

# Media Space and Gender Construction



Media Space and Gender Construction:  
A Comparative Study of State Owned and Private  
Channels in the Post Liberalisation Period

By

Shekh Moinuddin

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P U B L I S H I N G

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Dedicated to  
Dr. Anindita Datta, Amma, and late Abba



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## PREFACE

This book is the result of a very personal investigation that began during my M.Phil. research more than four years ago. Media Space and Gender Construction is a study with the aim of enhancing the relation between gender and geography. Media Space is a metamorphic space of views, ideas, images, and texts. The advent of media space and cyber space has brought new metaphorical spaces for interaction which do not exist in a strictly real sense, but have an impact upon spatiality.

Gender is a prevalent phenomenon, and indeed it is produced and reproduced every day in terms of femininity and masculinity. Gender is constructed every day through different contacts and processes, of which media is one of them. Among the various media, the visual media is one that has a much greater role in comparison to others such as print media and electronic media. Thus, in the present study, visual media has been taken as a medium through which to identify predominant gender stereotypes.

For this study, four prominent Indian channels have been considered from both the State owned and private media to examine the portrayal of gender stereotypes during both primetime and non-primetime. The channels considered are *DD (Doordarshan)*, *Zee TV*, *Sony TV*, and *Star Plus TV*.

The State owned media have been considered for the purpose of discovering the State's view and their responsibility in regards to the portrayal of predominant gender stereotypes in both primetime and non-primetime programmes.

This study comprises of a diagnostic look at the visual media and their portrayal under the responsibility of both the market and the State since liberalization has taken place in India. It is indeed true that both the private and State owned channels have their own ways and interests regarding how things are portrayed. Therefore this study broadens the research scope from within the geographical perspective to include non-material spaces or metaphorical spaces, such as television; a virtual space, which is considered an important agent in the construction of gender.

The names of characters are real, and only first names have been mentioned in order to identify the female and male gender stereotypes.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DD	Doordarshan
TRPs	Television Rating Points
TV	Television
MS	Media Space
GS	Gender Stereotypes
TS	Third Space
CD	Compact Disc
GPS	Global Positioning System



# CHAPTER ONE

## MEDIA-SPACE AND GENDER CONSTRUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

‘Media space has been on the periphery of geographical inquiry for too long. The very ordinariness of television, radio, newspaper, fiction, film and pop music perhaps makes their importance as part of people’s geography threaded into the fabric of daily life with deep taproots into the well-springs of popular consciousness’ (Harvey, 1984).

Being a geographer it is very tough to stick with the issues of space and their exploration under the changing dimensions of spatiality every day, particularly, in the present time. It is believed that the spatial dimension of our day-to-day lives has never been of greater practical, political, or social relevance than it is today.

The social and the spatial are inseparable, especially in geography and sociology; space is constituted through social relations and material social practices; or one can say that such space is a social construct. Gender has been deeply influential in the geographical (Massey, 1994).

Since the electronic revolution, e-mail, cyber cafes, facsimile services, and mobile phones have changed the global into local and the local into global. Under the influence of technology, life has increasingly created a feeling that space is not a 'thing' at all; it is a 'resource' in itself. This is not only true of the conventional view of space, that is, 'container' space, but also other conceptions of space, such as cyber space, media space, virtual space etc. Thus, by using the term 'media space', one refers to the portion of virtual space that is created or socially constructed by the media. In this way, it is an “imaginary” space.

In a country like India where a vast majority of the population, especially women, are illiterate, the electronic media, comprising of radio and television, have a natural edge over the print medium of the

newspaper. Television, incorporating visual images for shaping minds and opinions, has the potential to influence spatially constructed gender roles within the imaginary space it creates. These in turn influence the actual construction of gender roles and stereotypes in the non-virtual or “real”, material world.

It is only recently that the media space (mainly visual), a virtual space, has itself become the focus of systematic study within ‘Thirdspace’ (Soja, 1996). The media space is indeed a virtual space where the experiences of the space from a ‘slice of life’ are portrayed through the real and imagined in the third space as gender stereotypes. In the post liberalization period, the media space is instrumental in creating highly sensational gender stereotypes that directly and indirectly impact upon the viewers. However, unlike traditional stereotypes, the media presents us with a new gender stereotype every hour for both women and men, ranging from provider and caretaker to the purchaser and producer. Further, the media itself is changing continuously to provide a social mirror of the society or viewers. The gender construction is a study within the media space or ‘third space’, where discourse of gender stereotypes is portrayed by public and private media. In fact, the media facilitates gender construction within the home, as well as in the public and private realms of all spaces.

