Our urban India is slowly transforming into a western society. The concept of global village and information revolution has led the markets to target the world with one message. The writer also says that in this process, western culture is being imbibed into our veins. The advertisers have not succeeded in the just and true portrayal of women. There is surely a renaissance going on for the Indian women. But this renaissance is not being captured correctly by the advertisers. There is a need to voice out for a change in advertising content.

Women have been exploited by the advertisers for decades. They have frequently been stereotyped in the traditional roles or home maker, or have been projected as 'visual prop' to enhance the appeal of an advertisement. However, since the early 2000s, the frequency and the number of such demeaning and exploitative advertisements in the print and the electronic media have reduced (Jha, Jyotsna & Nigam Divya: 2007). Here the writer writes that since the advertising agencies in India are male dominated, the tendency to portray women in traditional roles, or in superhuman roles where they manage the home and the job, has been inherent in the content of Indian advertising.

In her seminar paper Shellat. M (1994) describes how after the gain of independence in 1947, advertising in India was restricted mainly to the print media since television reached the country only in the late 1960s. According to her study, the print advertisements of the 1950s and 1960s portrayed men as breadwinners of the family,

decision makers and professionals while women were portrayed as being inordinately concerned with their physical appearance and cooking meals to please their men and families.

Mallika Das (2002) in her study examined the portrayal of women and men in Indian magazine ads. Over 1,100 magazine ads from a wide range of magazines in 1987, 1990 and 1994 were examined. Results indicate that although the portrayals of women and men in Indian magazine ads have changed the period, they are still portrayed in stereotypical ways.

In this book the writer has accused the TV programmes being portraying women in derogatory manner, which has minimize the respect and dignity of women. He found that even though women were present in most of the TV programmes in significant numbers, their portrayals did not reflect the complexities of Indian women.

Women should be given the democratic space where she can talk about her problems. For this the media can be regarded as the best way through which they can transmit their voices and ideas to the mass. So, media should play a significant role to develop, as well as, empower women by focusing their problems and most importantly they should portray women as strong and superior instead of inferior and less respected. Because distance between the media and women not only deprives women of their right to information but keeps them in the dark (Prasad K.:2005). Discussing the modern issue of feminism the writer has opened a new angle to think about the equality, freedom or liberty of the women. She showed a great concern for the women's movement for the restoration of the feminine needs and necessities in the era of liberal economy.

In her seminar paper Ranu Tomar attempted to explore the struggle for transformation and bridging the gap between social identities of women and men. The relationship between media and women has a certain structure where women are trapped as an object. She also states that the role of women in media decision making is reflected in the poor representation of women issues and concerns.

Besides the advertisements, Cinema is also one of the most important and cheapest visual media of entertainment in contemporary India. Unfortunately, the commercial film industry, which is a purely profit based industry, cares little about the image of

women they portray to the public. Commercial films have followed a set pattern of female image portrayals wherein women are projected sacrificing themselves for the family and reaffirming values of self-effacement and devotion to the male head of the family. Women who opt for a less traditional life are portrayed in a negative light. Furthermore, these films vividly portray physical violence against women and hardly ever show women as being capable of thinking for themselves in a logical and rational manner.

Gokul Singh and Dissanayake (2004) quoting Richards (1995) mention three categories of sexual objectification of women in Indian cinema, the tribal costume which is used for cabaret dances, through which women's body particularly pelvic region and the other parts are shown, the wet saree and the behind the bush scene. In the film *Hum Apke Hain Kaun* (1995), the leading female actress wore a deep cut blouse, indicating the scopophilic nature of the camera. In another popular Indian cinema *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) actress Kajol enacting the modern version of the wet saree sequence, wearing not the saree but a more revealing white costume. In this film the female character comes from such a conservative Indian family that she fears to tell her father that she has fallen in love with someone. Given that conservative context, it seems unlikely that such a character would be dancing in the rain.

In their study of the mistreatment of women in commercial Hindi films, Dasgupta and Hegde examined a sample of thirty movies. After examining the movies the researchers concluded that the mistreatment of women in Hindi films is a mechanism which reinforces and perpetuates the patriarchal order of Indian society.

Television is also one of the most popular electronic media in India. In the television programmes women are basically seen as performing the decorative functions as marginal to national growth and development. Another important aspect of television programming is that large chunks of the entertainment programmes are drawn from commercial film content. A crucial implication of this phenomenon is that as in commercial films, women on television entertainment programmes are projected as non-thinking, sacrificing and suffering beings while educated and motivated women are seen as the scourge of the patriarchal order of society.

TV serials are depicting women and young females as involved in conspiracy, pre-marital, extra-marital, post illicit affairs, wearing costly, heavy golden, and diamond jewellery, perpetuating their religious fundamentalism, spending time in family feuds, suicidal love affairs, mega parties, palatial houses, luxury cars, sleek mobiles, elegant make-ups, little care about anything else than the individual matters, and at all mob even a word about the outside world.

As in the case of television, Desai and Patel state that the majority of the radio entertainment programmes in India are borrowed from commercial films. As far as typical women's programmes on radio are concerned, on an average, 60% of program time is devoted to entertainment only. 20% is given for educational programmes, and 20% is used for imparting information. Women are portrayed as gossip-mongers, and they are given advices on how to become a good wife, a good mother and improve their physical appearance. They are also given elaborate instructions on how to cook, sew knit etc.

The print media in India (when compared to electronic media) have limited impact on the vast and mainly illiterate population of the country. The majority of the population has depended on the oral tradition of cultural transmission for over two hundred years. It has been seen in the newspapers that these give place to the news related to rape, crime, politics, scandals, sports and economics; serious debates and discussions on issues related to women are completely missing. In vernacular press the depiction of women gets a share only in colored pages where there is a lot of gossip about actress of TV serials and film stars along with some hot pick-ups. The English press also dwells upon providing snaps of the hot babes and erotic photo gallery of party mania in multistar hotels.

Magazines, as well as, newspapers have sections for females where the readers are left only with the option of reading some personal gynaecological problems of married women or personal love hick-ups of young girls, otherwise special features on knitting, fashion, sales etc. are the routine one.

