# Gender Studies

## 1.1    An Introduction to Gender Studies

Think of the activities that take place in an average household during the course of a day. Food is cooked; cleaning is done – sweeping, mopping, and dusting. Groceries and
other household items are purchased. Clothes are washed, dried, ironed. Sometimes household repairs are carried out. Garbage is discarded. Also, the people who live in the house need to be looked after. Sometimes they may have special needs – for example babies need constant supervision.

These are some of the things that are required to be done to keep homes functioning. These activities take a lot of time, and many are to be done on a daily basis. The people
who do them expend a lot of energy and may be exhausted when they are finished. Most of the time, women perform these tasks. Put together, these tasks are called housework. Given this name, it may be surprising to learn that housework is not considered to be work in economic or social terms. It is seen as a set of tasks that is naturally performed by the women of a household. It is not, for example, calculated as part of the country's Gross Domestic Product (the sum of all goods and services produced in a country in a given period). This is in spite of the fact that if the women of the house are unable or unwilling to do these tasks, other people will do them - but only if they are paid to do so.

Housework is not the only area in which women's work is not recognised as work. We would generally see women rushing about the city, obviously very busy. But according to the prevalent statistics, only a tiny fraction of women are in the workforce. The question that is to be raised, then, is 'why is the economic contribution of so many women seen as being trivial?'

These examples reflect certain changes in viewpoint that are very significant from the
point of view of gender studies. They reflect a change in perspective – a change in the way things is looked at.
*Gender studies is a field of study that looks at the world from*
*the perspective of gender. This means that while studying something – the distribution*
*of resources within a household, a social unit like a caste group, a bill placed before*
*Parliament, a development project, the classification of different species – are done in a*
*manner that takes into account the fact that different genders exist in the world.*

These genders are differently placed within social reality such that various processes impact
them differently. Thus, gender studies recognises that gender has to be taken seriously. It is also a field that recognises that often, within academic disciplines and

also other spheres of society, the perspective that has been applied has been that of the most powerful people in
society, and that this is often at the expense of less powerful people. Gender studies then exists as an important means of correcting such imbalances.

## 1.2 Features of Gender Studies

Gender studies refers to the academic study of the phenomena of gender. What is meant by 'gender'? Within feminist thought, a distinction has been made between 'sex' and 'gender'. Sex here refers to the fact of being either male or female, and gender to the cultural and social ideas of masculinity and femininity that are assigned to different sexes. Gender refers to those traits and characteristics that a person is expected to possess by virtue of being male or female, as
well as the different roles that the person is expected to perform. For example, women may be seen as naturally caring and nurturing, while men may be seen as naturally rational and logical; this may lead to the belief that women are naturally suited to jobs like nursing, while men will make good scientists and engineers. The traits associated with masculinity and femininity varies across different cultures and societies, as well as different periods in history.

Gender studies looks at the manner in which the norms and patterns of behaviour associated with masculinity and femininity come into being. It studies the features of these norms and patterns – which traits are considered masculine, which feminine, and why? How do stereotypical models of men and women develop? How do they change over time, and what factors contribute to changes? Also, and very importantly, what impact do such stereotypes have upon actually existing men and women?

This last point – that gender studies also has a focus upon actually existing men and women – is significant because within gender studies, there is a recognition that men and women do not exist in isolation from their other social roles and positions. A women is not only a woman – within our society, she also has a certain class position, caste position, religious identity, sexual identity, and many more. All of these factors impact her life – therefore while studying her life, all these factors need to be taken into consideration. Another feature of gender studies is that it examines how the world is gendered. Some examples can explain this concept in more clear terms:

Think of the difference in girls' and boys' clothing. Skirts, saris, salwar-kurtas are seen
as feminine clothing, and trousers, shirts, sherwanis, etc. as masculine. There are other
differences too – feminine clothing is often more colourful than masculine clothing, more likely to be decorated with sparkles and shiny material.

