

COMMUNICATION, WOMEN AND MEDIA IN INDIA

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D E C L A R A T I O N

Certified that the dissertation entitled
"Communications, Women and Media in India", submitted
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eight credits out of a total requirement of twenty-
four credits for the degree of Master of Philosophy
of this University. This dissertation has not been
submitted for any other degree of this University
and is her own work.

We/I recommend that this dissertation be placed
before the examiners for evaluation.

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Chapter I

COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

Strictly speaking, the word 'communication' comes from the Latin word 'communico'--meaning 'to share'. Communication is essentially a social process, for to share means not only to pass on something, but also implies that others accept and recognize this particular act or sign. So, communication becomes part of the individual i.e. 'self' and of the social i.e. 'society' and both influence each other.

The transfer of information from person to person, creature to creature or point to point, is called communication. Communication may be in the form of sound transmission, e.g., bird calls, the beating of drums, human speech; or it may be in a form that requires sight i.e. signals, flags, gestures, paintings or pictures, writing, etc., or it may be in forms that require the utilization of other senses. ¹

Communication is the exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols. This has

1. 'Communication' in Collier's Encyclopedia, vol.7, p.73.

long been a subject of concern to scholars. The English literary critic and author, I.A. Richards in 1928 offered one of the first definitions of communication as a discrete aspect of human enterprise. He said, "Communication takes place when one mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced and in that other mind an experience occurs which is like the experience in the first mind, and is caused in part by that experience."²

So, communication becomes a social process because by the flow of information, the propagation of thoughts and accumulation of knowledge, people learn about new ideas and are influenced. Social scientists have identified various forms of communication by which myths, styles of being, mores or traditions have been passed on from generation to generation or from one segment of culture to another.

There can be no doubt that human development has been greatly aided by the ability to communicate. By far, the most important is vocal communication or speech and the development of language. Another key method is that of the printed or written word.

In modern society, the technology of modern mass communication results from the confluence of many types

2. Quoted in The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Macropedia, vol.4, p.1005.

of inventions and discoveries, some of which (e.g., the printing press) actually preceded the main thrust of Industrial Revolution into western countries. Modern technology has developed many communication devices, utilizing both sight and sound transmission in a variety of ways. The first and most dramatic examples of technical ingenuity were the telegraph and the telephone. These were followed by wireless radio, telephoto devices, motion pictures and television. These media have been responsible for the rise and social power of the new phenomenon of mass communication.

Along with communication, the medium through which it is transmitted also becomes important. According to American sociologist Schramm, "A mass medium is essentially a working group organized around some device for circulating the same message at about the same time to a large number of people."³ These are the media of the printed word i.e. newspapers, and newsprint, books, magazines, fiction and comics and the visual media, i.e. films, including art and commercial films, documentaries, news reels, advertisements, hoardings, billboards, along with radio and television. These have been called the mass media i.e. they deliver the message to every body--the mass.

3. Wilbur Schramm, ed., Mass Communications (Chicago, 1972), 2nd edn.

The message is conveyed differently by different media--the same message has different reactions, depending on the media, e.g., when we read a short story which has a tragic ending in a newspaper or magazine, we are touched; but the same when put across as a play, short film, or on television, may affect many more of us emotionally--even to tears and anguish. This is an important point for we realize that the visual impact through television and films, is much more powerful and appealing and its range and potency are greater.

Traditionally, the mass media have been regarded as "merely means of transmission".⁴ But in the 1960s, Canadian educator McLuhan (1964) coined the oft repeated idea--"the medium is the message"⁵--in the sense that its own peculiar attributes help to determine the very meaning of communication. It is not so much a neutral channel through which a message flows as it is a distinctive material in which the message is recast. This stimulated film-makers, photographers and artists, who were convinced by his advice that contemporary society had moved from a 'print' culture to a 'visual' one.

4. Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel, The Popular Arts (New York, 1964).

5. Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extension of Man (New York, 1964).

By the 1970s, the focus of interest in communication drifted away from McLuhan's view and started looking at the mass communication industries, i.e. the people who run them and the effects they have upon their audience; "who says what to whom and with what effect"⁶--the question originally posed in 1932 by the political scientist Lasswell, became the important focus of study.

✓The field of mass communication is vast and we realize the important part played by the media in education and in economic and social development. Various aspects, i.e. the history and development of mass media, a content analysis of the media, the study of news-flow, values, cross-cultural comparisons of communication, all can form important aspects of study and research.

The mass media develop distinctive styles in different countries, depending on the societal processes at work, the political system, the economic development of that country, etc. All these factors have a definite bearing on the content of the media, presentation, purposes used for and what control or controls are exercised, the size of the mass communication system, etc.

6. Harold Lasswell, "The Triple-Appeal Principle: A contribution of psycho-analysis to political and social sciences", American Journal of Sociology, 37, 1932, pp.523-38.

The expansion of various sectors of communication, and more particularly of mass media, increases the importance of and stimulates the expansion of press agencies which supply and circulate news to newspapers and broadcasters. Newspapers play a valuable role in explaining, interpreting and commenting upon events in society, especially when broad debates on major social objectives or world affairs are taking place that require expanded analysis. But, both books and newspapers require a degree of literacy which does not exist uniformly in developing countries. Hence, the role of newspapers in circulating news is decreasing, as broadcasting, particularly by television in both developed and developing countries, enhances the appeal of news-content with reporting and visuals.

In developing countries, radio was the first medium to be labelled 'mass' since a large proportion of the population could be reached by radio broadcasts and could also 'possess' the receiver. The proliferation of receivers around the world is estimated at one billion, i.e. an average of approximately one for every four persons on earth (1973 world survey). This shows that radio can be used easily and economically to reach outlying regions and for communication in many local and unwritten dialects and languages. Most countries have the capacity to produce programmes for broadcasting on radio in accordance to their

political and cultural needs. Despite its advantages, radio is, to an extent, limited as an international medium of communication because of language and technical barriers except in the field of music.

Despite progress made by the print media and the broadcast media of radio, it is the visual media of cinema and television which have captured the minds of the viewers in both developed and developing countries and hence their viewership has greatly outpaced that of other media.

"Cinema is one of the major technologies for mass entertainment as well as for disseminating information and various messages on a broad scale, alongside the press, radio and television."⁷ The term 'cinema' is customarily used to include all the aspects of the mass medium of films, from production to viewing and hence is considered "a complex, aesthetic, psychological and social phenomena. Films are 'documents' comprising pictures and story, accompanied by words and music; they are thus highly complex and multi-dimensional productions. Films play a multi-faceted role in society, in that they provide information, drama and music, fiction and entertainment, singularly or in combinations".⁸

7. Sean McBride, Commission, Many Voices, One World (Unesco, Paris, 1980), p.74.

8. *ibid.*, p.75.

The impact of visual media on the masses was first felt with the introduction of cinema. The growth and development of the cinema industry, both production and exhibition, have varied widely in different parts of the world. But, cinema till today remains one of the most popular media of communication and entertainment for the people.

The rise of television as a communication medium is obviously more striking since it started from a zero base only a few decades ago. Its phenomenal development has been not only in the proliferation of receiving sets but also in the quality of its output. Television has multiplied the amount of visual information and entertainment available to the public to a vast degree and has introduced new dramatic sensations which involve the viewer in far flung events. Television, more than any other medium epitomizes the advances made in communication in the last twenty-five years. 9

Though television has developed after cinema and is in a sense an extension of it in that both are audio-visual, television may in fact seem more like cinema at home, which can be switched on and off at will. Yet, in some ways, the two do not compare.

Television is considered even by children as a routine affair. Seeing a film on television does not hold the same thrill as seeing it on a full 70 mm screen,

9. *ibid.*, p.61.

whether it is for adults or children. One can watch television and be distracted by other activities. Television is also watched in the privacy of one's home and hence is not considered as a special privilege or occasion.

But its importance lies in its domesticity, i.e. bringing visual display into the home and secondly, immediacy for television can show events while they are happening, though we may not deeply sense that fact.

While there is a decline in the number of persons attending films in public cinema houses, they are nevertheless seen by much larger audiences through television. For instance, in France cinema attendance has dropped from 411 million in 1957 to 180 million in 1979. For the same period, the number of television sets has risen from 44,000 to 16 million. It is estimated that there is a cumulative audience of almost four billion television viewers who watch the five hundred films screened annually.¹⁰

Thus we see the newer medium of television giving a new lease of life to the older medium of cinema. Besides, it is also expected that the growing video cassette industry will provide still more films for television and home presentation. All this indicates that a new leisure time

10. *ibid.*, p.76.

industry has begun developing based on television, videos, and films, which are having a vital cultural, social, educational and economic dimensions.

This new growth (of television) has already begun to reach the upper and middle classes in developing countries and will continue to spread. Despite lack of resources, the growth of television as an industry has been encouraged for the positive outcome through this new medium's wider coverage and reach into inaccessible areas, particularly in large countries like India where its growth has been phenomenal. Hence it would be appropriate to study the growth of Indian television to assess the situation we are presently in.

Television or Doordarshan in India is over twenty-six years old. The first experimental television centre was inaugurated by Dr Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, on 15 September 1959. Programmes were telecast twice a week, for a duration of one hour each day. Twenty-one sets were installed for community viewing. In 1960-61, a project was launched by UNESCO to assess the effectiveness of social education telecasts on an organized group of viewers. The report proved encouraging and the number of such groups as teleclubs rose to 182 by the end of 1964.

Two types of television programmes were telecast from Delhi--general and educational. With the aid of the Ford Foundation, telecasting of educational programmes for Delhi schools began in 1964. The general transmission programmes in the evening were also increased to a duration of three hours in 1970. A number of Television Centres viz., Bombay, Srinagar, Amritsar, Calcutta, Madras and Lucknow came into existence from 1972 onwards in quick succession. Today, the number of these main base centres is ten and there are five relay centres, eleven Post-SITE/INSAT centres, and the number of low power and high power transmitter centres linked to Delhi number 147. A total of 173 transmitters are spread all over the country so that the total population covered is 3953 lakhs i.e. 58 per cent. Of this, the urban population covered is 1300 lakhs i.e. 19 per cent of the total population and the rural population covered is 2653 lakhs i.e. 39 per cent. The total area covered is 1162,000 sq. kms.¹¹

In 1975, Indian television embarked upon an ambitious tele-communication experiment called SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment) to link India with different parts of the world, as well as within itself, i.e. external and internal networks of communication were being developed.

11. Audience Research Unit, Doordarshan, Television in India (New Delhi, July 1985).

When SITE ended, Indian television technicians and programmers were ready with a territorial follow-up service for the Indian villages called SITE continuity service in 1976.

India in 1981 arranged to launch a geo-stationary device called APPLE (Ariane Passenger Payload Experiment) with European collaboration. This has been successfully used. India launched another communication satellite INSAT in 1982 and this quantitatively enhanced the tele-communicational, meteorological and mass communication capabilities, enabling direct satellite coverage to economically backward, and inaccessible areas in the country. Relay transmitters for satellites numbering 173 have been set up in all parts of the country. This has helped in providing a national television hook-up and so new vistas of impact have opened up.

Television started its commercial service in January 1976. This is a good source of income and the earnings from commercials continue to increase. The sponsoring fee is Rs 35,000/- for half an hour programme and considered low. "The sponsor here stands to gain more than twice as much exposure for every lakh he spends as he would if he were directly to buy advertising time."¹²

12. Praful Bidwai, Times of India (New Delhi), 3 October 1985.

Revenue from advertising and sponsored programmes during the current financial year may in fact reach Rs 60 crores, which will be nearly 15 per cent of the national advertising budget.¹³

Sponsored programmes and commercial advertisements use women as the main means by which to sell a product. Leading industrial houses buy time at a high price in anticipation of good sale of their products and to create a demand for their goods. This implies expectation of high returns corresponding to their investment.

The decision of the Government of India to introduce television a new communication medium developed in the West, to an Indian public which is largely rural and mostly illiterate, is one of the best examples of the views of the country's leaders like Pandit Nehru, who believed in the need for modern technology for development. Nehru is said to have remarked that 'India must learn to run before she can walk',¹⁴ but the question we have to ask ourselves today is--are we really moving forward or merely reinforcing traditional and out-dated views which ought to be changed?

13. N.L. Chowla, Times of India (New Delhi),
17 March 1986.

14. Jawaharlal Nehru, quoted in OECD Reports (Unesco,
Paris, 1960).

The tremendous increase of mass media, and its geographical expansion in almost all the developed countries of the world, as well as in Third World countries, gaining access into remote rural areas, especially in the case of television, has brought with it diverse social changes (in the broadest sense of the term), which have yet to be fully explored and assessed.

It has suggested that "illiteracy is not so great a social and cultural evil, since new media can bring even illiterate people into the orbit of communication by the use of the spoken word and image".¹⁵ Besides language it is the power of the audio-visual means of communication, new technologies and mass media, who along with all available means of educational, cultural and social resources have to be developed to their ultimate capacities to bring those who cannot be reached by the printed word into the mid-stream of social economic life and allow them to become citizens in their full rights and explore their own capabilities.

Among the functions of communication and media the most important are its role in socialization and education. In particular the role of an audio-visual medium

15. Sean McBride, *n.7*.

like television as a socializing agent becomes doubly important for it penetrates into the home where the family is the primary socializing agent. Hence the social context in which the message is transmitted is the determining factor in bringing about effective socialization.

The root meaning of the term 'socialization' is the process by which the individual learns to become social and a member of society. To socialize as the Oxford English Dictionary defines it is simply 'to make (someone) fit for living in society' meaning that he is taught to be sensitive to the co-existence and demands of others. The sentiments or complexes of ideas and feelings about social relations, about the self vis-a-vis others are thus fundamental. They set the social tone. Of course, a child is prepared for a particular kind of social life. Thus the term 'socialization' always has an added meaning: learning through various agencies the distinctive patterns that fit an individual into the particular place and sub-group in which he lives. 16

Hence television becomes the chief agent for socialization i.e. the provision of a common fund of knowledge which enables people to operate as effective members of the society in which they live and which foster social cohesion and awareness thereby permitting active involvement in public life. It also becomes an agent of education

16. Herbert Hyman, "Mass Communication and Socialization" in Davison & Yu (ed.), Mass Communication Research (New York, 1974), pp.40-41.

which is the transmission of knowledge, so as to foster intellectual development, the formation of character and the acquisition of broader perspectives at all stages of life.

Chapter II

WOMEN AND MEDIA: THE STUDY

Since the beginning of the eighties, we have had the year of communication--1983, signifying a new awareness of the importance of this area for development and that "communication is at the heart of all social intercourse".¹ In today's world, besides the traditional means of oral and written communication, the tremendous strides made by science and technology have helped in making the whole world united through a mass communication medium like television which with the aid of satellites makes it possible for people not only in the same country, but also in different parts of the world, to witness the same phenomena or events and share in a sense of global unity despite varying cultures.

The present decade has been notable in that the world has publicly been made aware of the contributions made by women to humankind. This can be seen in the declaration of the United Nations Decade for Women from 1975-85,

1. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow in Foreword to McBride, Sean (ed.), Many Voices One World (UNESCO, Paris, 1980).

which has just come to an end. In the twentieth century one of the main achievements has been the granting of Universal Suffrage to women in almost all parts of the world. This is one measure to ensure equality to women.

In the Indian context, the Constitution of India provides for a liberal and equalitarian society. The framers of the Constitution were visionaries and idealists, who hoped that its implementation would definitely help towards the development of a new social structure where inequalities created by caste, class, creed and sex would gradually dwindle in importance, as a new order and democratic rule was established.

The Constitution aims to secure to all citizens social, economic and political justice, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, equality of status and opportunity ensured and fraternity and dignity of individuals through other provisions in the Constitution.

Thus we see that "the Constitution provides equality to every person before law and equal protection of law. It also directs the State that it shall not discriminate against any citizen irrespective of race, religion, caste and sex. Further, equality of opportunity for citizens has been ensured in matters of employment or office under the State. In addition, it has been laid down that

the State can take any special measures for the welfare of women.

The spirit of the fundamental rights mentioned above relating to women has been further elaborated in the Directive Principles of State Policy which relates to a variety of issues like equal pay for equal work, humane conditions of work for women, maternity relief, free legal aid, etc. The Directive Principles unlike the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution, are intended to be Directives to the State for further course of action. On some Directive Principles action has been taken like the passing of the Equal Remuneration Act which gives rights for equal pay for equal work, while on others action is to be taken."²

India embarked on a programme of rapid industrialization and spread of education with the focus towards equality and the ideals of equal opportunity to men and women with no discrimination. Progressive legislation guaranteed women equal opportunities and participation in education, employment and in the political process also.

2. Central Social Welfare Board, Women Awake: Law also has meaning for you (New Delhi, 1985).

Today, thirty-six years after we became a sovereign republic, we see that women have emerged from the traditional confines of society and have entered many avenues of work and participate in almost all activities.

There are 331 million women in India now and literacy rates have gone up especially in the urban areas. For all ages of women we find that in 1981 the literacy rate was nearly 25 per cent as compared to 19 per cent only in 1971. In urban areas 48 per cent of the women are literate while in the rural areas only 18 per cent women are literate.³

Similarly, compared to the earlier years, we find that the enrolment of girls especially at the primary levels has increased. And enrolment in higher education has also considerably increased as compared to even ten years ago, i.e. in 1971 we had 22 per cent of girl students graduating while in 1981-82 the figure has gone upto 28 per cent. Among post-graduates also, the figures have gone up from 25 per cent to 28.60 per cent and among researchers from 20.70 per cent to 27.70 per cent. Thus

3. Census of India, 1981, Series-I, India, Paper 2 of 1983.

the total increase in the enrolment of girls for higher education has gone up from 22.10 per cent in 1971 to 27.70 per cent in 1981-82, according to statistics published by the University Grants Commission.⁴ Besides, women today can also hope to live longer, i.e. upto 50 years of age, thanks to increased health measures. This is very significant rise for women as compared to a life span of only 31.7 years during 1941-51.

Important legislative measures like the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 have helped to prevent discrimination on grounds of sex in matters of employment. The Factory Act was amended in 1979 which made it compulsory for employers employing 30 or more women to provide crèches for the children of women employees. The Maternity Benefits Act was amended in 1976 to cover also those women who were not entitled to benefit under the Employees State Insurance Act, 1958. Recently, there has been a move to grant maternity leave to unmarried women also. The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 also broke new grounds in that for the first time, in our patriarchal society, women were given the right to inherit property and to have absolute ownership. Also, the Dowry Prohibition Act has been amended recently

4. University Grants Commission Report for the year (1980-81), 1981-82.

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to make the offence cognizable, to enhance the punishment, both fine and imprisonment and to widen the scope of the Act to make it more effective, especially by making it obligatory to prepare a list of gifts given both to bride and bridegroom at the time of marriage, listing the values and names of persons offering it and getting it signed by both bride and groom.