As a result, most of the feminist writers have come forward to study about the present status of women in media. And the necessity of feminist approach to the media is being acknowledged everywhere today. The world-wide Feminist Movement has pointed out that the portrayal and employment of women in media are in a most

derogatory position. In the middle of the twentieth century, Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* was published and she clearly established that the problems and the poor image of women arose from the affirmation of the past and a gross neglect of the growth, development, the talents and opportunities of women in specific societies. Her work is a classical expose and a foundation for an intellectual defense of women and their rights to a different experience (Busby; 1975, 107-131). Betty Frieden's research about the construction of the American cultural ideal of "the happy housewife heroine" in women's magazines and advertisements is a typical example of feminist academic venture related to media. Her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) was a best seller and gave rise to a revival of women's movement which had been dormant since the successful struggle for women's suffrage. Betty Frieden also headed one of the first 'second wave' feminist groups 'National Organisation of Women' which declared the media to be one of the major fields of struggle for women's rights. The group demanded better placement of women in media, child care centre and journals by women. A research project was launched in entire US to monitor TV networks and local stations for sexist content.

According to Raja Rao one of the biggest obstacles to women's access, participation and control of the media is the patriarchal structure of societies where men continue to see women as subordinate to them. Patriarchal attitudes of governments and media are manifest in their being predominantly male institutions which tend to view women as an undifferentiated mass of low status of society. Gender biases and gender-based discriminations therefore result in stereotyped attitudes, sexual harassment, pay inequities, discriminatory treatment in assignments and promotions, traditional gender hierarchies, including a premium on family responsibilities, lack of support mechanisms for working women and low education that deter women from joining the media or assume decision-making positions.

1.5.3 Media and Social Change

A paper published by Centre for good governance (2006) on "The Right to Information Act, 2005-A Guide for Media" states that media being revered as the Fourth pillar of a Democracy has really been versed with the potential to bring in social change: it's been the public sphere worthy of to continue the constructive criticism and make intellectual recommendation on the specific topic regarding

welfare of the society. Empowerment, social awareness and good governance are the three key areas where in media can prove beneficial and help in the upliftment of the people. It also states that media can make a real difference to the lives of poor and disadvantaged people in the following ways:

- Making people more aware of their rights and entitlements
- Enabling people to have access to government programmes, schemes and benefits;
- Making people more aware of political issues and options and helping to stimulate debate;
- Educating the public on social, economic and environmental issues;
- Drawing attention to institutional failings – corruption, fraud, waste, inefficiency, cronyism, nepotism, abuse of power and the like;
- Fostering exchange of best practices, knowledge resources, access to better technology, and to better choices
- Creating pressure for improved government performance, accountability and quality, for example in service delivery; and
- Providing a discursive space for citizens to dialogue with other actors in the governance process.

McQuail (1994) in *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction* explains that social change can also be brought into a society when there is a medium for having the flow of information in both directions at large. Regarding this he emphasizes on greater mass participation and awareness among themselves for being well informed in everything which are useful for the democratic development of the society in consistent with the humanitarian perspective. Media can provide that model in a community through interaction between the government and public, thereby generating greater participation and awareness. Thus participation and interaction are key concepts which can be achieved through media.

According to Klapper (1960), the mass media play a vital role in disseminating information, conducting propaganda, educating, enhancing and enlightening people, strengthening national integration and accelerating social development. The communication media are potent instruments of social change, contributing substantially to national development. When we talk of national development, we

mean of women and men, and we talk of women development and the media role in their development, we have to identify the two dimensions of the term “development”. Firstly, it is the development of women and the role of the mass media in this process. Secondly, it is the development of the society and the nation through the development of its women.

The role of the media in development of women is twofold—

- a) Development through exposure to media by way of programs and printed material. This is a consumer-oriented function, and by the consumer, we mean women.
- b) Development through the active the participation of women in the production of media messages by participating in the decision-making process regarding program content, policies and the projection of a balanced image of women.

Enzenberger (1976) in his article titled “Constitutions of a Theory of the Media”, and in “In Raids and Reconstructions: Essays on Politics, Crime and Culture” has proposed the role of a political emancipator for the media which is characterized by – 1) Interactivity between audiences and creators, 2) Collective production and 3) A concern with everyday life and ordinary needs of people. That media effect on the audience, through the contents of the same, cannot be ignored, so media should be the agent of emancipation of the society out of the inhumane activities.

Mernit (2009) in his paper on — “Using social media for social change” describes that in this digital age where social media are making well established network over audience by leaps and bounds, there should be the role of media as the active agent of the social change. There are social networking sites which effectively follow issues in society and generate people’s opinion. Net-enabled social tools have enabled new models for grassroots activism and community building, and they have changed how we function in society — how we communicate globally and locally, how we form ties and how we organize and connect. These web based tools have actually given voice to people to share, create, rate, and search for information.

Downie and Shudson (2009) in their article on “The Reconstruction of American Journalism” explains that newspapers, the country’s chief source of independent reporting and unflinching also, are shrinking – literally, ‘with fewer journalists

reporting less news in fewer pages'. The situation and prospects of broadcast television, which still commands a big audience across the world and remains the world's premier advertising medium, do not seem much brighter towards the bridging the gap between the reality and fantasy.

Parceiro (1999) in his article on "The Role of Media in Democracy: A Strategic Approach" explains that in informing the citizens about the developments in the society and helping them to make informed choices, media make democracy to function in its true spirit. It also keeps the elected representatives accountable to those who elected them by highlighting whether they have fulfilled their wishes for which they were elected and whether they have stuck to their oaths of office. Media to operate in an ideal democratic framework needs to be free from governmental and private control. It needs to have complete editorial independence to pursue public interests. There is also the necessity to create platforms for diverse mediums and credible voices for democracy to thrive.

Barnett (2004) in the book named *Media, Democracy and Representation: Disembodying the public* and specially in the article entitled "Spaces of Democracy: Geographical Perspectives on Citizenship, Participation and Representation" says that Democracy provides the space for alternative ideas to debate and arrive at conclusions for the betterment of society. The publicly agreed norms are weighed over that of actions on the part of economic organizations and political institutions (Barnett: 2004).

1.5.4 Women Issues and Media

Prof. Uma Joshi, Dr. Anjali Pahad and Ms Avani Maniar in "Images of Women in Print Media—A Research Inquiry" focus on the media's role towards the change of society and especially for the current situation of women in the society and the media, as well. Regarding participation and representation of women in media the researchers found that women journalist are very few in numbers in media houses and regarding portrayal they said, "Indian women as portrayed in the print media is not adequate and not without its set of cultural biases. And even after the strides that women journalists in India, have made, much remains to be achieved. It is reassuring that it is not a depressing scenario any more. The cultural biases in media in general will take time to completely vanish."(Joshi et al.: 2006)

In the study they suggested to give space to write about women's political, social, economic powerlessness in media and propose media to adopt transformational steps towards the oppressions and suppressions on women.

