



“Strengthening the Baton” : Self – Help Resources

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“The Image of New Women in Selected English Magazines of India : A Study
with Special Reference to Magazines of Twentieth Century”

Abstract : The proposed study intends to evaluate the qualitative substance contained in the related English Women magazines in building of femininity and feminine consciousness. For the study corpus magazines like *Femina*, *New Women*, *Women’s Era*, *Marie Claire* and *Savvy* have been picked up. These magazines are proved into for their prose and fiction contents, pep-articles, self-actualization columns and above all for their language and style in specific.

Media the fourth pillar of democratic polity been shaped by existing social reality, public opinion, personal beliefs and even people’s self perception. As a process of socialization, it not only shapes ideology but also thinking. The role of media has stretched far beyond the supply of information because of the outreach and technological sophistication. Media, therefore, is all pervasive and its functioning is very subtle. Media’s role as a social constructor and representative of people has greater responsibility in binding the complexities of culture with the people of the society as India is full of diversified culture.

Media is pivotal to the social and economic development of woman. It reflects the lifestyles, patterns of socialization, cultural and traditional modes,

political maneuvering, educational standards social stratification and religious norms. The commodification of woman in Indian Media is simply shoddy. Magazines like *Femina* and *Marie Clare* have plenty of young, good looking smart women in pursuit of rich Mr. smart adorned with sleek mobiles, palatial house and excessively rich and ornate attire. Magazines like *Savvy* and *Women's Era* have sections for females where the reader is left with either an agony – aunt solving their marital, premarital or pre-marital psychological – emotional issues or a health physician providing gynecological remedial suggestions. These also present special features on knitting, fashion, sales etc.

The presence of women in Media indicated the accessibility of Media to women. N. Abraham writes in his article “Women Liberation and Indian Media” says –

The status of women is going perceptible change. Women entering the labour market are on the rise, there is increase in the number of educated women and their mobilization to fight discrimination Media has largely come to be confined to the women in the middle and the higher classes, whether in the rural or urban auras, and more particularly in the urban auras whether as passive consumers or as active players.

(Vidura, vol – 25, No. 6 New Delhi : 1988)

One can notice much emphasis on stories about women where their struggle for recognition is the only motif, this gives the message that the society in general is against the liberation of women. P. Kumar in his book, *How the Media treats Indian women* writes -

‘The image of the educated women is typecast withy or the economically independent women is shown as domineering, hard, ruthless and the

cause of all the suffering around her. Perhaps the most damaging portrayal of women is in advertisement and commercials.’

(IMC Publication, New Delhi 1995)

Gagan Dhir in the essay ‘*Man to Women*’ writes –

Unlike *Savvy*, Which the management of *Femina* defines as aggressively Feminist, *Femina* takes a balanced position. *Femina* seeks to locate between the very upper market *Savvy* and the

middle – class *Women's Era*. A massive increase in media growth now caters not only to increasingly differentiated market needs but also to distinct target audiences.

(The Times of India, Delhi Times, 9 December 1998)

This chapter explores all those areas where according to the magazines under study a woman should clean up. The problem concerning women fall under just four categories :

(a) love (b) health (c) prosperity (d) self-expression

Love is the most important tool for good life. When one loves oneself it is easy to love others and for others to love us. 'Self' and 'love of life' connect us with the prosperity of the Universe. Self love leads to self expression and allows us to be creative in deeply fulfilling ways. In asserting such requisites the magazines under study are deeply probed into.

Conclusion :

New categories are coded for thematic explorations to strengthen the batons of self - help - resources –

- * Marriage and family (love, care, divorce)
- * Efficient homemaker (budgeting, do it-yourself cleaning, sewing, recipes etc)
- * Personal health. (Exercise, diet health-suggestion, medical aid etc)
- * Beauty and fashion (E.g. cosmetic application, wardrobe selection hairstyles, latest fashion)
- * Political and social awareness (legislative action, social programs, social issues etc)
- * Career development (E.g. Jobs, interview techniques, resume writing,

management style etc.)

- * Personal Growth and development (career, fitness, pep articles)

Women should now be presented in multiplicity of roles, achievements, and reflected in the positivity. struggles

Works Cited

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- * Savvy 2008
- * New Women 2008
- * Women's Era 2008
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