

CHAPTER 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 the Indian Print and visual media from historical perspective. Finally, it analyses the attitude of Indian media towards women in a comprehensive manner.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

“The flood of print has turned reading into the process of gulping rather than savoring.” --Warren Chappell

“When we talk of national development, we mean of men and women, and when we talk of women and 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 omen and the role of mass media in this process. Secondly, it is the development of the society and the nation through the development of its own.” (Singh: 2001)

Human beings have always had an innate natural curiosity to know, and gather information; which in turn enriched them; made them perfect and rational at heart. As a result, in due course of time, humans invented ways to get informed and share ideas with each other. Thus, men’s innate urge to have an appropriate medium to express their own ideas and thought, made it possible for the modern world to be intimated with the Printing Press in the long run. In different parts of the world, people used different methods to express themselves. In many countries people used dry wooden sticks as the media for mediating ideas where as in some other countries people used coloured threads with knots for this purpose. Thus, each typical human civilization developed their own written form of language to express thoughts. So, Shcramm says¹,

¹ Ravi, Dr.B.K (2012) .Media and Social Responsibility: A critical Perspective with special reference to Television. *Academic Research International* 2(1), 306-325. Retrieved from <http://www.savap.org.pk/journals/ARInt./Vol.2%281%29/2012%282.1-35%29.pdf> on 12.07.2016.

“.....communication is that part of social activity wherein there is dissemination information, entertainment and educative exchanges intended for positive development of the society” (p.306).

According to Harold Lasswell (1971-68), any act of communication whether face-to-face or mediated can be dissected into five processes that require separate methods of analysis which is shown below (Tamakuwala S.J.:2011 p-253)²:

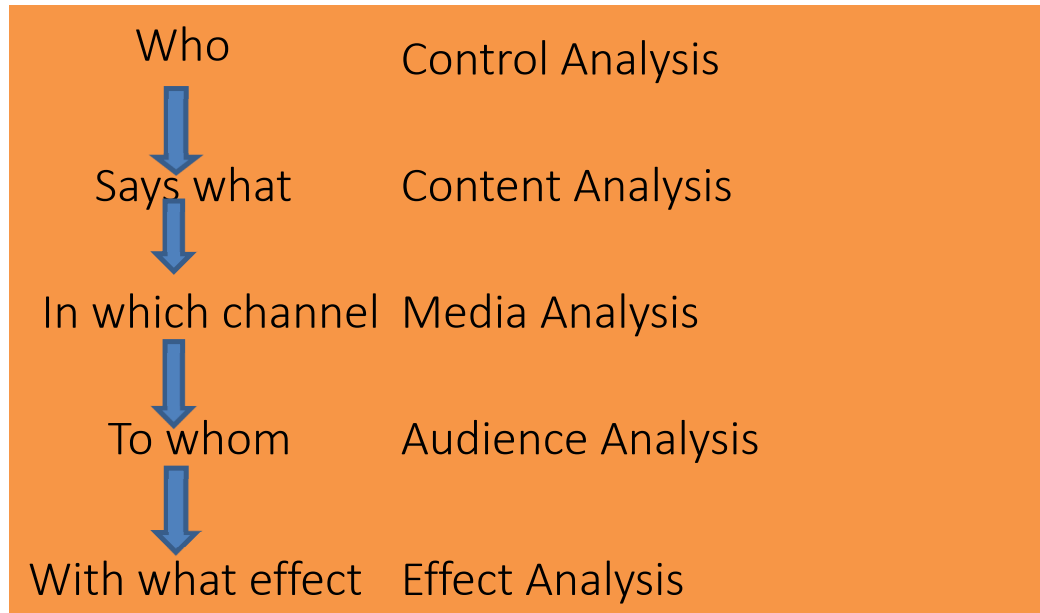


Figure 3.1 Lasswell's chain of communication

3.2 HISTORY OF PRINTING

In the entire process of evolution of the modern Printing Press, there had been several interesting stories in different parts of the world over the centuries. In 3000 BC and earlier the Mesopotamians used the round cylinder seals for rolling an impression of images onto clay tablets. Similarly, in other early societies in China and Egypt small stamps were used to print on cloth. Those stamps were gradually replaced by larger wooden blocks later. Basically, in China such woodblocks were used to print on silk. It is noteworthy that the *Printing Plates* given below are still being investigated. If they are genuine, the **Harappan civilization** in the **Indus Valley** will be recognized as the first one to use fairly modern printing techniques in that particular period of time.

² Tamakuwala S.J. (2010).The Third Chapter. Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/2563/9/09_chapter%203.pdf on 14.7.2016.

One of the plates bears 34 characters, which is the longest known single Indus script inscription (2600–2000 BC).



Figure 3.2 Printing Plates of Harappan Civilisation

But, the modern Printing started in the fifteenth century with the invention of the Printing Press by Gutenberg. The invention of the Printing Press, first and foremost, depended on the invention and refinement of paper in China over several centuries—a Chinese man named Ts'ai Lun is credited with inventing paper³.

In this regard, it should be mentioned that a copy of the Chinese version of The Diamond Sūtra (or Diamond Cutter of Perfect Wisdom) of ninth century is the earliest surviving example of a printed book. It was produced using woodcut, a relief printing technique in which text and images are carved into the surface of a block of wood.



Figure 3.3 The Chinese version of the Diamond Sutra⁴

³ *The History of Printing* (n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.prepressure.com/printing/history> on 14.7.2016.

⁴ *The History of Printing* (n.d) . Retrieved from <http://www.prepressure.com/images/printing-history-diamond-sutra-woodcut.jpg> on 14.07.2016.

During the Battle of Talas, near Samarkand, the secret of paper production was revealed to the Islamic world, since some of the Chinese prisoners were paper makers. Arabs created a finer sheet of paper by substituting linen fibers for wood and bamboo in the tenth century. During the Shang Dynasty the Chinese invented screen printing. During Eleventh century (1041) – A Chinese man named Pi-Sheng developed type characters from hardened clay, creating the first **movable type**. The fairly soft material hampers the success of this technology. In the Twelfth century Papermaking art reaches Europe.

In the seventh century a small book containing the text of the *Gospel of John* which was written in Latin is added to the grave of Saint Cuthbert. In the year 1104 it is recovered from his coffin in Durham Cathedral, Britain. *The Cuthbert Gospel* is currently the oldest European book still in existence.

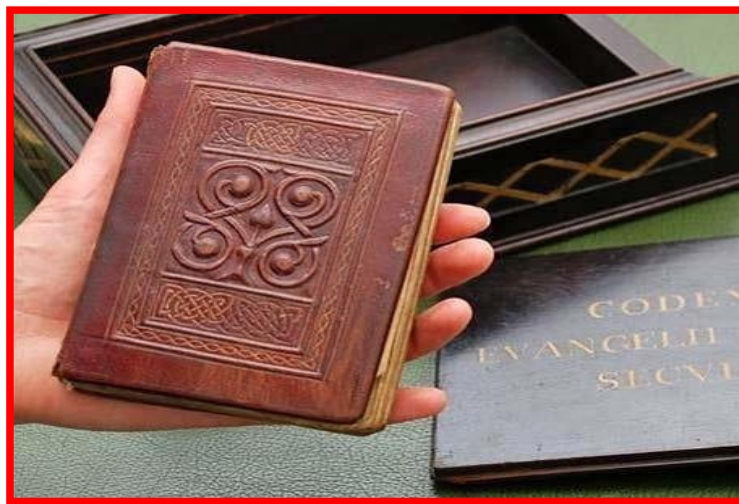


Figure 3.4 The Cuthbert Gospel

Although the European innovations came much later, European culture certainly felt the impact of print more dramatically than the Chinese did. Because their alphabet employs thousands of visually specific ideograms, the use of movable type was much more labor-intensive for the Chinese. Consequently, it did not change production efficiency as dramatically as it did for Europeans. Some historians would also assert that the sequential, linear and standardized character of the printed word especially

suiting the Western impulses toward progress and conquest-- a disposition that favoured quick and intense change⁵.

3.2.1 Gutenberg and the history of Print in Europe

Even though **woodcut** was already used for printing on cloth for over a century, the first European woodcut printing on paper happens in the early fifteenth century. It was used for printing religious images and playing cards. Woodcut is a relief printing technique in which text and images are carved into the surface of a block of wood. The printing parts remain level with the surface while the non-printing parts are removed, typically with a knife or chisel. The wood block is then inked and the substrate pressed against the wood block. The ink is made of lampblack (soot from oil lamps) mixed with varnish or boiled linseed oil. This printing technique is also called block printing. The first **block books** are produced in Germany and Holland around 1430.

Gutenberg begins working on a printing press. It takes him four years to finish his wooden press which uses movable metal types. Gutenberg developed his press by combining features of existing technologies: textile, papermaking and wine presses⁶.



*Figure 3.5 Gutenberg's Printing shop*⁷

⁵ *The History of Printing* (n.d) Retrieved from <http://www.prepressure.com/printing/history> on 14.7.2016.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

In 1444, Gutenberg (1444) sets up a printing shop. Among his first publications are the '*Poem of the Last Judgment*' and the '*Calendar for 1448*'. It is well stated in the following passage:

[U]ntil Johannes Gutenberg's 15th-century invention of the movable type printing press, books were painstakingly handwritten, and no two copies were exactly the same. The printing press made the mass production of print media possible. Not only was it much cheaper to produce written material, but new transportation technologies also made it easier for texts to reach a wide audience. It's hard to overstate the importance of Gutenberg's invention, which helped usher in massive cultural movements like the European Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation⁸.

From the year 1450 Gutenberg started printing Bibles. Printed indulgences, theological texts, even how-to manuals for conducting inquisitions became common tools for the spread of the Church's influence. But, the Church had even more difficulty controlling the activities of printers than they had with the secular scribes. The production and distribution of an expanding variety of texts quickly became too widespread to be disseminated among the people than before. They prompted far-reaching discussions that became the foundation for mounting opposition to the Church's role as the sole custodian of spiritual truth. Bibles printed in vernacular languages rather than Latin fueled the Protestant Reformation based on the assertion that there was no need for the Church to interpret scripture--an individual's relationship with God could be, at least in theory, direct and personal.