However, in spite of this progress, we find that developments are not so admirable, for, a large number of our women, especially in the rural areas have not benefited. Again, the steady decline in the position of women in our society can be seen from the daily incidents reported, by the media like the press, about incidents of rape, molestation, bride burning and dowry deaths.

Such downward tendencies were reported by the Committee on the Status of Women⁵ who observed certain dangerous trends. There was a glaring disparity between men and women in access to health care and medical services, especially among the poorer sections. There has also been a persistent decline in the sex ratio, i.e. the proportion

5. Government of India: Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on Status of Women in India, 1971-74 (New Delhi, 1975).

of women to men in the population--for in 1901 we find that of the total population, we had a ratio of 972 females per 1000 males which has now come down to 933 females per 1000 males. Also, the gap between the sexes has been widening. Of the total population of 238 million in 1901, the female population was 117 million--a gap of 304 million. This rose to a gap of nearly 20 million in 1971 and has now gone up to a staggering figure of above 60 million. So, in the total population of 685 million (1981 figures of census) women only constitute 331 million.⁶

Again, women in India do not have a higher expectation of life than men. In fact, this trend which prevailed ^{earlier} is gradually getting reversed.⁷ This is evidenced by high rates of infant mortality, for it is seen that female infant mortality is 30-60 per cent higher than among male infants. Besides, a heavy toll of women's lives is also taken up during the child-bearing years. The maternal mortality rate in India was 573 per 100,000 births in 1968 and at present 418 per 100,000 live births.⁸

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6. Census of India 1981--India, Part II, Special report and tables based on 5 per cent sample data, p.23.
 7. Critical Issues on the Status of Women, Suggested Priorities for Action, ICSSR, 1977, p.3.
 8. Beyond Tomorrow--Discussion on Health, 13.5.1986. (Figures quoted on Television Programme of the same name).

This is rather high as compared to 200 in Sri Lanka (1962) and a below 100 rate in many other developing countries.⁹ Also, 20 per cent of maternal mortality cases die of anemia alone indicating lack of proper health care and nutrition.

Along with these demographic trends, employment trends for women also show a downward process. The formal female work participation rate is presently assessed at 14 per cent which is not very high when compared to men. Detailed analysis of employment in a large number of occupations in the traditionally modern as well as combined sectors provides indisputable evidence of increasing displacement of women from economic activity, particularly in the rural areas where their participation had always been high.

The increasing numbers and visibility of women in administration, professional and other white-collared jobs has hidden the stark reality that women en masse are being displaced from employment at an alarming rate, not only in agriculture, but also in the informal and formal industrial sectors in both rural and urban areas. The marginal increase in the number of women in the service sector can only minimally offset the massive decline in employment opportunities in agriculture, industries (household and modern), and traditional service. There is enough evidence to suggest that much of the increased employment in the services is in poverty-oriented

9. Critical Issues on the Status of Women, n.7, p.4.

occupations, i.e. personal and domestic services generated by the population increase, particularly in urban areas.¹⁰

The last problem of poverty results from very low levels of literacy. Female literacy is of special interest in the Indian context, because of the great disparity in male and female literacy rates. In 1901 there were 1466 male literates for every 100 female literates, but gradually the difference has now come down to a ratio of 201 for 100 females in 1981.¹¹

Yet female literacy is above 50 per cent only in the four areas of Kerala, Chandigarh, Mizoram and Delhi. In other states, literacy varies between 25-50 per cent, the lowest rates are in Bihar, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh where the literacy is between 11-13 per cent. Also, the educational profile in 1975 indicated that formal schooling failed to reach even modified goals for women, and that it had not alleviated inequalities. The combined result of population growth and educational lacunae is that compared to 65 per cent of women illiterates in 1975, in 1984, 71 per cent of women in the prime reproduction age group of 15+ were illiterate in 1984.¹²

10. *ibid.*, p.7.

11. Manorama Year Book 1984 India.

12. *ibid.*

II

These findings have aroused a great deal of attention and social scientists as well as planners realized that alternatives to formal education, i.e. schooling had to be found. This has resulted in a shift towards non-formal education which includes adult education, effective skill training programmes, etc. Along with these, the role of a medium like television which can overcome the handicap of illiteracy by its audio-visual nature, as well as penetrate into remote and inaccessible areas, through the help of transmitters, satellites and community television sets, can be a new tool for the spread of education by means, other than, formal schooling.

Because just as the family and community have delegated to the formal agencies like schools and colleges, the task of transmitting culture from one generation to the next, so also today we see a partial shift in this task to other agencies in society, especially in the field of mass media which combine non-educational activities and cultural transmission. "Television and radio, cinema, magazine and, in some ways, newspapers, combine the teaching of the young, with entertainment and commerce. Thus the media also become part of society."¹³

13. J. Halloran, The Effects of Television (London, 1970), p.29.

The media's function is the provision of social realities where they did not exist before, or the giving of new directions to tendencies already present, in such a way that the adoption of the new attitude or form of behaviour is made a socially acceptable mode of conduct, whilst failure to adopt is represented as socially disapproved deviance. 14

III

Television's rise to near dominance among India's media constitutes one of the most important developments in the eighties. Today, the country can boast of about five million television sets.¹⁵ Besides, there has also been an increasing expansion in the number of television centres, i.e. Doordarshan Kendras, LPT's, HPT's and nearly 173 transmitters, enabling an all India network.

There has been a boom in television during the past five years due to a number of factors, especially the sanction for expansion and development by the government. The first was the decision to begin colour transmission during the Asiad Games in 1982, held at New Delhi, where India played host. For this purpose, colour television sets were imported in knock-down conditions from other countries (to be assembled in India), and in a great hurry

14. *ibid.*

15. Times of India (New Delhi), 10 October 1985.

to cope up with expected demands. Besides, import restrictions were relaxed to facilitate these imports.

Another decision was to set up a number of transmitters and receivers all over the country as soon as the second satellite and earth-station was set up in space for post SITE and INSAT stations were already in operation. Doordarshan also became autonomous and broke away from All India Radio. Besides, a decision to allow sponsored programmes to supplement the revenues was taken up in 1984 and this led to a sudden awakening of the private sector as to the tremendous possibilities of advertising on a national medium.

Till 1984 the government was levying an annual broadcasting and license fee on television sets. This enabled some data to be collected on the approximate number of sets in use in the country. But, in February 1985, in an effort to boost sales and promotion, this fee was abolished. This has made it extremely difficult to assess the number of sets in use in the urban and the rural areas.

The last stated figures, according to licenses issued upto December 1984, were approximately 36,32,328 sets.¹⁶ Newspaper reports and surveys done by market

16. Audience Research Unit, Doordarshan, Television in India (New Delhi, 1985).

research bureaus, however, estimate that there are over five million sets in use in the country.¹⁷ In the urban areas the possession of a television set has become a status symbol and nearly 90 per cent of the upper and middle class households possess at least one set, if not more, either in black and white or in colour. Among the poorer sections, government has encouraged and helped the setting up of community sets for viewing during their leisure time.

The growth of television has vastly out-placed the increase in the readership of print media, for the average television viewers spends three to four times more of his leisure hours with the television set, than he or she does with the newspaper. People have begun turning to the television for entertainment as well as information and news, for the visual depictions lend more credibility to the viewer. How does such a powerful medium portray women?

We have no data on the exact quantum of audience and also no incomewise, agewise or sexwise break up of the audience. Since television is essentially entertainment brought indoors--it is difficult to assess, how many viewers there would be, even within the household and who

17. n.15.

all are watching a particular programme. In the case of women and children, especially their access within the home, to the television set, may itself depend on, their role and status within the family and the type of household they live in, i.e. nuclear, joint, etc. All these would determine how much of television watching they can indulge in or are allowed to by the family.

The Study

Television is a medium which has developed only during the past twenty six years in India. Yet it has made inroads in the lives of men, women and children and into the fabric of our society. We are particularly interested in its social and educative role insofar as it relates to the projection of women on its small screen. For this purpose, we propose to study 'the portrayal of women on television', keeping equality as the main focus.

The choice of television, as opposed to radio and other print media, is deliberate since this is a mass media which has had a comparatively later development than the other media. Also, the government realized the importance of this new medium which has a far flung range and can have easy access to many interior areas with the help of transmitters and receivers.

With the setting up of Doordarshan as an autonomous body, the installation of transmitters and relay centres, in quick succession in remote parts of the country and ⁱⁿ both rural and urban areas, the government which wholly controls television in India has ^{given} great impetus to the growth and expansion of this media.

With the government's ideal of planned social change and the objectives of Doordarshan to promote social change and to use television as an instrument to educate the masses, we would like to find out whether this media is fulfilling this function.

How does such a powerful medium, guided by the government's objectives of development, change and equality, perceive and present women on its television screen, is the chief problem that we intend to study, i.e. the portrayal of women on television in Doordarshan's programmes, serials and advertisements.

Objectives and Research Questions

Some of the crucial questions arising in this context are the following:

- (1) Does television depict change in the lives of women in India?

- (2) Is it being used to project new images? or Is it being used to reinforce the traditional images of women?
- (3) How are popular myths and rituals being used to perpetuate traditional roles of women?
- (4) Do standardized portraits of Indian women appear most frequently on the small screen?
- (5) What is the place of educated and professional women in various portrayals especially in women's programmes and television serials?

These are the questions that we will try to answer through the present study. We realize that many more aspects of the problem have to be studied and we hope that this exploratory study will offer sufficient insights to formulate a proposal for doctoral work.

Sources of Data and Methodology

The present study is primarily an exploratory study based on the audio-visual medium of television. Hence the primary source of information is Doordarshan or Indian television itself. Programmes for women, a popular serial and advertisements have been monitored over a period of one year between 1985 and 1986 intermittently

so that new developments and changes over time can be taken into account. For the present study, we have observed:

(a) Programme for Women: On Doordarshan we have a programme exclusively meant for women which is telecast once a week for fifteen minutes from 6.30 p.m. to 6.45 p.m. in the evening and relayed from Delhi. During the period of our monitoring, these were broadcast on Wednesday evenings and ten episodes of this programme which is called Mahilaon Ke Liye meaning 'For Women' have been viewed.

(b) Advertisements: Primarily those advertisements appearing during prime time, have been monitored for a year. These are put out by manufacturers of consumer items mainly to advertise their products while sponsoring programmes.¹⁸ The study of advertisements will enable us to understand the portrayal of women in the world of commercials.

(c) One sponsored serial--Khandaan: This had 52 episodes and has now come to an end. Of these 40 episodes have been monitored. This was broadcast once a week on Wednesday nights for 30 minutes at prime time, i.e. from 9.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. This serial has been studied using a scheme developed by the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation. This will help us to understand the roles of Indian women portrayed in television serials.

18. It is important to note that sponsors of programmes get 1 1/2 minutes of advertising time free. Hence the same ad is repeated two or three times i.e. before and after the sponsored programme or serial and sometimes in between also.

Personalities dealing with and or concerned about television, i.e journalists, writers, media watchers and officials connected with Doordarshan, have also been interviewed informally.

The growing awareness of the reach of media has stimulated much debate and discussion on the developments and future of media especially television in our country. This has led to a spurt of articles especially in the print media, i.e. the newspapers and magazines. These along with published and unpublished materials in the form of books and seminar papers have been made use of in this study.

Hence the materials used in this dissertation are from primary and secondary sources. The first chapters which provide the theoretical framework of the study have relied on ideas from published and unpublished material in the form of books, articles and papers. The fourth chapter is based on primary data gained by monitoring of programmes and advertisements on Indian television and through informal interviews. An analysis of the status of and the role of women as portrayed on television has been undertaken.

Outline of Chapters

In this study we begin from the general area of the history of communications and media. We briefly trace

the growth of communication and the development of modern means of communicating with the masses i.e. the mass media. Of these, the media with audio-visual capacities like cinema and television score over the others in developing countries where the majority of the population have not transcended the barriers of literacy, geographic location, etc. In a vast country like India, television with its networking is a means to link up hitherto inaccessible areas and segments of the population. Thus the study of the growth and rise of television as one of the most popular media in India is gone into briefly in Chapter I.

Women constitute one of the segments in the population whose access to education and other means of communication have been largely restricted. Despite governmental and constitutional measures to provide equality of opportunity to women, a large number of women in our country remain ignorant and unaware of happenings outside their sphere of activity. How does television which reaches into the home and functions as a new means of socialization and education within within the household, portray women in its programmes and advertisements is the chief concern of our study. The questions we will try to answer are spelt out in the present chapter (Chapter II).

Three framewords guide the study of women in society, i.e. the Feminist, Marxist and Patriarchal frameworks.

How do they, along with traditions and myths about women, influence the perceptions about women in society is the area we explore in Chapter III.

Chapter IV focusses on the specific analysis of how women are portrayed on television. How do women's programmes and advertisements project women and what are the roles they perform on television? Are these roles significantly different from the roles women play in their homes and in society at large?

The dissertation concludes by pointing out that the portrayal of women on television tends to conform to the existing norms prevalent in our society. Television with its immense potential can be used to reflect changes in the lives of our women as well as the diversity in their experiences. Can these be effectively conveyed to the masses by presenting changed portrayals of women who have entered into various professions and walks of life, is one of the crucial issues that needs to be discussed and further studied. Besides, the role of television as a socializing and educating agent for the future generation and its influence on children's perceptions about women, etc. is another area which needs to be researched. This will be explored at the doctoral level using content analysis to monitor the programmes on television.

Chapter III

WOMEN AND TRADITION

A woman's status still largely depends on the biological fact that she is potentially, if not in actual fact at any given time, the bearer of children. This has been a recurring theme in diverse cultures, irrespective of changes in the social role of women throughout the ages.¹

Besides their biological roles in reproduction, men and women are likely to have different occupations and different customs and rites and gradually develop different personality characteristics. Thus, "the physiological differences between the sexes are buttressed by the social order and institutionalized by mores and traditions".² So, the role of culture and tradition in reinforcing women's status in society becomes an important aspect of study.

The survey of literature points out that it is the gender bias and the tradition/culture bias, which are

1. "Status of Women" in Encyclopaedia Britannica, p.906.

2. *ibid.*

the dominant influences on any society despite technological, political and economic advances in both developed and developing nations. In studying women's changing roles different paradigms or frameworks have been used for describing changes in individuals and the larger society. We consider here, in brief, the Feminist, Marxist and Patriarchal explanations which have been used to study the position of women in society and then propose to take note of the type of myths and superstitions attached to women and the impact of these on the role of women and their status within the family and in society.

The Feminist Framework

The term 'feminism' has been widely misinterpreted and the very word conjures up visions of militant women parading the streets of New York and London, in the sixties and seventies of this century, demanding their rights and indulging in 'bra burning', 'free sex', etc. This has been the media build-up on feminism and the impact of media on our perceptions. However, the simplest dictionary meaning of 'feminism' is 'the advocacy of women's rights on grounds of equality of the sexes'³.

3. Alice Rossi, (ed.), The Feminist Papers--From Adams to Beauvoir (New York, 1973).

Within the feminist school of thought there have been two movements. The first feminist movement began in the West in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and along with other related women's causes was spearheaded mainly for the granting of and the exercise of women's franchise, and hence often known as the Suffragette movement. This culminated in the 1920s in the United States of America with the notification of the 19th Amendment, and also the end of the first drive for women's equality. Some of the women who contributed greatly to the movement in the West were Mary Wollstonecraft, Margaret Fuller, Margaret Sanger, Sarah Grimke, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Pankhurst, Margaret Mead and Simone de Beauvoir among others.

Margaret Mead can be considered to be one of the most prominent scholars of anthropology. The insights recorded by her pen, voice and camera, have contributed much to the discovery and communication of cultural variation. Mead is critical of those who tend to portray women as infinitely malleable, a creature "upon which mankind has draped every varying period costume in keeping with which she wilted or waxed imperious, flirted or fled".⁴

4. Margaret, Mead, Sex and Temperament in the Three Primitive Societies (New York, 1935).

Instead, Mead has been insistent in pointing out that studies of women per se observe the basic point--"the recognition that the cultural plot behind human relations is the way in which the roles of the two sexes are conceived and that the growing boy is shaped, to a local and special emphasis, as inexorably, as is, the growing girl".⁵

Mead's studies of the Arapesh, Mundugumor and Tchambuli--three primitive tribes of the Pacific Islands--were important in giving content to this basic view of the inexorable cultural pressure for both males and females to conform to the very specific gender rules of their society.

She found and reported the very considerable variation across societies in the content of gender roles. She found that "two of these tribes--the Arapesh and Mundugumor--have no idea that men and women are different in temperament. They allow them different economic and religious roles, different skills, different susceptibilities to evil, magic and supernatural differences. But any idea that temperamental traits of the order of dominance, bravery, aggressiveness, objectivity, malleability, are inalienably associated with one sex (as opposed to the other) is entirely lacking".⁶

5. *ibid.*

6. *ibid.*

This may seem strange to a civilization which in its sociology, its medicine, its slang, its poetry, and its obscenity accepts the socially defined differences between the sexes as having an innate basis in temperament and explains any deviation from the socially determined role as abnormality of native endowment or early maturation. 7

Thus Mead's theory that the 'personalities of the two sexes are socially produced and that the temperaments which we regard as native to one sex might instead be mere variations of human temperament'⁸ has been a very important foundation of the feminist movement.

The works of Simone de Beauvoir represent the product of the transitional period between the old and the new feminism, hence it can also be considered to be part of the historical collection of feminist writings. Beauvoir writes that "a man would never get the notion of writing a book on the peculiar situation of the human male. But if I wish to define myself, I must first of all say: 'I am a woman'; on this truth must be based all further discussion. A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a man".⁹

7. *ibid.*

8. *ibid.*

9. Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (1949)
Trans. by H.M. Parshley, New York, 1953, pp. 16-732.

She also points out that "the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of 'man' to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity... Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being... And she is simply what man decrees; thus she is called "the sex", by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute--she is the other..."¹⁰

Beauvoir questions this duality. Why is it women do not dispute/^{male}sovereignty? Whence comes this submission in the case of woman? According to her, the reason for this is "that women lack concrete means for organizing themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative unit. They have no past, no

10. *ibid.*

history, no religion of their own; and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat... They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition and social standing to certain men--fathers or husbands--more firmly than they are to other women... The bond that unites her to her oppressors is not comparable to any other".¹¹

Many of the latter day feminists have been inspired by Beauvoir's works and ideas especially to organize themselves into a movement--a unit that together can face challenges and oppressions. Hence, the vital importance of her work for the feminist movement.

The second feminist movement began in the West again in the 1960s when women found that despite the first feminist movement, society assumed that women by nature were destined to be home-makers and mothers. Because of this assumption, many women believed that their destiny was indeed the home. Any discontent they felt as described and analysed by Friedan (1963)¹² was believed to have resulted from individual maladjustments. Alongside this, many women had begun working outside the home, due

11. *ibid.*

12. Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique (New York, 1963).

to the introduction of labour saving devices for housework and the ability to plan their families due to advances in family planning methods, etc.

