Chapter – 1
Introduction

Women have served all these centuries as looking glasses possessing the power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size.

Virginia Woolf[1]

The mass media and the general public are captivated by findings of gender differences. Reviews of research on psychological gender differences began with Woolley's (1914)[2] and Hollingworth's (1918)[3] and extended through Maccoby and Jacklin's (1974)[4] watershed book *The Psychology of Sex Differences*, in which they reviewed more than 2,000 studies of gender differences in a wide variety of domains, including abilities, personality, social behavior, and memory. Gender researchers have emphasized the importance of context in creating, erasing, or even reversing psychological gender differences (Bussey & Bandura, 1999[5]; Deaux & Major, 1987[6]; Eagly & Wood, 1999[7]).

The question of the magnitude of psychological gender differences is more than just an academic concern. There are serious costs of overinflated claims of gender differences (for an extended discussion of this point, see Barnett & Rivers, 2004[8]; see also White & Kowalski, 1994[9]).

1.1 Understanding Sex, Gender and Gender Differences

"Sex marks the distinction between women and men as a result of their biological, physical and genetic differences. Gender roles are set by convention and other social, economic, political and cultural forces"[10]

Gender refers to those social, cultural and psychological traits linked to males and females through particular social contexts. It is a social structure that involves specific relationships with bodies. The term gives recognition to the expression of natural difference, that is, the bodily distinction of males and females. Sex and Gender are usually considered as synonymous but there if very thin line that differentiates the two. Gender includes the

psychological traits associated to males and females. Sex determines male and female but Gender makes us masculine or feminine. Sex is an ascribed status because a person is born with it whereas gender is an achieved status because it must be learned.

Varying widely within and across cultures, gender is also relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them. It can be defined as the sexual division of power related to living-giving and life-taking. It has also been defined as:

> *Gender is the structure of the social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinction between bodies into social processes.*
>
> (Connell, 2009: p.11)[11]

This implies that gender concerns the way human society deals with human bodies and their continuity, and the many consequences of that 'dealings' in our personal lives and our collective fate. Gender, like other social structures, is multi-dimensional or it is not just about identity or just about hard work, or just about power or just about sexuality, but all of these things at once[12]. Such arrangements are produced socially by the power of structures to shape individual actions, so they often appear unchanging. Yet, such arrangements are always changing, as human practices create new situations and as structures develop crisis tendencies.

The division of power also contributes to the sexual division of labour; women's work being restricted to the private sphere of life of the household while men's work extended to occupations in the public sphere. Indeed, this is not the matter to perceive that primacy is accorded with labour or work differences rather it is accorded with differences in power relations of gender (Miller, 2001)[13]. Gender differences affect the distribution of resources between men and women and are shaped by ideological, religious, ethnic, economic, and social determinants. One can observe the gender differences in various social networks formed at school, work and in volunteer activities. From early childhood, these groups are usually gendered segregated.

Rouse (2002)[14] says that gendered subcultures emerge that strengthen the perception of gender differences and erode the common grounds on which intimate, status-equal friendship between the genders are formed. It has been propounded that differences rather than

similarities are much more likely to be noticed, defined and acted on. Gender issues have become more mainstreamed in media reports than ever before but one needs to understand what gender implies. When cross-gender social interactions occur, such as in the work place, it is unlikely that men and women hold statuses with similar levels of power and prestige. Once the genders are socially constructed as different, it is easier for those with more power (men) to justify inequality toward those with less power (women). Social difference is constructed into social privilege.

1.2 Gender Relationships

We have seen that society or an organisation has a regular set of arrangement about gender and this pattern of gender arrangements may be called as gender regime of an institution. These gender arrangements including gender regimes and gender order reflect the gender relationships in society. By relationships, we mean the ways people, groups and organisations are connected and divided. It may be perceived that relationships are learned behaviours that are not innately determined; they can be changed over time to achieve equity and balance. They may be understood that gender relations are not necessarily direct interactions between women on one side and men on the other side. They may also be indirect- mediated, for instance, by a market, by technologies, such as TV or Internet.

Gender equality does not simply mean including equal numbers of men and women or boys and girls, nor does it mean treating them exactly the same. Rather, it is a kind of recognition that men and women might have as both of them have different aspirations, needs, and priorities, face different constraints, and contribute to the process of development in different ways. Gender roles are the expected attitudes and behaviours a society associates with each sex. This explanation places gender squarely in the socio-cultural context. But, such definitions of gender roles are often rigidly conventional, and increasingly fail to correspond to external change. These anomalous expectations are at the root of continuing gender inequality.