Dr. Vandana Nautiyal and Jitendra Dabral (2012) in "Women's Issues in Newspapers of Uttarakhand" focused on the coverage of women's issues in two popular Hindi newspapers with largest circulation in Uttarakhand *Amar Ujala*, and *Dainik Jagran*. The analysis was made on the items like equality, health, education, sexual harassment, violence, police atrocities and crime against women covered by both the newspaper as articles, news stories, analysis, editorials, letters to the editor, column. The study shows that newspapers give a little bit space to women's issues in fact less than one percent. The findings show that news items are covered by both the newspapers while women's issue was given less attention in Analysis, Editorials, Columns and Articles. The researchers also find that women's issue got least preference in the editorial selection. The data shows that newspapers do not project a balanced picture of women's lives in real world. The researcher recommended more studies regarding the "participation, portrayal and access of women to the media and its impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women should be carried out.

Venkataraman (2002) conducted a study entitled 'Women in Print—the change over the last half century' in reporting on women and gender issues by Indian newspapers. The study was conducted on a random selection of 84 national and region-specific newspapers over three time periods; the early fifties, the mid-seventies and the period from 2000 to 2001. Both news material and features were included in the study. The result shows that women make page one news mostly as victims, for example when murder or rape is committed. Women politicians are the second largest category. The findings of the study also show that women get rare coverage on business and edit pages. The study shows that out of the stories appeared on the front page in 2001-2002, only 6.9% mentioned women. He writes, "Page one in Indian newspapers is still a male preserve. Women make front page news mostly as victims".

Dasgupta (1976) in her study of women's issues in four English dailies published in New Delhi in 1975, observed that women's issues received no attention in the six subject categories: social, economic, political, art and culture, biographical and other

issues. However the study did not elaborate on the methodology adopted for the study.

Sudeep paul (2011) points that in the world of media in which the women reporters are subjected to danger and difficulties. His book is a collection of articles from eminent writers and gives detailed report on national seminar on the said topic. The primary focus includes a) representation of women in media and b) portrayal of women and coverage of issues/events concerning women. It highlights issues on the women's access to media how they are related to the media, their right to information and communication, analysis and how they disseminate their perception through the knowledge, opinion and perspectives through the organization. Finally, the laws and policies e.g. (The Broadcast Bill, content code) in relation to media and communications give least important to women issues even the age of ICTs or the media and even in macro level media developments (e.g. media globalization) the coverage women's issues is still far less.

Ankur (2008) who is a freelance journalist by profession carried out a study to analyze news space given to the women and children issues with Urdu, Hindi and English newspapers from Patna for a period of one month. And the study shows that the space allotted by the Urdu newspapers on women and children is more than Hindi and English give. The Urdu daily newspaper *Rozana Rastriya Sahara* gave 20% of the news space to the coverage of women and children issues. It is followed by the Hindi daily *Hindustan. Quami Tanzum*, a Urdu newspaper gave 9% of the space to the issue. The Hindi newspaper like *Rashtriya Sahara* allotted 13%, *Dainik Jagran* allotted 9%, *Prabhat Khabar* 8%, *Aaj* 8% and the lowest coverage is in next 6%. Regarding the coverage of English dailies *The Times of India* covered 9% and *Hindustan Times* 7%. Ankur tallied his numbers and the figures were found after monitoring various newspapers for a month that women's and children's issues are less covered.

Bhatnagar made a study on women's issues taking four English dailies publishes in New Delhi in 1987. What he found indicated the powerlessness and secondary position of women in the Indian society. He found that only 280 (1%) items in the sample exactly published on the problems and welfare activities about women.

Important items like women's education, right and wage rates of women workers lacked adequate coverage in any newspapers undertaken for study.

Dasgupta (1976), in her study of women's issues in four English dailies published in New Delhi in 1975, observed that women's issues received no attention in the six subject categories social, economic, political, art and culture, biographical and other issues. However, the study did not elaborate the methodology adopted for the study.

Sharma (2005) in his article "Women in Indian media studies: The case of introspection for media planners" mentions the study made by Bahuguna which shows that studies related development got less than 9% while the sensational stories related to crime got between 52% and 63% of items in newspaper (Nitin Jugran Bahuguna). A study of four English dailies in India showed that women's issues accounted to nearly 2% (Bahuguna).

Mohammed (2009) carried out a study on both the print media and electronic media. Analysis of over 2000 newspapers from June 2007 to Sep 2009 was selected for the study and news channels like, NCN, Capital News, VCT Evening News and Prime news were taken. The findings reveal that Guyanese women and children together accounted for 2.9% of the total coverage. Woman's issues were covered five times more in newspapers and 3.5 times more on television compared to children's issues. Newspapers like the Guyana time more women's issue followed by Star brock News and The Chronicle in 2008.

A study by Parismita Borah employs three methods to understand media content. Initial part of the study examines the 'peak periods' to ascertain the pattern of coverage. Second, 4058 articles were used for the study to examine the prominent frames employed by newspapers. Third, the interview of the journalist from the same newspaper to study the factors that influence the way these frames were created in the first place. Results show that, in general, the motive of this coverage is marketability of the stories. This inference is implied by the overall coverage as well as the responses of journalists.

1.5.5 Assamese Media and Women

P. Datta (2015) in his 'Representation of Masculinity in Assamese Movies', dilated the role of Assamese Media towards the construction of images of both men and

women. In his analysis, he pointed out the Assamese media's attitude towards men and masculinity, in which while men or the male characters are shown as heroes who can fight against the villains just like one man army, women are shown in certain stereotypes as fit for the domestic works and look after the family matters.

Satyabrat Prasad Saikia (2015) in his article titled "Stereotypical Representation of Women in Assamese Popular VCD Films with Special Reference to *Jonbaai*" examining the role of the Assamese Media towards women, found that the recent version of Assamese film, the VCD films, trying to commercialize the industry and to have profits, use women's body and attribute certain stereotyped qualities to be called women as the property of the men and as the server of the visual pleasure to satisfy the male gaze.