Much of the feminist movement has to do with the equality of rights of men and women. The main backbone of their movement is to eradicate all biases based on gender and sex. Both the earlier and the latter day movements have defined women as an oppressed group and have traced the origin of women's subjugation to male-defined and male-dominated social institutions and value systems.

Hole and Levine point out that "although feminism has a long history, the contemporary feminist movement is new in that there is no systematically organized body of the new feminist thought".¹³

Though pieces have been written that are already considered 'classics' within the movement, there is no single recognized theoretician or theory of the movement. Instead, the theoretical formulations are scattered throughout the multitude of the feminist writings. One can, however, abstract from these writings and construct the main outlines of feminist thought.

13. Judith Hole and Ellen Levine, Rebirth of feminism (New York, 1971).

Among the tenets of feminism are that all women share a sense of 'entrapment'. They also advocate the use of a new feminist invented phrase 'reproductive freedom' instead of population control. Some women come to choose this word out of a simple concern for health or an understanding that if they did not control their bodies from the skin in, they could never control their lives from skin out. Others felt that women's roles as that most basic means of production would remain the source of their second class status, as long as outside forces were allowed to either restrict or compel that production. For both these reasons, the new phrase 'reproductive freedom' was chosen, signifying an individual's basic human right to decide, to have or not to have children.

The ideas and issues explored in almost all of the new feminist writings fall into two major areas of concern:

- (i) Analyses of the 'biological differences' argument: the single most important assumption being that there are no inherent emotional, intellectual or psychological differences between men and women. All differences that are considered to be noted in 'nature' are, according to feminists, a reflection of socially-imposed values.

(ii) Feminist social critique-feminists describe the social values which distinguish male from female (on the basis of psychological characteristics and social roles) as a system of sex-role stereotyping. They are examining the ways in which the sex-role system, based on the unquestioned acceptance of the asserted differences between men and women, has in fact created those very differences. Thus, much of feminist writing is concerned with analyzing social institutions and values which reflect and reinforce the sex-role system--the family, the educational system, marriage, social expectations, etc.¹⁴

In addition to these two major areas, feminists are also writing about and analyzing the kinds of resistance the movement has encountered. "It is the politics of sexuality and reproduction which is most difficult for the first wave of feminists to discuss publicly, much less to change" says Steinem.¹⁵ These are important issues in women's lives and for their survival and fundamental to women's self-determination. Steinem also argues that "it is the patriarchal societies that wish to control

14. *ibid.*

15. Gloria Steinem, National Women's Conference Report (Texas, 1978), pp.10-17.

women's bodies as a means of producing children, that also try to control or condemn any sexual forms that cannot end in conception".¹⁶

The women's movement encompassing as it does such a diversity of individuals and groups, has adherents who represent almost every shade of political opinion regarding both women's issues as well as traditional political concerns. So within feminism we have the groups of radical feminists and moderate feminists.

Early radical feminist writers like Millett attack 'patriarchy' as an 'over arching category of male dominance'. She argues that the political power which men wield over women amounts to the fundamental political division of society. "Our society like all other civilizations is a patriarchy only in which the rule of women by men is more vigorous than class stratification, more uniform certainly more enduring."¹⁷ Millett's position implies that class divisions are relevant only to men. She denies that significant class differences exist between women. Her theory resembles that of Firestone insofar as it gives not only analytic independence to male domination but analytic 'primacy'. Firestone, however, grounds

16. *ibid.*

17. Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (London, 1971).

her account more firmly in biological reproduction, her aim being 'to take the class analysis one step further to its roots in the biological division of the sexes'. Firestone's theoretical goal is to 'substitute sex for class',¹⁸ as the prime mover in a materialist account of history.

Since radical feminists are the ones most concerned with raising consciousness, they tend also to formulate the theory and analysis. Indeed the very attack upon the social manifestations of discrimination against women in large part rests on the new feminist understanding of the psychological oppression of women. Radical feminists carry to an extreme the basic feminist tenets. Thus 'radical feminism recognizes the oppression of women as a fundamental political oppression wherein women are categorized as an inferior class based upon their sex. It is the aim of radical feminism to organize politically to destroy this sex class system. They also argue that as radical feminists we recognize that we are engaged in a power struggle with men, and that the agent of our oppression is man insofar as he identifies with and carries out the supremacy privileges of the male role.

18. Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex: The case for feminist revolution (New York, 1970).

Radical feminism argues that gender is not the only way in which women are differentiated socially from men: they see it also as the way in which women are subordinated to men. The genders are not "different but equal". Instead, gender is an elaborate system of male domination. The theoretical task of radical feminism is to understand that system, its political task is to end it. 19

The Marxist Framework

We now turn to a discussion of the Marxist understanding of women and her problems. In "the origins of the Family, Private Property and the State", Engels describes the change from a primitive communal society, with group marriage and collective work for collective ends, to a property oriented pairing social structure that developed class differentiation of work and life style. In the early period there were no status differentiations between men's and women's work. Both were necessary and contributed to the good of the whole community. But with the early forms of trading, and the development of the notion of barter and property, women gradually became like cattle (the earliest unit of exchange) and the property of men. Religions and customs developed

19. Alison Jaggar, Feminist Politics and Human Nature (Sussex, 1983), p.85.

to reinforce an emerging class society.²⁰

Marx emphasizes that the superstructure of society develops around the economic base or the means of production. There is a cultural lag--customs may carry over, even after the previous productive form has been outmoded. Gradually with the development of capitalism, women were confined to the home and her economic function became more that of a 'consumer' and an unrecognized domestic labourer.

Engels focused on the public rights of women in the early stages of society: participation in political decision making and their collective rights to depose a chief (for example, the Iroquis). These rights came from membership in the clan, which in turn was based on the performance of public or social labour.²¹ He was also impressed with the high status of a wife, relative to

20. It is important to point out that Karl Marx and his friend Engels produced a huge mass of writings in the 19th century. But Marx was often ambiguous and to a number of issues including the status of women, he devoted little attention. It was Engels who did undertake a systematic analysis of Marx's works. Hence what we know of today as Marx's view on women is actually Engels view and based on his writings.

21. Frederick, Engels, The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State (New York, 1891).

her husband. Women's supremacy and equal status in the community was destroyed by developments in the sphere of production with the invention of agriculture, etc., the forces of production, greatly expanded, a surplus was created and it became profitable to own slaves and so the first form of class society, i.e., slavery, came into being. This gave men a social dominance over women, as it occurred in the male sphere of production and moreover having acquired wealth, men now waited to be able to control its disposal and in particular, to be able to bequeath it, to their own biological offspring.

Thus, on the one hand, in proportion as wealth increased, it made the man's position in the family more important than the woman's and on the other hand, created an impulse to exploit this strengthened position in order to overthrow in favour of his children, the traditional order of inheritance. This, however, was impossible so long as descent was reckoned according to mother right. Mother right, therefore, had to be overthrown and overthrown it was. For Engels, "the overthrow of mother right was the world historic defeat of the female sex".²²

22. *ibid.*, p.119.

Engels is almost alone in providing an account based on materialist theory--one that sees the position of women varying from epoch to epoch, or society to society depending upon the prevailing economic and political relationships of the society. He has drawn an ethnographic and historical data to show that women's social position has 'not' always been subordinate to men.

The basic tenet for Marxists remains that the notion of class is the key to understanding all social phenomena, including the phenomena of oppression. The good society is the classless society. Marxists deny that women's oppression is universal or biologically determined. Rather the distinguishing feature is the causal link that it seeks to establish between women's oppression and class society, and that this can be abolished only by the abolition of class society.

From the Marxist perspective, the material basis of women's oppression must be found in a sexual division of labour. Though Marxism provides a clear acknowledgement of the social necessity of women's work, 'consumption' and 'procreation', it does not explain why it is women who do 'women's work', in the household (private sphere) or market (public sphere).

The division of labour by sex in procreation is unquestioned in Marxist theory. It receives little direct attention and is mentioned as 'natural'. This seems to mean that 'division of labour is biologically determined'. Yet, Marxism provides no theoretical analysis of procreation and gives no explanation of which features of women's biology make them so uniquely suited to perform procreative labour. Marxism takes it as self-evident that human biology requires women to conceive and bear children and to be responsible at least for infant care. Jaggar points out that "the apparent gender blindness of the Marxist is in reality a gender bias... gender is a constitutive structure of temporary human society. By concealing this, Marxist theory mystifies social reality and legitimizes the continued oppression of women. Insofar as it does this, it is another ideology of male domination."²³

Here it is important to take note of the newly emerged group called the Marxist-feminists from the women's liberation movement. This important group of women in the women's movement has an independent commitment to the struggle for socialism. From this has sprung not only a disillusioned critique of sexism on the left, but also an interest in the role women and feminism have played in revolutionary movements.²⁴ In particular,

23. Alison Jaggar, Feminist Politics and Human Nature (Sussex, 1983), p.179.

24. *ibid.*

the lives and works of socialist feminists such as Alexandra Kollontai have been retrieved and re-examined. This forms part of a more general effort sustained by feminism and politicization of personal life, to challenge the separation of feminist and socialist activity and to understand the relations between the struggle against capitalism and the struggle for women's liberation.

Yet the term 'Marxist-feminist' view is still an undeveloped theoretical perspective--at best we may call it a viewpoint to explore the relations between the organization of sexuality, domestic production, the household, etc. and historical changes in the mode of production and systems of appropriation and exploitation -- especially an "emphasis on the relations between capitalism and the oppression of women".²⁵

We would ^{now} like to discuss the salient features of the patriarchal framework which has been referred to both in Marxian and Feminist framework, for we believe along with Barrett²⁶ and Kuhn and Wolpe²⁷ that this has to be understood and related to the other two frameworks.

25. *ibid.*

26. M. Barrett, Women's Feminist Oppression Today--Problems in Marxist Analysis (London, 1980).

27. A. Kuhn and A. Wolpe (eds.), Feminism and Materialism (London, 1978).

The Patriarchal Framework

The term 'patriarchy' was formerly used very commonly to denote the 'governing of a family group by an elderly male, although there were other slightly different usages. Writers, such as Maine²⁸ and Morgan²⁹ originally gave 'patriarchy' a special place in the social sciences. A closely related term is 'patriarchate' defined by Jacobs and Stein³⁰ as "any society in which the feminine sex has lower status". It is mainly anthropologists, who have been responsible for introducing this term in the social sciences. The adjectival form 'patriarchal' especially as applied in the family has various but similar definitions.³¹

28. H. Maine, Lectures on the Early History of Institution (London, 1875), p.116.

29. L. Morgan, Ancient Society (London, 1877), p.465.

30. Jacobs and Stein, General Anthropology (New York, 1952), p.319.

31. A society may be called 'patriarchal' when descent is 'patrilineal' (i.e. the children belong to the group of the father), marriage is 'patrilocal' (i.e. the wife removes to the local group of the husband), inheritance (of property) and succession (to rank) are in the male line and the family is 'patripotestal' (i.e. the authority over the members of the family is in the hands of the father or his relatives). This has been the most precise definition given by Radcliffe Brown (1952).

Igitzlin argues that although there may be constitutional amendments on equal rights for women in one country, or a statute barring sex-discrimination in another yet everywhere sex-stereo-typed views based upon traditional norms and values prevail. Such a state of affairs has persisted for so long and has been so universal that deeply rooted socialization patterns have resulted. These patterns and the set of attitudes which underlie them, constitute the heritage of patriarchy, which has dominated most of recorded history and remains even dominant today.

"The crux of patriarchal thinking is a belief in male superiority and female inferiority"³² she writes. Acceptance of this distinction between men and women explains the sex based division of labour, characteristic of all patriarchal societies. She points out four sources which have legitimized this assumption through the ages-- biological, cultural and anthropological, religious and economic.³³

The justification for patriarchal rule is biological in that it emphasizes the greater physical strength of the male. In India, also as pointed out by Dube,

32. Lynne Igitzlin, "The patriarchal Heritage" in Women in the World ed. by Igitzlin & Ross, 1976.

33. ibid.

"the woman is considered analogous to the field and it is the male who sows the seed". The woman's role is passive and she spends all her important years in 'child-bearing and child-rearing'.³⁴

A second major source of patriarchal thinking arose from cultural and anthropological studies of ancient and pre-modern societies in family life. Many studies share the view that society evolved in stages, some dominated by 'mother right--matriarchy' others by 'father right--patriarchy'. Long before societal institutions were developed, the head of the family was a significant agent in maintaining customary law and was the chief property holder for its members and for future generations. So the prevalence of patriarchy, is supported by anthropological studies of the family unit in different societies and stages.

The limited freedom of women and children was the essential quality of the patriarchal family. Women were delivered unconditionally into the power of their husbands in order to guarantee their fidelity and husbands paternity of the children. Sexual relationships moved gradually towards monogamy and the physically stronger male obtained complete sexual control over the female.

34. Leela Dube, "Socialization of Women", paper presented at seminar on Socialization, Education and Women, April 8-11, 1985, at Teen Murti Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

The sexual power of the patriarch was based on the widely accepted view that women existed solely to reproduce and perpetuate the male line for the extension of the tribe and race.

Economic conditions, especially property rights and the mode of production and distribution, the shift from communal to private property, and the passage from matriarchy to patriarchy are used to establish the continuation of the patriarchal family. Engels has pointed out that with the development of agriculture and sophisticated tools, man needed more labour and subjugated slaves and women. No doubt the subordination of woman was total in patriarchal families where women were treated as cattle (an economic unit) and dehumanized as part of male property, to be lent out to perpetuate the line and always part of the patrimony of the male. Beauvoir too states that in the patriarchal regime, she is the property of her father who marries her off. Attached thereafter to her husband's hearth, she is no more than his chattel and the chattel of the clan into which she has been put.

Religion is the last source of patriarchal ideology. The tenets of all major religions reflect the attitudes and moral values of the male priests and scribes who enunciated them. Patriarchalism is evident in Muslim, Jewish and Christian religions who share the view that

woman was responsible for the 'fall of man' and hence woman as descendants of Eve are a source of danger. Woman, sex and sin are interconnected in religious teachings.

Religion nationalized and legitimized patriarchal practices already well established in the economic, social and political structure of the system. Andreas³⁵ lists some of the practices covertly or overtly encouraged by religion which include adultery, prostitution, female infanticide, suttee or widow burning, child marriage where young girls were even married to dying men, polygamy and arranged marriages, illegitimacy, wife selling and wife beating, slavery and prohibition against birth control and abortion. All these practices have been unequal for women and the heritage of patriarchy and religion has been that the beliefs and attitudes it promotes, provides a continuing rationale for the subordination of women within a contemporary society. These are reinforced through tradition and perpetuated through myths, symbols and images.

What is tradition? According to Shils, "tradition means many things. In its barest most elementary sense, it means simply 'a traditum'. It is anything which

35. Carol Andreas, quoted in Igitztin (1976).

is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present. It makes no statement about what is handed down or in what particular combination or whether it is a physical object or a cultural construction. It says nothing about how long it has been handed down or in what manner, whether orally or in written form".³⁶

Tradition in the strict sense is a neutral term used to denote the 'transmission' usually oral, whereby modes of activity or tastes or beliefs are handed down (given across), from one generation to the next. Thus, as applied to social institutions, tradition is the vehicle through which every child learns something of the mores and stock of accumulated knowledge of his forefathers.

The term tradition is also applied to some of the elements of culture so transmitted but not to all elements. Those elements which are singled out and given the status of 'tradition' are usually valued and it is strongly implied that they are especially worthy of acceptance. Thus, a tradition is a mode of behaviour or standard, produced by a group, as distinct from an individual; and serves to intensify group consciousness and cohesion.

36. Edward Shils, Tradition, (London, 1981).

Thus tradition is often advanced as the source of legitimacy and it has in fact proved the base of many forms of authority (q.v.). Patriarchalism is by far the most important type of domination, the legitimacy of which rests upon tradition.³⁷

Myth is a narrative tale concerned with the Gods and the nature and meaning of the universe and man. In political science and sociology, the meaning of the term is sometimes extended to include the whole world picture held by a social group and the value system anchored in that picture, i.e. 'the whole realm of world view, religion and values'.³⁸

Symbols are used to give meaning to our perceptions. A symbol such as a word, colour or an object is arbitrarily used to represent something else. This has led to certain symbols being 'feminine' and others being 'masculine' as for example, different colours for girls and boys i.e pink for girls and blue for boys. Again, Walum suggests that parents are guided to choose important boys names, but pretty ones for girls; and argues that American male names are short, hard-

37. From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, trans. & ed. by H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (London, 1947), p.296.

38. J. Gould, and W.L. Kolb (ed.), A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (UNESCO, 1964).

hitting and explosive, while girls' names are longer, more melodic and softer.

Delamont based on Walum's study about the American 'naming' situation, took the names of 378 girls and 399 boys aged 9-13 years in an English town, in schools which had a balanced intake of West Indian and Asian children. She found the findings correlated and writes that even diminutives are sharp for boys and soft for girls, i.e. Debbi for Deborah and Eliza or Liza for Elizabeth. Popular male names are Lance, Mark, John (sharp and short) and, if longer e.g. Robert, Alexander, etc. have diminutives like Bob, Alex or for other names Ike, Jack, etc.⁴⁰

In our country too Manu has ordained that female names should be melodic and not harsh sounding to the ears. Names, clothes and early influences on new born child, all contribute to gender stereotyping in both traditional and modern society. Through the use of symbols and their influence we learn in many different ways, of women being unequal to men by the usage of symbolic media, such as in language too, where

39. Walum, The Dynamics of Sex and Gender (New York, 1977).

40. Sara Delamont, The Sociology of Woman--An Introduction (London, 1980), p.17.

'man' means people, while women is the 'other'. 'Effeminate' is not a nice word to use for a man, while 'feminine' is a nice word to describe a woman.

Here the role of cultural imagery--reinforced in literature, sculpture, dance, drama, film, picture, painting or visuals, etc. express the ideas prevalent in the society for, the social context of image construction is not in a vacuum, but the positions in a group or society determine our perceptions.

Imagery and symbols are of great importance in shaping not works of art alone, but all perceptions of reality. An 'image' is an idea or picture formed in the mind. It may be composed of symbols or serve as the symbol itself. Imagery is a medium of expression which depends on the symbolic association of the perceiver. Five themes relating to women in imagery are predominant all over the world. According to a classification made by a women's studies group, they are: (a) frightening females; (b) venerated madonnas; (c) sex objects; (d) earth mothers; (e) misbegotten men.⁴¹ This has been incorporated here to study the various aspects in which men view women.

41. Hunter College Women's Studies Collective, Women's Realities, Women's Choices: An Introduction to Women's Studies (New York, Oxford, 1983).