Gender inequality holds back the growth of individuals and the development of countries and societies, to the disadvantage of both women and men. "Gender issues" are not the same as "women's issues"—understanding gender means understanding opportunities, constraints, and the impact of change as they affect both women and men. It is increasingly understood

that partnership between women and men is the basis for strong families and viable societies in a rapidly changing world. Yet gender inequality remains pervasive. It is a matter of urgency affecting both human rights and development priorities. One of the keys to sustainable development is recognizing the costs of gender discrimination and the advantages of equality, making them visible to policy makers, community leaders, and families.

There is powerful impact of gender on social ordering of our relationships at the micro- level and our institutions at the macro-level, this has led to the emergence of feminist perspective. The feminist perspective asserts the structured social inequalities which are further can be called as division of being privileged and oppressed. Such inequalities are often maintained by ideologies. Thus, feminist theories focus on the unequal power relations between men and women from the point of view of women who are "ruled" by men in various settings. Overall, they offer a sound framework for organisations working to change women's inferior social position and the social, political and economic discrimination that perpetuates it.[15]

Even before the women's liberation movement, a literature in social psychology and sociology about the "male sex role" had recognized the social nature of masculinity and the possibilities of change in men's conduct (Hacker 1957)[16]. During the 1970s, there was an explosion of writing about "the male role," sharply criticizing role norms as the source of oppressive behavior by men (Brannon 1976)[17]. Critical role theory provided the main conceptual basis for the early antisexist men's movement. The weaknesses of sex role theory were, however, increasingly recognized (Kimmel 1987[18]; Pleck 1981[19]). They included the blurring of behavior and norm, the homogenizing effect of the role concept, and its difficulties in accounting for power.

1.3 Gender Portrayal in Media

Media plays a very critical role in understanding various social aspects. It not only gives people information and entertainment, but, according to Marshall McLuhan, it also affects people's lives by shaping their opinions, attitudes and beliefs (1964)[20]. It controls social if by invisibly transferring the dominant hegemonic ideology. Antonio Gramsci, is the first one to defined cultural hegemony, which is an intellectual and moral leadership, distinguished from armed force. It can be formed by cultural and political consensus through institutions such as the church, schools or media. The last one creates a state of domination by focusing on the

elites and the dominant ideologies, subsequently neglecting the subordinate groups (Durham, Kellner 2006: XV)[21].

In the case of gender roles, the societies have established the hegemony of males by institutionalizing of male dominance over women. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, formulated two decades ago, has considerably influenced recent thinking about men, gender, and social hierarchy. This is a contested concept. Yet the issues it names are very much at stake in contemporary struggles about power and political leadership, public and private violence, and changes in families and sexuality.[22]

Men have always been perceived as the head of the household and women were mainly housewives. Nowadays the differences between male and female roles are smaller; however mass media still perpetuates traditional gender stereotypes. Moreover, due to their great influence on people's attitudes, they can depict certain social groups in negative and unrealistic manner. They can be a very useful tool for those remaining power. By manipulating the message, media can create a certain image of reality, which is consistent with the policy of the dominant group. As a result, the reflection of a real world is incomplete and distorted. Although people are aware of the unequal representation of certain social groups in mass media, it is hard to remain objective and insensitive to its influence.

Women are more often presented in commercials, because they are seen as responsible for making everyday purchases. Men generally advertise cars, cigarettes, business products or investments, whereas women are shown rather in the commercials with cosmetics and domestic products. They are also more likely portrayed in the home environment, unlike men, who are shown outdoors. Another important distinction is the face-ism phenomenon in the commercials, which consists in showing the entire figure in case of women and close-up shots in case of men (J. L Matthews, 2007)[23]. The first method lowers the receiver's estimation of the intelligence of the person on the photo. The second one more often evokes positive associations.

The differences model, which argues that males and females are vastly different psychologically, dominates the popular media. Media have been influencing the gender role stereotypes and the feminist stereotypes. Most of the time, it has been argued that feminist values are ignored and ridiculed in all forms of media including conservative media,

mainstream, cable news, and entertainment media. These portrayals illustrate the key features of misogyny[24]. Media messages implicitly support misogyny that propels stereotypes about feminism. Media latch onto disagreements among feminists and presents sound bites giving the impression that media has split into irreconcilable warring factions. There is negative media attention which is reinforced with news format entertainment shows suggesting that women have already achieved polity parity and legal parity with men, and because feminists have nothing else to fight for; they fight among themselves.