In the year 1476, William Caxton set up England's first printing press. Caxton had been a prolific translator and found the printing press to be a marvelous way to amplify his mission of promoting popular literature. He realized that English suffered from so much regional variation that many people couldn't communicate with others from their own country. Caxton's contributions as an editor and printer won him a good portion of the credit for standardizing the English language⁹.

⁸ Lule Jack (n.d) Understanding Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Media. Retrieved from <http://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/bookhub/reader/3833?e=lule>, on 17.11.2015.

⁹ *The History of Print Media* (n.d). Retrieved from http://karmak.org/archive/2002/08/history_of_print.html on 14.07.2016.

3.2.2 Print and rise of Modern Thought: Energizing the act of Expression

Innovations in the accessibility of knowledge and the structure of human thought that attended the rise of print in Europe also influenced art, literature, philosophy and politics. The explosive innovation that characterized the Renaissance was amplified, if not in part generated by, the printing press¹⁰.

The invention of Printing press paved the way for putting oneself in the threshold of knowledge and modernize the world with new innovative ideas in every respects of human's lives. This caused the rise of an intellectual middle class having the ambition for knowledge and hunger for education in rigidly fixed class structure which determined one's status from birth based on family property ownership. Apparently, the rise of this middle class had energized the world's socio-political and economic system for establishing an egalitarian society.

Print technology facilitated a communication revolution that reached deep into human modes of thought and social interaction. Print, along with spoken language, writing and electronic media, is thought of as one of the markers of key historical shifts in communication that have attended social and intellectual transformation (Berdal: 2003). There is a very cognitive relationship between information and communication. Cutright and Nixon observe, “.....*information of a certain kind, once released awakens appetite for the things or new ways of doing things*” and strikes a “*psychic spark of modernization*”. In the following passage, it will be cleared:

Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press is widely thought of as the origin of mass communication-- it marked Western culture's first viable method of disseminating ideas and information from a single source to a large and far-ranging audience. Print culture and technology also needed to go through centuries of change after Gutenberg's time before the "massification" of audiences could fully crystallize. (Rubinstein: n.d, para 1)¹¹

Among the three communication revolution in human history, invention of printing, the second, injected Western culture with the principles of standardization,

¹⁰ *The History of Print Media* (n.d). Retrieved from http://karmak.org/archive/2002/08/history_of_print.html on 14.07.2016.

¹¹ Rubinstein Geoffrey (n.d). *Printing: History and Development*. Retrieved from http://karmak.org/archive/2002/08/history_of_print.html on 14.07.2016.

verifiability and ended the monopoly of church, the clergy and the mandarins. Depositing dramatic reform in the religious thoughts print innovations helped bring about sharp challenges to institutional control.

3.3 INDIAN PRINT MEDIA: AN ASSESSMENT AS “PUBLIC SPHERE¹²” FOR THE SUBORDINATES

“Women form half the world’s population and have acquired political citizenship in most of the societies. Yet their concerns and status have remained marginal within the social, economic and political structures.” (Bathla: 1998)

“A platform where various interests can be brought together exists in the form of media in today’s democratic society. As an embodiment of democratic values, media offers a ‘liberal’, constitutional public sphere permitting a rational, well-informed conversation between equals capable of resolving their differences by non-coercive means.” (Schlesinger & Timber: 1995)

“The role of media in early liberal thought was defined mainly in terms of watchdog, the expectations from this medium widened with the development of mass society. Liberalist believed that “the right to free press was a political trump held by individuals against government’ and perceived it ‘as a check upon the conduct of the ruling few.” (Keane: 1991)

The Indian media are booming on all the fronts i.e. print, electronic and web (Kohli: 2003, as cited in Murthy et al). In a democracy media have been recognised as a liberal public sphere where a rational and well-formed conversation between the equals will be possible and can be resolved wide individual differences in respects of every issue among the citizenry through non-coercive methods: through exchanging comments and criticism. Having been accepting this role, Media have been inferred the role of “Watchdog” by the earlier liberalists. As a result, media are obliged to protect the rights and liberties of the entire citizenry against the state abuse on these matters. It is well stated in the following:

¹²The term “Public sphere” denotes a platform where various interests can be brought together exists in the form of media in today’s democratic society. As an embodiment of democratic values, media offers a ‘liberal, constitutional public sphere permitting a rational, well-informed conversation between equals capable of resolving their differences by non-coercive means (Schlesinger and Tumber: 1959, as cited in Sonia Bathla:1998. Women, Democracy and Media.)

The Hutchins Commission, in 1947 in the US, specified the additional role of the press which was to provide full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning; to serve as a forum for the exchange of comments and criticism and be common carriers of the public expression; to give a representative picture of constituent groups in society and goals and values of society" (Mcquail: 1994, as cited in Bathla: 1998)

According to Curran, "The accessibility to the public sphere and the freedom to interpret social reality is emancipator in many ways. On the one hand, it provides an opportunity to subordinate groups to offer their perspectives and to question the dominant ideologies and structures, and, on the other hand, this freedom and accessibility promotes understanding and tolerance among people towards alternative perspective." (Bathla: 1998)

From this perspective media can be assessed the role played by itself towards women: a question can be put on the democratic role played by media in representing women's concern and their participation in the public place. Various women's groups and women's movement are genuinely concerned about the media's role towards women. Cantor and Steeves assert that (Bathla: 1998) a number of studies carried out in the 1960s and 1970s in the US looked at the images and portrayals of women in various media and established that media promote a traditional sexist attitude towards women. Ven Zoonen says,

"Radical Feminists pointed to Patriarchy as a major cause of women's subordination and advocated separate media organisations for women to achieve their objectives. Similarly, socialist feminists believed in the functional changes of socio-economic structures."

Women live under great social control and scrutiny, which restrict them in terms of what they want to say and where and to whom (Prasad: 2005). In this regard communication is vital for women's development and mass media can play an important role toward it as it has the power to shape the social values, attitudes, perception and behaviour. The exposure of women to mass media can enable women to give voice to their experiences and for the society to understand them as human

beings and react to them with sensitivity: the age old silence of women can be minimised through media. In this regard Prasad says:

Women are forced to express their subordination through ‘feminine’ words, voice and syntax. In Patriarchal cultures, men determine the general system of meanings for society and validate these meanings through the support received from other men. These meanings, regarded as correct by men, have evolved out of male experiences. The concepts and vocabulary arising out of it are quite different for women to contend with and express themselves. (Prasad:2005)

The growing crime rates and violence against women in India, where women are left as silent sufferers who cannot voice against the inhuman injustice that they suffer in the form of deaths caused by dowry, rapes, prostitution, abuse and many more. These are the proofs of their “powerlessness” and “helplessness” in India in particular and in the global set up, at large. This type of victimization of women by violence and abuse restricts women’s activities and undermine women as secondary beings. Prasad observes,

“..... [Men] enjoy immunity from stigma and abuse which is strengthened by the fact that there are no words to describe such immoral men. There can be ‘other women’ in extra-marital relations but no ‘other men’”.

As a result, feminist media scholarship has entered in the field to change the traditional paradigm of women’s status and position in media and media’s role towards it. Feminists, keeping in mind that the Mass media have the power to penetrate and reinforce the status quo through selective dissemination of ideology and information regarding the role and status of women, document media as agents of social change and control. In the year 1988 the UNESCO made an observation:

In overall terms women are very much minority presence in what several studies describe as the ‘man’s world’ of the media; technical jobs are almost exclusively the preserve of men, and women are poorly represented in senior management; conversely women are very much in certain on-screen jobs as presentation and announcing; a kind of sex stereotyped segregation dominates in educational and children’s programmes (UNESCO:1988).

The Indian Print Media is one of the largest Print Media in the world. The evolution of Newspapers in India is with the introduction of *Bengal Gazette* started by James Augustus Hickey¹³ in 1780 from Calcutta as a weekly two sheet paper.

This Newspaper (*Bengal Gazette*¹⁴) paved the way for Indian freedom struggle and the fight against the social evils in India by the way of revolutionary and enlightening writings. Very soon other Newspapers such as *Calcutta Chronicle*, *Madras Courier*, and *Bombay Herald*, *Bombay Courier*, *Bombay Gazette* entered into the scene and the Newspapers in Hindi and other regional languages also started flourishing in the various parts of the nation¹⁵.



Figure 3.6 Hickey's Bengal Gazette¹⁶

Bengal was the birth place of Journalism in India and the language press. *Samachar Darpan* was the first Indian language Newspaper which was a Bengali weekly newspaper introduced in 1818 and the first periodical of India in Indian language was *Dig Darshan* in Bangla language started in the same year. *Eenadu* was a Telugu daily which was started by Ramoji Rao, first Gujarati Newspaper was *Bombay Samachar* which still exists and is considered as the oldest living Indian Newspaper of India¹⁷.

¹³James Augustus Hickey is regarded as the 'Father of Indian Press'.

¹⁴It was published for two years (1780-1782)

¹⁵*Indian Print Media Industry- Historical Perspective. (n.d). Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/20156/7/07_chapter%201.pdf on 14.07.2016.*

¹⁶Hicky's Bengal Gazette (2016). Retrieved on 13 August, 2016 from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hickey%27s_Bengal_Gazette

¹⁷*Indian Print Media Industry- Historical Perspective. (n.d). Retrieved from*

http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/20156/7/07_chapter%201.pdf on 12.07.2016.