By this definition, the concept of media-space is a very simple example of a trans-disciplinary concern, and is not only confined to geographers, but includes others for whom spatial science reasoning is a primary professional preoccupation. Media is nothing except portrayal and representation of geographical issues. It integrates the past into present in terms of cultural, economic, social, political, and geographical change. We respect media as an information house, for cultural dissemination within a geographical dimension.

The advent of satellite television in the country in 1991 opened up a whole ‘new world’ for the advertisers. The Television Rating Points (*TRPs*) gained a new meaning for the commercially viable channels. The commercialization of the media led to the advertisers exercising control over the selection and content of programmes broadcast across channels. These ultimately influence the gender construction and portrayal of gender stereotypes.

Meanwhile television viewing also becomes a fragmented exercise. Earlier the entire family would sit together to watch programmes, the new



genre of programming however, is designed to specifically deal with a particular target audience. 'Advertisers too recognized the specific target groups and began crafting advertisements according to the target viewers of these serials' (Sivadas, 1998). For example, during the late morning and afternoon, family serials catering to homemakers are shown and advertisements for home appliances such as washing machines and refrigerators, and consumer products like detergents, soaps, cosmetics, and food items dominate the small screen.

Advertising is a ubiquitous cultural form that reflects and moulds our lives. Every day we are inundated with advertising messages. The constant flow of advertising generates images of gender, types of person, social class, and other groups, which influence our socialization process. Several media scholars have emphasized advertising's role as a major agent of social reinforcement because of its presumed power for changing opinion, attitudes, and behaviours. Goldman (1992) has argued that advertisement is a major social and economic institution which strives to maintain cultural hegemony by providing us with socially constructed ways of seeing and making sense of our world. In television, a visual space, the space devoted to advertisements cannot be ignored. With its reach extended into rural areas, television can play a crucial role in instilling confidence and self-respect in women and help them in securing their dignified and rightful place in society (Gupta, 2000).

The eminent geographer David Harvey (1990) has argued that studying cinema and films may enhance the theoretical debates about postmodern culture, therefore cinema is nearer and dearer than any other media. In fact television has taken the place of cinema among viewers since liberalization took place across the country.

In India, in recent years, considerable attention has been focused on the issue of the portrayal of women in the media. In Doordarshan *Shanti*, *Kasauti Zindagi Ki* from Star plus, and *Tumhari Disha* from Zee TV are examples of such portrayals. 'Beyond the symbolic representation of modernity, unequal gender roles and stereotypes are actually assiduously reinforced. Soap operas on prime time television (such as *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki*, *Kyonki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* and *Jassi Jaisi Koi Nahi*) endorse the image of the ideal women as dutiful who sacrifices individual choice and aspiration at the altar of the patriarchal family' (Datta, 2005).

One of the earliest observations highlighted by feminists within geography was that gender relations vary over space (it had long been recognized that they vary over time). 'Thus 'A women's place' uses the views of space and place outlined in parts of the construction and reconstructions over time' (McDowell, 1983). Moreover the influences also run the other way; gender has been deeply implicated in the construction of space as uneven in the development or regional variation and local specificity. In particular, gender is of significance to the geographical construction of space and place.

Through the years, many feminist geographers realized that, in geography, gender should be the domain of work under the purview of media. Media enhanced gendered construction and it portrayed women's primary roles in the day-to-day as mother, care taker and home maker. This meant their activity space was seen to be essentially confined to the private spaces of home and its immediate surroundings. In contrast, socially constructed roles for men are largely, if not entirely, those of great earners (Raju, 2003).

The portrayal of gender as a product and the accompanying politics in the media is well defined. However, it is not only femininity, but also the dominant notions of masculinity that are portrayed by the media. The most common form is the coverage provided of beauty shows, and it can also be seen that men's and women's representations have moved beyond female images of the family and home to persons dictated to by the market agenda in a predominant patriarchy (Dagar, 2002). The influence of the market and media is accepted to the extent that the media and the patriarchy have created the view of the body as a product. The dominant notions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are projected as commodities (Dagar, 2002; Roy, 1998). On different occasions different media are preoccupied with particular gender stereotypes or have even said that it is a matter of time that determines the specific characters.