Present research is an attempt to explore the role and scope of mass media addressing gender issues. Media is a very powerful tool as its audiences are informed, educated, sensitized and sometimes persuaded on issues. Thus, continuous exploration of programme formats and content formulation needs to be evaluated. The study is an attempt to find out factors responsible for downgrading conditions of women and the media's efforts in addressing the problem. For the purpose of the study, two national English and Hindi dailies will be taken as a sample. Selection of the sample would be on the basis of readership. At the same time two national TV channels will be taken as the sample. The selection of sample would be on the basis of channel's TRP. Thereafter, extensive data exploration, content analysis will be done. Such study is quite relevant in a country like India which is still struggling hard to cope with many developmental challenges. This study will come up with newer critical perspectives that would help the future researchers, policy makers, students, media planners and many more.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The media, especially mass communication, pervade our lives at all levels, may perpetuate and enhance stereotypical attitudes about the roles and situation of women and men. They may also contribute to different types of discrimination and unequal treatment between girls and boys, women and men and even contribute to violence against women. When mentioning gender stereotypes in the media, it is essential to define our target groups, what we mean by the media and what we mean by stereotypes, as there may be different understandings.

Gender and the media is a subject discussed quite frequently. Media content influences the way we perceive reality and also contributes to transmitting and shaping gender roles. Despite their crucial role in our modern high-tech society, women are not represented in the

media according to their number, to their social involvement, to their real life. Actually, there is a gap between what the reality of women's and men's lives in India is and how they appear in and through the media. The portrayal of gender as a product and the accompanying body politics in the media is well documented. Media can act as both an architect and as a protagonist – it can either be an accomplice to gender based discrimination by portraying stereotypical sensational images of women or it can provide balanced coverage that empowers women while exposing acts of gender bias.

Present thesis explores the scope and potential of mass media in getting resolved various issues related to gender problems. Such studies are quite relevant for developing societies like India and many countries of South and South- East Asia.

Keeping in mind the role of media as the Fourth Pillar of Indian democracy, the study attempts to develop an understanding of the factors which govern the shape of media content and critically situate the on-going concerns about representation of women on print media and television against the backdrop of globalization. Print media is considered as parent media which helps other media professionals by establishing the messages into their sub-conscious mind. TV professionals use this medium for idea generation for their visual programmes. At the same time increased literacy rate of the country, well informed masses, demand of literature by the common readers etc have bring this mass media in the forefront even in age of convergence. Print media is enjoying increased readership and has got huge share of revenue. Although most of the print media organizations are running with a profit making objective but how they are projecting the issues, how they are setting the agendas of public interest, are they trying to mould the public opinion or they are being driven by commercial objectives or others are the prime matter of concern in this study.

Indian viewers now spend more time watching news than reading news as TV news channels in India compete with each other for more viewership, more and more sensational types of news programs are being created vying for public attention and ultimately to improve their television rating points. To understand the connotation of statement let us now take an example, abrupt increase in sting operations being done by the news channels, that prove how

much time and energy is needed to create 'sensational' news and how journalists slog to furnish the proof while uncovering hidden facts, live on screen.

Radio, television, newspaper, magazines and films play a vital role in spreading information, propagating, educating and enlightening, strengthening national integration, creating national identity etc. Mass communication essentially means dissemination of information, ideas and entertainment by the communication media. If one was to ask what is today's most powerful vehicle in moulding of beliefs, attitudes, values and lifestyles, one would say it is media. By becoming more gender aware in content and language, media can present a clearer and more accurate picture of the roles and responsibilities of both men and women in the society. The need for mass media to cover the entire population is widely admitted.

> *Developing countries give priority to broadcast media, radio and television, even though the people's access is not always equitable and balanced.*

(Aggarwal 1994)[25]

Mass media has been influencing the social, cultural, economic and religious aspects of the society. The impact of mass media especially the television on the society has been compared with the effect of water dripping steadily on a stone imperceptibly eroding old values and attitudes in favour of new ones. It gives the people latest information and creates the need for change in contemporary society.

> *Gender refers to the personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being a female or male. It operates as a dimension of social organization, shaping how we interact with others and how we think about ourselves.*

(Macionis, 2007)[26]

Gender inequality may be one of the most popular issues that are triggered among societies. Women were being portrayed in a wide array of media forms – including films, primetime television dramas, newspapers, pornography, news magazines, cartoons, women's and girl's magazines, popular music, comic books, advertising and soap operas while men predominate for cars, travel, banking services and alcoholic beverages. A careful study of gender in advertising reveals that men usually appear taller than women, implying male superiority. Feminists quickly realized that effective challenges to certain standard ways of representing women in the media and popular culture depended on being able to provide empirical evidence of sexism. In doing so, the media tend to emphasize and reinforce the values and images of those who create the messages and own the means of message dissemination. In addition, these values and images are often influenced by commercial considerations. As a result, the viewpoints and experiences of other people are often left out, or shown in negative ways.