The prime motives to start the Newspapers in Indian languages were to promote the feeling of patriotism and to encourage social reforms also because the society was occupied with lots of prejudices, orthodoxies and social evils like the custom of *sati*, child marriage, caste discrimination, idol worship, animal sacrifice and other narrow beliefs. Raja Rammohan Roy, who is considered as the founder of revolutionary Indian Press, recognized the power of Newspapers and used it as a vehicle for propagating his liberal ideas and eradicating the social evils prevailing in the Indian society. He introduced *Sambad Kaumudi* in Bengali in 1821 and published the articles promoting women education, social betterment and awakening and development of scientific outlook. His other publications include *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* in Persian and *Brahmanical Magazine* in English. (Aggarwal, V.B. & Gupta, V.S. :2002,¹⁸)

Veteran journalist N. Ram wrote in his foreword for the book by Rangaswamy Parthasarathi, *History of Mass Communication in India*, he divided the history of press in 'four' phases (as stated in C. S. H. N. Murthy: 2010) —

Phase I (1780-1818): Phase-I is inaugurated by Buckingham and includes the inspiring efforts of Raja Rammohan Roy. The struggle against censorship, harassment, deportation and prosecution, the struggle to establish some measure of freedom of expression, the dilemmas of colonial rulers etc. were the key features of this period.

Phase II (1880-1947): This phase witnesses the rise of the Indian Press as part of the nationalist or anti-nationalist or anti-imperialist struggle and the manifestation of two lines in the press. One line is support to the colonial raj and its politics and the other is a line of criticism that is prepared by various developments. This stage sees many technological developments such as opening of telegraph line at Calcutta (1851), appearance of railway and completion of land telegraph line from England to India. During this period, the Indian press comes into its own. Some notable events in this respect are the founding of the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* (1868) and *The Hindu* (1878) with the pro raj newspaper. *The Statesman* also appeared in 1875. The founding of Indian national congress in 1885 reminds us that the history of patriotic Indian press predates the history of Indian party politics. A wave of revolutionary movement was

¹⁸ *Indian Print Media Industry- Historical Perspective. (n.d).* Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/20156/7/07_chapter%201.pdf on 14.07.2016.

sweeping through the country, particularly in Bengal. With the government's notification in July 1905 announcing the partition of Bengal, the stage was set for widespread trouble. Tilak who was inspiring the people in the cause of freedom movement through his papers *Kesari* and *Marhatta* was prosecuted and sentenced for sedition, twice in 1897 and in 1908. After Gandhiji's return to India (1915), both Gandhi and Tilak, themselves considerable journalist, wielded a major influence on the field. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre closes this stage, with the press dividing sharply into the sections which condemned the crime and outrage, and the opposite camp which defended, or provided apologies for this brutal response to the intensification of the freedom struggle. The Govt. of India was haunted by the spectre of sedition enacted in 1907 the laws to control public meetings followed by the newspapers (Incitement of offences) Act.1908. This act empowered a magistrate to seize a press on being satisfied that a newspaper had printed matters containing any incitement to murder or to any other act of violence or to an offence under the explosive substance Act.

The Indian press act was directed against the offences involving violence, as well as, sedition. The rigorous act of 1910 were further enhanced by the criminal law Amendment act of 1913 and by the Defense of Indian Regulations 1914 which was promulgated on the outbreak of the First World War.

Phase III (1919-1920) sees the differentiation of the Indian press into moderate and radical tendencies in relation to the strategy and tactics of the freedom movement. The next important law on the subject is the official Secret Act 1923. It is a general act but has an important impact on the press. It is aimed at maintaining the security of the state against leakage of the secret information, sabotage and the like. Gandhiji's advent into politics took place in 1920. Drawing essentially upon his experience in South Africa he launched his first Non-cooperation Movement in 1920 which aroused political consciousness among the masses. In the 1920 the Indian newspapers played an important role by propagating the views of different schools of thought and by moulding public opinion.

The struggle between the nationalist and pro-British press continues. The sedition trial of Gandhi in 1922 witnesses a heroic response. In British the labour government is formed a new attitude towards India, questions are shaped and expressed. In India

nationalist newspapers such as Hindustan Times and Indian Express are established while those already established make impressive progress in their reach and influence. The struggle for the freedom of press and for wider civil liberty acquired full voice. After the repeal of the acts of 1908 and 1910 in 1922, no repressive press laws and newspapers flourished. But the launching of the civil disobedience movement by Gandhi in 1931 promoted the government to promulgate an ordinance to 'control the press' which was later enacted as the Indian press (Emergency powers) act 1931. While the draft constitution was under consideration in the constituent Assembly, the government appointed a press laws inquiry committee to 'review the press laws of the Indian with a view to examine if they are in accordance with the Fundamental Assembly of India'. The act of 1931 was accordingly repealed and replaced by the press (Objectionable Matter) Act 1951.

Phase IV (1937-1947) sees the maturing of assertive tendencies in the press and significant professional developments such as news services, the pooling of arrangements and expanded coverage of foreign news. Jawahar Lal Nehru found the National Herald (1918) and adopts a forward looking stand on the question of the press. As the congress prepares to assume office upon the transfer of power, new tendencies surface in the national press, suggesting a more assertive and confident role. The strength, conflict and dilemmas of the press are increasingly expressed during this stage and the Indian press as a whole group towards an understanding of a new role in independent India.

In the post-independent era Indian print journalism was in a fix. But a drastic change occurred in the Indian print media industry during the period of emergency imposed by the then Indira Gandhi Government of 1975. The provision of emergency strangled the freedom of expression hence censorship was imposed on print media. Some newspapers like *The Indian Express* and *The Statesman* could stand against the provision of emergency, though they were highly oppressed by the state at that time while other newspapers yielded before the govt. for their survival. During emergency and after it the number of news magazines like *India Today*, *Frontline*, and *The Week* etc. came into existence. After emergency with the advent of the Janata Party

Government the freedom of expression was re-established hence newspapers also started enjoying freedom¹⁹.

Due to the arrival of the modern technologies and the fast growing progress of the same make it possible to modernize and develop Indian Printing Industry to reach in the height—all contribute towards the Colour printing, clean designing become common feature of Indian print media. Now, there is a boom in the readership and circulation of Indian newspapers. With newspapers' strength progressing, the magazines also find its place in the same way—advertisements get published both in newspapers and magazines which become popular amongst the masses.

Besides, LPG brought a sea change in Indian journalism. Twenty-first century journalism associates business and corporate news and it is making an effort to be more visually attractive. Certainly in this era of visual journalism advertising is still being published in modern newspapers of India.

In the recent NRS survey it has been shown that the Indian language newspapers are taking over the English press. One of the important reasons is the marketing strategy followed by the regional papers. The second reason may be the growing literacy rate. Increase in the literacy rate has direct positive effect on the rise of circulation of the regional papers. Besides, the reason behind it may be the localization of news. Most of the regional papers have several editions to cover up the local news of a particular area so that people of certain area can be the well-informed of the local news and information.

¹⁹ *Print Media-Indian Scenario* (n.d). Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/94855/7/07_chapter%202.pdf on 1.09.2016.

Table 3.1 Indian Newspapers and their Founders in the pre-independent period

NEWSPAPERS/JOURNALS	FOUNDER
BENGAL GAZETTE	J.K HICKEY
KESARI	B.G. TILAK
MARATHA	B.G.TILAK
SUDHARAK	G.K.GOKHALE
AMRIT BAZAR PATRIKA	SIRISH KUMAR GOSH & MOTILAL GHOS
VANDE MATARAM	AUROBINDO GHOS
NATIVE OPINION	V.N MANADALIK
KEVAVACHAN SUDHA	BRATENDU HARISCHANDRA
RAST GOFTAR	DADA BHAI NAOROJI
NEW INDIA WEELY	BIPIN CHANDRA PAL
STATESMAN	ROBERT KNIGHT
HINDU	VIR RAGHAVACHARYA &G.S AIYAR
SANDHYA	B.B. UPADHYAYA
VICHAR	LAHIRI KRISHNASHASTRI CHIPLUNKAR
HINDU PATRIOT	GIRISH CHANDRA GHOS
SOM PRAKASH	ISHWAR CHANDRA
JUGANTAR PATRIKA	B.DATTA,B.K.GHOS & A. BHATTACHARYA
BOMBAY CHRONICLE	FIROZE SHAH MEHTA
HINDUSTAN	M.M. MALAVIYA
MOOKNAYAK	B.R. AMBEDKAR
COMRADE	MOHAMMED ALI
TAHZIB-UL-AKHLAQ	SIR SYYED AHMED KHAN
AL-HILAL (URDU)	ABUL KALAM AZAD
INDEPENDENT	MOTILALA NEHRU
PUNJABI	LALA LAJPAT RAI

(Source: MassComNow, 2011)

Current scenario

The Indian newspaper industry is one of the largest in the world. It publishes the largest number of paid-for titles. As per the data available with the Government, a total of 1,05,443 newspapers/periodicals are registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) as on 31st March, 2015²⁰ with the 14, 984 total number of newspaper and 90459 periodicals. The highest numbers of newspapers were published in Hindi, 12516²¹.

²⁰ Dubbudu R. (2015) More than a Lakh Newspapers & Periodicals are registered in the country. Retrieved from <https://factly.in/indian-newspapers-more-than-one-lakh-newspapers-periodicals-registered-in-the-country/> on 12.07.2016.

²¹ Registrar of Newspapers for India, Government of India. Retrieved from <http://rni.nic.in/> on 12.07.2016.