*Think of two women. One who teaches in a school and one who is a construction worker. What kind of differences and commonalities can you visualize in their working lives?*

Sometimes there is an overlap in men and women's clothing. For example, both men and women may wear denim jeans. But even here, it can be noted that there are differences – in cuts, i.e. in how the jeans fits the wearer (tight or loose), in colours and embellishments (embroidery, sequins, crystals etc.). Thus even in common items of clothing, there are differences. Clothing is gendered. It differs for both genders, and in doing so; it allows determining whether the wearer is male or female. Sometimes men and women do wear clothing that is absolutely identical. For example, a school uniform may also consist of a tie that both girls and boys have to wear. In this case, can it be said that the tie is also a gendered article of clothing?

From a gender studies perspective, it will be seen that clothing that is common to both men and women is often men's clothing that women have also adopted. Neckties would be an example of this. Think of other examples. It may be noticed that both men and women go to work in offices wearing business suits – trousers and jackets. These are masculine clothes that have been adopted by women. It is much less common to find examples of women's clothing that have been adopted, on a large scale, by men. It is not usual to see men going to work
wearing saris. This example also indicates another area that gender studies focuses on –
that of power differences between genders. It is more common to see the powerless adopting the characteristics of the powerful, than the powerful adopting the characteristics of the powerless.

## 1.3 Life in a Gendered World

People may advise a young person on which subjects to take in school or college by saying, "you should study this – it is a good subject for a girl" or "that is not the right
subject for a boy". In this way, education is also gendered, as is the job market – different opportunities are considered to be appropriate for girls and boys. Certain careers are gendered – nursing, for example, is a profession that has more women than men and which is not deemed appropriate for men. Physical spaces may be gendered. Think of the roads of a city – can anyone be out on the street at any time? There are no rules prohibiting anyone from going out onto the street. Yet it is found that women do not stay out on the streets as late as men do. Women also do not spend time hanging around on the streets – at a teashop, for instance, alone or chatting with friends. Men and women thus have different kinds of access to streets, and have different experiences of being out on the streets. In these ways, physical spaces are also gendered.

Thus various aspects of living world are gendered. They differ for different genders, the
experiences of them differ in ways that depending upon the gender. The study of the gendered nature of the social and physical world is an important part of gender studies. The perspective of gender studies can be applied to a variety of situations, examples of which have been given. These examples were all from different

academic disciplines – sociology, political science, biology, law, and economics. Thus, gender studies encompass many disciplines. It is multidisciplinary. This is an important dimension of gender studies because it has also pointed out certain gaps in various disciplines.

The origins of gender studies lie in women's studies. Women's studies came into being
in order to address the gaps and imbalances in academic knowledge that resulted from an inadequate incorporation of women into academics. Many women's studies scholars have pointed out that often, academic disciplines would not take women into account when developing theories and concepts, or when doing research and collecting data. An example of this has been given above – women's unpaid housework is not calculated as part of our country's GDP. If the GDP is to reflect the total of the goods and services produced in the country, shouldn't it then include housework? If it doesn't, isn't it then inaccurate? A gender studies perspective can, in this way, indicate and correct imbalances and inaccuracies in various disciplines. It can also ask the significant question – why have these errors and imbalances come into being? Why have various disciplines not recognised the contributions of women? Why have these contributions been devalued and/or ignored?

Gender studies has, in this way, questioned the theories and underlying assumptions of
many disciplines. In doing so, it has also developed new tools and techniques for research.
One of the most significant dimensions of gender studies is that it is political. It raises questions about power in society, and how and why power is differentially distributed between different genders. It asks questions about who has power over whom, in which situations, how power is exercised, and how it is, and can be, challenged. Different theories and perspectives within gender studies have different approaches to these questions, and look for answers in different social processes. Many debates are
on going, as new data is revealed and new theories are put forth.