Mass media plays an important role in creating awareness and influencing beliefs, attitudes and practices. It is important to involve mass media in behaviour change communication (BCC) strategies for rural audiences in northern India as it can be an effective instrument in guiding social norms. However, to use various types of mass media judiciously and create long-term partnerships, it is critical to understand their potential reach and target audiences, and the interest of media agencies in partnering in efforts to promote behaviours that will have a significant impact on family health outcomes. As the learning of gender roles through the mass media suggest, not all media influences are created equal. Media presents young girls and guys an image that is unattainable. We as consumers buy into it. We strive to achieve this image and are more susceptible to judge others that don't.

> *Gender roles are widely shared expectations about how males and females are supposed to act. They are of special interest to feminist. People learn gender roles through the mass media.*

> (Brym & Lie, 2010)[27]

Gender roles are embedded in our heads at a young age. The ideology of women being domestic was imposed by media. The media exposure of women as victims of violence has

been rather sensational, sloppy and devoid of serious analysis. Obviously violence remains one of the biggest threats to the security of the women and children in many communities. The media actually tends to create significant perceptions about feminity and masculinity in the society. It is important to note that women are no longer missing from the Indian media, whether as media professionals or as subjects or even sources of news. If "symbolic annihilation" resulting in the absence of women from the news pages was the problem (worldwide and in India) a few decades ago, the media now tend to be replete with images of and references to women. The question today is not so much "Where are the women?" but "Who are the women?" Also, "When and where do they appear?" and "What are they shown saying and doing?" In other words, "How are they represented?" So it is imperative that, we try to investigate the ways in which every day popular media material affects people's lives.

1.5 Influential Source

The news media remain the major and most influential sources of information, ideas and opinion for most people around the world. They constitute a key element of the public and private space in which people, nations and societies live. They are in a position to further public understanding of the political, economic, social and cultural environment and to gauge the public mood.

A society that does not fully know itself cannot respond to the aspirations of all its members. So who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed do matter. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important. The cultural underpinnings of gender inequality and discrimination against women are often reinforced through the media across the world. It would be significant for the study if the status of woman working in media will be examined on different parameters like; whether women occupy more positions in journalism, especially those that involve decision-making? It is so because not only should media reflect the changes that have taken place in our time but also those changes that ought to take place. These changes include greater representation of the welfare and interests of sectors or groups that have long been ignored and therefore left at a disadvantage, among them. For media, it means having more stories that faithfully reflect the world's realities and these include the realities confronting half of its population. For practitioners in media, equality begins in the newsroom.

The media in general continue to depict public life as a male domain and even insignificant factors may contribute to strengthening or perpetuating traditional gender stereotypes and stereotyped attitudes. Today's social changes make it an evidence that the traditional role model associated with women is no longer appropriate and realistic as real life is showing more and more active women playing a lead role in society. This evolution should be more appropriately reflected in the media. Women are often depicted in the media in traditional and male dependent roles such as victim, sexual object, sacrificial wife and mother, as either victim or monster. All this calls for an in-depth study of the public image of women generated by the media.

"In many parts of the world, despite the apparent increase in women's visibility in media, progress seems to be slow and uneven. A study by the International Federation of Journalists" (Nieman Reports/ winter 2001)[28] showed that women journalists in the Americas accounted for 41 per cent of the total number of journalists; in Europe, 40 percent; in Africa, 25 percent; and in Asia-Pacific, 12 percent. The numbers drop down dramatically when the proportion of women in decision-making positions is considered. In the Americas, women journalists make up five percent of decision-makers; in Europe, three percent; in Africa, 1.4 percent; and in Asia-Pacific, 0.1 percent.

According to Bettina Peters who wrote about the report, female journalists still have to overcome many barriers if they want to reach their full potential in the industry. Across the world, these barriers include:

1. **Stereotypes**: cultural attitudes that expect women to be subordinate and subservient, as well as the negative attitudes toward women journalists.

2. **Employment conditions**: lack of equal pay, lack of access to further training, lack of fair promotion procedures, lack of access of decision-making positions, sexual harassment, age discrimination, and job segregation.

3. **Social and personal obstacles:** conflicting family and career demands, lack of support facilities, and lack of self-esteem.