In its flexibility towards dominant socio-political influence, the media has successfully approved a discourse of gender rights and women's empowerment and the imagery of gender hierarchy is reflected, not only through roles, visual depiction, and symbol, but also through language and place (Dagar, 2002). Viewers are reconstituted as subjects, not just by the form and content of serials, but by the manner in which these texts resonate with the viewer's experiences of dominant social discourses' (Mannekar, 2002). Thus it is commonly believed that the media invade

personal interests for multiple interests.

In constructing women's images, the media follows its own profound codes. Fragmentation of women into stereotypes, such as sex objects, widow, daughter, mother, or housewife, is one method. The media has adopted a particular kind of gender representation in recent times under the agenda of globalization. It is worth noticing that gender is always represented in isolation from class, caste, and religion; that is, the apparent neutrality and cultural homogeneity conjured up by images of women in advertising and serials are a clever ploy to conceal the reality of the bitter diversity of Indian society.

## 1.2 Conceptual Framework

It is necessary to know that the term 'media space' emerges from post-colonial thought to comprehend the social space that has been enhanced by technology. In this, it is 'Thirdspace'; a radical enunciation about the space. The fact is, the third space is an area where the real and imagined are combined, and it is important to the development of any scene on the screen because the scene is a combination of real and imaginary, the symbolic and figurative. Space also acts as a character, acting as a critic of the concept of materialism. As Soja (1996) declares, "The process of creating of space involves first and foremost direct and lived experience". A significant observation of any film or documentary serial acts as a representation of space in which portrayed gender stereotypes represent the place in the third space or lived space. It would be worth noting that, after the liberalization period, the media reinforces the effeminate stereotypes, pushing towards the greater standardization and homogenization of these, perhaps as a result of globalization. Places of critical exchange, where geographical imaginations can do their best, and be expanded across a multiplicity of perspectives, are indeed 'third space'. It is a space where universal issues like gender, race, and class can be addressed easily from this platform without privileging one over the others; where one can belong to different ideologies: Marxist, idealist, structuralist, and trans-disciplinary at the same time (Soja, 1996).

With the understanding of space under changing dimensions, it is necessary to recognize and refer to the concept of first and second space, and the emerging spatial context of Thirdspace. On the foundations of first space and second space, the third space can be described as a creative recombination and extension. The first space perspective is focused on the

'real' material world, and the second space perspective interprets this reality though an "imagined" representation of spatiality. The third space is where 'real' and 'imagined' are combined to represents the world. Therefore media is basically the visual space in which real and imagined (Thirdspace) are combined to represents the social space across the geographical limit.

Recently a Bollywood movie "*Rang De Basanti*" (Released in 2006) directed by Rakysh Mehra and starring Aamir Khan alongside others, beautifully narrated two stories in parallel frames. The combination of existing 'real' and thinking 'imagination' is an excellent example of Third Space within the space of cinema.

However, 'Thirling' introduces a critical "Other than" choice that speaks and critiques through its otherness. Lefebvre in his book 'the Production of Space' (originally in 'la production de l'espace', 1974, Paris) reveals his own longstanding interest in the dialectic of the lived and the conceived, the "real" and the "imagined", the material world and our thoughts about it. With time 'third space' gained momentum and grew in research curricula among social scientists. Gregory (1994) sums up the Foucauldian view as:

"The construction of this discursive triangle between power, knowledge, and spatiality effected a colonization of the life. A world in which "space" was given both metaphorical and material resonance: as Foucault declared, "space is fundamental in any exercise of power". (Gregory, 1994, Geographical Imagination)