Newspapers in India are measured on two parameters, circulation and readership. Circulation is certified by the Audit Bureau of Circulations which is an industry body. It audits the paid-for circulation of the member newspaper companies. Readership is estimated by two different survey (NRS)²². Print media, as anyone can understand is one of the most important factors coming through in the way a nation works. Newspaper, magazines, books etc. are read by a lot of people and are certainly one of the most trusted media of National and International news. The circulation highlight for the year 2014-15 is as follows:

The total circulation of publications during 2014-15: 51, 05, 21,445

- ❖ Hindi publications: 25,77,61,985
- ❖ English publications: 6,26,62,670
- ❖ The largest circulated multi-edition Daily: *The Times of India*, English (33 editions): 46, 30,200.
- ❖ The second largest circulated multi-edition Daily: *Dainik Bhaskar*, Hindi (34 editions): 36, 94,385
- ❖ The largest circulated periodical: *The Sunday Times of India*, English/Weekly, Delhi : 8,85,201
- ❖ The largest circulated periodical in Hindi: *Sunday Navbharat Times*, Hindi/Weekly, Mumbai: 7,04,257

India has a vast array of print media with thousands of magazines and newspapers in circulation. Top Notch journalism, great reporting, press unity and a very strong network are what makes print media so much of a success even today in the age of television and the internet). It is also said that print media also helped literacy and undoubtedly the general knowledge of the average person in India (Khan Mahin Fatima²³: 2012)).

²² *Industry Analysis of Print Media* (n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.slideshare.net/guestacd5bd/industry-analysis-of-print-media> on 14.07.2016.

²³ Khan Mahin Fatima (2011-2012) *Impact of Print Media in India* (Project work, University of Mumbai).

At present there is no repressive centre law directed against the press. The press act 1951 was enacted to provide against the printing and publication of incitement to crime and other objectionable matters. The good thing about Indian print media is that any bias of any sort is quickly subsided; therefore impartial reporting is a major feature of the Indian print media. The news you get through these outlets cannot be any truer²⁴.

India offers a promising market for the print media industry. The bright future and the immense scope of the Indian print media have also aroused the interest of foreign inventors and recently the government has opened up the sector to foreign investment. Foreign media has also shown interest in investing in Indian publications. The revenues for Indian newspaper market are generated from advertising and circulation. India's growth rate in this segment is poised to be higher than the average rate of growth in the Asia-Pacific region over the next four years. Digital printing, new ways of promotion and distribution are the largest trends and content being focus of the print media industry.²⁵.

3.4 INDIAN ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Radio

It was in June 1923, that the very first radio programme in India was broadcast by the Radio Club of Bombay (Mumbai) and then in November, 1923 from Calcutta (Kolkata). These radio broadcasts were made with the efforts of amateurs, later followed by private



enterprise. This was the beginning, of a medium, which **Figure 3.7 AKASHVANI**²⁷ was to connect the country through electric waves and eventually contribute greatly in creating new India in new world order! Finally, organised broadcasting in India began when the first station of the Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC) was inaugurated at Bombay by the British Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin on July 23, 1927. Though it gained a lot of popularity, the Indian Broadcasting Company went into premature

²⁴ibid

²⁵ibid

²⁷ Radio: Harbinger of new hope and life (2015, July 21st).Retrieved from <http://akashvanisamvaad.blogspot.in/2015/07/indian-broadcasting-day-23rd-july-1923.html> on 14.07.2016

liquidation from March 1, 1930. Eventually, from April 1930, broadcasting in India came under the direct control of the Government²⁸.

In 1932, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) started as Empire Service. The number of receiving sets, which were all imported, doubled in less than two years. This resulted in an increase in the government's income from license fees. The increase in import duty on radio sets and components of the radio sets also enhanced the government's revenue. Broadcasting has now become financially viable. It was decided to start a radio station in Delhi. In September 1935, broadcasting began in the princely State of Mysore with the name AKASHVANI. The name All India Radio was adopted from June 08, 1936 and the Delhi Station of the Indian State Broadcasting Service went on air on January 01, 1936 from the temporary studios at 18, Alipur Road. The BBC loaned the services of Lionel Fielden who became the Controller of Broadcasting²⁹.

Following the country's partition, six radio stations came into the share of India (Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Tiruchi, Lucknow and Madras). When the princely states became a part of India, five more stations (Hyderabad, Aurangabad, Baroda, Mysore and Trivandram) were taken over by AIR. 1957 also saw the start of an inter-station programme exchange unit at Delhi. An annual folk music festival, "songs of national builders", was started in 1958 but it was short-lived. The third Five Year Plan (1962-66) had made expansion of medium wave broadcasting. As many as 26 transmitters were added to Air stations for broadcasting Vividh Bharati programs³⁰.

By the 1980 radio covered about 90% of the population and over 78% of the area of the country. In 1991, India had 102 full-fledged radio stations which were production centres, the population covered 97.5% and area covered was 91%. The number of transmitters was over 300. This number included short wave and VHF (Very High Frequency) or FM (Frequency modulation transmitters. National AIR channel via satellite was started in May, 1988.

Radio now covers almost the entire population of India. One of the largest broadcasting organizations in the world in terms of the number of languages of

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Introduction (n.d). Retrieved from <http://www.indiantelevision.com/old-html/indianbroadcast/legalreso/Chapter2.htm> on 14.07. 2016.

broadcast, the spectrum of socio-economic and cultural diversity it serves, AIR's home service comprises 419 stations today located across the country, reaching nearly 92% of the country's area and 99.19% of the total population. AIR originates in 23 languages and 146 dialects³¹.

It has a great ability to inform, educate and entertain people. In India about half of the population is illiterate, radio being a medium of the spoken word uses conversational, simple and direct language. This can be easily understood even by illiterate folks. The effectiveness of radio can be gauged from the fact that its rural program has been able to help the farmers in agricultural works.

Television

Television, in recent times, has emerged as the most powerful and all-pervading force throughout the world. It can disseminate information with lightning speed and impact, as well as, infuse viewers with images and values in subtle and imperceptible manner. Because of its very inherent nature, television is not only reflects the values of our society but also influence them (Ahmed, Dr. Aalia: 2012). Television has the connections to the real world of culture and society in which it exists³².

Television first came to India [named as 'Doordarshan' (DD) on Sept 15, 1959 as the National Television Network of India. The first telecast started on Sept 15, 1959 in New Delhi. After a gap of about 13 years, second television station was established in Bombay in 1972 and by 1975 there were five more television stations at Shrinagar (Kashmir), Amritsar (Punjab), Calcutta, Madras and Lucknow. For many years the transmission was mainly in black & white. Television industry got the necessary boost in the eighties when Doordarshan introduced colour TV during the 1982 Asian Games (<http://www.indiantelevision.com/indianbroadcast/history/historyoftele.htm>)³³.

The second phase of growth was witnessed in the early nineties and during the Gulf War, that foreign channel like CNN, Star TV and domestic channels such as Zee TV and Sun TV started broadcast of satellite signal. This changed the scenario and the

³¹ All India Radio. Retrieved from <http://allindiaradio.gov.in/default.aspx>. on 12.07.2016.

³² Bignell: 2004, as cited in Nerisa Pillay. He also states that television is fascinating to study because it seeks to study to provide the audience with elements, issues and events that they are currently experiencing.

³³ Vyas R.V. & Sharma Dr. R.C (2002). Educational Television in India. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*. 3(4). 1302-6488 Retrieved from <http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/yonetim/icerik/makaleler/72-published.pdf> on 14.07.2016.

people got the opportunity to watch regional, national and international programmes. Starting with 41 sets in 1962 and one channel (Audience Research unit, 1991), at present according to Broadcast Audience Research Council, the average viewership of Doordarshan National is 91 million³⁴ with 798 channels³⁵. Easy accessibility of relevant technology, variety of programmes and increased hour of transmission are main reasons for rapid expansion of TV system in India³⁶. It is quite visible in the figure 3.8 below:

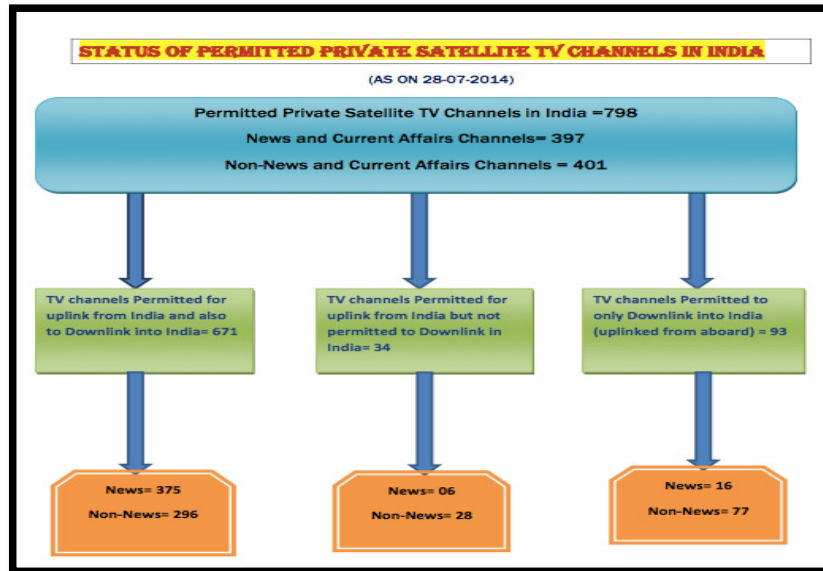


Figure 3.8 Status of permitted private channels in India in 2014³⁷

Films

Cinema provides in-depth information about the various things of the past as well as the current happenings. One of the most important aspects of cinema is that it usually records the world as it is. Cinema is closely related to the life of common man and the principle that define human society. The understanding of cinema lies in culture. The components of meaning in

³⁴ Indiantelevision.com (2016, August 8) .Team Average viewership of DD National according to BARC is 91 million: Rathore [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.indiantelevision.com/television/tvchannels/terrestrial/average-viewership-of-dd-national-according-to-barc-is-91-million-rathore-160812> on 12.07.2016.

³⁵ Mahit (2014). Total number of Permitted TV channels in India as of July is 798, I&B Ministry gives Clearance to 3 New Channels [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://telecomtalk.info/total-number-of-tv-channels-in-india-as-of-july798/120527/> on 13.07.2016.

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Mahit (2014). Total number of Permitted TV channels in India as of July is 798, I&B Ministry gives Clearance to 3 New Channels [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://telecomtalk.info/total-number-of-tv-channels-in-india-as-of-july798/120527/> on 13.07.2016.