Thakuria (2005) in his 'A Media Minority - Women Journalists in Assam' discusses about the status and position of women journalist in Assamese Media. He said that despite the Assamese media are in boom but numbers of women journalist are still minority in terms of employment. Besides, women journalists are even not in a position to get higher post to have share in the decision-making. Moreover, he highlighted the role of Assamese media's negative concern about addressing the women issues and negative portrayals of women in media contents both Print and Visual.

Dr. J. Chakravarti, Muktikam Hazarika & A. Goswami (2015) in 'Engendering Media Participation: The Case of Women Journalists in Assam' highlighting the status and position of women journalist in Assam says that journalism as a profession and a field to be participated is still a field of Patriarchy. Low wages, unfair labour practices, sexual harassment have been the story of women journalist in Assam over the years.

Garima Kalita & Monoj Borpujari in 'Perspective of Cinema of Assam' observes that in contrast to women, the depiction of men and men's lives have been given prominence in Assamese cinema. The male protagonists are shown as having the strong footing in the family, as well as, in society due to their responsibility towards both as men have the great social prominence in the Assamese society. They are shown as strong in terms of physicality and dialogue.

1.5.6 Women in Indian Society

The famous Indian feminist writer Uma Chakrabarti, in her work *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens* has discussed about the causes of subordination of the women section in terms of the caste and gender. According to her, the relationship existed between these two have shaped the life and environment for women. In this regard, the writer has referred to the name of Gerda Lerner whose exploration regarding gender stratification over early Mesopotamian society where she finds that women of that period from different class had enjoyed economic independence. Giving historicity to the evolutionary process of caste and class Uma Chakrabarti discusses about pre-Manu society and social formations.

Tahira Basharat (2009) in her 'The Contemporary Hindu Women of India: An Overview' observe that the dichotomy between "private" and "public" sphere, being imposed by the religious practices in India, project Indian women to be the spiritual being, confined in the household and protector of spiritual domain and "*Ghar*", the home. Regarding the subordinate position of Indian women, she conceptualizes the state of being oppressed into different concepts: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence.

Geeta V. (2009) in her work *Theorizing Feminism* observes that not only the religious scriptures, but even science assesses women to be inferior to men. Sometimes, it is said that women are devoid of all qualities of decision making. The power system is centered in the hands of the male sexuality. In India, basically, the religious taboos, caste system, and the patriarchal social system have made the environment muddled for the women section. These systems have diminished the possibility for women to become empowered and developed.

Thus, it can be said that there is an on-going trend in Indian Media to portray women as busy and concerned with beautifying herself, choosing make-up, new fashions, jewellery, cosmetics, constantly watching her weight, worried about good figure and skin colour, proud of advertising and selling latest products. She is hardly portrayed as having social commitments, capable of intelligent decision making, or as capable leaders and policy makers. Usually, she is shown to accompany her husband like a shadow or as a decorative piece. In media contents, she is tactfully domesticated, and sanction her place in 'home and hearth' by unwritten codes of society. Everything

around her is arranged in such a way that she can't let herself loose. Women who break this unwritten code and re-arrange their day are considered feminists or rebels. Media is playing their role perfectly to preserve the societal concepts. As a result, most of the mediated women are "weak, passive, needy and subservient, or vain, irrational and hot-headed. But the question is how to turn the media into an effective tool for promoting constructive change and faithfully representing the multiple roles of the women today---as achiever both at home and in the labour force.

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It's an important task in a Research Work to relate some theories to get the solutions of a particular problem as there are different approaches and perceptions available to observe and evaluate the problems. In this present study, to analyse the media's portrayal of women several theories were employed.

1.6.1 Feminist Theory

Feminism seeks to explain how women find their own power in a world filled with social stereotypes and stigmas. It seeks to expose, not to perpetuate, patriarchal practices (p. 39). It is about fighting for equal rights for women as a distinct social group, equal to men in every way (Chad Brewer: 2005). In this particular study, it was applied firstly, to theorise media's portrayal of women and to find the major stereotypes being implicated in the media contents and secondly, to examine the status and position of women in society.

"Identifying male sadism, especially toward women, and holding men at least theoretically culpable for such acts as rape, wife beating, and child abuse are major achievements of modern feminism" (Clover, 1992, p. 226). Because of the women's rights movement, Feminists argue that female portrayals in the media should change. King (2007) argues, "As women assume authorial control and industrial power, and as audiences demand new images in old-fashioned genres, the representation of women should continue to change" (p. 2). Before the representations can change, it is first important to understand these representations of women, what they mean, and to understand where they fit into scholarly theory (ibid). According to Tuchman, the media performs two simultaneous works, first enshrining and reflecting dominant societal values and then acting as a means of socialization. Therefore, media images are regarded as 'a version of reality that is culturally determined' (Jewkes 2012:37). It

is a site where ‘cultural understanding about women are reflected, created, transformed and publicized’ (Hirsch 1994:1027).

As a system of gender ideology, the media reflects masculine understandings of the world, and in turn legitimates the “natural” authority of men and subordination of women (Daly & Chesney-Lind 1988; Flavin 2004; Humphries 2009). Constructions of gender thus reinforce the socialization of ‘dichotomized and hierarchal sex-role stereotypes’ (Carter and Steiner 2004:2). The general categories identified in the construction of gender dichotomies include powerlessness and passivity against authority and power, with the former associated with women and the latter with men (Van Zoonen 1994).

Feminist media theorists argue that the media provides a space to ‘construct hegemonic definitions of what should be accepted as “reality”’ (ibid.). This, in turn, supports the two interlocking systems of patriarchy and capitalism.

The Indian media appropriate the cultural norms that relegate women to the private sphere, which performs a secondary socialization by reinforcing typically female roles (Smart and Smart 1978:2). Although previous blatant sexism has dissipated in Indian media, this has evolved into subtle distortions due to the media’s patriarchal structure (Joseph and Sharma 2006:42). Coverage reinforces these socially appropriated roles.

1.6.2 Marxism

The Marxist Theory was employed, basically to theorise the status and position of women. It was employed with a view to examine the status and position, oppressions and suffering of women out of the pressures of different socio-cultural, economic institutions, such as, Family, Marriage, Patriarchy, Capitalism, Productivity, Caste and Class etc. Marxism and Feminism are the theories of power and its distribution: inequality. They provide accounts of how social arrangements of patterned disparity can be internally rational yet unjust though their specificity is not identical.