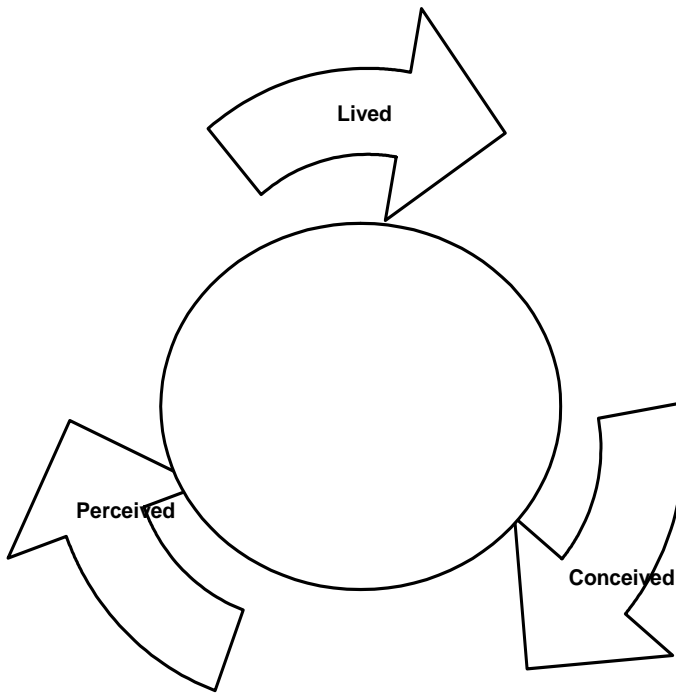
Foucault's conception of a new approach to space and the spatial, which he called "heterotopology", was described in ways that resemble what is being described here as third space. The topic of this study therefore comes under the geographical purview of third space. This has even been referred to as part of 'geographical imagination' (Soja, 1996) or the expansion of spatial knowledge. Thirdspace is part of postcolonial literary tradition and is described as a radical post-modernist perspective to "see" space differently. Thirdspace is a perfect combination of subjectivity and objectivity, the real and the imagined, mind and body, and consciousness and the unconscious. Lefebvre called it 'spaces of representation' in his book *The Production of Space* (1991a), *For Bhabha* (1990a), the difference of cultures cannot be contained within the universality framework of liberal democracy or, for that matter, Marxist historicism, for their different cultures are often incommensurable and not

neatly categorized, triggering an observation for identifying a "Thirdspace" of alternative enunciation. Of course, Thirdspace can't assume in the Universalist grid, a space which is beyond the boundary or may say that it's beginning from the point where something end. Once Bhabha called it "location" of culture, and he locates his post-colonial project "with the notion of cultural differences..., in the spirit of alterity or otherness". A space within the cultural hub or notion has been devoted to this through the transformations or 'lived' space (Lefebvre, 1991a).

Here, the space being talked about is 'lived', a space that stretches across the images and symbols that accompany it. Both Thirdspace and Lefebvre's most encompassing notion of social space are comprised of all three spatialities: perceived, conceived, and lived. Lived space is the space of social struggle, Lefebvre's conclusion about the lived space is that it is the space of all-inclusive simultaneities. In his *The Production of Space*, he maintain the three spaces linked together dialectically, the spatial practice (perceived), the representation of space (conceived space), and the space of representation (lived space).

The spaces of representation are seen by Lefebvre as "complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not". They are linked to the "clandestine or underground side of social life" and also to art, which Lefebvre described as a coding, not of space more generally, but specifically of the space of representation. 'Spaces of representation contain all other real and imagined space intertwined and with capitalism, racism, patriarchy and other spatial material that concretize the social relation of production, reproduction, exploitation, domination, and subjection' (Soja, 1996). In view of third space, 'lived space' is an area where real and imagined is combined, this concept is important to the development of the idea of media space and gender construction because gender sensitization or biases are reinforced in such spaces under a patriarchal society.

Media is a space where social life is reinforced in both real and imagined ways and emboldens the values of third space. Television is a space of representation where the depictions of social struggle as symbols of arts with gender stereotypes is enhancing social understanding. Of course, television is just one important segment of the media and is reemphasizing the social struggle in a different context. Therefore, from within the media, television has been chosen for this study.



### **The Trialectics of Spatiality**

**Source : Soja (1996) : Third Space. Journey to  
Los Angeles and other Real and imagined places.  
Oxford : Blackwell Publishers. Page 74.**

Television is, first and foremost, a domestic medium. Silverstone (1992) argued that the relations between public and private spaces and cultures are constantly changing, and television is tied to this in a number of ways. Indeed it involves the family again and again both in fiction and factual programmes. At the core of interest, such things as politics, economy, socio-cultural factors, and gender are used to serve the common interest. Even beyond this, television delivers programmes concerning areas including war situations and crises and catastrophes of many kinds. All these enable people to comprehend a world which is full of tension,

possible conflicts, and a degree of construction (both through ideology and representation) from 24:7 daily services. It is argued that television programmes in many ways provide the viewers a form of identity-strengthening therapy, in which anxieties and uncertainties are also treated. For example yoga practices and the ways of maintaining physical exercise are nothing but the extension of stress therapy. Television habits place interplay between the 'individual' (ongoing construction of identity) and 'macro' (functioning of the societies) on to each other. At present the importance of television is to know the space around us, particularly to construe the geographical enquiry in various social forms. Indeed, it is a virtual space where the subject of portrayal should attract both subjectively and objectively. Therefore the prime concern behind the choice of television as a medium for this study is to understand the gender stereotypes in terms of the degree of change between societies and what is portrayed, and to enhance the relationship between gender and geography with the help of the small screen.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