## 2. GENDER: BASIC CONCEPTS

Excerpts from a boy's diary…
*"I have a friend who has long hair,*
*No you guessed it wrong,*
*That friend is not Siya or Ria, his name is Rajan.*
*I like the way Ajay takes care of his baby sister,*
*But it is sad that a few boys ridicule him for this, why?*
*The other day when I saw women in mountains carrying heavy loads,*
*I felt how wrong I was to think only men are strong."*

As a discipline gender studies has developed certain terms and concepts which are used
while studying the phenomenon of gender. An understanding of their meaning and implications allows us to see and connect various aspects of it.

## 2.1 Sex Vs Gender

Sometimes it is hard to understand exactly what is meant by the term 'gender' and how
it differs from the closely related term 'sex'. Understanding of the social construction
of gender starts with explaining the two concepts, i.e., gender and sex. Often these
two terms are used interchangeably: however, they bear different meanings as concepts.
"Sex" refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and
women. It is defined as the anatomical and physiological characteristics that signify
the biological maleness and femaleness of an individual.

"Gender" refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and
attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Gender
emphasizes that masculinity and femininity are products of social, cultural and
psychological factors and are

> *In our society men and women perform different roles and are assigned different
> responsibilities. Why is it so? Is this natural or has society made these rules?*

acquired by an individual in the process of becoming a man or woman. **'Gender'** is the
term widely used to refer to those ways in which a culture reformulates what begins as
a fact of nature. The biological sexes are redefined, represented, valued, and
channelled into different roles in various culturally dependent ways.

Sex as defined earlier is the concept that emerges from anatomical and physiological
characteristics that differentiates males and females biologically whereas gender can be
seen as a social construct manifested by masculine and feminine roles prevalent in a
culture or a society. Thus, gender can be seen as an artefact of social, cultural and
psychological factors which are attained during the process of socialization of an
individual.

What is the significance of the concept 'gender'? In talking about the social and cultural
construction of masculinity and femininity, gender allows us to see these dimensions
of human roles and personalities as based not on nature but on social factors. It then
allows us to address issues like subordination and discrimination as issues where
change is possible.
Therefore, the meaning of sex and gender, femininity and masculinity fluctuates
within societies and cultures across the globe.

## 2.2 Gender as a Social Construct

People do not merely internalize gender roles as they grow up but they respond to
the norms prevalent in the society. Children learn to categorize themselves by

gender from infancy. A part of this is learning how to display and perform gendered identities as masculine or feminine. Children observe and gradually internalize the gendered behaviour around them through different medium and sources. Gender-differentiated children's activities gradually cement the gender difference in behaviour that later reflect in the nature of adult male and female behaviour. Gender refers to culturally constructed roles that are played by women and men in society. Further, gender is used as a concept to analyse the shaping of women's and men's behaviour according to the normative order of a society. Gender as a conceptual tool is used to analyse the structural relationships of inequality existing between women and men, as reflected in various aspects of life such as the household, the labour market, education and political institutions. Sex, on the other hand, refers to the biological differences between female and male which are seen as uniform across time and space. Gender can therefore be defined as a notion through which the social and ideological construction and representation of differences between the sexes can be understood.

Gender is a complex phenomenon which is socially and culturally constructed. An individual acquires gender through a process of socialization, i.e., the person acquires the gendered body - feminine or masculine - in the course of social development. The construction of femininity and masculinity plays an important role in shaping various institutions like the family. Understanding of gender in relation to society leads to a reflection on the existing power relations between women and men. Children are socialised into performing the gender roles required of them. For example, young girls may be encouraged to play with dolls, and when they are slightly older, may be expected to participate in housework. It is in these ways that they come to learn what codes of behaviour are considered appropriate for them, which norms they have to conform to.

## 2.3 Gender Stereotypes

**Gender stereotypes** are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and the roles of individuals and/or groups. Stereotypes can be positive or
negative, but they rarely communicate accurate information about others. Gender has
appeared in religious, philosophical, and literary works for centuries. Consider the following excerpts, from ancient times to the present:

§ "Woman is more compassionate than man and has a greater propensity to tears…
But the male… is more disposed to give assistance in danger, and is more courageous than the female".
(Aristotle, cited in Miles, 1935).