1.6.3 Stereotype Theory

The Stereotype Theory was employed in this particular study to analyse the stereotypes being showed in both the Print and Visual Media. The term, “Stereotype” was first used by Walter Lippmann in 1922 to mean an image that presents in everybody’s mind about a specific topic. According to him, such images differentiate the social groups from one another on the basis of traits that are attributed on a group

and thus those images become perpetuated in a particular society. This means that the dominant group tends to label traits or characteristics of another group, that stand out as unique, as stereotypic of a particular group. Similarly, there are different stereotypes attached to both men and women and they are judged by those stereotypes which are perpetuated by different socio-cultural institutions. In this regard Kanhara observes, in every society, stereotypes become comfortable and easy ways for those in the majority to refer to those in the minority. They are unrealistic at times, but they are also unreliable generalizations that give rise to negative feelings and associations of negative qualities with certain groups. For this reason, prejudice often finds its way into society through stereotypes (Kanhara, 2006).

So, Media, as one of the influential socio-cultural organisations, cannot be out of the purview of examination in regard to the portrayals of women. Researchers believe that understanding media stereotypes is important because stereotypes lead to discrimination among the sexes. They hope that their research will provide information that will help minimize public evaluations based on misinterpretations by the media.

1.6.4 Intersectionality

This approach was basically applied to examine the interconnected between the gender and caste in Indian society. Gender based discrimination is one of the burning issues in India that needs to be addressed commonly across boundaries, and various disciplines. In this regard, one cannot ignore the role of Media in the communication of women's problems. Gender and caste inequalities are deeply rooted in Indian society and culture in where women have to be deprived from enjoying a dignified life with proper respects and be empowered. It should be noted that, apart from gender discrimination many factors like caste, sexual orientation, ancestry, socio-economic class, religion, and geographic location play an important role in determining the social position of women in India.

1.7 RESEARCH GAP

From the review of the existing literature on women and media, it may be stated that significant contributions have been made by scholars in the study of participation, portrayal of women in media in the world and in India, as well. The books and articles cover practically all the aspects of Indian women and media in general. Besides these,

the studies that have been conducted on the media's role towards portrayal of women tend to highlight their status in Indian media. But, when the researcher of this study was reviewing the literature she discovered that most of the works were done by men. So, it is quite questionable that how the sufferings and pains of women can come out as reality through the writings of men?

It should be mentioned here that the researcher finds a wide gap in the field of Assamese Media's role towards the portrayals of women. During the review of existing literature on Assamese Media and its role towards role women the researcher finds that—

1. There are some writings on Assamese media's role towards the construction of Assamese society, media's role in Indian Freedom struggle but there is a lack in the field of Assamese media's attitude towards women and portrayals.
2. Very few articles were found on women and media, but no article on portrayals of women through feminist perspective.
3. During the collection of data of the print media, basically, it was seen that most of the articles on women issues were written by the male writer. So, it can be assumed that the sufferings of women in a patriarchal society might not be the expression of the real picture of women's position in the society in those articles mostly because the editorials are written by men and the editors are men themselves.

Dolly Phukan in her article "Gender Sensitisation: A Critical Analysis of the Role of Media" tried to explore the role of Assamese media towards women in general, but is not based on facts. In the article "A Media Minority" Nava Thakuria mentions that the burning problem in the context of today is the insensitivity of media coverage of the sensitive women's issues. How credible and factual is the presentation of news is? The recent incident of the molestation of a girl in the heart of the city (covered later) throws light on the unethical reportage by the media practitioners. The most astonishing part of the incident was that the entire episode was shot by a cameraperson of Assam's a leading channel News Live and the incident was telecast within half an hour as the so called 'breaking news' (Nava Thakuria, 2005: Media Minority). But, through the article the writer could not emit the reality of the whole

media activities towards women. So, the researcher, attempting to fill the gap to some extent, has made this study.

1.8 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The present study entitled ‘Portrayal of Women in Assamese Print and Visual Media (2000-2002): A Feminist Perspective’ is unique in its kind. The researcher empirically analysed the data to find how women were portrayed in the selected Assamese Print and Visual Media and to find how much space was rendered to the women’s issues, what type of issues were given more coverage and through those issues how women are portrayed. Regarding the films, the scenes devoted to women and women character were analyzed empirically by the researcher.

1.9 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are----

1. To analyse the Feminist understanding on media.
2. To critically analyse Media’s role in constructing the images of women.
3. To analyse the Assamese Media’s role towards women.

1.10 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions of the present study are:

1. What is the Feminist stand on media?
2. What role do the Media play in constructing images of women?
3. What kind of role is played by the Assamese Media in constructing images of women?

1.11 CONCEPTS AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Modern Mass Media: Modern mass media refers to the following forms of mass communication:

1. Print form of communication- newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, books, novels, etc.
2. Broadcasting media- radio, public address systems such as amplifiers, loudspeakers etc.

3. Audio-visual media: television, cinema and video shows, etc.
4. Multimedia: computer based media such as VCD players, DVD players, internet etc.

Socio-cultural values: Socio-cultural values consists two components-social structure and cultural life.

Social structure is a term refers to the basic institutions of the society such as family, marriage, kinship, economy, political system and forums of social stratification.

Cultural life is a term refers to the cultural activities such as religious life (worship of the gods and goddesses, rituals of life cycles), festivals and fairs, religion in crisis situations (worship of deities of specific diseases.)

Gender: Gender is a concept which defines social orders of a person as opposite to his/her biological sex. Gender presents a social role status, which defines social opportunities in education, professional sphere and access to power, family roles, and reproductive behaviour.

Gender Role is a type of social role, a set of expected patterns of behaviour (or norms) for women and men. Gender role is understood as execution of certain social prescriptions, i.e. corresponding behaviour to a certain gender expressed by speech, manners, cloths, gestures, etc.

Gender Equity is a process of development of a just attitude toward and treatment of women and men. To provide justice, criteria have to be developed to compensate historical and social obstacles, which hamper men and women to exist under equal conditions. Justice leads to equal rights.

Gender stereotypes are common concepts (beliefs) formed in culture about how actual men and women behave. The term should not be confused with the concept of “gender role” which means a set of expected behaviour patterns (or norms) for women and men. The appearance of gender stereotypes is result of historical construction of a gender relations model where gender differences were situated above individual, qualitative differences of personality of man and woman.

