COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN BODY IN INDIAN MEDIA

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ABSTRACT The commodification of women or called as objectification of women in the media has been studied in the field of feminist scholarship. However, commodification of women in television advertisements, serials, magazines and movies has received little attention. Therefore, it is important to examine women representation in India. This paper will focus on the portrayal of women in advertisement, movies, serials, magazines and media sector and how this commodification was increasing the rate of cosmetic surgeries, eating disorders and how woman are effecting their self-image. The portrayal of women in TV ads, serials and movies affects the attitudes of the viewers and society. In movies and ads, women are treated as objects or commodities, for this reason we referred to women as the ‘creatures’. She is used as a product that is selling another product.

Keywords: Women commodification, objectification, creature, media, portrayal of women, attitudes of viewers

I. INTRODUCTION
The commodification or objectification of women in mass media has long history. The concept of a commodity changes its meaning when dealt with capital industries. In this the meaning of commodity means an economic good that is ready exchange or exploit within a market. Today a trend which is developing in entertainment media is the objectification of women. Specifically in Indian movies, music videos and television women represent as sexual objects. This is a total loss to society because the entertainment media is creating a stereotype. This issue is common because if the media use the sexual content the more viewers will buy them. Thus, the media is able to create the sexual attitudes of society and that is affecting the people. Advertisement and media provoke girls to focus on their looks, body and sexuality and this harms them emotionally and physically. By this woman develop the ideal of seeing their bodies as a sexual object and this can develop into problems like eating disorders, low self-esteem and depression.

In past women have played the main role in advertisements and films by showing their cultural effects but now they have moved on to the glamour world. During the 21st century, women have become multidimensional and shown their role in business, political and everywhere. These days the social science researchers have main focus on women’s participation, performance and portrayal in media. Media can play substantial role in promoting and disseminating information and are regarded as the key for development of women in the social, political and economic field. This is the duty of media to portray positive image of women instead of society and it is necessary to maintain their dignity and status. This will remove inequalities between men and women.

In India, Mass Media comprises of the print media i.e. the newspaper and Electronic media composed of the radio, television, film, press, publication and advertising. In media objectification of women is harmful for our society because they focus on a specific part of the body and this focus in our culture detaches the person from their body. By this society creates a different view for beauty. The main concern is in a media industry i.e. movie industry. Women constantly struggle for their equality and they are not being represented with respect in movies. Not only films, but magazines, television and music videos also represent negative portrayals of women. But no matter how much one complains, women will be objectified in entertainment field. The objectives of this study was to critically analyze the way of portrayal of women by media in television serials/soaps, films and advertisements. Second objective is to analyze the negative effects of female commodification and third to find its prevention.

In order to fulfill the objectives of this study the data was collected from the secondary sources. The secondary data includes books, magazines, journals and different websites.

II. ANALYSIS
During the past decade there is an advances in information technology that have transcends national boundaries and has put an impact on everyone, especially the children and youth. Media has to make a great contribution for the advancement of women. Many women are involved in jobs but few have attained the higher positions. This is just because of the lack of gender sensitivity. Advertisements and commercial

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sector often portray women primarily to target girls and women to become their customer easily. It is the fact of our Indian society that they generally consider women as weak person. As a result, a woman have to face huge traumas from birth to death like infanticide, rape, violence at home, drop out in education for family etc. But media do not focus on these problems. They are only busy in publishing the gossips of the actors and actresses, their love stories, their marriage breakage etc. Representations of Indian women by media reveal that they are not respected and looked them as objects.

Currently advertisements are used to promote the products. We can see these numbers of advertisements in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, internet, hoardings, pamphlets etc. But these advertisements should be criticized because they are portraying women as a sex object. Women’s body has been used to promote things like male under garments, automobiles, shaving cream, deodorant etc. These images encourage people to think women as a sex object and this may encourage to violence against women also. For example, there is an advertisement of a use of deodorant which was a male deodorant in this the woman get attracted towards a strange man who has used that brand of deodorant. This show that women are treated as a object which itself do not have any self identity and it promotes men that if you use this product the women will get attracted towards you. The depiction of women in this and other advertisements is actually insulted to the women in general which are destroying the real status and dignity of women.

In India along with the advertisements, Cinema is also an important visual medium of entertainment. Unfortunately, the film industry cares little about the portrayal of women image infront of the public. They portray women’s image as a sacrificing and devoted personality. Women who do not have these characters are portrayed as a negative personality. But some of our modern directors are focussing on the current topics of our society and making movies on lesbians and gays. Beside this some movies are totally focus on showing nudity or show actresses wearing bikini or undergarments while showing intimate scenes in movies like in movie Hate Story 3 (2015). In this Zariene Khan and Daisy Shah have given intimate scene with their male co-stars by wearing undergarments. Movie released in 2017 like Julie 2, Lipstick under my Burkha, Babumoshai Bandookbaaz etc are the adult movie which have focused on promoting nudity of actresses, showing of sex scenes etc.