Peters also points out a fact that women journalists know only too well: "The stories of women journalists who make it to the top are often ones of personal struggle and sacrifice."

Teresita Hermano and Anna Turley, in their article, "Who Makes the News?" (Nieman Reports/ Winter 2001)[29], points out that while there have been "immense changes" in women's participation in media in certain parts of the world, women still make up just 18 per cent of the news subjects in the year 2000. It was a mere one per cent increase over the figure five years before that when the Global Media Monitoring Project was first undertaken by the World Association for Christian Communications.

The common criticism of women's groups is that women are often portrayed in the media in stereotypical roles. Even those stories that are apparently meant to sympathize with women tend to portray them as victims, with little to say about how they are trying to deal with their problems. Front-page stories are usually about politicians and only a few are about women.

Yet, despite the importance of being given to the need for more women in decision-making positions, women journalists themselves say that such a change would not automatically spell a difference in the way that stories are reported. Having come into an environment where men used to dominate, not a few women journalists have adopted the mind-set of their male counterparts.

In a report prepared for the UNESCO by Theodora Ziamou ("Women Make the News: A Crack in the Glass Ceiling?")[30], a Malaysian journalist was quoted as saying,

> *It's a good idea, having women in charge of the newsroom. But I don't think that it would make such difference. It would if we were all, men and women, gender sensitized. Sad to say, not many of us are.*

And so it is therefore true that men—as well as women—in media need gender-sensitization.

While examining the research problem researcher has investigated the key issues related to gender and media by asking certain questions relating to gender insensitivity like examining the title of the story and if it possibly points to gender bias: (Example: Tomboy kills employer)

Media can be notorious in strengthening stereotypes. In the example given above, the stereotype of "tomboys" as aggressive and violent persons is strengthened by the headline and the story itself even though the sexual orientation of the person involved had nothing to do with the crime.

Journalists also tend to whip up interest in a story by titillating the reader. For example: "Addicts rape pretty coed." It was as if being pretty was an invitation to get raped.

Journalists should be gender-sensitive because they are journalists. As put forth by Libby Brookes in The Guardian (March 8, 2000)[31], "Men and women are not so fundamentally different as to choose entirely conflicting agendas – often it is about sensitivity rather than gender, an occasional shift of emphasis rather than a complete change of subject."

1.6 Aims and Objectives

In the present context, it is important to address the fact that gender stereotypes not only contribute to the status quo in terms of women's and men's roles, but also promote an asymmetrical vision of women and men in society. Furthermore, they are one of the most persistent causes of inequality between women and men in all spheres and at all stages of life, influencing their choices in education, professional and private life. Regarding to the diversity of women, and with the objective to eliminate complex and versatile stereotyping in relation to gender, media conscious of its widespread power of shaping public opinion should respect and account of the identities, situations and experiences of various women within society.

The aim of this research study is to examine the actual performance of print and electronic media concerning the coverage of issues related to gender. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To know the newsworthiness of gender-issues

2. To understand the perception of gender-issues by policy-makers in media houses

3. To compare the print and broadcast media's approach towards gender issues

4. To analyze the media framing of gender issues

The research also examines how the phasing out of gender stereotypes in the media can be promoted through close partnership with media companies in the framework of regular communication based on respect of human rights and human dignity while respecting their freedom and independence. In order to promote gender equality in an effective and concrete way, the study details as to how media should play a very active part at different levels.

1.7 Research Questions:

It is essential that the media promote gender equality, both within the working environment and in the representation of women. Media should open this debate and highlight the issue in the news agenda to better inform society and to overcome gender stereotypes. Journalists' unions and associations have a key role to play in this work, not least by ensuring that equal treatment for all media workers remain on media's agenda. In spite of the progress made over the last 25 years—and there are more women in media and more female executives than ever before—media still churn out female stereotypes that limit the power of women in society.

The objectives of the study take us to the formulations of the following research questions-

1) How and to what extent do the print and the broadcast media report gender issues?
2) How is broadcast media fared in terms of giving importance to gender issues as compared to the print media?
3) How news stories on gender issues are framed and to what extent the coverage by media is episodic or thematic.
4) What is the editorial orientation of the newspapers and news channels towards gender issues?

A repetitive use of notorious gender stereotypes (such as showing women only as carers of the family or as sexual objects) affects the public's perception of reality. The stereotypes are everywhere. They exist in the portrayal of glamorous women to promote cosmetics and beauty products or in stories of women as carers and homemakers, again often to sell household food and services. This phenomenon was denounced in the Declaration adopted at the United Nations Fourth World conference on Women in Beijing, 1995, which called on media owners and media professionals to develop and adopt codes or guidelines to promote a fair and accurate portrayal of women in the media. The 2005 GMMP report[32] pointed at the marginalization of women who make up 21% of people featured in the news.