Masculinity presents a system of attitudes, characteristics of behaviour, opportunities possibilities and expectations, which determine social practice of a group unified by

the category of male gender. In other words, masculinity is that which is added to anatomy to obtain a men's role.

Sexism is an ideology and practice of discrimination against people on the basis of their gender. It is based on sets and beliefs according to which women (or men) are falsely prescribed (or denied) certain qualities.

Gender differentiation is defined as a process within which biological differences between men and women are given a social meaning and used as means of social classification.

Feminism is a theory and practice of gender equity/equality developed on the basis of women's movements for emancipation. Often it is interpreted more broadly as various activities directed to protect women's rights based on ideas about legal gender equality. Feminism appeared as an acknowledgement of the fact that there is injustice in social evaluation of women.

Mass communication: the term communication is derived from the Latin word 'Communis' which means common. In social situation the word communication is used to denote the act of imparting, conveying or exchanging ideas through speech, writing or sign. It is also an expression of transferring thoughts.

According to Mcquail (1969), "Communication is a process which increases commonality, according to him interaction, interchange and sharing of ideas through signs and sound."

According to American political Scientist Harold D. Lasswell (1948), the convenient way of describing any act of communication is to answer the following questions who? (Communication), says what? (Message), in what channel? (Medium), to whom? (Receiver), with what effect (Effect). This is the process of communication the essential elements are communicator, message, medium, receiver and effect.

1.12 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.12.1 Research Design

The present study is Analytical in nature. An Analytical Method is that where a researcher has to use facts or information which are already available, and analyse

these to make a critical evaluation of the materials. In the present study the available data on both the Assamese print and visual media were being critically analysed from the period between 2000 and 2002. As this study is all about the analysis of the contents of the newspapers, magazines or different films, the technique of Content Analysis has been used. Kerlinger (1986) defined Content Analysis as a method of studying and analysing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.

1.12.2 Period of study and the logic behind its selection

After the economic reformation of 90's, the Indian economy had grown at more than 6% on the average during the period 1990-2004 (Agarwal: 2008). A salient revolution has been taking place in the Indian press—a revolution during the course of which two century old dominance of the English press has been overcome by the Indian language press in terms of both the numbers of newspapers and their combined circulation. India's overall employment growth also has considerably increased from 1% per annum to nearly 3% and industrial employment growth increased from 2.9 % to 4.2%, between 1993-94 to 1999-2000 and 1999-2000 to 2004-05 (Unni & Raveendran: 2006 and 2007). Keeping in mind these entire phenomena the researcher selected the period of 2000-2002 for exploring what type of role was played by the Assamese media towards women as liberalisation had exerted such impacts on Assamese media from where a new era was started in Assamese Media Industry. In the period between 2000 and 2002, *Dainik Agradoot* and *Asomiya Pratidin* had got place in the list of the top regional language dailies.

Table 1.1

Top Regional Language Dailies, 2000-2002	
Bihar (Hindi)	Assam (Assamese)
Hindustan	Asomiya Pratidin
Aj	Amor Asom
Dainik Jagran	Dainik Agradoot
Prabhat Khabar	Dainik Janambhumi

Source: Media Trends⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Media Trends: Indian Media Industry News (2002, January, 3). Retrieved from http://www.mediawareonline.com/newsletter/nl_print.htm on 23.09.2016.

From this period the popularity of Assamese newspapers and magazines came and people in large numbers came forward to read these. *Bismoy* and *Asomiya Maya* are the leading entertainment magazines of Assam since 4 decades.

Regarding Film Industry, it should be mentioned that the period selected for the study can be termed as the golden age for Assamese film industry. Till the 1990's there were about 350 cinema halls and 100 plus touring centers which used to showcase movies in Tea Gardens, villages and remote areas. Till 2003, there were about 240 registered cinema halls. But today there are only 49 cinema halls in good condition and with satellite connection⁷⁹.

1.12.3 The Universe and the Population

The local Assamese newspapers, magazines and films from the period of 2000 to 2002 had been chosen by using the Purposive method of sampling for the study. This period of time had been chosen because in this period Assamese Print and visual media was in its highest pick, from where a new era was started for Assamese mass media. The selected newspapers, magazines and films taken for Content Analysis are as follows—

PERIOD: 2000-2002		
Newspapers (Daily)	Magazines (Monthly)	Films
Dainik Agradoot (Guwahati Edition)	Bismoi	Tumi Mur Mathu Mur (2000)
Asomiya Pratidin (Guwahati Edition)	Asomiya Maya	Kanyadaan(2002)

The Editorial pages of the respective newspapers had been taken for the analysis. These two newspapers are the most popular newspapers among others in this period of time. In the analysis of these magazines focus was specifically given on the women centric items and issues concerning women. In the analysis of these two films focus was given on women characters and scenes devoted to them.

⁷⁹ Deka, Girin & Das, Sailendra (n.d). Assamese film industry: growth, challenges and future prospects. Retrieved from <http://www.dimorianreview.com/2015/07/assamese-film-industry-growth.html> on 25.07.2016.

Both the Primary and Secondary sources had been used in gathering data for the study.

1.12.4 The basis of the selection of the print and visual media

The rationale behind the selection of two Newspapers namely, 1. *Asomiya Pratidin* and 2. *Dainik Agradoot* and two Magazines –1. *Bismoy* and 2. *Asomiya Maya* was that, their readership is confined to all over Assam and they represent all the people of Assam living in the urban and the rural areas and they are the most popular among the readers of all ages. Regarding the Visual media the researcher selects the movies- 1. *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur* and 2. *Kanyadaan* because these were the two most popular and most seen films by the people of Assam of all ages of that period between 2000 and 2002.

Table 1.2: List of super hit Assamese Films in the period 2000-2002⁸⁰

SL NO.	TITLE	YEAR
1	Hiya Diya Niya	2000
2	Dag	2001
3	Nayak	2001
4	Kanyadaan	2002
5	Gun GunGane Gane	2002

Table 1.3: Popular Love-centric movies of the 2000-2002⁸¹

SL NO.	TITLE	YEAR
1	Hiya Diya Niya	2000
2	TumiMur MathuMur	2000
3	Ai Morom Tumar Babea	2001
4	I Love You	2001
5	Prem Aru Prem	2002
6	Jonaki Mon	2002

1.12.5 Sampling Technique

The Sampling Technique adopted for the present study was Purposive Sampling. Purposive Sampling is also known as Judgmental Sampling or Relevance Sampling. The motive behind the selection of Purposive Sampling was that the researcher chose the types of samples in accordance with his/her views or judgment on the

⁸⁰ Deka Girin & Das Sailendra (n.d). Assamese Film Industry: Growth, Challenges and Future Prospects. Retrieved from <http://www.dimorianreview.com/2015/07/assamese-film-industry-growth.html> on 25.09.2016.