Another most popular electronic media in India is the Television. Important aspect of television programme is that large part of the entertainment was taken from the commercial film. The women on television entertainment programmes are projected as sacrificing and suffering beings. TV serials women and young females are busy in conspiracy, affairs, wearing costly, heavy golden, and diamond jewellery, spending time in family feuds, suicidal love affairs, mega parties, elegant make-ups, etc and take little care about anything else. As far as programmes concerned on radio are focused on entertainment only. Only twenty percent is given for educational programmes. Women are shown as gossip-mongers, and advices were given to them on how to become a good wife, good mother and how to improve their physical appearance or beauty.

The print media in India have little impact on people because of illiterate population of the country. It has been seen in the newspapers that they focus on the news related to rape, crime, politics, scandals, sports and economics. News on women empowerment is published only on Women’s Day otherwise issues related to them is completely ignored. Only gossips about actress of TV serials and film stars along with some hot pick-ups are published in newspaper. Magazines as well as newspapers have sections for females where some personal gynecological problems or personal love affairs problems etc are published. Otherwise special features on knitting, fashion, sales etc. are shown on the magazines.

Thus, it can be said that in Indian Media there is an on-going trend to portray women as busy and concerned with beautifying herself, choosing make-up, jewellery, cosmetics, constantly watching her weight, worried about good figure and skin color, etc. She is not portrayed as an intelligent, decision maker, or as capable leaders and policy makers. Usually she is shown to accompany her husband like a shadow and following her decision without mattering it is correct or not. Now the question is here that how the media will play an effective tool for promoting a better image of women and represents their multiple roles as achiever in both at home and in the world of carrier?

III. ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES OF COMMODIFICATION

It is necessary for us to get knowledge of commodification/objectification because of its adverse effects in our society. Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn and Twenge in 1998 did an experiment in which they asked participants to wear either a swimsuit or sweater but women prefer to wear sweater because they felt body shame in the swimsuit and this is due to poor eating. This self-objectification can lead to sexual dysfunction also, because while getting engages in sexual activity another person focuses on another’s body and woman
can be distracted by thoughts about her body rather than enjoying sexual pleasure. Another adverse effect of female self-objectification is self-harming. It includes cutting, burning, hitting or biting, head banging, hair pulling, breaking bones, insertion of toxic or sharp objects etc. Such extreme behavior is related to the low self-esteem of person which is arrived from objectification or commodification.

IV. COMMODIFICATION/OBJECTIFICATION: PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Muehlenkamp and Saris-Baglama (2002) write that ‘girls understanding of the importance of appearance for women in a patriarchal culture may contribute to feelings of fear, shame, and disgust that some experience during the transition from girlhood to womanhood, because they sense that they are becoming more visible to society as sexual objects’. Ways to mitigate commodification/objectification include the development of media sensitivity, sexuality related education, parents and family involvement in watching television and participating in activities with children, sensitization of religion, spirituality and mediation, portray of girl in media in a positive way, etc. Another solution includes the teaching of women about the low level of commodification. The parent’s role is very important about preventing female objectification. Ways to promote media sensitivity include exploring about how body size is portrayed in the media, protest against offensive media images and messages and promoting about healthy eating. Sexual education can also help to build respect for oneself i.e. about our body and develop communication skills. In the end parents play an important role in reinforcing young women’s efforts and accomplishments in non-appearance related domains, rather than focusing on physical appearance (Noll, 1997).

V. CONCLUSION

The trend of commodification/objectification of women in media is a profitable and entertaining section and it will remain continue. However, this media practice on women portray is harmful for our society in aspect of physical and mental reasons. Thus it can be concluded that overall effect of the portrayal of women in media is to reinforce rather than reduce prejudices and stereo types. The mass media in India has not done efforts about discussing the issues related to women and prepare the women to work for their rights and work for equal role in society. Women are stuck with shaping their body perfectly as presented by the media and all this is done on keeping their physical health and mental state aside. Due to this they face lots of depression and eating disorders. It is clear that commodification/objectification of women in media have negative effect on our society. For preventing objectification in girls and women it needs to increase societal rewards and social powers. This paper tries to explain that how female commodification/objectification occurs and what we can do to counter its negative effects on our society.

REFERENCES