

SOCIOLOGY OF MEDIA AND GENDER STEREOTYPES: REFLECTIONS ON THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to critically analyse the role of media in promoting gender stereotypes and perpetuating gender hegemony. The observations are made on the basis of advertisement content on television and in print media with reference to various newspapers and magazines. The media today is a vibrant means of constructing, influencing and moulding public opinion as its reach and impact have increased many folds as compare to a decade ago. Media projects and presents society in its varied shades and also acts as a catalyst of change. It disseminates knowledge and information besides entertainment. It has the power to influence socio-economic and political structures of the society. Thus, media has a responsibility to work for the weaker sections of society, to inform and educate people, to raise its voice against old practices and traditions and bring transformation in the society but it is tantalizing to see the way women have been portrayed performing the social roles thus perpetuating the construction and maintenance of gender stereotypes. Media not only promotes gender stereotypes but also denigrates women who do not conform to the parameters fixed for the image of an ideal woman. It controls all aspects consisting looks of a woman, behaviour and roles to be played by her and expects her to be paragon of all virtues. Women are depicted in various roles from an ideal homemaker to a sex object, presented as an eye candy to men or a super woman who can be seen multitasking even when undergoing physical pain.

KEYWORDS: *Media, Gender Stereotypes, Society, Paragon*