*cinematic articulation are inseparable from various social, intellectual and cultural developments*³⁸.

The history of cinema now spans more than a century. One could say that the twentieth century was the first century to be recorded in motion pictures. But how useful are motion pictures as historical evidence and what sort of evidence do they provide? From the inventors' first projections at the end of the nineteenth century, cinema was hailed as a mode of preservation, a hedge against death itself, preserving for posterity not only the images but the actions of people now long dead. We could say that cinema not only records the visual appearance of past time, but the passage of time itself. When we look at films from the period we now call early cinema (from the invention of cinema around 1895 to the World War I)³⁹.

India is the largest film producing country in the world and Bollywood, the main centre of film production in India, is known world over for its musicals. Cinema⁴⁰ in India also developed almost at the same time when it started in the west. The screenings of moving images by Lumiere brothers in 1895 in London created sensation across Europe and it was an epoch-making event in the history of cinema. The Lumiere brothers organized the first public screening of their films at Watson Hotel of Mumbai in July 1896. The work of Lumiere brothers were mainly related to the depiction of reality. They screened silent films which were mainly documentation of reality like Arrival of a Train, A Demolition, The Sea Bath, etc.⁴¹. The Birth of 'A Nation' by D.W. Griffith in 1915 proved to be a mile stone in the history of World cinema (Kumar S: 2008). In India Hiralal Sen is credited with directing the first short

³⁸As cited in Portrayal of Cast in Indian Cinema by Dr.GovindJi Pandey.

³⁹Gunning, Tom (n.d). Making Sense of Film. Retrieved from <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/film/film.pdf> on 16.07.2016.

⁴⁰Cinemas of India constitutes of films produced across India, including the cinematic culture of Mumbai along with the cinematic traditions of provinces such as Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh(Gokulsing, K. and Dissanayake, W :2004). Indian films came to be followed throughout South-East Asia and the Middle East—where modest dressing and subdued sexuality of these films was found to be acceptable to the sensibilities of the audience belonging to these regions. As cinema, as a medium, gained popularity in the country as many as 1,000 films in various languages of India were produced annually (wikipedia/Cinema_of_India, retrieved on 01-06-2009). Emigrants in countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States continued to give rise to international audiences for Hindi-language films, some of which—according to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2009) entry on Bollywood—continued to carry "formulaic story lines, expertly choreographed fight scenes, spectacular song-and-dance routines, emotion-charged melodrama, and larger-than-life heroes". As cited in

http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/10672/9/09_chapter%203.pdf

⁴¹ *History of Silent Films in India* (n.d). Retrieved from

http://entertainment.indianetzone.com/films/1/history_silent_films.htm on 11.11.2015.

film *Dancing Scenes from the Flower of Persia* in 1898 (Thoraval Y: 2007). It was in 1903, when H.E. Porter made a film 'The Great Train Robbery', and then the concept of narrative came in cinema⁴².

In India, S. Bhatvadekar, popularly known as Save Dada is credited with title of the first film maker, with his two films *Do Pahalwanon ki Kushti* and *Bandar Ko Nachata Hua Madaari*. The first motion picture in India, *Raja Harishchandra*, made by Dada Falke in Marathi language, was the most important event in regard of development of cinema in India. It was a silent film and the roles of female characters were played by male actors. In the initial years, working in cinema or watching were restricted to a small community: especially women of the reputed family were restricted to act in the films. As a result, it posed a great difficulty for the film makers to make film: lack of social recognition for people working in films by the society frustrated them. This was the main reason behind the selection of actors in Dada Falke's *Raja Harish Chandra*. He could not arrange a single female actor to work in his film all the actors were male. Even the roles of female characters were played by male actors only. Gradually people started accepting the actors and many female artists from various parts of India got opportunity to act in Hindi films⁴³.

3.5 INDIAN WOMEN IN PRINT MEDIA: AN ASSESSMENT

The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced in the failure to eliminate gender-based stereotyping. Generally, the media do not provide a balanced portrayal of women's diverse lives and their contributions to society in a changing world, often reinforcing stereotyped images of women and their roles in society. It is well stated in the following:

More women are involved in careers in the communications sector, but few have attained positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies that influence media policy. The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based

⁴²Ibid

⁴³ *History of Indian Cinema* (n.d). Retrieved from <http://moviesandgalleries.blogspot.in/2008/09/history-of-indian-cinema-bollywood.html> on 14.07.2016.

stereotyping that can be found in public and private local, national and international media organizations⁴⁴.

Indian society is extremely diverse and pluralistic in nature with women being kept in the “Private sphere” and men in the “public”. Women are under strict social control and scrutiny, which has limited what they can say and where and to whom. This public/private division gain credence in Indian media in defining the gender, sex roles, body image, identity etc. It is well stated below:

Unwelcomed at birth, yet referred to as Lakshmi of the house; neglected in the childhood, yet worshipped as the virgin incarnation of Devi; given away in marriage in order to gain merit in the next world, yet valued for the material wealth she can transfer to her marital family. (Krishnan & Dighe: 1990)

Uma Chakravarti (1993: 579) has opined that the general subordination of women assumed a particularly severe form in India, through the powerful instrument of religious traditions which have shaped social practices. A marked feature of Hindu society is its legal sanction for an extreme expression of social stratification in which women and the lower castes have been subjected to humiliating conditions of existence. (Nath & Dutta: 2012, p.15)⁴⁵

So, Indian media cannot be free from the shackles of patriarchy or in other words from the bindings of social, cultural and religious beliefs. Media are hardly challenging the gender attitudes promoted and perpetuated by the society. As a result, different Indian feminists have come forward with different criticism and they have conducted different scholarly researches over the representation, portrayal and performance of women in media. Indian media’s role towards the portrayal and projection of women is basically succumbed into the two extreme continuums as ‘devi’ and ‘damned’.

⁴⁴ The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing, China Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995, September). Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/media.htm> on 12.07.2016.

⁴⁵ Nath, D.P & Dutta J. (2012) Women and Culture in India: Countering the Force of Nativity. SACS (4)1, pp 12 – 18. Retrieved from <https://blogs.edgehill.ac.uk/sacs/files/2012/08/Document-4-Nath-D.-P-Dutta-J-Women-and-Culture-in-India-Countering-the-Force-of-Nativity.pdf> on 15.07.2016.

As the Indian society is more complex and different than that of west in regard to the perception, projection and acceptability of women in a stringent patriarchal culture, the persona or role model of Indian women revolves around 'devi' and 'damned'. With Feminist movement of 70's the very question of women's rights, role/status and identity of Indian women in Indian patriarchy were raised and is yet struggling to gain clarity and acceptance of society.

Between these double standard roles as 'devi' or blessed and 'damned', Indian women are now experiencing the intense identity crisis and has been narrowed down as secondary and inferior to men. Jain remarks:

Indian women representing urban class have been projected as self-independent, empowered, liberated and looking good in terms of "fair and lovely", "thin and sexy", "smart and fashionable" and also financially empowered as projected by media in last two decades. On the other hand women are still being exploited, used, victimised seen as an object of desire and second grade citizen in the family and the society as well. (2011, quoted in Sarkar S.:2014, p.53)⁴⁶

Such portrayal of female body is itself oppressive and devastating in terms of women empowerment and deceives the women as to what is or should be the real image. In this regard Sarkar (2014) quoted Derne like this:

Derne put forth that media promoted the divide of same gender through generating lifestyle and promoting in all small screen soaps showing class division within women population, a class exposed to pasta, jeans and tea shirts, laptops and size zero fashion and the other suppressed and overtly oppressed often shown wearing sarees, believing in talisman and trantas, making kheer as best desert to give traditional taste of palate and protector Indian culture. (p.55)⁴⁷

One of the biggest obstacles to Indian women's access to participation, performance and get portrayed positively is the patriarchal nature of social structure where men continue to see women as subservient and second grade citizens. Media are

⁴⁶ Sarkar Sumita (2014). Media and Women Image: A Feminist Discourse. Journal of Media and Communication studies. 6(3), pp.48-58, 2141-2545. doi 10.5879/JMCS2014.0384.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

predominantly male owned and controlled by the strict patriarchal gender role. So, gender biases in the portrayal of women can be seen frequently. It is well stated in the following:

Women's role is either romanticized or dismissed as not important enough, 'relegated to the kitchen'. 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. (Perrumpally: n.d, p.25)

Though media have been called as one of the influential actors capable of changing and transforming the society, in Indian scene, it is playing the role of preserving societal norms and cultural values based on patriarchy. As a result, most of the mediated women in Indian media are "weak, passive, needy and subservient. The following quote perfectly describes it:

Manu's dictum that 'a woman is protected by her father in childhood, husband in adulthood and son in old age' is perpetuated in all media representation. In most of the representations she tactfully domesticated, and her place is "home and hearth" by unwritten codes of society. (Perrumpally: n.t, p.25)

Guru (1996) criticized the role of Indian Magazines as portraying women as sex objects, consumer and slaves. He says, "Women journals [...] are not in a position to advocate the course of women and rejuvenate our socio-political economic and cultural orders. The targeted readerships of these magazines are the upper and lower middle classes living in cities". A study carried out for the Second Press Commission of the contents and performance of women's journals says that, most of women's journals consistently seek to direct women's energies into a narrow channel to define their concerns, pre-occupations and aspirations with an arbitrarily imposed 'feminine framework'.

In the opinion of S. Mukherjee (a supervisor in an Advertisement agency) as quoted by Kumar (1995) - "It is possible to depict a woman as career oriented people but this would not be accepted. So, we try to project this image of a very smart woman. She is not as mundane as you and me, even if she is a housewife. We try and put that

through in very beautiful manner". She further remarks- "the idea of new woman is actually a myth".