§ "To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her, man could not be. If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more

effective appeal to the heart than woman?" (Mahatma Gandhi, cited in Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, 1960)

§ "A man will say what he knows, a woman says what will please." (Jean Jacques Rousseau, Emile, 1762/1955)

§ "Man with the head and woman with the heart; Man to command and woman to obey; all else confusion." (Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1842)

Although the past three decades have brought a new level of awareness about the wide
range of roles possible for each gender, strong beliefs about gender difference remain.

The commonest female stereotypical role that is prevalent is of the homemaker. It is imperative for her to put her family's welfare before her own; she is loving, compassionate,
caring, nurturing, emotional and sympathetic. The male's role on the other hand is to be the provider. He is also to be assertive, competitive, independent, aggressive, courageous, rational, career-oriented and pragmatic. These sorts of stereotypes are quite damaging and
can hinder an individual's personal and professional growth as well as expression and creativity. Besides these, a list of other gendered lists for physical characteristics (tall, strong, and sturdy for men; soft, dainty and graceful for women), occupations, and activities or behaviours were also tabulated. The variety of these attributes identified as masculine or feminine, till date have a wide acceptance, and their stability over time suggests that gender stereotypes are deep-seated in people's mind.

## 2.4 Gender Roles and Relations

**Gender roles** can be defined as the social roles that a person is expected to fulfill based upon his or her gender. These vary in different social, cultural and historical contexts. They vary among different societies and cultures, classes, ages and during different periods in history. Gender –specific roles and responsibilities are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions (FAO, 1997)

Ever since human started living in societies, the differentiation between the male and the female gender and implicated specific lifestyle, duties and functional areas for each
of these genders began. In many societies across the globe a differentiation is seen between the roles and relations of men and women.

The socio-cultural norms of a society are instrumental in demarcating the gender relations. They indicate the way men and women relate to each other in a
socio-cultural setting and subsequently lead to the display of gender-based power. This develops from the expected and gendered roles assumed by men and women and the impact of their interactions. A good example for this can be 'The family'. In

this setting man assumes the provider and decision maker's roles and woman takes-up the familial and childcare roles. These power relations are biased because the male has more power in making financially, legally and socially influential decisions. Roles, assumed attributes and socio-cultural norms lead to the design of behavioural blueprints. Those who do not conform to these roles we are seen to be deviant as per the societal standards. In most of the societies the family systems are based on the similar structure of such gender roles and it is predesigned these stringently structured roles that rein members of the family to be in this institution with bound responsibilities.

Gender roles are societal, cultural and personal. They regulate how males and females should think, speak, dress, and interact within the context of society. Learning reinforced through various societal institutions and plays a role in this process of shaping gender roles. While various **socializing agents**- parents, teachers, peers, movies, television, music, religion- teach and strengthen gender roles throughout the lifespan, parents probably exert the greatest influence. The way in which gender roles are absorbed and assimilated by a group of people describes the influence of society. The role of a man and a woman in society is influenced by a variety of factors. These factors vary with the region, religion, culture, climate, historical beliefs, ideologies and experiences, across the globe.
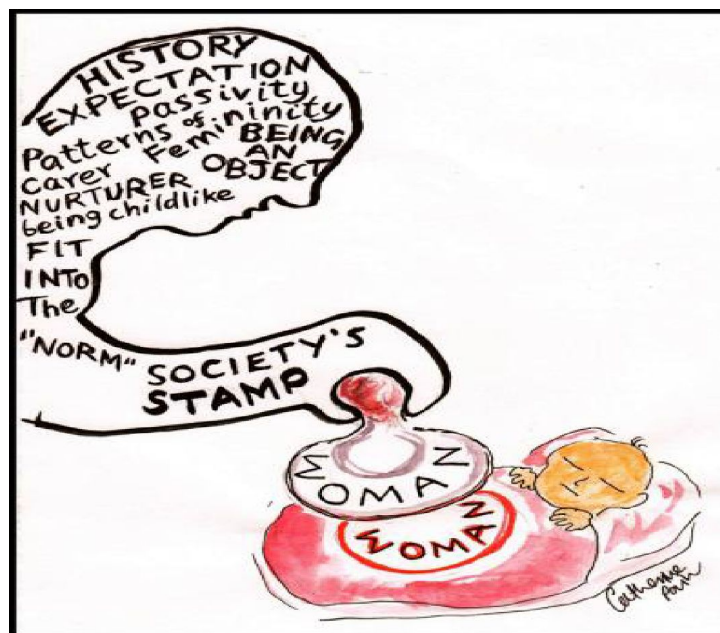