#### **Gender: An Understanding**

During the 70s, the term gender came in to the limelight, and since then many intellectuals have enhanced the concept of gender. Generally gender is defined as the socially constructed correlate of sex. The concept of gender, as socially constructed, has been theorized extensively and illustrated in a variety of arenas, from the playground to the boardroom (Kessler 1990; Lorber 1994; Messner; 2000). However, there remains a general consensus that gender is socially constructed and sex is its initiating point.

Wharton (2005) believed that gender is a 'system of social practices' and detailed three features. First, gender is as much a process as a fixed state. This implies that gender is being continually produced and reproduced. In other words gender is enacted or 'done', not merely expressed. Second, gender is not simply a characteristic of individuals, but occurs at all levels of the social structure. This is contained in the idea of gender as a system of practices that is far reaching, interlocked, and that exists independently of individuals. Gender is thus a multilevel phenomenon (Risman, 1998). This intends to explore how a social process, such as interaction, or social institutions, such as work, embody and reproduce gender. Third, gender refers to its importance in organizing

relations of inequality and it is the subject of debate. But the important point is that, as a principle of social organization, gender is one critical dimension upon which social resources are distributed.

## **Gender and Space**

Massey (1994) tried to establish a relationship between space and place with gender and the construction of gender relations. She believes that "Geography matters to the construction of gender". She endorses the spatial difference and cultural influence in the construction of gender, along with space. In the continuum of space and place the term 'local' has been associated with gender.

It is intriguing to note that Indian geography, which has borrowed significantly from Western thought to such an extent that it did not really develop an Indian perspective at all, in general appears to be resistant to gender studies in geography, which by now have established their stronghold in the Anglo-Saxon world (Datta, 2003).

Gender roles are thus seen as constructed in part through our culturally experienced bodies, and the ways men and women experience their bodies becomes a part of their experience of gender and gender relations (Raju, 2001).

R.W. Connell (2002) in his Book 'Gender' offers very tentative perspective on gender studies and issues like individual life, social relation and culture. Connell recognises both intellect and culture in seeking to understand Gender.

## **Third space**

Lisa Law (1997) in "Dancing on the Bar", tried to look at stereotypical representations of sex tourism, as well as sites where the entire incident took place. She reconceptualises the space of the bar as a negotiated space, a third space, where identities are negotiated and ambivalent, performed and not fixed.

Indeed *Third Space* as an emerging idea, and the book "Third Space: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined places" by Edward W. Soja (1996), think differently about the meanings and significance of space and related subjects.



The aforementioned book is divided in two parts; part I and part II. A journey starts in the first chapter with the promising "*Discovering third space*" to forward a new thought: 'how and why spatiality and the inquisitive spatial imagination have recently entered'. To understand the third mode, the author relies on *Henri Le Febvre*, a French 'metaphilosopher', who has been more influential than any other in exploring the third space. The chapter largely discusses the perception of Henri Lefebvre and notably the title is 'the Extraordinary Voyages of Henri Lefebvre'. Almost the entire first chapter appreciates the allegorical tour of the life of Henri Lefebvre, his term "transdisciplinary", his Marxist exploration of the spatiality and sociology of everyday life and urban condition, what Lefebvre termed in his work the social production of space, or "rhythmanalysis". As per Soja, Lefebvre remained throughout his life a restless intellectual nomad, and his reconceptualization of the relationship between centre and peripheries are most important ideas, as he always believed that, 'two terms are never enough, there is always an-Other term.' This conceptualization from Lefebvre nurtures a different thought that is third space.