Men's fear of women is expressed in a vast number of different symbolic modes. Rituals and beliefs relating to physiological processes are termed as polluting, i.e. menstrual blood, seclusion after child-birth, purification rituals, etc. Women are prevented from participating in certain rituals, e.g., in Hindu custom, secrets are whispered in a boy's ear during the the sacred thread donning ceremony, i.e. upanayan for the Brahmins, which no woman can hear or the sanctity would be lost. No woman can recite Gayatri Mantra,⁴² a privilege which was accorded to men only.

Folk tales present witches, sorceresses, rakshasis, semi supernatural figures who are sometimes beautiful or don beautiful disguises as tricks, but are most commonly ugly. The Western fairy tale also has an important female in its story--the ugly and wicked step-mother who has no male counterpart. In the Indian context also, we have the wicked step-mother, or a wicked aunt, sister-in-law or mother-in-law. This is clearly depicted in most plays, serials and films on television, where scheming mothers-in-law plot against their daughters-in-law.

We also have powerful female deities and mythological women like the Goddess Kali who is supposed to

42. Indigenous words.

be the 'powerful, supernatural agent of destruction' in Hindu mythology. The Goddess Kali symbolises death and destruction and is described as having red palms and eyes, blood stained teeth, face and breasts, fang teeth and a string of skulls around her body.

Explanations for these myths have been varied. Some base it on a Freudian analysis which begins with early childhood conflicts ending up in fantasies. Others go to the extreme of saying that a system of matriarchy once existed in human history, when women ruled. Awesome, uncivilized female figures are interpreted here, as representative of an older order threatening patriarchy or the rule of men.

Women have also been idolized as objects of love and veneration. The wicked witch has a counterpart in the fairy god-mother, the destructive goddess in the heavenly madonna or a good-natured goddess, e.g. Lakshmi or Saraswati (in Hindu religion) ever-smiling and with a peaceful countenance. Woman in this guise is self-sacrificing, pure and content. Her job is to make men (and children) feel happy and successful. In the Christian religion this form is incorporated in the image of Virgin Mary who is young, beautiful and pure and she is at once mother and Virgin serving as the symbol

of the 'good woman'.⁴³

The impact of these cultural and religious beliefs can be seen in our Indian films, television plays, serials and advertisements where we have women continuously sacrificing for their father, brother, husband or son their wealth, status or virginity. This woman is trodden all over like a door-mat, her husband may desert her for another, or her lover may never marry her, yet she would be true to him for her entire lifetime. In the end, she dies to save his life, the family name or reputation and is seen as a clear example of a tradition or myth being woven into the fabric of the visual media. Allen discusses how the four tenets of Hinduism--artha, kama, dharma and moksa are all for women. Women help men but do not share in the final goals.⁴⁴

Women are also seen as sex-objects mainly to gratify men's desires. Pornography serves this purpose to titillate the imagination of men. Their sadistic desires are also fulfilled through the visual media by scenes of violence, rape, beating and bleeding scenes. Women are also encouraged to respond to the dictates of male fantasies prevalent at a particular time. "If the depiction of women as sex objects depends largely on

43. n.41.

44. Michael Allen, "The Hindu View of Women" in Allen & Mukherjee (ed.) women in India and Nepal (Canberra, 1982), pp.1-20.

cultural artifice, the counter part, the earth-mother is seen as embodying what is 'natural'. Because women perform reproductive roles and nurture infants and children, they are supposed to be closer to nature, especially since they are intermediaries in transforming 'natural' humans into cultural ones."⁴⁵

Ortner, an anthropologist, sees the universal devaluation of women as related directly to the symbolic association of women and 'nature'. Her argument is that "every culture controls and transforms nature by means of symbols and artifacts. 'Culture' is equated with human consciousness and its products (thoughts and technology) which humans use to control 'nature'. Culture is superior to nature, for it can transform nature according to its needs and wishes. Women have been associated with 'nature' and men with 'culture'; hence, women are seen as inferior to men, and can be controlled by them."⁴⁶

Women are thus seen as closer to nature than men and accordingly assigned a lower status and men have manipulated their ideas so that they are the controller of nature and women. This is clearly seen in the Hindu

45. n.41, p.34.

46. Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture" in Michel Z. Rosaldo and Louis Lamphere (ed.) Women, Culture and Society (Stanford, 1974).

reverence for nature and the Earth Goddess or Dharti Mata who bleeds while her hungry sons exploit her. She is always depicted as powerless (like woman) in the face of onslaughts by the male Gods--Sun, Rain and Air, i.e. Surya, Indra, Vayu, who destroy or cause havoc.

In contrast to the above, where women remain a distinctive presence in the cultural constructs of femininity, the minute she begins to ape man, she is labelled as a 'misbegotton man'⁴⁷ or as manly, dominant, bossy, aggressive or unladylike. These are some of the adjectives, commonly used to describe her.

Women of ambition, who succeed in training their intellect are said to think like men. Man in the male centered world is the maker and doer of things, but the minute women infringe on their territory, they are chastised.

Thus we see that there is a similarity in the images of women over time and in different countries, in spite of cultural differences. Also that certain qualities are assigned to women, which are also assigned an inferior value. Religion and patriarchy have combined to reinforce the inferior status of women. Tradition

47. n.41., p.36.

as represented through myths, symbols, images and rituals, further reinforces the differences between men and women.

Although it would be a mistake to assume that any one image of the female is predominant in a society, or at a particular time, as Levi Strauss argues that "a myth cannot be understood in isolation from the full repertoire of the mythology of that society".⁴⁸ However, what is crucial is the role modern media of communication, especially television, play in projecting the culturally based, genderbiased images. Also, are myths, symbols, etc. being used to project a new image of the modern Indian women or not?

The message that woman is always dependent or weak, the emphasis on certain aspects of women alone tends to give a one-sided view of an incomplete woman image. This reflects, according to Chodorow, a male way of thinking, a tendency to deal with 'categories' rather than 'people' and results from the socialization process applied to boys. Though imagery may originate in the male mind, women also subscribe to and use it

48. Claude Levi Strauss, The Raw and the Cooked (1964). Tr. by John and Doreen Weightman, (New York, 1969).

while socializing their children and it is this that we have to fight against.⁴⁹

If our sense of ourselves and of the ways we feel and act, is shaped by predominant social images of gender, then presumably our perceptions, feelings and behaviour can be changed in part, by a change in imagery. And if our discomfort with past images is denied in part from the fact that we had little to do with their construction, then the positive directions these changes will take will depend on the extent to which women participate in image formation now and in the future. 50

We hope to understand the portrayal of women the in/media in the light of the preceding discussion to see how far women's existential condition or rootedness in the social context, whether seen in the Marxist, Feminist or Patriarchal frameworks, can be explained satisfactorily. We would also like to relate the Indian women's images in the media to their specific cultural situation which plays such an influential role in their lives through myths, traditions, rituals, etc. for we believe along with Mead that it is culture and social mores which play an important part in differentiating between the sexes and influencing behaviour and attitudes much more than the basic biological differences. We now go on to Chapter IV to review some programmes and advertisements on Doordarshan (Indian television).

50. n.41, p.37.

Chapter IV

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN ON TELEVISION

In this chapter we discuss and analyse some of the programmes and advertisements which are shown on Indian television. We monitored these programmes during the course of one year from 1985 to 1986.

We begin the first section of this chapter with a review of literature on studies done on the portrayal of women on television in the Western countries and some emerging studies on the subject in India also. We mainly refer to studies of women as shown in advertisements and as portrayed in general programmes like serials, etc.

The second section has a discussion on programmes produced by Doordarshan specifically for women viewers. We try to see what Doordarshan imagines will be of relevance and interest to women both in the urban and rural areas. Here we have monitored ten episodes of the women's programme called 'Mahilaoon ke Liye'.

In the third section of this chapter we discuss the portrayal of Indian women in advertisements and commercials appearing on Doordarshan. This is a new area which

has immense potential and Indian television has only recently entered this area. How are patterns and roles for women being depicted? Is it also progressing, as in the West, to a portrayal of stereotypes of women, rather than depicting changes that have come about in the lives of Indian women after Independence?

In the fourth section we discuss a sponsored television serial involving the highs and lows of a business family over whom a patriarch presides. We analyse the popular serial 'Khandaan' using a schema prepared by the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation to see how equality between the sexes is depicted.

Hence in this chapter we discuss and analyse how various programmes and advertisements portray women on television. Do they portray men and women in their traditional masculine and feminine roles, i.e. do they emphasize the house wife and mother role for the women or do they project the images of the new working women in the urban areas? How far is television using culture to reinforce the traditional roles of women? So far as the rural areas are concerned, are they depicting the rural woman who has always worked on the farm or the village woman who has worked for wages, in the battle of survival for the family?

Section ISurvey of literature

The dominant role of television in the propagation of ideas to the public, shows the need for a serious analysis of the types of images and roles it projects for and of women, through commercials and advertisements, entertainment and other programmes. Most of the research on the portrayals of women in all types of television programming originates in U.S.A. Knowledge of the American scene is important for developing countries in Asia and Africa who are also consumers of the American programme exports. It is also important to note that the ideas and images reflect the Western influence and depart from the socio-cultural needs and interests of the audience. Cross cultural influences are very important and begin to influence broadcasting structures and professionals in developing countries as pointed out by Contreras¹ and O'Brien.² The resulting discrepancy of such ~~im~~ports of outside influences and the relevance of their message to the needs of the audience constitutes

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1. E. Contreras, Across Cultural Broadcasting: Reports and Papers on Mass Communication (UNESCO, Paris, 1976).
 2. R.C. O'Brien, "Professionalism in Broadcasting in Developing Countries" in Journal of Communication 27(2), Spring 1977.

a major obstacle in utilizing television potential for purposes of national development. For example, thanks to the television broadcasting of an entertainment serial, imported from U.S.A., we have a new generation of girls called 'Lucy' in Haryana³ which is a pointer to the influence of television and that the modern technology of television has vastly increased the reach of the media. Besides more than the direct, its indirect influence has to be noted with concern. "By gradually shaping public opinion, personal beliefs and even people's self perceptions, media influences the process of socialization and shapes ideology and thinking. Added to this, there is a general uncritical acceptance of the views and facts presented by the media... Therefore, often media acts as a conservative force in society--one which wants to maintain the status quo and avoid major changes, whether in relation to class or sex."⁴

Of late, there have been several studies of media with particular reference to the role of television in various countries. In India too, there is a new awareness of the potential of television. Studies,

3. Kamla Bhasin, "Women, Development and Media" in K. Bhasin and B. Agarwal (ed.), Women and Media (New Delhi, 1984).

4. Ibid.

seminars and workshops are now being conducted to analyse the impact of television programmes.

In India, where only an over all 36 per cent literacy rate (for men and women) exists, it is obvious that the large majority of viewers are illiterate, yet captivated and interested in the visual media of television. Besides television carries a certain stamp of authenticity and people would tend to believe its comments and portrayals as true. This general uncritical acceptance of the views and facts presented by the media is very crucial with regard to women who form half the population and who are likely to be affected by the kind of images presented about them on the television screen. Often, the only proof and argument people give in favour of something is: "But I saw it on television".⁵ The ring of objectivity surrounding this truth is dubious for people realize that television is controlled wholl by the government, in particular the party in power and the bureaucracy. Besides, increasing importance is being given to commercials and sponsored programmes which are in turn controlled by large business houses. Also with the making of serials by film directors from Bombay, the tendency is to project the Bombay film world conceptions

5. *ibid.*

of reality and their 'ideal' images of women.

Here in this section, we limit our review to two aspects of women as portrayed on television, i.e.,

- (a) studies of women as portrayed in television programmes like dramas, operas and sponsored serials (the latest entry on the Indian television scene) and
- (b) studies of women as portrayed in advertisements appearing on television.

(a) Women in Television Programmes--Dramas, Serials, etc.

One of the earliest American studies on television content was made by Smythe in 1953, called 'Three Years of New York Television'. He analysed drama programmes broadcast (in New York city in the first week of January that year) and found that among many other things, drama concentrated mainly on people in their courting or child bearing ages and hardly on the young or old. Sexual discrimination was noted in the stories where male heroes out-numbered females in the ratio of 2:1. Among villains, the male domination was 4:1. Most characters worked in professional,

middle class jobs rather than in blue collar. White collar men workers out-numbered women 2:1.⁶

De Fleur, Melville in 1964 studied "occupational roles as portrayed on television" based on 6 months of drama in a mid Western town of U.S.A. in the 1960s. Like Smythe, he found that although ordinary jobs of modest prestige were held by half the labour force but ^{by} only 10 per cent of the T.V. labour force, yet there was an over representation of high prestige jobs, especially for males. This is a theme which constantly recurs in television content indicating perhaps an inbuilt class bias. He argues that 'television presents least often and as least desirable (from a child's stand point) those occupations in which its younger viewers are most likely to find themselves later... Television may be instructing children in ways that are not apparent even to close observers which may lead to later disappointments as the individual enters the labour force".⁷

6. D. Smythe, 'Three Years of New York Television' in National Association of Educational Broadcasters. Monitoring study No.6, Urbana, U.S.A. 1953.

7. Melville De Fleur, Occupational Roles as Portrayed on Television in Public Opinion Quarterly, 28(1), Spring 1964, pp.57-64.

This implies that the world of work on television should represent the real world of work precisely and that because it does not, it distorts reality. It also implies that children and adults react to the message system in the same way as they react to the reality that is portrayed.

Hall disagrees with De Fleur and argues that messages about violence and violence itself are different in kind. In a television film, it is about social relationships and behaviour, and crisis solving.⁸ Gerbner also argues that "the symbolic world is often very different from the real world... The power and significance of symbolic functions rests in the differences".⁹

So, when De Fleur says that one third of the jobs represented on television were involved with the enforcement or administration of the law, this can be viewed as a reflection of social values, not of objective social reality. He also found that in an occupation

8. Hall, Encoding and decoding in the Television discourse centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Birmingham Papers, no.7, 1975.

9. Gerbner, "Cultural Indications: The third voice" in Gerbner, Gross and Melody (eds.), Communication, Technology and Social Policy, 1973, p.571.

what was most valued was the ability to exert power over others, followed by money, prestige, travel, etc. and constructed an index based on this.

Seggar and Wheeler made an analysis in terms of sex and race of occupational roles portrayed on television in 1971. They studied job stereotyping and found that blacks and women were shown in fewer occupations than whites and men--57 per cent of black males and 65 per cent of black females were working in the five most frequently portrayed occupations. The actual occupations are interesting.¹⁰

MALE

Sl. No.	White Male (N-112)	%	Sl. No.	Black Male (N-95)	%
1.	Physician	7.6	1.	Govt. Diplomat	18.9
2.	Policeman	7.6	2.	Musician	13.7
3.	Musician	4.8	3.	Policeman	9.5
4.	Serviceman	4.6	4.	Guard	9.5
5.	Govt. Diplomat	4.5	5.	Serviceman	5.3
		29.1			56.9

contd...

10. J.F. Seggar and P. Wheeler, "The World of Work on Television: Ethnic and Sex Representation in T.V. Drama", Journal of Broadcasting, vol.17, 1973, pp.201-214.

FEMALE

Sl. No.	White Female (N-260)	%	Sl. No.	Black Female (N-20)	%
1.	Secretary	15.5	1.	Nurse	30.0
2.	Nurse	15.0	2.	Stage-dancer	15.0
3.	Stage-dancer	8.1	3.	Musician	5.0
4.	Maid	6.5	4.	Govt. Diplomat	5.0
5.	Model	5.0	5.	Lawyer	5.0
			6.	Secretary	5.0
		50.1			60.0

Source: Seggar & Wheeler, "The World of Work on Television: Ethnic and Sex Representation in T.V. Drama", Journal of Broadcasting, vol.17 (1973), p.212.

Seggar and Wheeler found significant racial differences as well as sexual differences. Women in the symbolic world of television are more socially disadvantaged than members of racial minorities.

Tedesco reports on the sex roles for 'major characters' in a four year sample of prime time network dramatic characters. She found that only 28 per cent of these characters were women. Of the female characters, 60 per cent were not employed while only 36 per cent of the males had no occupation. Also, women mostly worked as entertainers or clerical workers or in health or

education; whereas men were managers, or in military, government or law enforcing professions.¹¹

She also studied personality characteristics and non-occupational roles and found that women were more likely to be happy, comic instead of serious, married and non-violent. Men were more likely to be bad persons, unsuccessful, unhappy, serious instead of comic, unmarried and violent. Also women were more attractive, sociable, warm and peaceful while men were powerful, smart rational and stable, according to a (six) personality scale used by her. Tedesco's main concern was the gross under representation of women as compared to men in her analysis of prime time network dramatic programming telecast in the 1969 to 1972 seasons.

On personality characteristics McNeil (1975) found in the analysis of 43 programmes representing 1973 prime time series, that women differed from men in personal characteristics. Women were more frequently concerned with family, marital and romantic problems and had their problems solved by the intervention of another party. When employed, they were supervised

11. N. Tedesco, "Patterns in Prime Time" in Journal of Communication, 24(2), Spring 1974, pp.119-24.

by another person and their marital status was clearly identified.¹² Seggar (1975) also found a significant difference in the portrayal of marital status of males and females performing major roles in 1974 T.V. dramas.¹³ Women were more likely to be shown as married than men. Weibel (1977) also noted a predominant housewife/mother image of women in situation comedy, professional drama, and family drama, while drama-adventures, women were merely transit characters.¹⁴

Research evidence points to the greater relevance of marital status to television women and an emphasis of housewife/mother roles for women versus occupational and non-domestic roles for men, perhaps suggesting that marriage and motherhood and the associated responsibilities are more central to a woman's life than to a man.

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12. J.C. McNeil, "Imagery of Women in T.V. Drama: Some Procedural and Interpretative Issues" in Journal of Broadcasting, 19(3), Summer 1975, pp.283-88.
 13. J.F. Seggar, "Imagery of Women in Television Drama: 1974", in Journal of Broadcasting, 19(3), Summer 1975, pp.273-82.
 14. K. Weibel, Mirror, Mirror: Images of Women Reflected in Popular Culture (New York, 1977).

(b) Women in Advertisements

Dominick and Rausch (1972) studied the image of women in television advertisements screened in 1971 and found the same social value system.¹⁵ The top three occupation for males and females in the world of advertisements were:

Sl. No.	Females (N=230)	%	Sl. No.	Males (N=155)	%
1.	Housewife/Mother	56	1.	Husband/Father	14
2.	Stewardess	8	2.	Professional/Athlete	12
3.	Model	7	3.	Celebrity	8
		71			34

Source: Dominick & Rausch, 1972, p.263.

We must recognize here that though the occupations portrayed in the dramas and advertisements differ, there is no difference in the job stereotyping and male-female relationship.

15. J.R. Dominick and G.E. Rausch, "The Image of Women in Network T.V. Commercials" in Journal of Broadcasting, 16(3), Summer 1972, pp.259-265.