## 2.5 Patriarchy

Patriarchy literally means the 'rule of the father'. Within gender studies, the term refers to a social system wherein men dominate over women. Male dominance can be expressed in various ways – for example, within the institution of the family, in the greater rights given to men, through the ownership and control by men of resources like land and other assets.

Patriarchy takes different forms in different social and historical contexts. This is because patriarchy is a system which interacts with – i.e., it is shaped by, and shapes – other systems in society. It operates differently in different communities, economic systems, countries, etc.

A patriarchal society is a society controlled, and run by men. Men devise the rules and
hold dominating positions at home, in community, in business and government. "A man's world", is a phrase that is used to talk about this. They hold the privilege to listing out rules and dominate in all forums both inside and outside the home. In such a
societal setup a woman is seen more as supplementing and supporting a man (behind
every successful man is a woman), bearing children and taking care of household chores. This is how it is and has been for ages in many of the cultures.

Feminists used the concept of patriarchy in early 20th century to expound the social arrangement of male dominance over women. The underlying ideology of a patriarchal
society is all about the men possessing superior qualities or typical attitudes and traits
like – virility, strong will power, authority, dominance, bullying, shrewdness, maintaining
confidentiality, social associations and network, action oriented, having a free will, a sense of superiority over others (outlook, race, gender), brute force, belligerence, carrier of family legacy so on and so forth.

Thus, in a patriarchal social structure, the patriarch is an elder holding societal legitimate
power over a group in the community unit. Men acquires a dominant status not in terms numbers or in strength but by means of having a more prominent and powerful social position and having almost absolute access to **decision-making power**. It is also related to economics as in patriarchal societies men will have greater power and control over the economy. In such a scenario, because men have higher income and greater hold on the economy, they are said and considered to be dominant.

There are a variety of ways in which patriarchy can be enforced. This may include extortion through violence, physical and mental assault and other forms of harassment, and the demeaning of their efforts to unify and resist. patriarchal societies and they trust heavily on legal-rational approaches of association, show stronger martial implication and also reliance on police suppression to impose authority. In such a setting it is a general trend to hold contempt for women and for her attempts to liberate herself. In these societies, women are presented with an interpretation of the world made by men, and a history of the world defined by men's actions. For instance, in history when we read about war and conquests, we read more about male warriors, whereas the stories of women are scarcely told. This expurgation of women's lives distances women and fails to provide them with relevant role models.

In contrast, matriarchal societies honour women as key decision-makers and they hold the privileged positions as community leaders, where they play a central role in the family, community and in the society. In the few matriarchal societies that exist today women's rights are central; women are given space to express their creativity and participate in society.

## 2.6 Feminism

*Savitribai Phule was the first woman teacher in India. She was married at the age of nine, and was educated by her husband, Jyotiba Phule. Phule's father was furious at his teaching Savitribai, but the couple persisted. In 1848 they opened a school for girls in Pune. In 1851 they opened a school for Mang and Mahar girls and in 1853 a home for Hindu widows and their children. Savitribai also started the Mahila Seva Mandal in 1852, an organisation that was aimed at making women more aware of their rights.*



Savitribai Phule

In the broadest sense, the term feminism refers to a set of ideas that recognise that women are faced with certain disadvantages because they are women and the belief that this should not be so. It refers to the political practice that emerges from these, a practice which is aimed at changing the situations of women who face systemic disadvantages.