The author relies further upon, Lefebvre's (1991a) *The production of Space*, arguably the most important script about human spatiality and spatial imagination. The central argument is about the ontological, epistemological and theoretical rebalancing of spatiality, historicity, and sociality as all embracing corner of human life. One of the important 'meta philosophies' that Lefebvre preferred was the description by Soja (1996) presenting "*Thirling- as- othering*". Lefebvre's work, the *Production of space*, was divided into a trialectic of spatiality, spatial thinking, and the spatial imagination that correspond to Lefebvre's three different kinds of space: the perceived space of materialized spatial practice, the conceived space as representation of space; and finally, he defined lived spaces of representation as representational spaces. A new kind of thinking about space became most clearly formulated in Paris. Edward Soja elaborates the 'Third Space' as a new thinking on spatiality and builds on Foucault's "heterotopology" and "heterotopia".

### **Media space**

Prasad (1994) in 'A vision unveiled: women on Television', thought about the idea that women's issues require the support of this powerful medium for creating a social climate where policies and programmes related to women's empowerment can be implemented effectively. It is

important to look into the manner in which women and their issues are being portrayed. In chapter one she talks about 'women in India', the demography and constitutional rights as well as women's active participation in industry and political milieu. In the second chapter she emphasizes the quantitative data about 'Mass media in India', along with day to day activities regarding programmes, organization, etc. She is also talking about 'Television and women's issues', in which a more embracing Television can now play an effective role toward focusing women's issues. Even the forthcoming chapter is also dedicated to the portrayal of women on Television and about how the transmission time reflects the images of women in society. Despite vague data, the book has supplied a very authentic picture of women and their related issues.

Literature which analyses the ways in which women are portrayed in media has gradually been emerging in recent years. More frightening than the direct reach of media however it is indirect influence. With time, media influences the process of gender relations, which are constructed differently in different cultures. The Kinship system often seems to contain the most change-resistant aspects of social organization (Dube, 2001).

The main thrust of the study was to find out the effects of watching television on viewers with different social class backgrounds. The impact of watching television was seen with regard to intra and inter-family social interaction, as well as on children, who are likely to be the most vulnerable section among the viewers (Gupta, 2000).

Mannekar's (1993), "Reconstituting Indian womanhood: An Ethnography of TV viewers in a North Indian City", is a feminist ethnography of how lower-middle class and upwardly-mobile class women living in New Delhi interpreted dramatic serials shown on Doordarshan (DD), the state run Television in India. She was interested in examining the role Indian Television serials played in the construction of women viewers as gendered and national subjects - while explicating the notion of Indian women viewers as gendered subjects of Indian television. She touched on the role of Indian TV commercials in the construction of femininity. Femininity, according to her, was commodified in Indian TV commercials where the "notion of femininity, embedded in discoveries about modesty and sexuality, tradition and community, class and 'national culture', were inscribed in the bodies of many of the women featured in advertisements on Television". Mannekar further observed that the commercials aimed at

married women generally used model-style dress, and appearance indicated their national states as well as their Hindu identity. Further, marital status was indicated, as well as their Hindu society. In these Indian Television commercials, femininity was constructed by featuring stereotypical gender roles and roles of mothers and wives.

Shelat's (1994), presented a paper in South Korea on 'The changing image of man in Indian advertising' in which she focused on the changing images of males in Indian advertising. She observed that advertisements in India in the 1990s were changing, but the change was slow. Although there are few advertisements that portrayed Indian men and women as equals, the stereotypically negative images of Indian women were still very much in existence.

### **Gender Stereotypes**

According to Desai and Patel (1990), the Indian woman was depicted as a sex symbol or stereotypical housewife. She was either featured in a sexually alluring manner or as a traditional housewife whose place was in the kitchen or around the four walls of a house. Krishnan (1984), in her analysis of Indian advertisements, pointed out that Indian women were typically portrayed as a home bound house wife or mother. As a housewife, she was depicted as being obsessive about domestic management and keeping her husband happy. Motherhood was another important facet of Indian womanhood. He realized that Indian advertisement treated women as commodities by juxtaposing images of brides with image of products. Krishnan also observed that Indian advertisements frequently promoted the image of a woman as a sex slave who was shown in "varying stages of undress", especially the advertisements for women's undergarments and jeans which were "doubly exploitative, offering images of bondage and vulnerability as images of liberation."

In her book, Balasubrahmanyam (1988) focused on the depiction of Indian women in mass media. According to her, Indian commercials were mostly sexist in depicting women in the stereotypical roles of "mother wife sex object roles".

## 1.4 Objectives

This study has the following objectives.