Subsequent to these studies, we have a later study by O'Kelly and Bloomquist on 'Women and Blacks on T.V.'. They have undertaken a content analysis of various characters (total 2,309) portrayed according to sex, age, race, occupation and the type of or commercial in which they appeared. Females and blacks were found under-represented in television roles. Although women fared better numerically in the commercials due to their consumer role, they had very little to do with new programmes and their occupations were to be highly stereotyped. Blacks, though under-represented, had a variety of activities.¹⁶

Culley and Bennet (1976) in their study, 'Selling Women, Selling Blacks' have made an analysis of the frequency of appearance and types of roles played by blacks and females in magazines, newspapers and television advertising.¹⁷ The findings point out that in most ads, women are portrayed as being more concerned

16. Ch. O'Kelly and L. Bloomquist, "Women and Blacks on T.V.", Journal of Communication, 26(4), Autumn 1976, pp.179-84.

17. J.D. Culley and R. Bennet, "Selling Women, Selling Blacks", Journal of Communication, 26(4), Autumn 1976, pp.160-74.

about personal appearance and household matters and less concerned with complex discussions. Women are more likely to be shown in the household setting and as housewife/mother. Women are rarely portrayed as professionals--doctors, lawyers, scientists, engineers, judges, etc. Although 20 million wives work in America, few ads portray women in a working situation or appeal to this segment of the market.

Similarly, Pingree and others have developed a 'Scale for Sexism'. To enable qualitative content analysis of media sexism, four levels are identified and it is called a consciousness scale: (i) Woman as a two dimensional non-thinking decoration; (ii) Woman's place is in the home or in womenly occupations; (iii) Women may be professionals but first place is the home; (iv) Women and men must be equals; and (v) Women and men as individuals. Ads were examined in magazines like Time, Newsweek, Playboy and it was found that a majority fell into level (i) and (ii). Level (iii) and (v) had the smallest percentage.¹⁸

18. Suzanne Pingree et.al., "A Scale for Sexism", Journal of Communication, 26(4), 1976, pp.193-201.

They point out that the media limits and stereotypes women and distorts reality by portraying women most in womanly occupations or in the home--level (ii) especially--and do not take cognisance of the fact that many women (about 40 per cent in the U.S.A.) have worked at some point in their lives.

"The medium also sets an agenda for public opinion by deciding the themes, structures and content of programmes for women or featuring women. They choose to omit many topics--shopping, housework, having a baby, etc.--which relate to mundane aspects of women."¹⁹ Feminist research into mass media have shown that women tend to be depicted as submissive and passive; and are portrayed largely in terms of their sexuality or domesticity, while men tend to be shown as dominant, active and authoritative. (Researches by Tuchman et al 1978, Janus 1977, King & Scott 1977, Busby 1975, Sharpe 1976).

It has also been pointed out by Lowry (1980) that it is still the use of the "housewife label that most distinguishes women from men--whether it is adopted with pride as the fulfilment of a dream or with apologies and resentment, or regret for another dream abandoned".²⁰

19. Helen, Baehr (ed.), Women and Media (London, 1981).

20. Suzanne Lowry, The Guilt Cage: Housewives and a decade of Liberation (London, 1980).

Lowry points out that the term 'housewife' implies the presence, whether shadowy or overbearing, of a man--a protector and possessor. "He is her status symbol and she is his, super-servant, it gives her a mask, it is a protection in society. Housewife is the X factor, the third dimension for which women are prepared from childhood, and develop when they ^{marry} Single or divorced women who may be performing many of the same tasks as the married, rarely, if ever describe themselves as housewives."²¹

Another important role projected for women is that of the consumer. Advertisers continue to sell to women by holding up an ideal image of a wholesome, capable, ever-smiling, stereotype for her to identify with--who may or may not be real. Friedan writes, "Why is it never said that the really crucial function, the really important role that women fulfil as housewives is to buy more things for the house?"²²

The basic explanation for the critical focus on sex-role portrayal in advertising lies in the close relationship which exists between advertising, the consumer

21. *ibid.*, p.4.

22. Betty Friedan, The Feminist Mystique (New York, 1963).

food industry and the crucial economic role of women as consumers (Ceulemans and Fauconnier).²³ As a result, a large portion of commercial messages envisage women as their primary target audience. Advertising effectiveness largely depends on the manipulation of the consumers self image (Weibel 1977).²⁴ Since women are perceived as the major consumers, advertising manipulates the female image in order to persuade women to buy.

In North America it was found that the portrayal of employed women was very low in both print and broadcast advertisements. Cantor (1972) found that women in T.V. commercials were mostly represented in domestic roles, while men were more likely to be portrayed in occupational roles or non-domestic activities. Women appeared mostly as housewives or, if employed were in traditionally female occupation.²⁵

On the Indian scene, however, we must point out that no leading study on the role portrayals of women in television drama and serials has been published,

23. Mieke Ceulemans and Guido Fauconnier (ed.), Mass Media: The Image, Role and Social Conditions of Women, UNESCO, (Paris, 1978).

24. Weibel, n.14.

25. M. Cantor, "Comparison of Tasks and Roles of Males and Females in Commercials Aired by WRC-TV during a Composite Week" in Women in the Wasteland Fight Back (Washington D.C., 1972), pp.12-51.

although voices are being raised about the kind of roles allotted to women. The fear of a 'bazaar culture being inflicted through sponsored programmes' has been well brought out by Bidwai (1985).²⁶ Chowla (1986) too cautions on the derogatory portrayal of women.²⁷

Krishnan (1984) has pointed out that it is a sexist portrayal of women that is emerging both in advertisements and programmes shown on television. Bhasin and Agarwal (1984) also emphasize that a male bias in the media exists and that "these biases are found not only in the popular media but also in educational media and development communication media".²⁹

We now go on to study the actual portrayals of women on television in India.

26. Praful Bidwai, Times of India, 3 October 1985.

27. N.L. Chowla, Times of India, 17 March 1986.

28. Prabha Krishnan, Times of India, 4 March 1984.

29. Bhasin and Agarwal, n.3.

Section IIProgrammes for Women

Some programmes on Doordarshan are directed specifically towards women and have come to be known as programmes for women. There are two prominent programmes, i.e., Ghar Bahar meaning 'Inside and Outside the Home' and Mahilaon Ke Liye meaning 'For Women'. Ghar Bahar deals with problems of food, nutrition, child health, demonstrations on how to prepare snacks, etc., vegetable carving, flower arrangements, etc. Occasionally they have discussions with a panel of speakers on topics like family planning, women in literature, the women's decade, etc. This programme is broadcast at 1.45 p.m. on Saturday afternoons for fifteen minutes since 1985. Earlier, it was on Friday evening but timings have varied, sometimes at 6.30 p.m., sometimes at 7.30 p.m.

Another programme for women is Mahilaon Ke Liye which till recently was aired on Wednesday from 6.30 p.m. to 6.45 p.m. for fifteen minutes. Lately, it has been changed to Monday and the timings are from 6.15 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. We have noticed that sometimes this programme is also called Grameen Mahilaon Ke Liye i.e. for the Rural Women, but no extra components seem to be included to make it special for them.

It was decided to view a few of these programmes to be able to understand the messages imparted through such a non-formal and education^{al} programme. It was decided to monitor the programme and accordingly four programmes in July 1985 and six programmes from mid-January to mid-March 1986 were viewed. It was felt that a time gap between viewing would enable us to see if any changes in content had been made. The general content we observed was imparting of knowledge on:

- (i) domestic skills like cooking, food preservation and pickle and jam making techniques;
- (ii) child care and health of the new born. Along with these, a few minutes of entertainment were provided by having a folk song from Haryana, Himachal, etc. usually in the studio setting.

In a particular month, i.e July 1985, we noticed that two programmes in a month, i.e. 50 per cent, was devoted to (a) making of different types of pickles with mango, and (b) pickling and preservation of vegetables. Again, while monitoring we found 2 programmes in March relating to pickling and food preservation.

In another month (February 1986) we observed that in three programmes consecutively, week after

week--every Wednesday, i.e. on 5th, 11th and 19th-- three doctors were interviewed on child-care. The programmes varied only marginally in that they dealt with prenatal and post-natal care for mother and child, another dealt with the care of the new born child along with necessary inoculations, and the third with the child and vaccines--all preventive immunization measure. While the themes were repetitive, the interviewed doctors differed in the timings of such immunization doses being administered.

The programmes were held in the studios. We had a self-conscious interviewer using a lot of make-up along with well made up, sophisticated doctors (2 females and 1 male), who seemed rather bored with the whole exercise. One particular lady doctor had a coiffeured hair-do, and seemed more interested in displaying her diamonds, as if she were attending a party. Rather than trying to answer questions and make herself clear, she preferred to use English words which were often not translated by the interviewer.

In one particular episode, where the bathing of the newborn was demonstrated by the doctor, a doll was used. Surely, in India with such a vast population, a child could have been found to lend credibility to the

rural viewers. Interestingly, the doctor advised rural women to use baby soap, baby powder and clean towels. The doctor also made use of plastic mugs and tubs for cold and hot water, as well as liberal helping of cotton wool. How many rural women could have emulated this process? Surely, traditional utensils of brass could have been utilized, clean old clothes and substitutes for soap--like flour made of grams and grains³⁰ or Fullers Earth³¹ could have been substituted. Rather a discussion could have also been held on indigeneous substitutes used locally in different parts of the country.

Actually, the understandable middle class and urban bias of the interviewer and interviewee comes right through in such programmes. Surely, a visit to a rural home, and the primary health centre would have benefitted all and contributed to understanding the problem faced by the rural folk. Charts indicating the right weights and time of administering vaccines were shown. In a country where 75 per cent of the women are illiterate, what impact can such programmes have? Some

30. Gramflour called 'besan' and wheat flour 'atta' are commonly used in different parts of India as safe to bathe infants.

31. Fullers Earth is known indigenously as 'Multani Mitti' and is considered to have cooling properties.

programmes must be developed after talking to women per se and finding out their fields of interest and ignorance. The focus could be on the role played by child care and health centres and Balwadis and Anganwadis.

Besides the important work women do outside their homes--working in the fields, looking after cattle, collecting fodder, etc., despite attending to domestic tasks, could definitely be aspects to be explored. Doordarshan seems to have completely ignored women's role in development especially in agriculture and as wage earners of the family.

Two programmes dealt with women's rights--one was a discussion with a woman advocate on the "rights of women", the other with a woman lawyer on women's rights, as given in the Constitution (Samvidhan me Adhikar). The learned lawyers expressed with great clarity the important rights women have today to property, maintenance and alimony payments during divorce, equal pay in most professions except semi-skilled and unskilled ones, etc. But again, instead of bringing forth women who had suffered or lost out on their rights or who had court cases pending, both in the rural and urban set up, we had the interviewer asking standard and repetitive questions. The effectiveness

of such a programme to educate women about their rights was totally washed out and it seemed a waste of time to have even brought such eminent jurists to the studio. The problem faced in law-courts and the judiciary by women or the kind of hurdles women have to cross before receiving justice; any one of these obstacles could have held the audience's attention and actual case studies would have helped to establish the credibility of Door-darshan programmes in the minds of women viewers and bring forth other affected women to discuss their personal grievances.

Only one programme shifted out from the studio and for only a few minutes. Still it was a welcome break to see a rural woman supplementing her income by sewing clothes on a sewing machine and daughter-in-law using traditional skills of crocheting and embroidery to make products for sale (a message which did not come through) in urban centres. The idea was on savings but yet it was a departure and a new beginning. An interview with a woman officer of the Post Office followed who advised on different ways and schemes to save with a post office. She pointed out that one could contact the nearest post office where literature about various savings schemes, with and without income-tax relief, were available. It was a commendable effort to at least

simplify and explain saving schemes to women.

Yet this very programme could have again gone to a nearby village and found out how many women actually are aware of the various schemes in the banks. The tendency in India is that women's income contributes to the running income of the home. The savings are hidden in conventional places--under the floor, kept in a pot, etc. within the home and is usually demanded by the males of the family with accompanying threats when in need. Going and saving in the post office would in itself be a step forward in development.

An interesting and positive point in favour of these Women's Programmes has been that by and large they have depicted women in all fields, i.e. doctors, lawyers, in Government service, as interviewers and in the home. This at least gives us an idea of the wide range of roles women perform and indicate that women have entered into various professions. This is in stark contrast to advertisements, where women's progress in education and in professions, remains totally ignored and unrecognised. Only the house-wife/mother/sex object/decoration images are focussed upon repeatedly.

The tendency to emphasize domestic skills and child care to the exclusion of other traditional as well

as modern pursuits is not peculiar to the Indian situations alone. Even "in the United Kingdom, television's 'further education' for women still consists mainly of series on cookery, dress making, knitting and so on; programmes dealing with women's retraining and re-entry to the labour market hardly exist".³²

Kishwar³³ found that short films dealing with health and contraception aiming at women, had a sexist bias in that it perpetuated the traditional Indian value of the superiority of having a male heir and pandered to the 'Munna' cult--the desire for women to gain status by producing a son. We feel even in women's programmes a conscious effort must be made to refer to a child neutrally rather than in the masculine gender.

We found that only 30 minutes of time in a week was spent for women, that is,

15 minutes (once a week) for 'Mahilaon Ke Liye'
and

15 minutes (once a week) for 'Ghar Bahar'.

We were unable to find out the number of hours devoted by Doordarshan to women's programmes as officially

32. Margaret Gallagher, Unequal Opportunities: Women and the Media, UNESCO (Paris, 1983).

33. Madhu Kishwar, "Family Planning or Birth Control", Manushi, no.1, 1979.

published. While such a programme format exists as far as plays, news, etc. is concerned,³⁴ this data is not available for Women's Programmes. But one is aware of the responses to viewers regarding such programmes. Such programmes could focus on the problems of running a home--whether in the urban or rural areas and involve men also, thus catering to the male viewers in the audience too. Instead this programme has been labelled as another women's programmes because of the tilt towards domestic responsibilities like bringing up children, nutrition, cookery, salad carving, etc.

The Audience Research Survey Unit of Doordarshan has collected some data on the time that most suited women. Afternoon viewership was discovered to be ideal. Hence the time slot of Ghar Bahar has been changed from Friday evenings (where it varied from 6.30 p.m. or 7.30 p.m.) earlier to Saturday at 1.45 p.m. for fifteen minutes. No information was collected on the type of programmes liked or expected.

But are women really free at this time under present circumstances? The reality is that recently the Government has declared Saturday as another holiday. This would only increase the burden on the housewife

34. See Appendix for existing format.

who would have to cater to extra demands on her time, because of the presence at home, of her husband and children. Or else she would have to go on social visits, shopping, or succumb to well deserved rest. Besides in most urban areas, 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. is lunch time for most families. How many women--housewives or working women have time to switch on the T.V. set? Unlike the American situation where T.V. (like radio in India) blares throughout the day, as a companion to women, in the Indian context, this is not so. Instead, why could we not have 'Ghar Bahar' telecast on Sundays in between the innumerable sponsored programmes on Sunday morning, say any time between 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.? This is the time when the eyes of over 50 per cent of our population (at least) are riveted on to the Doordarshan screen. Surely, then the attention of the majority of viewers could be obtained immediately. Besides a large number of vital issues could be discussed both relating to women and to society as a whole, regarding changes in the women's role in the family and the impact of technology and development on social change. Topics like the necessary number of vaccines, inoculations, times for check up and health care, could be presented at a time when both working women and housewives are free and when men also, who are more literate

than women could pay attention, or older, educated children could take note of these valid points. Or a rural quiz could be conducted to ascertain the existing knowledge of the men and womenfolk on matters relating to education, health, law, etc. to test their awareness.

Talking to media critics, one of the first observations about women's programmes was that they seemed to hold little interest for the women viewers in the audience. It was pointed out that what one notices is that during women's programmes, women are outside the house or busy in their usual activities of seeing their children playing, chatting, buying something, etc. Just as the streets are deserted during the Sunday evening film, so also the streets are full during the women's programmes, implying that it does not hold their interest, nor are programmes broadcast at a suitable time. Women's programmes need not be alienated from the family--rather it should be integrated into the time when the whole family is around. In fact, the P.C. Joshi Committee had recommended prime time during the week to broadcast these programmes.

There also seems to be utter disregard for the recommendations made by various committees--on the

one hand we say we have no information and feed back; on the other, recommendations that are made, based on field studies, are simply not taken up. For example, no action has been taken on studies by Agarwal on SITE transmissions who points out that "use of English sounding technical names (in programmes on agriculture and animal husbandry) compounded the problem... None of the languages spoken in the village was used on T.V."³⁵ How then can we expect women or men in rural areas particularly, to follow the lavish advice given through programmes?

In programmes for women, except for occasionally good programmes or short films, the general thrust is towards cooking, home decoration and child care. Even in child care again, physical aspects of feeding, dress-making, etc. are discussed, rather than attitudes towards the child and differential treatment to the male and female child.

Some new directors are trying out innovative programmes but often radical ideas, especially in films made by women's groups, e.g. CENDIT, etc.³⁶ Attempts to even screen them are not accepted or when they are,

35. Binod C. Agrawal, Television Comes to a Village: An Evaluation of SITE, Ahmedabad, ISRO, Oct 1978, Mimeo.

36. CENDIT: Centre for the Development of Instructional Technology, a development group experimenting with media alternatives.

they are cut down mercilessly. Even during panel discussions, the studio crew intercept and stereotyped, typical reactions emerge. On a panel discussion on rape, for example, some panelists, and the camera crew too, felt it was more due to women's provocative dress and manners rather than as a result of cinema and other media. So we have two types of bias--bias of policy and bias of people within the system--mostly male editors, cameramen, etc.

It is important to show areas where women are moving forward and achieving like the work of SEWA in Ahmedabad and Women's Action Forum and know how the problem is being tackled at regional levels. Simply focusing on the negative aspects--dowry deaths or the problem of dowry, the double-burden of work for women, etc.--can become very depressing and de-energising. It is also important to show programmes where women are achieving like the Chatra Yuva Vahini in Bihar where they are asking for and fighting for the land rights of women--the exposure should be at the grass roots level.

Television with its networking can be tremendous force for there are many groups working for social change, often in an isolated and localised setting, where one

can get depressed. Therefore, knowing about the problems of other organisations can have a tremendous impact in removing the isolation of individuals and helping them to know how others have overcome their handicaps. It has been suggested that instead of concentrating on domestic spheres, the women's programmes should try to show at least one women's group activity in the form of cooperatives, women in various small-scale industries, e.g. in mat weaving, beedi making, doing 'chikan' work embroidery in Lucknow, and in the handlooms and handicrafts sector, etc. Showing one group at least from each state would ensure that all areas got adequate coverage and women would be enthused and inspired. Or else the focus could be on woman entrepreneurs who have emerged in large numbers of late and begun to export garments, pickles and even herbal beauty products.