3.6. INDIAN VISUAL MEDIA: PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN

Antonio Gramsci's (1998) concept of Hegemony is at its best be discussed in Indian context. The dominance and influence of patriarchy affect the society and most Bollywood films are based on this ideology. This hegemonic ideology, also endorsed by religion, has become the most powerful, internalized, common and dominant ideology of the Indian society. It can best be understood in Indian context. Various factors of religion influence and govern popular culture in the Indian subcontinent. It is well stated in the following:

The epics and mythological tales of Hinduism have always celebrated male dominance, and this has been adopted by filmmakers. (Nandkumar: 2011, as quoted in Sarkar: 2012, p.55)⁴⁸

Various scholars have raised their voices against these stereotyping of women based on socio-cultural practices in Indian films. These include, amongst others, scholars such as Gargan (1993 cited in Dasgupta, 1996), Dasgupta (1996), Gopalan (1997), Dasgupta and Hedge (1988 cited in Ghadially, 1988), Datta (2000), Kasbekar (2001 cited in Dwyer and Pinney, 2001) and Ganti (2004)⁴⁹.

3.6.1. Bollywood and Indian Women: Role and Portrayal

"Bollywood", a part of the Indian film industry located in Mumbai, can be called the National Film Industry as it produces the most watched films in India. The term "Bollywood" has been derived from the American Film Industry, **Hollywood**. Due to its productivity, Mumbai has become the largest film centre in the world. But, it should be mentioned that the films produced from Calcutta and Madras within India compete vigorously with Bollywood films.

If Bollywood is analysed from women's perspective, it will be visible that women have been in a long journey in Indian Cinema from passive wife in *Raja*

⁴⁸ Sarkar, Srijita, "An analysis of Hindi women-centric films in India." (2012). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. Paper 1265. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.18297/etd/1265> on 13.07.2016.

⁴⁹ Asma Ayob (2008) . The Changing Construction of Women Characters in Popular Hindi-language Cinema from 1970 to 2007.

Harishchandra in 1913 to *Marykom*, 2015. The first women to act in Indian cinema were mainly the “Anglo-Indians” as there was a stigma attached to Indian women to become actress or to participate in public sphere. It is well stated in the following:

There was a stigma associated with Indian women acting and in the context of this social stigma, when Indian women began to act, directors, in order to conform to social norms might have been pressured to portray Indian women leads as characters who live within the confines of society even in the films. In Indian cinema, this is probably the beginning of the idea of having to necessarily cater to audience needs and conform to existing value systems. (Nandakumar: 2011, p.23)⁵⁰

In traditional Indian society, there were definite and consensual norms of behaviour—that regulated the conduct of women. It is a well-known fact in Indian society that ‘*Sita*’—being immortalized in *The Ramayana* because of her loyalty to her husband and submissive character, is the ideal woman, the ideal wife and every Indian woman is judged on the basis of ‘*Sita*’. As a matter of fact, in so called Cultured Indian society... women’s roles are glorified essentially as daughter, wife and mother.

Indian value system emanated from religious scriptures and texts have personified women as beings of submissiveness and subordination. *Manusmriti*, one of the Dharmashahstras, which has a profound effect on shaping the morals of Indian society, says a woman should not be given any kind of independence; they should be subject in childhood to her father, in youth to her husband, and when her husband is dead, to her children. These values are implemented in Indian films also. In the earlier period of Indian film industry most of the films were produced glorifying women as ideal mothers and wives. It is well stated in the following:

She (a woman) is told to be cheerful, efficient in the management of household affairs, fastidious in cleaning utensils, careful with expenses... these norms governed the lives of women in traditional India and they find

⁵⁰ Nandakumar S. (2011). The Stereotypical Portrayal of Women in Commercial Indian Cinema (Thesis Presented to The Faculty of the Department of Communications University of Houston). Retrieved from <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/uh-ir/bitstream/handle/10657/217/NANDAKUMAR-.pdf?sequence=2> on 15.07.2016.

clear articulation in Indian cinema, especially in popular films. (Gokulsing & Dissanayake: 2004, p.78, as quoted in Nandkumar: 2011, p.24)⁵¹

Different patterns of portrayals of women in Indian Cinema can be discussed as under:-

3.6.1.1 As Traditional Role Models

In the early stage in Indian cinema that is in 60s and 70s women characters were mostly shown as the girls who wake up early, singing bhajans, doing household chores, giving emotional support to their husband and the family etc. The characters were revolves around the roles of Bahu (Daughter-in-law), Bhabhi (Sister-in-law) or single mother toiling for surviving with their children. As for example, in the film “*Do Anjane*”, Rekha played the role of a typical Indian woman who is fit for the home and hearth.



Figure 3. 9 Rekha in “*Do Anjane*”

Dasgupta and Hedge (1988 cited in Ghadially, 1988), and Gargan (1993 cited in Dasgupta, 1996) further note that “good” women are generally portrayed in Bollywood films as long-suffering and submissive. The ideal women in Bollywood, according to Dasgupta and Hedge (1988 cited in Ghadially, 1988), have also traditionally been controlled, chaste, surrendering individuals, and have not been afraid of making sacrifices for others, especially their male relatives. The “bad” women on the other hand, have been depicted as Westernized, blond-haired,

⁵¹ Ibid

individualistic and sexually aggressive, ready to lead men into ruin. Dasgupta and Hedge (1988 cited in Ghadially, 1988) note that the Hindi-language film industry has repeatedly reinforced the notion that the glory of ideal Indian womanhood lies in the tolerance she shows toward society and men, even when she is unjustly treated and brutally victimised⁵².

So, it is quite apparent that Bollywood underlies what Indian society believes women to be—that women should wear Indian traditional dress, visit temples, conduct *pooja* and maintain cordial relationship with her in-laws to preserve the cultural norms to be inferior and secondary, but men can generally do whatever they want. And Bollywood tries to endorse some sort of unrealistic and artificial “ideal” which ultimately creates clashes between the women of “Real life” with these mediated “ideal” women. In trying to portray characters in these “stereotypical” socially acceptable roles, Richards (1995) observes, “The Hindi film upholds the traditional patriarchal views of society which, fearful of female sexuality, demands of the woman, a subjugation of her desires”. (p.3, as quoted in NandKumar: 2011, p.24)⁵³

3.6.1.2 As Vamps



Figure 3.10 Helen in Caravan 1975



Figure 3.11 Helen in Caravan 1975

One of the patterns of portrayals of women in Indian commercial Hindi cinema was as vamps where women were shown as performing cabaret in a bar, pubs or in any place. The women characters of 70s who were shown as vamp usually wore derogatory

⁵² Nandakumar S. (2011). The Stereotypical Portrayal of Women in Commercial Indian Cinema (Thesis Presented to The Faculty of the Department of Communications University of Houston). Retrieved from <https://uh-ir.tdl.org/uh-ir/bitstream/handle/10657/217/NANDAKUMAR-.pdf?sequence=2> on 15.07.2016.

⁵³ Ibid.

fashion or some time sexy and sensual and even this is the reality of most of the modern films of today. In this case, Kumar remarks that on one hand Indian men perceive women to be epitomes of all qualities as typical Indian women, and, on the other hand, the men with western outlook need women to be like vamp, as portrayed in the films.

Nanadakumar (2011) examining the role of actresses role in Indian cinema finds that actresses starts their career when they are teenagers and ends when they reach in 30s. On the other side, male actors continue their professional life after 30s and even longer. According to her, this indicates the male centeredness in the film industry as well as in the Indian society as a whole. In the stringent patriarchal society of India, there is a general concept regarding female actresses that they look more sensuous and attractive in young age rather than after 30s. So, the film makers, keeping in view the concept try to make film to serve the “*male gaze*”.

3.6.1.3 As objects of Sex and Entertainment

And in recent time a new trend has reached India to satisfy the audience of globalized world for business purpose in a profit and loss game. A recent research fact released by Geena Davis of Institute on Women in Media supported by UN Women and The Rockfeller Foundation, which goes like Indian films top in the list to objectifying women on screen. Below are some pictures of women as objects of sex and entertainment:



Figure 3.12 Kajol in Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge, 1995



Figure 3.13 Madhuri Dixit in Tejab, 1988⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Images of Madhuri (n.d) retrieved from <https://www.google.co.in/search?q=images+of+madhuri+dixit&num=30&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:en- on 17.07.2016>.



Figure 3.14 Dipika Padukone in *Cocktail*⁵⁵



Figure 3.15 Priyanka Chopra in *Fashion*, 2008⁵⁶

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 Koun* (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.⁵⁷

In *Tejrab*, *Madhuri Dixit* was presented as a vamp wearing sensual dress and derogatory fashions. Similarly, in terms of the films like "*Cocktail*", and "*Fashion*" women characters represents the urban women having carefree mind, independent, empowered and highly fashionable. But, in reality women are becoming the victims of the hegemonic masculinity to be just the objects of sex and entertainment to satisfy the male gaze and perpetrate the voyeuristic consumer culture.

⁵⁵ Srivastava P.(2014, October 11) Depicting women in Bollywood: The mould never changes [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/depicting-women-in-bollywood/1/395242.html>.

⁵⁶ Verma S. (n.d) *Whoa! Priyanka Chopra Is The First Actress To Win A Filmfare In 5 Different Categories!* [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://www.missmalini.com/2016/01/16/whoa-priyanka-chopra-is-the-first-actress-to-win-a-filmfare-in-5-different-categories/> on 16.07.2016.

⁵⁷ Patowary, H. (2014). "Portrayal of women in Indian Media: An Investigation". *Journal of Education and Social Policy*, 1(1). Retrieved from http://jespnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_1_June_2014/12.pdf on 14.07.2016.

According to Dasgupta (1996), the treatment of women in Hindi “masala” films has been a concern of feminists and social scientists. Kishwar and Vanita (1987) argue that women characters are often stripped of all realistic human and social complexities, thus ending up on screen as stereotypes.