⁸¹ Ibid.

characteristics of the sample relevant to the research topic and which are easily accessible to him/her. The variables were given importance in the universe according to the prior judgment of the researcher.

1.12.6 The Sample Size

Firstly, the selected newspapers of Guwahati editions from 1st January, 2000 to 31st December, 2002 comprise the universe. The editorial pages of both the newspapers are selected for the study. The total number of the newspapers is 2194 ($365 \times 6 = 2190$), but due to some special occasions such as Durga Puja, Bihu, Independence Day etc. 36 newspapers were not published, so the sample size is $2190 - 36 = 2154$. Thus, the study of newspapers is consisted of total 2194 copies. Regarding the magazines, there are 72 (36×2) copies of magazines have been taken for the study. Regarding the visual media all the scenes i.e. $130 + 128 = 258$ have been taken for the study.

1.12.7 Units of analysis

Regarding the newspapers selected for the study period of 2000-2002, the units of analysis were the editorials and articles published in the Editorial page. Among the magazines, focus was being given on women-centric news items and issues, articles and stories concerning women. In the analysis of the films, the units of the study were the women characters and the scenes devoted to them.

1.13 RESEARCH TOOLS

Keeping in mind the analytical nature of the research topic content analysis was applied to investigate the portrayal of women through the coverage of women issues in the selected media contents. It is seen that the primary objective of the content analysis is accumulating the quantitative data that highlight the qualitative aspect of the coverage. The researcher had employed this technique in the study because frequencies or facts can be used as indicator of phenomenon (Krippendorff: 1980).

1.13.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a methodology that is most widely used as research tool in media research. The researchers examine the artifacts of social communication and understand social reality in a subjective and scientific way. Berelson (1952) says content analysis is a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative

description of the manifest content of communication”. According to Holsti (1968) Content Analysis is, “any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying special characteristics of messages”. It helps in making valid, replicable and objective inferences about the matter under study on the basis of explicit rules. The researcher has employed this technique in this study because frequencies or facts can be used as indicator of phenomenon (Krippendorff:1980). According to Abraham (1983), “Content Analysis can be fruitfully employed to examine virtually any type of communications”. Therefore, it may focus on any of the two aspects of content analysis—quantitative or qualitative analysis. Quantitative content analysis is used widely in communication research as a method employed to count manifest of the textual elements. It is basically deductive in nature. Qualitative content analysis is developed to explore the meaning and examining the underlying messages of the topics and themes as well the inferences drawn from the data and is mainly inductive in nature.

In quantitative content analysis the data that are used for quantified analysis to ensure valid statistical inferences and the qualitative content analysis are purposefully selected text that addresses the research questions under investigation. Qualitative content analysis focuses on the uniqueness of the themes that conveys a range of meaning of a particular phenomenon rather than the statistical inference of the occurrence. Smith suggests that, “qualitative analysis deals with the forms and antecedent-consequent patterns of form, while quantitative analysis deals with duration and frequency of form” (Smith: 1975, p-218). The products of the two approaches are different as according to (Patton, 2002). Quantitative content analysis involves a process designed to mould the available data into categories or themes on the basis of significant inference. The categorization involves the researcher’s careful examination and constant comparison. Berg (2001) assessed that the qualitative content analysis researcher benefit from the concepts or variables of theory or previous studies in inferring the inception of data analysis.

In this study, the Quantitative variables are---

QUANTITATIVE VARIABLES

NEWSPAPERS

Extent in terms of total space measured in Column Centimetre
Total number of items on women issues
Total number of women issues

For Quantitative Analysis, the Articles and the Editorials of both the newspapers were divided into different categories to measure the women's issues through which women are portrayed, coverage of women issues and types of coverage. For Quantitative Analysis the issues of both the newspapers analysed with variables like 'Extent in terms of total space measured in Column Centimetre' and total number of items on women issues and total number of women issues. The items selected for analysis were differentiated under Articles and Editorials.

The themes/issues were the most important categories in the Coding schedule. The categorised women issues covered in the selected newspapers are given in the following table---

Sexual Harassment/ Rape
Dowry/Dowry Deaths
Women Empowerment
Women and Rights
Women and Laws
Women and Superstitions
Women Agitation
Violation on Women
Beauty Pageant
Women and Politics
Women and Education
Others

* The issue which was difficult to distinguish was placed under the others category

MAGAZINES

Total number of items on women
Coverage of women issues

Regarding analysis of magazines the items selected for analysis were differentiated under Articles, Editorials Women news items, and Stories related to Bollywood/Jollywood actors. For Quantitative Analysis, the Articles, the Editorials, news items related to women and stories related to Bollywood/ Jollywood of both the

magazines were divided into different categories to measure the coverage of women's issues through which women are portrayed, and types of coverage. For analysis variables like total number of items on women and total coverage of women issues were taken.

It has already been mentioned that the selection of themes/issues was the most important category in the Coding schedule. The categorised women issues covered in the selected Magazines are given in the following table---

Women and violence
Women Empowerment
Women and Entertainment
Women and Seduction
Women and Beauty
Women and crime
Women and Bollywood
Women and Jollywood
Others*

* The issue which was difficult to distinguish was placed under the others category.

Visual Media
Extent in terms of total time given to the film in time analysis
Total time given on the scenes of both male and female characters
Percentage of total no of the role of the women characters in the film
Types of costumes
Language/words used by the female characters
Economic status of women characters
Living style of women characters

Similarly in the Quantitative Analysis on the Visual media, the selected films were analysed with variables like—extent in terms of total time given to the film in time analysis', 'total time given on the scenes of both male and female characters', 'total number of the role of the women characters in the film' 'types of costumes', 'language/words used by the female characters', 'economic status of women characters' and 'living style of women characters'.

The Qualitative Variables are as follows----

QUALITATIVE VARIABLES

NEWSPAPER

The nature of the coverage of women issues
The nature of portrayal of women
Manner of expression

To analyse the nature of the coverage of women issues, as well as, portrayals of women the parameters were coded as---

Women as Victims
Women as Perpetrators
Women in Traditional Role
Women as Modern/independent
Women as Weak Politicians
Women as Strong Politicians
Women as Superior
Women as Inferior
Women-men equal
Women as Agitators
Others*

* The natures of coverage and the portrayals which was difficult to distinguish, was placed under the “others” category.