This research thesis sets out the level and areas of inequality and measures that are used to address women in media. It also examines media performance in portrayal of women and

reinforcing or breaking down existing stereotypes and raises some of the key professional challenges facing journalists in their reporting.

1.8 Scope of the Study

In this research, the researcher has explained how media particularly the news contributes to gender roles. The media are instrumental in the processes of gaining public consent. It doesn't only reflect reality, but construct a definition on what should be accepted as reality. As media continues dominating and influencing the society, gender inequality arises which promotes gender discrimination. This discrimination evaluates the ability of males that give them supreme power over females. Therefore, this study shall attempt to primarily discuss the cause and effects of these inequalities. The focus is on media categorizing the kind of roles "suitable" for men and women.

This thesis is concerned with understanding different dimensions of gender socialization as portrayed through media, which vary in their impact on the young and which are essential to build up a gender identity.

Through media portrayal and the socialization, we also learn what is appropriate and improper for both genders. The vast literature on this topic has pointed out a consolidation of the debate. It allows us to identify important problematic bonds relative to the achievement of their gender identity and to build reciprocity and complementarities between the sexes and the valorisation of fundamental contexts such as society and media. Socialization is a relational process between society and media and its objective is to build identity [in this case gender identity.

Concern about the portrayal of women in everyday culture appears to have helped drive a feminist renaissance that takes a far broader view than the focus on high-powered role models which permeates mainstream debates. A healthier representation of women in public life should not be reduced to the portrayal of more empowered women, as this risks creating a decoy effect, giving the illusion that women have 'made it'. Instead, the focus should be on breaking down stereotypes, with non-traditional roles that show there is more than one way to

be a girl – or a boy – and reflecting the realities of growing up and growing older in today's world.

If the topic of gender is extremely important for the overview of sociological studies, it is even more important if it is seen from an intergenerational point of view speaking about gender socialization as circulated through media reports. This research thesis has primarily focused on how in particular media portrayal and the attitudes generated mediate traditional gender roles and the effect of their attitude towards gender roles as circulated in society.

1.9 Theoretical framework

Hall (1997:15)[33] describes representation as an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It involves the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things. Hall has explored representation as a signifying practice in a rich diversity of social contexts. These include film and image; photography; fantasies of 'the racial other' in popular media and the gendering of narratives in television soap operas. According to Hall (1997:15)[34], representation means using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent the world meaningfully to other people. Hall (1997:16)[35] adds that representation is the construction of meaning through language. Language plays an important role in shaping and developing what people perceive as reality. Taking into account his study, this research focuses specifically on how the representation of women in the print and broadcast media has been made and how it shapes public opinion.

The representation of women in media can be analysed from various perspectives. It could be representation in terms of portrayal of women, coverage of women's issues, empowerment in the workplace and the presence of women in important reported issues. When we talk of portrayal of women, we refer to the extent to which media depict women especially in comparison to men. The stereotypical perceptions are endowed in our society and issues of masculinity and femininity are constructed by our societies.

According to Trans Media International - TMI (2009), representation refers to the construction in any medium, especially the mass media, of aspects of 'reality' such as people,

places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts. Such representations may be in speech or writing as well as still or moving pictures. The involvement of mass audiences in the representations proposed by popular culture has been one of the main areas of debate in work on the mass media. According to Geraghty (in Curran and Gurevitch, 1996:265)[36] questions that are crucial to one's understanding of the media are:

How far can the mass media produce culture which speaks of popular concerns rather than interests of ownership? How do audiences engage with cultural texts as varied as for example, photographs, television series and bestselling novels? And to what extent do the values of popular press or television dominate or control the way in which we think about the world?

Geraghty's questions are very relevant and this study attempts to use Geraghty's concerns to specifically address the influence of the media in portraying women issues.

According to Fourie (2001:103)[37] media effects theories started by focusing on the effect of the media on personal behaviour and then developed to a more holistic approach to the effects of the media on society and culture in general. It thus began with simplified assumptions about the power of the media and gradually developed into complex and multiple assumptions, saying a lot not only about the media, but about society and humanity as such.