Datta (2000), in reflecting on stereotyping, comments on the film *Duplicate* (1998, Yash Johar). In the film, a gangster tries to seduce the heroine and to the tune of a light-hearted song, pulls off her saree and gropes her. Datta (2000) notes that this form of retrogressive representation in a country where some women are battling against physical violation and sexual harassment can contribute towards trivialising sexual harassment. According to Datta (2000), polarises the feminine into the romantic lover and the sexual vamp that is on the wrong side of the law. This polarisation presents a “conservative ideology” (Datta, 2000) where the woman is presented more as an object or commodity rather than a heroine. Datta (2000) also remarks that films from the female avenger genre raise similar problems. Although they denounce rape, scenes of female violation feature centrally in the narrative⁵⁸.

Gopalan (1997) notes that the rape scenes provide the narrative ruse of the revenge plan, while providing the spectator with a range of scopophilic pleasures. This is just a way to recycle the old stereotypes in Indian films. Viridi (1999) also remarks that films portraying the “avenging daredevils” have sparked complaints about the static two-dimensional portrayals of women as victims or vamps, whores, suffering mothers or pleasing wives. These women, figured as retaliating rape victims, are merely grist for the Bollywood film mill furbished by and for male fantasies⁵⁹.

In their study of the mistreatment of women in commercial Hindi films, Dasgupta and Hegde examined a sample of 30 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 society⁶⁰.

On the other hand, while sports and athletics are concerned more man is sported than women in the past India and in the West. But, today real achievers like Sania Mirza and Saina Nehwal have changed all that. We may find Mahendra Singh Dhoni and

⁵⁸Ibid

⁵⁹Ibid

⁶⁰ibid

Sachin Tendulkar more often compared to them no matter the product they are advertising for. Women in Indian advertisements are being presented in less dependent roles than they were before. An advertisement for a leading women's fortnightly recently carried a delightful image of an aging woman in bridal attire. It later transpires that her daughter is getting her married again. This is an example of positive advertising that subtly carries a social message. Many mother and daughter advertisements in recent times bear out female bonding and marginalizing the role of men by cutting them out completely from such advertisements. Yet, women do not appear in ads for 'solid' products such as steel and cement and even if they do, they all side-tracked within the script.

Cinema is considered as the mass media of the monopoly phase of industrial capitalism of the 20th century. Currently electronic media and modern communication technologies have become the facilitators of financial markets as international corporations and financial institutions in their bid for monopoly and hegemony. The commercial international media and communication create the cultural basis for world imperialist system with the help of new and modern economic tools and communications technologies. By promoting and legitimizing the interests of western corporate industry the mass media leads as chief cultural institution which mediates the culture and the value system⁶¹.

So, seeing the activities of media, it appears that, it is not out of the influence of patriarchy. Traditionally, women are thought to be and adored in almost all the religions and civilizations as caring mother, wife or good homemaker where media has also a share of it to show women as so. Now, there is shift to show women as slim, beautiful or stylish and economically independent but in turn in the name independence women are being pushed as objects of entertainment and sex—media are re-energising the traditional concept of women who never are independent but it was not so long ago that women on the screens solely portrayed as submissive housewives taking care of their children and family. The confusion is well stated in the following:

⁶¹Tamakuwala S.J. (2010).The Third Chapter. Retrieved from http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/2563/9/09_chapter%203.pdf on 14.7.2016.

Many scholars who study the gender role construction of women in mass media fear the consequences of the “ideal woman,” who is usually depicted as a hyper-sexualized, domestic, and obedient creature. (Charlebois, as quoted in Murray: 2014, p.2)⁶²

3.6.2 Advertisements

Modern Indian advertisements play an 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 brassiers, 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. Dwivedi quotes Anand thus:

“...The process of commodification in advertising brings out the paradoxical nature of women’s role as consumer; she is the subject of a transaction in which her own commodification is ultimately the object. Advertising frequently commodifies women by exploiting their sexuality or fragmenting the female body into their eroticised zones such as hair, face, legs, breasts etc. Thus, in the exchange between the commodity and ‘woman’ in advertisements, a woman becomes a commodity too. Women are portrayed as sex objects who are probably casted to titillate the viewers by exposing their body parts. Women are shown wearing revealing clothes and take leaning and yearning postures – signs of incompleteness or lack of security⁶³.

According to a United Nations Research Report (UNRR, 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

⁶² Murray Shelby C. (2014). The Deceptions of Powerful Female Roles: A Feminist Critique of Homeland (Senior Project, California Polytechnic State University). Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1158&context=comssp> on 13.07.2016.

⁶³ Dwivedi R.R (2014) Women in Indian Television Advertisement: A Feminist Observation. *International Journal of Education and Psychological Research (IJEPR)*. Vol.3, Issue 1, pp.50-53.

Review Board, 1975). Shrivastava's 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 women is physical beauty.
- 3) A woman's energies 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.

3.6.3. Television

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 and as being 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 programme time is devoted to entertainment only. Twenty percent is given for educational programmes, and 20% is used for imparting information. Women are portrayed as gossip-mongers, and they are given advice 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.

Thus, with the influx of the women characters in films, television shows, having the traditional masculine profession such as doctors, engineers, lawyers of the past few decades people may vision the gender equality be grounded in society but in reality, it is a matter of discussion, are these strong female roles shown on the screen really promoting the gender equality or are they patriarchy in disguise? Though the women characters are seen cooking in their kitchen wearing the aprons, washing clothes in the bathrooms, not sweeping the floors but other background activities of her personal life, the dialogue she delivers, the behaviour she portrays, symbolize patriarchy.

3.7. INDIAN MEDIA: PRODUCING IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE

Media portrayals indicate the guiding norms and values of a certain society. Indian media work in such cultural saturated society where patriarchy as an ideology and as a practice affects women with keeping them subservient. Sex, gender, gender roles, sexuality and reproduction—these are inter-connected and are maintained in such a way to produce and perpetuate patriarchal norms in a country like India. Stringent socio-cultural and religious bindings over Indian women's sexuality and reproduction prioritize men to be domineering and women to be weak, powerless and helpless. And the politics of portrayals of men and women revolves around that ideology of power relations being based on patriarchy—where Indian men are shown as domineering and women as submissive. Thus, Indian media normalize the ideological and cultural norms and values of Indian society and again through this entire process they reproduce the same culture and ideology amongst the viewers. It is well stated in the following:

This intersecting system of representation serves a crucial ideological function: it defines who has power and who does not. In order to do this, some groups are shown to be domineering while others are portrayed as weak and helpless so that the power dynamics are confirmed and culturally perpetuated. Understanding these strategies of representation is therefore a way of understanding how power manifests itself through the conduits of ideology such as media. (Aich: 2009, p.24)⁶⁴

The stereotypical portrayals of women as submissive housewives, caring mothers, sacrificing sisters are thus preserved for the future generation so that patriarchy gets perpetuated and the unjust power relation can be internalised.

With globalisation continuing, the trend has also changed in Indian Media. Now, in media Indian women representing urban classes being projected as “independent”, “liberated” or “empowered” and looking good in terms of body i.e thin, sexy, fair and lovely. But, the reality is something different from what is happening to these people, because still now women are being used for market purpose as an object and property of the men. So, media, on one hand, preserve the societal norms regarding women in traditional role, and produce some new set of ideas which are intertwined with commodification and stereotyping of women. It is well stated in the following:

Space occupied by women in patriarchal society of the world in general and India in particular is defined by two characters, firstly as sex object and secondly as their all- pervasive stereotypical roles. So far as their objectification as sexual character is concerned, it also eventually ends up in perception of women as stereotypes worth nothing else than the means of sexual gratification and bearing children for the sake of familial and social dignity⁶⁵.

⁶⁴ Aich Priyanka (2009). The Construction and (Re)Presentation of Indian Women in Recent Mainstream Western Cinema (Master Thesis in Communication, Washington State University). Retrieved from http://www.dissertations.wsu.edu/thesis/fall2009/p_aich_112309.pdf on 16.07.2016.

⁶⁵ Dwivedi R.R (2014) Women in Indian Television Advertisement: A Feminist Observation. *International Journal of Education and Psychological Research (IJEPR)*. Vol.3, Issue 1, pp.50-53.

3.8. STATUS OF WOMEN JOURNALISTS

It has been a global view of the contribution of women work force in media. In context of India, a study on Status of Women Journalist in Print Media was conducted in 2002 by Press Institute of India commissioned by NCW (National Commission for Women). A two pages questionnaire was distributed in three languages to journalists across the country, from Punjab and Shillong in North and North East to Kanyakumari in the South and from Calcutta in the East to Kotach in West. This study turns into the reality that women in regional-vernacular press are lagging far behind their colleagues in the English language press. There is vast difference in the wages earned by those in English national newspapers and those in regional media. This report says that in regional press men and women are hired like contract labour on daily wages. They are extremely insecure and invariably it is the women that are the first to be axed.

The level of awareness of basic working conditions is very low on some key issues:

- i. 31% were not aware if any equal employment policy existed in their Organization.
- ii. 29% did not know if women were targeted.
- iii. 19.5% did not know whether formal appeal procedures or mechanisms for handling grievances existed in their organization while 50.7% were sure of no such facility.
- iv. 10% are not aware of any formal training programme in their organization while 42.3% said that no such facility was provided.
- v. 87.6% are not aware of any superannuation scheme or believe that it does not apply to them.

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).

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., 2010:366).

3.9. COVERAGE OF WOMEN ISSUES

As patriarchy prevails, women in India experience from their childhood systematic discrimination and neglect of which could be in the shape of dowry, female feticide, sexual harassment, discrimination in work places, women empowerment, maternal health, unemployment, illiteracy, inadequate nutrition, denial or limited access to education, health and property rights, child labour and so forth. So, media should be sensitised towards these issues and should address the root cause for the subordinate status of women in the Indian society. But, as far as Indian Media is concerned, women’s issues get a fallback position and are kept away from the mainstream reportage in media even though the entire society is plagued with burning women’s issues. Besides, women are rarely given professional coverage in fields like economic, social, political and business. The most disturbing trend in Indian media is that women are either poorly or negatively covered. For these reasons portrayal of women and media coverage of women’s issues has got immense importance India and has been a source of contention and debate by the media researchers.