Also important is the need for the media to build up a critical awareness in the viewer about the media itself by having discussions, e.g. on the film shown on television--both the positive and negative aspects and so a slow process of building up could be initiated with the discussion of award winning films or even the Sunday weekly films.

Besides the role of women in development must be stressed. Bhasin and Agarwal have pointed out that

in programmes like Krishi Darshan, women are totally ignored.³⁷ Some women have come forward to make programmes for television and these have been aired on prime time on Sundays. But, again this resulted in a fiasco because the wrong kind of images--negative in nature tended to get projected. For example, Women's World which was a programme by Simi Garewal, the actress, broadcast in late '84 and early 1985 and sponsored by Vimal--Reliance Industries, packed up after four episodes. This came on at prime time on Sunday at 1.00 p.m. But the contents went back to the traditional sector, i.e. of an interview with a leading actress, beauty care, physical fitness and exercises and astrology for women.

Simi left in a huff because her projections on women were criticized. She reduced the whole business to a woman to woman battle, without making any attempt to understand issues put forward by women groups who felt that the whole programme was negative and badly conceived. In particular, her collection of opinion on 'infidelity' sent off a spark of protests from all women and especially those who are alert and conscious of what damage a statement from a man like Mahesh Bhatt who said "that he would hack the woman to death" if he

37. Kamla Bhasin and Bina Agarwal (eds.), n.3.

found out she was being unfaithful to him, could do. Such a statement with no discussion from a panel, giving views for and against, could have serious repercussions on the public at large and could typify a dangerous trend. Reactions were mixed: one opinion was that "well people have a right to their opinions--how much can you censor". A second opinion was that "how can you censor such a statement as that would affect freedom of speech". Why is it we react this way only to women?

Violence against women is accepted. Tradition seems to support it; besides there seems to be some connection with ideology and the efforts of the State. After 30 years of freedom and the effect of ideology, state and the media, people are aware that untouchability is banned. So some effect of the official thrust has been there and use of the media has been made. Similarly, we need to constantly emphasize in the media about women's rights and changes in their role and position in society today so that the audience--men, women, and children--become aware of the existing shortcomings and are educated in the need to treat women as human beings and equals.

Section IIIAnalysis of Advertisements on Television

Several studies have been done on the portrayal of women in advertisements in America and Britain. It has been pointed out that "news about women concentrates on their appearance, sexuality and domestic relations".³⁸ To be successful, advertising must sell, and the reliance is on the use of the female model as consumers or users of a product, or concentration on women's bodies, or the use of other sales gimmicks.

Although advertising was allowed in 1976 on Indian television, these were called 'Spots' and lasted for a few seconds. Also, they were made in black and white without many special light and sound effects. But, with Doordarshan becoming commercial, it began to allow advertisement films of a longer duration varying from one to three minutes. Besides, colour telecasting began and with the development of high technology, computer graphics and light and sound play, advertisers have now found a novel way to catch the eye of the consumers.

38. Helen, Baehr, Women and Media (London, 1981).

Surveys indicate that large companies have begun to set aside a considerably big amount of their publicity budget for television. According to published figures,³⁹ Hindustan Lever allocated half of its advertising budget of Rs 11 crores for television in 1985. Reliance Industries which spends an estimated Rs 4 crores has set aside 40 per cent for television advertising and Richardson Hindustan Limited has cut down on cinema advertising to earmark 45 per cent for television out of its two and a half crore budget. Even manufacturers of small consumer goods are trying to get into the race to advertise their products, for to be telecast, means reaching 25-50 per cent of our country's population, in a single attempt, despite prohibitive costs. This has also resulted in advertising expenditure on other media like radio, newspapers, magazines and cinema being slashed and moved to television.

Doordarshan's advertising revenue in recent years has shot up from a meagre Rs 9 crores in 1980 to Rs 20 crores in 1983, double that i.e. Rs 40-50 crores in 1985 and is expected to be Rs 60 crores in 1985-86 and expected to go up further after the recent rate hike.⁴⁰

39. Business India, 10-23 March 1986.

40. This is a conservative estimate. Recent estimate put the figure at Rs 80-90 crores. Ref. Business India, June 1986.

Besides, the amount of time available on television for advertisers has also been increased. Earlier, only parts of Sunday feature film and one or two other programmes could be sponsored or brought to the viewers.

Today, except the news in English and Hindi, and a few other programmes produced by Doordarshan, e.g. 'Focus', 'Roving Eye', 'The National Programme of Music and Dance' and discussions and seminars, etc. to name a few, everything else is sponsored--be they women's programmes or for children, quiz programmes, documentaries or developments in the public sector, or plays or serials. It must be mentioned that Doordarshan begins its network programmes for local centres at 6.00 p.m. The National Programme begins at 8.40 p.m. with the News in Hindi and goes on till a little after 11 p.m. every evening. Everyday during prime time (i.e. 8-10.30 p.m.) we have at least four to five sets of sponsors, advertising their products. Some programmes are being co-sponsored by two companies, e.g. Parle Soft Drinks and Lakme sponsor a new serial 'Air Hostess' at 9.00 p.m. on Sundays; Duncans Agro Industries and Garden Silk Mills sponsor the short story serial by Satyajit and Sandip Ray on Thursdays, etc.

During the live telecasts of important activities or debates or sports like cricket and football, the

entire programme seems to be bought up by sponsors. Sunday, again seems to be the red letter day for advertisers, for we have sponsored programmes from 10 a.m. to 11 or 11.30 p.m. Here, advertisers, mainly of consumer perishables and durables have caused a mini-revolution on the small screen by the range and variety of products advertised from batteries, eggs, tea, soaps, dress materials, toys, water tanks, umbrellas to music systems, insurance and other savings policies. The tempo for advertisements is the fastest before the advent of the Sunday feature film in Hindusthani at 5.45 p.m. A tally was taken and the number of advertisements varied from 25 to 35 in number just before the beginning of the film when probably a large captive audience is easily available.

One of the most notable points about advertising on television is that advertising and selling agencies have been quick on the uptake, in making use of this new medium to reach out to the vast number of viewer watching network and national programmes.

From studies, in the U.S.A. and Britain, we can point out three chief aspects of the woman's image which appear most frequently on the television screen. These are their roles as:

- (i) housewives
- (ii) sex objects, and
- (iii) employed women.

(i) Woman as Housewife and Mother

The issue of housework occupies a central role in the feminist criticism of sexual role divisions. In T.V. commercials, it has been pointed out by Culley and Bennet that "the largest role category for women was the housewife/mother role".⁴¹ On the Indian television also, we see that the portrayal of women in house-hold oriented and related roles, particularly the loving mother, seems to be the recurring theme in our advertisements. Nearly all detergent powders for washing clothes show women washing and drying clothes with happy smiling faces and this holds true for washing powder brands promoted by multinationals as well as for lesser known companies. Popular detergent bars or cakes like Det, Rin, Dubble, Chek, Trilo, etc. all show women scrubbing away at dirty clothes to make them look cleaner and brighter.

The endless portrayal of women washing away with smiling faces, yet immaculately dressed with traditional embellishments of bindi (spot on forehead),

41. Culley and Bennet (1976), n.17.

sindoor (vermillion mark of a married woman on her hair parting), mangalsutra (signifying that woman is married according to Hindi tradition);⁴² and clad in the traditional saree--all suggestively imply that married women have a significant role to perform. For by scrubbing clothes and giving clean clothes to their children and husbands, the women are kept happy, occupied and are also fulfilling their duties.

One particular mother, despite her best efforts to launder the family clothes is shown as upset and worried because her children's clothes are grey and even her children criticize her for this. Despite using the best detergents, her problem is solved only by using Robin Blue to whiten the clothes and win appreciation. Most women envy each other on the whiteness of their clothes and sarees for without using 'Rin' such whiteness cannot be achieved. This clearly shows what small ambitions women have.

Surf in particular suggests that the woman in question 'Lalithaji'--a stereotype housewife model with the traditional embellishments, proves her capacity to discern between good and bad, proper weight and quality in the market place and proof of her capability lies in

42. Indigenous words.

her buying Surf which is more expensive than other powders, since it does the job so well. The advertisement goes on to suggest that she is intelligent because she understands that half a kilogram of Surf washing powder is worth a kilogram of cheaper washing powders.

Similarly for Vim, a cleaning powder, we have the husband questioning his wife as to why she uses such an expensive brand of cleaning powder when other cheaper brands are available. She replies that it is because of its superior cleaning powers, for it removes grease and dirt in seconds and proceeds to demonstrate this, whereupon her husband praises her for her beauty (irrelevant here and again a traditional description of woman) and intelligence (simply proved in selecting the best cleaner).

Besides these, the housewife/mother has an 'important' role in selecting tooth pastes like Colgate and Promise to ensure dental protection for her children. She also has to add selected malt or cocoa flavourings to the milk her children drink, e.g. Viva, Maltova, Complan, Bournvita, etc. Here, it should be noted that the mothers tend to concentrate more on the boy i.e. the son--a typically traditional Indian socio-cultural trait, where the woman attains status only by producing a male heir. So, we have a 'Maltova Mum' whose son wins prizes at sports in school because she's given him

Maltova. We have the 'Nutramul dada'--a boy who can get his way through fights and football because of Nutramul, and the Complian boy who is growing so tall, his clothes become small. Besides, he is a champion at basket ball, all because he drinks Complian which the mother proudly mixes for her son. His sister's role is to clap for the brother when he scores the winning goal, to pull his vest to tease him and then bravely assert that (along with his I'm a Complian boy) she too is a 'Complian girl'! Even when the sports coach compliments the mother by saying 'your son's a champ', the mother continues to worry about him--for her son sweats so much! For this 'enormous problem' the coach advises her to give him 'Electros' to replace vital body salts, which he needs to grow and be healthy.

The responsibility for health care seems to rest totally on the mother for she has to care for her children by using Iodex on sprains. Here again, gender stereotyping comes in. We have the boy hit by a ball, so he runs to his mother who rubs Iodex, whereas the girl is hurt while trying to walk in her mother's high heels and she twists her ankle in this process. Again, in the Vicks Vaporub ad the boy comes slowly into the room late at night to take the Vicks jar. The mother immediately springs up and says 'why didn't you wake me up'? Thus, it is the mother's guilt feeling that she is

failing in her duty by not rubbing Vicks, is what is projected. Why couldn't the boy do it himself or even ask his father? Also why are mothers more often worried about their sons in particular, when equality for both sexes is promised in our Constitution?

Besides, women care for their children by giving them Instant Soft Drinks like Rasna, etc., Sauces, Ketchups and Maggi Noodles. In the ad for Maggi Noodles, we have the little girl, complete with doll, helping her mother and learning to cook noodles; so the media have already decided the roles for the girls of tomorrow too. Women also cook a variety of tasty foods but it all depends on the spices they use (Sona masala by Brooke Bond) or the cooking medium (Indana Ghee for 'Lajawab' i.e. matchless food or Dalda Refined Oil). Women have to cook, but their culinary talents are zero without the aid of specific cooking media and ready spices. So, even in their own traditional domain, i.e. cooking, they are shown as incapable, in the media.

Their love for the husband consists of greeting him when he comes home with innumerable cups of tea and coffee and looking bright and sparkling, relaxing on lounges and easy chairs, and looking fresh, despite the strain of all the household work. The magic lies in offering the tired husband a cup of specially brewed

coffee by Brooke Bond ('She's a special woman she's my wife) or Taj tea using tea-bags by Brooke Bond. Duncan's Double Diamond Tea has today's intelligent, modern woman moving out of the four walls of her house, and looking for the best things in life--she is depicted as 'busy'--going in a chauffeur driver car to the bank, tending to her plants and reading a book while relaxing. (Perhaps this is to indicate to the viewers that she is educated. But then why is she not making use of her education in other ways that can reflect change?) She then springs up to greet her husband with a smile and a hug when he comes home and offers him Double Diamond Tea--for she is today's woman, who looks for the best, especially in her tea...

On the same theme, we have cricketeer Sunil Gavaskar and his wife Marshneil, advertising as a perfect couple for Lipton's Tea and we have Gavaskar saying, "If you have a wife as good as mine, she'll give you Lipton's Tea'. Is that all a woman as a wife is expected to or has to do?

(ii) Women as sex object/decorative role:

Women as decorative and sex objects are used mostly in advertisements dealing with clothes, shirtings

for men, lights, fans and scooters, etc. For example, an eminent actress like Sharmila Tagore is shown arranging flowers (the implicit message being that both women and flowers are decorative objects); and lays her seal of approval on her husband M.A.K. Pataudi's choice of 'Gwalior Suiting'. Her professional talents seem non-existent. Her only role as projected here is that of one more asset to her husband, besides his racing car, stud farm, horses, mansion and antiques all shown and indicating his princely lifestyle. When her husband's importance as a cricketeer of yester years is recognized, why cannot her talents also be utilized? Besides, why do people of such affluence and repute like Gavaskar and Pataudi agree to participate in such advertisements? Is it the lure of money or lack of awareness?

Again women, whether teenaged girls or older women, are mostly shown taking the rear seat on scooters, mopeds and the vast range of two-wheelers that have recently flooded the Indian market. Nowhere is a girl shown riding off as easily as a boy on a moped as is increasingly visible in many of our cities, for example, in Pune, Baroda and even in Delhi, etc. It has become a vehicle of convenience for many girls as students and working women to have an easy and light weight mode of conveyance. When such social change is occurring,

why is it not portrayed, Instead we have boys begging their parents to have transport of their own (Explorer by Enfield), another teenage boy riding off for the sense of freedom (Kinetic Spark) and Vespa PL 170 scooters for the very young, young and not so young. This particular ad shows three generations riding past, all of them with the women in the rear. Surely, here was an ideal opportunity to show a reversal of roles in the younger generation at least.

Another debasing trend has been to equate a woman to the role of a scavenger. On the one hand, we talk of abolishing casteism, based on the type of work one does, on the other hand, why is such a trend being promoted whether consciously or unconsciously? Particularly objectionable was the advertisement for 'Harpic'--a toilet cleaner. The woman model looked a typical housewife, yet well dressed and pretty and her surroundings indicated a degree of affluence. She was shown pouring out a new liquid cleaner on all sides of the toilet bowl and brushing out the sides. She then relaxed and read a magazine while the cleaner was at work. She then pulled the flush and the toilet was clean. The man is shown giving the publicity for Harpic and exonerating its cleansing properties. Besides, he proudly points out,

"Can you imagine that's my wife cleaning the toilet"! and promptly goes in to use the toilet. Surely, if it was such an easy and simple chore, the man could have done it himself. Secondly, it also indicated that the man had all the privileges to enjoy his wife's labour even in this sphere, without contributing his share. Besides her numerous traditional tasks, advertisements have added on a new one--i.e. that of keeping toilets clean. In actuality many men have come forward to share in household tasks, which do not necessarily have to be the women's domain alone. Here was an ideal opportunity for men to share in a simple household chore, further simplified by the use of a new cleaner. After protests were voiced by many women's organisations, this advertisement was withdrawn .

Similarly, in the recent advertisement for Godrej Refrigerators, the man proudly points out that many things have changed in his home during the past fifteen years, that is, except his Godrej Refrigerator and as an afterthought his wife. She beams as if this was the greatest compliment her husband could ever pay her! Why should a woman and wife be relegated to the role of another consumer item? The message indicates rather blatantly that if she had not measured up to expectations by her performances, she too could easily

have been changed! Is that all women are worth? Another consumer good easily replaceable? What then is the status of women in India today? Besides, a husband is shown buying a pressure cooker for his wife as a symbol of his love for her. (Prestige Cookers). Can love be measured in terms of consumer items? Similarly, parental love for a child is expressed in buying a Godrej Storewell Almirah--'a gift to treasure'. This again is another disquieting trend--that of equating all pleasures and emotions to consumer goods. What kind of values then remain in society?

The role of woman as a sex object is typified in all advertisements for beauty soaps. Beginning with Liril, a Hindustan Lever Product, which shows a woman in a two-piece bathing costume, having a bath under a water fall, a new trend has caught on, i.e. to expose women's bodies and sell a soap. Variations on this theme are 'Crowning Glory' from Godrej, in which film actress Dimple is shown bathing in a pool. She dives in with the camera focusing on objectionable angles of her waist, stomach and thigh since she also has on a two-piece swim suit. She then gives seductive--'come hither' looks while extolling the product. Ponds Dreamflower soap also has a woman with her daughter, bathing in two piece costumes. An earlier advertisement by Pears soap

also had the daughter, questioning the mother as to whether she too would be as beautiful as her mother when she grew up, simply by using Pears soap. Can women and little girls ^{think} of nothing other than beauty?

Other soaps too show women bathing using Mysore Jasmine soap, Marvel, Clearasil, Emami Gold, Cinthol, etc. Only Hamam and Dettol seem to be promoted as family soaps, but here again, another bias comes in, i.e. that of the glorification of the son. The growing boy is encouraged to participate in so many activities, like cycling or jogging with his father while the proud mother beams and waits to receive him. The woman could easily have participated in jogging which has become a common form of exercise especially in urban areas and today women are leading in sports like P.T. Usha for instance who had won so many running events and participated in the Olympics too. Why is such talent among women not focused upon?

A similar repetition occurs in a Dettol soap ad where it is the growing boy who is outdoors cycling and busy with his ball and needs a complete bath with Dettol Soap. He comes home and hits with his ball his sister playing quietly indoors with her dolls--the sex-role stereotype of woman is brought in with portrayals of future domesticity and indoor activities. Violence

on the girl child is also accepted right from childhood and this can lead to unquestioned acceptance of violence on women too. Besides, the little girl also accepts this hit meekly whereas, today in many families, girls would surely react.

Women as sex objects are also used to sell talcum powders. Cuticura, for example, concentrates on the girls' low backed and provocative tennis apparel rather than on her reasons for using the talcum powder which could be for freshness and to avoid prickly heat, rash, itching, etc. Similarly, for shampoos, Lakme, Halo, etc., a girl is sought after by men only when she has shining hair. Cleanliness as an important part of hygiene and health seems to be completely forgotten. What is important is the ability to catch the eye of boys and men for which women have to strive throughout their lives and which can be guaranteed only by using select consumer goods, projected as instant steps to beauty, glamour, attention and success, rather than as basic necessities for good health.

Again, the traditional cultural biases as to what are the basic points in a woman's beauty, i.e. long and lustrous hair, fair skin, clear complexion, etc. all seem to be reinforced by advertisements. For example, using pure coconut hair oil by Parachute or



Herbal Oil from Dabur for hair, creams to lighten the complexion like Fair and Lovely and Naturally Fair; and a host of other creams, soaps and shampoos. No doubt, women are conscious of their looks, but to what extent are media going to pander to these needs alone. Besides, this has led to an artificially created demand for soaps, etc. and more and more companies are diversifying into this lucrative field. Soaps are being demanded in rural areas as payment for letter writing, etc. These are clear examples of an artificial culture being imposed on unsuspecting minds and also circumscribing, prescribing and narrowing down what women's needs or ideas are.