To analyse the manner of expression in portraying women as victims in different violence the parameters were coded as under---

Sympathetic
Myth-Laden
Judgemental
Non-judgmental

MAGAZINES

The nature of coverage of women issues
The nature of portrayals of women

Regarding magazines to analyse the nature of coverage and portrayals as well the parameters were coded as under---

Women as victims
Women as perpetrators
Women as traditional/submissive
Women as modern/independent
Women as objects of entertainment
Women as sensual seductive
Women as beauty conscious
Others*

*The natures of coverage and the portrayals which was difficult to distinguish, was placed under the “others” category.

VISUAL MEDIA

The nature of symbolism of non-virtue of women character (presence on screen)
The nature of personality virtues of women characters
The nature of relationship existed between women-women and women-men
The nature of portrayal of women character

To analyse the nature of symbolism of non-virtue of the women characters the coded parameters are shown in the following table----

Smoking
Drinking
Flirting
Sex before marriage
None

In the analysis of nature, personality and virtues of the women characters the coded parameters are---

Educated
Decision making
Love
Strong personality
Career oriented
Ritual followed
Not mentioned

In the analysis of the nature of relationship existed between women and women and women and men the coded parameters are as under—

Women and women		Women and Men	
Friendly/co-operative		Women are superior	
Enmity/Jealous		Men are superior	
others*			

* The natures which were difficult to distinguish, was placed under the “others” category.

To analyse the nature of portrayal of women characters the parameters were coded as under—

Women as victim
Women in traditional role
Women as sexy/seductive
Women as soft-hearted/ stereotyped
Women as decision maker
Others*

* The natures which were difficult to distinguish, was placed under the “others” category.

1.14 DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data for this particular study were analysed applying Quantitative and Qualitative methods. The analysis is prepared and organised using the MS Excel Tool.

1.15 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Though the researcher leaves no stone unturned to produce a resourceful work yet it cannot be said that the present work is out of limitations. Throughout the study the researcher has felt the scarcity of adequate literatures and resources on Assamese media, both Print and Visual, which might have been discussed through Feminist perspective. So, some the part of the Qualitative Analysis of data of both print and visual media are analysed in Indian and in global set up in particular.

Secondly, the present study is made to analyse the portrayal of women in the Assamese media, but further research might also expand this type of study to explore the societal impact of stereotyping women in media. An expanded version of this study might include a section of literature review about the Psychology and Cognitive effects that Assamese print and visual media have on the readers and the viewers or the audience.

1.16 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

As the present study is made on Assamese Print and Visual Media, the researcher has taken two Assamese newspapers, two magazines and two films to analyse the portrayals of women in it. Keeping in mind the time within which the work has to be completed only few numbers of Assamese media have been taken for the study. But, there is a leeway to take few more numbers of newspapers or magazines and films (Assamese, Hindi and English) to make a comparative study regarding portrayal of women with feminist perspective.

Future research should definitely include newspapers, magazines or films from different period of time and made separate study on newspapers, magazines and films. The research might include a comparison between the portrayal of men and women. This could analyse the idea that a more balanced presentation and portrayal of women often leads to a more stereotypic portrayal of males. If this is the case, then the future research could establish what this shift in the balance of power between men and women has done to effect both print and visual media of Assam.

1.17 ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTERS

1. Introduction

The First Chapter deals with the Framework of the study. In introduction, inquiry of the age old oppressions and suppressions of women throughout the ages from historical point of view has been made. Women have been generally oppressed by the Patriarchal society in which men are dominants. The Indian society is also not an exception to that. So, with a view to investigate the Indian scenario the chapter examines various socio-cultural institutions. In Stating the Problem, in terms of Media's role towards women in modern digitalized world, this chapter employs meticulous assessment.

2. Feminism and Media

The Second Chapter deals with the discussion on the inter-relationship between media and women as representation, performance and portrayal of women in media indicate the status of women in a particular society. Secondly, it analyses different perspectives

on media to examine the media's role towards women. Next, in regard to the Indian scene, the chapter rigorously analyze Indian feminist point of view on media.

3. Indian Media and Women

The Third Chapter charts the evolution of the communication processes throughout the ages in different civilizations across the world. Subsequently, the chapter also discusses about Indian Print and visual media from historical perspective. Followed by, it analyses the attitude of Indian media towards women in a comprehensive manner.

4. Assamese Media and Women

The Fourth Chapter deals with the discussion on the status and position of women in the Assamese society and the role played by the Assamese media towards the projection of women. Firstly, to examine the status and position of women in the Assamese society various religious texts, cultural myths and stories and literatures of Assam have been discussed. Next, as Assamese media are the integral parts of the Assamese society, its role towards women has been discussed.

5. Print Media and Women

The Fifth Chapter analyses the data collected from the selected Assamese Newspapers and Magazines in terms of the coverage of women issues and portrayals during the period between 2000 and 2002 applying Content Analysis method. Subsequently, to examine the attitude of the Assamese Print Media towards women the chapter employs quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse every single datum found throughout the collection of the data from two Assamese Newspapers namely, 1. *Asomiya Pratidin*, 2. *Dainik Agradoot* and two magazines – 1. *Bismoy* and 2. *Maya*, have been taken for the analysis of the contents. For convenience the chapter is divided into two sections for newspapers and Magazines respectively.

6. Visual Media and Women

The Sixth Chapter analyses the data collected from the Assamese films 1. *Tumi Mur Mathu Mur*, 2. *Kanyadaan* selected for the study from the period between 2000 and 2002 in terms of time and scene dedicated for the women characters and portrayals of women applying content analysis method. Next, the chapter examining the attitude of

visual media towards women also tries to analyse the status and position of women in Assamese society.

7. Conclusion

This chapter covers the conclusions of the study.

1.18 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The study has vital importance not only from the academic point of view but also from the point of view of development policies. Media is considered as the powerful weapon to educate, influence and motivate people. The present study would be useful in determining the possible consciousness of the Assamese media towards the issues and problems of women. As the study gives insights towards the construction of positive images of women in the Assamese mass media, it is definitely going to be recognized as a step forward in the welfare of the women of Assam.