Women’s issues⁶⁶ first began to be addressed in India when the State commissioned a report on the status of women to a group of feminist researchers and activists. According to the Report (1974), “Towards Equality” the heterogeneity of Indian experience reveals that there are multiple patriarchies contributing to the existence of multiple feminisms. “Patriarchy” ‘according to Sylvia Walby is “a system of social structure and policies in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (1990), and “Indian society is oppressively patriarchal” (Suma Chitnis: 1988).

⁶⁶ The period between 1960s-80s were significant globally, regarding women studies as this period was significant in bringing women issues to the forefront. During this period a number of studies in line with feminist thoughts on the place of women in society were spurred on as a result of second wave feminism and most pointedly the women’s liberation movement. (Pillay, Nerisa: 2008)

With this gloomy picture of Indian women there are two other giants i.e. crimes and violence against women are emerging to determine the fate of Indian women. It includes crimes involving sexual exploitation for economic gains like prostitution & trafficking, adultery, abduction, rape, wrongful confinement, and murder etc. on the one hand and crimes related to women's property like dishonest misappropriation, criminal breach of trust, domestic violence, dowry extortion and outraging the modesty of women etc. on the other.(Purnima: 2010; Dr. Alok Mishara et al: 2014).

Violence⁶⁷ against women has been clearly defined as a form of discrimination in numerous documents. It has its origin in the patriarchal structure that oppresses women (Amoros: 1990)⁶⁸. Gender inequality is the underlying determinant of violence against women⁷⁰. The (WHRC) World Human Rights Conference in Vienna, first recognised gender- based violence as a human rights violation in 1993. In the same year, United Nations declaration, 1993, defined violence against women as:

[...] any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to a woman, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. (UN :1994, Montiel:2013, p.15)⁷¹

Radhika Coomaraswamy identifies different kinds of violence against women, in the United Nation's special report, 1995, on Violence Against Women (Singh: 2012, p.199)⁷²:

- a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related

⁶⁷The perpetration of men's violence against women is understood as to be a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women. (Wall, Liz:2014)

⁶⁸ Monitel A.V.(2014) Violence against women and media: Advancements and challenges of a research and political agenda. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/publications/gamag_research_agenda_vegamontiel.pdf on 16.07.2016.

⁷⁰Gender inequality as a cause of violence against women also underpins approaches to prevention by organisations such as the World Health Organisation and in Australia, VicHealth, as well as, much of the research on the topic (Yodanis: 2014, as cited in Wall Liz)

⁷¹ Monitel A.V.(2014) Violence against women and media: Advancements and challenges of a research and political agenda. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/publications/gamag_research_agenda_vegamontiel.pdf on 16.07.2016.

⁷² Singh Bhupendra (2012). *Crime Against Women*. New Delhi: Mohit Books International.

violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.

- b) Physical sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution.
- c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs. This definition added 'violence perpetrated or condoned by the State', to the definition by United Nations in 1993.

The Fourth Conference of Women, 1995 has defined violence against women as a physical act of aggression of one individual or group against another or others. Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence which results in, physical, sexual or arbitrary deprivation of liberty in public or private life and violation of human rights of women in violation of human rights of women in situations of armed conflicts⁷³. (Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995 Country Report).

In India, the amount of coverage in mainstream media is inversely proportional to the actual prevalence of the kinds of violence and gives a false impression (Dr.Alok Mishara et al: 2014; Lucinda Marshal: 2004; Purnima: 2010). Most disturbing is the disproportionate coverage of sensationalized violence. Invariably, rape stories get far more coverage than domestic violence stories. In all likelihood, this is because rape stories usually focus on one individual woman, if she is attractive, she is a very marketable victim (Lucinda Marshal: 2004; Purnima: 2010; Sharada Adhikari: 2014). Hence, lack of appropriate media coverage of an issue leads to the implication that the topic is not important. Public awareness is significantly lessened if a story is not reported (Purnima: 2010; Lucinda Marshal: 2004).

The sexual brutalization of women is a highly marketable business and a profitable story for the news media. For example the Indian media, be it press or the broadcasters, choose to highlight the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl rather than to report about the success of women in recent Panchayat elections in the country.

⁷³ Ibid

The media have no time to show the actual problems of real India at the grass root level, its culture, traditions, faiths and beliefs and so on. They usually show only those handpicked stories which sell and increase their TRPs. (Juluri, V.:2013, March 19; Dr. R.P Raman: 2009, Bihar Times Indian Mass Media and its Role Towards Society whither Goest Thou?; Sharada Adhiari:2014).

In this regard it should be mentioned that both the CEDAW and Belem Do Parà call to the responsibility of the media in the elimination of violence against women and girls. In 1995 the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) called explicitly on governments to 'take effective measures or institute such measures (emphasis mine), including appropriate legislation against pornography and the project of violence against women and children in the media' (UN, 1995). The BPfA called on both the media and advertising industries 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.
- Disseminate information aimed at eliminating spousal and child abuse and all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. At the national level, laws regarding violence against women and girls in countries such as Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Spain and India list specific actions related to media industries. However, while the BPfA listed the actions which would achieve gender equality and stop gender-based violence, there is no single formal policy on gender and communication in most countries in the world.

All these mandates have been followed by extensive research developed by feminist scholars regarding media's role in the reproduction of violence against women.

These studies show that:

- Media content reproduces sexist stereotypes that associate male identity with violence, domination, independence, aggression and power, while women are depicted as emotional, vulnerable and sensitive, and dependent upon male actions (Elasmar, Hasegawa and Brain, 1999; McGhee and Frueh, 1980; Thompson and Zerbinos,1995).

- Women are usually stereotyped as sexual objects or even as mere body parts. Some examples show that: female nudity in magazine advertisements increased significantly around the world between 1983 and 1993 (Reicht et al., 1999); teen female TV characters used to be hyper-gendered (Holdden, 2012). In consequence, female sexuality is represented not as the sexual liberation of women but as the availability of women for male consumption.
- Only 24% of news subjects are women, 76% are men. Representation of gender in news is associated with relations of domination and subordination: whereas men are represented as sportsmen, politicians and businessmen, women are represented as vox populi –that is to say, they use to be associated to the lack of status and power (WACC, 2010).
- News reports of violence of gender tend to represent women as victims – associated to their lack of power– or, conversely, as those responsible for the violence of which they are victims. Usually, aggressors are not part of news reports (Diez, 2002; Vega Montiel, 2007).
- Popular music is a powerful vehicle for the reproduction of violence of gender. That is the case with rock and pop music, country, rap and, most recently, reggaeton. Feminist research has also shown how the Internet and ICTs are now part of the gender-based violence environment.

A final but no less important dimension of the gender-based violence and media relationship is the increase in violence against women journalists. Forms include sexual, physical, psychological, economic and femicide. This occurs in conflict and post-conflict countries where the human rights of female journalists have become more vulnerable. This happens with the consent of states and in an environment in which news media do not ensure secure conditions for women journalists to develop their work.

With regard to news channels, it is seen that competition relating to TRPs (Television Rating Points) has paved the way for unnecessary sensitization of news. The increasing practice in news media to show the real news with the help of dramatic serials has broken the conduct of electronic media to be fair in communicating the real problems. It is well stated in the following:

A number of incidents made one rethink where to draw the line between journalistic ethics and sheer sensationalism. While covering the Aarushi-Hemraj double murder case of 2008, news channels showed lewd animated pictures of the 14 year old girl along with the other victim in indecent postures. This is not an isolated incident. When a tragic incident of a video doing rounds in one of India's premier educational institution took place, media continued to be insensitive. (ibid).

Another shocking incident was a young girl being molested on a busy highway in Guwahati by a number of miscreants in June, 2012 and this was being shown through live telecast by a local private news channel. Similar behaviour was witnessed during the December, 2012 gang rape case in Delhi where news channels, as well as, some newspapers were more obsessed with the identity of the victim and her relationship with her male companion as opposed to the crime. (Chaudhuri A.:2012; Sultana: 2014)

This continuing insensitivity towards women of the Indian media raises some pertinent questions about whether news media is also commercialised and gendered. So, media, as has been entrusted with the crucial responsibility to keep people well informed on the kind of atrocities and violence happening around the country and raise awareness among the masses, journalists of both print and electronic media need to be extra careful. It should be sensible in addressing and focussing the gender issues. It is well stated in the following:

Press, the fourth estate of democracy, has to maintain a balance between good reporting and accountability. Journalists are expected to maintain a standard of neutrality, objectivity but not sans sensitivity. With electronic media entering the scene, our living rooms are flooded with 24 hours entertainment and news channels. Nothing escapes the gaze of media. (Parvin Sultana: 2014).

3.10 CONCLUSION

Lastly, it can be said that even though Indian women have formed organisations, staged various protests and initiated various crucial discussions and conferences, it seems, all have gone in vain as the media's tendency of portraying women as sexual

commodity for satisfying men and glorifying women's subordination has not changed. Sex stereotypes are still prevalent in Indian media contents and messages conveyed by it which signify the slow trends towards more varied and equal portrayals from Indian women's perspective. Women are only projected to serve the visual pleasure of the males as Mulvey articulated through the concept of "Male Gaze". It is already mentioned that stereotypes are the tools to keep minorities in the positions of limited and subordinate powers, which are also regenerated by the media contents and the messages it tries to focus on. So, even though Indian women constitute the half of the population, males are revered as the dominant social groups. Therefore, Indian media target the male audience to please them with the stereotyped portrayals of women and try to preserve the patriarchy for the generations to come. Males are displayed as independent, courageous and intelligent while women are portrayed as submissive and dependent more often performing home-making tasks and less often employed outside of the home and when they get portrayed as modern or independent they are projected in a hyper-sexualised manner.