The term 'broadest sense' has been used to describe this definition because there are different types of feminism, which recognise that in the social world women suffer certain disadvantages in comparison to men.

However, the different strands of feminism vary in what they understand the root cause or
causes of these disadvantages to be. Another common feature of the various strands of feminism is that they do not hold the difference in the social positions of men and women to be based on natural factors. They do not believe that there is anything that women have or lack that makes them inherently inferior to men, or which makes men inherently superior to women. Instead, the disparities in the social positions of men and women have arisen, over long periods of human history, due to social and cultural factors, and must also be countered through social and cultural means.

This last sentence gives an indication of another very important facet of feminism – it seeks to change those dimensions and systems of society which give rise to inequalities between the sexes. Thus, it not only wishes to understand social systems and processes, but also has a commitment to change those that are unjust and discriminatory. In doing so, it realises that the problems that individual women face – violence, exploitation, and discrimination, for example – are caused by broad social

and historical factors, and not because of immediate individual circumstances. They must therefore be countered through social changes.

Why is feminism an important concept in the field of gender studies? As has been discussed, in the introduction to this unit, that gender studies is a political field of study. It raises questions of power in society, and asks how the balance of power, which favours one
gender, can be shifted and made more equitable. It is in this way informed by a certain politics, and historically this has been the politics of feminism.

*In the 1970s, Bodh Gaya saw a movement by agricultural labourers to reclaim agricultural land, much of which was held by the Bodh Gaya Math. In 1979, the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini organised a shibir (camp) where the demand was first raised that the redistributed land be registered in women's names as well as in men's. Why was this demand important? Land is a very significant asset. It is considered a primary resource for the economy, and a source of livelihood and financial security for people. Women made the demand for ownership of land because it would help them to achieve all these things. The lack of ownership of land left them particularly vulnerable.*

# Gender Representation and Media

Women's are the prime assets for the development of a country, especially in the context of India where nearly 50% of total population comprises of women. The time has gone when women were generally considered as an object and their role in family and society was very limited. The women of 21st century are achieving several mile stones and they are becoming source of inspiration for many. However, we cannot say it confidently that the image of women in Indian society has completely transformed, there are many evidences which proves the existence of systematic discrimination and neglect of women's in India. It may be in terms of inadequate nutrition, denial or limited access to education, health and property rights, child labor and domestic violence (Purnima, 2010). Media has always been a significant pillar of social transformation and social change. To bring a social change the instrumental role of media can-not be denied. It doesn"t just have the power to build public opinion by reaching to far, wide and diversified audience but also mobilize people and mould the public opinion. This puts the media in a powerful position in a democracy. Popular mass media such as news papers, television, and radio represent a symbolic power of social control. Now days there are other interactive forms of communication have emerged out such as internet, blogs, social networking sites, text messaging, wikis, virtual world and many more. They are generally termed as new Media and becoming increasingly powerful mechanisms for mobilizing popular support. The characteristics of this new media are collect, collaborate, create and interact (Arif Moin & Ehtesham Ahmad Khan 2013). They effectively solicit public support and participation for the well being of the society. The structure of ownership and participation are new in new media and directly challenge the monopoly on mass communication possessed by traditional media producer. Women have crucial role to play in every sphere of life whether it is household, economic contribution child rearing or improving the quality of life. To play these role women should be conscious of their potential and it can only be possible when they will not be deliberately marginalized by male domination. In this context, media has an important role to play to create awakening in women to achieve their potential as the prime movers of change in society.

