



Women portrayal and role of magazines; Comparative analysis of Femina from 1959 and 1994

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Abstract:

This topic includes the content analysis of magazines' cover page. The study is regarding the magazines' cover pages portrayal of women issues and how the magazine depicts women's role in their issues. Women's images in magazines have been the matter of concern for long time as magazines are very prominent medium of communication. Media as an opinion maker play an important role in creating the image of women in the society. This study includes that how strongly women issues are taken in Femina Magazine in 1959 and 1994 in different ways. The study is a kind of qualitative analysis of magazines' cover pages carrying the pictures of women. Both the cover page of magazine portrays women in different manner. Two cover pages of magazine that have taken as the sample for study are Femina from 1959 and 1994. The magazine is nationally acclaimed and cover huge population by its circulation.

Keywords: Woman Issues, Femina, Content Analysis, Woman Portrayal.

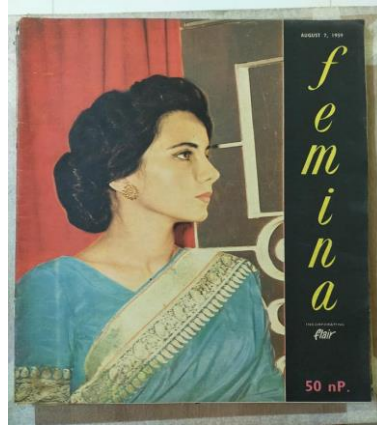
1. Introduction

The Study gives the basic sense of portrayal of women in cover page of the magazine from 1959, when it was started and the comparative analysis of 1994. Women issues are covered differently in different platforms of media. In this study we have analyzed two cover pages of the same magazine and the point of view about women issues. As the life has different phases of concern, in the same way media also have different forms of portrayal as politics, sports, social and economic issues. In this study, the researcher analyzed the cover page and media portrayal about woman that how women pictures are used to carry the story.

Representation of women in media has long been a matter of concern as well as disappointment not only in India, but elsewhere in the world. The gender stereotypes in the media mostly limit the roles and power of women in the society. Studies have shown time and again that women are represented as less aggressive, more submissive, giggly and unable to assume greater independence. Media contents often believed to shape the image of women in the society. For example, increased commodification of female body in the media increases the possibility of limiting the women's definitions about the self. The advertisers time and again target women on their appearance and forcefully tout the value of 'success' through allure, appeal, and seduction.

According to Althusser (1977) the study of ideology is not associated with the study of ideas, rather it is associated with the study of workings in the material practices of certain Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs). He differentiates Ideological state Apparatus from Repressive State Apparatuses. He argues that the Repressive State apparatus like the army, the administration and the judiciary use force and repression to control/maintain order in the society. In contrast the Ideological State Apparatus employ the social and cultural institutions like the church, the school, the family and literature which function through ideology to control/maintain order in the society. In order to hold power, the ruling class uses its hegemony through these Ideological State Apparatus. Antonio Gramsci developed the notion of

hegemony. According to Terry Eagleton (1991) "Gramsci normally uses the word hegemony to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates". The ISA is not merely the stake but also the site of class struggle as it offers the platform for resistance to the subordinate classes as well. Unlike RSA where the ruling class can use force, it cannot lay down the law in the ISA. But at the ground level there can be no direct or easy challenge to the ISAs.



Femina Cover Page- August, 1959

2. Analysis

The issue in the very first years of its publication portrayed the images of Bollywood actress **Priya Rajvansh** who played lead role in very famous Bollywood film "**Heer Ranjha**". The cover page of the magazine displays a single woman who is working and belongs to celebrity category. She is a working woman and the same is portrayed in the cover page. However, the image is ethnic in its style and portrays Indian culture as the actress is wearing simple Indian Saari with Bengali touch. The magazine did not use any title or subtitle on its cover page, not even any information about the content of the magazines. This is simple an example of a woman who belong to working class. This pic doesn't show any relation with the household.



Femina- July, 1994

2.1 Analysis

The Magazine is all about the work. The Cover page portrays a successful girl who has won the title of Miss Universe. Sushmita Sen was a successful model who contested in Miss Universe contest from the side of India and created history. The magazine is 100% about the working woman and has nothing to do with household on its front page.

3. Conclusions

Femina, at that time, provided to about 1% of India's English educated population, who had the size to lead the impending, and this magazine required to create and encourage that leadership. Firstly, that leadership destined men and, as a result, the magazine had more male readers than female. The sub-continent was lastly united, and this magazine in the 1960s portrayed a new kind of Indian woman by marrying the varied cuisines, looks and styles that piloted the length and extensiveness of this country. The magazine was consequently effective not only because it depicted the new Indian woman, but also because it shaped a network for women.

Both the cover pages of Femina portrays women in two different aspects; one is classical Indian women which is portrayed in 1959 while second is with the powerful world title of Miss Universe. Though both the cover pages covered women as working one but one magazine did not maintain any headline or sub-head while the cover pages from 1994 mentioned more than one headlines with appreciation.

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