(iii) Women in Employment:

The role of the employed women just does not figure so far in television advertisements on Indian screen. It is they who need time saving devices to speed up the drudgery of household work. In fact, the Indian advertising screen seems to refuse to recognize the existence of the working woman in India in skilled or unskilled jobs. Whereas the truth is that women today have entered the legal and administrative professions, teaching, medicine, engineering, banking, tourism and a host of other fields in large

numbers. Why then this subconscious withdrawal and no attempts to project the employed woman?

How can television advertisements be called progressive when the male creators seem to be only interested in presenting the ideal housewife and mother image. Otherwise, it is the sex-object-- a young fresh faced girl who sparkles after the use of a particular cream, soap, powder or shampoo and gets admiring glances from men and envious glances from women, e.g. in the Clearasil ad. The Clearasil advertisement is a trend-setter because for the first time in India ^a new soap was launched through the medium of television exclusively. The product manufacturers, Richardson Hindustan Ltd., have clearly realized the potential of a medium like television.

Views on Advertisements

Talking to media watchers about advertisements on television one of the first comments was that it tended to put you off. 'Besides the whole idea of relating a particular brand of Instant Coffee or a Cold Drink to a kind of lifestyle is alienating. To many of us India this kind of a high lifestyle is itself alien, i.e. having a fabulous looking house, pretty lawn, antique car, etc.'

At another level, the whole advertisement is so nicely and attractively packaged to sell and catch the people's eye that 'there is a certain tendency for people to use a product in the hope that one day their lifestyle will match--i.e. a dream for the future that is a utopia of sorts is being created. This whole lifestyle selling can be termed 'obnoxious'. Along with this lifestyle, the ads emphasize that it is all due to the woman's labour. This is irritating because it puts the burden of guilt on the woman for, on the one hand it makes her feel dissatisfied with her present living and, on the other hand she feels guilty for not being able to achieve those standards within her given income. Also, this display of perfection makes everyone unhappy with themselves. 'These are reciprocal expectations that people have. They expect their houses to be pretty and perfect and the children to be absolute angels. The children would like and also expect that they live in congenial surroundings, have pretty playmates, etc.'

Television also affects the images of roles performed by men and women in daily life and this percolates down even into children's programmes. It was observed that in a ballet based on the Ramayana and a Bombay T.V. programme, that the role of Rama was

played by a girl as also the role of Sita played by another girl. Yet, the role making and role taking was so portrayed that Rama was always at a higher level and Sita at a lower one, always we had Rama walking ahead and Sita following him and the child playing Sita was always falling at Rama's feet and at that age it was very oppressive, and more so as the parts were all played by girls.

The same happens in other children's films and programmes--girls and boys take part in 'Treasure Hunts', etc., but the girls are shown to adopt passive roles and arrange picnics, napkins and food, etc., while the boys go for adventure and find the thieves or hidden treasures, etc. One can see the Western syndrome, as depicted in text books and story books, being continued in our advertisements and programmes.

The problem is that when such a problem is raised (it was raised at an Advertising Club during slide shows), the opinion is 'It's such a small thing'. If so, then why is there so much resistance among advertisers to portray men and women equally? Besides, if the urban woman who is supposed to be educated and glamorous, etc. is herself shown as having the typical yearnings and care for the husband and son, it gives rural women a negative impression of change for this

is the type of oppression they are already used to in the village.

Even at the decision making level, when a woman's body or picture is used to sell a product, the clients are happy, whereas without it the customer is dissatisfied and the agency loses the contract. Besides, few women are in a position to take such decisions. Whether the ad is for a fan or a mattress, it usually has pictures containing a woman, e.g. relaxing and drying her nails after using nail-polish, or women models and fans are used interchangeably to show the range and variety available in fans (Khaitan Fans), or for a mattress (Corfoam) in which the camera is focused on all the body contours of the woman.

There are only rare examples where women can take a stand against such exploitation--as it happened in a case narrated to me. In this case, a woman had been in an ad agency and now had her own business connected with hotels, etc. She was given a layout by an ad agency for her hotel group. It said that the hotel was comfortable and it showed a woman lounging on a mattress. The person who presented it to her was a young man and he found it strange and was surprised that the ad was turned down. Because she was in a position

to take a decision and she also controlled the finances. She could say that her hotel was fine with comfortable rooms, garden, etc. which could be highlighted. There was no need for a woman to be used. One can also add that in most hotels in India, it is the men who come to stay in hotels, much more often than women.

Another example was given of a woman who works in an ad agency as a partner with equal autonomy in decision making, along with her male partner. When they made an ad layout for a fan, because of their own convention, no woman/female was displayed; so, her team's display was not approved and they were told that it was not effective. The next company, which projected a woman draped over the fan, got the contract. This is a pointer to the fact that awareness of a woman's rights to equality is hardly there in our country.

Even in an advertisement which was popular and continued for a long time--Vicco Turmeric Vanishing Cream where the virtues of indigenous turmeric (haldi) and sandal (chandan) were stressed, we can remember beautiful women expensively dressed, music, etc. and the idea is of a lavish traditional wedding and dressing in finery--the girls dream of getting married and romanticization of marriage and all that follows as being perfect, is stressed. Here again, traditional

aspects are emphasized upon and imply a wealthy set up--no change has been brought in.

Ads often follow the Westernized trends as is the case for most soft drinks--young boys and girls driving away in cars, motor-boats going for yachting, surfing, etc. How many urbanites and rural people can do so? And only a small percent of the upper rich in the urban areas can afford these fancy cars, yachts, jalopies and send out their girls and boys together.

Another point is the tendency to project the cinema image of reality and especially the idea that you can pick up a woman or girl who would willingly go with any boy/man who asked her. Scenes of moonlight and candlelight dinners shown in the name of romanticization, a tendency to look the woman up and down and stare in an objectionable manner especially when she has used a particular cream or shampoo (Fair & Lovely, Clearasil, etc.) or women drooling over a man when he wears O.C.M. fabrics or has had a particular type of shave (Wiltech), etc.

We may conclude this section by pointing out that an awareness now has to be created both in the minds of the audience and the makers of advertisements about the need to use women, only when necessary, to vouch

for a product. Many people confess to enjoying advertisements but are unaware of the subtle images being ingrained.

Television's role here as a socializing agent is very important because the sex stereotyping affects children more than adults and will lead them to have a poor opinion of women as slaves and men as masters. What equality can then remain? Showing women performing domestic tasks and using household products in their homes is not objectionable in itself. But the endless repetition of such portrayals suggests that women's place is only to be in and around the home. Also, the housewife seems quite dumb and dependent--as seen from the superimposition of a male voice, extolling the qualities of a product in many advertisements. Whereas, in fact, many women are educated and aware of new products through media, and other means of communication. Also, changes in women's and men's roles are not reflected at all even when real, and especially of working men and women. Men, for example, are sharing and cooperating in house-keeping, shopping, and many small chores. Shopping in any case has been traditionally done by men in most parts of India. Now, this is done by men, along with their wives, both working and non-working women.

Why are these changes not projected on television?
For example, shopping has also become a new family outing as on holidays. Why not show, perhaps alternatively, a man cooking Maggi Noodles or preparing tea quite easily with tea bags for the whole family or his wife or mother when they come back tired from an outing?

Section IVAnalysis of a sponsored serial--Khandaan

(written, directed and produced by S. Kshirsagar;
sponsored by Hindustan Lever Ltd.)

In this section, we try to study the portrayals of women in a serial produced for television. It is called Khandaan, meaning a large extended family with high social status, somewhat akin to a dynasty, but having no royal links. This was a popular serial telecast in 52 episodes over a period of a little over one year and came to an end in February this year (i.e. 1986). This programme was aired on Wednesday at prime time, between 9 and 9.30 p.m. (i.e. for half an hour). The entire serial was sponsored by Hindustan Lever Ltd., a leading producer of consumer items, and some of the products regularly advertised were Liril and Rexona soap. Forty episodes of this serial were monitored. We have tried to analyse this serial making use of a schema prepared by the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation as part of their 'Equality Project 1978' (c.f. Schema for Programme Analysis Sex Roles in Television Fiction).¹ The analysis sheet will help

1. From Margaret Gallagher, Unequal Opportunities: The case of women and the media, UNESCO (Paris, 1981).

us to obtain information on four different aspects of fictional content:

- (a) Number of women and men appearing;
- (b) Attributes of women and men--their activities, occupations, interests, personal characteristics;
- (c) Relationships between characters;
- (d) Conclusions about women and men supported by the story, either explicitly or (more) often implicitly.

Besides, it will help us in understanding the portrayal of Indian women in television serial and particularly changes in the activities and roles they perform.

PROGRAMME: 'KHANDAAN'

1. - DRAMATIS PERSONAE?

List all the characters of relevance to the plot. Note their approximate age, marital status and occupation, if indicated. Mark the principal characters with "X".

<u>Characters</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marital status</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>"X" for principal characters</u>
Male:				
1. Ramdas Premchand	60	M	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Anil Premchand	30	M	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Vinay Premchand	25	M	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Rohit	35	M	A	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Abhay Varma	45	M	G	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Jagdish	40	-	D	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Raunag	30	W	G	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.				<input type="checkbox"/>
Female:				
1. Tulsi Premchand	55	M	C'	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Pratibha	25	M	B'	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Yashodhara	30	M	E'	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Nasreen	22	M	E'	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Ketaki	25	M	G'	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Urmila	40	M	G'	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Amrita	40	W	A'	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.				<input type="checkbox"/>



OCCUPATION:

No occupation mentioned.....

Have no occupation.....

"House-person".....

Occupation:

Kind of work not specified.....

Female-dominated field.....

Mixed.....

Male-dominated field.....

	<u>N</u> <u>Male</u>	<u>N</u> <u>Female</u>
A	A'	A'
B	B'	B'
C	C'	C'
D	D'	D'
E	E'	E'
F	F'	F'
G	G'	G'

SUMMARY

of preceding page: Check the box under each heading that best describes the programme.

- Among the characters there are more men than women more women than men roughly as many men as women
- Among the principal characters there are - " - - " - - " -
- Age: On average the men are older than the women
 On average the women are older than the men
 Men and women are of roughly the same age (on average)
- Marital status: Specified to same extent among men and women
 More clearly specified with respect to men
 More clearly specified with respect to women
- Occupation: Men and women have jobs to the same extent
 More men have jobs
 More women have jobs
- Among the characters with jobs, the occupations specified show the following pattern:
Majority "Men's work" for men and "women's work" for women
 Other. Describe:

2. - HOW ARE THE CHARACTERS RELATED?

Indicate known relationships between the characters on the matrix on the following page.

Instructions:

First, enter the characters' names on the lines to the left of the matrix and in the columns at the top of the matrix. Each cell of the matrix will thus indicate the relationship between two characters.

Consider the characters one by one. Male 1 and Male 2 - are they in any way related? If so, how? Use the symbols indicated on the following page. Proceed to consider Male 1 and Male 3 - are they related? Etc, etc.

NOTE: Two persons may have multiple relationships (e.g. both hierarchical and amorous).

SUMMARY

- Most male-male relationships are of the type No type of relationship predominates
- F A, C, R HF E Fr Ac
- Most female-female relationships are of the type
- F A, C, R HF E Fr Ac
- Most male-female relationships are of the type
- M. F A, C, R HF E Fr Ac U_f, U_m
- Most relationships occur
- between men between women between men and women

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS APPLY TO PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ONLY

3. - RANK THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS ACCORDING TO THEIR IMPORTANCE (CENTRALITY) IN THE PROGRAMME

1. R. Premchand 2. Abhay Varma 3. Anil Premchand
 4. Ketaki 5. Urmila 6. Vinay
 7. Rohit 8. Yashodhara 9. Tulsi Premchand

Comments (?) :

Since it is a family business which is involved, there
is in-family rivalry between brother and sister, i.e.
Ketaki and Anil. The father Mr Ramdas Premchand supports
and protects his daughter and sets her up against his son.
It is clearly seen that the patriarch and head of the family
dominates. There are hardly any friendships shown--rather
it is only rivalry and enmity despite their being part of
the same family.

4. - WHAT DO THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS DO?

What are the principal characters occupied with in the programme? Briefly describe their main activity, e.g. conversing, entertaining, household chores, beauty care, attending the theatre, etc. prayer, music, club activities playboy/playgirl, social work, etc.

Males:	Name	Activity
1.	<u>Ramdas Premchand</u>	<u>Business and after retirement conversing with wife mainly about others.</u>
2.	<u>Anil Premchand</u>	<u>Playboy who turns to business, forced by his father.</u>
3.	<u>Vinay Premchand</u>	<u>Music, and later social service in the village. Not interested in business.</u>
4.	<u>Abhay Varma</u>	<u>Workaholic turned businessman. Frequent tiffs with working wife.</u>
5.	<u>Rohit</u>	<u>Frequents club, does not work, indulges in various sports.</u>
6.	<u>Raunag</u>	<u>Advisor to management of Premchand Industries</u>

Female:

1.	<u>Tulsi Premchand</u>	<u>Conversing, Household duties and prayer</u>
2.	<u>Pratibha</u>	<u>Household chores and domestic confinement boresher. No job or interest shown.</u>
3.	<u>Yashodhara</u>	<u>First household cares, then soon social work for blind.</u>
4.	<u>Nasreen</u>	<u>Nurse, social work in village</u>
5.	<u>Ketaki</u>	<u>Playgirl interested in club and beauty activities, suddenly changes to business.</u>
6.	<u>Urmila</u>	<u>Architect, involved in work. Arguments with husband on this.</u>

Comments: Do these activities reflect common sex-role patterns? How?

Yes. Men's activities concentrate on business while for women the most important role pattern is on household maintenance.

Sometimes they pursue work which is again in traditionally feminine fields like social work. There are only 3 women in professions-- Nasreen, a nurse (again a female dominated subservient job), Urmila, an architect and Ketaki forced into business but retains her feminine traits.

5. - CHARACTER DELINEATION

Describe each of the principal characters using words from the following list.

Appearance, outward manner:

ordinary, plain
 elegant
 athletic
 proper, prim
 unassuming
 flamboyant, provocative
 beautiful, handsome
 ugly
 clumsy, blunt
 dainty, dapper
 ridiculous
 charming
 pert
 "world-wise"
 sexy
 repulsive
 pretty
 crude, "tough"

Temperament, feelings:

happy, cheerful
 sorrowful
 aggressive
 friendly
 cold
 warm
 extroverted, out-going
 introverted, "private"
 calm, secure
 anxious, insecure
 angry
 nagging
 dour
 realistic
 romantic
 indifferent

Capacity, strength:

strong
 weak, delicate
 patient, long-suffering
 impatient
 knowledgeable, intelligent
 ignorant
 purposeful, methodical
 impulsive
 stupid
 wise
 unsure
 self-confident
 active
 passive
 scatter-brained, whimsical
 sensible

Relations to others:

dominant
 submissive
 dependent on others
 independent, self-reliant
 loyal
 egoistic, egocentric
 helpful
 disloyal
 ruthless
 empathetic (able to "live oneself into"
 another persons's situation)

Motives:

kind-hearted, altruistic
 evil, malicious
 ambitious
 idealistic
 dutiful, conscientious
 adventurous
 helpless, seeking help
 dictated by social role
 guided by feelings
 responding to external forces or coercion
 conventional
 rebellious, obstinate

Q.5. Character Delineation

Males;

1. Ramdas Premchand

- (a) Appearance: ordinary, dour
- (b) Temperament: aggressive
- (c) Capacity: strong, purposeful, impatient
- (d) Relation to others: dominant and egoistic
- (e) Motives: ambitious.

2. Anil Premchand

- (a) Appearance: elegant, handsome, 'world-wise', playboy, sexy.
- (b) Temperament: outgoing, extrovert
- (c) Capacity: impulsive, stupid
- (d) Relation to others: ruthless
- (e) Motives: evil, malicious, ruthless

3. Vinay Premchand

- (a) Appearance: Unassuming
- (b) Temperament: Friendly, introvert, 'private', romantic
- (c) Capacity: impulsive, stupid
- (d) Relation to others: 'empathetic', dependent on others.
- (e) Motives: idealistic.

4. Rohit

- (a) Appearance: Charming
- (b) Temperament: friendly, insecure
- (c) Capacity: Passive
- (d) Relation to others: Submissive to an extent with wife, egoistic
- (e) Motives: obstinate

5. Abhay Verma
- (a) Appearance: elegant
 - (b) Temperament: aggressive, private
 - (c) Capacity: self-confident, strong, purposeful, intelligent
 - (d) Relation to others: dominant, egoistic
 - (e) Motives: ambitious, obstinate and rebellious.
6. Jagdish
- (a) Appearance: Clumsy
 - (b) Temperament: Happy, cheerful, romantic, play-boy
 - (c) Capacity: stupid, ignorant
 - (d) Relation to others: dependent on others
 - (e) Motives: seeking help, helpless.
7. Raunaq
- (a) Appearance: Handsome, sexy
 - (b) Temperament: Calm, suave
 - (c) Capacity: Patient, long-suffering, wise, self-confident.
 - (d) Relation to others: loyal, dependable
 - (e) Motives: Dutiful, conventional, conscientious

Females:

1. Tulsi Premchand
 - (a) Appearance: Elegant
 - (b) Temperament: Calm
 - (c) Capacity: Patient, long-suffering
 - (d) Relation to others: loyal, submissive
 - (e) Motives: kindhearted, dutiful, conventional

2. Pratibha
 - (a) Appearance: Pretty
 - (b) Temperament: insecure, sorrowful
 - (c) Capacity: unsure
 - (d) Relation to others: submissive
 - (e) Motives: dutiful, conventional

3. Yashodhara
 - (a) Appearance: ordinary, plain
 - (b) Temperament: friendly, calm
 - (c) Capacity: patient, wise, sensible
 - (d) Relation to others: loyal, dependent on others
 - (e) Motives: dutiful, dictated by social role.

4. Nasreen
 - (a) Appearance: dainty
 - (b) Temperament: angry, aggressive
 - (c) Capacity: strong, active
 - (d) Relation to others: dominant
 - (e) Motives: guided by feelings, obstinate

5. Ketaki

- (a) Appearance: provocative, charming, sexy
- (b) Temperament: aggressive, insecure, romantic
- (c) Capacity: impatient, impulsive, whimsical
- (d) Relation to others: ruthless, disloyal
- (e) Motives: malicious, rebellious.

6. Urmila

- (a) Appearance: charming
- (b) Temperament: aggressive, nagging, insecure
- (c) Capacity: strong, intelligent, self-confident
- (d) Relation to others: independent, self reliant
- (e) Motives: ambitious, rebellious.