The content of media reflects the pattern of value in any society. The prevailing attitude of the society gets revealed through the way subjects dealing with women are treated by the media (Arpita Sharma, 2012). Media can act as both a perpetrator and as a protagonist – it can either reinforce the gender based discrimination by portraying stereotypical sensational images of women or it can provide balanced coverage that empowers women while exposing acts of gender bias (Amrita Ray and Mr. Ritwajit Das). Recognizing the role of media in women empowerment, the National commission for women and other organizations are striving hard to improve the status of Indian women different forms of communication for the mass. This paper would try to prove the ways women are portrayed in media may empower women in society but may also promote them as sexual objects, submissive to male dominance and wrapped with stereotyped roles, which has detrimental impact on the self esteem and .body image of young girls. Women in Commercials Though media proves out to be a boon to bring social change in Indian society but its policy in terms of depicting women image has somehow distorted. More often than not the media depicts women as a sexual object with little value. It sends negative messages about the ways in which women should be treated and constantly degrade status of women in the society. In news and entertainment media, women have frequently been marginalized with minor changes in proportions over the past decade. The female characters often depicted in film and television cast gender stereotypes and the likelihood of women, specifically young women, to be hyper sexualized in film is far more expected than men. In television commercials the trend of sex-role stereotype can be observed where women are mostly given the roles such as not making important decision at home

and outside, dependent on men, need men‟s protection (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971). The commercials for men‟s products generally involve women as sex objects (advertisement of deodorant, shaving cream etc.). In an observation of 1000 TV commercials Dominick and Rauch (1974) observed that the role given to women are limited to housewife/mother and rarely given occupational roles. This type of stereotypical representation of women in media can have a detrimental impact on young girls who identifies themselves with their role model shown in these commercials. Women may perceive the image of a complete housewife stereotype as a cultural directive. They may learn to suppress their desire of pursuing their career of interest and replace them with the "ideal" presented to them through the media in their daily lives. Most of the time media depicts the desire rather than the reality. Behind the sensational portrayal of women in advertisements the simple reason is to pursue the target audience in favor of a respective product or service. We can see a women depicting a vulgar and lusty image in many advertisements such as soft drinks (Slice), Deodorant and Body Spray ("Engage" , "Axe", "Wild Stone"), which is not at all necessary to portray in this kind of advertisements of male products. In many two wheeler and four wheeler advertisements and an advertisement of E-commerce website of second hand products portrays a kind of greedy and self-centered woman character, which makes a very bad impression to the society. The message conveyed through the media may misguide the adolescents of today to maintain a slim and skinny body image. It may give rise to many health related issued among adolescents girls. The pervasiveness of sex stereotyped role in commercials are not only limited to India but a strong similarity of sex role in advertising can be seen around the world.

Women in Television In the era of cable and satellite television has become the part of everyday‟s life in almost every level of socioeconomic strata. It is one of the vast and widely accepted media in the developing world. The development of satellite television in 1991 revolutionized the content and context of television. There are a number of channels with specific content of programmes like cartoon channels for kids, health channels, devotional channels and channels especially for daily soaps (Zee TV, Colors, Star Plus.). These channels showing daily soaps basically targeted the housewives sitting at home in the afternoon. Women watch more daily soaps than man (Jyotin, 2002). But the popularity of these daily soaps is not limited only to these category of women, many working women and male also watch these serials regularly. The striking features of these serials is that it portrays women either as vamps planning some conspiracy or an ideal women who keep herself busy in performing household chores, whose main aim is to make everyone happy over sacrificing herself. But it has no relationship with reality. Though in few serials like "Balika Vadhu", "Punarvivah‟, "Diya and Baati" has came up to raise the bold tabooed issues related to women such as child marriage, widow remarriage and women education. But being based on these themes ultimately, they portray the submissive and sacrificing image of women simultaneously. It is also been shown in these serials that when women possess the power or excel in professions, the ego of males get hurt and gets webbed into allsorts of insecurities and inferiorities. (Karthika, 2005). These serials exaggerate a selection of real life circumstances and assumptions. These types of programme create a world which seems very real and viewers are unable to differentiate between the contrived.

