

Theme: Gender and Media

## EDITORIAL

Mass media, all over the world, are accepted as agenda setters and powerful tools for promotion of varied causes and issues. They are also supposed to play a major role for the cause of the marginalised and deprived sections along with the other cross-sections of society. The issues related to women and sexual minorities are now seriously discussed in the public sphere. They also constitute almost half of the human population; it is only natural that the issues related to them would come up as discourse. Mass media being an integral part of public sphere can contribute a lot in highlighting issues of the marginalised sections. But this assumption sometimes goes wrong when we see mass media act differently by reflecting realities of society with misrepresentation or overstatement. Though mass media are not overtly negative towards any sections of society, it has been noticed that print, electronic and digital media, in their different formats and contents like fiction, non-fiction and advertisements portray women or sexual minorities in a stereotyped manner. This is due to the deep-set patriarchal mindset which is embedded into the consciousness of the people and been inherited down the ages. Mass media being an integral part of society often typecast these marginalised sections. Though it is assumed that mass media form public opinion and change perception of people on various issues it has been observed that the reflection of the prevailing ideas and traditional values of society get reproduced in mass media and this is especially true in case of women and sexual minorities. Here mass media fall into the trap of societal norms and judgement resulting in coverage of these issues in ways which are conducive to the value system of society. In this context the various contributions of the current issue try to delve into the different aspects of the marginalised sections of society and analyse the various facets in relation to mass media. It is indeed interesting to note that in this issue, participation has been from different disciplines of social science with contributors ranging from Political science, Sociology and English other than from Journalism and Mass communication. Cross sections of researchers from different areas have contributed articles, commentaries, book reviews and students' research.

In the article, Women Empowerment and the Role of Press: An Analysis of Newspaper Coverages of 1993 West Bengal Panchayat Elections by Jhumur Ghosh which concludes that the task of empowering women socially could have been undertaken by social institutions like the press however the sample newspapers' did not adopt the role of social motivator and crusader. Advertisement Pressure and its impact on Body Dissatisfaction and Body Image Perception of Women in India by V Sasi Rekha and K Maran finds distinct relationship between the advertisement pressure and its impact on body dissatisfaction and body image perception which are detrimental to women. Probing the Problematics of Gender and Sexuality: An Intercultural Approach to Critical Discourses on Body in the Colonial Bengali Magazine Nara-Naree by Sutanuka Banerjee resolves that gender identity is not a stable and fixed trait but has contra-hegemonic discourses which establish a new system to provide ambiguous answers to the problem of incorporating corollary with issues of east and west. Print Media Portrayal of Women Candidates in 2009 Indian Elections by Sagarika Golder finds out that these women receive less representation in media; the coverage associates them with domestic and private concerns even when they are active in the public sphere, women get to be identified with social, welfare and women's issues which are an extension of their domestic roles. Sanjeev Sabharwal and Riteeka Sen in Portrayal of Sexual Minorities in Hindi Films feel that sexual minorities are slowly finding place in Bollywood themes however it has to be kept in mind that balanced portrayal of homosexuality in Indian films will happen only when the characters are portrayed objectively without bias of any sort. Discursive Self in Consumption: Body, Fluidity and Femininity by Sourav Madhur Dey deals with issues where by using certain imagery portrayed in the media, women are able to construct an identity for themselves. In Representation of Violence Against Women In Indian Print Media: A Comparative Analysis by Rupsayar Das, the content analyses revealed that the national newspapers highlighted the political blame-game and other details not directly associated with the acts of violence against women. Debanjali Roy in Reality or myth: Representation of women in Indian TV serials discusses with case studies whether both good and bad women are victims of patriarchy. Islamic Women in Films: Turning the Voyeurs into Spectators by Sankhamala Ray has shown how these films have been able to engage the spectators in a silent but continuous dialogue with them. The female actors of the discussed films have not been portrayed in the films; they themselves have portrayed the films. Gender Reflections in Mainstream Hindi Cinema by

Nidhi Shendurnikar Tere discusses that cinema should seek a redefinition of women as objects of male gaze and give due importance to women's experiences and dilemmas as points of narration. Women issues in Newspapers of Uttarakhand by Vandana Nautiyal and Jeetendra Dabral shows the newspapers do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world and space provided to women issues is minimal. Globalization and Human Rights of Women with reference to Mary Wollstonecraft's Vindication of the Rights of Women by Barnali Ray speaks of Mary Wollstonecraft's emphasis on providing women with rational education with welfare remaining the primary focus also recognition of women as agents of development and social change with relation to globalization. The Pencil-like Thin Icons of Fertility in the Indian Media by Reshma Austin stresses upon how mass media puts to work the potential of female body as a powerful marketing tool and bombard public with idealized and perfected versions of female bodies. According to Subhas Singha Roy in Portrayal of Women in Indian Media in the era of Neo-liberal Economy, it appears that globalization and neo-liberal economy creates opportunities not for all women, but only a certain section of women enjoy the fruits of open market economy. Maitryee Mishra and Manisha Mishra analyses the treatment of women protagonist's in relation to themselves and others in Marriage, Devotion and Imprisonment: Women in Bimal Roy's Devdas and Bandini. Construction of Contemporary Women in Soap-Operas by Aaliya Ahmed and Malik Zahra Khalid have found out that soap opera can contribute to the process of changes by generating a thinking role for women and provides for experiences, learning and pleasure for women in which feminine discourse can be spoken of and appreciated.

The present issue of GMJ attempts to probe the role of Gender and Media in different and changing contexts. We are thankful to the contributors for their interest in the subject. Dr. Shoma A. Chatterjee has reviewed an important book. We are thankful to her. It would have been very difficult for us to complete the work without their participation. We would like to thank Prof. Buroshiva Dasgupta for his help with this issue especially with the book review section. We are grateful to Dr Baidyanath Bhattacharyya for his support with this issue. We are also thankful to all our colleagues, students and Calcutta University Library authorities for their constant help and support.

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