



Women's portrayal in the news media: A feminine perspective

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Abstract : *Women's portrayal in the media has been a point of strong international debate, and is also a highly-sensitive topic in our country.*

The issue of media sociology is an important element in this scenario, rendering it difficult to determine whether it is the media that affects and shapes the trends of society or vice versa. It is generally believed that the media and the masses influence and modify each other in an open-ended and undetermined way. Since women constitute half the society, their own role in ascertaining how the fairer sex is projected in the media cannot be overlooked.

Whether we say that it is this normative society that is mirrored by the media or that media is conjuring up images of women in which it wants to see them fitted — in either case women cannot be totally absolved from holding responsibility for the way in which the media projects them.

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Many women entering the glamorous world of films, television or advertising want to be considered as sex-symbols or queens of physical perfection themselves.

"Women's real liberation lies in the realization of their individuality and independent thought process, not in stripping themselves or taking to the streets," observes the eminent writer, BanoQudsia.

In recent months, there has been a flood of reportage on women, on the electronic media and in print. These images of women need to be examined from a sociological perspective. As students of the media, we may ask:

What kind of message does a daily newspaper give that describes the murder or rape of a young woman by placing a headline that reads, 'Fashionable woman murdered or raped in train'? The subheads say, 'Polished nails and henna on hands'.

Are women portrayed only as victims, or as vamps? What are the images used when reporting on women?

One may therefore infer that while women's projection in the media constitutes a major concern with the women, it's not only men who need be gender sensitized in a positive way. Even women need to be clear about what they want to adopt as the insignia of their identity, ensuring that this conviction comes from within the women directly involved 'in the media and with the media', because these are the women who are eventually in a position to direct change by their firm stance.

Therefore, this paper has attempts to gauge the women's viewpoints and opinions of their portrayal in the media.

Towards this end, a cross-section of women have been interviewed as consumers and producers of news.

Keywords : *Television, Women, Media, Bihar, Feminism, Media Content, TV shows.*