world and the real one. Television serials have a definite impact on thought pattern of society (Desai, 1996). Women have been portrayed as men would like to see them- beautiful creatures, submissive mothers of their children, efficient house keepers, but nothing else. Impact of television is more on the young children and adolescents. It may have an adverse impact on the attitude and behavior of adolescents. The present scenario demands of taking initiative on the part of women in making sure of presenting a positive ideals of both men and women in the society by altering portrayal of damaging stereotypes (Gahulant, 2002). Women in Print Media The print media include newspapers, periodicals, newsletters is one of the oldest media and has been relied upon by the people as credible source of information. The print media are known for fearless criticism and service. Print media not only reflects the values prevailing in the society but also provides platform for dialogue and discussions on issues leading to social change (Kumar. P. 1995). No doubt that electronic media broadcast the issue immediately but print media creates a more persistent and lasting effect. It has

been observed that women issues generally do not get a chance to come up on the front page, unless they are rape cases, crime, sexual harassment, abuse of women or other atrocities. Even in news on issues related to women they are presented as passive victims or passive reactors to public event in news media. Visibility of women in news is widely covered on some specific days like Mother‟s Day, Women‟s Day etc. On other day‟s news related to women generally occupied with sensational stories of glamour, sex, domestic violence and other forms of violence. Besides Sunday and Saturday special glossy editions on women's leisure, fashion, beauty and other luxurious news items with erotic photographs are issued from time to time by daily newspapers (Dhar, Pattnaik ;1996). The presentation of women in media has changed the perception of perfection especially among adolescents. Perfection means being skinny beyond healthy standards, and fit and beautiful for today‟s adolescents. Ultimate impact of identifying themselves with these models of media contributes to the growing rate of eating disorders among young women. Many women now feel the need to be skinny and do so through drastic measures, such as anorexia or bulimia (Morgan S, 2012). Women in Film Films are the most complex way of communicating which may include all aids like visual, sound and drama it has an advantage over the print media and impressive impact well on illiterate audience, the movies are made on different spheres like family social drama, romance, religious stories and affairs of family and society. It‟s the most influencing medium with whom the audience often gets carried away and any immoral interpretation can have unethical impact on the society. The fact cannot be denied that film has bought the change in perception of society to some extent but still there is a dearth of awareness in society regarding the real status of women. There has been a shift in depicting women in film story from dancing around tress, making love with men, taking care of everyone in the house, and bounded to behave like an ideal daughter, wife and daughter-in-law. Over 75 years a change has emerged in feminists across the respective time "a new wave" in the cinema has leashed Rao(1989). In the last decades many women role oriented films have come in which women are shown breaking the barriers of stereotypical role such as in "Mardani", "Lajja". Many real life crimes against women are also depicted through movie such as "No one killed Jessica". The films like „Mary Kom" depicts the success story of women. But these kind of movies are so meager that they can be counted on finger and they do not come in the list of crossing 100 crores like a commercial film showing women in songs, dance, in a situation of asking for help and men fighting to protect women. This shows the stereotypical mindset of the audience where they enjoy men and women in their traditionally defined roles. Women are hardly shown as a working unless compelled by the circumstances. She sits at home or show doing shopping even though she is highly educated. Even if shown working then the areas get specified like teachers, lawyers and receptionist. Working women often shown encountering sexual harassment and reinforces masculinity by media (Gallagher1992). Modern women shown in films is a complete transform of patriarchal tradition women who is well educated beautiful independent but still needs a hero to save her to save her from petty thieves. New cinema and the portrayal of women may lead to myth in society (Laxmi1986). It is a prejudice mind-set that women directors must create a film related to some feminine problems (Gupta 1994). In a study conducted on 'reading habits and perception of portrayal of women' by Nidhi Mittal (1999) where she found out that the respondents themselves felt that there is a need to change women's portrayal in magazines as they were shown more in subdued roles.

Women, who constitute half of the population, need particular attention of the media not only to raise the issues related to them but also to show their achievements, success stories and their struggle towards their dream of creating a sense of self respect, self reliance, economic independence and equality in status with men. During the last two decades, proliferation of women in developmental research is remarkable but there is still a dearth of researches inquiring the sensitivity of media towards presentation of women in their content. Today‟s adolescents are most of the time exposed to one or other kind of media and they learn through identifying themselves with their role model, most often the characters shown in news, films and serials. On the backdrop of this the present study has been taken to find out the perception of adolescents