- To identify predominant Gender stereotypes within the following media spaces:
  - a) Prime time (8-10pm) TV
  - b) Non prime time (2-4pm) TV
- To compare predominant gender stereotypes shown in both state owned and private channels in the above mentioned media spaces.

## 1.5 Research Questions

Dealing with the abstract concept of media space, this study examines the following questions:

- Whether media space is an area that can be used to either reinforce older or create newer gender stereotypes. In this study only the television media is considered for reasons mentioned earlier.
- Whether private channels reinforce traditional Gender stereotypes during prime time.
- Whether the state owned media reinvents and reinforces progressive gender stereotypes.

## 1.6 Methodology

### I. Choice of medium:

The percolation of television to Indian has been phenomenal. Studies show that households in both rural and urban India have access to TV. In India there are 34.50 million urban households and 26.14 million rural households that are reported to have TV (Census, 2001). TV scores as a medium of instruction and entertainment to those segments that for various social and economic reasons cannot enjoy cinema in the new multiplexes or cinema theatres; the power of TV media is therefore far more than cinema. It is for these reasons that TV has been chosen over print and cinematic space for this study.

## **II. Choice of channels:**

1. D.D. 1 (Doordarshan)
2. Private Channels (Sony, Star and Zee T.V.)

For study consideration I took two groups of channels in which two different media spaces have been taken to identify the gender stereotypes and, to establish a relationship between media space and the gender construction in the post liberalization period. Among the media spaces DD is the only State agency to telecast or reflect the government views, and has been chosen to represent state owned media space. The private channels have been taken on the basis of *TRPs* (Television Rating Points); these are *Sony TV*, *Star Plus* and *Zee TV*. In fact these private channels are very popular across the territory in India.

## **III. Choice of Time Slot:**

Non-Prime Time (2-4am)

Prime Time (8-10pm)

In India two broad division of time can be discerned. One is non-prime time and another is prime time, non-prime time generally considered lunch hour and for those who live in home viz. children, the older aged, and housewives. The prime time slot comprises of the night or dinner programmes, where watching television is as a daily routine and both State and private channels ensure the soaps should touch each and every individual spatially. During prime time all family members watching the soap together. Therefore, I took both parts of the time schedule to decipher the nature of portrayals of gender stereotypes in general parlance. The study is supported by data collected through analysis of the media in both the prime time and non- prime time slots.

## **IV. Choice of Serials:**

All the serials running across the different channels, from both prime time and non prime time, have been taken for this study. Those serials have been considered in this study, for further details see appendix- 1.

## **V. Identifying Gender Stereotypes:**

The identification of the gender stereotypes has been based with qualitative weightage. For each media space a week long structured viewing schedule was used to examine gender stereotypes. Since four channels were long analyzed, this translated into four weeks of structured viewing to identify the main gender stereotypes. The analysis of the soaps and serials involved a combination of critical and qualitative analysis. My critical analysis used analytical tools borrowed from a variety of perspectives including structuralism, semiotics, and the concept of gaze.

The gaze (sometimes called “the look”) is a technical term which was originally used in film theory in the 1970’s and is now broadly used by media theorists to refer both to the ways in which viewers look at images of people in any visual medium and to the gaze of those depicted in visual texts. The term ‘the male gaze’ has become something of a feminist cliché for referring to the voyeuristic way in which men look at women.

Semeiotics is understanding media images from the point of view of potential impact. Such an understanding is possible when the viewers realize that they are the subject-matter of the medium and the image, and that the image is crafted in a particular manner to send them a particular message. Semiotic studies can inform us how feminism and womanhood are constructed in TV by examining the varied cinematic techniques such as camera distance/angles, shot composition, lighting, music, and voice-over, among others. TV uses similar methods as film to connote meaning. The TV camera’s angle and focus is used to give the viewer a perfect view of the scene and help in getting a complete understanding of it (Fiske, 1987).

In structuralism (code of appearances), when used in feminist analysis, the term is mainly aimed towards gendered symbols and representations rather than material social relations. The code of appearances includes body and looks. The body of the characters indicate the presence or absence of any gender stereotypes. In serials and advertisements the women’s bodies are often presented on sex objects or decorative pieces, with the sole function of serving as a commodity for the male gaze. The female body may be presented in a fragmented manner where the camera shows the female body detached from the lips, eyes, legs, and hands. Examining the bodies of women in serials and commercials lends insight as to whether they are disembodied and portrayed as gender stereotypes. In