Fourie (2001:237)[38] further explained that the underlying assumption of long-term theories is that media do not have an immediate impact on behaviour and people's way of thinking, but can affect behaviour over a longer period of exposure to media content. There are many long term media effect theories including agenda-setting theory, modelling theory, social expectations theory, accumulation theory, spiral of silence theory, framing theory and diffusion of innovation theory.

For the purpose of this study the researcher will look specifically at agenda setting theory (first and second level) and framing theory.

Gatekeepers are the people or groups that have an impact on this process. They are part of the news organisation and their influence can also extend beyond the daily tasks of news identification, newsgathering and publication. Gatekeepers primarily decide what is going to

appear and how it is going to appear in the media. Fourie (2001:197)[39] states that once gatekeepers have selected the news events that they want to publish, they allot varying amounts of space (in newspapers) or time (radio and television) to news items. This leads to emphasis or de-emphasis of news events. If they allot more space to an event it means they regard it as being more important. With regard to gatekeeping, Hiebert (1991:91)[40] maintains that most media regulation starts internally, and that media's self-censorship can often be more crucial than outside pressures.

Though gatekeeping is introduced by the media themselves, it also seriously influences the content of newspapers. Fourie (2001:197)[41] affirms that the primary effect of gatekeeping is that it changes the original message in some way. This implies that what readers read in a newspaper may be a distorted reflection of reality simply because it has passed through various 'editorial checkpoints' before being disseminated to the public.

In terms of how public opinion is formed, Lippmann (1922:174)[42] argues that the public, and especially those exposed to media messages, do not respond to actual events, but to a pseudo-environment or the pictures in our heads. Explaining that the real world is far too complex for the ordinary person to handle, he said that people generalised and simplified reality. The relationship between this phenomenon and the role of the media was later described by McCombs and Shaw (1972:178)[43] who state that here lays the most important effect of mass communication, its ability to mentally order and organise our world for us. In short, the media may not be successful in telling us what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about (Cohen 1963 pg. 13)[44]

Sensationalism is often one aspect of agenda setting that relates to the media's portrayal of an individual or an issue. McQuail (2000)[45] stated that sensationalism is used by the mass media as an instrument to gain attention and prompt emotion from audiences. Sensationalism generates a certain level of interest in a story by using language or graphics that are thrilling and shocking. Wanta and Hu (1993)[46] conducted a study involving agenda-setting in relation to international news. Results showed that high degrees of conflict and stories that include Americans have the strongest agenda-setting impact (Wanta & Hu, 1993).[47]

Several definitions have been forwarded about media frames. Authors like Tankard et al[48] define media frames as "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration." (Cited in Weaver 2007:142)[49] Similarly, Gitlin (quoted in Steeves, 1997:25)[50] describes media frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual." Media framing can be compared to putting a picture frame around a piece of artwork to create a more aesthetic effect for viewers. "Journalists— often subconsciously—engage in essentially the same process when they decide how to describe the political and social world. They choose images and words that have the power to influence how audiences interpret and evaluate issues and policies" (Bryant & Oliver, 2009, p. 17)[51]. The media provide information to billions of people worldwide every day. These messages have consequences and significance for how people understand societal information (Sotirovic, 2003)[52]. Carlyle, Slater, and Chakroff (2008)[53] state that frames are an integral part of news stories and encourage interpretation and understanding of content (p. 172).

This research also uses feminist media theory to inform a critique of media. This approach is particularly important for the present study because the coverage of gender issues in media directly affects women and are certainly gendered. Although feminist media theory analyses all types of media, regardless of whether coverage would immediately be seen as gendered in nature, this theoretical framework is of obvious benefit for examining the gendered implications of news stories that deal with issues or events that are directed at women and have repercussions that are not gender neutral. Additionally, since feminist media theory devotes a great deal of attention to the stereotypical depictions presented in media of both men and women, as well as the underlying ideological frameworks at play in the mediation process, it is the ideal methodological framework to apply to questions seeking to understand the image of women portrayed in media

Like feminist theory in general, all feminist media theory challenges ideas of neutrality and objectivity in media creation. The perspective of feminist media theory is that contemporary media present images of women, of feminism, and gendered issues that do not represent women's lived experiences. Media create archetypes of female characters into which women

are then categorically placed – as victims, as wives, as mothers and so on. Feminist media theory challenges these categories as too limiting, confining and essentializing. The objectives of the researchers, academics and activists who align with the Feminist media theory are to change the boundaries of such categories, to create new categories or even to move past categorization all together. The goal is to create media that are more reflective of the world and more capable of acting in a way that reduces power inequities, instead of transmitting and reproducing such inequities.

