



A Psycho - Semiotic analysis of the 'mediatized' text through gender lens

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Women's participation, performance and portrayal in media are the three important dimensions of the present study of psycho-semio centric analysis of the mediatized text, especially through the gender lens. Because for the empowerment and development of the women section, it is very important to give them proper environment where they can raise their voices against the inequalities and the gender-gap they are experiencing in our male dominated or patriarchal societies (Patowary, 2014). Improving the status of women, in every aspect, is regarded as the only way to eradicate this gender gap and achieving a better quality of life for the women. For this, communication can be regarded as vital way and Media can play a significant role in Priming, framing and agenda setting social values, attitudes, norms, perception and behaviour with the help of three pillar of political economy of mass media, i.e. propaganda model, manufacturing consents and media hegemony.

It has been widely recognised that media can play substantial role in promoting and disseminating information among the masses and are regarded as the stimulating agent of the social, political and economic development of women. Media can acts as a mirror of the society by highlighting all the problems faced by women in their everyday life as well as their pocket size achievements, hope, freedom as a token of acknowledgement. In ideal democratic environment, media can provide a space for women to talk about their rights or freedoms, even where women can participate, represent their womanhood and in which they will be portrayed or re- presented positively. A positive portrayal of women in 'mediatized' text is necessary to maintain the real dignity and status of women which will minimise the gap and inequalities between any gender "identities".

'Mediased' text is the combination of both pictorial images and textual images created and circulated by the media organisations. Hence, the media consumers are default exposed themselves in front of gargantuan mediatized text, from morning to night - in every moment and every sphere of their daily life. Among the mediatized text 'Advertisement' and 'News' are the most vibrant tools of communication , in which psycho – semiotic ingredients like signifier, signified connotation and denotation of the communicated words, cognition criteria , impact of 'ego strength and defence' are the most study worthy area.

Now the questions may arise that why mediatized text take the help of some imaginary identity for consumption purpose and who need this 'identity'? There are two way of responding the questions (Hall,1996)- The first is to observe something distinctive about the deconstructive critique to which many of these essentialist concepts have been subjected.... which aspire the production of positive knowledge, he deconstructive approach puts key concepts under erasure. A second kind of answer deals with 'where, in relation to what set of problems, does the irreducibility of the concept, identity, emerge?'

As hall argues that, the term 'identity' remains embedded within the central narratives of the agencies and politics related to the media. So, for the vernacular press it can be the state and the state politics but the silent gigantic stimulus is the political economy of mass media which regulate the politics of representation. Any product, be it white goods or brown goods, the pictorial image as well as textual image has its own politics of representation which can be traced only through its psycho - semiotic reading. Our

system of constructing meaning of communicated message totally depends on the individual's 'ego strength and defence' in one hand and in other hand ideology, perception and other discourses through which the reader is going through, which are again responsible to develop person's 'ego'. So, from the mediatized text where, advertisements reflected a glorious picture of women overcoming all obstacles and becoming independent decision maker, actual news are not so rose tinted. These kind of gender portrayals construct multidimensional meaning from the intended encoded texts of pseudo-realistic 'gender empowerment'.

This paper focuses on the way they are portrayed in advertisement in comparison to their actual social position as revealed from the news in leading Bengali news papers and magazines. To fulfil the purpose of the study, five advertisements (viz. Cooking spices, cough syrup, jewellery buying scheme) are selected from the local magazines in urban area and five newsfeed are selected from two leading Bengali newspapers.

Figure 1 Saptahik Bartaman



Figure 2 Saptahik Bartaman



Picture 3 Saptahik Bartaman



These three advertisements from Bengali magazine Saptahik Bartaman portrayed three different images of women whose psycho semiotic analysis will show how meaning is created and myth is formed by these kind o mediatized text.

As Ronald Barthes (1977) Said, The advertisement is a message. It is basically a communication process where his message is formed by an identified source, transmitted through a channel and received at a specific point. The emission and the perception of the message both lie within the field of sociology and psychology. It is basically a matter of studying human groups, identifying human motives and attitudes and trying to link the behaviour of this group to the social totality of which they are a part.

By definition advertising photograph is the scene itself, the literal reality. The above three picture shows the trust of a RJ on the cough syrup, a woman on the cooking spice with a notion that buying best is always safe and the again trust on the jewellery investment scheme.

From object to its image there is of course lies a eternal difference in the form of 'reduction' – in proportion, perspective, colour- but not at all the mathematical sense of transformation of the 'reduction'. To move from the reality to photograph the pictorial mediatized text can be divided into small unites of signs. It is the code between the object and its image which is conveyed through this advertisement. Hence, the image which is portrayed in the advertisement is not the reality rather a perfect analogon which defines the photograph. That is why photographic message is an continuous message. Those continuous messages develop different supplementary messages as well by the readers with ego strength –ego defence mechanism.

The idea of *ego-strength* has a long history in the field of psychology that can be traced back to the development of Sigmund Freud's three-tiered view of personality in terms of id, ego, and super-ego. Neo Freudians shifted from Freud's deterministic and pessimistic view and provided an empowering view of personality as primarily social in focus and self determined by intrinsic motivation. While according to Freud, ego strength refers to the capacity of the individual to balance between the needs and desires of id

and suppression of super ego, Neo Freudians use the term to refer to a cultivated resiliency or strength of our core sense of self, the extent to which we learn to face and grow from challenging events or persons in our lives in ways that strengthen our relationships with our self and others and enrich our lives with meaning.

People with well-developed ego strength tend to share a number of essential characteristics. They tend to be confident in their ability to deal with challenges, and they are good at coming up with solutions to life's problems. They also tend to have high levels of emotional intelligence and are able to successfully regulate their emotions, even in tough situations (Hall, 1999). An individual with solid ego-strength approaches challenges with a sense that he or she can overcome the problem and even grow as a result. By having strong ego-strength, the individual feels that he or she can cope with the problem and find new ways of dealing with struggles.

These people can handle whatever life throws at them without losing their sense of self. People with good ego strength tend to be very resilient in the face of life's difficulties. Rather than giving up in the face of an obstacle, these individuals view such events as tasks to be mastered and overcome. Even when very difficult events or tragedies occur, those who possess ego strength are able to pick themselves up, dust themselves off and move forward with a sense of optimism. (Freud, 1923)

Closely associated with the concept of ego strength, is that of ego defence. A 'defence mechanism' is an unconscious psychological mechanism that reduces anxiety arising from unacceptable or potentially harmful stimuli. (Schacter, 2011) There are several types of such mechanism which are adapted according to the level of ego strength. Those who have a high level, employ mature defence mechanism, which include acceptance, tolerance, patience, emotional self regulation and emotional self sufficiency. (McWilliams, 2011)

It is often claimed rightfully, that Advertisements in the print media like newspapers and magazines often use women models as a lustful luring object. However, there are other way round, where they are portrayed as a role model (RJ in cough syrup ad) or decision maker (choosing household gadgets or cooking spices) and an empowered soul (operating money independently for buying jewellery...where jewellery is not only a symbol of beauty or culture, but an asset) (Pollock, 2006). These images are likely to promote self confidence and hence encourage today's women to promote their ego strength and to cope with the challenges life throwing to them by taking mature defences.

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