

Representation of gender in media media essay



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Media plays a great role in changing the world by affecting the way people perceive different aspects of our lives. People tend to believe what they continuously see, and with time they take it as the normal way of life, the way things should be. It is important to ensure that what the media shows or the message it delivers, whether directly or indirectly, is appropriate. The message should reflect the positive side of the society's expectations because with time, whatever is in the media today will start playing in real life.

Most scholars have shown that in media, there is a way that each gender is represented, based on the stereotypical nature that the society has classified males and females. Males are strong, tough and powerful, both intellectually and physically as expected by the society and represented by media. Males should dominate and conquer everything and come out victorious. Females on the other hand are supposed to be soft, emotional and caring as well as supportive to those around them as well as their male counterparts. They are to subordinate men and work toward supporting them and making their life comfortable.

In gender matters, the role that media has played in influencing people's perception of the differences between male and female and expectations of each gender is big. The media has shown that women as the weaker ones, whose role is not major unlike the male gender who are strong and fearless and are depicted as the stronger sex. In employment, most employees in the media such as radio and TV are male with the females occupying a lesser percentage. The job roles that women get in the media industry are most of the time junior and offering support. It is rare to find women occupy

leadership or senior positions which most are occupied by their male counterparts. In media training colleges, the number of females is slightly above that of males. This notwithstanding, in the job market there are about a third of employees who are females, showing that there is a great gender based bias while recruiting which favors males. This creates an impression that women should not be working. The content is another area. Most TV programs or films for example, will have men as the dominant characters and females only as supporting cast with minor roles. In most of the cases, men end up victorious in their leading roles in the productions. The costs of productions of movies with male characters as the leading actor have a higher production budget than those with a female. There is evidence that the more expensive films to produce are more successful and so this favors the male-acted movies more. The role of women as depicted by media is that they are more valuable in their youth and how they exhibit their beauty and sexuality. In media production, whether television programs, film or music videos, females are presented in a demeaning manner from their dressing, roles and character. They show only their sexuality as their greatest asset and potential they have. This makes them, and even men feel that women cannot exhibit their own potential in the job markets or other fields. It denies them a chance to compete with men, and make them think they can only rely on their sexuality. The type of movies or programs that female actors lead in are the drama and romantic ones while males are involved in action packed productions which show their aggressive nature. This therefore labels females as the soft ones, while the men as the tough ones. Men have left behind women even in the sad event of death; women's deaths rarely get to the obituaries column yet they are as many as men are.

In advertisement, women presentation is that of homemakers expected to know the requirement of housekeeping and family. For instance, in an advertisement for a household item such as tissue paper or cooking fat, there is likelihood of a female being questioned or asked to make a statement as an authority. She will not be an authority because she is an experts in use of the respective items but because they are household items, and she is expected to be a homemaker or know how to take care of the home. On the other hand, when advertising a distinguished career or occupation of a high office, it is likely to have a man, which creates in the mind of a girl that she cannot achieve much out there, she is destined to the kitchen. Such bias in packaging media information and presenting the female gender less capable than the males does not help in empowering females.

News content does not help matters either. Women are only a focus on a few matters unlike men who dominate business, political and various other news items. This negatively makes girls believe men are the only ones who can make news. This also shows that men occupy those positions of power; making the females doubt their chances and the males think the positions only belong to them.

Social media has uplifted the presence of women in media as they are able to relate well and are more active of such sites. Their voices are growing and reaching more people, both males and females. There is however, the problem of gender biasness where some male chauvinists have brought some online campaigns based on female stereotypes which is trying to demean women and bring them in bad light. The media owners and

producers should be mindful of the image portrayed in the media as it will either encourage girls and women to play their rightful roles in the society as well empowered and capable individuals or conform to the stereotypes and message that the media portrays. Men will also be in a position to treat women better if there is general message across the media that is empowering women. The message should not be in the content of the news only but also on the representation in the media such as the employees in the whole wide journalism industry.

As the society dictates, media often present women as part of a team in their work and thoughts. They take a passive rather than an active role and even as victims in whatever happens in the society. The society expects women to be beautiful but weak and the value of their sexuality enhanced but in a very narrow and stereotypical way. They treated as emotional instead of intellectual and people who create relationships in order to survive instead of being independent. The society castigates those who tend to be independent or exhibit their worth in other areas, and see them as deviant or dangerous for not meeting the society's expectations.

On the other hand, the society expects men to be more rigid and strong, both physically and intellectually, and this is how the media present them. They are expected to show power and be independent in their thought and even in their actions and don't rely on others.

These media representations serve to paint the society in its real form, and so the media has to conform to ensue the audience identify with them. This may sometimes not be planned but due to how the society is. Such

representations make the media seem credible and the male chauvinists have their ego maintained, but at the expense of females who fail to get the right motivation to exploit the full potential in them.

With the changing society however, there is a tendency of both men and women finding it hard to live to those expectation of the society due to more empowerment and education on the part of the females on their worth other than the society's expectations of femininity. More female leaders are coming up and this is changing the way they view life with such role models. The toughness of masculinity is also reducing and even the modest of the males such as grooming which was previously considered a feminine thing is now being adapted by males; with even product in the market for them.