By 1978 feminist research had informed a large body of gender stereotype literature, enabling the publication of two major texts on stereotypes studies. During the 1980s and 1990s liberal feminist theory maintained a place in mainstream academia, business, and government agencies. Acceptance of liberal feminist research, especially content analysis research, can be found not only in mainstream academia, but also in government agencies and media industries, such as advertising. According to Rakow (1986:18)[54] it is easier to accommodate women and minorities by instituting policies and making content changes in media than it is to change the socio-economic systems.

Drawing upon these theories and the works of several scholars, the thesis presents the theoretical underpinning for the research. This is detailed in the review of literature where the researcher has discussed dominant theories that address the media's representation and its impact. These theories allow the researcher to look at the context of newspapers and news channels in this study. Based on this discussion core themes have emerged. These themes have been used to analyse the way print and broadcast media portrays women and gender issues. The specific theories discussed suggest that an interpretive research strategy, employing qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis will be required. These strategies are further in Chapter three and four of this thesis.

1.10 Conceptual and Operational Definitions

A conceptual definition is a definition outlining the basic principals underlying a term. For the purposes of this thesis, a conceptual definition was defined as some explanation of the author's intended meaning about the concepts used in this research. The key terms and concepts mainly used within the scope and context of this research are defined as follows–

- **Audience** – A group of households or individuals who are attending, listening or watching something. It is often used to indicate viewers of a television program or another advertising medium. Audience measurements are expressed as percentages, or as estimated numbers of households or individuals watching or listening to a program.

- **Audience Composition** – Estimates of numbers of people viewing a program or time period, by age, sex, etc.

- **Broadcasting** – Signals transmitted over-the-air for television or radio for use by the general public.

- **Leased Channels** – Channels made available on cable systems, usually by local franchising authorities, for leasing to members of the public at posted rates, on a common carrier basis. A form of paid public access.

- **Media Mix** – The distribution of time and money allocated among TV, radio, print and Internet advertising that makes up the total advertising budget of an advertiser, agency or media buyer.

- **Pay Cable** – Any of a number of program services for which cable subscribers pay a monthly charge in addition to the basic cable subscription fee.

- **Pay-Per-View Television** – Pay TV for which subscribers pay on a program bases, rather than on a monthly subscription basis.

- **Target Audience** – A portion of the TV audience identified (targeted) by an advertiser to be the most likely to purchase its product.

- **Time Period** – An interval of time on a station, cable system or network. Sometimes, but not necessarily, an entire Daypart (prime time, daytime, etc.). In audience research, ratings for time periods are often calculated, as opposed to program averages, for purpose of evaluating station or network performance.

- **Time Period Rating** – Rating calculated for a specific time interval, such as 15 or 30 minutes, as opposed to a specific program.

- **Universe** – The population chosen for research study. Universe estimates are the estimated number of actual households or people from which the sample will be taken and to which data from the sample will be projected.

1.11 Organisation of the thesis- Chapterisation

The main attempt of this thesis is to study the performance of print and electronic media in the coverage of gender related issues. This is the first chapter of the thesis- Introduction. As seen, the chapter includes the introduction to the concept of gender, gender relationships and related issues, a brief introduction about the media portrayal of gender issues and states the basic questions revolving around this research. The problem statement, aims and objectives, the scope of the study and the operational definitions have been duly covered in this. Apart from this chapter, the research thesis constitutes five more chapters.

The Second Chapter is the Review of literature and is dedicated to the question of gender representation, discussing gender and media at length, and reviewing literature on the media coverage of gender related issues, and how media had portrayed them. Specifically, a vast body of literature is discussed, analysing findings of various research studies on gender coverage both in verbal and visual news.

The Third Chapter is the Research Methodology and Data Collection. It explains in detail the methodology used for the completion of this research. It also provides an overview of the research design, the data collection methods used, research instruments used and data analysis techniques undertaken. In this chapter, the researcher has also outlined the time frame of this study. It must be noted that the analysis is not only analytical but also interpretive. This analysis seeks to get beneath the surface meanings and examines more implicit social meanings.

 The fourth Chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative findings of the content analysis of newspaper texts as well as newscasts related to gender. To keep coherence throughout, this chapter consists of broad observations of the unit of analysis, which is the every single news story on gender issue published or broadcast.

Chapter Five finally concludes the thesis and summarises each chapter and details the results of the research study. It explores the comparative stress and importance given to gender discussion by print and broadcast media. It also provides a gist of how the coverage of gender discourses is examined over two time periods in the selected newspapers and TV news

channels to determine ideological differences among them representing different interests and catering to different types of audiences.

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