

## **WOMEN and MEDIA**

“The content and communication at any given time reflect the patterns and values of society and definitely any thing portrayed in the media can be the reflection, and portrayal of women cannot be the exception”

This quotation is much discussed and may be stale but an article of women and media cannot be started without this.

Gandhi once told.

I quote“Women is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he. The soul in both is the same. Each is a component to other”unquote

But in our society many women does not have such privileges. Being neglected, insulted from every corner the womanhood is suffering and suffocating. The portrayal of women in media is the best example for the status and condition of women in any society.

### **THE INSIDE STORY**

Twenty five years ago news papers used publish advertisements for journalists with a footnote-“Women should not apply” .Media had closed doors for women. But now the scene has been changed. Print, audio and visual media accepts women wholeheartedly . The number of women media professionals has grown rapidly. Many girls are happy to make it a profession.

Women are taken in to confidence and are given challenging and prestigious assignments.

Only in cinema still the condition is not that much appreciable. The number of women behind is bare minimum . Recently many girls who have graduated in film and video production are actively visible in the scene.

As in any other field women working in media also faces problems . Sexual harassment, glass ceiling for promotion, denial of vehicle dropping after night duty, nonavailability of toilettes..many problems are reported from the scene. But women in the field are facing all these and marching ahead.

### **THE SAD STORY**

The grave and sad situation really exists in the content of the programmes.

The portrayal of women in the serials and telefilms is alarming..

Media should serve as a powerful tool to support the cause of women by helping them to shape a new positive man-woman relationship and bring a

critical awareness of rights of women. But the reality is just the opposite. The visual media fall into the roll of vested commercial, consumerist interest that exploit women. Often the insensitive approach tarnishes the image of womanhood. The portrayal of woman is mostly reinforcing the idea that her place is at home and the most valuable asset of woman is her physical appearance. She can be educated, have a career but she must be a good wife and perfect mother – this is the idea projected by the visual media in general.. Middle class ideologies of woman's role as wife and mother provide the underlying basis for most programmes. The result is the reinforcement of stereotyped images and role specifications of women.

The viewers of mega serials are loaded with derogatory images of women. The old idea of women against woman is the dearest theme of our serial makers and in almost all serials we can see woman characters scheming against other women. Most of the serials remind women that their energy and intellect must be directed to find a right man and keeping him forever. They must be masochistic into their response to indignities, humiliations and even to physical violence inflicted upon them. The good woman in the visual media is a traditional housewife. She must be traditionally dressed, passive, pious, submissive, coy, long suffering and dependent on men. It is made very clear that the modern woman who asserts herself and her independence is undesirable and can never bring happiness to anybody nor find happiness herself.

Men and women are seldom portrayed in ways that encourages mutual respect and spirit of give and take between the sexes. The rising incidents of violence towards women in the real life cannot be delinked from the depiction of womanhood in the media. For this films also contribute much. The violence, vulgarity and lewdness shown in films and its impact on public morality and the price women pay for it cannot be neglected.

Apart from serials the other programmes for women are mostly showing “feminine” hobbies such as beauty treatment, flower arrangement, cooking, household tips, interviews with successful women etc. Still some hopeful attempts are coming in some channels where the talents of women are encouraged and appreciated. The positive image of woman is emphasized in such programmes.

The anchoring is the most hopeless presence of girls in visual media. Small girls to young women, speak a different language without intelligence and act as perfect example of showpieces.

The women angle will give a more healthy and balanced approach to media . For this more women should come to work in the field. The programme makers must realize their responsibility to women and society and make positive programmes for women.

**-K.A.BEENA**