7. Amrita

- (a) Appearance: elegant, charming
- (b) Temperament: cheerful, warm, friendly
- (c) Capacity: strong, self-confident
- (d) Relation to others: independent, self-reliant, helpful
- (e) Motives: kindhearted.

Comments: Do the characterizations reflect common sex-role patterns?
In what respect?

Yes. Women are tradition bound and their relationships are guided by social expectations of them. Home comes first.

For men what is important is ambition and a ruthless drive to succeed, despite family breakups and discontent, disharmony, etc.

SUMMARY	M	F
- Number of characters "faintly delineated" (=difficult to describe)	1	3
- Number of characters vividly and richly delineated	4	2
- Number of "one-dimensional" (stereotyped) characters	1	2
- Number of characters delineated according to standard sex-role patterns	4	3

6. GOALS AND MOTIVES

What do the principal characters want to achieve? Describe their goals briefly on the basis of what they say and do.

Males:

1. R. Premchand Ambitious businessman--has achieved setting up of industry under his name.
2. Anil Premchand Playboy, rich son of rich father, indulges in vices.
3. Vinay Premchand Diffident, drifter, sensitive, no ambition
4. Rohit Easy going, rich due to hereditary wealth. No ambition or profession.
5. Abhay Ambitious, self-made, wants to out-do Premchand.

6. Raunaq Middle-class background. Important in hierarchy as advisor; ambitious to succeed in chosen career through hard work; is only male character depicted as highly educated.

Females:

1. Tulsi Premchand Traditional mother and wife.
2. Pratibha Premchand Traditional role of daughter-in-law; suffocates her as she is educated. Her husband ill treats her and she leaves him and the family.
3. Yashodhara Traditional. Success within boundaries of family, widow remarried, so grateful.
4. Nasreen Lower middle class background; orphan and nurse so unacceptable. Class conflict shown..
5. Urmila Non-traditional working woman in male field. Yet escapist from responsibilities of marriage and children.
6. Ketaki Non-traditional. Achieves social prestige from male adulation. Desire to succeed just to spite brother and rivals.

7. - HOW DO THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS BEHAVE?

Once we have identified the principal characters' goals (or what they seem to be striving for) we can characterize how they go about pursuing those goals.

One and the same character may, of course, both be the victim of circumstances and take the initiative to carry the plot forward. Therefore, please note the actions/events you have in mind in answering the following questions.

- A. - Which of the characters act(s) on his/her own initiative, thus carrying the plot forward? How?

Abhay Verma - breaks away from employer, starts rival business

Urmila - unable to cope with family and career, walks out periodically.

Vinay & Nasreen - forced to walk out of family as their love

- B. - Do any of these characters succeed in their strivings? Do they achieve their in unac- goals? Who succeeds with what? ptable.

Abhay Verma - to an extent but has to face losses.

Urmila - yes to an extent.

Anil Premchand - Manages with Raunag's advice.

- C. - Do any of the characters fail in their strivings? How? Who fails to do what?

1. Pratibha--she has no control over her husband's activities; so she

2. Ketaki--when she fails to become a mother (loss of baby affects her husband and father) she commits suicide due to guilt.

him.

3. Vinay and Nasreen--leave home & realise the need of money for social work

- D. - Which of the characters is/are mainly influenced by the course of events or others' actions? Who is affected? How?

Abhay Verma, his daughter and family are affected.

- E. - Which of the characters find(s) it hardest to exert his/her will, to assert his/her views?

The traditional wives--Pratibha, ^{and} Tulsi Premchand, ^{who} is able to communicate with her husband only after he becomes retired and helpless and turns to her.

- F. - Which of the characters find(s) it easiest to exert his/her will, to assert his/her views?

All the male characters and one female i.e. Ketaki to some extent.

B. - WHAT IS DEPICTED AS 'FITTING' AND WHAT INAPPROPRIATE FOR MEN AND WOMEN, RESPECTIVELY?

Now let us try to summarize the values regarding men's and women's behaviour that are implicit in the story.

A. - What is depicted as "fitting", pleasant or attractive, something to be emulated?

For men?

success in business, being ambitious.

For women?

looking attractive, attending to domestic chores and keeping up a feminine job or social work with no damage to the family relationships.

B. - What is depicted as inappropriate, unpleasant or repugnant, something to be avoided?

For men?

sensitivity, gentleness, submissiveness, unsuccessfulness.

For women?

Full time profession, neglect of home, children, family and relatives.

CONCLUSIONS about the world depicted in the programme (the "moral of the story"):

- Men are/[✓]must/[✓]should/want to/can successful, ambitious, achieve more, do better.

- Women are/[✓]must/[✓]should/want to/can attend to home first, be good mothers, keep family together, look happy. Can pursue a side hobby to keep busy.

- General goals for the figures in this world are according to this serial--success, money.

9. - CHECK-LIST

Studies of sex-role patterns in television fiction show that men and women are often portrayed according to traditional stereotypes. How do these results correspond to the patterns apparent in this programme?

The following patterns are common:		Corresponds (by and large)	Does not correspond
WHO? (Q. 1)	- More men than women are involved in the plot	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- More men than women among the principal characters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- The men are older than the women (on average)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Women's marital status is more clearly specified than men's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- A larger proportion of men have occupations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Among those WITH JOBS, men do "men's work" and women do "women's work"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RELATION- SHIPS (Q. 2)	- Most interpersonal relationships are between men	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Most relationships between men are hierarchical and/or formal (HF)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Most relationships between women are familial (F)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	- Few friendships (Fr) are depicted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Most friendships - to the extent they are depicted - occur between men	<input type="checkbox"/>	NOT APPLICABLE <input type="checkbox"/>
RANK (Q. 3)	- Men are more central to the plot than women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ACTIVITY (Q. 4)	- Men are engaged in activities related to their occupations more often than women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	* - Men are engaged in leisure activities/hobbies more often than women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Women are more often depicted in the home, where they are occupied with household chores, child care, clothing and/or beauty care, pooja or prayer and belief in religion, godmen, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Club-games played by Abhay, Anil, Rohit, etc.
vs. only one woman character Ketaki who goes to the club.

		Corresponds (by and large)	Does not correspond
THE PRINCIPALS (Q. 5)	- More women than men are "faintly delineated" (difficult to describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- More men than women are vividly and richly delineated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Appearance is a central component in the delineation of female characters: Most women are depicted as attractive (beautiful, dainty, charming, pert, sexy, pretty)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Appearance is of secondary importance among male characters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Women express their feelings more than men ("Feminine" descriptors: romantic, angry, anxious, insecure, nagging. "Masculine" descriptors: aggressive, cold, extroverted, realistic)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Men are depicted as being more capable than women ("Feminine" descriptors: unsure, weak, delicate, ignorant, passive. "Masculine" descriptors: strong, knowledgeable, intelligent, purposeful, methodical, wise, self-confident, active)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Men are depicted as independent, self-reliant individuals, and women as unself-reliant, dependent ("Feminine" descriptors: submissive, dependent, empathetic "Masculine" descriptors: dominant, independent, loyal)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Men actively <u>pursue</u> ambitions - fame, adventure, ideals - whereas women are <u>driven by</u> (the victims of) feelings, their helplessness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<i>Two examples of women who fail-- Ketaki & Pratibha</i>
	GOALS (Q. 6)	- Women, to a greater extent than men, pursue limited, limited/short-term/egoistic goals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
- Men, to a greater extent than women, pursue broad/long-term/social-altruistic goals		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BEHAVIOUR (Q. 7)	- Men, to a greater extent than women, take the initiative and carry the plot forward	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Men are more often successful than women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- When women take the initiative, they often suffer setbacks or fail, or compromise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Women are more often the victims of "fate" or circumstances than men	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	- Men assert their views, and exert their will	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Corresponds: (by and large) Does not correspond

..BEHAVIOUR - Men are - to a greater extent than women -
(Q. 7) more vividly and richly delineated, which means that they are both affected by events/ circumstances and carry the plot forward with greater or lesser success

STEREOTYPES - Women are depicted as primarily interested
VALUES in the "private sphere" (romance, family, (Q. 8) "hearth and home")

- Men are depicted as primarily interested in the "social sphere" (the world outside the family and the home)

- Women should be mainly interested in the home and the family (with careers and public affairs subordinate interests, if at all)

- Men should be mainly interested in their careers and public affairs (with the home and family subordinate interests, if at all)

OTHER

OBSERVATIONS: This serial was a prototype of the affluent society in India today

- Demands and pressures of upper class different from lower and middle classes.

Only 2 women have careers - one an architect and the other a nurse.

One woman is in business for social prestige & is portrayed as insecure and incapable of decision making.

NOTE: One cannot make an assessment of the programme simply by tallying the number of "X's" in the respective columns. Some points are more important and should be given heavier weight than others. But this summary should offer a good basis for your answer to the final question:

10.- IS THIS A GOOD PROGRAMME WITH RESPECT TO THE EQUALITY OF THE SEXES?

Yes, because _____

No, because women are not adequately represented in true portrayals of the roles they are performing in all spheres of life in India today. The serial is positive about tradition and negative about modernity

If "No": Does the programme work against equality passively or actively?

Passively

Actively

inssofar as it applies to women's role in the family. The broad message is that women should attend to the home and keep the family together. Men should be ambitious and successful.

Analysis

We now analyse the information obtained on the four different aspects of fictional content obtained from this serial.

(a) The number of women and men appearing on the small screen seems almost equal. This is a positive indicator that Indian women of today have become visible.

(b) Regarding attributes of women and men, we observed that male biases in production and direction had crept in. The women were largely pretty or attractive, well groomed and concentrated on activities in and around the home. For men, the office and work situation was shown as all in all. Success meant doing well in the business, to the exclusion of all other interests and responsibilities. On the other hand, for women having a professional qualification and being interested in the job was held as a disqualification. For example, Urmila is an architect, totally involved in her work. Hence, her family and home life is neglected and her daughter has to be sent to a boarding school, where the girl is not happy and often tries to run away. Urmila's job is a constant source of friction between her husband and herself. At the same time, a professional woman like her is shown as being terribly possessive

about and suspicious of her husband's activities, especially whenever he talks to any other woman even on the telephone, which seems rather unrealistic.

The other woman who is shown working is Ketaki who is the spoilt daughter of a rich father. She is depicted as totally selfish, self-centred and insecure demanding attention from men all the time. She does not like the idea of motherhood, and much to the chagrin of her eager husband and father, has an accident because of which she suffers a mis-carriage. This upsets her father who loses his mental balance. The guilt bears heavily on her and she commits suicide.

The other woman pursuing a profession is Nasreen--a nurse who is not accepted into the family. Here, class bias comes in for she has lower middle class origins and is an orphan. Besides, she belongs to a different community, i.e. she is a Parsee and she is a nurse--a profession that has low social prestige.

Hence all women following a career seem to be portrayed as suffering from a lot of problems and unhappiness. On the other hand, the women who stay at home and follow traditional womanly occupations like social work are shown as contented. The women seem to have little interest in education, or have hobbies or activities of their own.

(c) Relationships between the characters seemed very strained and artificial. The general impression was that people were always arguing and quarreling particularly the men seemed rivals. No friendships were portrayed and this seemed very unnatural. Most relationships shown were also within the family circle.

(d) Conclusions about men and women:

A man's chief aim in life was to succeed in business. Women took care of the home and were the stabilizing and cementing factors in the family, always sacrificing and portrayed conventionally. Home should be of utmost importance to women and she should be loving, giving and understanding. Women did not have any power in the decision making process.

A small attempt at social change was made in that two widows, i.e. Amrita planned to marry again and Yashodhara, a widow with a child, was brought in as the second wife to Anil Premchand. She refuses to leave her son behind and also continues her part-time interest of doing social service to the blind, and both these are not liked by her husband.

Tradition carries the day as seen from great importance given to 'mangal sutra' and the family

reunion. This reconciliation among father and sons is brought about in a very superficial manner and again by the traditional woman. Wealth and success are shown as the greatest values. The patriarch reigns supreme and hence the dynasty continues.

The portrayal of women seemed to conform to the traditional stereotyped roles prevalent in our society. Women had no status or personality of their own. The impact of education and social legislation was also negligible in the roles portrayed in the serial *Khandaan*.

CONCLUSION

Mass media like television, as instruments of social control and social change, may have either positive or negative consequences depending on their organization and content. In particular, some of the crucial problems facing mankind today, especially the social ills affecting the majority of peoples and the gradual elimination of injustices and inequalities, are problems that can be overcome by concerted efforts in the media. An important problem is the inequality meted out to women despite many assurances and declarations. Despite some progress in recent years, there is no country in the world where women have achieved full equality. Although making up more than half of the world's population, they are treated as a minority group, disadvantaged and powerless. Often, burdens of poverty, unemployment and educational backwardness weigh more heavily on women than on men.

Statistics indicate that two thirds of the illiterates in the world are women and the education given to girls tend to be inferior, limited and often curtailed at an early age. Women need access on equal

terms to education, social participation and communication if they are to share rightfully in solving the problems of their societies. But this access is impeded by traditions, by prejudices based on social customs or religion, by discriminatory laws and also by imposing on women a disproportionate share of the responsibility for care of the home, children, and work on the land.

In both developed and developing countries, public attitudes regarding the role of women in society are major determinants in deciding the status of women. In shaping these attitudes, the media exert a strong influence.

The present study on Communication, Women and Media has been chiefly concerned with the portrayal of women on Indian television, i.e. Doordarshan. Through the monitoring of television programmes of three types, i.e., 'Mahilaon Ke Liye' - a programme for women, advertisements appearing on prime time, and viewing of a sponsored serial-- 'Khandaan', we have tried in this exploratory study to analyze the roles the media have assigned to women on the small screen.

The objectives of the study were set out in the form of crucial questions relating to the position

of women in Indian society today, which we now try to answer. The first question was whether television depicted change in the lives of women in India today? We may answer that based on the programmes monitored, the answer is 'no'. Television programmes do not depict change or the multifaceted roles women are performing in society today.

Does television project new images? The answer is again in the negative. Is it being used to reinforce traditional images of women? The answer is an emphatic 'yes'.

Are popular myths and rituals being used to perpetuate traditional roles of women? Yes, these can be observed from the glorification of motherhood, which continues, as well as the gender bias indicating preference for the male child. This is seen particularly in advertisements where it is the boy child who is portrayed as the achiever of many things and a future head of the house-hold. Girls are trained in domestic duties and occupy a subordinate role. Besides, women are heavily made up and ornamented, with the traditional adornments of bindi, mangal sutra, bangles, etc. symbolising her married status. Why don't we have symbols indicating men's marital status?

Hence, standardized portraits of Indian women appear most frequently on the small screen. Women appear in television drama and fiction as superstitious, over-emotional, self-depreciating and dependent. No attention is paid even in programmes meant for women to issues of specific importance or interest to women, e.g., contributions by gifted or independent women who have come forward through hard won battles or activities of women who are achieving or bringing about change. Concentration is mainly on child and home care, and portrayals are nurturing and domestic roles.

The place of educated and professional women in various portrayals, especially in women's programmes and television serials is minimal. They are portrayed as leading unhappy and discontented lives and unable to perform their occupational and domestic roles satisfactorily and hence not a good example to follow. In the world of advertisements such women seem non-existent.

Thus through the analysis of three aspects of television programmes, besides reviewing literature and talking informally to people interested in the media, we have come to the conclusion that the portrayal of women on Doordarshan is narrow and unnatural.

It tends to be lopsided and a rather distorted portrayal of reality. Television depicts that women's activities and interests do not extend beyond the home and the family. They are characterized essentially as dependent and not decisive; traditional rather than modern; inferior, subordinate and subservient rather than equal. Hence, a dichotomy is built up by the media which defines women as good or bad, depending on their chosen careers, i.e. housewifery/motherhood versus employment/profession, which in turn reinforces the traditional versus modern controversy. This also indicates that the dominant ideology remains patriarchy and that men look after outside problems and women the inside, i.e. home and family.

According to Indian television, Indian women are happy receiving advice on cooking, pickling, food preservation and child care from women's programmes. Advertisements exploit them as sex objects and use them as an alluring back drop to make consumer goods more attractive and more sellable. Besides, the role of the educated woman is only to differentiate between different brands of tea, coffee, washing powder and soaps, health drinks, cooking medium, etc. to show how intelligent she is and how much she cares for her family. Sponsored serials do portray some modern women going in for employment or involved in their professions.

But they are depicted as strong, break-away characters who ultimately have to sacrifice their home, husband or children for the sake of their career. This succeeds in conveying a negative picture of professional women in a subtle manner.

Since communication functions are linked to people's needs, both material and non-material, the vital importance of content, context and the media being used, must be recognized. It is here that a visual medium like television with a far reaching range in bringing about necessary changes in society, especially in the role and status of women becomes very important.

It has been pointed out that media can reflect the values of a society and the position of women in that society. This reflects that model can also be turned around to suggest that media can project new and changing roles of women for the viewers--men, women and children, both in rural and urban areas. By bringing about changes in the themes, structure and content of programmes for women or featuring women, television in a developing country like ours, can set an agenda for public opinion, influence attitudes towards and about women and lay a foundation for treating them as equals in real terms rather than only on paper.

It is realized that the causes of unequal treatment to women lie in the social, economic and political structures as well as deeprooted cultural and traditionally determined attitudes. Yet, the media can play an important role in stimulating and bringing about change in the role and status of women by projecting full equality for women through changed portrayals of women in their programmes and advertisements.

Implications and Future Study

The implications of such portrayals can be far reaching, especially on children who are going to be the citizens of tomorrow. Since television along with the family and peer group has become a new agent of primary socialization we would like to study at the doctoral level how unequal and one-sided portrayals of Indian women affect children's perception of them. In particular, we would like to study whether sex-role socialization patterns that are handed down traditionally are now being reinforced by the mass media ^{especially} television. A content analysis of television programmes for children is also proposed to be undertaken at the Ph.D. level.

APPENDIX

PROGRAMME COMPOSITION BY FORMAT

(April, 1985)

(Figures are in percentages)

FORMAT	DELHI*	BOMBAY	CALCUTTA	MADRAS	JALANDHAR
1. Serial/Play/Skit	18	17	14	16	15
2. Spoken-word	15	30	16	25	16
3. Music	12	2	8	7	10
4. Feature Film and Chitrahaar	11	13	19	16	13
5. News	11	14	16	14	12
6. Documentaries	11	4	5	6	7
7. Sports	6	6	9	5	6
8. TV Report/Demonstration/Recitation	5	4	4	1	8
9. Dance	3	1	2	3	3
10. Quiz	3	3	2	2	4
11. Cartoon film/Puppet show	1	-	-	-	-
12. Slides/fillers/announcements/highlights/Commercials	4	6	5	5	6
TOTAL TRANSMISSION	273 hours 33 minutes	189 hours 17 minutes	175 hours 44 minutes	214 hours 30 minutes	228 hours 53 minutes

* Including Channel II

Source: Audience Research Unit
Doordarshan, New Delhi.

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